

**PRECARIOUS WORK, GENDER ROLES, AND THE  
USE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE PROGRAMS IN ACADEMIA**

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## **DEDICATION**

To Jesus Christ – my Lord and Savior, for enabling me with the good health to complete this project.

To my family, for their steadfast love and many sacrifices - without their encouragement, the successful completion of this project would not have been possible.

To my friends who stuck with me till the end: every act of kindness, be it a text message or a phone call, a visit or an email, a meal or a cup of tea, was recorded indelibly in my heart. Even if you don't show up by name, please, know that I am grateful for all your generosity and support.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examined the experiences of contract academic staff (CAS) regarding their use of work-life balance programs (WLBP). As precarious employees, CAS are subject to work conditions that put them in a bind between surviving as precarious workers and meeting the demands of their work and family lives. As such, a clearer picture of how such highly-skilled professionals utilize WLBP to achieve WLB is required. Adopting the phenomenology qualitative research approach, I used NVivo to analyze the data obtained from in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with ten research participants. Four themes emerged: precarious work, support and performance, gendered aspects of academia, and precarious workers' use of WLBP. Results showed that male and female CAS adopted similar WLBP as boundary management strategies to integrate and/or separate their work and family obligations. The limitations and implications of the research for theory and practice were discussed and recommendations were made for future research.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CAS	Contract Academic Staff
CAUT	Canadian Association of University Teachers
HRM	Human Resource Management
SER	Standard Employment Relationship
WLB	Work-Life Balance
WLBPs	Work-Life Balance Programs
WLC	Work-Life Conflict

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance (WLB), describes the perceived equilibrium between the amount of time that individuals devote to work and other aspects of their lives (Hughes & Parkes, 2007). WLB does not imply striking an equal balance across all domains of life, but rather, it assists in scheduling work and non-work commitments in a realistic manner by minimizing the occurrence of work-life conflicts (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In this thesis, the term work-life balance is really more about balancing the demands of paid precarious work and unpaid work (as opposed to leisure). Unpaid work in this regard would include those non-work obligations (e.g., the family responsibilities) that are required of individuals. With this in mind, family responsibilities should therefore be understood to mean those daily, direct obligations that CAS undertake (e.g., providing parental care or spousal support) to direct members of their nuclear family.

Work-life conflicts (WLC), are the perceived work-life imbalances caused by incompatible demands between work and family role, such imbalances often make participation in both domains to become more difficult (Koubova & Buchko, 2013). Several studies explore WLC (e.g., Damaske & Gerson, 2008; Kelly, Moen, & Tranby, 2011; Lyness, Gornick, Stone, & Grottoa, 2012). Generally, these studies show that men and women who hold demanding jobs, work longer hours, and have dependents (e.g., younger children, elderly parents or relatives) are more likely to experience higher WLC or low WLB. For instance, “what it means to engage in mothering and caring are still often seen to be in direct conflict” (Damaske & Gerson, 2008, p. 233) with a mother’s desire to make more income due to the increase in dual-income households as well as the gendered role of mothers in the society. As more women enter the workforce, they are being criticized for devoting too much time to work rather than their home-life (Damaske & Gerson, 2008).

Considering these trends, some organizations offer work-life balance programs (WLBP) as formal human resource management (HRM) initiatives which often extend beyond legal requirements (Swody & Powell, 2007), to help employees manage their respective work and family obligations in ways that facilitate the achievement of WLB (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). These initiatives usually include some combination of formalized material support (e.g., onsite daycare centers); social support (e.g., contracting specialized consultants to provide seminars on work-family issues); as well as flexible work arrangements (e.g., compressed workweeks), provided the employees utilize these programs (Wang & Verma, 2012).

Precarious work is defined as “employment for remuneration characterized by uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements” (Vosko, 2010, p. 2). She suggests that “references to precarious employment, or related terms such as contingent work and atypical employment, are increasingly common in popular and scholarly discourse and are often used interchangeably” (Vosko, 2010, p. 2).

Vosko maintains that precarious work is determined by the relationship between certain factors such as the employment status (for example, paid or self-employment), the form of employment (for instance, permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time), and the dimensions of labor market insecurity, the social context (for instance, geography, industry, and occupation) and the social location (or the interaction between social relations – e.g., gender and citizenship) (Vosko, 2010). Precarious jobs could also affect employees’ willingness and ability to perform their work and family obligations more effectively and reflects a growing trend in employment relations across industries (Valcour, 2007).

To understand precarious work, it is important to comprehend the idea of a standard employment relationship (SER). SER is described as “a full-time continuous employment

relationship where the worker has one employer, works on the employer's premises under direct supervision, and has access to comprehensive benefits and entitlement" (Vosko, 2010, p. 1).

Vosko argues that precarious work is presently viewed as a departure from the SER, which leads regulatory responses to "seek solutions that minimize such deviations" (Vosko, 2010, p. 4).

Although "there is a link between non-standard employment and precarious work, both terms are not synonymous" (Vosko, 2010, p. 3). Vosko maintains that "when we conflate precarious work and non-standard employment, we risk obscuring and reinforcing the very problems that need to be addressed" (Vosko, 2010, p. 4). According to Vosko, whereas part-time work rarely provides enough income to adequately support individuals and their dependents; temporary work is unpredictable, and the nonexistence of labor protections is a common feature of most self-employment. In her opinion, the link between these two kinds of employment is not that straightforward since some full-time employment are precarious and some non-standard work are relatively secure (Vosko, 2010).

Precarious employment creates conflicts that often generate stress and puts a demand on employees' willingness and ability to address obligations in ways that can affect the organization, the employees themselves, and the people they serve (Standing, 2011). For instance, non-paid out-of-office obligations such as taking part in children's school and extracurricular activities, socializing with friends, assisting with caregiving needs of aging parents and/or elderly relatives, as well as scheduling medical appointments (Henly & Lambert, 2014).

Precarious work has grown in multiple sectors, and though it has often been associated with unskilled or low-skilled non-professional work, its concept is emerging within academia (CAUT, 2015). Academia embodies extremes of job precarity: At one end of the spectrum are

tenured faculty members with assurances of lifetime employment, benefits, pensions, and substantial control over their work-life balance. At the other end, are an increasing number of contract academic staff (CAS) employed in precarious work with temporary employment, limited benefits, and sometimes, a lack of control over their work-life balance. CAS describes those persons who teach in academia under a range of job titles that may be different from one institution to another – these academic staff may be called part-time faculty or contract instructors in some universities, whereas they could be addressed as limited-term appointments, or adjunct faculty in other universities (CAUT, 2015).

Lewchuk et al. (2015) reported that universities hired fewer tenure-track faculty, relying on short-term solutions to manage the increasing demands for such highly-skilled professionals. Lewchuk et al. showed that only 51% of workers in Ontario had permanent full-time jobs, while 9% had permanent part-time jobs, and 40% had temporary part-time jobs. The latter category was defined as being precarious because of the level of job insecurity experienced by employees. The same authors also reported that insecure jobs increased in both low and middle-income categories.

In addition to facing job insecurity, CAS have different work expectations and career development paths. They may be required to juggle multiple contracts at more than one institution to maintain a living wage. They may be offered the least preferred courses and teaching times. They often have fewer boundaries, moving work between "the workplace and the home, between weekdays and weeknights, and between the working week and weekends, holidays, and vacations" (Drago & Colbeck, 2003, p. 2).

Academia is also a highly gendered institution (Winslow, 2010), and while WLC affect all faculty, the balance between work and family-life may differentiate the experience of faculty

work for male and female academics (Sutor, Mecom, & Feld, 2001; Winslow, 2010). Within the WLB literature, gender roles have become a focal point. Whereas a role within this context is defined as “the expectations placed on members of a social system” (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 190), gender roles describe social roles involving attitudes and expectations of persons on the basis of biological sex (Lindsey, 2015).

In a review on gender role and the work-family interface, Korabik, McElwain and Chappel (2008) define the construct of gender and identify challenges with how the terms sex and gender have been studied in the WLB literature. Although some researchers have used both terms interchangeably, many social scientists and humanists differentiate sex and gender. While sex has been described as a biological characteristic that assigns individuals to biological features of male and female (Poleacovschi & Javernick-Will, 2014), gender, on the other hand, has been explained as a social behavior embodying the sex (Beauvoir, 1952).

Korabik et al. (2008) pointed to studies that examined just the average differences instead of the relationships among variables as well as the researchers that used the term sex as a substitute for different dimensions of gender. Their research critiques the differences between men and women on WLC and examines the relationship between WLC and other dimensions of gender such as gender role orientation, gender role values, and gender role attitudes/ideology. Their review offers some recommendations for incorporating gender-related concerns into future work-life studies such as developing a better comprehension of policies and theories on gender and establishing measurement equivalence for studies involving gender and culture with respect to work-family conflict. In this thesis, the term gender role focuses on the binary female/male role expectations and how they combine with precarious work to influence the experiences of WLBP among CAS.



One of the key gaps in the WLB literature is understanding the place of gender roles in HRM practices (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Eby, Maher, & Butts, 2010). The composition of today's workforce impacts the adoption of WLBP (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). As dual-income households become more common, the need to cater for children/elderly relatives becomes an important concern. Before now, a family could be sustained by one parent's income while allowing the other parent to remain at home to cater for the children (Hill et al., 2001).

Citing a United States Department of Labor report, Butts, Casper, and Yang (2013) point out that in 2010, 58% of married employees in the US were dual-earner couples, 64% of mothers with underaged children were employed (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010), and the proportion of men and women in the labor force was almost equal at 53% and 47%, respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Another report showed that about 42% of employees provided eldercare support to their family members (Aumann, Galinsky, Sakai, Brown, & Bond, 2010).

Gender roles matter with respect to WLB and HRM practices intended to support WLB, but many questions remain. For example, it is unclear how precarious work may differently affect the experiences of WLBP for men and women. While some studies have looked at the association between job precarity and work-life balance (e.g. Richter, Näswall & Sverke, 2010; Yu, 2014), none have closely examined how this experience might be different for men and women. More so, it is unclear how gender roles combine with precarious work to influence how men and women experience WLBP.

Such a narrative puts forward questions such as: what makes the job of CAS precarious – if at all? What role does gender play in precarious jobs? Are CAS in precarious work, or not? And how do gender roles and precarious work impact CAS's use of WLBP, if at all? More so,

previous studies do not delve into the micro-level processes of how CAS are marginalized, nor do they look in-depth at the effects of these precarious processes on such employees themselves.

In summary, understanding the use of WLBP for employees in precarious work is an important and understudied topic, more so, as such relationships have not been examined through a lens of gender role expectations. This is a particularly timely topic especially in academia where reliance on CAS is on the rise and where WLC may be particularly salient. The following research questions will help to deepen our understanding of the collective nature of these concepts:

### **1.1 Research Questions**

1. How do precarious work and gender roles influence the experiences of WLBP among male and female CAS?
2. In what ways do precarious work and gender roles influence the ability of male and female CAS to use WLBP in maintaining boundaries between their work- and family lives?
3. In what ways do precarious work and gender roles influence how male and female CAS utilize WLBP to integrate their work- and family lives?

### **1.2 Thesis Structure**

This study is presented in seven chapters as follows:

**Chapter One – Introduction:** Here, I introduce my research, defined the key concepts, as well as outlined the research questions of this study.

**Chapter Two - Literature Review:** Here, I provide an overview of the literature and also discuss how to understand contract teaching as precarious work.

**Chapter Three - Theoretical Framework:** Here, I discuss the theoretical orientation of my study – emphasizing on the work-family boundary-management styles.

**Chapter Four - Research Methodology:** Here, I discuss the qualitative research approach, data collection and data analysis processes of the research.

**Chapter Five - Results:** Here, I outline the demographic information of the ten research participants and the four main themes (and subcategories) that emerged from the data analysis.

**Chapter Six - Discussion:** This chapter discusses the findings presented in chapter 5. I also describe some similarities and differences between precarious work in academia and other industries. In addition, I discuss the four main themes as well as their corresponding subcategories within the context of how they addressed the three research questions of this study.

**Chapter Seven - Conclusion:** In this final chapter, I summarize my research; discuss the limitations of my study and areas for future research. I also discuss the implications of this study for both theory and practice.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Work-Life Balance and Work-Life Balance Programs

WLB has been studied extensively over the years using constructs from quantitative and qualitative research methods (see Appendix 1). It can be influenced by factors such as job characteristics, rising financial household needs, as well as a second, or even third job for all adult household members, including parents (Butts et al., 2013). In addition, the societal and personal outcomes of not meeting one's work or family obligations may result in increased levels of stress-related illnesses, enhanced rates of substance abuse, and lowered life-satisfaction (Butts et al., 2013).

Guest (2002) generated a model outlining the nature, causes, and outcomes of WLB. Based on this model, the causes of WLB are located within the context of work and home. Whereas the individual causes of WLB include factors such as a person's energy, personality, work orientation, age, gender, life, and career stage; some contextual causes of WLB include the demands and culture of work and the home, respectively. Accordingly, the nature of WLB is defined both objectively (e.g., hours of free-time outside work and hours of work) and subjectively (i.e., the states of perceived imbalance and balance between respective domains). Guest's (2002) model suggests that balance may be reported when equal weight is ascribed to attending to the demands at home and work or when work or home demands tend to dominate by choice. The model also mentions some consequences of work-life imbalance to include poor performance at work and at home; low well-being; as well as poor life/family satisfaction.

Researchers on WLB accentuate the significance of family-friendly practices (e.g., WLBP) in helping to strike a balance between family and work-life by providing a deeper conceptual comprehension of the work-family relationship (e.g., Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Carlson, Grzywack, & Zivnuska, 2009) and inter-role conflict (e.g., Allen, Herst, Bruck, &

Sutton, 2000; Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008) that can occur when workers are required to maintain a balance between their family and work obligations.

## **2.2 Precarious Work and Work-Life Balance Programs**

Researchers have examined the emergence of precarious work including part-time and temporary work (e.g., Fudge & Vosko, 2001; Kalleberg, 2011). Studies have also examined broad global and national trends toward precarious work (Kalleberg, 2009; Standing, 2011); the relationship between organizational restructuring and precarious work (Kalleberg, 2009); as well as precarious work and changing employment relationships (Fudge & Vosko 2001; Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich 2003; Bosch, 2004). Whereas some factors that enhance the growth of precarious work include globalization, organizational restructuring and downsizing (Østhus, 2007; Procyk, Lewchuk, & Shields, 2017), some consequences of precarious work include increased staff turnover, increased absenteeism, depression, and the anxiety that comes from job insecurity (Lewchuk, Clarke, & De Wolff, 2013; Procyk et al., 2017).

Employees in precarious work are usually faced with seven “dimensions of insecurity” (Standing, 2011, p. 11), which include job insecurity; work insecurity; employment insecurity; labor market insecurity; skill reproduction insecurity; representation insecurity; and income insecurity (Standing, 2011). CAS by virtue of their temporary employment status are likely to face one or more (if not all) of these dimensions of insecurity to varying degrees, suggesting that a typical CAS could experience these effects and could also recognize the impact of these dimensions of insecurity in their daily life. Studies have shown that the multidimensional insecurities faced by CAS (often understood as manifestations of employment precarity) have lasting devastating effects (Field et. al., 2014).

As Field et al., (2014) mentioned, precarious work in academia is not a homogeneous category of employment since it is generally understood as paid work that is likely to be poorly remunerated and, more importantly, insecure. The lack of job security is identified in the literature as the characteristic that makes precarious work so inimical (Field et. al., 2014). Job insecurity encompasses situations where valued resources (e.g., salary and social status) come under threat (Jahoda, 1982). Employees' reactions to job insecurity can be considered in two ways: In the short term, they may react with impaired mood and decreased focus on the job, whereas in the long term, social network or employment become threatened, leading to serious consequences for the organization as well as the employees (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002; Låstad Berntson, Näswall, Lindfors, & Sverke,, 2015).

Job insecurity has been linked to weaker social ties in the sense that individuals with unpredictable weekly incomes are more likely to say that they do not have close friends to rely on for help, than those with stable weekly incomes (Lewchuk et al., 2013). This, in turn, may create some form of work-life imbalance putting at risk the ability to plan for the future since one's economic future seems no longer protected (Lewis, Smithson, & Brannen, 1998). More so, workers in precarious employment may become worried that their existing employment status and functional roles within their family may become altered should they not be able to meet the financial needs of their dependents (Kinnunen, Feldt, & Mauno, 2003; Voydanoff, 2004).

Since family and work-life are increasingly closely-linked (Voydanoff, 2004), there is need to pay close attention towards understanding how employees in precarious work can utilize WLBP's to manage the existing boundaries between their work and family lives especially since both domains have been shown to influence each other in several ways (Barling, Dupre, & Hepburn, 1998). Several work and family roles are perceived as being mutually-benefiting

(Wilson, Larson, & Stone, 1993) and where poor work-family boundary management exists, the demands from both domains tend to create an imbalance in how employees allocate their resources (e.g., energy, money, time) towards achieving WLB (Wilson et al., 1993).

### **2.3 Precarious Work and Gender Roles**

Precarious work has been investigated together with gender (e.g., Pugliesi, 1995; Vosko, MacDonald, & Campbell, 2009; Betti, 2016). Vosko et al. (2009) examined the studies that explore the nature, size, and dynamics of precarious occupation in various industrialized countries. Their research proposed that precarious work in industrialized societies presents a significant challenge to the economic, social, and political stability of their labor markets. Vosko et al. (2009) opined that the growth of precarious work contributed to a sequence of routine social inequalities, mostly along the lines of citizenship and gender.

In describing the gendered nature of precarious work, Betti (2016) investigated the association between precarious labor and gender roles in the second half of the twentieth century. Her study pointed out that the proliferation of precarious work during that period was facilitated by factors such as labor and women's movement struggles as well as labor laws. Betti maintains that gender division of labor and gender-based discrimination are central to the gendered nature of precarious work. Betti's work demonstrates that women encountered a recognizable amount of precariousness during that period since different working conditions and production modes were present simultaneously at that time (Betti, 2016).

One occupation where gender roles, job insecurity, and WLB may be particularly relevant is in Academia. Academia is unique in the sense that academic work entails high expectations which include a set of conditions. Such expectations include research productivity, demanding workload, and attaining full tenure. As such, academia qualifies as an institution in

which its employees have a high level of work devotion since faculty members are responsive to the demands of their job environment settings and also because rewards, acknowledgments, and professional success are so significant to them (Frone, 2003).

For instance, long work hours (e.g., an average of 60 hours or more weekly) are often associated with productivity in academia (Carson, Bartneck, Voges, 2013) and generally, “when these standards for striving and excelling operate, or are idealized, work claims precedence, setting the stage for conflict with family” (Fox, Fonseca, & Bao, 2011, p. 718).

Powell and Greenhaus (2010) considered the over-representation of women in contingent forms of employment. Their study observed that the persistence of gender inequalities was present even among highly-skilled workers, and this was characterized by continuity in the marginalization of women. Canada’s academia is no exception. Between 1999 and 2010, women represented 61.7 - 63% of temporary full-time and permanent part-time university professors, but only 25.7 - 39.5% of full-time, permanent university professors (CAUT, 2015). Though recent data shows increasing gender parity, with almost 40% of women working as full-time, permanent university professors, data on temporary full-time professors continue to show that women are over-represented in temporary work in academia (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Other studies have examined how parenthood and family-life affect professors (Mason & Goulden, 2002; Gatta & Roos, 2004; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Misra, Lundquist, & Templer, 2012). Given the complexity of both faculty life and parenthood, and concurrent with the nature of academia itself, faculty members face intense pressures (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996; Sutor et al., 2001).

For instance, Mason and Goulden (2002) examine the effects that family composition has on the careers of female and male academics over a 20-year period from the time they receive



their doctorate degrees. Their findings show that 77% of male academics had secured tenure within twelve to fourteen years after earning a doctorate whereas only 53% of female academics had achieved tenure within the same period. These authors argue that there is a consistent gap in achieving tenure between female academics who have early babies and their male counterparts who have babies earlier in their careers. These numbers they claim, support the contention that WLB remains an obstacle to female academics' full participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) workplaces (Mason & Goulden, 2002).

#### **2.4 Gender roles and Work-Life Balance Programs**

The origins of the research on gender roles and WLBP can be traced back to studies of women having multiple roles (Alesina, Guliano & Nunn, 2013). In a study to examine the natural role of women in society, it was reported that in some societies that, “the dominant belief was that women should be allowed to participate freely, and equally to their male counterparts, in employment outside the home...although in others, there was a different view that the appropriate place for women was within the home, and as such, they were discouraged from taking part in activities outside the home” (Alesina, Guliano & Nunn, 2013, p. 470).

Research on WLB (e.g., Goldin, 2006; Doepke & Tertilt, 2009; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010) have also shown the importance of other determinants such as cultural beliefs, the production structure of the economy, technological change, medical improvement, and economic development, in shaping the evolution of norms regarding the role of men and women in society. Due to the persistent nature of such determinants, norms regarding gender roles may be in effect long after the economy becomes industrialized, thereby influencing the involvement of men and women in roles conducted outside the home (Alesina, Giuliano, & Nunn, 2013).

Previous studies have investigated the role of gender and WLB (e.g., Daly, Ashbourne, & Hawkins, 2008; Galinsky, Aumann & Bond, 2011; Gordon, Pruchno, Wilson-Genderson, Murphy, & Rose, 2012; Evans, Carney, & Wilkinson, 2013; Ruppanner, 2013). For instance, Daly, Ashbourne and Hawkins (2008) observed that when it comes to the discussions and policies on WLB, fathers have been relegated to the periphery as a result of factors such as social processes and the privilege extended to mothers, as well as their experiences. Their study documents the place of fathers in the lives of children and suggests that reconciling the father involvement in family with the provider-role obligations is one of the ongoing contradictions that men currently experience.

The social process of men denotes the “hegemonic acceptance of the category of men through the taken-for-granted process of biological identification and other gender-specific practices” (Hearn, 2004, p. 60). Goldscheider and Waite (1991) conclude that viewing men’s decision-making within the context of masculinity and their ‘new father’ role could broaden the work-family literature by outlining reasons why men are not considered to be ‘equal partners’ as caregivers in the family.

Similarly, Ruppanner’s (2013) multilevel study found gender differences when looking at the association between family-work and work-family conflict and family-friendly policies in ten Western countries. Ruppanner analyzed the relationship between family-work and work-family conflict and four specific policy measures, namely: work schedule, family leave, early childhood care and school schedules. Ruppanner’s results demonstrate that work-family policies modulate work-family conflict only for women who are parents of young children since fathers and mothers experience less family-work and mothers less work-family conflict in jurisdictions with more comprehensive family-leave policies (Ruppanner, 2013).

Several studies have also considered various aspects of WLB and gender roles in post-secondary learning institutions (e.g., Armenti, 2004; Gatta & Roos, 2004; Lynch, 2008; Hirakata & Daniluk, 2009; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). For instance, Bianchi and Milkie (2010) reported that between 2000 and 2010, several studies examined the issues that women and men face in academia, especially those in dual-earner households.

On the other hand, Gatta and Roos (2004) presented qualitative data from a gender-equity research at an institution using interviews with senior female and male faculty that deal with WLC at different times in their professional lives. Their research explored some coping strategies that individuals used to achieve WLB at different points in their careers. Their research also showed how females and males defined work-family integration by offering the personal accounts of females (and a few males), who struggled with WFC.

Furthermore, their research accentuated the consequences that female employees faced due to the absence of the university's support. They also demonstrated how such outcomes can be used to design measures to address WLC and evaluate current WLB initiatives. In addition, their findings identified sectors where policies can be instrumental in addressing WLB concerns. These authors concluded that work-family integration was still a major issue within universities and this was becoming increasingly prevalent as more faculty members were finding themselves in marital relationships as dual-earner couples (Gatta & Roos, 2004).

## **2.5 Work-Life Balance Programs, Precarious Work, and Gender Roles**

The use of WLBP has gained popularity as a dual agenda since it has been identified as a means of achieving organizational goals while providing workers with the chance to meet the demands of family- and work-life (Hill, Ferris, & Martinson, 2003; Dembe, Patridge, Dugan, & Piktialis, 2011).

Kelly and Moen (2007) advanced a conceptual model to show how job schedule control impacts WLC and they also identified some avenues to enhance employees' job schedule control. Their model proposed three moderators, namely: occupation, gender, and life stage. Their framework suggests the existence of a direct effect of perceived job schedule control on WLC.

Kelly and Moen (2007) argued that implementing job schedule control could change an individual's behavior since it had the tendency to reduce WLC and increase perceived control over when and where an individual performed his/her job functions. According to them, having control over one's job schedule could foster job flexibility in the sense that enabling job flexibility in the workplace, as regards, when and where work is performed, has been identified as one means that organizations can deploy to reduce WLC whilst contributing to the overall achievement of desired organizational outcomes (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2003).

Providing job flexibility has been considered as a means of minimizing gender gaps in working times and employment rates, hence, linking job flexibility to larger concerns of social stratification (Lyness et al., 2012). The quest for job flexibility has been mostly associated with the increase in women's paid employment to the extent that flexibility has been considered as an outcome with the potential to assist women to combine their work and family tasks. The need for flexibility also emanates from other sources e.g., men's greater involvement in family caregiving, increases in single-parent and dual-earner households, increased number of older employees, as well as the increase in workers with elder-care obligations (Lyness et al., 2012).

Although organizations have become more aware of the growing need to provide WLBP, promoting work flexibility through WLBP remains poorly understood, even though it is widely used in both practitioner and the academic literature respectively (Kossek & Lautsch,

2018). Consequently, such outcomes generally tend to also blur the boundary lines between employees' work and personal lives since the fulfillment of obligations in one domain can now encroach into other domains (Ammons, 2013) – increasing the need for effective boundary management between these domains.

With respect to WLB, precarious work, and gender role, Cheng and Chan (2008), conducted a meta-analysis to examine the age, tenure, and gender differences in the relationship between employment insecurity and health-related consequences. Their findings replicated Sverke et al.'s (2002) meta-analytic results with a larger database and a more up-to-date approach.

However, the essential differences between their results and Sverke et al.'s were that the negative association between employment insecurity and job performance was significant and that the relationship between insecurity and job involvement was smaller in their study. Their analysis also indicated that: (a) the positive association between employment insecurity and turnover intention was stronger among temporary workers (e.g. CAS) than those with longer tenure, and was stronger among younger workers than older ones; (b) the relationship between employment insecurity and the criterion variables was similar across gender (Cheng and Chan, 2008).

## **2.6 Understanding Contract Teaching as Precarious Work**

A variety of factors contribute to the changes that facilitate fluctuations in the demand for university lecturers, for example, the increased undergraduate enrolment and the labor market expectations that require varying degrees of teaching labor (Winefield, Boyd, & Winefield, 2014). More so, the slow pace of growth amongst permanent tenure-track faculty positions as

well as the prohibition of mandatory retirement for lecturers in post-secondary learning institutions, also contribute to this outcome.

Here in Canada, there appears to be a surplus of qualified lecturers in the contemporary academic labor market (CAUT, 2015). There is also the concern regarding the various procedures in the hiring of CAS across universities - a trend that suggests that there is no singular labor relations landscape for temporary contract employment in universities. Extant literature supports these variations by underscoring the role of the autonomy of universities to make decisions about faculty hiring and salaries (Clark, Moran, Skolnik, & Trick, 2009; Henry, Kobayashi, & Choi, 2017).

Attaining full academic tenure is a central tenet of scholarly recruitment in universities, thereby, offering a job-for-life for professionals who can secure such jobs. However, in a period of austerity measures and cuts in provincial funding to universities across Canada, securing such employment is becoming scarce. Due to insufficient funding, universities may hire lecturers on a temporary basis each term on part-time employment contracts instead of hiring a full-time, permanent faculty. Thus, a debate has emerged regarding the prevalence of precarious work in academia (Henry et al., 2017).

It is strongly suspected that dependence on contract academic staff has increased over time (CAUT, 2015), as an increasing number of teaching staff are working in precarious employment on short-term contracts at Canadian universities as part-time employees (Vosko, 2006). Statistics Canada's Universities and Colleges Academic Staff Survey of Part-Time Faculty (UCASS-PT) suggests that temporary faculty instructors in Canada increased by 10% from 25,700 between 1990 and 1991 to 28,200 between 1997 and 1983, respectively (Healy, 2002; Jones, 2004).

For instance, about 34% of Canadian universities' teaching positions in 2010 were filled by CAS and a recent report also mentioned that approximately 50% of all courses taught in universities were taught by part-time faculty (CAUT, 2015; Council of Ontario Universities 2018). In addition, a survey report stated that the number of part-time lecturers per year increased by 74% from 2005 to 2015. On the flip side, the number of full-time, permanent professors increased by only 14% even as the students' population size increased by 28% within the same period (CAUT, 2015). These figures suggest that permanent teaching positions are declining while temporary teaching positions are increasing (CAUT, 2015).

The narrative surrounding these short-term contracts in tertiary learning institutions is that they serve both the university and the CAS as well. The general notion is that employees in temporary teaching positions are attracted by the flexibility that such job types allow in the sense that these employees are just picking up extra income on the side to support themselves while working elsewhere (CAUT, 2015).

However, there is also a narrative of CAS who are in need of permanent employment. These ones shoulder enormous workloads for meager paycheques and perform their jobs without the tools and resources afforded to full-time, permanent faculty lecturers. For such employees, rather than experiencing the attractive flexibility that precarious work affords, theirs becomes a story about the discouraging, and often demoralizing outcomes of precarity (CAUT, 2015).

Several factors tend to blur our understanding of contract teaching as precarious employment. Some of these include the use of various terminologies when describing CAS as well as having access to accurate information on these group of employees. Since the exact titles and terms of employment for CAS vary from institution to institution, researchers have

consistently found it difficult to track their prevalence over time, thus, making it difficult to identify and enumerate this category of academic employees.

One reason that has been given for this difficulty is that across tertiary institutions (and even within a single tertiary institution), CAS “are variously defined by a series of parameters, e.g., the length of their contract or the number of courses that they teach” (Brownlee, 2015, p. 794). Despite the variations in terminology and terms of employment, CAS share one thing in common: unlike tenure-track faculty, CAS are not contracted as permanent employees, and it is this difference that makes contract teaching a form of precarious work (Standing, 2011).

Another concern is that few institutions are willing to share accurate records of the number of contract academic staff they employ; even if they did, the exact number of people employed in CAS positions vary from one academic term to the next, as do the people themselves (Brownlee, 2015). Even though a paucity of data on the prevalence of temporary teaching positions exists, and where present, is usually localized and rarely (if ever) tracked over time (Pankin & Weiss, 2011).

More so, many of them teach in several departments and even in multiple institutions in a given semester or academic year. As a result, CAS are a dynamic and obfuscated target and attempts to study them, no matter what research method is used, are stymied at every turn (Brownlee, 2015). As Brownlee puts it, it is for these reasons that CAS are often addressed as hidden academics in the tertiary education labor force.



## CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that informs this research is the work-family boundary management styles model developed by Kossek and Lautsch (2012). The conceptual framework of this study (Figure 1) relies on this framework. This model was developed by combining three existing theories: Katz and Kahn's (1978) Role-Taking Theory, Karasek's (1979) Job Control Theory, and Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton's (2006) Psychological Boundary Management Theory. A boundary management style describes "the general approach that a person uses to demarcate boundaries and attend to work and family roles" (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012, p. 152). The boundary theory explores the intentional actions that individuals take to shape, maintain, or alter the boundaries between their work-family roles through physical, psychological, or time borders (Ashforth, Kreiner, Fugate, 2000; Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014).

As formal and informal flexibility between family and work roles become prevalent, employees and their respective employers are enacting new boundaries around work and family interactions (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). From the role theory (1978), the interference between roles can enhance psychological distress when persons practice several roles within one or more social systems (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Contemporary work-life studies suggest that work and family subsystems are increasingly overlapping for many persons, and generally, this promotes the crossing of role boundaries and increased self-regulation of the integration of work and non-work functions (Ashforth et al., 2000). Researchers describe how people enact boundary crossings, often focusing on preferences and strategies for integration, alternation, and segmentation (Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005).

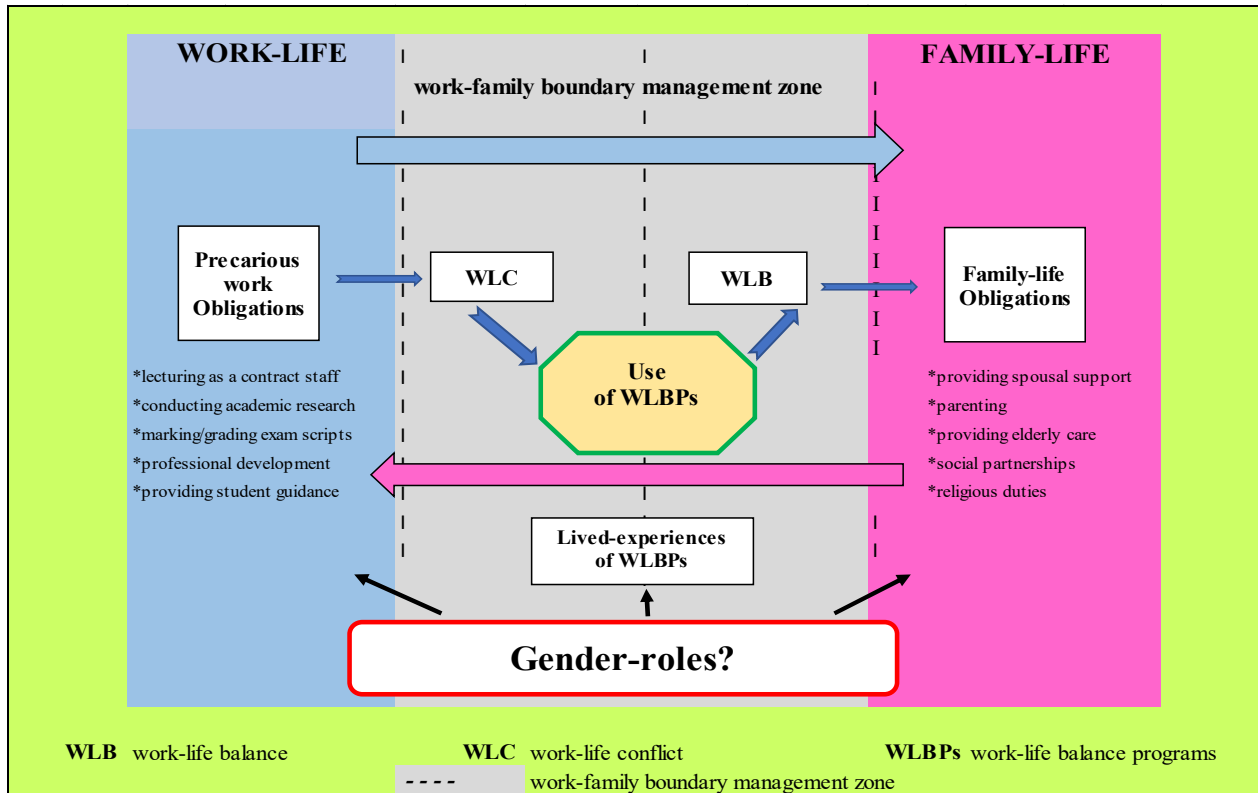


Figure 1: The conceptual framework for this research

Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) cross-level model and typology of work-family boundary management styles offer several contributions to organizational theory and practice in the following ways: First, it presented a comprehensive cross-level framework for integrating other theories of boundary management. Secondly, the model gave rise to the introduction of the alternating boundary management style. Here, their work developed the notion that some persons engage in both integration and separation and argued that those with dual-centric work-family identity salience are more likely to enact alternating styles. In particular, the model highlights the significance of perceived control over boundary management as having a direct and indirect influence on WLC. This emphasis extends the existing scholarship by suggesting that the boundary measures of individuals and the organizations to which they belong should be included in studies and research models.

The strategic human resource management (SHRM) perspective (e.g., Wright & Nishii, 2013; Upam, Vasanthi, Ganesh, & Sourav, 2018) theorizes the existence of HRM initiatives at multiple levels – the design level (intended HRM practices), the implementation level (actual HRM practices) and the experience level (experienced HRM practices) respectively (Upam et al., 2018). Whereas Wright and Nishii (2013) explicate these mechanisms and draw on existing theories to explain the linkages between ‘Intended-Actual-Experienced’ HRM initiatives, Upam et al., (2018) used a multiple embedded case study design within a multi-unit hypermarket chain to identify ‘intended-actual-experienced’ gaps across HRM initiatives in seven retail units. According to them, these inconsistencies were generated by the adaptation of HRM initiatives due to the various comprehension of the purpose of such HRM programs as well as the processes involved with their implementation.

Although HRM has been described as a multi-level phenomenon (Shipton, Budhwar, Sparrow & Brown, 2017), it has been slow to adopt a multi-level perspective (Molloy, Ployhart, & Wright, 2010). This may be attributable to conceptual as well as methodological challenges, with influences extending beyond institutional boundaries (Gupta, Tesluk, & Taylor, 2007; Renkema, Meijerink, & Bondarouk, 2016). Generally, studies in strategic human resource management have commenced integrating macro and micro-level analysis in exploring the influence of HRM initiatives on individual behaviors and attitudes (Jiang, Takeuchi, & Lepak, 2013).

According to Shipton et al. (2017), within the multi-level perspective, research has adopted a top-down approach to examine cross-level influences and has also considered how HRM systems at a higher level influence the behaviors and attitudes of individual employees. A significant development in contemporary research is the increasing attention that is being paid to

individual employee's views in HRM-performance studies as reflected in the increase in multi-level research (e.g., Jiang, Takeuchi, & Lepak, 2013; Upam et al., 2018). More so, several HRM scholars (e.g. Jiang, Takeuchi, & Lepak, 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013) have urged future research to build multi-level theories by exploring the cross-level associations between 'intended-actual-experienced' HRM practices.

In this thesis, the multi-level perspective is strengthened by explaining the relationship between the WLBP that have been provided at the organizational level and my research conducted at the individual level (experienced WLBP). This is imperative because as Upam et al. (2018) proposed, WLBP as organizational-level policies have the potential to influence the attitude and the behavior of employees who utilize such initiatives as we will see in the lived experiences of the research participants of this study.

Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) research also discussed the relevance of symmetry in cross-role boundary interruptions as well as the need to integrate a more robust conceptualization of multiple identities into new models. These authors also highlighted that the measures of symmetry and asymmetry in patterns of boundary interruptions can be formed to facilitate a means of linking the research on individual regulation of boundary management to existing measures – distinguishing the degree and direction of WLC and spillover in distinct domains.

As Kossek and Lautsch (2012) pointed out, the two main features of boundaries that employees may alter are boundary permeability and flexibility. According to them, whereas boundary permeability describes permeable boundaries that allow aspects of one role [e.g., behaviors or emotions, to spill over into another role in a way that an individual may "be physically located in one role's domain, but psychologically and/or behaviorally involved in another role" (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 474)], boundary flexibility defines the degree to which the

boundaries of a role are elastic and mutable, in such a way that it may be enforced in many different places or at different times (see Table 1). Whereas boundary flexibility answers the question of when and where a role can be enforced, boundary permeability informs us of what the role is (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008; Kossek & Lautsch, 2018).

The boundary management styles that individuals deploy have been described by work-life scholars as occurring along an integration-alternation-separation continuum, with points along the scale reflecting distinct boundaries (Desrochers, Sargent, & Hostetler, 2012). Although Kossek and Lautsch (2008) mentioned three main boundary management styles: (a) separating work and life; (b) integrating work and life, and (c) a hybrid approach that involves alternating between the two prior approaches, combined, boundary flexibility and boundary permeability are capable of determining whether roles are separated, alternated, or integrated.

**Table 1**

Illustrative Flexibility Definitions (Source: Kossek & Lautsch, 2018)

Definitional approach		Exemplars
Descriptive	A list of prevalent employer policies or practices	Allard, Haas, and Hwang (2007); Allen, Shockey, and Poteat (2008); Galinsky, Sakai, and Wigton (2011)
Social comparative	An "alternative" work system	Baltes et al. (1999); Swanberg, Pitt-Catsouphes, and Drescher-Burke (2005)
Flexibility for whom?	For individuals: Practices that allow individuals to balance work and personal roles <b>OR</b> For firms: Practices that enhance the ability of firms to adjust staffing to market demands	Hill et al. (2008)
Choice	Employee choice or control over features of the work arrangement	Putnam, Myers, and Gailliard (2014)
Control	Employment-scheduling appointments that promote worker control over: (1) when, (2) where, (3) for how long, and (4) how continuously they work	Kossek, Lautsch, and Eaton (2006); Kossek et al. (2015)

In identifying the individual antecedents of boundary management styles, Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) cross-level model examined two factors that determine how individuals

manage work-family boundaries: the centrality of their work-family role identities; and the individual preferences for boundary-crossing. Their findings show that with respect to boundary-crossing preferences, people vary in their choices regarding how work-family boundaries should be managed. This is so since while some persons would rather separate roles so that boundary crossings are minimized, others may select alternate roles so that boundary crossings or work-family roles can be switched when necessary, whereas other individuals would instead choose to blend work and family roles by integrating roles.

Although there was a growing interest in boundary management prior to the cross-level model developed by Kossek and Lautsch (2012), existing theories at the time did not fully integrate organizational and individual perspectives together. Kossek and Lautsch (2012) addressed this deficit by designing a cross-level model of work-family boundary management in organizations (some boundary management styles are shown in Table 2).

Since society is in constant flux, it becomes inevitable that employees could be imbalanced as their priorities differ and there is also a need to meet various demands. However, such an imbalance should not be viewed as a problem, but rather, an opportunity to explore how employees must evolve in order to adapt and respond to such challenges via the practice of effective boundary management styles. Hopefully, this can offer some insight into how CAS utilize WLBP in their practice of WLB. Providing some answers to such questions become imperative to our understanding of the work-life balance process, its success and/or pitfalls – especially, as it concerns CAS in precarious employment within academia.

Despite the belief that both employers and employees agree on the relevance of WLB, more stakeholders still voice growing concern regarding WLB especially as both female and male employees play different roles at home (Grzywacz, Carlson, & Shulkin, 2008). For CAS,

these persons are employed in an industry that allows married couples/co-habiting partners to work together (even within the same institution). Such spouses/partners become exposed to similar experiences in the workplace (e.g., workplace expectations and career advancement requirements), and such a lifestyle could easily generate WLC - encouraging the need for WLB via effective boundary management practices.

**Table 2**

Examples of Boundary Management Types (Source: Kossek & Lautsch, 2012)

Organizational work-family climate	Perceived control	Integrators Definition of individual styles Tendency to blend work and family-roles  Examples of individual styles	Separators Tendency to segment work and family roles	Alternating Tendency to have clear periods of defined separation and defined integration
Standardizing work-family climate	Low	Managerial consultant who works out of a home office and feels she must always be available to clients.	Production manager who works in an assembly plant and who can't attend to personal needs on work time.	Project manager who travels and lives in a hotel Monday through Thursday, separating to focus on work while travelling and integrating on Fridays and weekends at home. Often experiences stress from the enforced switching of styles to location norms.
Customizing work-family climate	High	Managerial consultant who works at home, and who enjoys the freedom to go offline when needed to provide general supervision for children after school.	Engineer who puts family first by focusing on work when in the office and, even if work is not fully done, leaves office on time to take care of family needs and makes it a point to not take work home.  Manager who values putting work first and delays going on vacation or starting the weekend until she feels work is done.	Human resources specialist who integrates domestic errands, personal time, exercising, and socializing with friends when working at home one day per week, separating in the office the remainder of her time. Satisfaction with the arrangement is high.

Bearing in mind the research questions outlined in chapter 1 of this thesis and using the research method that will be discussed in the following chapter, it would be interesting to see how CAS as precarious workers, utilize these various boundary management styles to integrate, alternate, or separate their work and non-work obligations while describing their experiences of WLBP here at the University of Lethbridge.

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 An Overview of the Qualitative Research Method

In this chapter, I will first discuss the rationale for using qualitative research, and more specifically, an approach influenced by the concepts of phenomenology. The phenomenology approach to qualitative methods is then discussed, followed by an explanation of the participants, data collection procedures and analytic methods.

This study examined precarious work, gender roles, and the use of WLBP in academia by addressing the following research questions: (1) how do precarious work and gender roles influence the experiences of WLBP among male and female contract academic staff? (2) in what ways do precarious work and gender roles influence the ability of male and female contract academic staff to use WLBP in maintaining boundaries between work- and family life? (3) in what ways do precarious work and gender roles influence how male and female contract academic staff utilize WLBP to integrate work- and family life?

The qualitative research method is the preferred research to find the essence of a topic of interest or phenomenon by promoting a deeper understanding of how individuals make sense of the reality that they have constructed, as well as their experiences in that crafted reality (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, qualitative research addresses the question of what? and understanding what something is may also involve the conceptualization of its how? i.e., its related processes and temporal unfolding in time (Merriam, 2009).

As “an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe the meaning (not the frequency) of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 520), the qualitative research method “focuses on meaning-in-context and also requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to the underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting



data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 20). Atieno (2009) pointed out that the qualitative research method manages and simplifies data without destroying the integrity of its context and complexity.

In qualitative research, the principle of emergence (i.e., emerging knowledge) assures that the findings have an evidentiary base. Although the qualitative analysis involves the full engagement of the researcher as well as the research participants (Merriam, 2009), it should not be viewed as a projective test in which anything goes since this type of research requires the researcher to read the data as a whole and sensitively distinguish their various facets (Savenye & Robinson, 2004; Merriam, 2009).

Although a summary of constructs for studies on WLB suggests that more quantitative research has been conducted in this field, (Appendix 1), researchers argue that such a trend has only sparingly acknowledged that not all phenomena can be quantified (Atieno, 2009). “If the purpose is to understand a phenomenon or a concept in detail, the researcher will have to rely on research methods that allow for the discovery of central themes and analysis of core concerns” (Atieno, 2009, p. 16). Qualitative research methods are suitable for questions where pre-emptive reduction of the data will prevent discovery, more so, they are useful when the objective is to understand the manner in which research participants experience a phenomenon. The qualitative research method also explores the meanings that participants put on their experience, how they interpret what they say. This makes it important for the researcher to use systematic approaches that allow for discovery, in ways that accentuate the perceptions and complexity of participants’ diverse interpretations.

Seeing that the purpose of this research is to examine precarious work, gender roles, and the use of WLBP in academia by considering the experiences of WLBP among CAS, the use of the qualitative research method (specifically, the Phenomenology approach) is appropriate.

## 4.2 Phenomenology

Patton (2002), explains that phenomenology studies how people experience and describe things through their senses. According to Patton, such studies are interested in our ‘lived-experiences’. Therefore, this approach to qualitative research describes people’s conscious experience of their “everyday life and social actions” (Schram, 2003, p. 71). Merriam (2009) opines that the task of phenomenology is to depict the essence of intense human experiences in ways that enable the reader to come away with the feeling that they have a better understanding of what it is like for someone else to experience that phenomenon.

Phenomenology was developed by Husserl in 1962. As an approach to qualitative research, it has been used in several studies across various disciplines (e.g., Dearnley, 2005; Brown & Kimball, 2013) with the aim to assist in conceptualizing how situations are experienced in the real world (Giorgi, 2009). An essential task of this approach is to the underlying meaning of a lived experience. To accomplish this, the phenomenological interview has been identified as “the primary method of data collection...and prior to interviewing individuals who have had direct experience with the examined phenomenon, the researcher involved with this type of qualitative investigation, usually explores his/her own experiences, in part to examine dimensions of the experience, and in part to become aware of their own prejudices” (Merriam, 2009, p. 43).

As Merriam (2009) points out, no actual experience stands outside its interpretation since an individual’s experience also includes the ways he/she interprets such an experience. Furthermore, Merriam (2009) identifies research questions that are similar to the following question as being appropriate for using the phenomenological approach: does the study investigate a significant topic and research problem(s) that require qualitative knowledge of

lived-experiences? The research questions for this project bear similar characteristics with this question, further justifying the choice of the phenomenology qualitative research approach in conducting this study.

Since this research seeks to understand the experiences of WLBP among CAS within the context of gender roles and precarious work, the phenomenology approach suits the purpose of this study. Though I use general qualitative analytic methods, I am focused on the idea of lived experience. I present the personal accounts of male and female CAS regarding their experiences of WLBP by exploring the boundary-management strategies that they use to integrate and/or separate their work and family responsibilities.

### **4.3 Participants**

Participant recruitment for this study was purposeful and conducted at the same time as the data analysis. The logic and power of purposeful sampling depends on selecting information-rich cases whose investigation will provide more insight into addressing the concerns of the research questions (Patton, 2002). In purposeful sampling, the researcher collects some data, analyzes the data and then determines the next type of participant to seek out. This iterative process continues until saturation is reached. Merriam (2009) explains that data saturation occurs at the point where further data collection and/or data analysis are unnecessary seeing that no new themes or categories are emerging.

Purposeful sampling facilitates variations within the sample group and also allows for maximum variation sampling. A maximum variation sample (also known as maximum heterogeneity) is a special kind of purposeful sampling that can also act as a representative of a random sample (Dennis, 2004). This sampling type aims at capturing and describing the essential themes that cut across a large segment of the research participants (Patton, 2002). For smaller

sample sizes, achieving heterogeneity can be a daunting task since individual cases could be so dissimilar from each other. However, the maximum variation sampling technique turns this weakness into a strength by applying the following logic: any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest to the research in ways that add value in capturing the fundamental shared experiences of the research participants (Patton, 2002).

To attain maximum variation, I was interested in finding out the views of various CASs as much as possible. I, therefore, attempted to achieve an equal representation of both male and female CAS. I also sought variations among the sample group in terms of (a) differences in the life stages, i.e., early-, mid-, or advanced-life stage (b) differences in the career stages, i.e., beginner-, mid-, or late-career stage (c) differences in marital status, i.e., single, married, divorced, or in a relationship, as well as (d) differences in the family structure, i.e., participants with dependents or without dependents – this includes having children or elderly dependents. Using female CAS as an example, I wanted to interview married female CAS versus female CAS who were single or not married; female CAS who have a child (or children) that were below the age of 18 years old versus the female CAS who did not; female CAS in their advanced career stages versus the ones who were not.

Since I sought participants who were extreme in different ways, my participants included individuals who were average in other ways. In turn, I was likely not to miss out on different groups that made up a high proportion of the sample since average respondents were automatically included.

Participants were recruited with the help of emails and recruitment posters (Appendixes 6 and 7 respectively) that I sent to Area Chairs, Heads of Departments, and the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA). Area Chairs, Heads of Departments, and ULFA went

on to provide this information to potential participants who then contacted me via email. The invitation package included a cover letter (Appendix 4) and a consent form (Appendix 5). I recruited English-speaking CAS who were over the age of 18, and currently work here at the University of Lethbridge as either sessional instructors, post-doctoral fellows or contract instructors/researchers, respectively.

#### **4.4 Data Collection**

The primary data collection method for this research was from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth analysis of research participants' experiences of WLBP, and how they make sense of them (Dearnley, 2005; Merriam, 2009). The interview questions were followed by probes and requests for more details where necessary. These interviews began by asking participants to provide information on standard demographic characteristics such as their age, preferred gender role identity, highest educational qualification, precarious employment category, and the total number of children or dependents. Interviews were conducted at a location and time convenient to the participants and lasted for about sixty minutes. They were recorded and later transcribed using Voice Notepad (a speech-to-text recognition computer software).

The interview questionnaire (Appendix 9) included a blend of direct, semi-structured, and open-ended questions. Examples of direct questions that I used include 'what work-life balance programs do you or have you used here at the university?' and, 'what strategies do you use to separate your work and family life?' Some open-ended questions that were used include, 'how would you describe your current job position, is it precarious, or not?'; 'tell me how your gender role influences your view of job security here at the university?'; 'tell me about a time when your work here impacted your family life'; and 'tell me about a time when your family life impacted

your work here'. My questions provided participants with the platform to describe their experiences of WLBP in precarious employment within the context of their gender roles.

To test the effectiveness of my interview questionnaire, pilot interviews were conducted with two MSc. graduate research assistants to evaluate how well they understood the questions in the interview questionnaire, as well as to determine how well the questionnaire addressed my research questions. Data from the pilot interviews were not included in my final sample since they were intended only for the purpose of testing the effectiveness of my interview questionnaire.

The data obtained during the pilot interview enabled me to reconstruct the interview questionnaire in a manner that enhanced the logic, understanding, and flow of the interview questions. For instance, the initial questionnaire included questions such as 'do you think that your gender role influences your use of WLBP here at the university' and 'is your work here at the university precarious'. These evolved into open-ended questions such as 'how does your gender role influence the choice of work-life balance programs that you use presently/or have used in the past?' and 'how do feel about your current job security here at the university?'

Finally, this study adheres to the Human Subject Research Committee Ethical Standards of The University of Lethbridge by ensuring that participants' self-selected pseudonyms were used to maintain their anonymity. Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2000) suggest that the use of pseudonyms help to protect the identity of participants in the published outcomes of a study.

#### **4.5 Data Analysis**

I analyzed the data that I collected for my study in a multi-step, iterative fashion using thematic analysis techniques. This technique identified patterned meaning across a dataset. The purpose of this technique is to identify patterns of meaning across the dataset in ways that

addressed each research question (Grbich, 2007). I used NVivo - a Qualitative Data Analysis software computer program, to identify and code the data in an open-ended fashion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Doing so enabled me to identify ongoing patterns and also recognize underlying themes within a single account as well as across all accounts (Blaikie, 2000).

I conducted a pre-analysis of each interview transcript along with its digital recording to ensure that the transcript captured everything that was said correctly. To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of my research participants, I edited all identifying information in the transcript and observation notes that could be traceable to any of them. I noted, and then recorded, any identified initial themes and/or passages that I considered to be interesting within the context of the proposed research questions. Afterward, in preparation for the next phase of data analysis, I imported the transcribed interview into NVivo.

As outlined by Giorgi's (2009) procedures for phenomenological studies, I began by following the stories of the participants with an openness to all details. In the second step, I differentiated segments of each participant's response that were applicable to the research questions especially those whose contents lend themselves to further meaningful analytic reflection. In the third step, I examined what the meanings in each unit revealed and created categories and nodes where I grouped common ideas.

I was iterative and flexible throughout this process as I went through several rounds of coding and redefining the codes to capture the essence that the data was showing me. In the fourth step, I organized my findings into a structural whole. I achieved this by using a schematic diagram to show how the emerging themes (along with their corresponding subcategories) were linked with one another. The schematic representation also acted as a mind map to guide my thought process and analysis in a manner that rings true to other researchers. There were

instances when I had to collapse some themes and subthemes because they lacked the size to lend themselves to a further analytic reflection that addressed the concerns of my research questions. To accommodate this, I merged the collapsed themes with existing ones to form a broader category that made more sense to me (since they could enable further analysis) and this gave rise to the four main themes that will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

#### **4.6 Maintaining Rigor**

Consistent with qualitative research methods, the measure of research quality is assessed through authenticity. “Authenticity, rather than reliability, is often the issue since the aim of such research is usually to gather an 'authentic' understanding of the research participants' experiences” (Seale & Silverman, 1997, p. 380). In ensuring rigor, this research adopted the general analytical procedures for phenomenological studies outlined by Giorgi (2009) as follows: (1) reading for a sense of the whole; (2) differentiating the data into meaningful units; (3) reflecting on the psychological significance of each unit, and (4) clarifying the psychological structure(s) of the phenomenon. Essentially, I paid careful attention to the conceptualization of the whole interview questionnaire as well as the manner in which the data was collected, analyzed and interpreted. This was carried out in a way that ensured that the insights and conclusions can resonate with other researchers, practitioners, as well as the reader.

While I was unable to have a second researcher conduct a concurrent analysis independently, I periodically provided the transcript of the data and emerging nodes from my analysis to my thesis supervisor for review and discussion. This was another way that I maintained rigor in the course of conducting this research.

Since the qualitative research method relies more on the human instrument for collecting its data (Merriam, 2009), I spent adequate time in collecting the data and completed a



comprehensive analysis of each interview before going to the next one. Such a systematic approach made it possible for me to know which areas to probe further and also enabled me to recognize when I had attained saturation. In analyzing the data, I used NVivo computer software as a tool to organize and categorize emerging themes. Using NVivo ensured a systematic analysis of representative instances of data (Weitzman & Miles, 1995). Not only did the use of this software allow for a close examination of the data, but it also enhanced effective data management (Reid, 1992) which, in turn, enhanced the rigor of the study (Seale, 2008).

The data analysis was conducted for units of meaning, rather than individual words since this also ensured that the emerging themes appropriately captured contextual information that could influence the interpretation of the transcribed data. Using a schematic diagram as a mind map, the emerging categories were linked to allow the reader to visualize how the categories work together (see Figure 2). I also ensured that the emerging themes were presented in a logical way that other investigators could agree that the themes made sense in light of the data. In essence, the emerging themes were sufficiently precise to enable independent analysts to arrive at similar results when the same data is examined (Seale & Silverman, 1997).

To ensure that I correctly represented what was said by the participants, I conducted respondent validations with some respondents (four respondents in total) in the course of analyzing the data. This allowed me to clear up ambiguities and to also confirm that I was adequately representing what they said. McNiff (1988) suggests that doing so enhances the validity of the findings since the research participants are able to confirm the meaning of what they have said. More so, it gives them the opportunity to withdraw comments that they appear not to be comfortable with, although no such scenario occurred in this research. I wrote my observations (Appendix 10) and also kept an audit trail (Appendix 11) of the key decisions that I

took in the course of conducting this research. This instrument is useful in enabling the reader to authenticate the findings of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by following the audit trail to see the key decisions that were made in helping me arrive at the conclusions that are presented in the final chapter of this thesis.

Another way that qualitative researchers maintain rigor is by thinking reflexively about their role in the research and their beliefs about the topics under investigation. I have experiences and beliefs that could influence how I understand and interpret the information provided by my participants and have considered them as I have conducted my research. First, I am an outsider to this participant group in many ways. I am not an academic working in a post-secondary institution, although I aspire to become one since I look forward to obtaining a Ph.D. in the near future. Second, I do have experience with precarious. As an international student here in Canada, I have been employed in precarious jobs in order to support myself financially during the course of my studies here at the University of Lethbridge. These precarious jobs have come with low wages, poor working conditions, fluctuating work schedules and no guaranteed work hours.

With respect to WLBP, I believe that having unlimited access to WLBP is important to my overall well-being and ability to balance my work, school, and family demands. For me, these programs are important since they enable me to achieve a higher level of psychological and health stability, e.g., I currently use the University's gym since I am able to access this facility based on my status here as a graduate student. In my experience, it is more difficult to use WLBP while in precarious work since I do not enjoy the flexibility of managing my WLBP, let alone, having the freedom to choose which jobs to accept or decline. Alongside undertaking precarious work to earn sufficient income to support myself each semester, having limited access

to resources affects my ability to practice a more effective WLB. As such, managing the boundaries between my work and non-work domains appear daunting since such demarcations seem blurred.

I also think that it is unfair how organizations treat professionals with advanced degrees who are in precarious positions since I believe that such persons have sacrificed a lot to achieve the educational qualifications that they have. As such, these individuals deserve fair treatment and better remuneration at work, regardless of their gender role affiliations. Moreover, as a married man coming from a traditional dual-parent family, with family dependents and relatives that rely on me for financial support, I identify with a male-role and my parents both worked outside of the home until their retirement. As a result, I believe that both parents should be gainfully employed. As a married man with dependents, although I come from a traditional culture where people who identify as non-binary are not easily accepted, my educational and professional exposure has equipped me with the ability to prevent such outcomes from influencing how I interact with people who are not married, do not have dependents, or identify themselves as non-binary.

Finally, I recognize that I am more comfortable thinking about research as an objective search for truth, but feel that the qualitative research (in this case, phenomenology) does not seek an objective reality. Instead, this approach to qualitative analysis seeks to describe the researcher's authentic understanding of research participants' experiences even when such experiences cannot be verified.

## **CHAPTER 5: RESULTS**

In this chapter, I begin with a brief description of the research participants. This is closely followed by an in-depth description of the four emerging themes: precarious work; support and performance; gendered aspects of academia; and precarious workers' utilization of WLBP's.

### **5.1 Description of the Research Participants**

Altogether, ten contract academic staff (CAS) at the University of Lethbridge were involved in this research - six of which identified their gender roles as females and four of which identified their gender roles as males respectively. Accordingly, the results of this research will be reported using male and female to reflect the gender roles requested by the research participants. Although I was able to achieve good variation in terms of gender roles, age, marital status and nature/number of dependents, I was unable to find a post-doctoral fellow willing to participate in the study. Table 3 summarizes the participants' demographic information. Appendix 10 shows my observation notes regarding each research participant. The results are reported using the participants' preferred pseudonyms. Five potential participants withdrew their intention to participate in the research on the grounds that their schedule could no longer permit them to do so.

Three participants were between 25 and 34 years old, five participants were between 35 and 44 years old, two participants were between 45 and 54 years old. Two female participants were not yet married, two other female participants were living in a cohabitation relationship, and the remaining six participants were married. Four participants reported that they did not have any child or elderly dependents while six participants reported having at least one child or elderly dependent(s). Six participants hold a master's degree while the remaining four hold a doctorate degree.

**Table 3**

Research Participants' Demographic Information

Participant's pseudonym	Gender		Highest completed education			Job type		Average weekly work hours	Key financial contributor in existing relationship		Age (years)					Number of years on the job			Marital status			Number of dependents	
	female	male	MSc.	PhD	post doc. fellow	sess. instr.	contract instr.		self	spouse/partner	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	>54	<1 yr	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	single	married	co-habitation	children	elderly
Al		X	X			X		8	X				X				X	X				2	
Amy	X		X			X		15	X			X					X	X				1	
Cyclist	X			X			X	50	X			X				X		X					
Elaine	X			X			X	40	X			X				X				X			
Leeanne	X		X			X		10	X				X				X	X				3	
Olen		X	X				X	10	X			X				X		X				4	
Pilot	X		X				X	10	X			X				X				X			
River		X	X				X	40	X			X				X		X				2	
Rose	X			X			X	35	X			X			X			X					
Sportsman		X	X				X	40	X			X				X		X				1	

In terms of their type of employment, seven participants are contracted instructors, while the remaining three participants are sessional instructors. Four participants work for less than ten hours per week here, one female participant works for greater than 10-hours but less than 20-hours per week. Four participants work more than 30-hours but less than 40-hours per week and one female participant works more than 40-hours per week.

Regarding their length of stay on the job as CAS here at the University of Lethbridge, three participants have been working here for more than ten years, three participants (all male) have been working here for between three and five years, while four participants (all female) have been working here for less than a year.

## 5.2 Themes

Data analysis revealed that four main themes seemed to resonate deeply among research participants. These themes include precarious work in academia; support and performance; gendered aspects of academia; and precarious workers' use of WLBP's in academia. Figure 2 shows the emerging themes and their subcategories.

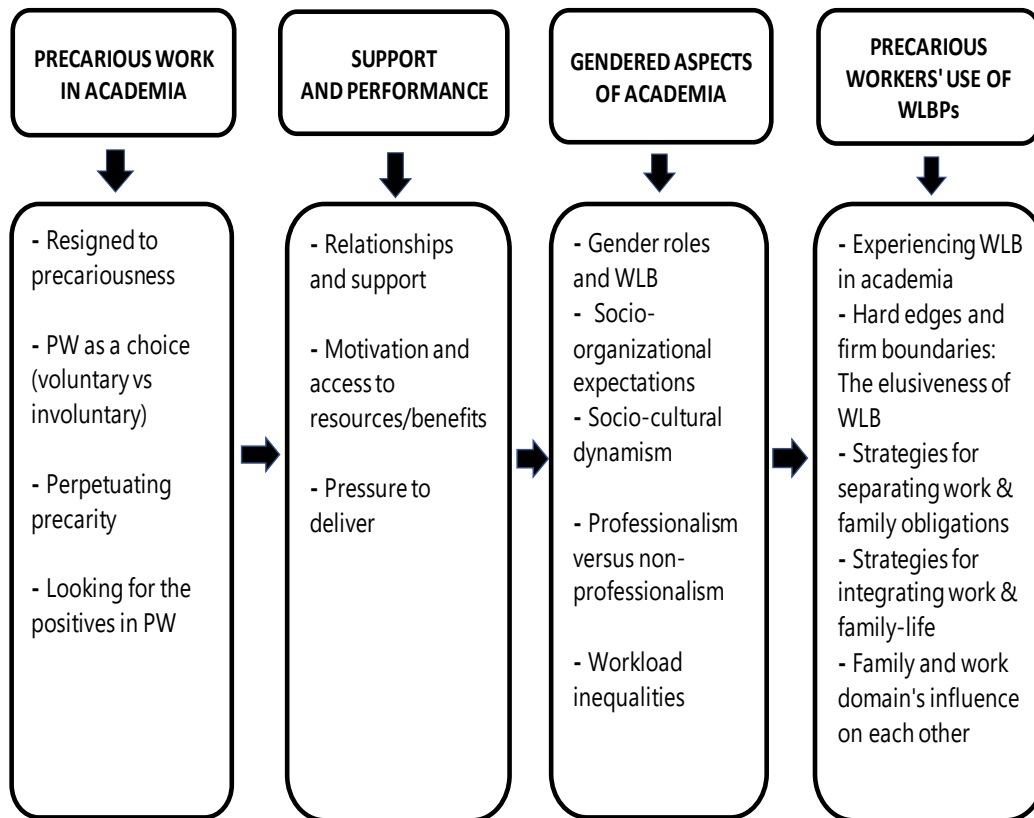


Figure 2: The main themes and subcategories

## **Theme One: Precarious Work**

This theme shows participants' unique experiences of precarious work. It includes the following subcategories: resigned to precariousness, precariousness as a forced choice, looking for the positives in precarious work, and perpetuating precarity. Generally, there were few gender role differences in how respondents viewed precarious work as being stressful and insecure especially in ways that affected their ability to plan ahead. The seeming consensus was that the uncertainties that accompany precarious work permeate other aspects of life in ways that affect overall job performance and job quality, as well as the individual's wellbeing.

### **(a) Resigned to precariousness**

The similarity in participants' responses was evident in the sense that they considered their employment as CAS here at the University of Lethbridge to be precarious. Their unique definitions of precarious work often revolved around factors such as job insecurity, level of organizational support, limited access to resources and benefits, lack of equal pay, and workload discrepancies. Essentially, whereas some CAS explained their understanding of precarious work from the viewpoint of job insecurity, others described the same subject from the standpoint of limited access to resources that were available to perform their jobs successfully.

In speaking to the gendered aspect of precarious work, participants described their understanding of precarious work in terms of either its cause or impact on their work and family lives. Whereas the male respondents were more likely to describe precarious work from a cause/source viewpoint, female respondents described it from an impact perspective. For example, one respondent explained her understanding of job precarity as:

The lack of suitable working conditions where you don't have all you need to perform your job successfully. In academia, people in precarious work are supposed to work as if

they were full-time professionals but on the other hand, you don't have all the benefits associated with full-tenure. (Rose)

Al, on the other hand, explained his understanding of precarious work as “the economic/political reality since funding and spending are crucial to educational institutions”. Essentially, whereas Rose feels the impact of precarity on her ability to do her job, Al explains the source of the precarity. Rose expressed the difficulty she experiences at doing her job. In her opinion, such an outcome was as a result of the unsuitable working conditions confronting precarious employees. Her view also suggests that there is a demand for CAS to do a similar amount of work that fully-tenured faculty perform, even without the full benefits that the latter group of individuals may usually get.

Moreover, Al seems resigned to the concept of job precarity as a fact of life – a view also shared by Olen. Al goes on to highlight the role of adequate funding in academia and how such a factor was important in shaping job precarity in tertiary institutions. This suggests that the ability to provide better working conditions for staff in the university is contingent upon having the resources or means to do so.

In contrast, there was a difference between the views of respondents with a spouse/partner who was the primary breadwinner and those whose spouses/partners were not. Participants that held the former view described precarious work as a choice that also enabled them to support their spouses financially:

It mostly comes down to the fact that my partner has a permanent full-time job and makes a lot more money than I have on my part-time jobs. Earning is a part of it, it's a big part of it. I spend more time at home with the kids. I'm the one who was more patient at 3 o'clock in the morning, when someone was sick. (Amy)



I recognize that my wife makes more income than I do even though I contribute to the family's upkeep in other ways. This stems from my ownership as a man who does most of the chores around the house and functions as an instructor here. (Al)

In my family, I'm the breadwinner but that's mostly by the choice of my wife and me, she wanted to be at home with our kids to support them in that way. (Olen)

Participants' comments above suggest that income plays a huge part in determining who takes on the role of the breadwinner within the family. For both male and female participants whose spouses/partners earned higher incomes, it appears that beliefs about "breadwinner" roles can make accepting precarious jobs more palatable for the spouse/partner with lesser income. Moreover, such an outcome does not diminish the significance of their contributions to the upkeep of the family since they can provide support in other ways.

Although stress and fear were also reoccurring ideas among the respondents' experiences of job precarity for most female respondents, resignation to precariousness was more evident, whereas control seemed to be the relevant concern for the male respondents. In spite of the fact that four participants (Amy, Rose, Leeanne, and Elaine) maintained the idea that females were more willing to undertake precarious work by choice when they made the following comments:

Women are working more of these precarious positions. You don't necessarily get hired into these full-time positions. I definitely think that there is something to males in my particular field, I think it is also a highly gendered layer. (Elaine)

I think for many men they would not have stayed as sessional instructors for 10 years. I think they would have looked to have a more permanent kind of work. I think I'm a little bit more willing to do it because women are not seen. (Leeanne)

only one male respondent echoed a similar view by saying:

I have a lot of female colleagues and I hear a lot about the inequalities in different jobs even though they still take on these jobs in different situations and so I have to assume that I'm in a very privileged position as a male. We think about precarious labor that it is inherently gendered, right? It is. (River)

From the aforementioned statements, these participants considered precarious work in academia as gendered since men and women did not get similar teaching positions, notably, full-term positions. Their views also suggested that females were more likely to remain as precarious employees than their male counterparts in similar job positions, and as such, women may be more inclined to undertake precarious work than men.

(b) Precariousness as a choice

Some respondents (Amy, Elaine, Sportsman, Leeanne, and Olen) said that undertaking precarious work was a personal choice. Addressing the idea that precarious work was by choice, both Amy and Elaine linked their voluntary choice to undertake precarious work with their resignation to precariousness in their own ways. Whereas Amy said that “for me, my current job role is by choice, it certainly has seemed to work out that way”, Elaine said:

Since I finished my Ph.D., I have been doing contract positions. So, primarily working as a sessional before I came here, I was working at multiple institutions, this job seems like that, you know, but again, it's not a permanent position. I have complicated feelings around that. I accepted the offer and moved here.

In Al's opinion, resignation to precarious work was not so much a voluntary choice since such an outcome was forced by an over-abundance of qualified professionals who could fill teaching positions. He maintained that this trend would continue because it is less expensive for universities to hire from this large pool of qualified candidates:

The proliferation of Ph.D. graduates makes it easy for universities to draw from a large resource pool at any given time. Such a dynamic tends to create an overflow of the workforce in this regard. It has become a big issue for universities to find good teachers, such individuals are sought after since they can provide the services at a cheaper rate compared to tenured faculty. (Al)

Although both male and female respondents mentioned their resignation to precariousness as a choice, for some of them (e.g., Amy, Elaine) the choice seemed to be a voluntary decision, whereas for others (e.g., Al), this was not so. Whereas Amy and Elaine's comments above capture the general position of most female respondents who considered their resignation to precariousness to be a voluntary choice, Al's position encapsulates the views of the respondents who mentioned that resignation to precariousness was a forced choice since it was facilitated by external factors beyond their control in ways that seem to perpetuate precariousness (academia was inundated with too many qualified persons with Ph.Ds. and perpetuating precariousness in academia was also justified by academic budgets since the impact of low public funding and the limited access to resources contribute to the growth of precarious work in academia).

#### (c) Perpetuating precarity

According to the participants, in addition to the proliferation of Ph.D. graduates in academia, precarity continues because of other factors that they consider to be the demerits of precarious work. Such factors include the demanding nature of academic work, the high uncertainty occasioned by the insecurities that come with precarious jobs, the exploitation of CAS, the lack of proper funding to universities, and the limited access to resources. These factors, in turn, they said, enhanced a lack of motivation, and could also, facilitate delayed career progression among CAS, as well as restrict their ability to plan for the future.

For instance, both River and Elaine identified the lack of proper funding to universities as

another factor that nurtures the growth of precarious work in academia. Whereas River said:

In my department, there's always a difficulty in terms of financial security and it's always a precarious situation from year-to-year: our enrolments are down, the government has cut our budget, so certain things suffer in that regard.

Elaine on the other hand said:

Based on what I know, the things I've been exposed to don't look good in terms of having my contract being renewed because of some of the issues around the university budget right now, the university is not super-invested in supporting our department right now. So, I think they are feeling a little restricted right now: they don't have a lot of room to move finances around

In describing the exploitation of CAS, both Leeanne and Elaine said:

I think contract staff are more exploited...so they're brought in to fill in for another professor on vacation or study leave. Usually, they bring in somebody like me to teach a very heavy course load because you know they're not getting more funds like they used to...so, they need someone who can teach the courses that other faculty can't teach, they need somebody to start filling those gaps. (Elaine)

I think it could be quite likely that sessional instructors could be asked to do a variety of unpaid labor with no recognition that is unpaid. So, if I'm starting September 1st, I'm not contracted generally before June or July. I am expected to develop a course and have that course prepared for September 1st whether I have a contract or not, and I'm not paid for that preparation. The contract assumes the preparation, but I'm not paid before September 1<sup>st</sup>. And I've had students you know, if I'm teaching in the Fall, I will get student reach me in June asking for the syllabus for September...I'm not contracted in June, I'm not even getting paid and yet there's still an expectation to respond. (Leeanne)

According to these participants, the exploitation of CAS occurs in the form of unpaid/unrecognized labor input. In academia, the expectation is that part-time workers are required to perform unpaid work. Such an outcome facilitates job precarity and also generates

discrepancies in employees' remuneration. Participants also mentioned the perceived job inequalities among employees when they described that the workload of CAS has often been described as unequal, and in some cases, tend to exceed those of full-tenure faculty. As Rose mentioned, women in precarious employment were more likely to face this challenge than their male counterparts (probably as a result of the voluntary resignation to precariousness as discussed earlier?) when she said:

In this department where I work, say 80% of us are women in precarious job positions and so it is quite a workload and the difficulty you know to speculate because most of the people in my situation do not have it easy. (Rose)

Viewing job quality and job performance from the lens of precarious work, five participants (Cyclist, Leeanne, Pilot, Rose, and River) upheld that precarious work does more harm than good. For instance, both Leeanne and River said:

I think that we are not as good as we could be because, to be honest, I'm not as good as I could be because I'm doing the minimum that I can. So if I was a tenured faculty I would feel that I could spend June and July prepping a brand new class or prepping a new way to deliver an old class, but rather, in my case, I would I say I've delivered this class that I'm teaching in September five times before now and I'm not changing a thing - same slides, same assignments, same tests - I'm not going to learn one new thing. (Leeanne)

Since I know that my job here isn't guaranteed, I'm not pushed to give out anything new as much as I would want to, the quality of my output is similar to previous years. (River)

Concerning how precarious work enhanced the uncertainties that CAS experience – most of which are often associated with job insecurity -, whereas Elaine said:

About that job security, I'm always having to worry ahead like where's my next job going to come from... this really affects the quality of what I put out there, so there's always

this underlying feeling of stress... you're always having to think like okay, I have this job for the semester but what's going to happen after that?

Both Olen and River said:

It is very tough to think straight since you know that anything can happen, job security is not there for this kind of job and this affects my ability to plan ahead in advance...it is very disturbing, to say the least. (Olen)

It is not easy working as a CAS since you're likely to be the first one to be asked to leave when the need arises, especially with all these budget cuts, departments are suffering and financially exposed, we're the first ones to be laid-off. (River)

However, Sportsman offered a different view regarding job insecurity when he said:

I am not afraid if I will be kicked out as a result of job insecurity. I don't feel pressure since I do my best and I know what expectations are required of me. I manage my schedule and expectations in a way that I don't feel any form of pressure. I am optimistic that in the end things would work out according to plan. (Sportsman)

Sportsman's view suggests that people see job precarity differently – a fact that rings true among my research participants. Whereas some participants accept job precarity as a fact of life, others view precarity as a choice as a path to a desired future position. Furthermore, Sportsman's comment suggests that there is something important about managing expectations and self-confidence when it comes to job precarity. Expectations management, he claims, is important for all the stakeholders in the employment contract since this enables everyone to understand what is expected of them. More so, this also enables them to measure their level of success in meeting the objectives that have been set from the onset of the contract. Sportsman proposed that doing so can help individuals to prepare themselves to handle disappointments should such outcomes arise.

With regards to how precarious work impacts job control and the ability to plan ahead, five participants (Amy, Elaine, Rose, Pilot and Leeanne) maintained similar views on how the uncertainty that comes with precarious work influences job control and the ability to plan ahead. According to them, the uncertainty that comes with such jobs meant that they did not know what was going to happen in the future. For these five respondents, it was difficult to plan ahead since they did not have control of certain aspects of their work lives (e.g. classroom lecture schedules):

With this kind of work, I don't know what's going to happen next. I mean, on one hand, it is difficult to plan for tomorrow, and on the hand, there are lots of promises that I might be able to stay-on after my current contract is renewed, that has encouraged me to put my effort into other avenues. (Rose)

It is not easy working as a contract staff in a university. It is very tough to think straight and plan ahead in advance since you know that anything can happen. The job security is not there. It is very disturbing, to say the least. (Pilot)

In describing how precarious work facilitates delayed career progression among female CAS compared to their male counterparts, both Leeanne and Rose had different views:

For women academics, only about half of them make it far in their career. It's 50% of them that get promoted while having children. As a woman, anything that you had that was focused on the family would necessarily eliminate a large number of women faculty. On the other hand, male faculty have a higher percentage of having children and progressing in their academic careers. (Leeanne)

I haven't thought about the fact that whether men or women have more chance of getting promoted or getting better working conditions, I think that's not a factor in how people are chosen to stay on as contract sessional staff. (Rose)

These varied opinions among these two respondents suggest that gender roles appear not to determine the career progressions of male and female CAS.

(d) Looking for the positives in precarious work

Some benefits of precarious work that participants mentioned include that it provides an avenue to make additional income, promotes entrepreneurship, as well as offers the freedom to choose other obligations. According to LEEANNE, “I have always held other jobs as well and so the sessional work, I’ve often had more than one job and the sessional work and my Ph.D. work, and raising children”. To this, AMY said:

I take these precarious sorts of contract to afford me that flexibility, because there has to be someone who can drop everything and go to pick up the kids, there has to be someone, and in my relationship, that’s me.

In discussing the flexibility that precarious work provides, participants seemed to recognize that multiple (and often conflicting) demands exist on them. The flexibility that term contracts provide could enable employees in such jobs to control where and how they perform their work. Participants also mentioned that such flexibility tends to promote entrepreneurship since it enables them to maximize other income-earning opportunities:

It seems to be a bit more of an out-of-the current-day situation where finding a 9 to 5 job that's going to have job security for the next 20 or 30 to 40-years isn't as realistic as it used to be. Nowadays, it seems to be more about being your own boss, searching out your next employment opportunity and creating your own career in that respect. (River)

I’m a sessional instructor here at the university. I teach here and I also teach at another institution. I also maintain a part-time job downtown where I do mostly receptionist work. My office job downtown is flexible and I can change my hours every semester to



match my reality, depending on the semester, I do a majority of my prep at home and a majority of my administrative work at the office. (Amy)

Two participants viewed precarious work as a means of gaining financial control:

My one thought is an economic consideration: if I didn't have five dependents, if I didn't have to worry about that, then I would probably have to work less on my other job and more at the university but I have to maintain a full-time job elsewhere so that I can be able to pay all the economic considerations because as a part-time faculty, they treat me fairly I think, but definitely it is not enough to support the family. (Olen)

I decided to work in all these professions so that it affords me the ability to work when I didn't have work in other areas. So, if the educational side of things has a break, then I still have other options. (River)

From the comments above, whereas female respondents mostly identified themselves on the basis of multiple role functions as multi-trackers, male respondents linked their choice to undertake precarious work to economic considerations.

### **Theme Two: Support and Performance**

This theme highlighted how support impacts employees' job and family lives. It includes subcategories such as relationships and support, motivation and access to resources/benefits, as well as the pressure to deliver. It highlighted the multiple intersectionalities that exist between both work and family domains and also described how these factors combine to shape employees' work and family performance in managing their work-family boundaries while meeting their respective professional (lecturing, exam proctoring, grading students' homework, exam and test scripts, administrative work, professional development) and family obligations (providing dependent care for children and elderly parents and relatives, spousal support).

(a) Relationships and support

Describing how precarious work influences family lives, three participants (Elaine, Al, Sportsman), indicated that this type of employment could strain the existing relationship among family members when not managed properly. In this regard, Elaine's words captured their views best when she said:

If I'm being honest, accepting this job impacted my person in so many ways. Last semester was really challenging because I moved here in August and my partner and I didn't make plans to leave each other that suddenly for that long. In fact, I don't think I recognized it at the time but I think it had an impact on both of us.

As Elaine described, although they have no children of their own at the moment, the sudden need to relocate here also meant that she would have to leave her partner behind in another city. For over 4-months, they were physically living over 1,100 km apart. Moreover, their financial situation, as well as their demanding separate work schedules, did not make it possible for them to visit more frequently.

According to Elaine, this was the first time she has had to be physically separated from her partner for that long. They had both agreed that she should take on the job in order to help with their financial situation. Making the decision to leave her partner behind in pursuit of this job had a negative impact on Elaine's health, her job performance, as well as their thriving relationship. In her words, this became evident during her first semester here during which she was always complaining about stress and eventually experienced a panic attack during her first semester here.

In addition to family support, six participants (Al, Amy, Elaine, Leeanne, River, and Rose) described how crucial organizational support was in their lives as employees in precarious work. Each of these participants provided examples relating the impact that the supports

provided by Department Chairs had on their ability to manage their work-family boundaries more effectively while in precarious work. Such supports were often in the form of allowing them the chance as employees to schedule their classroom lectures around other non-work obligations as well as supporting childcare at work:

At least given my professional relationship with the Departmental Chair, our conversations are always open and all persons have always been supportive, I'm within a very supportive environment. (Al)

I use baby carriers and I would just go to class and I would teach with the baby on my back, the students didn't seem to mind, I never got negative feedback. I'm very fortunate, what has been the most helpful for me is having an understating Chair of my department who schedules me in such a way that I can make it work with the rest of my life, with my other jobs, and with my family. (Amy)

The significance of support from the workplace and at home was a similar theme among all respondents and did not seem to vary by gender. By describing the importance of having the support of their supervisors in navigating through the ordeals of being in precarious work, the research participants expressed that support plays an important role in their career management, career enhancement, boundary management, as well as their ability to deal with the demands that come with undertaking precarious work.

(b) Motivation and access to resources/benefits

Participants mentioned that full-tenure faculty members usually have the resources that they need to perform their jobs successfully. However, according to them, the twist for CAS was that they had limited access to similar resources. Participants mentioned that such an outcome led to a lack of motivation among employees due to such discrepancies. Their comments point us to the uneven distribution of resources as well as the uneven workload distribution between CAS

and full-tenure academic staff here at the university. Both Leeanne and Rose maintained a similar position on this:

Why I don't have access to the library privileges all of the time is ridiculous to me. When I am prepping a class in June or July for September, I don't have access to Moodle...so, I am prepping courses without articles, without access to updated journals...I don't have an endless supply of money, I don't have the ability to pay \$35 for a journal article... so again, the lack of access to resources significantly reduces our motivation and capacity to be good instructors. (Leeanne)

My position here and the fact that I don't have all the resources that I need is worrisome. I don't always feel motivated to do more since I don't have the tools to do so even though my workload can be compared to that of a fully-tenured faculty. (Rose)

Olen expressed dissatisfaction that no substantial benefits accrued to CAS or their family members if they did not carry the workload that comes with being employees in precarious employment when he said:

With the way that the contracts work with the university, if I teach one class, I'm considered a sessional lecturer and I have no benefits. On the other hand, if I teach two classes, I'm considered an instructor and I'm now part of the Collective Agreement and there are benefits. So, as an example, my wife takes classes at the university, so one of the benefits of being part of the collective agreement is that family members can have half-price tuitions, but the next semester, if I don't have that many number of classes, she loses that benefit.

Olen's comments above say something about the inconsistency in benefits as well as a lack of benefits. His statements describe that the inconsistency in benefits are due to his prevailing contract status during a given semester in the sense that his family members' ability to access any benefit is tied to what role he occupies within a particular semester.

Since CAS seem not to have control over the number of classes that they will teach each semester beforehand, it makes it difficult, or nearly impossible to determine which benefits they (or their family members) will access. And in the event that they do access these benefits, how long they do so is also influenced by their length of stay in such teaching positions.

Although all the research participants described the impact that the limited access to resources/benefits has on their ability to enhance their job quality and performance, gender roles did not seem to impact their experiences and motivation. According to them, such an outcome (i.e., the limited access to benefits/resources) failed to provide the much-needed motivation for them to perform their jobs better and also diminished their desire to enhance their job quality. Their comments conveyed the message that they felt isolated by the university in ways that suggest that they were not included in the grand scheme of things (feelings of non-inclusiveness).

(c) Pressure to deliver

In addition to their teaching jobs, CAS are required to perform administrative tasks as assigned to them by their respective departments (mentoring students, proctoring exams). In most cases, for the CAS in these precarious positions, achieving full tenure often comes with a condition to do so within a period of probation. All of these, combined with their professional development requirements as well as meeting their family commitments, drive tension and enhance WLC among such employees.

Such dynamics tend to create a pressure to deliver on the CAS since their employment contracts often include a condition that requires them to accomplish such feats within the stipulated timeframe. In extreme cases, and more so, depending on the organizational culture, one's failure to achieve the set conditions within the probationary period could lead to the

termination of employment especially for the employees who are continuously on the sessional/precarious employment wheel. Cyclist echoed the views of three other participants (Al, Pilot and Leeanne) when she linked the pressure to deliver concern to career progression management when she said:

So not getting a promotion kind of indicates that you're a failure, that you're not good enough for this particular career which if you think of it, can be a hard thing to take because you've dedicated almost 5-6 years of Ph.D. and then another 5-6 of years working towards a tenure-track...and so, the pressure of this, the idea that this might happen to you creates a lot of psychological distress. You have to realize that your promotion and tenureship will be based on the number of papers that you publish. So, if I want to be tenured in 5 years, I need to work on a lot of research now...so if I were not under that pressure maybe I could preserve my energy and time for some outside-of-work activities.

Furthermore, respondents mentioned how academic jobs create challenging situations for employees who are primary care-givers. The respondents who provide dependent-care or spousal obligations drew attention to the important role that family structure and support play in their lives as employees in precarious work. According to them, this is particularly important in determining the amount of flexibility that was available to employees in precarious employment. Speaking along these lines, Leeanne commented on the pressure that comes with the level of responsibility outside of work when she said:

I took a year off my Ph.D. and reduced my teaching here when one of my sons was not well...my son who doesn't have a learning disability needs me once in a while, but he certainly doesn't need me for eight hours of work.

Caregiving obligations lead to yet another point that is closely related to this concern – that being the number and nature of dependents within a particular family unit. As the

participants described, together with their family structure, these factors were personal circumstances that also affected them, especially the ones with dependents or care-giving responsibilities. On the other hand, four participants (Cyclist, Elaine, Pilot, and Rose) mentioned that precarious work takes the pressure off them since they are not required to perform any dependent care seeing that they have no children or elderly dependents.

Respondents commented that working in academia was demanding in itself in a way that bringing precarious work into the mix tends to exacerbate the complexities involved with precarious work. According to them, the demanding nature of academia itself tends to enhance the stress and pressure that come with working within such an industry and also tends to affect how employees within this industry live-up to their non-work obligations.

From Amy's comments that "shuttling between the college, my office, being a mom and dropping the kids off at daycare, and at school becomes very challenging", to Leeanne's who said:

And there is an expectation nowadays: that people should respond very quickly. So, if I get a text message from someone at work or if I get an email from a student, there is an expectation that I will respond, no matter what time of day.

respondents described the demanding nature of working in academia and also pointed to the need to effectively manage both the short- and long-term expectations of the relevant stakeholder. According to them, doing this could help to minimize the degree of expectation on CAS.

### **Theme Three: Gendered Aspects of Academia**

This theme showed participants' understanding of gender roles within academia. It includes subcategories such as gender roles and WLB, socio-organizational expectations, socio-cultural dynamism, professionalism versus non-professionalism, as well as the workload inequalities that exist in academia.

#### **(a) Gender roles and WLB**

Some participants (Amy, Leeanne, River, and Rose) were interested in discussing the gendered aspects of WLB more than others. For instance, Amy said that “men are quite more often identified with their professional lives than with their personal lives and so they might prioritize that professional life more, whether they choose to or that’s forced upon them”.

However, River and Rose offered a slightly different view of this. According to River, “I would like to think that if it were a female in my exact situation with the same kind of work-life balance that it would play out pretty much the same...I would like to think that”. He opined that regardless of their gender roles, men and women faced similar WLB issues. Perhaps, his opinion stems from the fact that he is single with no dependents?

Rose (who is also single) upheld a similar notion when she said:

I mean it's not special even though it's influenced by the fact that I am a woman, I don't cook, I do obviously take care of my own laundry...which may be a typical experience for many women all over the world...one thing, and I'm not sure of about this is whether it has to do with a gender role or the fact that I'm single.

In explaining gender roles and work-life balance, Amy explained that such an association can be influenced by the level of spousal support that an individual receives from their partner/spouse.

Her view on this was captured as follows:



My partner works more hours than I do at a paid job, I work more hours than my partner at our family managing our home, and it balances out. I do all the dishes and my partner does all the laundry and we find a way...so if there's a sick kid, I will work in the morning and be at home with the kid in the afternoon and she will be at home with the kid in the morning and work in the afternoon. We try as much as we can to allow each other the ability to get our work done.

(b) Socio-organizational expectations

Generally, participants understood gender roles to mean the way males and females are expected to function within society. Within this context, participants spoke along the lines of socio-organizational expectations, and cultural dynamism. Explaining socio-organizational expectations as the expectations required of men and women by society and the organizations to which they belong, whereas Rose mentioned that “for me it's like a mould within a framework where each gender has to fit in, it's a set of boundaries defined by society regardless of which gender one identifies with”, Sportsman on the other hand described it as “the differences between men and women responsibilities as seen by the society”.

Expanding on this, Elaine said:

At least within our social structure, the notion is that men and women take on particular roles based on their gender or perceived sexual identity. This is important since it helps you to know how appropriate roles facilitate certain functions within society.

Participants also mentioned the dynamic nature of gender roles when they commented that society's views of gender roles have undergone several changes over the years. In their opinion, the gender role concept seems blurred due to the influence of other factors such as the changes in one's level of education, culture, as well as the socio-organizational expectations. For instance, one participant commented that:

I think that there is some complication with the fact that I'm the only woman in the department. I find every term that people come to talk to me about unplanned pregnancies in ways that they don't do with male faculty members who have told me that no student comes to tell them that. They do come to tell me because I'm a woman. And it may be just that I have that face of a mother, I look approachable on these matters but I certainly get the bulk of those kinds of crazy requests as opposed to other members of the faculty. (Leanne)

The afore-mentioned statements reflect the general consensus of the participants to the socio-organizational expectations of gender roles. According to them, these expectations also give rise to society's and organization's perceptions of gender obligations among males and females, and academia is no exception.

#### (c) Socio-cultural Dynamism

Describing how culture shaped their practice of work-life balance, participants generally based their descriptions on the premise that the practice of WLB occurred within various cultural contexts. According to them, in order to understand how concepts such as culture and gender roles impact their practice of WLB, one must view these against the backdrop of the contexts/environments within which they occurred.

To this end, the research participants pointed out two kinds of cultural settings within which they utilized WLBP in practicing WLB as follows: organizational and individual culture, respectively. Whereas organizational culture has to do with how a company (and those within it) view/respond to WLB issues, individual culture has to do with an individual's perspective of WLB. Participants maintained that an organization's culture regarding WLB should be seen in its human resource management practices as well as in the company's willingness to implement family-friendly practices. On the other hand, participants went on to say that individuals' cultures showed themselves in the form of their values, principles and belief systems and these

were often defined by factors such as a person's education, income, place of birth, upbringing, and religion.

With respect to individual culture, both River and Cyclist had this to say:

Historically, in my understanding, gender roles would be assigned to home-life versus work-life. If you are looking at the 1940s and 50s then the man is the one that's going out to work whereas the women remained at home to take care of the kids etc. (River)

In my home country, it is women who are caregivers, and men provide for the family. I think my view of WLB definitely comes from my upbringing. I think because I'm the first child in the family, my dad has never treated me as a girl in a female gender role. I didn't grow up thinking that I should be working a job and also be the mother of five children. I grew up thinking that I need to find a calling in my life that will be fulfilling my days. (Cyclist)

Although both participants talked about the role of their individual culture in their respective understanding of gender roles and WLB, Cyclist's comments showed how a family's culture on gender roles can differ from the larger national view. In her words, even though it was the acceptable practice that the female child should be encouraged to follow in the steps that were traditionally acceptable for women as home-keepers and care-providers in the home, her parents chose to raise her otherwise.

On the other hand, with respect to organizational culture, Leeanne said:

So, I'll tell you other ways that they accommodate me: they'll say 'we want you to teach, what time period would you want to teach, what would work for you? And so, I get the sort of primo position of 9 to 12, and then I balance that with my other work duties, and with my home-life and I get first dibs on that. Now, that's because I have a really supportive department. I know other departments who say 'we need somebody at 3 in the afternoon and I don't care if you have children to pick up from school, do you want the

job or do you not want the job? I have not faced that. I don't know if that's a broad thing across the university but I do know that's my department.

Leeanne pointed to the ways that her department assisted her in maintaining effective boundary management practices between her work and family responsibilities. Her comments showed that by providing her with various options on the teaching times that were available to her, her department provided her with the support that makes it possible for her to structure her time and availability in ways that minimized the occurrence of conflicting schedules.

Respondents attributed the dynamic change in society's view of gender roles to the increasing influx of women into the workforce. According to them, as more women aspire into higher managerial positions within the workplace, they are likely to earn similar income with their male counterparts. This yields the outcome where more women are taking up managerial positions in the workplace and hence, earning similar salaries with their partners/spouses. To these participants, gender roles have become blurred in today's society since what we expect of men and women are constantly changing in the workplace and at home.

Describing how the society's views on gender roles have evolved over the years, both Al and Pilot had this to say:

Save for the general expectation that women are to take care of the home and men should be the breadwinners, which is not the case here in Canada now. As you know, we pride ourselves on being an egalitarian society and we advocate for gender equality among men and women. (Al)

Even today, more men are now becoming stay-at-home dads and women are becoming managers. I know that that was usually not the case but it is becoming so now even as more women have joined the work-force and so this trend has changed over the years. (Pilot)

Generally, the research participants described culture as the way a certain group of people behave. For them, a society's culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the norms and beliefs of its citizens. According to them, this, in turn, helps to define behaviour and role expectations of the individuals or citizens within the society, i.e., the male and female gender roles. Elaborating on this, Leeanne shared a story about her struggle with gender roles and identity when she described the impact of culture on her behaviour:

I think culture is involved. My husband wasn't born in Canada; his culture has certain constructs of gender roles that go a long way back. I have often had difficulty identifying whether what he is saying or doing is based on culture or based on gender. For instance, I come home and I'm tired but I'm not hungry, and so I'm not going to cook, even though I'll be hungry in half-an-hour, but then I'll start cooking because he's already hungry. So, I start cooking before I'm hungry. Is that because I'm Canadian, is it because I'm a woman or is it because I have a very high appetite? Or is that a personal thing? (Leeanne)

Olen offered a slightly different view on this:

I don't mind saying that in this field, it's very male-dominant. I think I've had opportunities that some women might not have had. I think that perhaps my gender plays a role in the type of clientele I've been able to have. I've had clients that have expressed a clear preference for a male practitioner.

Both Leeanne and Olen seemed to recognize that culture plays a role in shaping their respective views of gender roles. However, whereas Leeanne seems to talk more about how it reflects on the way she behaves, Olen seems to see that it affects how others behave. Leeanne's comments suggest that she struggles with her own identity and how these factors (work, culture, and relationship expectations) combine in changing her behaviour. Also, Leeanne seems to be struggling more with this than Olen as he 'doesn't mind' saying it – which in a sense, could be a subtle way of saying that he accepts it.

In contrast to her upbringing in her country of origin, one participant mentioned that she adopts a different notion of gender roles in her nuclear family today. This participant attributed the reshaping of her thinking, in part, to her university education. Her view on this was captured in the following words:

Where I grew up, there is a very strict distinction that men earn money and bring money to the family and women - they raise the family...they prefer the kids, they stay at home, they take care of them or they take care of the elderly...with my spouse, however, we're both egalitarian in terms of our gender roles in the family...I graduated from university and my viewpoint changed...I am now married and we both see each other as equals in the family. He does the domestic chores and so do I, it really depends on which of us has the chance to accomplish the task quicker. (Cyclist)

Offering a similar view, Leeanne and Sportsman agreed that education was a pivotal factor in addressing how people viewed their gender roles and how such narratives evolved with time.

Their opinions were captured in the following words:

I think it's more an issue of class and education. My husband doesn't have an education, so when it comes to anything educational, he defers to me on that. The fact that I have an education, I see my life as being my job and it's bigger. (Leeanne)

I'm married to a person who has the same educational experience (she decided to this kind of family relationship with me where we are much more egalitarian). Higher education was an important education for me...certain aspects of our growing up can be traced to our exposure to higher education and that has helped us to make well-informed decisions. (Sportsman)

These comments show that for these participants, the exposure that formal education affords tends to affect how individuals think and view themselves. Generally, the research participants agreed that quality education offers access to good information in ways that can enable them as individuals to make informed decisions on the issues confronting them in their daily lives.

(d) Professionalism versus non-professionalism

Regarding the gendered nature of academia, Leeanne drew a comparison between being viewed as a professional versus being viewed as a non-professional when she said:

The fact that I take my child into a classroom could be viewed as being unprofessional. If I were to say in class that I need to end the lesson ten minutes earlier because I've got to meet my son to take him to the doctor, that is seen as unprofessional. I think that then it becomes gendered and I think because women are potentially more likely to do that, then they are more likely to be seen as a being unprofessional because professional is separating those things. It's possible that I could be seen as unprofessional by my colleagues and even by my students if I were to integrate those things.

Leeanne's position seems to promote the idea that universities still need to do more in order to accommodate the needs of female faculty members. According to her, institutions can do so by providing their employees with the kind of support and information that enable them to integrate their family caregiving responsibilities together with their job obligations in ways that responsibilities are not neglected. Her comments show that other persons (possibly their male colleagues) view the female staff experience as being unprofessional when they blur the boundaries between work and gender role responsibilities. On the other hand, her comments also seem to suggest that their male staff do not undergo similar scrutiny should they blur these boundaries, more so, since they would expect their female colleagues to draw a line between both domains.

Expanding on the perceived unprofessionalism towards female faculty, Leeanne mentioned that compared to their male colleagues, female faculty members are more likely to bring their caregiving obligations to work. Based on their gender role as mothers and primary caregivers in the family, blurring the boundaries between work and family responsibilities can

also be viewed from a negative position where being a female in academia could mean that they are having to choose one task at the expense of another.

In describing how difficult it was to practice WLB as a female, a mother, and a dependent care provider, Leeanne's emphasized the impact of blurring the boundaries between work and family responsibilities when she said:

As soon as a parent is physically there at home, they're available - especially a mother, the kids are just going to take advantage of that. So, the fact that my job can be done anywhere is both a positive and negative, I can mark anywhere but because I can mark anywhere, it's never clear that I am marking. I am at work but my kids will absolutely keep on interfering, my other job will absolutely phone me, my other job does not care at all that it's the marking season, they don't care.

Unpacking Leeanne's comments above, one can readily see how not practicing effective boundary management between work and family responsibilities can affect the practice of WLB. It also shows how factors like the nature of the task at hand as well as the nature of the dependents (i.e., those in need of care/attention/service) can influence the choice of how and where obligations are accomplished since where a task is accomplished is both positive and negative. It is positive in the sense that it offers flexibility and freedom to choose where and when to do so, but it is negative in the sense that other stakeholders may interfere unwillingly since they are unaware of what it takes to meet their demands at any given point in time.

However, regarding blurring the boundaries between work and family responsibilities, Olen accentuated the positive aspect of bringing his family members into his workspace. From his comments, it seems like he does not see this blurring of home and work responsibilities as a problem – a view that is similar to my other research participants':

I think I'm a little bit more willing to do it because women are not necessarily seen in a career way the same way as men are because they can't see a way in which they could be



both a good mother and also be a good academic. So, if you cannot do these two, you are going to have to prioritize one over the other, you may even have to sacrifice one for the other. (Leeanne)

So even my children come into my office often and I've explained to them a little bit about what I do so that the mystery isn't there. So, they know that daddy is there to help people and sometimes it means I can't be there at home. (Olen)

Continuing on the idea of blurring lines, and also the impact of role expectations on career progression, the research participants mentioned how their gender roles as men and women influenced their performance evaluation at work. The respondents acknowledged that there was a difference in how male and female CAS were evaluated. For most of them, their comments pointed out that the job performance of female academics was more scrutinized compared to their male counterparts. The female respondents said that they go the extra mile to prove themselves on the job. More so, those participants with caregiving responsibilities maintained the notion that they performed more obligations than their male colleagues who did not provide such responsibilities.

Generally, the female respondents reported that there was bias in how they were assessed on the job. For them, it was important to mention this because it often affected their career growth and impacted how they were seen by their male colleagues. In Elaine's words: "the fact that the female teacher is often being evaluated differently and in biased ways compared to men, you always feel like you have to prove yourself by going the extra mile". Leanne echoed this when she linked this to how difficult it is for female academics to achieve full tenure. In her words, "so women my age are not necessarily seen in a career way the same way as men are, and so there is an expectation on a male of my age to have a faculty position (or a full-time position)".

(e) Workload inequalities

Female participants in my study often talked about that there were workload inequalities in academia, especially in situations where female staff were expected to provide caregiving responsibilities in their families in addition to their job obligations at work. According to them, there was a higher tendency for students to ask female staff for advice on issues such as unwanted pregnancy, relationship matters, and family upbringing concerns – more than their male counterparts. As Leeanne said:

So, I find every term that people come to talk to me about mental health issues, about unplanned pregnancies, about domestic violence, in ways that they don't to other faculty members. Male faculty members have told me that no student comes and tells them such things.

According to most female participants, these additional expectations were often categorized as unpaid work for the affected staff members. In this sense, to them, the amount of work that is expected of female staff in academia seems to have inequalities compared to their male colleagues. However, Sportsman - who has an infant and whose spouse is also a CAS - thinks that both male and female staff have a similar amount of job workload, though he pointed out that childcare and pregnancy often created a different kind of work for female employees outside of the university:

Some people believe that everything should be shared equally among male and females while others do not think so. Female academics in my position will also be going through the same thing that I am going through except for the fact that now they're pregnant and have a child and then they have to take care of the child after pregnancy.

#### **Theme Four: Precarious Workers' Use of WLBP in Academia**

This theme includes subcategories such as experiencing WLBP in academia, the elusiveness of WLB, strategies for separating and integrating work & family-life, as well as family and work domain's influence on each other.

##### **(a) Experiencing WLBP in academia**

Participants described their experiences of the WLBP that they have used here at the University of Lethbridge. Some of the initiatives that they have used include the University's daycare center, The University's counselling services, the Arts theatre, as well as the gymnasium and fitness center. Describing his experience of the university's WLBP, Olen said that "there are nice facilities there that I use on my own volition, like the Sports Center and the facilities in the Students' Union building".

Summarizing her experience of WLBP here at the University of Lethbridge, Amy's said:

The daycare program actually helps. Our children went to the daycare on campus for a year, it actually helped a lot when we were just being able to consolidate our life into one site a little bit more, it was an excellent program.

Amy's comment points to an interesting idea: consolidating life's activities into one place. This idea can actually be one of the strategies for maintaining WLB. In describing their experiences of using the University's WLBP, both Rose and River said:

I appreciate that there is a massage and physiotherapy center here on campus. I have been there to the theatre in the performing arts department here at the university to see concerts and plays. I appreciate that the campus itself provides enough of hiking trails and parks so that you can walk around and exercise. (Rose)

I definitely used the university's counselling services. The counselling services got me through. It got me back on my feet so that I could function well and take care of myself on my own...so that was all offered through the university. In addition to that, being able to understand the job better. I could not feel like my classes were weighing on me psychologically anymore. (River)

From the comments above, both participants shared the satisfaction that they derived from using the WLBP's that have been provided by the university. Respondents expressed their various levels of satisfaction by mentioning the benefits of using such initiatives. Generally, participants classified the benefits of using the university's WLBP's into temporary and permanent benefits, respectively.

Whereas some temporary benefits of using the University's WLBP's that the participants mentioned include enjoying immediate relief from stress and being able to socialize, the long-term benefits that the respondents mentioned include the sustained gains they gained from using these programs over a longer period of time. According to the participants, the effects of using such programs are not felt immediately but afterward (e.g., enjoying enhanced energy levels, mental and physical well-being, enhanced job quality and job performance, personal and professional fulfillment obtained from participating in extracurricular activities. For instance, both River and Sportsman had these to say on this:

So being able to participate in teaching conferences, attend gallery exhibitions, film festivals, and other things like that, I can understand better how to get the most out of students without allowing it to weigh on me. (River)

Using these (programs) gave me that balance that helps in dealing with my teaching engagements, because I have to work a lot, I have to be energetic in the classroom. This also means that I have to be powerful physically and also have a solid starting reference point in my mind. (Sportsman)

Citing a similar view, one participant mentioned the students' pub on campus (popularly referred to as the zoo), as one facility on campus that she uses to socialize/reconnect with students in groups outside the classroom. Set up in a social (yet professional) atmosphere, the out-of-classroom experience according to her, was important for the students and herself since it offers a place to share about their various life experiences besides their coursework. In her words:

Every last Friday of the month, I have offered them (the students) to meet me at the zoo and that's because I feel that we don't have enough time in the classroom to discuss all kinds of different things they may be interested in. So, I offered them to do this basically in a social setting to discuss anything in our discipline, not their individual marks or assignments. (Rose)

In describing their experience of the university's WLBP, both male and female participants described that they were satisfied with using the University's WLBP. Furthermore, acknowledging their use of such programs also strengthened the claim that work-life conflict does exist among CAS – regardless of their gender roles in ways that make it necessary for them to utilize WLBP toward maintaining better WLB.

In sharing their experiences of using the University's WLBP, participants also commented that doing so comes with its own set of challenges. According to them, such challenges present themselves as factors that tend to prevent the use of such initiatives. Some of the factors that prevent the use of WLBP that the research participants mentioned include the family's structure, the family's influence on work, the individual's non-academic work demands, the low level of organizational support, as well as work-life's influence on the family.

In describing how one's non-academic work demands prevent the use of WLBP, Leeanne pointed out that her involvement in non-academic work obligations often interfered with her ability to engage here at the university when she mentioned said:

I mean anytime there was a demand for my family like a child is in the hospital, especially when they're very little, and the hospital doesn't want that child to be left alone, they want you to stay there with the child the whole time and that became very complicated when I'm teaching.

Upholding a similar view, Olen pointed out that during the workweek, his clients on his other job determined what he did when he is not teaching here at the university:

I'm controlled by what my clients dictate, I get texts and calls (from my wife) saying that you got to go pick up this child at that place because I can't, I'm doing something with another child or my car is broken down you need to go get it fixed, and so on. These are some of the considerations that I face. So, there is a fairly regular struggle because I have demands here, I have demands at the university and I have demands at home. So, it's a juggling act a lot of the time, and it's stressful.

(b) Hard edges and firm boundaries: The elusiveness of WLB

This subcategory captured the research participants' view and experience of work-life balance in academia. Generally, respondents viewed work-life balance as having the personal life and economic security that comes from a well-paying job. Some defined personal life as being able to participate in the things that you know you care about at work and outside of your professional life. Some definitions of WLB that the participants mentioned include the ones by Al and Amy. These definitions are notable in the sense that they are representative of the common views of my research participants:

I see work-life balance as taking good care of myself. You see, there can be no balance between work and family if I am not in good shape or a healthy state of mind to do so.

Essentially, for me to be able to maintain any kind of balance between work- and non-work obligations, I need to be healthy to do so. (Al)

It means having enough quantity and quality of work and life outside of work. So, if work was completely stressing me out and taking up all of my time then I'm not able to be a good partner and I'm not able to be a good parent. Similarly, when things blow up in my personal life, I'm not my best on my job either. WLB ideally, would be being able to be my best person in both of those domains. (Amy)

In contrast, describing the implications of work-life imbalance within academia, two respondents (Rose and Olen) mentioned that the failure to practice WLB often led to unwanted outcomes. On this, they both said that:

I've also seen serious mental health issues that are attached to workaholism. I can tell you anecdotally many times I've seen relationships breakdown because of the inability to have a clear separation between work and home life. (Olen)

Whether its professionals that work well into the evenings, or work on weekends, and they don't make that clear time for family, they don't care what their family might look like. (Rose)

From the aforementioned comments, blurring lines was a common thread throughout the participants' views as well as in my analysis. On the elusiveness of WLB, four participants (Sportsman, Rose, Olen, Al and Amy) opined that WLB had always been elusive, and hasn't always been the norm in their lives. For instance, whereas Rose said that "I guess the barrier between life and work balance is more abstract than real", Olen on the other hand, said that "sometimes it is not as clear as that, it doesn't always work, and sometimes you have to fake it".

In describing their experiences with this, one common notion that appeared in their explanations was that in the past, they had struggled with separating their work and family obligations since they could not easily demarcate the boundaries between both domains.

According to them, their inability to effectively manage these boundaries was due to its elusiveness, more so, since attempting to do so appeared unattainable. Speaking on this, Al said that “although this is never an easy task to accomplish sometimes, I try to keep both domains as far away from each other as possible”, Amy said that:

Work-life balance was really challenging for me then because I had to try to balance this position with hard edges and with firm boundaries with these children who just need, and need, and need. You never know when that’s going to come.

Although these respondents emphasized the elusive nature of WLB, they were also hopeful that the elusiveness of WLB can be minimized over time. Olen said that “in the not-too-distant future, I think that things would change, to a much lesser degree”. By ‘things’, he was referring to fact that his current dependants (his children in the university at the moment) would eventually graduate from school and go on to become parents of their own with their own children (who would later become his grandchildren). Olen went on to explain that although such achievements would mean that he would no longer be primarily responsible for the financial upkeep of his children in the future (as is the current practice), the fact that they could give birth to his grandchildren also meant that he would still have to play the role of being a grandfather – even though unlike his children, his grandkids would not be his direct responsibility.

Offering a similar view that the elusiveness of WLB was reduced over time, Elaine said:

I think I had much time to deal with the issue over the following months and I can say that things are more manageable now. I feel more like I know what to expect and I know the institution now better than before.

These views in themselves, tend to also emphasize the role that one’s career/life stage plays in determining when and how both male and female CAS practice WLB. Participants suggested



that in the early stages of an academic career, the focus was more on building a professional reputation in the workplace – one that commanded the attention and respect of colleagues and employers alike. According to them, it is often during this stage that employees have ‘a point to prove’ and are more likely to engage in longer work hours in a bid to maintain the optics of being seen as hardworking members of staff. As Rose (who is at the early stage of her career here as a CAS) said:

I would probably feel a little bit more comfortable to leave the office earlier...I wouldn't worry so much about the optics because there is a part of me that is saying well if they see me staying longer in the office or there leaving later than the others, it could be seen as being that I am putting in much effort beyond the call of duty. If I'm always here, even though I am aware that staying longer or being here more often does not necessarily mean that I am more productive. However, partially because of optics, I'm like okay if I'm spending my Sunday preparing a lecture instead of watching movies.

According to Rose, for some CAS in the early stage of their careers, this stage also heralds when they are likely to get married or start a family of their own together with their spouse or partner. More so, according to her, in some cases, this stage could also coincide with when the demand for providing childcare is at its lowest, or in some cases, non-existent (although this is applicable to both male and female CAS, it is more likely to occur amongst female employees).

Rose alluded that should this be the case for both male and female CAS, such employees could also be tasked with the responsibility of providing elder care to their ageing parents or relatives in addition to providing parental care for their children. According to her, where such variations in caregiving demands exist, the complexities of balancing one's work and family life become enhanced in ways that often determine how much free time is available to those

involved. Such outcomes have the potential to shape how and when an individual practices WLB.

(c) Strategies for separating work & family-life obligations

In identifying the strategies that they adopt to separate work and family obligations, the research participants mentioned using separation strategies such as disengaging from unrelated activities, compartmentalization, clear boundary-setting, effective prioritization of tasks, as well as effective time management. According to the participants, separating work and family obligation was imperative because it ensured that they maintained a balance between work and family obligations in ways that guaranteed that they can be mentally and physically present at work or at home – depending on where they were required to carry out their respective obligations.

For example, Cyclist said that she completely disengaged from home-related concerns while at work, and vice versa. According to her, she eliminated ways that could offer a possible distraction from focusing on her work or home-related obligations as follows:

When I'm at home, I try to disengage from work-related issues, and also, when I come to work I usually put my phone facing down so I cannot see messages popping up and I open my screen and I make sure I don't have any pop-ups on my screen and I can fully focus on whatever it is I am working on. Like I said, I do think that you do need to detach at some point...if you're coming home and all you're doing is working, well, you're not home really, you are physically at home but not mentally. (Cyclist)

Describing their strategies for separating work and family obligations, Leeanne and Olen mentioned that they compartmentalized their obligations by allocating a specific time and space for doing their work, and prioritizing activities in those particular times:

As a sessional instructor, I will prioritize my work. So, I will prioritize by having a lecture ready by Thursday at 9:25 in the morning when I start lecturing. I try as much as

possible to leave work at work so I don't bring work home with me. I try not to even bring my academic work home if I can avoid it. I've created clear spaces. (Leanne)

I have my office off-campus and that's where I do my other work. I have my office at the faculty, and that's where I try to do my school work, and then I don't bring it home with me, I have clear physical boundaries so keeping all of my work at my other office and not bringing it home. I try to do my class preparation at the university wherever possible, and then home-life is his home-life. (Olen)

By compartmentalizing the activities, these participants described that they practiced delineating clear boundaries between their work and non-work tasks in ways that enabled them to minimize the occurrence of WLC. According to them, doing so ensured that they could maintain a balance between their work and family obligations in ways that could also determine where they could perform such tasks in respective domains as required.

With respect to their work- and family-life separation strategies, participants cited the following concerns as some of the factors that inhibit their ability to utilize such strategies to separate their work and family obligations: their career or life stage, the level of organizational support, level of emotional involvement, the nature of the job, the nature of the dependents, as well as the influence of technology.

Regarding how the nature of dependents could hinder the separation of work and family tasks, both Al and River said:

The nature of those involved with accomplishing a particular task can determine what I do. For example, if I had to mark students' exams, I could do so while watching one of my kids participating in a school organized team sport. But assuming the task where to invigilate an exam, I would have to be there physically in the exam hall to proctor the exam, you see what I mean? (Al)

The nature of individuals that I have to deal with, along with their respective needs also have a role to play in how I am able to separate these aspects of my life. By that I mean, that I require a different skill set when dealing with students or colleagues at work, compared to what I need when I am dealing with my elderly parents at home or my friends outside work. (River)

Both Al and River's comments point to the significant role that the nature of dependents have in determining how they as CAS in precarious work separate their work and family obligations. However, adding the need to provide dependent-care into the mix, Cyclist believed that this outcome could be different for her if that were to be the case:

Perhaps, this would have been different if we had kids, I think to be in a family where it's just me and my husband definitely gives me quite a bit of freedom in deciding how I use my time. There are sometimes when I will just tell my husband that I'm sorry, I can't come home this evening since I need to work and I'll be back at 9 p.m. However, if you have a child you may not be able to do that, right?

In describing how the nature of the job inhibits the separation of work and family obligations, participants mentioned that job characteristics such as job location, deadlines, end-user demands, all seem to play a role in determining the possibility of them separating work from family obligations. Elaine said that "the amount of work that I have to accomplish, that is, the volume of the things I have to do certainly affect how I separate my work and family life". Amy continued along these lines by saying:

So, I'll often work a full day and then be with my family and then when my kids are down to sleep, I go back to work. On my other job, most of what my work is there is to answer emails, I answer the phone, I direct people to programs that might be useful to them, sometimes I get to go to community events.

From the strategies for separating work and family-life responsibilities that have been mentioned above, both male and female respondents appear to adopt similar strategies for separating their professional and personal obligations. Their explanations suggest that these separation strategies in themselves are not gender-specific, but instead, are contingent on other factors as outlined above.

(d) Strategies for integrating work & family-life obligations

The research participants described some strategies that they utilized to integrate their work and family obligations. While none of the research participants stated why they felt that it was important to do this, all of them spoke about ways that they integrate their work and family obligations, these include maintaining a home office, incorporating their family members into their work-related activities, as well as avoiding being inflexible in carrying out their obligations. Citing the flexibility that they get from using a home office as their strategy for integrating their work and family life, these respondents said:

Working from home allows me the flexibility to cover more grounds while I'm away from the office. The fact that I can use an aspect of my living room as a home office makes it possible for me to carry on with my job even while I'm at home. (Rose)

I have a working studio at home, so when I am not here at the university, I can still do my artistic activities at home, this functions more like my home office occasionally and helps me to enjoy a smooth transition between the two worlds. (River)

Furthermore, whereas Cyclist mentioned that "I have a home office that I use a lot during the summer because I don't need to be at the university...so I can choose whether I feel like I want to work from home or not", in integrating her work and family life, Leanne said that "I occasionally brought my son to class when he was quite little, I would bring him to the class that I'm teaching and say to the students that that's my kid and I'm going to teach".

With respect to the factors that prevent the integration of work and life responsibilities, two participants mentioned the confidentiality and the perceived stigmatization from colleagues that comes with integrating work and non-work obligations as some factors that inhibit the integration of work and family tasks:

I will debrief my spouse if there've been any major episodes. Of course, we have confidentiality issues but we can talk about some of the major things and what I feel. My spouse acts as a soundboard on these matters. Confidentiality is one major aspect preventing the integration of work and family life since there are certain boundaries that you just simply cannot cross. There are certain things that I can demystify for my family but there are other things that you just simply can't explain or don't want to explain and so that becomes a barrier. (Olen)

The fact that I let my kids come to my office at any time or the fact that I take my child into a classroom could be viewed as being unprofessional because being professional involves separating those things. So, it's possible that I could be seen as unprofessional by my colleagues and even by my students. (Leeanne)

Leeanne's comment above draws our attention to the existence of the following concerns: first, her view suggests that this perceived stigmatization is often gendered since female staff are potentially more likely to be found wanting in this regard. Secondly, her position on this further suggests that not every member of the organization understands the benefits of WLBP - let alone position themselves to encourage other colleagues who use such initiatives. Given such realities, it becomes possible that this lack of understanding can generate circumstances where the employees who use WLBP become stigmatized for using such initiatives. Moreover, this could affect their career growth, and in extreme cases, it could stop them from using such programs altogether.

(e) Family- and Work Domain's Influence on Each Other

Participants commented that both work and family influenced one another in ways that ultimately shaped how they used WLBP's here at the university. Respondents cited examples of how their job roles influenced their family lives, and vice versa. For instance, describing how their work interfered with their family lives, both Olen and Cyclist said:

As a part-time instructor, it impacts me in that I often teach in the evenings and I don't get a lot of control over my schedule. I don't get to choose the time slots and so it impacts me because I miss my children's sporting games, I miss their dance recitals, or things like that when the schedules conflict. (Olen)

I've always struggled with WLB as it was, but now, there's a whole new responsibility thrown into that mix, because I'm trying to figure out now, how can I manage to do teaching and research. So, I feel like the way it's impacting me right now is I just get very tired and so I might come home at 5 p.m. but I do not have the energy for any kind of family activities, all I can do is lie down and watch TV, and that's not really WLB to me, it's just kind of recovery period. (Cyclist)

From what the participants described, work's impact on family life as well as the family's impact on work are real-life issues. Participants commented on how they took home school work and how such actions affected the times that they had to attend to other things at home and outside work. In a sense, this speaks to how demanding academia can be for these employees as the demands within this sector appear to be on the increase daily. For instance, Leanne said:

With this job, I have a hundred students and every one of them can email me, so there are no boundaries or time in a day where I could say I'm not working because people can contact me by phone or email through both, and they do.

Whereas some respondents addressed the strenuous workload and demanding work schedules as some factors that contributed to the overwhelming feelings of fatigue that they described, others

decried not having enough time to take part in social events outside of work due to the deadlines that they are required to meet up with at work.

In concluding this chapter, the four main themes that emerged from the data analysis were as presented above. Together with their subcategories, these themes captured the collective views and experiences of the research participants regarding their use of WLBP as employees in precarious employment. A more detailed discussion of these results and how they fit into the overall purpose of this study viz-a-viz how they address the research questions of this research is presented in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This chapter is focused on the interpretation of the results. First, I will compare CAS in precarious work within academia with professionals in other industries where job precarity has been reported to be prevalent. Also, in this chapter, I will also focus on discussing the interpretation of the results of this study within the context of how they addressed the research questions.

Hennessy and Tranjan (2018) reported that precarious professionals can be seen in every occupation, though there is a higher proportion of them working in education (28%), health care (18%), business, finance and administration (19%). Fong (2018) pointed out that while part-time work may not be a growing problem at the aggregate level when viewed across all the sectors of the economy, it may be becoming a bigger issue in sectors that feature more precarious characteristics.

For instance, the health sector employs highly skilled professionals who also experience job precarity. Like CAS in precarious work within academia, a lack of control over work hours has been found in nurses to increase WLC and inimical health outcomes (Pisarski, Bohle, & Callan, 2002). WLC among such professionals result in increased fatigue and diminished psychological/physical well-being (Pisarski et al., 2002).

In a bid to establish trends between 1991 and 2005, Landry, Ricketts, and Verrier (2007) in 2005, combined national and provincial information of registered physical therapists in order to estimate the Health Human Resource (HHR) ratio among physical therapists (PTs) across Canada. HHR ratios are a measure of workforce supply often expressed in the number of health professionals to a sub-set of the population. The results of their study signaled a potential inequality between supply and demand within the Canadian physical therapy workforce – a trend

that was similar to CAS in academia. Landry et al.'s (2007) study concluded it was necessary to establish a consistent supply of such health professionals in meeting the emerging rehabilitation and mobility needs of an aging and increasingly complex Canadian population.

On the other hand, in several institutions such as the service industry, work schedules are posted at most a week in advance, thus allowing employees very limited opportunity to balance their respective obligations (Zeytinoglu, Lillevik, Seaton, & Moruz, 2004). Hennessy and Tranjan (2018) opined that patterns of gender inequality can be seen even at the professional level of work: women comprise a disproportionately larger portion of precarious professionals (60%) than men (40%). This calls for concern particularly when we consider that the shift towards precarious labor has been most witnessed amongst women, immigrants and younger workers in industries such as in the hospitality and tourism industry respectively (Mayhew & Quinlan, 2002).

Previous research has also highlighted the vulnerability of precarious hospitality workers to specific types of adverse outcomes including burnout and stress (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997). Researchers have attributed the high levels of stress that employees in hotel work experience to a combination of outsourcing/work intensification, long and irregular work hours, excessive workloads, and bad job design (Lo & Lamm, 2005). Like CAS in academia, such precarious employees are mostly used to meet changeable demands in the hotel industry. The implications of such an outcome are often highly variable irregular work hours with no control over the timing and duration of such hours.

Qualitative research on permanent and temporary workers in five-star hotels illustrates the irregular and highly variable nature of work hours by temporary employees and consequences for WLC and health (Bohle, Quinlan, Kennedy, & Williamson, 2004). Temporary

workers reported greater variation in working hours than full-time, permanent staff. Their hours ranged from zero to 73 hours per week and the length of shifts varied between 2 and 18 hours. In contrast, most permanent full-time workers reported much more regular hours (often fixed 8-hour shifts with limited overtime).

Perhaps one difference between job precariousness in the service industry and academia is that job insecurity is not only felt by casual workers but is rather a feature of the hotel industry in general (Louie, Ostry, Quinlan, Keegel, Shoveller, & LaMontagne, 2006). A high turnover culture in the hotel/hospitality industry has perhaps led employees to have different perceived job security, and a more short-term perspective, compared to those in other industries (Iverson & Deery, 1997).

Since temporary contract employees are regularly used to meet the various demands in the hotel industry, the high rate of turnover guarantees that jobs are readily available (TTF, 2006). In fact, 78% of hotels surveyed reported experiencing staff shortages and recruitment issues (TTF, 2006). Therefore, job insecurity is less of a problem and the overriding issues are burnout and role overload.

Hennessey and Tranjan (2018) reported that even those with full-time jobs are not immune to economic insecurity as 26% of precarious professionals in Canada have full-time, permanent jobs. Some industries are characterized by more insecurity than others e.g., the seasonal nature of hospitality work contributes to insecurity. The concept of security may be viewed as a continuum of effects ranging from formally insecure to traditionally secure forms of employment.

In concluding this chapter, I will now discuss the interpretation of the findings within the context of how they addressed the three research questions as follows:

RQ. 1: How do precarious work and gender roles influence the experiences of WLBP among male and female contract academic staff?

Precarious work and gender roles influenced the experiences of WLBP among male and female CAS by shaping their views and understanding of such concepts. For instance, by describing the inimical conditions of working as a CAS, and by showing how being under-resourced impacts their WLB here at the University of Lethbridge, both male and female respondents maintained that their employment was precarious.

Participants' understanding of precarious work agreed with the way the concept has been identified in existing scholarship (e.g., Cranford & Vosko, 2006; Kalleberg, 2009; Goldrin & Landolt, 2011) since respondents often linked precarious work to job insecurity, limited access to resources and benefits, and workload inequalities or discrepancies. Researchers have also used both terms (precarious work and job insecurity) interchangeably (e.g., Lewchuk et al., 2015).

Although the participants' definitions and views of precarious work appear to support the views of previous research on the subject (e.g., Vosko, 2006; Standing, 2011; Lewchuk et al., 2013), my research participants' perspectives of precarious work also appear to come from how they perceived their respective gender role obligations at home and at work. For instance, four of the female respondents (Amy, Elaine, Leanne, and Rose), maintained that these expectations would include motherhood as well as providing dependent-care or home-keeping.

Respondents' seemed to agree that their preferred gender role affiliations at work or in the family often determined the manner in which they approached/performed their respective obligations – especially at home. From the family perspective, all but one female respondent (Cyclist) mentioned that their inability to meet up with the demands of the family was considered as a failure on their part since it questioned their ability to be good mothers, spouses, or

caregivers. On the other hand, from a work point of view, female respondents maintained that they were faced with a similar challenge since they felt that there were often required to go the extra mile at proving themselves on the job – a view maintained by Damaske & Gerson (2008) and Ruppner (2013) respectively.

Participants seemed to agree that gender-role identities also determined the organizational and/or societal expectations required of male and female CAS. For the female respondents in my research, when the need to provide dependent care (spousal, parental, or elder care) was also added to the mix, it seemed to increase the obligations that they (as females) have to give as the ‘default parent’. Although this was particularly true for the female respondents with dependent care responsibilities (e.g., Amy and Leanne), one male respondent (Al) also identified himself as the default parent in his family since his spouse made more income than he did, and he was the one that spends more time at home with the kids.

Existing literature (e.g., Goldring & Landolt, 2011) report that in the event that dependents are present in a family, if the primary breadwinner earns more income than the other spouse/partner in the relationship, regardless of the marital status, in most cases, the individual with the lesser income in the relationship becomes the default parent (the spouse/partner whose responsibility it is to meet the non-financial demands of the family since he/she was more likely to spend more time at home, often with the kids or those in need of care).

Participants also described that seeking to meet these additional expectations generally affected the amount of time that was available to them to undertake other ventures. In turn, such outcomes also determined the type of WLBP that they chose to use in maintaining a healthy WLB in ways that also determined how much time they had to utilize such initiatives. According to both male and female participants, precarious work and gender roles collectively influenced

the type of WLBP that they used, as well as the amount of time (free/flexible time) that was available to them to utilize WLBP in engaging non-work activities.

For instance, Amy mentioned that in using the University's daycare facility, female staff could leave their children at the daycare while providing lectures to students in the classroom. Both male and female respondents upheld the need to maintain some degree of flexibility while seeking to meet their additional work and family expectations. With respect to their caregiving roles, female respondents (especially the ones with the obligation to provide dependent care) complained of the lack of time to take part in other activities outside work. According to them, this affected how they used WLBP to maintain a healthy WLB since meeting such additional obligations often meant that they had insufficient time to embark on other non-work activities.

Within the context of how gender role combines with precarious work to influence the use of WLBP among male and female CAS, although both male and female respondents described themselves as being resigned to precariousness, whereas female respondents described themselves by some gender-specific expectations, three male respondents (Olen, River, and Sportsman) described themselves as more inclined to having control over their finances and also desired to be recognized as the primary financiers/breadwinners of their respective families.

Another point regarding how precarious work and gender role influenced the experiences of WLBP among CAS has to do with the manner in which both concepts facilitated respondents' views regarding the implications that these factors have on their psychological wellbeing. In highlighting the demanding conditions of working in academia as precarious workers (e.g., inconvenient working hours, limited resources/benefits, job inequalities), participants described the effect of such jobs on their health.

The health implications that some of the research participants mentioned (e.g., stress, strained relationships, perceived job insecurity), validated what other researchers have said regarding how such employment tends to impact negatively on employees' job quality/performance (Lewchuk et. al., 2013; Procyk et al., 2017). The psychological implication of working with such a mindset is gruesome and begs the question: How can one be expected to thrive in such work environments? Avoiding such unwanted outcomes become possible when employees in precarious work can redirect their resources to other more rewarding ventures, especially in circumstances where the precarious nature of their employment allows them the flexibility to do so (Procyk et al., 2017).

RQ. 2: In what ways do precarious work and gender-roles influence the ability of male and female contract academic staff to use WLBP's in maintaining boundaries between work- and family life?

Precarious work and gender-roles influence the ability of male and female CAS to utilize WLBP's by shaping the choice of boundary management separation strategies that these persons adopt in separating their work- and family lives. Generally, while the research participants talked about their ability to make choices regarding aspects of their employment (e.g., the terms and conditions of their employment contracts), this choice occurs within a forced status as non-tenure track members of faculty since they could still make choices within their constraints as employees in non-tenure track employment within academia. The data suggest that they were making the best of the situation they found themselves in even though they wished that they had more secure terms of employment.

Participants maintained similar views on this by mentioning the need for boundary management through effective time-management and prioritization of tasks. Respondents

acknowledged that they had a limited time to accomplish a task or series of tasks, and as such, the idea of separating work and family obligations was necessary. My research participants identified some strategies that they have adopted to manage their family- and work-life. According to them, these boundary management separation strategies assisted them in minimizing the occurrence of WLC in ways that also enhanced their chances to maintain WLB.

For my research participants, effective boundary-management occurred by setting flexible work-family boundaries as well as the compartmentalization of work or family-related tasks. Their views uphold a similar position that researchers have maintained in this regard (see Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008; Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010; Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). According to these CAS, the compartmentalization of tasks as a form of setting clear work-family boundaries (in this case, flexible or permeable boundaries) allowed them to maintain WLB, making it easier for them to move between the work and family domains as required.

More so, it enabled them to recognize when and how to utilize their limited resources more appropriately in ways that would maximize the benefits for doing so. Such outcomes lend credence to what researchers on work-family boundary management have said in this regard (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Desrochers et al., 2012; Allen et al., 2014). In particular, Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) research reported that managing the boundaries between the family and work domains do not rest solely with organizations or with individual employees that such organizations employ. Instead, it occurs in-situ, i.e., whether workers' boundary management styles relate to positive work and family outcomes may be a function of individual preferences in relation to the social contexts in which boundary management styles are enacted.



Since these boundary management styles are enacted within social contexts, it suggests that some degree of expectation exists between employers and employees or among individual family members with respect to each other. An example of such expectations would include what is expected of males and females as a result of their gender roles. It is safe to say that how individuals behave within society appears to be determined by the social contexts in which they find themselves. Hence, the need to manage the expectations of the various stakeholders involved (expectations management).

Whereas both male and female respondents generally agreed that there was the need to enact effective boundary management between work and family obligations, some participants were also quick to point out that such boundaries in themselves, seem blurred. According to them, demarcating between such boundaries was sometimes a difficult thing to do since the boundary lines are blurred and not as distinct as some would think. This blurriness, some said, seemed to occur because certain roles from one domain, tend to overlap/spillover into another domain.

Furthermore, recognizing that the boundary lines between the work and family domains are blurred lends credence to the elusive nature of WLB among CAS as employees in precarious work (as discussed previously) and points us to the complex nature of work-life balance. Acknowledging that such blurriness exists since certain roles tend to overlap/spillover across domains also speaks to the ‘complexity of intersectionality’ that the research participants experience daily. Intersectionality is “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations” (McCall, 2005, p. 1171). This relationship can be used to explain the elusive nature of the WLB practice as reported by the research participants.

Other factors that participants mentioned as being responsible for promoting the blurred boundary conditions between the work and family domains include one's career or life stage; the level of organizational support; nature and number of dependents; the nature of the job or task at hand; as well as the role of technology, to mention just a few. Using the role of technology as an example, such a factor has been shown to enhance the blurred lines that exist in the boundary conditions between the family and work domains (Park & Jex, 2011; Park, Fritz & Jex, 2011; Adkins, Farmville, Premeaux, & Rock, 2014).

In academia, technology is redirecting all facets of education more than ever before and the challenge of integrating technology into research, teaching, and service appears to be difficult for universities and their faculty members (Groves & Zemel, 2000). More so, the demands for delivering lectures on- and off-campus sites are challenging lecturers' creativity regarding how to maximize the benefits of technology in their professional work lives (Rice & Miller, 2001). The proliferation of electronic devices (e.g., cell phones) and mobile computer Apps (e.g., FaceBook, WhatsApp, Yahoo Messenger, and Skype) has produced increasing workplace expectations by placing a demand on employees to stay connected to work during paid/unpaid vacations, on weekends, and sometimes late after the close of work (Derks & Bakker, 2014; Adkins et al., 2014). Capitano and Greenhaus (2018), reported that the advancements in technology further intensify the expectation that workers should remain occupied with work-related duties even while at home.

Although the infusion of technology into all areas of teaching and research makes it increasingly possible to work in any place and at any time, it also tends to increase the demands on faculty members' time and availability – in ways that make it increasingly difficult to separate work from family obligations (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). For instance, the existence of long

work-hour cultures (e.g., academia) encourages the need for employees to ‘keep up’ with their work colleagues (Burke & Cooper, 2008) even while they are not at work.

RQ 3: In what ways do precarious work and gender-roles influence how male and female contract academic staff utilize WLBP to integrate work- and family life?

Precarious work and gender-roles influence how male and female CAS utilize WLBP by impacting the choice of boundary management integration strategies that these persons adopt in integrating their work- and family lives. Some of the boundary management integration strategies that the research participants mentioned include: The use of a home office and bringing family members to work.

Participants described a home office as a space that they have set aside at home in order to perform office work (in this case, school work for CAS). According to the participants, setting aside a portion of their home as a home office, allowed them to continue with schoolwork. Although this did not seem to be a strange occurrence among the respondents, they all considered this as a means of integrating work responsibilities into family life.

Another integration strategy that was mentioned was incorporating family members into work obligations. For the respondents who mentioned this, bringing family members to work is a strategy they use to integrate family-life with work-life. According to them, not only does such a practice ensure that work-related tasks are completed as at when due, they also act as a means of strengthening the existing relationships among family members in ways that make the family member(s) to have a deep sense of belonging. These participants’ views support what the extant literature maintains on the role of dependent family members as it concerns their ability to practice WLB (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Goldring & Landolt, 2011).

In concluding this segment, the main factors that participants mentioned as being responsible for preventing the integration of work and family life include the nature of the task at hand as well as the level of organizational support that was available to CAS. Regarding the former, participants talked about this along the lines of the need to maintain confidentiality and discretion in sharing work-related information with family members outside the workplace. Participants said that sometimes, it was impossible for them to share work-related information with the members of their family since such sensitive information belong to the workplace.

Concerning the level of organizational support, most female participants also commented on the harmful effects of being stigmatized by their male colleagues for using WLBP to integrate their work and non-work lives. According to them, such a negative practice had the potential to discourage them from integrating work and family obligations since doing so could be misinterpreted as being non-professional. According to them, such a disposition, in turn, could lead to workplace discrimination - especially against those employees who use these WLBP.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

### **7.1 Research Summary**

This qualitative study has served to extend the existing body of work-life research by exploring the experiences of CAS in precarious work who utilize WLBP to integrate and/or separate their professional work role activities with their family obligations. My intention was to examine precarious work, gender roles, and the use of WLBP in academia.

I used the work-family boundary-management styles model (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012) as the conceptual framework of this study and also used the procedures for phenomenological studies outlined by Giorgi (2009) as a tool for the collection and analysis of the data for this study to guide/inform the research process. Using this approach gave rise to the emergence of four main themes:

The first theme, precarious work in academia, expressed how participants labelled their particular job situation as precarious employment. The second theme, support and performance, expressed how participants described the various supports they received through their relationships with professional and personal stakeholders. The third theme, gendered aspects of academia, captured participants' understanding of gender roles and how they fit (or differ) from such delineations within academia. The fourth theme, precarious workers' utilization of WLBP expressed participants' views and practice of WLB. It also touched on participants' recollections of their WLBP experiences here at the University of Lethbridge.

## 7.2 Research Limitations

This study, like all studies, has limitations. First, this study sought to examine precarious work, gender roles, and the use of work-life balance programs in academia – with emphasis on the experiences of contract academic staff. As such, its findings are specific to Academia and do not consider job precarity, gender roles and the use of WLBP in other industries.

By focusing only on the experiences of CAS, this study does not address the accounts of other faculty members (e.g., tenure-track faculty members who have permanent contracts), some of whom may be more experienced in providing more in-depth information regarding their experience of WLBP. More so, since this study dealt with the experiences of CAS from various faculties and departments across the University of Lethbridge, the possibility exists that it may have failed to capture some of the nuances that were peculiar to certain faculties or departments as it concerns WLB and the use of WLBP. For instance, CAS in Social Sciences are more likely to work outside on the field than those in the Natural Sciences (e.g., CAS who work in the Physics Department) who are more likely to spend most of their work hours in the laboratory. In this regard, the experience of job precarity, WLB and the use of WLBP may be more prevalent in certain faculties than others.

Furthermore, this study does not cover the broader aspects of gender since it restricts itself only to the binary perspective of gender as being male or female. Specifically, I took the procedures for phenomenological studies outlined by Giorgi (2009) to inform and guide my analysis. Maximum variation techniques were used to generate a non-probability sample for this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I conducted in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Blaikie, 2000) in order to gather primary data for my study. More so, the results of

this study were based on interpretations that were influenced and based on my review of the literature as well as on my collection, analysis, and interpretation of the interview transcripts.

Next, this study relied on the credibility of the participants (Merriam, 2009) and is limited to the views expressed by the 10 participants who were interviewed. Although their accounts could not be verified, they were subjective, and their experiences were largely personal, yet socially constructed. The participants' claims and the findings of my study, do not represent an objective reality, or a single, all-encompassing truth. However, in support of the participants' claims, I feel it necessary to state that participants were transparent when describing their experiences. In my opinion, they shared their recollection of events freely and with great clarity.

Moreover, I did not employ a longitudinal design. Instead, I relied upon participants' retrospective accounts of their experiences of WLBP here at the University of Lethbridge. Participants can become wary or suspicious, or they can become aware of what the researcher wants and try to please the researcher. In addition, participants sometimes do not know how to articulate correctly their interactions, feelings, and behaviors in a way that responds directly to the interview questions. As such, this study is representative of participants' experiences at a particular moment in time within their academic teaching careers at the University of Lethbridge. As such, it does not capture the experiences of the research participants over a long period of time. A longitudinal design could provide a more enduring and broader understanding of participants' experiences of WLBP here at the university.

Also, topic sensitivity could be said to be another limitation here. Gender-related studies are sensitive. As such, my gender as a male researcher could affect how female participants (or those with other gender identifications) become comfortable with answering the interview questions or divulging in-depth information about their experiences of WLBP. Put differently, it

could be easier for male respondents to speak with me more transparently than it could be for non-males. Although I owned my own bias, my personal bias as a male researcher could influence my understanding of the accounts of non-male participants since it becomes almost impossible for me to experience their accounts from their own individual gender perspectives.

I also admit my personal limitation in fully understanding what it takes to work as a CAS in academia. I deem it necessary to mention this because of the fact that the researcher has been identified as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in the phenomenology qualitative research approach (Atieno, 2009). As such, data will be channeled through this human instrument (Atieno, 2009). Essentially, the ability of the researcher to adequately capture the nuances and cultural connotations of the respondents becomes essential to how he/she will analyze/interpret the meanings of what the participants narrate during the interviews.

Where the researcher fails to do so could mean that he/she would fail to capture these nuances, their true meanings, and or hidden connotations. Within this line of reasoning also, scholars argue that by coding, categorizing, and standardizing, valuable data may be destroyed (or lost completely) during such analysis, even as it becomes possible to impose the researcher's world on the participants (Atieno, 2009). It is important to mention this because of the fact that the descriptive and inductive nature of this process demands that the researcher constructs concepts and abstractions from the data in a bid to make sense of the respondents' stories, especially since human behavior cannot be understood without comprehending the contextual framework within which the participants interpret their feelings, thoughts, and actions (Atieno, 2009).

Furthermore, it was not possible to triangulate the findings from the experiences of the ten respondents with an existing document on WLB for CAS here at the University of



Lethbridge because the university did not have an actual document on WLB for its employees except for the People Plan strategy. Although this document was guided by a committee comprising individuals from several employee groups, it did not contain adequate information on employees' WLB that would enable me to compare with the results of my research. According to a Senior HR Consultant here at The University of Lethbridge, there are sub-committees that have branched out from the People Plan who were discussing other documents, but as at the point of writing this thesis, nothing had been finalized. As such, none of that information could be released to me or anyone else.

Finally, due to the research design and methodology of this study, its findings do not provide a strong basis to make it generalizable to all CAS in precarious employment since an individual's experiences are informed and based on personal, institutional, and contextual factors that are rooted in past experiences, as well as the broader social environment (Schram, 2003). Zikmund (2000) suggests that one limitation of the qualitative method is that its findings are not generalizable since the focus of such studies is the functioning of the topic itself. It is unrealistic, therefore, to assume that all CAS share the same experience of precarious work and WLBP, hold the same views of precarious work, WLB, and WLBP, and employ the same strategies to separate or integrate their work and family lives. However, the results of this research contribute to the literature on precariousness and gender roles and also provide avenues for further study.

### **7.3 Researcher's Voice**

The voice of the qualitative research, my voice, is explicitly present in this research study. I came to this research topic as a graduate student in a Master of Science in Management degree program here at the Dhillon School of Business, University of Lethbridge. In the course of my studies here, I had the opportunity to work as a Graduate Research Assistant with a faculty

member here in the department. Although I was not contracted to teach, this exposure deepened my curiosity to know what male and female CAS face in their quest to balance their work and family lives while working as precarious employees.

As a graduate student in the same institution where the research participants work as employees, I reflected on the ethical implications of conducting this research within my own university. Although Smyth and Holian (1999) acknowledged the potential problem of researcher credibility as one of such ethical concerns, they suggest that the researchers who conducted research investigations in organizations to which they belong can offer a uniquely rewarding perspective on the topic under investigation as a result of their knowledge of the history, culture, and individuals involved in the study.

I maintained an openness to the views of the respondents. In giving voice to the participants' views (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I engaged professionally with the respondents in a bid to learn, understand, record, and report my findings in an authentic manner without passing judgment. To minimize the occurrence of potential biases on my part as an insider researcher, I owned my biases and aligned my thought process with Finlay's (1998) position who argued that bias could imply that an unequivocal reality exists, one with the capability of being distorted by subjective interpretation. The alternative view of this would be that rather than adopting the perspective of a single, unequivocal reality, multiple realities exist to one phenomenon and this notion rather than rejecting it as bias, upholds the positive impact of subjectivity.

Whereas Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) explained reflection as an important process which enables individuals to relive and evaluate their experiences, Finlay (1998) argued that engaging directly and openly in reflexive procedures (a core feature of the phenomenological qualitative research approach) makes it possible for the researcher to turn the potential problem

of subjectivity into an opportunity. Personal reflection is encouraged among qualitative research investigators since it allows the researcher to identify with the participants (Schön, 1983). Thus, making it possible for the researcher to better understand the views of the participants. Reflection is significant and remained constant throughout this study. This qualitative study demanded that I constantly reflect in action, that is, during the interview sessions, and on action, that is, after each interview session (Schön, 1983).

#### **7.4 Future Research**

Since this study provides rich descriptions and interpretations of CAS and what it means to be a person in their particular world, future research is required to fully understand the experiences of WLBP for these employees in precarious work.

Primarily, in addition to social context determinants like the job precariousness and gender roles, the results of this research are likely influenced by other factors such as the nature and size of the institution (university), employee's life stage, career stage, weekly work hours, length of stay on the job, marital status, number/nature of dependents, and age. Future research needs to build upon the findings of this research by delineating the impact of such factors in understanding how male and female CAS utilize WLBP within the context of precarious work. For instance, employees' age or life stage can influence their choice and use of WLBP. In turn, this could also determine their choice of strategies for integrating, alternating, and/or separating their work and family lives.

As an example, due to their life stage, younger and older female CAS who also provide any form of dependent care (childcare, eldercare), are more likely to be restricted in their use of WLBP. This is so because of younger female CAS are most likely to be getting married during this stage of their lives while working in entry-level job positions in the early stage of their

career whereas, for older female CAS, this late stage in their career could likely signal when they about to retire or leave academia. Younger female CAS in such situations are likely to have extra obligations in the sense that they may also be required to provide dependent care for a spouse/child or children, and/or elderly parents/close family relatives.

On the other hand, older female CAS in such situations who are nearing retirement may likely have the additional responsibility of providing dependent care for their elderly parents or close family relatives, and in some cases their grandchildren. The suggested scenario above could also be true for male CAS in such situations. Either way, these additional dependent care obligations are likely to influence the ability of male and female CAS to utilize WLBP at various stages of their lives and career in precarious work. Existing literature (e.g., Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2013, Allen & Martin, 2017) maintain a similar position by saying that practicing WLB has been viewed by many to be a personal and an intentional effort that is often influenced by an individual's life or career stage.

Second, future studies should investigate the positive and negative outcomes of work-life boundary management policies for male and female contract academic staff (CAS) in precarious work as well as their employers. I recommend that emphasis should be placed on the longitudinal investigation of the impact gender roles and job precarity on the development, utilization, and monitoring of work-family boundary management policies. More so, efforts should also be made to examine how the impact and outcome of work-family boundary management policies vary based on other defining categories of CAS in precarious work (e.g., age, family structure, gender); type of institution/university (e.g., size, province); and lastly supervisors/managers (e.g., Dean's management style, Dean's gender, Dean's training experience on handling WLB issues).

Third, future studies should build upon the findings of this study by exploring the vicarious impact of work-family policies in view of how co-workers stigmatize their colleagues who utilize WLBP. This study provides evidence that suggests that co-workers are involved in the co-construction of informal perceptions regarding the use of work-family programs. More so, such perceptions are fuelled and affected by their colleagues' use of such programs. Participants commented that they felt stigmatized by their colleagues for using WLBP. As such, it is likely that these initiatives also indirectly impact those associated with persons who use such initiatives.

In conclusion, this study is a valuable contribution to the existing literature as it focuses on employees who have been largely understudied by the wider precarious work, gender roles - WLB research field. It has focused largely on temporary contract employees who teach in academia and who are more exposed to irregular, unpredictable and anti-social work hours as precarious employees in academia. As such, precarious work must be examined as a complex integrated phenomenon by analyzing employment trajectories and dynamic intersections with other forms of employment and social conditions such as employees in permanent employment.

### **7.5 Implications for Theory and Practice**

In adopting a phenomenological lens this study provides a coherent theoretical and empirical analysis of the challenges facing contract academic staff (CAS) in achieving work-life balance. While the WLB concept is increasingly addressed in the HRM and Labour Relations literature, few studies have examined the case of CAS confronting high levels of job precariousness or labor market insecurity and fewer still have considered the situation of such employees through a gender lens. This project addresses these concerns.

### 7.5.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of my study have theoretical implications for both precarious work, gender roles, and work-life research. This study presents an important and timely subject by bridging three distinct bodies of scholarship – on precarious work, gender roles, and the use of work-life balance programs – in examining the working conditions of CAS. As such, this study contributes to the existing literature in the following ways:

This study advances Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) boundary management styles model. First, although Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) model proposed that work-family boundary management did not occur in a vacuum but was localized within some kind of social contexts, their study did not specifically mention the factors that shape such social contexts. My research addresses this gap by proposing that precarious work and gender roles produce a combined effect - as social context determinants - in influencing the choice of boundary management styles that CAS adopt to manage the boundaries between work and family life within academia.

Both parameters can play a role in deepening our understanding of Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) work-family boundary management styles. By demonstrating how CAS in precarious work utilize various strategies to enact their preferred boundary management styles (integrating, alternating, and separating), the findings of this research lend support to the established integrator/separator/alternator individual preferences suggested in Kossek and Lautsch's (2012) boundary management styles model.

Although identifying such boundary management strategies (and hence, the perceived boundary lines between work and non-work domains) makes it possible to see how these CAS utilize WLBP in managing their WLB, the findings of this research also suggest that the boundary lines between the work and family domains are blurred, and not straight, since they are

in constant flux, rather than fixed. It is this blurring effect that distinguishes the boundary management choices of my research participants from the alternating/integrating/separating styles suggested in my theoretical model. The blurring effect discussed in my research extends the literature on WLB and the use of WLBP by explaining how the complexity of intersectionality contributes to the complicated nature of the WLB practice. A closer observation of the participants' demographic information (Table 3) and the accounts of their lived-experiences suggests the impact of intersectionality in the respective stories of these individuals. This complexity occurs at various degrees depending on the presence and interplay of several existing factors with one another. For example, the amount of additional obligation(s) required of an individual, the nature and number of dependents, their life/career stage, age, income level, and marital status, all affect boundary management techniques.

Let us consider two of our research participants: Leeanne and Elaine, respectively. According to their demographic information, both respondents are females, both are CAS, and both are living with a spouse or partner. However, on the basis of their dependent care responsibilities, both individuals are not exposed to similar conditions since they both have different dependent care obligations. While Leeanne has three children under the age of 18 years old (hence, she has parental care obligations), Elaine does not have any children.

Moreover, both have spousal obligations, although Leeanne is required to do more since she also has to provide care to her three children. This shaped Leeanne's experiences of WLBP and choice of boundary management style in ways that may not be the same for Elaine. For instance, Elaine's lack of dependent care obligation (parental or eldercare) can be considered instrumental to her decision to relocate some 1,100 kilometers away from her partner to take a job that had no guarantee of becoming a continuing appointment. On the other hand, Leeanne's

description of her day-to-day experience suggests she could not make such a similar decision to relocate here considering her dependent care responsibilities. These variations in the lived-experience of both individuals reflect how the complexity of intersectionality affects an individual's experience of WLBP as employees in precarious work.

### **7.5.2 Practical Implications**

This study has practical implications for both precarious employees and their employers. First, despite a plethora of existing research on work-family balance, understanding precarious work, gender roles, and the use of WLBP for workers in precarious work is an important and understudied topic. This is so because previous research has only focused almost exclusively on either two of these parameters simultaneously (e.g., Daly et al., 2008; Vosko, MacDonald, & Campbell, 2009; Betti, 2016), but not all three (precarious work, gender roles, and the use of WLBP) combined. Empirically, in providing answers to the research questions of this research, this study has addressed this significant gap by deepening our understanding of these three phenomena collectively. As such, this research advances the scholarship on precarious work and existing WLB models by providing a clearer picture of how such highly-skilled men and women in precarious employment within academia experience WLBP.

Second, this study also reveals the inimical working conditions of CAS here at the University of Lethbridge. The results show that CAS are grossly under-resourced, underpaid, and overworked. This presents a dismal image for the majority of these teaching staff who often feel trapped in the quagmire of precarious employment.

Third, the findings from this study can help policymakers to craft more effective policies on WLB and for employees in precarious work within academia. In a dynamic environment such as academia, the use of WLBP among CAS is contingent upon other variables. As demonstrated



in my study, the experiences of WLBP among CAS in academia may vary, and is not fixed - depending on other factors such as the CAS experiences, organizational work climate, the broader sociocultural environment, as well as other contextual factors such as career stage, age, life stage, number and nature of dependents.

As such, to fully understand how to manage such employees more effectively, it is necessary to approach this from the subjective viewpoint of the precarious workers themselves. This is so because CAS ascribe meaning to their experiences retrospectively. More so, the meaning they ascribe is highly subjective, experiential, and is informed by subsequent experiences and acquired knowledge (Weick, 1995). As a result, the meaning of the experiences of WLBP among CAS is dynamic and changes over time. With this understanding, it would be detrimental for university administrators to assume that all the male and female CAS share the same experiences of WLBP. Doing so could lead to several misunderstandings between employees and employers, or even among the CAS themselves.

For instance, if a CAS feels that others' actions and behaviors in response to his/her situation is not in line with their perceptions of the severity of the situation (Weick, 1995), they may feel unsupported and undervalued at work. This has the potential to result in negative consequences such as nurturing strained workplace relationships, increasing stress among the employees in the workplace, increasing the occurrence of work-life conflicts among the staff, reducing employees' job satisfaction, and the enhancement of unhealthy perceptions of an unsupportive work-life organizational culture among the employees.

One implication of this for business is that it draws our attention to the need for organizations to equip their staff (regardless of their gender roles) with the information to deal with WLB concerns. Although this should be extended to include all the staff and stakeholders

within the organization, it is particularly important for those in managerial positions and supervisors (e.g., Deans, Heads of Departments, and Area Chairs). Such persons in leadership positions within the organization should be provided with the training and knowledge to manage their subordinates who use WLBP. As role models and key decision-makers in any organization, business managers/supervisors play a key role in transmitting organizational intentions to their subordinates, and in a situation where such a knowledge/exposure seems to be lacking, both the employees and the organization tend to suffer the consequences.

For example, when employees feel stigmatized by their colleagues or supervisors for using WLBP, the affected employees can interpret such to mean that the organization does not have their interest at heart. In turn, such perceived lack of organizational support could breed disloyalty among the employees and impact the organization's performance negatively through increased employee absenteeism, reduced job quality, reduced job performance, and increased employee turnover, to mention just a few.

Such unwanted outcomes challenge HRM practitioners to adopt family-friendly policies in the workplace such as the provision of WLBP to employees within the organization. The need for employers to provide more enlightenment and to its workforce regarding the use of WLBP becomes imperative. Such policies should be made readily available to all staff in the staff handbook. More so, periodic training exercises on WLB should be put in place to provide adequate awareness and enlightenment to all stakeholders so that they are well equipped with the information and exposure to handle such concerns. Furthermore, HRM policies should be made to reflect organizational values that encourage better WLB. Together, these documents should be updated regularly to ensure that they capture the existing challenges confronting precarious employees in their quest to balance their work and family lives.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Summary of Constructs for Studies on WLB (source: Kaiser et al., 2011)

	Examined constructs	Type of research	
		Quantitative	Qualitative
1	Work-family or work-life	189	56
2	Work-family	172	41
3	Work-life	17	15
4	Conflict/spill-over/interference (Total)	140	-
5	Conflict	113	-
6	Interference	23	-
7	Spill-over	15	-
8	Role overload	6	-
9	Two-directional conceptualization of conflict as a frame	60	7
10	Independent variable	28	3
11	Dependent variable	96	7
12	Construct development	2	-
13	Construct validation	2	-
14	Correlates	2	-
15	Mediator (conceptualised not tested)	2	-
16	Mediator (truly tested)	2	-
17	Studied of both antecedents and consequences but not conceptualized as a true mediator	4	-
18	Scale development and validation	2	-
19	Balance (including those measures as satisfaction, well-being), and functioning as:	31	33
20	a goal	-	24
21	an independent variable	4	-
22	a dependent variable	22	-
23	Construct development	1	-
24	Dependent variable - work and family satisfaction, well-being	4	-
25	Functioning	-	-
26	Facilitation/enrichment/positive spill-over	3	-



## Appendix 2: Some Antecedents of WLB

Antecedents	Researcher
1 Job demands	Hughes & Parkes, 2007; Rijswijk et al., 2004; Hill et al., 2004; Yildirim & Aycan, 2007; Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Voydanoff, 1988; Burke, 2002; Higgins et al., 2000; Higgins & Duxbury, 1992; Burke & Greenglass, 2001; Simon et al., 2004; Guest, 2002.
2 Work load	Kubzansky & Kawachi, 2000; Major et al., 2002; Woodward, 2007.
3 Work intensification	Burchell et al., 2002; Pocock et al., 2001; Prober et al., 2000; Watson et al., 2003.
4 Home demands	Rijswijk et al., 2004; Abbott et al., 1998; Borrill & Kidd, 1994; Major et al., 2002; Guest, 2002.
5 Childcare responsibility	Dalton 1993; Benin & Nienstedt, 1985; Major et al., 2002; Jones & McKenna, 2002;
6 Long hours	Drew & Murtagh, 2005; Hughes & Parkes, 2007; Brett & Stroh, 2003; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Hooff et al., 2006; Burke, 2002; Higgins et al., 2000; Higgins & Duxbury 1992; Saltzstein et al., 2001; Karasek et al., 1987; Rutherford 2001; Greenberg & Grunberg, 1995; Major et al., 2002; Evenson, 1997; Hochschild, 1997; Hubbard, 1997; Shapiro, 1997; Jones & McKenna, 2002.
7 Work-time control	Aryee et al., 1992; Fox & Dwyer, 1999; Frone et al., 1997; Greenhaus et al., 1987; Gutek et al., 1991; Izraeli, 1993; O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1996; Wallace, 1997, 1999; Geurts et al., 2009.
8 Job involvement	Major et al., 2002; Adams et al., 1996; Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Greenhaus, Parasuraman et al., 1989; Wley, 1987; Frone et al., 1992; Beutell & O' Hare, 1987.
9 Career stage	Luk, 2002; Whitehouse et al., 2007; Haden et al., 2008; Guest, 2002; Drew & Murtagh, 2005.
10 Work culture	Hyman et al., 2002; Divya et al., 2010; Guest, 2002; Bragger et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 1999; Thompson & Prottas, 2005; Voydanoff, 2005; Major & Cleveland, 2007; Major et al., 2008.
11 Irregular work schedule	Yildirim & Aycan, 2007; Burke & Greenglass, 2001; Simon et al., 2004; Karasek et al., 1987.
12 Supervisory support	Yildirim & Aycan, 2007; Anderson et al., 2002; Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Duxbury & Higgins, 1994; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Eby et al., 2002; Glynn et al., 2002; Allen, 2001; Goff et al., 1990; Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Moen & Yu, 2000; Thompson & Prottas, 2005; Major et al., 2008.
13 Social support	Beehr & McGrath, 1992; Caplan et al., 1975; McIntosh, 1991; Kaufmann & Beehr, 1986; Kahn & Byosiere, 1991; LaRocco et al., 1980; Allen, 2001; Goff et al., 1990; Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Glass & Finley, 2002.
14 Age	Martins et al., 2002; Haden et al., 2008; Guest, 2002;
15 Gender	Martins et al., 2002; Chapman, 2004; Haden et al, 2008; Guest, 2002; Wilson, 2005; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001; Felstead et al., 2002; White et al, 2003.
16 Marital status	Bando, 2002; Becker, 1981; Tsut suit, 2005; Jones & McKenna, 2002; Dex and Scheibl, 2001; Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Rotondo et al., 2003.
17 Dual working couple	Bharat, 2003; Rajadhyaksh & Bhatnagar, 2000; Komaraju, 1997; Sekaran, 1992.
18 Locus of control	Noor, 2002; Noor, 2006; Andreassi & Thompson, 2009.

### Appendix 3: Some Outcomes of Work-Life Imbalance

Outcomes	Researcher
1 Alcohol use	Eby et al., 2002; Frone et al., 1993.
2 Anxiety and depression	Schieman et al., 2003; Eby et al., 2002; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Kinnunen et al., 2003; Frone, 2000; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003.
3 Burnout	Bacharach et al., 1991; Burke, 1988; Geurts et al., 1999; Allen et al., 2000.
4 Commitment	Wang & Walumbwa, 2007; Leonard, 1998; Tenbrunsel et al., 1995; Gordon & Whelan, 1998; Wiley, 1987; Adams et al., 1996.
5 Destructive parenting and poor family life	Stewart & Barling, 1996; Hughes & Parkes, 2007; Allen et al., 2000; Eby, 2005; Oudge et al., 2006.
6 Employee engagement	Lockwood, 2006; Martel, 2003; Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2007.
7 Employee turnover	Wang & Walumbwa, 2007; Dagger & Sweeney, 2006; Mulvaney et al., 2006; Doherty, 2004; Maxwell, 2005; Griffeth et al., 2000; Steel, 2002; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Eby et al., 2005; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2007; Simon et al., 2004; Hughes & ozionelos, 2007.
8 Fatty food consumption	Allen & Armstrong, 2006.
9 General strain and Stress	Lange, 2003; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003; Major et al., 2002; Gallinsky, 2005; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001.
10 Job satisfaction	Yildirim & Aycan, 2007; Eby et al., 2002; Adams et al., 1996; Burke & McKeen, 1988; Rice et al., 1992; Sekaran, 1985; Bamundo & Kopelman, 1980.
11 Life satisfaction	Rice et al., 1992; Allen et al., 2000; Eby et al., 2002,2005; Yildirim and Aycan, 2007; Hill, 2005.
12 Loyalty	Breaugh & Frye, 2007; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Lambert, 2000.
13 Organizational citizenship behaviour	Breaugh & Frye, 2004; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Lambert, 2000; Gordon et al., 2007; Kopelman et al., 2006; Wang & Verma, 2009.
14 Performance	Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000; Konrad & Mangel, 2000; Cappelli, 2000.
15 Physical ailments and lower energy level	Kinnunen et al., 2006; Noor, 2003; Jansen et al., 2003; Demerouti, 2007; Lange, 2003; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003; Hyman et al., 2003; Googins, 1991.
16 Quality service	Hogarth et al., 2000; Lach, 1999.
17 Recruitment	Greenhaus & Parasuraman; 1997, 1999; Hall & Parker, 1993; Lobel & Kossek, 1996; Lobel, 1999.

## Appendix 4: Cover Letter



### Research Title

#### **Precarious Work, Gender roles, and the use of Work-Life Balance Programs in Academia**

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study about your experience with work-life balance programs at the University of Lethbridge. The information collected from this study will be presented in a Master's thesis, in addition to other scholarly publications and presentations (no personal identification will be disclosed).

This research will **require about 60 minutes of your time** for a one-on-one interview at a mutually agreed upon time and location. During this time, you will be interviewed about your views on the influence of precarious work on the use of work-life balance programs and how this might be influenced by your role as a male or female. The interview will be audio-recorded and notes will be taken during the interview. I may also contact you later to ask some follow-up questions or to seek your opinions about my understanding and interpretation of the data.

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, you will be contributing to a better understanding of the influence of gender roles and precarious work on the use of work-life balance programs. In addition, there are no anticipated risks related to this research. **Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and your continued participation should be as informed as in your initial consent**, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. You may choose not to answer any question or you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. If you do this, all information you have provided will be destroyed.

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and confidentiality. The transcription of the interview will be done by me. Only my thesis supervisor (Dr. Kelly Williams-Whitt) and I will have access to the audio recording and transcription. All data collected in this study will be kept in a password-protected computer. Each transcript will be edited to remove or mask any personal identifying information that can be linked to you. The audio recording will not be used for any purpose other than data collection. The transcript and audio recording will be destroyed once I have completed my Master's thesis for this research. The thesis and any other presentations will not contain any mention of your name and only pseudonyms will be used for any of your quotations.

The results from this study may be presented in scholarly publications and presentations. However, at no time will your name or any identifying information be revealed to anyone. If you wish to receive a summary of the results from this study, or should you require any additional information about this study, kindly contact me directly via email using [jackson.enoh@uleth.ca](mailto:jackson.enoh@uleth.ca) or my Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Kelly Williams-Whitt at [kelly.williams@uleth.ca](mailto:kelly.williams@uleth.ca) Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge (Phone: 403-329-2747 or email: [research.services@uleth.ca](mailto:research.services@uleth.ca)). This research project has been reviewed for ethical acceptability and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Subject Research Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

**Jackson Enoh**

MSc. Student,  
Dhillon School of Business,  
University of Lethbridge,  
4401 University Drive, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4.  
e-mail: [jackson.enoh@uleth.ca](mailto:jackson.enoh@uleth.ca)

## Appendix 5: Consent Form

### RESEARCH PARTICIPANT'S ENDORSEMENT

I have read the above information regarding this research on Precarious Work, Gender roles, and the use of WLBP's in Academia, and consent to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Printed Name of Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

I have read the above information regarding this research on Precarious Work, Gender roles, and the use of WLBP's in Academia, and I agree to the audio recording of the interview. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records and reference.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Printed Name of Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Printed Name of Researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

## Appendix 6: Recruitment e-mail

Dear Volunteer,

My name is Jackson Enoh. I am a MSc. (Mgt.) candidate at the Dhillon School of Business, University of Lethbridge, Alberta.

I am inviting you to participate in a face-to-face interview as part of my MSc. (Mgt.) research titled Precarious Work, Gender roles, and the use of Work-life Balance Programs in Academia. The purpose of this interview is to assist me in understanding the influence of precarious working conditions and gender roles on the use of work-life balance programs. The Human Subject Research Committee of The University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada has approved this study.

To participate in this research, you must be an English-speaking non-tenured faculty member who is over the age of 18 and currently works as either a **sessional instructor, post-doctoral fellow, or contract instructor/researcher** with the University of Lethbridge, Alberta. This will be a unique opportunity for you to tell your own story in the way that only you can and it will also add to our knowledge of the use of work-life balance programs in temporary or contract positions at universities here in Canada.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me using the email address below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

**Jackson Enoh**

MSc. Student,

Dhillon School of Business, University of Lethbridge,  
4401 University Drive, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4.

e-mail: [jackson.enoh@uleth.ca](mailto:jackson.enoh@uleth.ca)

Appendix 7: Recruitment Poster

Are you a

**Probationary Contract Staff,  
Term/Contract Academic Staff,  
Sessional Lecturer, or  
Post-Doctoral Fellow**

here at the University of Lethbridge?

**If yes, would you be interested in sharing your views about  
how this impacts your work-life balance?**

**Research Title**

**“Precarious Work, Gender-roles  
and Work-Life Balance Programs  
in Academia”**

To participate, please contact the primary researcher:

**Jackson Enoh**

MSc.(Mgt.) Student  
Dhillon School of Business  
University of Lethbridge  
(email: [jackson.enoh@uleth.ca](mailto:jackson.enoh@uleth.ca))



University of  
**Lethbridge**

UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE  
**DHILLON**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

## Appendix 8: Participant's Demographic Information Template

Preferred pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Which of the following gender-roles do you mostly identify with?</b>	<input type="radio"/> male <input type="radio"/> female <input type="radio"/> non-binary
<b>How old are you?</b>	<input type="radio"/> 18-24 yrs. <input type="radio"/> 25-34 yrs. <input type="radio"/> 35-44 yrs. <input type="radio"/> 45-54 yrs. <input type="radio"/> over 54 yrs.
<b>Job level</b>	<input type="radio"/> post-doctoral fellow <input type="radio"/> sessional instructor <input type="radio"/> contract instructor or researcher
<b>How long have you been teaching at the University of Lethbridge?</b>	<input type="radio"/> less than 1 yr. <input type="radio"/> 1-5 yrs. <input type="radio"/> 6-10 yrs. <input type="radio"/> 11- 20 yrs. <input type="radio"/> Over 20 yrs.
<b>How many hours per week do you currently work at the University of Lethbridge?</b>	
<b>Do you also work for other organizations? If yes, please tell me the type of organization and about how many hours per week you work there.</b>	
<b>Are you currently married, living with a partner, or living alone?</b>	<input type="radio"/> single <input type="radio"/> married <input type="radio"/> separated <input type="radio"/> divorced <input type="radio"/> co-habitation <input type="radio"/> widowed
<b>If you live with a spouse or partner, is one of you more responsible than the other for contributing to household financial resources, or are you about equal?</b>	
<b>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</b>	<input type="radio"/> Master's degree <input type="radio"/> Doctorate degree
<b>Do you have children? If yes, how many and how old are they?</b>	<input type="radio"/> none <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 or more <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say
<b>Do you have other people who depend on your for financial support or caregiving?</b>	<input type="radio"/> none <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 or more <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say
<b>If yes, who are these people( parents, grandparents, siblings, others)</b>	



## Appendix 9: Interview Questionnaire

Date/month/year:

Interview Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Participant,

Thank you once again for taking out the time from your busy schedule to participate in this interview. I appreciate that you have agreed to take part in this research. My name is Jackson Enoh and I am a second-year master's degree student here at the University of Lethbridge conducting a research on **Precarious Work, Gender roles, and the use of Work-Life Balance Programs in Academia**. This research is a part of my final thesis for a Master of Science degree in Management at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Do you have any questions before we begin? I will turn on the digital audio recorder right now.

Thank you.

### **Q.1. Precarious work**

How would you describe your current job position, is it precarious, or not? If yes, why, if not, why not?  
How do you feel about your current job security here at the university?

Tell me how your gender role influences your view of job security here at the university?

What can the university do regarding your job security and work-life balance?

### **Q.2. Gender roles and work-life balance programs**

Tell me what the term gender role means to you?  
Tell me what work-life balance means to you?

How does your gender role influence your definition of work-life balance?

How would your definition of WLB have been different if you were not a CAS (i.e., if you were employed on a tenure-track basis)?

### **Q.3. Experiences of U of L's work-life balance programs**

What work-life balance programs do you or have you used here at the university?

How does your gender role influence the choice of work-life balance programs that you use presently/or have used in the past?

How does your CAS status influence your choice (and use) of work-life balance programs?

### **Q.4. Work-life's impact on family life**

Tell me about a time when your work here impacted your family-life.

### **Q.5. Family-life's impact on work**

Tell me about a time when your family-life impacted your work here.

### **Q.6. Work and family life separation strategies**

What strategies do you use to separate your work and family life?  
How does your gender

role influence your choice of strategies that you use to separate your work and family life?

How does your non-tenured employment status influence your choice of strategies that you use to separate your work and family life?

What factors make it difficult for you to separate your work and family life?

### **Q.7. Work and family life integration strategies**

What strategies do you use to integrate your work and family life?  
How does your gender role influence your choice of strategies that you use to integrate your work and family life?

How does your non-tenured status influence your choice of strategies that you use to integrate your work and family life?

What factors make it difficult for you to integrate your work and family life?

### **Q.8. Precarious work, culture, and gender roles**

Tell me how your cultural background influences your gender role?  
How would you describe the university's work-family culture?

How does gender role influence the university's work-family culture?

## Appendix 10: Observation Notes

<b>Participant's pseudonym</b>	
1	<p><b>Al</b> identifies as the default parent, has municipality council responsibilities where he works for over 40 hours weekly, enjoys domestic work even as a male, has a child with reduced mobility, drums as a form of relaxation, believes the job is filled with uncertainty, very conscious of WLB, advocates that 'self' comes first, imposter syndrome, experienced caregiver, council work is viewed as a commitment to self more than anything else, enjoys Dept. Chair support, constantly experiences overlap of public expectations with university work, contract ends this term. Very enthusiastic.</p>
2	<p><b>Amy</b> Calm disposition. born to parents in academia, other jobs include working at the College and the Legislative Assembly, over 19 years in marriage with two children, identifies as the default parent, views WLB as the alternation of quantity and quality of life, WLB is achieved by personality and not just monetarily, disappointed at the way the WLB fair was organized by the university, calls for careful work scheduling for CAS e.g., constantly changing schedule every four months affects participation in children activities mostly on the family side, stresses the need for CAS to be paid for performing administrative work like meeting with students, expectations management, concerned with the limited access to the library, advocates for office job fun events strictly for women alone, views the work contract as a gift that should be cherished, views uncertainty as a big deal, considers staff evaluation by students as being gender- and racially-biased, frowns at last-minute contracts and calls for salary bumps for long-serving CAS.</p>
3	<p><b>Cyclist</b> interests beyond work, not conformed to original culture of the past, views men as breadwinners, upbringing as first child, opinion of WLB has been formed from watching others go through WLB, involved with recreational clubs, views academic publications as the major yardstick for measuring academic success as a CAS, nuclear family structure is more egalitarian, demands that expectations should be set clearly by each Department in the University, very open to talk about her experience. Calm and collected personality.</p>
4	<p><b>Elaine</b> Passionate and very keen on precarious work, bothered about continuity and budget, complained about stress, experienced panic attack during the first semester here, concerned that more WLB services were geared toward students and not staff, of the view that both parties (employees and employers) are responsible for WLB, credits the Teaching &amp; Learning Centre for their support, enjoys professional development grants, emphasizes on heavy workload in excess of 40 hours per week for a CAS.</p>

5	<b>Lecanne</b>	Has taught introduction to women in politics since 2009, works for a government organization, provides over 70% of family income, PhD. candidate (All but Dissertation), caters for a 20-year old niece. Although showing a reserved personality, very concerned.
6	<b>Olen</b>	Articulate and quite compelling. puts in 40-50 hrs of work weekly, to him family always comes first, prefers not to work on weekends in order to spend some quality time with family, feedback from family members is very important, has witnessed what colleagues without WLB face over the years.
7	<b>Pilot</b>	the value of WLB is more personality-driven, WLB enables higher productivity, values education and exposure, partner is more dominant in the relationship and what goes on in the home, very protective of work-time, avoids overtime as much as possible, job insecurity is a big issue as this is linked to cash flow and the ability to remain steady and put out a good job, individual's culture places strong emphasis on earning power, job security, family values. A bit nervous personality.
8	<b>River</b>	Anxious at first but quite settled in later. practising graphic artist, freelance illustrator, filmmaker, makeup artist, caters for both parents during the week and feels guilty when not able to do so, has experienced poor self-esteem and negative relationship issues, of the opinion that the CAS job prevents "big moves", for this person home-life is work-life, does not enjoy the idea of retirement, marked over 100 papers, each with 2000 words over the previous Christmas holidays, has benefited from travel grants to display artwork at national conferences.
9	<b>Rose</b>	Certified fitness instructor in Canada for 8-years, single, responsible for aging parents' upkeep, lives close to the university, emphasizes on the need for optics, would like to see more WLBP's for staff, and obtains resources from Teaching Centre and IT departments, Public Health expert...very passionate about the research topic.
10	<b>Sportsman</b>	initial notion and view of WLB came from observing close friends, currently required to travel every other weekend to be with family, high demand on health and job output, back pain consistent with poor sitting/standing posture while at work, very open and willing to discuss personal experience and use of WLBP's, claims that expectations were communicated clearly at the time of being hired, but not afterwards. Composed and quite expressive about the topic.

## Appendix 11: Audit Trail

Issue	Action	Remarks	Started	Completed
Email invitations were sent to volunteers via ULFA (University of Lethbridge Faculty Association)	Administrative Manager, Health Sciences - Dean's Office; met with ULFAs Executive Director	promised to get back to me after consultations with her boss, John. Also suggested I read the CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers) report, see <a href="https://www.caut.ca/latest/2018/09/caut-releases-results-first-national-survey-contract-academic-staff">https://www.caut.ca/latest/2018/09/caut-releases-results-first-national-survey-contract-academic-staff</a> ; <a href="https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf">https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf</a> ;	31-Aug-18	31-Aug-18
Recruitment poster placed on designated noticeboards across the University		completed	31-Aug-18	31-Aug-18
Search for U of Ls WLB policy document	Sent an email to a Senior HR Consultant; met with the U of L's Wellness & Recognition Manager	U of L does not have an actual document on WLB except for the "People Plan", a not-too comprehensive document on WLB. According to a Senior HR Consultant with the university, "The People Plan is the most recent 'finalized' document that is available. There are sub committees that have branched out from the People Plan that are discussing other documents, but at this point nothing has been finalized as so I can't release any of that information" (email from a Senior HR Consultant with the university, September 4, 2018).	31-Aug-18	31-Aug-18
Access to CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers) 2017 survey results	sent an email to CAUT's Research Officer, requesting for same survey report	Survey results were published on Tuesday September 4, 2018. Available online at <a href="https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf">https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/cas_report.pdf</a>	03-Sep-18	04-Sep-18
Pilot interviews	Pilot interviews conducted	test phase conducted on campus...the two participants were encouraged to begin with providing answers to few ice-breaker questions to set the tone for the rest of the pilot interview process.	01-Sep-18	02-Sep-18
Interview 1	first interview conducted	conducted on campus	03-Sep-18	03-Sep-18
Sent Invitation emails to Area Chairs & Deans	recruitment emails plus poster	some Chairs/Dean forwarded my email to prospective participants. Favorable response from others.	06-Sep-18	06-Sep-18
Interview 2	second interview conducted	conducted on campus	07-Sep-18	07-Sep-18
Interview 3	third interview conducted	This interview took place off-campus at the instance of the research participant involved	12-Sep-18	12-Sep-18
Interview 4	fourth interview conducted	conducted on campus	13-Sep-18	13-Sep-18
Phone call with thesis supervisor	I had serious concerns about the timing of the interviews and based on this I requested to talk about this concern with my Thesis Supervisor.	I was concerned about the time it was taking to schedule interviews with prospective participants since the interview sessions were designed to suit their availability. After my phone conversation with my thesis supervisor, I was advised to suspend further data gathering until I had completed an initial analysis of the interviews that I had conducted previously. This I did.	19-Sep-18	19-Sep-18
Reformatted the recruitment poster		The purpose of this was to ensure that my research captured the right research participants. The previous recruitment poster was worded in a way that excluded other qualified participants. The updated version showed the words "Probationary Contract Staff, Term/Contract Academic Staff, Sessional Lecturer, or Post-Doctoral Fellow"	21-Sep-18	21-Sep-18

Initial coding		As per my phone conversation with my thesis supervisor on the 19th of September 2018, after a series of deep reflections on the contents of the data, I commenced the initial coding of the first-four interview manuscripts. The results yielded some emerging themes that were captured into nodes.	22-Sep-18	13-Oct-18
Sharing the findings of my initial coding with my Thesis Supervisor		to ensure an efficient and seamless intercoder reliability process	13-Oct-18	20-Oct-18
Received initial feedback from my Thesis Supervisor	Thesis Supervisor instructed me to put all the initial codes into the nodes icon for a better understanding of my thought process	Node placement into icons made it possible to have a more visual understanding of how interconnected the initial emerging categories were related	22-Oct-18	27-Oct-18
My Thesis Supervisor suggests that I read some more about how to conduct phenomenological analysis and also make sure that I was using these techniques in my analysis going forward.			27-Oct	
My Thesis Supervisor emphasized the need for me to go much deeper with my coding, as my initial attempt appeared to have missed some vital ideas and categories	To achieve more depth and scope in my analysis, I adopted to code line-by-line in addition to reading for a comprehensive meaning as a whole as shown in <a href="https://research.family.med.ubc.ca/files/2012/03/TPA_Smith_Osborne21632.pdf">https://research.family.med.ubc.ca/files/2012/03/TPA_Smith_Osborne21632.pdf</a> .	Coding procedure: I adopted the general analytical procedures for phenomenological studies outlined by Giorgi (2009) as follows: (1) reading for a sense of the whole; (2) differentiating the data into meaningful units; (3) reflecting on the psychological significance of each unit, and (4) clarifying the psychological structure(s) of the phenomenon. More so, Seeing afresh, Dwelling, Explicating, helped me a lot. Applying this process during coding analysis yielded positive results as I was able to find more themes that I had missed initially.	06-Nov	
Completed initial analysis of the first set of interviews using Nvivo		The initial analysis helped uncover the need to restructure the interview questionnaire to capture a more straight-forward response from subsequent research participants going forward. With the approval of my Thesis Supervisor, I restructured the interview questionnaire to effectively address the concerns of the Research Questions.		end of December 2018
Restructured interview questionnaire becomes effective		updated interview questionnaire in use	02-Jan-19	24-Jan-19
Interview 5	fifth interview conducted	conducted on campus	03-Jan-19	03-Jan-19
Interview 6	sixth interview conducted	conducted on campus	07-Jan-19	07-Jan-19
Interview 7	seventh interview conducted	conducted off-campus	10-Jan-19	10-Jan-19
Interview 8	eighth interview conducted	conducted on campus	14-Jan-19	14-Jan-19
Met with four research participants to verify the contents of their respective interview transcripts		member-checks with selected participants	15-Jan-19	17-Mar-19
Interview 9	ninth interview conducted	conducted on campus	18-Jan-19	18-Jan-19
Interview 10	tenth interview conducted	conducted on campus, post-analysis shows that saturation has been attained at this point.	24-Jan-19	24-Jan-19
Post-saturation analysis		post-saturation comprehensive data analysis and detailed writing of the final report	25-Jan-19	24-Apr-19