



This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights and duplication or sale of all or part is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for research, private study, criticism/review or educational purposes. Electronic or print copies are for your own personal, non-commercial use and shall not be passed to any other individual. No quotation may be published without proper acknowledgement. For any other use, or to quote extensively from the work, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder/s.

**“My husband knows what is best for me...”: An exploration of
educated Saudi women’s views towards domestic violence**

Maha Nahshal

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Social Work**

Keele University

December 2018

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Dedicated to the memory of my beloved father, whose blessings have brought me this far...

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence, as we know from existing literature, is an ancient and global phenomenon (United Nations Report, 1970-90, 1991; World Health Organisation, 2005; Kaur & Garg, 2008). However, in Saudi Arabia, the problem of domestic violence only came under the spotlight about a decade ago, after a famous TV presenter, publicly came forward when her husband brutally abused her (Vallis, 2004). At the time, she was considered quite the rebel as she broke the socio-cultural taboo of Saudi women suffering violence in silence. What followed was a storm of discussion and debate about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia, and in its wake, domestic violence finally found its way in Saudi vocabulary. However, despite the increasing awareness, there is still a limited and insufficient studies on domestic violence in Saudi Arabia (Fikree and Bhatti 1999; Haj-Yahia 2002; Yount 2005; Al-Atrushi et al 2013).

Consequently, this research seeks to shed light on how educated Saudi women view domestic violence in Saudi Arabia as a socio-cultural problem, which is characterized by a unique family culture, informed by distinctive traditions of gender differentiation and corresponding gendered power structures, including the practice of male guardianship, both in the public and private spheres. To explore this problem in depth, thirty well-educated Saudi women were asked to participate in a qualitative study that employed phenomenology to ascertain their thoughts and feelings on domestic violence. To collect this data, the semi-structured interview method was determined to be the most effective for coding and thematising data, thus allowing for both inductive and deductive analysis, and providing scope to focus on interpretations and its links between social contexts.

This study illuminates some of the ways that Saudi culture, which is strict, conservative

and orthodox, is influenced by the misuse of religion, family socialisation practices, patriarchy and societal attitudes to contribute to a fairly unique experience and phenomenon of domestic violence. Saudi society actively encourages traditional gender roles, resulting in inequality between men and women. Consequently, Saudi women are deprived of their rights through citizenship, especially by the practice of male guardianship, which leaves them confined to the private sphere, without autonomy and dependent on males, thus giving men unlimited space to commit acts of domestic violence against women whilst women are confined to spaces and have limited avenues to vocalize their suffering.

The study also draws attention to the positive steps that the Saudi government has taken within the last ten years to give women more autonomy, who would then be able to free themselves from domestic violence. The empowerment of Saudi women has been a gradual and systematic process, including increased academic and professional opportunities and involvement in the decision-making process on a state level. Moreover, Saudi women are now actively fighting for their rights, especially the right to be a full citizen without dependency on the male.

The findings in this research have the potential to bring further positive changes to the status of women in Saudi Arabia. Firstly, it establishes the need for continued and further in-depth investigation of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, it can help inform and guide the activists and campaigners for women's rights and equality in Saudi Arabia. Lastly, it can aid policy- and decision-makers to develop effective strategies to address domestic violence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These last few years have been both an incredible and intense experience, and today, I finally complete this labour of love (and loathing) that I began in the March of 2014. The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without many a person and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

Firstly, I would like to thank Keele University for the opportunity of pursuing my doctorate. Secondly, I would like to thank King Abdullahaziz University who supported me during my four years at Keele. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Bureau of Culture, Saudi Arabia in London without whom travelling between Saudi Arabia and England would have been a near enough nightmare.

I would especially like to thank Sally Findlow, my supervisor, because without her this dissertation would not have been possible. Her steadfast guidance and expertise has contributed immeasurably to this thesis. Thanks to her constant and consistent feedback, recommendations and advice, this thesis would be a far cry from being complete or focused. From the weekly meetings to the seemingly excruciating write-ups as part of my assignments, Sally's involvement has been invaluable, and she has been my biggest support at the university.

Though at the time I found the entire process laborious, Sally constantly gave me recommendations that made the writing process a great deal easier and ensured that I would be confident at the time of my viva. From enforcing the literature review write-ups from the onset to the data analysis process which she insisted be completed before the formal writing process began, though excruciating at the time, made the writing and drafting process a breeze and for that I am forever obliged to Sally.

I would like to thank Eman Kazmi who patiently advised me during my study, like whenever I became disheartened at the slow progress of my dissertation or an obstacle seemed unsurmountable. She kept from panicking and being frazzled whenever a new challenge presented itself and helped me to charge through the obstacles and hurdles. I have the deepest appreciation and gratitude for Eman because of the unlimited support and encouragement throughout this journey.

A huge thank you to two of my brothers, Ahmad and Abdul Qadir, who have taken care of our mother in my absence, which has been instrumental in reducing my stress because I know my mother is in good and safe hands, who love her as much as I do. Likewise, I want to express my sincerest gratitude to Jamilla whose promise to take care of my mother as her own was comforting and reassuring whenever I felt that I had abandoned my mother in favour of my education. My brothers continued support and care towards my mother and Jamilla's promise have been invaluable during these four years and I cannot thank them enough,

Next, I am truly grateful for my children, Mohammed, Bader and Maan because in my pursuit of higher education, my sons have gone through a rigmarole in terms of their education and adapted to whatever new challenges that my circumstances have presented to them. Regardless of the difficulties they have faced, they have continued to support me in my endeavours without much complaint.

The person I want thank next is my husband. In fact, I don't think I have the words to express how grateful and indebted I am to him and even if I did, I don't think he will ever be able to understand the magnitude of what he has done for me, right from supporting me during my undergraduate to degree to taking sabbaticals from to accompany me when I had to study abroad. I don't think there any words that can convey the gravitas and depth of what I feel about his contributions to my successes. Even I if I wrote a hundred pages,

it would fall short so for now I can only settle for saying ‘Thank you’.

The person I want to thank next is my mother. Some children are unable to cut their umbilical cords and the same has been for me but it was my mother who took it upon herself to encourage and push me to continue striving for more in life. Despite our devotion and deep-rooted attachment to one another, my mother, with a heavy heart, sacrificed the time she wanted to spend with me to push me to pursue a life that would lead to the betterment of my family and me. Even when she was critically ill and desperately wanted me by her side, my mother would rally her spirits to ensure that I did not feel for guilty for leaving and a resentment towards my education. As with my husband, I do not think there are enough strong enough words to convey the depth and breadth of my gratitude.

Most importantly, I would like to thank Allah (Glory be to Him) without whom I could not do anything. I thank Allah (GBTH) for writing such a beautiful destiny for me, a life where I am able to contribute to the betterment of society. Without Allah (GBTH), I would not have been able to finish this thesis because he surrounded me with people who were supportive, and he listened to me when I was at my lowest and ready to give up and showed the me the way forward.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables	xii
List of Appendices	xiii
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF SAUDI ARABIA	3
1.2 RATIONALE FOR STUDY	8
1.3 AIMS	9
1.4 THESIS STRUCTURE.....	10
2 Domestic Violence: Definitions, Prevalence & Factors, and the State Response	15
2.1 BACKGROUND.....	15
2.2 WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	16
2.3 THE NATURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	18
2.4 CONTROL: AT THE HEART OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR A FORM OF IT?.....	23
2.5 PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	24
2.5.1 <i>Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Western Countries</i>	26
2.5.2 <i>Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Arab Countries</i>	28
2.5.3 <i>Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Saudi Arabia</i>	30
2.6 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	33
2.6.1 <i>Culture</i>	33
2.6.2 <i>Socioeconomic Status & Education</i>	35
2.6.3 <i>Family History</i>	37
2.6.4 <i>Consumption of Alcohol & Drugs</i>	39
2.7 STATE RESPONSE & LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	39
2.7.1 <i>UK State Response to Domestic Violence in England and Wales</i>	40
2.7.2 <i>Ireland State Response to Domestic Violence</i>	44
2.7.3 <i>Saudi Arabia State Response to Domestic Violence</i>	47
2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY	57
3 Culture, Gender Inequality & Citizenship	59
3.1 INTRODUCTION	59
3.2 CULTURE	60
3.2.1 <i>Misuse & Misrepresentation of Religion</i>	61
3.2.2 <i>Socialisation</i>	64
3.2.3 <i>Patriarchy</i>	66
3.2.4 <i>Societal Attitudes</i>	70
3.3 GENDER INEQUALITY AND CITIZENSHIP.....	73
3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY	83

4	Methodology	85
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	85
4.2	APPROACH	85
4.2.1	<i>Methods</i>	89
4.2.2	<i>Interviewing</i>	89
4.2.3	<i>Pilot Study</i>	91
4.2.4	<i>Sampling</i>	92
4.3	ENTERING THE FIELD	93
4.3.1	<i>Data Gathering</i>	94
4.3.2	<i>Reliability & Validity</i>	96
4.3.3	<i>The Insider & the Outsider</i>	97
4.3.4	<i>Reflexivity</i>	98
4.4	DATA COLLECTION	99
4.4.1	<i>Recording</i>	100
4.4.2	<i>Analysis</i>	100
4.5	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	106
4.5.1	<i>Consent</i>	106
4.5.2	<i>Confidentiality</i>	108
4.5.3	<i>Accountability</i>	109
4.6	INTERVIEW OUTLINE.....	110
4.7	THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	113
4.8	CONCLUSION.....	114
5	An Educated Saudi Woman’s View on Domestic Violence in Saudi Arabia.....	115
5.1	DEFINING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.....	117
5.2	THE POSITION OF CONTROL WITHIN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN SAUDI ARABIA	119
5.2.1	<i>Economic Violence</i>	121
5.2.2	<i>Isolation</i>	123
5.3	WOMEN’S PERCEPTION OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE	124
5.4	WOMEN’S PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE	127
5.5	WOMEN’S PERCEPTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE	131
5.5.1	<i>Manifestations of Psychological Violence</i>	132
5.6	WOMEN’S ATTITUDES TOWARDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	134
5.7	THE PERSISTENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	138
5.7.1	<i>Professional Encounters</i>	139
5.7.2	<i>Personal Encounters</i>	140
5.8	CONCLUSION.....	153
6	Factors Attributed to Domestic Violence: An Educated Saudi Woman’s View	156
6.1	SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES	156
6.1.1	<i>Religion's Stance towards Domestic Violence</i>	157
6.1.2	<i>Male Dominance</i>	165
6.1.3	<i>The Gender Role Doctrines during Upbringing</i>	170
6.1.4	<i>Societal Inclination that Perpetuate Domestic Violence</i>	175

6.2	THE GENDER GAP	187
6.2.1	<i>In the Family Unit</i>	189
6.2.2	<i>In Marital Relationships</i>	191
6.2.3	<i>In the Education System</i>	192
6.2.4	<i>In Society's Attitudes towards Women's Accomplishment</i>	194
6.2.5	<i>In the Workplace</i>	196
6.3	THE MALE GUARDIANSHIP SYSTEM.....	197
6.3.1	<i>Male Guardianship: A Form of Domestic Violence in Itself?</i>	198
6.4	CONCLUSION.....	208
7	Saudi Women's Views: State's Response to Domestic Violence.....	211
7.1	THE EFFECTIVENESS AND ADEQUACY OF THE STATE RESPONSE	211
7.1.1	<i>Criminalisation & Emergence of Protection Organisations</i>	212
7.1.2	<i>Changes in the Legal System in the Favour of Women</i>	215
7.2	THE LIMITATIONS & INADEQUACIES OF THE STATE RESPONSE.....	218
7.2.1	<i>Legislative Obstacles in Cases of Domestic Violence</i>	218
7.2.2	<i>Procedural Hindrances in Cases of Domestic Violence</i>	224
7.2.3	<i>Unsuitable Shelters</i>	226
7.3	WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF EMPOWERING SAUDI WOMEN	229
7.3.1	<i>Increasing Opportunities in Higher Education</i>	230
7.3.2	<i>Increasing Work Opportunities</i>	231
7.3.3	<i>Involving Women in the Decision-Making Process</i>	233
7.4	EMPOWERMENT & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: SAUDI WOMEN'S REFLECTIONS ...	235
7.4.1	<i>Awareness as a Tool for Empowering Women</i>	235
7.4.2	<i>Empowering Women Leads to them Exercising their Rights</i>	238
7.4.3	<i>Exercising Rights as a Route to Change</i>	241
7.5	CONCLUSION.....	242
8	Conclusion	245
8.1	CONCLUDING REMARKS	245
8.2	EVALUATION OF THE STUDY METHOD	253
8.2.1	<i>The Strengths of the Study</i>	253
8.3	AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE	254
8.3.1	<i>Further Recommendations for Domestic Violence Service Providers..</i>	254
8.3.2	<i>Further Recommendations for Raising Awareness through Education</i>	255
8.3.3	<i>Further Recommendations for the Development of Social Policy</i>	258
8.4	EMERGING THEMES FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION	259
8.4.1	<i>Women as Hindrance to Themselves to be Free from Violence</i>	260
8.4.2	<i>Tokenism in Saudi Arabia</i>	260
8.5	RESEARCHER'S FUTURE	261
	Bibliography.....	262
	Appendices.....	312
	Appendix A: Sample of Transcribing and Translation	313
	Appendix B: Sample of Coding Process	333
	Appendix C: Keele University Ethical Approval	339

Appendix D: Invitation Letter to Participants.....	341
Appendix E: Information Sheet & Consent Forms.....	343
Appendix F: Reply Slip.....	350
Appendix G: Interview guide.....	351
Appendix H: Images for the interviewees.....	355

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: PARTICIPANT PROFILE	115
TABLE 2. AWARENESS & DISCUSSION OF THE TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	119

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBING AND TRANSLATION	313
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF CODING PROCESS	333
APPENDIX C: KEELE UNIVERSITY ETHICAL APPROVAL	339
APPENDIX D: INVITATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS	341
APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORMS	343
APPENDIX F: REPLY SLIP	350
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE	351
APPENDIX H: IMAGES FOR THE INTERVIEWEES	355

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the thoughts and feelings of well-educated Saudi women about the problem of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. Despite recent reforms, Saudi culture is still strict, conservative and traditional, so much so that what could be considered a community/public affair elsewhere and open for deliberation to get a solution continues to be a private matter between husband and wife. It has been argued that this leads to a continuation of violence against women and leaves them suffering in silence (Eldoseri, Tufts, Zhang & Fish, 2014; Al Dosary, 2016; Alhabdan, 2015). For this to change, the discussion of domestic violence has to come out into the open and research is an avenue for that. That is what this study seeks to do.

One important change in Saudi Arabia, however, is the mass higher education of women (Hamdan, 2005; Abouammoh, Smith & Duwais, 2014). Undoubtedly, the links between education and awareness of political voice and citizenship rights are well established (Hoskins, d'Hombres & Campbell, 2008; Sahabi, Aghabeigpoori, Rezai, & Mohammadpur, 2015). It may be expected, therefore, that a more educated citizenry would lead to greater awareness of gender inequalities and a collective will to change the social acceptance of domestic violence, particularly of it being considered 'private'. That is why this study focuses on the educated Saudi women's view. Confident and articulate, they are well placed to understand the complexities of domestic violence in the country. And as the vanguards of social change in other respects, I wanted to see how prepared they are to break the silence on this count.

Domestic violence in Saudi Arabia is a complex problem that can be attributed to the interlinked elements of culture, gender, inequality and citizenship. Though these elements

are inextricably linked, it is crucial to understand each one on its own merit. Culture is produced through communities that share a common set of learned beliefs, values, norms and expectations of behaviour in order to be able to interact with one another (Damen, 1987). Gender is a social construct that discriminates between male and female based on perceived differences in capabilities, needs and desires by assigning masculine and feminine expectations to the respective genders (Holmes, 2007). Inequality is the opposite of equality (Firebaugh, 2003), whereby a group of people are given more opportunities over other groups, which leads to a power imbalance between the said groups. Citizenship has been explained as being a “legitimate personal claim to certain rights, liberties, and immunities” (Kruman & Marback, 2015, p.I).

As a general rule, and as will be seen later on in the course of this work, culture, gender, inequality and citizenship overlap and become interlinked with one another. Culture is generally responsible for constructing the different behavioural expectations and attitudes towards men and women respectively (Cuddy, Crotty, Chong, & Norton, 2010), including the concept of ‘gender’, which in itself is defined structurally and culturally in a way that creates and encourages inequality between the genders by establishing men as superior and women as their subordinates (Joseph, 2012). In turn, gender inequality can be attributed to the original concepts of citizenship, which gave males the rights, liberties and privileges due to their presence in the public realm (Lister, 1997). This is in contrast to the female who was not considered a citizen since she belonged to the private sphere, under the dominion of man (Lister, 1997).

In addition, therefore, I have chosen to explore these women’s views of domestic violence through the conceptual and theoretical perspectives of gender, culture and citizenship – and the interrelations between these concepts.

1.1 Domestic Violence in the Context of Saudi Arabia

Saudi culture is constituted of complex elements such as religion, family socialisation, patriarchal practices and societal attitudes. It is alleged that religion, in particular, is misused, and that this is what contributes to patriarchal practices and attitudes which can foster abuse. My own experience as a Saudi citizen is that these factors work in conjunction to produce gender inequality in ways that affect Saudi women's citizenship in terms of rights.

However, things have begun to change – even in regard to formerly private matters such as domestic violence. Within the last ten years ago, local Saudi newspapers began to publish photos and reports about female victims of domestic violence (Al-Ghalib, 2004), which was atypical practice in Saudi Arabia in the past. Consequently, in the last ten years, Saudi society has become aware of domestic violence against women and has begun to become a part of the public cognizance.

The Saudi government now recognises domestic violence as a social problem and has instated a new legislation which is the 'Law of Protection Against Harm' (Al Jazeera, 2013). However, the law has faced multiple criticisms ever since (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Dewey, 2013). While the criticism raises valid concerns, the most significant obstacle to challenging domestic violence against women in the country remains the cultural belief that all matters between husband and wife are private, which prevents even close family members from intervening (Kéchichian, 2013; Al Dosary, 2016). Thus, in Saudi Arabia, the problem of domestic violence is treated in such a discreet and confidential manner which keeps it hidden, subsequently leading to limited research on it. (Afifi et al, 2011; Fageeh, 2014). Even now, Saudi women still face restrictions in the social, political, economic and legal aspects of their lives, whether it is limitations on their mobility, denying them their autonomy or deprivation of their rights, which leaves them

vulnerable to domestic violence.

While domestic violence is an ancient phenomenon prevalent in all societies (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise & Watts, 2005; Kaur & Garg, 2008; Boutas, Koumousidis, Kalampokas, Sofoudis, Anastasopoulos, Kalampokas, Deligeoroglou, & Salakos, 2013), it has some specific characteristics in Saudi Arabia, which relate to the specific forms and manifestations of culture, gender, inequality and citizenship.

In the context of Saudi society, the interlinked elements require special examination as women in Saudi Arabia have continued to face domestic violence largely in silence. It was only in 2004 when domestic violence finally came to the forefront of the public consciousness in Saudi Arabia, when TV presenter Rania al-Baz instigated a public divorce from her husband after she was savagely beaten by him and suffered 13 facial fractures (Al-Ghalib, 2004). Her decision to deal with the abuse she faced in such a public manner was in complete contrast to the general culture of silence in Saudi society regarding domestic violence. Behind the Saudi culture of silence, lies the traditional and conservative Saudi culture which makes it difficult for women to free themselves from domestic violence. There are four significant components of Saudi culture which are the misuse of religion, family socialisation, patriarchal practices and societal attitudes; all of which leave Saudi women at the risk of domestic violence.

Although women have been given all rights in Islam, the religion is often held accountable for domestic violence against wives in Saudi Arabia (Hamid, 2015). It is argued that this is due to the misuse of religious texts (Ibrahim & Abdalla, 2010), especially those relating to the treatment of wives, which husbands can manipulate to justify their violent and cruel behaviour (Obeid, Chang & Ginges, 2010; Haddad Shotar, Younger, Alzyoud. & Bouhaidar, 2011; Douki, Nacef, Belhadi, Bousaker & Ghachem, 2003). The problem of domestic violence against Saudi women is also exacerbated by a specific form of

gendered socialisation in the way that Saudi families raise their sons differently to their daughters, (Janin & Besheer, 2003; Abu-Hilal, Aldhafri, Al-Bahrani & Kamali, 2016) giving the male authority over the females in the household without any expectation of responsible behaviour from the males while the female would be expected to be subordinate to the males in her family. Further, patriarchal practices add to the problem of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia, as it denies women their autonomy and agency, which leaves them vulnerable to abuse (Almosaed and Alazab, 2015).

Societal attitudes are a product of the misuse of religion, socialisation and patriarchal practices, all of which intersect one with the another (Kéichichian, 1986) to enforce the idea that Saudi women should be tolerant and patient in their marriages, which prevents them from reporting incidents of domestic violence (Afifi, Al-Muhaideb, Hadish, Ismail & Al-Qeamy, 2011; Fageeh, 2014). This allows for the continuation of domestic violence as Saudi society places an emphasis on confidentiality and privacy within spousal relationships (Eldoseri, Tufts, Zhang & Fish, 2014; Al Dosary, 2016; Alhabdan, 2015), and this is even more pervasive when it comes to sex, a subject that is considered completely a taboo in Saudi Arabia (Tønnessen, 2016). Consequently, no one will intervene in cases of domestic violence between husband and wife and abused Saudi women are also unwilling to come forward (Alhabdan, 2015) as they fear societal condemnation because coming forward about domestic violence is considered a shameful act that tarnishes their family's reputations and honour (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Afifi et al, 2011; Tønnessen, 2016). Furthermore, many Saudi women remain silent about the violence in their marriages and do not report it (Afifi et al, 2011; Alhabdan, 2015) as they fear losing custody of their children because generally the father is awarded custody in the case of a divorce (Almosaed & Alazab, 2015), due to the cultural belief that men are responsible, and women are not. It also ought to be noted that the "reasons that compel abused women to remain in violent marriages" are "numerous and complex" (Almosaed

& Alazab, 2015, p.156), which highlights the struggle Saudi women face between the violence at home and their inability to escape it because of the complexities of Saudi cultural values of shame and honour.

The struggle that abused Saudi women face is a layered issue as it pertains to gendered roles (and their corresponding gendered spaces), sanctity of family life, the distinction between the public and the private life, and authorisation of power (Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Smartt & Kury, 2007; Morse, Paldi, Egbarya, and Clark, 2012; Jayasundara, Nedegaard, Sharm & Flanagan, 2014; Tønnessen, 2016). In Saudi Arabia, a patriarchal society, men and women are expected to adhere to traditional gender roles, where the wife is responsible for the home and the husband is the breadwinner (Haj-Yahia, 2003; Almosaed, 2008), which confines women to the private sphere while men are free to engage in the public realm (Almosaed, 2008) and therefore women have limited space and limited freedom to express their voices and grievances (Al Alhareth, Al Alhareth, & Al Dighrir, 2015), if at all. Furthermore, the blame of the disintegration of the family unit is placed on the wife (Haj-Yahia, 2000), even though the preservation of a family unit is dependent on both husband and wife because in Saudi Arabia women are expected to be homemakers who are nurturing, caring and supportive and therefore should be able to change their abusive husbands into better men (Barakat, 1993; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Haj-Yahia, 2005; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). As Saudi society places many expectations on wives to keep the family together and there is a social stigma attached to divorce women, there is often a discrepancy between the reality of the private life and the image that has to be presented to the public (Haj-Yahia, 2000), thus many abused Saudi women will not come forward about domestic violence or consider divorce in order to preserve the image of a 'happy' family unit and to maintain their marital status (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Eldoseri et al, 2014).

Along with the conservative and traditional Saudi culture, where many women are expected to endure violence in their marriages (Gharaibeh & Oweis, 2009), domestic violence also arises from gender inequality and the limited citizenship (in terms of rights) for Saudi women, leaving them powerless and weak. This is further exacerbated as Saudi men not only enjoy privileges as rights but are also given authority over women through the system of male guardianship (Jackson, 1998; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004; Hamdan, 2005; Doumato, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Butler, 2015). In Saudi Arabia, women are seen as perpetual minors and subordinate to men (Jackson, 1998; Human Right Watch, 2016), to the extent that women cannot appear in public without a male chaperone (Hamdan, 2005). This is a point of contention given that the public sphere has been given a higher status than the private sphere (Siim, 2000), and the marginalization of women from the public realm seeks to reinforce the idea that women are inferior, which leads to the imbalance of power between men and women in Saudi Arabia, especially within the context of marriage. Consequently, Saudi women struggle to complete even the simplest of tasks pertaining their needs on a daily basis as they are not recognised as full citizens and face restrictions on their mobility, have limited autonomy and are deprived of their rights, which in itself is can be considered an act of domestic violence (Jackson, 1998; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004; Hamdan, 2005; Doumato, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Butler, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2016).

However, in the last decade, the bringing of domestic violence into the public cognizance has involved awareness-raising by universities, schools, hospitals, and other government programs. As a result, in 2013, the government officially recognised the problem of domestic violence as a social problem and instated a new law to address it (Al Jazeera, 2013), which is the Nizam Al-Hemaya min Al-Idha (which translates as the ‘Law of Protection against Harm’, henceforth NHA), (Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2013). This law is significant as it is the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia, which

officially acknowledges and finally criminalises domestic violence. Nevertheless, the new law has faced criticism for its lack of clarity and ineffectiveness (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Dewey, 2013) and is considered to be insufficient to protect women from domestic violence. The more pertinent issue remains that domestic violence against women in marital relationships is still largely hidden because it is considered such a sensitive topic that society chooses to continue brushing it under the carpet (Kéchichian, 2013; Al Dosary, 2016). It is therefore this lack of openness that has contributed greatly to the lack of robust research on the matter (Afifi et al, 2011; Fageeh, 2014), which has made it difficult to provide appropriately grounded resources to get a better understanding of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, and this in turn hinders the planning and implementation of services and facilities that are meant to support female victims of domestic violence in the country.

1.2 Rationale for Study

When the story of Rania Al-Baz came to public light, I was in my first year at university and it was then that I was introduced to the concept of domestic violence. This incident really opened my eyes to the problem of domestic violence against women in the country and highlighted the need for investigation into the subject. Consequently, I began to wonder about whether other Saudi women acknowledged and/or recognised domestic violence, and this became my primary motivation to examine the issue in greater detail. During my postgraduate research on the subject in 2013, I found that even almost 10 years after Rania Al-Baz's story became headline news, there was still a dearth of literature about domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, and what was available was exclusively from quantitative research, which did not reflect the reality neither did it present the fuller picture.

1.3 Aims

The primary aim of this study, therefore, is to explore the attitudes and perceptions of educated Saudi women towards domestic violence and this comprises three sub-aims:

1. To find out what educated Saudi women's *understandings* of the nature of domestic violence, generally and specifically are;
2. To explore these women's *beliefs* about factors associated with domestic violence in Saudi Arabia;
3. To investigate what educated Saudi women *knows and think* about existing structures and support systems in place to address domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

Currently, in Saudi Arabia, there is only a limited number of studies that are available on the problem of domestic violence, which makes it difficult for interested researchers to have a starting point for their own investigation into the subject. The research that is conducted within the country almost exclusively uses the quantitative method for research (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2010; Afifi et al, 2011; Bohlaiga, Al-Kakhli, Al-Mattar, Al-Lowaim, Al-Baqshi, Al-Harhi, Al-Harbi, Al-Moumen, Al-Hammad & Al-Nasser, 2014; Fageeh, 2014; Barnaw, 2015; Alzahrani, Abaalkhail, & Ramadan, 2016; Sari, Surrati, & alfahl, 2016), which tends to only scratch the surface of the problem and does not provide a wide and deep scope for the root cause of domestic violence.

On the other hand, international research that is available (Jackson, 1998; Human Rights Watch, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Butler, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Tønnessen, 2016), though larger in quantity, takes an emphatically 'outside' and 'othering' view of Saudi society. An 'outsider' tends to examine the problem of domestic violence based on certain pre-conceived cultural representations of Saudi Arabia (Said,

1978) and therefore do not possess the nuanced understanding of the complexities of domestic violence in the country that an insider may have. Consequently, an outsider's observations do not take into consideration the obstacle that Saudi culture itself poses, which would prevent policymakers to effectively implement their recommendations.

A further limitation of the available discussions on women's rights within Saudi Arabia is that it tends to be from print and digital news outlets (Al Sayed, 2010; Al-Essa, 2012; Hammad, 2013; Hammad, 2014) and the issue with these articles is that they often have limited depth and research and focus primarily on emphasizing the incidents of domestic violence rather than analysis.

Therefore, this study is intended to become a basis upon which Saudi researchers are able to further investigate the phenomenon of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia from a variety of perspectives and methods of data collection. Also, this research excavates educated Saudi women's views on domestic violence in ways that could aid decision- and- policy makers in developing more effective strategies by providing them with a better understanding of the underlying causes of domestic violence as the current policies and strategies in place to address the problem of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia only deals with the symptomatic elements, and even that is with limited success.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first is this chapter, an introduction providing an overview of the domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, rationale for study and aims, as well as an outline for the rest of the thesis.

The second chapter, firstly, discusses the insufficiency of the research on domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, it outlines the definitions and forms of domestic violence. As there is no universal definition of domestic violence, the

working definition that underpins this study is also explained in this section. Thirdly, there is an overview of the prevalence of domestic violence against women globally, as the research from Saudi Arabia on the subject has limitations. Fourthly, there is discussion and debate about some of the general contributing factors that have been associated with domestic violence against women. In this chapter, I also highlight that the phenomenon of domestic violence has many facets and is a result of different interrelated factors, therefore there is no one single significant factor that is accountable for the act of domestic violence. This chapter outlines the state responses to domestic violence in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Saudi Arabia. Finally, the chapter also highlights the steps that are being taken to empower Saudi women, with the intention that women will become able to free themselves from domestic violence.

The third chapter focuses on the interrelated concepts of culture, gender inequalities and citizenship, which are seen as contributing factors towards domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. Firstly, Saudi culture is explored within the context of four components that comprise it: the misuse of religion, socialisation process, patriarchy and societal attitudes and how these four elements work together to subjugate women and to place them in positions of subordination and submission, leaving them dependent on men and putting them at the risk of domestic violence. Secondly, this chapter discusses how culture influences gender inequality in Saudi Arabia, where women are believed to be lesser beings than men, leading to the imbalance of power between the genders. A manifestation of these gender inequalities is the limited citizenship for Saudi women as in Saudi Arabia, female citizenship is synonymous with male guardianship, and women are seen as perpetual minors who need to consult their male guardians to make decisions about their own life, which affects a woman's autonomy and agency and leaving the vulnerable to domestic violence.

The fourth chapter is the methodology for this investigation, which has three angles: 1) learning about an educated Saudi woman's general and specific understanding of domestic violence; 2) examining what an educated Saudi woman believes to be the factors linked to domestic violence in Saudi Arabia; and 3) determining what an educated Saudi woman knows and thinks about the existing policies in place regarding domestic violence in the country. I also discuss and explain the research design, which includes the approach, the ontological and epistemological approach, methods, interviewing, the pilot study and sample for this research. Then I focus on the field work and outline the data gathering process, explore the importance of reliability and validity of data, discuss the insider and outsider positions that the researcher has to adopt as well as look at the significance of reflexivity in this kind of research. Next, I summarise the data collection process, which includes the way the data was recorded and the analysis of data, which includes an outline of the transcribing, translating, coding and thematising process. Towards the end, the chapter emphasises the ethical considerations for this investigation, which comprised three elements: 1) consent; 2) confidentiality; and 3) accountability. In this chapter, I have also outlined the interview questions that were designed for this study. Finally, I mention the limitations of this study.

Chapters five through to seven, present and discuss the feelings and thoughts of well-educated Saudi women on the problem of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. The fifth chapter outlines what these participants know about domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, which provides the reader with an overview on the subject. Firstly, this chapter outlines the participants' understanding and definition of domestic violence as well as their understanding of the different types of domestic violence, which are supported by an array of stories that are either from their personal experiences or observations. Secondly, this chapter presents the participants' attitudes towards domestic violence and their responses if they came across a female victim of domestic violence. Finally, this chapter illustrates

how domestic violence is commonplace in Saudi Arabia as the participants shared many stories about domestic violence against women in the country.

The sixth chapter details the participants' beliefs regarding the factors associated with domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. The research presents the participants' beliefs about how Saudi culture contributes to the problem of domestic violence towards women. This chapter then highlights the participants' theory that traditional, conservative and strict Saudi culture is comprised of four components: 1) misuse of religion; 2) socialisation; 3) patriarchy; all of which contribute towards the fourth component, the societal attitudes which are unique to Saudi Arabia. In this chapter, I also explore the participants' belief that gender inequality is another significant factor in contributing towards domestic violence against women and within the problem of gender inequality lies the citizenship, which is the crux of the matter.

In the seventh chapter, the focus turns to the recently introduced legislation to protect women from domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. Firstly, I examine what the participants know and think about the existing policies and structures in Saudi Arabia, which are designed to protect and support female victims of domestic violence. Then I explore the participants' views of the effectiveness of these policies and structures. Finally, I discuss the participants' views of the steps being taken towards female empowerment in Saudi Arabia and the impact it is having on women gaining autonomy, thus decreasing female dependency on men.

The final chapter, the 'Conclusion', firstly I present a summary of the main points regarding domestic violence against Saudi women as raised by the participants and examines the strengths of the study. Secondly, I outline the agenda for the future by listing recommendations for domestic violence service providers, raising awareness through education and the development of effective social policies. Finally, I discuss the emerging

themes that could be further investigated, such as woman as a hindrance to themselves to be free from violence and tokenism in Saudi Arabia.

2 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: DEFINITIONS, PREVALENCE & FACTORS, AND THE STATE RESPONSE

Most of the literature on domestic violence comes from international authors and NGOs, which can take the ‘outsider’s’ perspective when it comes to the problem of domestic violence against Saudi women in Saudi Arabia, and this research can be clumsy in its observations. Furthermore, the available literature, including that from within the country, focuses on the symptoms of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia rather than exploring the underlying causes because the research is either quantitative in nature or comes from articles that report instead of delving deeper into the subject. The subject of domestic violence is further expounded by the term itself although it is frequently, it is more problematic than we might realise because there is no one universal definition. Thus, for this study the working definition of domestic violence includes but is not limited to physical violence, which will be discussed further in the chapter.

2.1 BACKGROUND

Domestic violence, as we know from existing literature, is an ancient and global phenomenon (United Nations Report, 1970-90,1991; World Health Organisation, 2005; Kaur & Garg, 2008) and not exclusive to Saudi Arabia. However, in Saudi Arabia, it has only come to the public’s attention recently (Al- Ghalib,2004) and research on the subject is insufficient (Afifi et al, 2011). The available literature on domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia, is limited to a few studies that have only very recently been conducted. Furthermore, even in other Arab countries the research on domestic violence against women is limited which is why this literature review concentrates as much as it does on studies from other countries that have a longstanding history of investigating domestic violence in depth (Fagan, 1996).

There are four aspects of domestic violence that shape this literature review. Firstly, I will discuss a wide range of a) definitions and b) forms of domestic violence, as it contributes the holistic definition for domestic violence used in this study. Additionally, it is necessary to mention the prevalence of domestic violence in different societies, including selected countries in the West and Arab societies, to understand that this problem occurs all over the world and the extent of the suffering inflicted on women. Thirdly, this literature review also investigates the general factors that are believed to lead to domestic violence. Fourthly, it also outlines and discusses the state's response to domestic violence in selected European countries, namely the United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as Saudi Arabia's response to domestic violence. European state responses have been included in this discussion due to the fact that the Saudi policies to address domestic violence are still at a nascent stage. Therefore, this thesis also needs to look at these two countries as they have a longstanding history of dealing with domestic violence against women at the state level but with different levels of success.

2.2 What is Domestic Violence

Defining domestic violence is a complex matter, as it is a widely debated concept that does not have a unanimously agreed upon definition (Sanderson, 2010). However, due to the nature of this study, a working definition must be constructed upon which this thesis can be built. Therefore, this section looks at research on domestic violence from places where it has been more thoroughly examined, which can provide a holistic understanding of the subject as the research includes within its different definitions the different aspects of potential harm, ranging from physical to psychological and sexual violence, as well taking into consideration acts of omission.

The United Nation Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines domestic violence as, "Any act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual,

or psychological-emotional harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (United Nations General Assembly, 1994, p.3). Furthermore, in the context of intimate partner relationships, the World Health Organisation (henceforth WHO) defines intimate partner violence as “Any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological-emotional or sexual harm to those in the relationship” (WHO, 2012, p.1). Domestic violence has also been defined as any act of “omission or commission resulting in physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, or other forms of maltreatment that hamper individuals’ healthy development” (Levesque, 2001, p.13). These definitions of domestic violence can be applied to all relationships between males and females, including intimate personal relationships, whether married or unmarried.

Many scholars also define domestic violence as any pattern of behaviour, which is repetitive in nature (Ganley, 1995; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Garcia-Moreno et al, 2005; Sully, 2011; Kabeer, 2014), that seeks to achieve power and control by causing harm or dictating behaviour (Smartt & Kury, 2007; Cochran, 2009; Hajjar, 2004; Fernández, 2006; Btoush & Haj-Yahia, 2008; Haj-Yahia, Wilson & Naqvi, 2012; Almosaed, 2004). In a report by the UK Home Office (2011), it is clearly stated that there is a correlation between domestic violence and controlling behaviour, as perpetrators often use coercion or threats to get what they want. It has also been argued that when any individual believes they are superior and therefore should have more privileges than their partner, they are likely to commit violence against their partner (Cochran, 2009). In this perspective, therefore, domestic violence is an instrument that is used by the abuser to maintain their power and authority, thus establishing a link between controlling behaviour and domestic violence.

Domestic violence is classified in a number of studies into four categories: physical,

sexual, psychological and economic (Fikree and Bhatti, 1999; Almosaed, 2004; Fernández, 2006; Whitaker & Lutzker, 2009; Haj-Yahia, 2002a; Ali, 2015; Kaplan, Khawaja, & Linos, 2011; Chhikara, Jakhar, Malik, Singla, & Dhatarwal, 2013; Haj-Yahia, 2013). Unlike physical violence, sexual, psychological and economic violence, as explored in this literature review, are not immediately recognizable as there is no visible manifestation of the abuse. There are also other types of domestic violence that are not visible, as Gelles (1985) notes that neglect and deprivation of any kind are also types of domestic violence though they leave no physical evidence behind. In the discussion below, the four main categories of domestic violence behaviours will be explained in more detail.

2.3 The Nature of Domestic Violence

Physical violence is the most acknowledged form of domestic violence (Mullender, 1996) as society in general is immediately able to recognise it since it manifests itself visually. Black eyes, bruises and broken bones, and other extremely serious injuries resulting from multiple assaults are visible to the naked eye (Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2010). One of the most frequently used nominal definitions of domestic violence is “the intention or perceived intention of physically hurting another person” (Gelles, 1985, p.352), which can range and/or escalate from lightly slapping someone to brutally murdering them by any means, including shooting and stabbing (Gelles, 1997; Wilt, & Olson, 1996; Poelmans, Elzinga, Viaene & Dedene, 2008). Whitaker & Lutzker (2009) explain that acts of physical violence include burning, biting, choking, pushing, punching, use of weapons and harmful tools and restraining the victim physically by using any means necessary. There are also a number of studies that have expanded on what physical violence encompasses, and the definition also includes acts such as poking, hair pulling, pinching and hitting (Straus, Gelles, and Smith, 1990; Wilt & Olson, 1996;

Ganley, 1995; Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Haj-Yahia, 2013).

Kabeer (2014) defines sexual violence as: “being ... forced to have sexual intercourse against [a woman’s] will; having sexual intercourse out of fear; or being forced to perform a degrading or humiliating sexual act” (p.6). Whitaker & Lutzker (2009) further explain that sexual violence also includes incidences when an individual, who is unable to consent, is compelled to engage in sex acts or abusive sexual contact. Sexual violence has also been defined “...any unwanted sexual activity including threats in varying degrees, or in conjunction with other kinds of violence”, which is a consequence of the socio-culture expectation that demands blind obedience from women to men, no matter what the circumstances (Haddad et al, 2011, p.80). Furthermore, sexual violence is the most complicated of the four main types of domestic violence, because it is still a taboo subject in many societies, therefore it is the least openly discussed form of domestic violence. Some have argued that sexual violence is quite a common occurrence but since it is not frequently discussed, it is poorly recognised (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Freccero, Harris, Carnay & Taylor, 2011; Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). In fact, two studies conducted in 1985 and 1990, respectively, indicated the majority of the female participants were unwilling to discuss sexual violence as only a few women in the studies, who were either married or cohabiting, were able to admit that they had experienced marital rape at least once by their intimate partners (Mahoney & Williams, 1998).

While sexual violence has always existed, sexual violence within marriage remains a contentious issue. Marital rape was not included within the definition of sexual violence because “marriage was presumed to grant a husband unlimited sexual access to his wife” (Berman, 2004, p.24). This is a view that is still held by some countries today, as spousal rape is not considered a crime in many countries such as Ghana (Adinkrah, 2010), India (Jaishankar, 2016), Oman (Deeb, 2005) and Tanzania (Browning, 2013). However, this

perspective has changed in many other countries where now sexual violence within marriage is considered a crime (Mahoney and Williams, 1998; Bessel, 2015). Therefore, a number of scholars identify any sexual act performed against a wife's will as a form of sexual violence (Weingourt, 1986; Kaur & Garg, 2008; Chhikara et al, 2013; Ipekten Alaman & Yıldız, 2014; Adjah & Agbemfle, 2016).

Domestic violence can also manifest itself in the form of psychological violence, which includes using verbal coercion, intimidation and force. Psychological violence refers to "Assaultive and coercive behaviours that adults use against their intimate partners" (Yount, 2005, p.580), and it is more likely to have a greater emotional impact on the victim (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003). Psychological violence involves many acts that leave the victims experiencing short-term and long-term stress, grief, anguish, and distress (Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Mechanic, Weaver & Resick, 2008; Antai, Oke, Braithwaite & Lopez, 2014). In contrast to physical violence, psychological violence does not include any physical contact, but can be equally or more harmful than physical violence (Adams, Sullivan, Bybee & Greeson, 2008). Methods used to enact this kind violence, include, but are not limited to, using foul language and verbal terrorization of the victim or even others including offspring (Ganley, 1995; Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003; Boonzaier & Van Schalkwyk, 2011).

Psychological violence is also signified by "threats of abandonment or violence, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression, or constant humiliation" (Srivastava, Bhatia, Jhanjee, & Pankaj, 2011. p149). According to Mezey, Post and Maxwell (2002), psychological violence is used systematically and chronically by the perpetrator resulting in lowering a victim's sense of self-esteem and confidence in order to maintain control over the victim (Mullender, 1996). Psychological violence has many facets, which

includes verbal threats, degradation, humiliation, intimidation, harassment and at its most extreme takes the form of brainwashing because it eliminates the victim's self-esteem, sense of self-respect, trust in their sense of reality, and self-concept, all in order to get the victim to comply without any resistance (Kulwicki, Aswad, Carmona & Ballout, 2010; Follingstad & Dehart, 2000).

The issue with psychological violence is that it is difficult to prove because it manifests itself in isolation, rejection, degradation, neglect, terror, accusations and blame, which are almost invisible (Doherty & Berglund, 2008; Gesinde, 2013; Ganley, 1995) as discussed below.

Isolation is a common form of psychological violence (Tolman, 2015), where the perpetrator physically confines the victim, restricts the victim's contact with other people, including family members, and limits freedom within the victim's own personal space. The perpetrator frequently attempts to control the victim's time, activities and interaction with others, such as depriving the victim of mobility to contact their family or friends, which makes the victim feel alone with no support as having been detached from the community and unable to turn to anyone for comfort (Mouradian, 2000; Doherty & Berglund, 2008; Karakurt, & Silver, 2013).

Rejection, when used as a form of psychological violence, is carried out with the intention of abusing the victim. Rejection is used by the perpetrator to make the victim feel as if their opinion is invalid and inconsequential, thereby implying that the victim is not important to the perpetrator. Consequently, the lack of respect and communication between the victim and the perpetrator leads the victim to feel unworthy of the perpetrator (Doherty & Berglund, 2008).

Degradation is also an aspect of psychological violence and manifests itself through

insulting, ridiculing, name-calling and imitating. Acts of degradation can include yelling, swearing, publicly humiliating, mimicking a person's disability or treating them as incompetent minors. These are the types of behaviour that lessens the identity, dignity and self-worth of the person, and victims can become depressed believing their life to be worthless (Follingstad, Coyne & Gambone, 2005; Karakurt, & Silver, 2013; Haj-Yahia, 2013).

Neglect is another way in which perpetrators of domestic violence can psychologically abuse their victims. When a perpetrator refuses to take responsibility of providing essential emotional, physical or sexual care for their partner, it is considered to be neglect. In this situation, the perpetrator intentionally disconnects from the victim and callously disregards any requests made, which leads the victim to feel unwanted because without the proper emotional support from the perpetrator, the victim will live a dark life (Doherty & Berglund, 2008).

A further method in inflicting psychological violence is terrorizing victims, by instilling great fear in a person through intimidation and placing or threatening to place an individual in an unfit, uncomfortable or unsafe environment. Furthermore, the perpetrator might threaten to use physical harm against the victim or their loved one in order to destroy the victim's life (Doherty & Berglund, 2008).

Accusations and blame also fall under the heading of psychological violence (Doherty & Berglund, 2008). Usually, the accusations are either baseless or the victim is blamed for mistakes that are inconsequential because the perpetrator wishes to be in control as they have failed to understand that equality and autonomy are essential to healthy and social adult relationships (Gesind, 2013). It is not uncommon for the perpetrator to commit these acts in front of their victim's families and friends or even strangers to gain even more control over the victim (Ganley, 1995; Haj-Yahia, 2000) and accusations and blame can

also be used as a way to justify physical violence against the victim by the perpetrator (Haj-Yahia, 2013).

Economic violence occurs when the perpetrators, dominate the victims' economic resources without their permission. The purpose of economic violence is to adversely affect the victim's mobility (Adams et al, 2008; Postmus, Plummer, McMahon, Murshid & Kim, 2012). The perpetrator can employ different tactics, such as limiting the victim's access to resources, forcing the victim to take out loans, denying education to the victim or interfering with their personal financial matters (Adams et al, 2008; Antai, Oke, Braithwaite, & Lopez, 2014; Fawole, 2008). Furthermore, the perpetrator can also refuse to contribute towards household expenses, including utility and phone bills or misuse the victim's credit cards without permission and run up huge debt (Corrie & McGuire, 2013). Economic violence can also extend to limiting mobility such as taking keys, driving licence or leaving the fuel tank empty (Bagshaw, Chung, Couch, Lilburn & Wadham, 2000). The aim of these actions to either make the victim financially dependent on the perpetrator or punish them for not being dependent on the perpetrator, thus allowing the abuser to control the victim.

2.4 Control: At the Heart of Domestic Violence or a Form of It?

Some studies posit that control is a form of domestic violence and the abuser uses a variety of tactics such as isolating the victim from family and friends, monitoring the victim's movements, restricting mobility, denying the victim access to financial and medical resources as well as preventing them from receiving an education or finding employment (WHO, 2012). Nonetheless, it has also been argued that control is the fundamental aim of all types of domestic violence, in which the perpetrator's desires to maintain hegemony over the victim (Mullender, 1996; Kaur & Garg, 2008; Rakovec-Felser, 2014). Ellen Pence's (1987) 'Power Wheel' indicates that power and control are

at the heart of all acts of domestic violence beginning with acts of emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, isolation, intimidation, threats (against the individual or children) and using male privilege, which eventually escalates to physical abuse and on occasions culminates in death.

In sum, there is no universally agreed definition for domestic violence (Sanderson, 2010). Nevertheless, it is important to have a baseline that defines the concept of domestic violence against women in the context of Saudi Arabia for this thesis as it is imperative to the proper development of this study. Therefore, added to the working definition of domestic violence adopted in this thesis the extent to which domestic violence is about the “[misuse of power] by [a husband] in a relationship to control [his wife]” in marriage, with the intention of “[establishing] control and fear in a relationship through violence and other forms of abuse”, which can “take the form of physical assault, psychological abuse ... [economic] abuse, or sexual assault” (Kaur & Garg, 2008). The reason this thesis focuses on domestic violence against Saudi women in marital relationships is because in Saudi Arabia, as an Islamic country, intimate and sexual relationships can only exist directly through marriage (Liversage, 2014; Lovelace & Joy, 2002).

2.5 Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Women

No country has immunity from domestic violence regardless of how developed it is (Nazir & Tomppert, 2005), and the issue of domestic violence is more pervasive in the lives of women than any other demographic group and it violates their basic human rights and leaves them in a constant state of suffering and pain (Meyersfeld, 2010). Even though prevalence is not what this study explores, it is nonetheless important to take into account the prevalence of the phenomenon of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. However, in Saudi Arabia, there is insufficient research on domestic violence, and therefore, this study provides research on the subject from across the globe and from selected Western

countries, where the issue has been adequately investigated on an international and national scale, which provides scope and understanding of the problem. This section also discusses the few studies from Arab countries as well as Saudi Arabia to get a glimpse of the problem specifically in these societies.

For instance, in the last two decades, there has been a worldwide increase in reporting the incidence of domestic violence against women. The WHO conducted a global study on women's health and domestic violence against women, which spanned 10 different countries that represent cultural, geographical and demographic diversity (Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Peru, Namibia, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, and United Republic of Tanzania), and collated data from 24,000 women. The study found that domestic violence is widespread in all the countries that participated in the research, and the prevalence of physical violence in the women's lifetime by their intimate partner in the ten countries ranged from 4% to 49%. The study also showed that 6% to 59% of the women suffered sexual violence at the hands of their partners, while 20% to 75% of women were subjected to emotional violence by their partners (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise & Watts, 2005). Further still, a separate study, also conducted by the WHO in conjunction with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Medical Research Council, analysed data collected from over 80 countries and found that globally, 35% of women around the world are subjected to sexual violence, in general in their lifetime, while almost one-third of women have experienced some forms of physical and sexual violence by their partners, and 38% of the women who were murdered were killed by their partners (WHO, 2016). Thus, it appears that the problem of domestic violence against women is on the rise across the world. However, it could also indicate that female victims of domestic violence are more willing to come forward about their experiences and to treat domestic violence as social problem.

2.5.1 Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Western Countries

In the United Kingdom, in general, there is a high rate of incidents of domestic violence against women. Based on statistics by the Crime Survey for England and Wales in particular 2012/13, it is believed that 30% of women will be subjected to violence at some time in their life (Office for National Statistics, 2014). In the same report by the ONS (2014) it was estimated that around 1.2 million females had experienced some form of domestic violence within the last year. Additional statistics provide a fuller picture about the state of domestic violence in England and Wales, stating that around one in four women have experienced domestic violence at some time in their lives since the age of 16 (Office of National Statistics, 2015). Moreover, according to data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales published in 2014, domestic violence had increased from 7.1% to 8.5%, bringing the total to 1.4 million female victims. The report also included the disturbing statistic of how two women per week in England and Wales are murdered by their current or ex-partner (Office of National Statistics, 2015).

Another country of interest is Ireland, in the sense that it is a country which is religious in constitution and has large rural and conservative populations. The phenomenon of domestic violence appears at least partly connected to those circumstances. Ireland also struggles with choosing an appropriate and effective course of action to reduce the prevalence of domestic violence (Kearns & Coen, 2014). Though Ireland is a Western nation, it has yet to implement effective protocols to manage the high prevalence of domestic violence in the country, hindered by the national culture as it is one of Europe's most conservative societies (Boland, 2015). In the last decade in Ireland, there has been an increase in the cases of domestic violence as reported by different organisations (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014; Women's Aid, 2015; SAFE Ireland, 2015). In 2005, a national survey revealed that around 10% of women had

experienced severe physical abuse in a relationship, while around 8% were victims of sexual violence and severe emotional abuse (Watson & Parsons; 2005) but in recent years those numbers have increased. For instance, the report published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) revealed that psychological violence against Irish women was at 31% while in 2015, two independent agencies also found there was a rise in domestic violence against women in Ireland. Women's Aid (2015) reported that 81% of the women who contacted them were either former or current victims of domestic violence at the hands of a male partner, while SAFE Ireland (2015) issued statistics that showed that more than 33% of women had been subjected to psychological violence while 25% had been victims of physical and sexual violence.

Reported incidents of domestic violence in the United States are even higher. However, the country's long history of campaigning against gender inequality and domestic violence may mean that this increased incidence in reporting could be attributed to female victims of domestic violence being more confident about coming forward about their experiences and suffering (Cullen-Dupont, 2000). It is said that as many as nearly 2 million women experience physical violence every year (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In 2010, a report by the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, which focuses specifically on domestic violence in intimate personal relationships, showed that the number of female victims who are subjected physical violence by their intimate partners, had increased to 36.1 million, which is more than 30 percent of the adult female population in the United States. The report also stated that nearly seventeen percent, which is around 19.1 million of women, have been exposed to sexual violence at some time in their life by their intimate partners. This shows that nearly half of all women (which is equivalent to 57.6 million) in the US, have experienced at least one type of psychological violence by their intimate partner (Black, Basile, Breiding, Smith, Walters, Merrick, Chen & Stevens, 2011).

The research above shows that many of the statistics about domestic violence against women are from surveys that are conducted at the national level by official government bodies as well as NGOs. This in turn demonstrates that the governments of these countries (which have a long history of battling against domestic violence) view the issue of domestic violence against women as a national concern that has to be addressed at a state level. This kind of research provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and leads to an increase in awareness for women and encourages more women to come forward about the abuse that they experience as domestic violence is then seen as a social problem rather than a private matter.

2.5.2 Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Arab Countries

In Arab countries, though the depth of research on domestic violence against women is limited (Douki, Nacef, Belhadi, Bousaker & Ghachem, 2003), Arab nations and Arab researchers have attempted to investigate the phenomenon. In Egypt, the Ministry of Health and Population sanctioned an annual health survey, which began to include data on domestic violence against women in 2005. In 2005, the *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2005* found that "... women aged 15-49 reported" that they had been subjected to domestic violence (El-Zanaty & Way, 2006, p.221). In a survey conducted in 2009, a large sample of women (both married and unmarried) selected from across governorates from many regions in Egypt showed that over half of unmarried women had suffered physical violence (56.5-57.1%) while 78-80% of all women in the survey were subjected to at least one type of psychological violence (Hassan, 2009). The data from the *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014* showed that more than 25% of all married women in Egypt have experienced physical violence at the hands of their current husbands, while 19% of them had experienced psychological violence and 4% suffered sexual violence committed by their present husbands (Ministry of Health and Population

[Egypt], El-Zanaty & Associates [Egypt], & ICF International, 2015).

In Jordan, when the first hotline service for reporting domestic violence opened in 1996, there were 4,000 cases of domestic abuse against women in the first year alone (Kulwicki et al, 2010). According to the *Jordan Population and Family Health Survey* conducted in 2007, almost-one third of Jordanian women were subjected to physical violence and 20% of Jordanian women had experienced psychological violence, while less than 6% of women acknowledged that they were victims of sexual violence (Department of Statistics [Jordan] & Macro International Inc., 2008). Moreover, the Ministry of Health, undertook a survey that polled a representative sample of 145 women via the Maternal and Child Health Care Centres and the data collected showed that that 30% of these women were victims of physical violence, 39% had experienced psychological violence and more than 5% had been subjected to sexual violence (Haddad et al, 2011).

In Iraq, a study involving 480 women was undertaken in public hospitals and the results showed that nearly 59% of Iraqi women had been experienced abuse at the hands of their husband. Nearly 39% of these women were exposed to physical violence, while approximately 53% experienced emotional abuse and almost 21% had been subjected to sexual violence (Al-Atrushi, Al-Tawil, Shabila, & Al-Hadithi, 2013). A similar style of study was conducted in Syria, which focused specifically on physical violence. Of the 362 Syrian women who were interviewed at medical health clinics, almost 26% had been subjected to physical violence (Maziak & Asfar, 2003). There was also a survey carried out in Lebanon, that included 1,418 Lebanese women who visited four different primary care centres, which found that 35% of these women were experiencing various forms of domestic violence in their marriages, with 88% enduring psychological violence and 66% constantly being subjected to physical violence (Usta, Farver & Pashayan, 2007). In the United Arab Emirates, a study including a select group of 700 women from primary health

care centres revealed that nearly all of the women in the study had experienced psychological violence, while 3% had been subjected to physical violence with less than 4% admitting to being at the receiving end of sexual violence (Al Serkal, Hussein, El Sawaf, Al Faisal & Wasfy, 2014).

These Middle East studies indicate that the percentage of sexual violence is the least occurring of the different types of domestic violence in these countries. This is often cited as praise but can also be understood as a consequence of the poor recording standards for such offences, as well as the women being ashamed to speak out about such incidents and/or their inability to discern sex from sexual violence (Tønnessen, 2016). The Middle East studies above also indicate that physical and psychological violence are the most common forms of domestic violence used against women, which can be attributed to how some Arab societies believe this kind of behaviour is acceptable. There has been found to be a tendency for some Arab societies to accept wife beating, as demonstrated by the participants of one study who justified the physical violence they experienced (Haj-Yahia et al, 2012; Obeid at el, 2010). Similarly, another study showed that nearly thirty percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “It is OK to for man to beat his wife” (Haj-Yahia, 2003). The acceptance of wife beating can be explained by the sociocultural construct that expects obedience and the submission of wives to their husbands, a claim supported by the study that revealed that amongst the justifications for wife beating, within the context of culture, are wife’s ‘disobedience’ or her challenging her husband's masculinity (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Haj- Yahia, 2003; Douki et al, 2003).

2.5.3 Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Saudi Arabia

Now that Saudi Arabia has begun to acknowledge domestic violence as a problem that is deeply ingrained in the culture, researchers have only recently begun to investigate to find

out how widespread domestic violence is in the country. However, much of this research is insufficient or still in the process of being collated leading to a dearth of data. For instance, in 2009, a study on domestic violence based on 689 ever-married adult women from thirty-two primary health care centres in Medina, found that 25% of the subjects had experienced physical violence, and 32% had endured psychological violence (Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2010). Likewise, in 2011, a survey involving 2,000 women, from Al-Ahsa, reported that 17% of the women involved in the study had experienced physical violence and 35% had been subjected to psychological violence, while only 6% came forward about sexual violence (Afifi et al, 2011).

In Jeddah, a survey involving 2,301 ever-married women from three different public hospitals revealed that 29% of them had experienced emotional abuse, 11.6% had been subjected physical abuse, and less than 5% had been exposed to sexual violence (Fageeh, 2014). More recently, in 2015, a study in Riyadh which included 720 women from primary health care centres reported that 20% of the participants had experienced physical violence, 69% had been subjected to psychological violence, while only 10% acknowledged they had experienced sexual violence (Barnawi, 2015). Another study in Saudi Arabia about the prevalence of domestic violence against women took place in primary health care centres in the city of Al-Madinah Al Munawwarah included 186 women whose age ranged between 18 to 60. The study revealed the percentage of emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse were at 36%, 25.3% and 5.9%, respectively (Sari, Surrati, & alfahl, 2016).

The studies cited above indicate that psychological and physical violence are the most common while sexual violence is less common or that there is a complete absence of it in the lives of Saudi women. However, these studies are not proof of how uncommon sexual violence is in Saudi Arabia, but rather suggest that the matter of sexual violence is highly

private in Saudi society, as with many other Arab societies, and therefore women are unwilling to mention or report sexual violence because of the conservative nature of the culture. The problem of sexual violence occurs in every society, however Saudi society is distinctive in its perception of sexual violence, in the sense that even talking or chatting about sex in general is considered a red line that enters into the culture of shame, therefore sexual violence is a subject completely out of bounds.

Despite these efforts, current research into domestic violence in Saudi Arabia is limited: firstly, in terms of depth, the statistics are derived exclusively from quantitative research; secondly, most of the research is relatively recent, therefore there is no foundation or context for this issue; and thirdly, studies are based on small sample sizes from specific regions therefore these studies do not represent the national statistics (Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Afifi et al, 2011). Most studies on domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia utilize surveys and anecdotal evidence suggests that when surveys are used for research in Saudi Arabia, participants usually answer the questions as quickly as possible and without any concern for accuracy or the truth. This is due to cultural lack of understanding of the gravity of the topic, widespread illiteracy, ignorance, and fear of the consequences of domestic violence, as well as apathy towards the research or any resulting societal changes. According to the study "Prevalence and Risk Factors and Abuse against Married women in Eastern Saudi Arabia", some of the participants refused to answer questions about domestic violence, which could be "explicated by the fact that due to the taboo and the sensitivity issue of this subject" in Saudi Arabia (Bohlaiga, Al-Kakhli, Al-Mattar, Al-Bahrani, Al-Lowaim, Al-Baqshi, Al-Harthi, Al-Harbi, Al-Moumen, Al-Hammad & Al-Nasser, 2014, p.154). The limitations of these studies lead to a lack of understanding about domestic violence amongst women, as well as society at large, which allows for its continuation.

2.6 Factors Associated with Domestic Violence

The substantial body of literature worldwide on the causes of domestic violence have helped researchers identify several general factors and motivations for domestic violence, and the risk factors fall into four categories: culture, socioeconomic status, family history, and consumption of alcohol and drugs.

2.6.1 Culture

There are numerous scholars across the world, who agree that culture is implicated in domestic violence. These scholars argue that cultural norms, values and practices define gender relations, roles and identities in different societies, and provide the context in which people conduct their daily lives. According to these scholars, violence against women has correlations with patriarchal structures and ideas of traditional masculinity where the male is dominant and aggressive, and men are placed as the head of the family with autonomy over the financial and personal decisions that affect the entire family unity (Usta, Farver & Hamieh, 2015; Smartt and Kury, 2007; Kaplan et al, 2011; Jewkes, 2002; Haj-Yahia, 2003; Agnihotri, Agnihotri, & Purwar, 2006; Douki, Nacef, Belhadj, Bouasker, & Ghachem 2003; Kulwicki, Aswad, Carmona, & Ballout, 2010; Obeid, Chang, and Ginges, 2010; Al-Badayneh, 2012; Singh, Singh, & Singh, 2014; Kabeer, 2014; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). In fact, traditionally, cultural norms have allocated power to men instead of women thereby establishing patriarchy. According to a study about domestic violence against women in Mauritius, deep-rooted social expectation of manhood places expectations on men to behave in a particular way that portrays an image of manliness, which in turn encourages harsh and potentially abusive attitudes towards their spouses (Agnihotri et al, 2006).

Furthermore, cultural norms have advocated patriarchy, which "...has existed across

various cultures” (Grigsby, 2012, p.142) and, therefore patriarchal attitudes have been woven into the fabric of those societies. Most societies around the world have supported traditional views towards women, in that they are expected to be submissive and obedient. As a result, women across the globe continue to be treated differently from men (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Singh, Singh & Singh, 2014; Usta et al, 2015; Obeid et al, 2010). These practices continue to be encouraged by cultural and social norms, as shown in a case study on Arab societies, which revealed that the participants prescribed to the belief that an ideal man is authoritative, a decision-maker and capable of maintaining order and discipline, all qualities associated with a male in patriarchal cultures (Usta et al, 2015).

These patriarchal practices are a fundamental component in Arab societies, which support the dominance of men and the subordination of women in both public and private spheres, and this, it is argued, contributes to the cases of domestic violence against women in Arab societies (Douki et al, 2003). Another study regarding marital abuse in Arab society highlighted that Arab men who have gender bias and conservative attitudes towards women have a greater tendency to be rigid, act stereotypically masculine and adhere to patriarchal practices in their marriages (Haj-Yahia, 2003).

Historically, Arab men are expected to be tough, independent, strong and brave, and within the context of these masculine expectations, domestic violence is likely to occur. Patriarchal attitudes, in general, support the ideology that men are inherently superior, which legitimizes the perspective that it is acceptable for men to discipline women in any way, including violence (Jewkes, 2002). Douki et al (2003) add that legitimizing violence against a woman frees men to use inconsequential mistakes as excuses to beat their wives. These ideologies and practices are not specific to Arab cultures though, for instance, Singh et al (2014) found other societies too support the patriarchal values through social

and cultural norms that leave women at risk of domestic violence.

Similarly, the findings of a study by Kaplan et al (2011) emphasised how patriarchal attitudes in an Arab society are not just limited to control or dominance over women, but they also extend to decision-making and generally controlling women's behaviour by limiting and restricting their mobility as most of the women interviewed reported that their husbands are the main decision makers for matters pertaining to home and finances, even when the issue is solely related to the woman.

2.6.2 Socioeconomic Status & Education

Socioeconomic status, which can be measured by education, income and occupation, also plays a role in cases of domestic violence (Winkleby, Jatulis, Frank & Fortmann, 1992; Allen, 2012; Rabi-ullah & Parvin, 2015). It has been argued is that higher the socioeconomic status of a woman, the lower the risk of domestic violence against her but some research has also indicated that women who have a socioeconomic status still remain at risk of domestic violence (Rasoulilian, Habib, Bolhari, Hakim Shooshtari, Nojomi & Abedi, 2014; Babu, & Kar, 2009; Renzetti, 2009), which will be discussed below.

The role of education in this scenario is multifaceted as a woman's socioeconomic status it determines her ability to be financially independent. Research has found that women with low levels of education, or no education, are deprived of the chance to be productive for themselves and in their families, which renders them powerless and vulnerable (Arends-Kuenning & Amin, 2001; Jahromi, Jamali, Koshkaki, & Javadpour, 2016). With lower levels of education, women are less likely to be financially independent and therefore are three times more likely to be subjected to domestic violence than those who have independent income (Walby & Allen, 2004). It is a common scenario that

women who are financially dependent on their husbands are considered easy prey to domestic violence.

It has been argued that educated women are less likely to experience violent marriages as the level of formal education will determine her earning capability, which is a risk factor associated with domestic violence as lower income (or no income) may create a situation of dependency, giving “the abuser an upper hand in feeding upon the victim’s vulnerability” (McMullen, 2008, p.269). Education can also have an important contributory role in the development of a woman’s autonomy by improving her confidence and self-esteem through the development of her numeracy and literacy skills (Sen, 1999). Women who are educated have more opportunities to find employment; therefore, they can become financially independent and are more aware of their rights, which gives them the freedom to leave a violent relationship (Sen, 1999; Kreager, Felson, Warner & Wenger, 2013; Rasoulilian et al, 2014). On the other hand, some studies have shown that women who are educated and employed are still susceptible to experiencing domestic violence in their marriages (Heath, 2014). Many offenders “perceive [their] partner’s education achievement as a threat” because “a person’s education level is often associated with earning ability and status in society” (McMullen, 2008, p.268). Gainfully employed women are at the risk of domestic violence as their male partner may seek to reassert his dominance and control having lost the position of the breadwinner for the family (McMullen, 2008; Heath, 2014) as gainful employment of “a female intimate partner may be threatening for some men, especially men who are themselves unemployed or underemployed” (Renzetti, 2009, p.2).

In Arab society, women are often unable to pursue higher education, which hinders their employability leaving them financially dependent on their husband (Haj-Yahia, 1998a; Haj-Yahia, 2005; Jewkes, 2002; Haj-Yahia, 2003; Monazea & Abdel Khalek, 2010;

Fageeh, 2014; Kharboush, Roudi-Fahimi, Ismail, Mamdouh, Muhammad, Tawfik, El Sharkawy & Sallam, 2010), which makes them easy prey to violent predators. The findings in one study show that the highest rate of women who experience domestic violence are those who do not complete their primary school or have no education at all (Monazea & Abdel Khalek, 2010). Though there has been no statistical research on how higher socioeconomic status among Arab women can still leave them at risk of domestic violence, there is anecdotal evidence that women who are educated and earn well are still at risk. In fact, one study revealed that women with higher socioeconomic status experienced significantly more domestic violence than non-working women, which is “explained by husband’s feelings of inferiority and dependence” (Alzahrani, Bahaa& Ramadan, 2016, p.98). There are also frequently stories in Arab newspapers which report how wives are exploited by their husband for the salaries and the women in these relationships face domestic violence on a daily basis (Al Arabiya News, 2011; Saudi Gazette, 2014; Saudi Gazette, 2015).

2.6.3 Family History

It is argued that family history is a major contributing factor in domestic violence against women (Bensley, Van Eenwyk & Simmons, 2003; Semahegn, & Mengistie, 2015). Research conducted in different countries has found that many children who witness their mothers being beaten by intimate partners are more likely to be violent in their own intimate relationships (Heise 1998, Obeid et al, 2010; Hamby, Finkelhor, Turner, & Ormrod, 2010; Abramsky, Watts, Garcia-Moreno, Devries, Kiss, Ellsberg, Jansen & Heise, 2011; Yount, Pham, Minh, Krause, Schuler, Anh, VanderEnde, & Kramer, 2014). The general consensus is that if children witness violence in any adult relationship in the family, they can come to believe that violence is acceptable and normal behaviour, which continues the cycle of domestic violence as the environment shapes the kind of adults

they become (Schuler, Hashemi, Riley, & Akhter, 1996; Usta et al, 2015; Heise, 1998; Smartt & Kury, 2007; Ellsberg, Caldera, Herrera, Winkvist & Kullgren, 1999; Al-Badayneh, 2012; Haddad et al, 2011; Bragg, 2003; WHO, 2012; Kabeer, 2014). Additionally, several studies have highlighted that children, especially male, who are beaten or suffer ill treatment by their parents are more likely to use violence against a partner (Jewkes, 2002; Walker, 2009; Al- Badayneh, 2012). Even if the child is used as tool of abuse by the abuser, they are still susceptible to becoming abusers in their own intimate relationships when they become adults (Ganley, 1995; Edleson, 1999, Kabeer 2014). On the other hand, adults who experience or witness violence in their childhood still have the freedom to choose their actions and must take responsibility for their own behaviour, as humans are not automatons that can be programmed to behave in a specific way just because of their childhood environment (Mullender, 1996). In fact, many adults who have had encounters with abuse as children are more inclined to avoid it in their intimate personal relationships as they have seen first-hand the damage it can inflict (Mullender, 1996), thereby implying “there is nothing inevitable about the intergenerational transmission of intimate partner violence” (Kabeer, 2014, p.11).

Family history is part of a broader socialisation processes, in the sense that the family, and especially the parents, play a significant role in shaping a child’s personality and behaviour, as the family institution is considered the primary source for social learning for children (Okour, & Hijazi, 2009). Consequently, socialisation processes within the context of family history play an integral role particularly in the way adult males treat adult females in intimate personal relationships. Studies have shown that in Arab societies parents allow their sons to dominate the daughters from early childhood, which often leads these boys to behave in violent ways towards women, especially their wives (Usta et al, 2015; Btoush & Haj-Yahia, 2008). Research in Arab countries has also revealed, for instance, that when children are raised in traditional gender roles, where males are

encouraged to be dominant, independent, aggressive, assertive and powerful while females are guided to be submissive, nurturing, sensitive and interdependent, it creates a space for men to be violent and women to tolerate it (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Usta et al, 2015).

2.6.4 Consumption of Alcohol & Drugs

Consumption of alcohol and drugs as one of the causes of domestic violence against women is considered a controversial issue. While, admittedly, there is no definitive or reliable research to corroborate that there is a correlation between drug and alcohol consumption and domestic violence (Leonard, 2005), there are reports (WHO, 2006) that implicate drug and alcohol use in the increase in frequency and severity of acts of domestic violence. Studies have shown that when a man consumes alcohol heavily or takes drugs, the chances of him committing domestic violence, particularly against the household, increase, because he loses control of his faculties as his brain chemistry is altered (Mullender, 1996; Jewkes, 2002; Agnihotri, Agnihotri, Jeebun, & Purwar, 2006; Btoush & Haj-Yahia, 2008; Clark, Hill, Jabbar & Silverman, 2009; Babu, & Kar 2009; Al-Batayneh, 2012; Singh et al., 2014; WHO, 2012; Kabeer, 2014).

2.7 State Response & Legal Framework

As a general rule, when there is increased official awareness of the incidences of domestic violence, it mandates an official response because addressing the problem of domestic violence is no longer merely a private matter. In Saudi Arabia, the measures to counter domestic violence against woman are relatively new and it is an uncharted territory for the country, thus it is difficult to gauge how effective legislation has been. Hence, this section focuses on legislations against domestic violence from the UK and Ireland and discusses their effectiveness, especially considering that these two countries have the oldest and most established models for preventing and protecting women from domestic

violence. By exploring the UK's and Ireland's respective responses to domestic violence, this section provides an insight on Saudi Arabia's state response to domestic violence against women as it currently stands, what needs to continue being developed and what should be taken into consideration from these two models, which can then be incorporated into Saudi Arabia's own policies.

2.7.1 UK State Response to Domestic Violence in England and Wales

Activists, volunteers, and researchers in the UK in general, and England and Wales in particular, have brought the issue of domestic violence to the centre of the debate on crime and human rights, which propel the topic into the spotlight, thus giving decision-makers the resources and information necessary to create an effective system to protect and improve victims' lives (Radford & Tsutsumi, 2004). In England and Wales, domestic violence has become an increasingly important aspect of state policy, which has led to the government's increased involvement in preventing domestic violence as they continuously make active efforts to curb domestic violence through severe punishments and constant development of policy (Radford & Tsutsumi, 2004; Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou & Lindsay, 2011).

The UK government has diligently worked over the years to reduce the risk of domestic violence towards women in England and Wales (Harwin, 2006; Griffith, 2014). Here, the first initiative to deal with the issue of domestic violence began by authorising the police to play an important role in addressing the incidents of domestic violence. In the early 1990s, the police were advised by the Home Office to treat the incidents of domestic violence as a serious crime, and they were allowed to use their existing powers to arrest the abuser. Assaults that occurred at home, however minor, were declared criminal acts akin to an assault on the street (Mullender, 1996; Griffith, 2014). Furthermore, in 1999, the government established courts in England and Wales that dealt exclusively with

domestic violence, as the crime required a combination of criminal and civil law to address the nuances (Cook, Burton, Robinson & Vallely, 2004).

In 2005, the Home Office published a national report on domestic violence in England and Wales, which showed that there was a shift in the fundamental tenets of the government's policy in order to combat the rising cases of domestic violence in the country. The report stated that a full member partnership had been forged between key figures in governmental departments, including but not limited to, Health, Education, Constitutional Affairs, Work & Pension and the Solicitor General. Additionally, the report also declared seventeen commitments to preventing domestic violence by supporting and developing the public services, responding to domestic violence proactively, and expanding the number of special courts for domestic violence (Maczak, Hatzidimitriadou & Lindsay, 2011).

Over the years, England and Wales have continued to develop its policy on addressing domestic violence and the government continues to strive to make improvements as necessary. Amongst the measures that have been taken to ensure high quality and ongoing support for the victims of domestic violence, includes the incorporation of established independent advisors (on domestic violence and sexual abuse) in governmental organisations with the aim of supporting victims so they can live their lives free of violence through easily accessible services as and when required (Robinson, 2009).

In 2009, after a review on serial perpetrators of domestic violence, Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN) and the Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) were introduced to further strengthen the measures already in place to check and manage domestic violence in England and Wales (Home Office, N.A.). Before implementing these initiatives across England and Wales, 3 pilot projects were conducted in 2011 to assess their effectiveness. The pilot study ended in 2012 and after the evaluation report

was published in November 2013, there was a general consensus in favour of the implementation of the DVPO and DVPN in England and Wales.

Furthermore, under the Domestic Violence Protection scheme, the Home Office has emphasised that the police should use their powers to prevent the perpetrators of domestic violence from contacting the victim or returning to the victim's home for a minimum of 28 days (Home Office, 2014). In addition to this, the then UK Home Secretary strongly insisted that the police force to continue in their efforts to develop an effective action plan to respond to the needs of victims of domestic violence (Home Office, 2014). This saw the introduction, on 8 March 2014, of a domestic violence protection order scheme across all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Aside from their commitment to protecting women from domestic violence in England and Wales, the government has also taken the initiative to try and prevent domestic violence against women. The government is committed to organizing general public campaigns that help to increase the awareness about the incidents of domestic violence (Home Office, 2014). Recently, a new legislation was introduced, called the National Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (also known as Clare's Law), whereby individuals who feel they are in a potentially violent relationship can go to the police and ask for a history of violence about their new partner, which when effective can enable the individual to avoid a violent relationship (Home Office, 2014; Griffith, 2014).

Although many efforts have been made to protect victims of domestic violence, there is no specific criminal offence of domestic violence in England and Wales. Instead, there is a range of offences for which a perpetrator can be prosecuted. These are generally referred to as an offence of "coercive or controlling behaviour against an intimate partner or family member". This ranges from rape, murder and manslaughter which can be found within the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Parliament. House of Commons, 2017, p.9).

In a bid to end violence against women and girls, the Home Office published a report outlining their future strategy (Home Office, 2016). Included within the total funding of £100 million were provisions for accommodation-based services, rape support centres and national helplines (Parliament. House of Commons, 2017). £15million are earmarked specifically for the new Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund, which will support local domestic abuse service provision (Parliament. House of Commons, 2017). Furthermore, in early 2017, the Prime Minister announced “a major programme of work leading towards bringing forward a Domestic Violence and Abuse Act”, which was then confirmed in the Queen’s Speech 2017 as a draft for Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill was said to be coming forth shortly (Parliament. House of Commons, 2017).

In the UK in general, and England and Wales in particular, there are multiple agencies, aside from the police, social services, housing services, probation services, health services and legal professionals, that work with victims of domestic violence. Across the country, there is a range of voluntary agencies and charities that are outfitted for the sole purpose of helping female victims of domestic violence (Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou & Lindsay, 2011). This array of agencies seeks to protect abused women and provide them with a suitable and safe living environment. As there are many agencies, on multiple levels, across England and Wales that deal with domestic violence against women, both government and NGOs, this section showcases the following organisations: Women's Aid, Refuge, and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (henceforth MARAC).

On a national scale, there is Women's Aid, which is a charitable institution established in the early 1970s (Mullender, 1996; Hague, 2005). It supports and helps over 500 local services in England, including refuge accommodation, outreach services, children’s services, hotline services and information services (Williamson, 2006). Women’s Aid

aims to develop the standard of the protection of women by ensuring that law, policy and practices work to develop women's position in society. They work to provide women with high quality services and to reduce domestic violence by raising awareness via public education (Women's Aid, 2015).

Likewise, Refuge, which was founded in 1971, is a national charity in England and Wales which offers sanctuary for women and children who are escaping from domestic violence. Their objective is to empower women and help rebuild their lives without any fear of violence or repercussions. Refuge supports over 3,000 women and children and provides many different types of services, support tailored to specific cultural needs, a free 24-hour phone-in helpline, accommodation, providing women with expert guidance and community outreach services (Harwin, 2006).

MARAC is an annual meeting held in different localities in England to assess the risk of domestic violence and how to help victims at high risk of murder or serious harm. It brings agencies and organisations together from all spheres to discuss the problems within the field of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a complex problem and no single agency is able solve all the related problems, which is why it is important that they work together, effectively (Matczak et al, 2011). MARAC's primary aims are as follows: providing solutions, managing the risks, providing professional support and decreasing repeat offences (Kury & Smartt, 2006). In order to succeed in their objectives, MARAC encourages dialogue, communication and exchange of information between agencies so they can work together to help support the victims in their efforts to become healthy and live safely.

2.7.2 Ireland State Response to Domestic Violence

Ireland began to officially address the issue of domestic violence around the same time

as the UK did, however, Ireland faced difficulties in implementing their policies for nearly a decade and therefore faced much criticism from the public (Kearns & Coen, 2014). In 1995, the Irish government passed the Domestic Violence Bill and in the following year, the government founded the Task Force against Violence which was comprised of civil servants, academics, field experts, and public servants from the health and police services (Kearns, Canavan & Coen, 2008). The task force was created with the intention of forming a coordinated and a strategic response to domestic violence and in 1996, this task force published a report which provided guidelines on how to deal with the problem of domestic violence in Ireland (Kearns & Coen, 2014). Subsequently, in 1998, the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women (henceforth NSC) was established, with membership drawn from all relevant sectors, including national NGOs dedicated to issues of violence against women, related government departments and agencies and the Law Society, to advise on policy development and priorities (Kearns et al, 2008).

In the same year, eight Regional Planning Committees were also established, and their mandate was to assess the needs of their respective regions and develop a strategy accordingly (The National Task Force on Violence Against Women, 1997; Health Services Executive, 2010). However, between 1997 and 2007, the development of the policies to combat domestic violence came to a relative standstill and consequently, in 2009, the Regional Planning Committees were replaced by eight Regional Advisory Committees (Kearns & Coen, 2014). The restructured committees were now composed of individuals from both governmental organisations and relevant non-governmental institutions, in hopes that there would be better understanding and communication between the agencies thus producing more effective and coordinated strategies to reduce domestic violence in Ireland. Furthermore, these regional committees, who also served as representative members of the NSC, would also help establish a strategic national policy against domestic violence (Cosc, 2010; Kearns & Coen, 2014).

In 2010, the Irish government published a policy regarding domestic, sexual and gender-based violence for the health sector (Health Services Executive, 2010) because there was no national planning across the health services for victims of domestic violence. The policy's primary objective was to prevent domestic violence and provide support to families who were either experiencing domestic violence or at risk (Health Services Executive, 2010). Its secondary objective was to increase the awareness and better understanding of domestic violence through training and public campaigns.

The Department of Justice and Equality in Ireland is also involved in the effort to address domestic violence against women and their contribution includes, but is not limited to, overseeing the police force's effectiveness when responding to incidents of domestic violence (Kearns et al, 2008). The Irish police, who are also now associated with the NSC (Cosc, 2010), had already taken the initiative to combat domestic violence and started to develop its own policies in 1994, which were later revised in 1997 and then most recently in 2007 (Kearns & Coen, 2014).

In 2007, due to the perceived ineffectiveness of previous policies and strategies, the National Women's Strategy (2007–2016) was published (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2007), which outlined a strategic 9-year plan to decrease domestic violence in Ireland, which included the establishment of a national executive office that would co-ordinate a national response to domestic violence in Ireland (Cosc, 2010). Subsequently, they also created the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (also known as Cosc) in June of the same year.

As discussed above, developing effective strategies to deal with domestic violence in Ireland had been delayed, primarily because there appears to have been no communication between the different agencies. Consequently, the organisations all developed strategies independently without coordinating or co-operating with one

another (Kearns et al, 2008). However, the government realised that the problem of domestic violence needed to be addressed from all known angles rather than in fragments because it is a multi-layered issue and therefore requires cohesion between both government and non-government agencies (Hester & Westmarland, 2005). Consequently, the government of Ireland is revising and restructuring its strategies and policies regarding domestic violence with the intention of becoming more effective in combating the problem in the country.

As in the UK, in Ireland voluntary and local charitable organisations are also involved in trying to help victims of domestic violence. Women's Aid Ireland is an organisation that provides advice and support to female victims of domestic violence as well as producing research that can help the government better understand the problem. The organisation also supports victims by making provisions such as one-to-one visits, court accompaniments and further telephone support (Hester & Westmarland, 2005).

Similarly, SAFE Ireland also offers a range of services to women who have experienced domestic violence. The charity has 40 services in total, ranging from providing accommodation for women who are escaping violent relationships to raising awareness about domestic violence. Furthermore, they have a 24hr crisis accommodation (refuges) as well as tailoring services to meet the victim's emotional, practical and safety related needs (Safe Ireland, n.d.).

2.7.3 Saudi Arabia State Response to Domestic Violence

The recentness of the official recognition of domestic violence against women and children in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ghalib, 2004) has meant that the country's policies and strategies to deal with domestic violence are still in their infancy, even though comparatively more progressive than is often given credit for. In 2005, the Royal Decree

by King Abdullah directly resulted in the changes in policy that have been seen in the last 10 years. Firstly, the National Family Safety Program (Human Rights Watch, 2010; Almuneef & Al-Eissa, 2011) was established, and it was a landmark initiative that addressed the issue of domestic violence at a national scale. The program's aim is to be distinguished in the field of domestic violence by providing high quality services, raising awareness, and constructing partnerships with professionals, government bodies, NGOs and international establishments, to promote a safe family environment in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the resources available and agencies for victims of domestic violence that have been founded specifically focus on supporting families that experience the effects of domestic violence. However, it is also important to note that these agencies have only been in operation for less than a decade (Dewey, 2013), and consequently these agencies face many obstacles because there are no clear roles for individual agencies, which leads to a duplication of their tasks and subsequently creates confusion regarding the specific services each agency is providing, and ineffective collaborations between these organisations (Okaz, 2010).

In 2008, a prime ministerial decree ordered an increase in Social Protection Units, which is the Saudi Arabian version of women's shelters, in various cities (Al Riyadh, 2009). The prime ministerial decree provided the government with an initial national scheme to manage this problem, in compliance with the United Nations (Al Riyadh, 2009). Furthermore, the Saudi government has founded centres, such as the King Abdul-Aziz Center for National Dialogue and the King Khalid Charitable Foundation, to improve education and awareness about domestic violence against women (Dewey, 2013). The Ministry of Social Affairs has made a special commitment to protect women's lives through studying the social problems that cause domestic violence against women (Al Riyadh, 2009). Additionally, the relevant authorities, such as courts and police, are constantly aiming to respond as rapidly as possible to cases of domestic violence (Al

Jaber, 2013).

The Ministry of Social Affairs has also taken positive steps to help reduce the incidence of domestic violence through a variety of measures, such as opening branches of Social Protection Units in all different regions, encouraging charity organisations to open branches to protect women in various cities, and raising awareness about domestic violence through media portals in collaboration with authority figures and professional experts (Al Riyadh, 2009). The authority figures involved in increasing awareness about domestic violence come from an array of state departments, including the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Youth Welfare (Al Riyadh, 2009). The Ministry of Social Affairs is also creating strategies to address domestic violence against women, and most importantly, organizing training courses and workshops to improve and develop the skills of the staff who will deal with domestic violence cases (Al Riyadh, 2009).

A 24-hour hotline was also established by the Ministry of Social Affairs to support the victims of domestic violence in order to advise and guide the victims towards the nearest place to find the necessary assistance in any region of the Kingdom (Sahli, 2014). Moreover, the Ministry of Affairs has created a budget of more than £2 million to open 14 branches of Social Protection Units, as well as investing in trying to increase awareness about the issue of domestic violence (Sahli, 2014).

The Saudi government has not limited itself to working with government departments and also works with NGOs. The collaboration with the NGOs has been made in an effort to continue raising awareness about the issue of domestic violence against women. In 2013, the first time in the history of the Saudi Arabia, the King Khalid Charitable Foundation launched the anti-domestic violence campaign, showing a burqa-clad woman

with a blackened and blood-shot eye with the slogan "Some Things Can't Be Covered", and it was widely regarded a challenging and positive step which would aid in the public discussion of the issue of domestic violence (Dewey, 2013; Eltahawy, 2015). The most important and landmark outcome of this campaign was the introduction of the NHA (Law of Protection Against Harm) in 2013. The law is comprised 17 articles that encompass issues of domestic violence exclusively and specifically against women and children and it includes regulating the reporting of these cases, detailing the responsibilities of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the punishments that perpetrators receive, which includes penalizing the abuser with a prison sentence up to one year and the minimum penalty of almost £10,000 (Al Jazeera, 2013; Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2013; Eltahawy,2015).

In 2014, the Ministry of Justice realised that judicial system was inadequate in cases of domestic violence, therefore they took the initiative to train judges by organizing workshops led by expert judges, researchers and social workers in most of the regions of the Kingdom so that the newly-trained judges could be more effective in dealing with cases of domestic violence against women (Badawi, 2014a). The Ministry of Justice and the Head of the Supreme Council of the Magistracy directed the courts to inform the Ministry of Social Affairs about any cases of domestic violence they encountered professionally, thus enabling these three departments to work together towards a common goal (Badawi, 2014a). In relation to this, the Ministry of Justice aims to provide support for female victims of domestic violence by assigning social workers, who are able to liaise between the various departments, including the Ministry of Family Protection (Badawi, 2014b). Also, as a part of their commitment to preventing domestic violence, the Ministry of Social Affairs is planning to find ways to support and help abused women rehabilitate into society (Badawi, 2014b).

While in recent years there has been a concerted effort by the government and NGOs to increase awareness about domestic violence, there still remains many obstacles to effectively implement the system of social protection in cases of domestic violence against women (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). The police have been criticised as disinterested in helping abused women, as well as displaying a general disrespect towards the roles of organisations that protect women from domestic violence (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). Furthermore, it has been deemed that the police and courts take unnecessarily prolonged investigative procedures in the cases of domestic violence and disregard the psychological reports for the victim prepared by the protection agencies (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). There has also been criticism about the relaxed response by hospitals in cases of domestic violence, which require immediate attention and action, and there is growing concern about the ineffectiveness of women's rights organisations due to the staff being inadequately trained (Al-Ghamdi, 2015).

Modi Al-Zahrani, the Directress of the House of Social Protection and Hospitality in Riyadh, believes that the Saudi government's current policies, though a positive step, are still not completely effective in protecting women from domestic violence (Al-Ghamdi, 2015). In fact, Al-Zahrani submitted a report to the Human Rights First Society, which detailed how the Ministry of Social Affairs chooses to either try and reconcile the victim with the abuser or provide social and psychological treatment with the intention of returning the victim to the abuser, and only if the first two measures fail, the Ministry will consider providing shelter. The reason that is attributed to this approach is due to Saudi society's conservative and traditional attitude where it is still considered shameful for women to be independent and live alone as women are traditionally seen as dependents of men (Al-Ghamdi, 2015).

Likewise, Maha Al-Muneef, the founder and executive director of the National Family

Safety Program (henceforth NFSP), explained the challenges Saudi Arabia faces when trying to combat the issue of domestic violence against women in the country (Alshahry, 2014). Al-Muneef explained that the NFSP, as well as other organisations, encounter obstacles from every level in society due to the conservative and traditional values of Saudi society as families consider the issues of domestic violence a private and highly personal matter, which is why women, in general, are unaware of their rights and the resources available to them. Al-Muneef noted that the road to freeing women from domestic violence was a long process and it would take time to change society's perspective on domestic violence, women's rights and marital relationships (Alshahry, 2014).

The NHA (Law of Protection Against Harm), which was passed in 2013, has also come under criticism as it has been deemed ineffective due to the law's ambiguity and thus, it is not considered a practical measure (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Eltahawy, 2015). The new law does not specify the government agency that has the responsibility to investigate the abuse allegations or enable these agencies to take steps to ensure the protection and safety of the victims from the perpetrators (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Additionally, there are no specific or clear mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of the new law nor does it clearly define what domestic violence is, making it even more difficult to enforce the law, which in turn allows for the continuation of domestic violence against Saudi women (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Dewey, 2013; Eltahawy, 2015).

While there is a debate about whether the policies that King Abdullah initiated have been effective, many have praised King Abdullah for working realistically within the conservative social structures in Saudi Arabia to make changes (Taylor & Albasri, 2014) with international critics attributing the slow pace of change to 'cultural relativism' or 'exceptionalism'. Though it is generally acknowledged that Saudi women are vulnerable

to domestic violence as they do not currently have all of their rights (i.e., they cannot drive, study without a guardian's permission, or travel alone), the increase in academic opportunities and availability of employment for Saudi women in the last decade has been empowering them to the extent that they are working towards freeing themselves from domestic violence.

2.7.3.1 Empowering Saudi Women

Empowering Saudi women is a crucial step in freeing them from domestic violence. Consequently, the Saudi government has been actively working towards empowering women in different ways, including increasing opportunities for higher education and employment. A significant step taken by the Saudi government was the introduction of the scholarship program (Bukhari & Denman, 2013; Hilal & Denman, 2013), which made female students pursue higher education abroad and in 2012, more than half the Saudi student body was made up of women (Abouammoh, Smith & Duwais, 2014). In fact, the number of Saudi women who obtain postgraduate and doctoral level degrees is continually on the rise to the extent that women now exceed men in terms of academic achievement (Hamdan, 2005). Though there are still cultural challenges to applying and succeeding in scholarship programs (Al Alhareth, Al Alhareth & Al Dighrir, 2015), women who successfully complete their education are able to shift from the private to public sphere (Kelly, 2009), which encourages women to continue their resistance and rally for more rights and freedom. The opportunity to interact with diverse cultures has led Saudi women to develop their abilities to think creatively and critically, which has given them the space and freedom to adopt, by Saudi standards, new and daring ideas (Taylor & Albasri, 2014).

From 2005 until his death in 2015, King Abdullah was the King of Saudi Arabia and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and he believed that the Saudi society could not

progress without giving women equal rights and power (Mills, 2009; Alsuwaida,2016). In this time, there were significant changes made in legislation in favour of Saudi women to the extent that the period is referred to as 'Al-aesr Aldhahabi Lilmarah' which translates into English as "Golden Era for Women"(Alsuwaida, 2016). The laws and legislations that were introduced encouraged and supported Saudi women to become economically and socially independent. The distinguishing feature of the Golden Era for Women is that society became more open and began to challenge all types of extremism and fanaticism whilst maintaining the values, norms, and traditions of the Saudi society (Alsuwaida, 2016). There were many changes made during this period which stunned not only the Saudi society, but also the world (Pavan, 2016). These changes are considered historical events that helped challenge Saudi society's widely-held views towards women by engaging and empowering women in society and giving them the space to raise their voice and become decision-makers (Al-Mukhtar, 2012). Consequently, many Saudi women became more aware and conscious of their rights, freedom and autonomy (Al-Mukhtar, 2012).

During the Golden Era for Women, the education policy helped to develop Saudi women's autonomy. In this time, many universities and colleges were founded for women and previously unavailable disciplines became accessible to women, such as law, engineering, journalism, and tourism (Kelly, 2009; Alsuwaida, 2016). This era also witnessed the establishment of the Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman University, the largest female-only university in the world (Toth, 2015). Due to the nature of gender segregation in Saudi society, it was also a challenge when he founded the University of King Abdullah for Science and Technology, the first Saudi academic institution which allowed men and women to work and study together (Pavan, 2016). By opening the doors to education, Saudi women were finally being included in the decision-making process (Drury, 2015).

Education was not the only sector where changes took place during this phase, as there were changes across a multitude of other arenas. For instance, in the legal system women were finally allowed to become lawyers, which was a significant step forward in the representation of women and their increasing visibility in society (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Saudi women were also empowered politically as 30 women were appointed to the Shura Council, a first for the Saudi government (BBC, 2013; Human Right Watch, 2015). Then, in 2015, for the first time ever, Saudi women were able to stand as candidates and vote in the local municipal elections as well as the local board for the Chambers of Commerce (BBC, 2013). In the last decade, Saudi women have also begun to become more financially independent as the new policies opened up new avenues for employment, expanding the list of available and suitable jobs for women (Human Right Watch, 2015), regardless of the level of education.

In the Golden Era for Women, there was much emphasis placed on the importance of giving Saudi women the same advantages as men, now that women were finally beginning to be recognised as fundamental assets to the development and improvement of Saudi society. Considering that Saudi women constitute half of society (Al Sibai, 2015), it is only fair they are actively involved in public life. As such, the period was crucial in helping women and society realise that women could take any role they choose, whether it was a doctor, lawyer or an activist and that women need to have a voice in society. In November 2015, the women on the Shura Council proposed an amendment to the Civil Status System, which would give Saudi women the right to their own original family card and it would include all dependents under the age of 15 years and this proposal was passed in early 2016. Dr. Haya Almanea, one of the women on the Shura Council, explained the purpose of this amendment was to secure women's right and their children as citizens (Shamrani, 2015). Since women have been appointed to the Shura Council, women have been given representation and a voice, which has allowed for a

more open and public discussion about the obstacles Saudi women face on a daily basis. This is indicated by the proposals currently under review such as Dr Haya Almanea's recommendation to increase awareness of women's rights through the coordinated efforts by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education & Culture, the Ministry of Media and the organisation Human Rights First Society (Ajeeban, 2016). Women on the Shura Council are constantly fighting for women's rights and are willing to present 'radical' proposals to support women, such as the recent call for the amendment of the passport issuance procedure for women, where women no longer need their male guardian's consent, thus freeing women from male dependency (Halligan, 2016).

Female empowerment in Saudi Arabia is moving at a gradual and slow pace (Abu-Dayyeh, 2015). This is an intentional strategy as there are many people in Saudi society who are still resistant to female independence and autonomy (Abu-Dayyeh, 2015). Changes that empower Saudi women have to be introduced steadily rather than rapidly to prevent extreme and adverse reactions as Saudi women still face essential barriers that are deep rooted in a culture that is conservative, traditional, prone to gender inequality and has limited citizenship for women, all of which contribute to the problem of domestic violence against women (Cochran, 2009; Kauser & Tlaiss, 2011; Kattan, Heredero, Botella & Margalina, 2016). Despite these challenges, Saudi women have started to ask for equality through different mediums and are demanding the removal of the guardianship system (Human Rights Watch, 2008). Saudi women have realised that they are treated as minors, and that there is no clear law that could protect women against guardian control, which often leads to domestic violence. Many Saudi women are now beginning to see and understand the attitude and behaviours of male hegemony (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007), and are thus challenging their society to recognise women as full citizens.

Empowered Saudi women are sidestepping the barriers placed by gender segregation and restricted mobility as they work towards the common goal of gaining equal rights. For instance, in the summer of 2016, Saudi women launched two major social media campaigns. The first, with the hashtag #IAmMyOwnGuardian, called for the end of the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia, while the other, #TogetherToEndMaleGuardianship, was designed to unite Saudi women to fight for the same cause (Nelson, 2016; ABC Australia, 2016). The purpose of these campaigns is to help Saudi women gain their autonomy, independence and freedom, which would reduce the risk of domestic violence against them. These hashtags were not just campaigns but also a platform to raise awareness and inform Saudi women of their rights.

Similarly, Saudi women are taking initiatives on other platforms to inform women of their rights, such as Nisreen Al-Eisa, a Saudi female lawyer, who launched an app, the first of its kind, solely for the purpose of informing Saudi women about their rights, especially within the context of domestic violence, divorce, custody battles and child support. The app also explains to Saudi women legal procedures, including filing suits against their violent husbands (iTunes, 2016). Saudi women are becoming proactive in their fight against oppression and suppression, and in September 2016, an active petition was launched asking for the end of the male guardianship system. The petition gained over 14,000 signatures online and more than 2,000 telegrams were directly sent to the Saudi King's office. These challenges to the conservative and Saudi culture are a starting point for female empowerment in Saudi Arabia that will lead the way to reducing the risk of domestic violence against women (Sidahmed, 2016).

2.8 Chapter Summary

Having looked at the various definitions, the extent and the increasing prevalence of domestic violence in its various forms and severity across the globe, it can be generally

discerned that domestic violence is a complex concept that is finally receiving more attention than ever before. More and more countries are beginning to give domestic violence the importance it deserves by encouraging research into the subject, thus giving the state some insight on the prevalence of the problem. However, domestic violence is a multifaceted problem, which is a consequence of the absence of a universally-agreed all-encompassing definition for the concept that makes it difficult to identify the definitive contributing factors towards domestic violence and in turn preventing the effective design and implementation of strategies to prevent it. This chapter also explored the Saudi government's response to domestic violence on a state level (vis-a-vis the UK and Irish policies regarding domestic violence) by highlighting the steps the Saudi government has taken to combat domestic violence against women in the country, which includes the official recognition and criminalisation of domestic violence. The discussion of Saudi Arabia's response to domestic violence includes the continuous efforts to improve the status of women in various ways, including education, awareness and employment, which led women to begin engaging in the public sphere in positions within the decision-making departments in the Saudi society.

The next chapter focuses on how domestic violence in Saudi Arabia is a layered issue with roots deeply embedded in the national culture, gender inequality and citizenship.

3 CULTURE, GENDER INEQUALITY & CITIZENSHIP

3.1 Introduction

In Saudi Arabia, domestic violence is bound up with issues related to culture, gender, inequality and citizenship. In order to understand these concepts in the context of the Saudi society, it is important to understand what these ideas mean independently. Firstly culture, which is when a group of people share a common set of learned beliefs, values, norms and expectations of behaviour in order to be able to interact with one another (Damen, 1987). Secondly gender, which is when a social construct that differentiates between male and female based on perceived differences in capabilities, needs and desires by assigning masculine and feminine expectations to the respective genders (Holmes, 2007). Thirdly, the concept of inequality which is defined as “the absence of equality” (Firebaugh, 2003, p.71), and in it refers to the practice when a group of people are given more opportunities over other groups. Lastly citizenship, which has been explained as a “legitimate personal claim to certain rights, liberties, and immunities” (Kruman & Marback, 2015, p.I).

The concepts that have been discussed above are interrelated in that expectations, behaviours, and attitudes for both men and women are generally shaped by culture (Cuddy, Crotty, Chong, & Norton, 2010) and the term ‘gender’ itself is defined structurally and culturally in ways that establish and promote gender inequality by establishing men as superior and women as their subordinate (Joseph, 2012). In turn, gender inequalities are linked to citizenship in its original form, which was exclusively in the context of the male, who was active in the public realm while the female was a non-citizen since she belonged to the private sphere, under the dominion of man (Lister, 1997).

3.2 Culture

Culture is a very complex concept to work with due to the difficulty in getting a single holistic definition for the term. In 1952, two American anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, after a critical review of the concepts and definitions of the term culture, compiled a list of 164 definitions. These definitions were collated from a variety of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political sciences and biology, and all these subjects defined culture in the context of their own field of interest. This compilation of definitions is indicative of the complexity that the concept of culture presents and affirms that no single definition could achieve a unanimous consensus in the literature (Spencer-Oatey, 2012).

Culture has been described as collective behaviour of a community that results in common beliefs, customs, norms, values, and traditions. These cultural beliefs are considered unwritten rules that are rooted in society and are embedded in societal norms. Peterson (1979) defines culture as consisting of “four kinds of symbols: values: choice statements that rank behaviour or goals; norms: specifications of values relating to behaviour; beliefs: existential statements about how the world operates ... and expressive symbols: any all aspects of material culture” (pp.137-138), which plays a major role in creating and maintaining the culture. According to Williams and Spencer-Rodgers (2010), culture is a set of shared meanings and practices that are passed from generation to generation through teaching and learning.

Therefore, culture, as defined in this thesis, is fundamental in constructing, controlling and determining an individual's behaviour, attitude, and feelings because a social system consists of doctrine, beliefs, norms, values, customs, and social conventions that enables individuals within groups or communities to function and interact with one another (Hall, 1992; Fourcroy, 2006; Alkahtani, Dawson & Lock, 2013). Thus, in its essence, culture is

a lifestyle shared by members of society, which affects every aspect of daily life - how to live, think, behave, view, and analyse the world. Culture is constituted of 8 components, comprising of language, religion, values and attitudes, aesthetics, education, law and politics, technology and material culture, and social organisation of different elements (Lomax, 2007). In the context of Saudi Arabia, this thesis focuses on the following four major components that shape, support, and maintain the culture of domestic violence against women, which are misinterpretation of religion, socialisation, patriarchy and societal attitudes.

3.2.1 Misuse & Misrepresentation of Religion

All citizens in Saudi Arabia are Muslims, and as such the Saudi government and society believes that state and religion are inextricably linked and therefore the Saudi government bases its laws on its interpretation of the Qur'an, Prophetic Traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), also known as Sharia Law, and the 1992 Basic Law is built upon on these texts and serves as the country's constitution (Saudi Arabia, 1992; Van Eijk 2010). Therefore, all Muslims are required to abide by the Qur'an and Hadith (Ammar, 2007; Abugideiri, 2005) and these religious texts are considered profound guidelines that inform social, political, economic, and health affairs in Muslim societies (Mernissi, 1997). Consequently, religion is an essential component of the Saudi culture (Al-Shehry, Rogerson, Fairweather & Prior, 2006; Aldraehim et al., 2012) and it is therefore important to understand where Islam stands on domestic violence against women as it has been argued, controversially and incorrectly, that religion is responsible for domestic violence against Saudi women.

In Islam, it is forbidden to commit acts of violence, especially against women (Abugideiri, 2005; Alkhateeb & Abugideiri, 2007), and the cultural practice of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia stems from misinterpretation of some of the verses in the Qur'an.

Ultimately, male perpetrators of domestic violence against women subscribe to the ideology of male supremacy and the inferiority of women, all of which can be further exacerbated by cultural practices, informed by misinterpretation of religion, which allows men to justify their actions against women (United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2001). This section focuses on how Islam views women, how wives are meant to be treated according the Qur'an and Hadith, and the impermissibility of using violence against women, and how some verses in the Qur'an are misinterpreted by scholars which is advantageous to male abusers (Jayasundara et al, 2014).

In the Qur'an, two of the longest chapters are dedicated to women, namely Surah Al-Nisa and Surah Maryam. These two chapters highlight the importance of women, outline women's rights and states that women are equal to men (Badawi, 1995; Goldstein,2010), and are granted complete agency and autonomy (Alkhateeb & Abugideiri, 2007; Goldstein, 2010; Riaz & Abbas, 2013). Women are also mentioned repeatedly in many of the other chapters in the Qur'an, emphasising the way women should be treated, especially within the paradigm of marriage: namely, wives should be treated kindly, fairly, compassionately, supportively, equally, mercifully and lovingly (Qur'an 2:187; 2:229-237; 4:19; 4:25; 9:71).

Though men and women have been assigned different (but equally significant) roles within the family unit, the husband's role as the breadwinner is not about establishing authority over his wife but instead assigning responsibility to protect, provide and support for his partner (Roald, 2001). The Qur'an further emphasises that the marital relationship should be harmonious and complimentary where "... [Wives] are [the husbands'] garment and [husbands] are [the wives'] garment ..." (Qur'an 2:187). By using the word "garment", the verse has profound implications; it represents the idea that the basis of a strong marital relationship lies in equality, security, intimacy, closeness, protection,

sharing, generosity, comfort, cover, and support (Ibrahim & Abdalla, 2010; Abugideiri, 2010; Hamid, 2015). Therefore, neither husband nor wife is meant to have superiority or power over the other, and should work together to facilitate a strong and nurturing family environment (Riaz & Abbas, 2013), and in light of this, there is no space for cruelty against wives in Islam (Al-Hibri, 2003).

Through the Hadith, the Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) instructed men on how they should treat their wives. Several sayings on the subject are attributed to him, including the following, “The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and the best of you are those who are best to their wives” (Hadith). The Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) was strongly against any act that lead to or included violence against anyone, and especially against women (Abugideiri, 2005; Hamid, 2015) as the Prophet clearly stated that “Never beat God’s handmaidens (female believers)” (Hadith). The Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) concern for the protection and welfare of women was so profound that even on his deathbed the very last advice he gave to all men was that husbands should take care of their wives (Hadith).

The Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) himself was an exemplary role model for husbands. The Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) lived a life built on the principles of harmony, where there is no place for oppression or injustice and everybody was seen as an equal, regardless of gender. The Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) treated everyone in his household with kindness, love, compassion and even though he was the leader of the nation, he would still partake in household chores (Mernissi, 1997; Hamid, 2015).

However, there is a contradiction between Islam and religious teachings and the cultural practices in Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia (Badawi, 1995; Ali, Liu & Humedian, 2004; Hamdan, 2009; Douki et al, 2003). The teachings of Islam, particularly

those concerning the treatment of women and women's rights, are often misinterpreted and, on occasion, disregarded outright. Often Saudi men justify their violent behaviour and ill treatment towards their wives by misinterpreting verses to best suit them, but the onus of their violent behaviour is on the individuals themselves and not the religion (Obeid et al, 2010; Haddad et al, 2011; Douki et al, 2003).

There is a misconception that Islam establishes gender inequality. For instance, in the Qur'an, the concept of Qiwama is explained as "... men are the protectors and maintainers of women ..." (Qur'an, 4:34-36). The concept of Qiwama is specific to the relationship between husbands and wives and the intent behind it is ensure that men provide for and protect their wives (Riaz & Abbas, 2013; Abugideiri, 2005). However, many Islamic scholars have misinterpreted it on many levels, such as applying it to all male-female dynamics and propagating the idea that man is superior, master, ruler and governor. Consequently, the scholars enforce the idea that women are inferior and subordinate, thus encouraging males to suppress and oppress females. Further misuse of the Qiwama includes imposing control over women by restricting their mobility and denying them their autonomy as women are made dependent on their husbands, which in turn promotes male violence against women who do not want to comply by these standards (Ibrahim & Abdalla, 2010).

3.2.2 Socialisation

It has been argued that one of the core pillars which shapes culture is primary socialisation, through which young children are introduced to the norms and values of a given people. Some scholars explain that socialisation is the process of learning, through parents and the family unit, which forms the individual's views on social roles, expectations and attitudes related to gender (Usta, Farver & Hamieh, 2015; Crespi, 2004). If socialisation is considered the foundation upon which children acquire knowledge,

skills, beliefs, norms, customs, and behaviours that enable them to interact effectively with others, then childhood influences, observations and experiences have a profound effect on shaping the kind of adult that child will become. In most Arab societies, parents socialise their children according to traditional gender roles that society imposes on them (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Haj-Yahia, 2003), which affects how men and women interact with each other as adults.

In Arab society, through a specific form of gendered socialisation that involves family, men are given the space to justify violence against women because parents enforce different gender roles on males and females from an early age, contributing to the gender gap (Usta et al, 2015). Parents play an instrumental role in influencing gender roles through expectations, as they encourage sons to be tough, adventurous, aggressive, while their daughters are expected to be obedient and maternal (Crespi, 2004). Furthermore, the language parents use can also contribute to children adhering to traditional gender roles as parents describe their boys within the contexts of physical strength, agility, whilst girls are described by parents as being affectionate, expressive and demure (Carter, 2014).

Differentiation between males and females by parents in Arab society can be an extension of the ideology that females belong in the private sphere while males are equipped to handle the public sphere. A survey conducted in the Middle East revealed that the majority of females in their late teens were assigned household chores, in contrast to the males who were significantly less involved in domestic work (Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee & El-Gibaly, 2003). This survey is indicative of how females are restricted while males are encouraged to participate in the wider world, which is a consequence of the parents' belief that males are more capable of generating income and securing the family's future (Trask, 2015) while females are considered a drain on the family resources due to the costs that are incurred with their marriages (Hallman & Roca, 2007).

In Saudi Arabia, traditionally, families favour boys over girls because they prescribe to traditional gender roles (Kulwicki et al, 2010). Boys in Saudi society are expected to preserve the status, provide for the family and continue the family name, and therefore taught to be strong and independent, while girls are expected to serve her family, which is why they are taught to be polite, obedient, and act as the caregiver, putting the needs of others before her own. Moreover, parents discourage their children from defying the norms of gender roles, such as scolding boys if they show emotions, wear pink clothes or play with dolls and kitchen tools. Through the process of socialisation, Saudi parents send indirect messages to their children to shape and promote their gender role (Usta et al, 2015).

In Saudi Arabia, through family socialisation processes, boys are given more freedom and autonomy over their lives. Saudi parents give unlimited space for the sons to pursue opportunities, which allows them to become more capable and confident, because sons are eventually expected to become the head of the household. In essence, boys are taught an ideal of masculinity, while girls are expected to become the ideal of femininity (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013; Mullender, 1996). The outcome of raising boys, in such a way, is that they come to believe they have an inherent authority over women and that women should be subservient to them. This belief can lead men to use violence against wives in order to maintain their status and power and it allows for the continuation of domestic violence against women. In fact, in a study about domestic violence against female spouses, it was found parents who give their sons control over their daughters from early age; therefore, when boys become heads of their own families and are married, they are likely to use violence against their wives (Obeid et al, 2010).

3.2.3 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is not exclusive to Saudi society as it has been suggested that “all significant

societies were clearly patriarchal ... There was no single exception” (Therborn, 2004, p.17) and it is considered to be responsible for determining gender roles for both males and females (Walby, 1990). It is pertinent to note that stories that relate to patriarchal practices are linked to domestic violence by many authors (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Becker, 1991; Abrahams, Jewkes & Laubsher, 1999; Jewkes, 2002; Almosaed, 2004; Profanter, 2014; Usta et al 2015; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). The expectations are for males to be in dominant and controlling positions, while females are expected to be secondary, and perform specific roles limited to the private sphere, such as maintaining the house, raising the children and being nurturing (Dibiase & Gunnoe, 2004). Thus, patriarchal attitudes can have a negative effect on women's autonomy and freedom, putting them at the risk of domestic violence (Walby, 1990). Examples of patriarchal practices can be seen across the world.

In Ireland, patriarchal attitudes have been adopted as “the Church, state and the laws governing the state view women as appendages of men” (Lambert, 1997, p.18), which leaves women vulnerable to abuse (Lambert, 1997) as patriarchy is embedded in every level of society, including the family structure (O’Connor, 2000). While in Russia, controlling and dominating wives is considered acceptable practice for husbands (Crandall, 2005). Similarly, in some Indian cultures, husbands control their wives and women do not have the right to manage their lives (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). Likewise, in Burma, there are some communities that believe women's identities are dependent on their husbands, and within this cultural construct, men are able to dictate what women should and should not do (Kusakabe & Oo, 2004), as it is in Vietnam, where women also expected to obey their husbands (Rydstrøm, 2003). There are also many Latin American cultures where women have been raised to accept their husbands to make decisions on their behalf (Ellsberg et al, 1999).

A similar degree of patriarchy has been identified in a number of African countries. Many scholars have found that imbalances of power through the ingrained patriarchal practices, which favour men over women, are the root causes of violence against women and this is true of many countries in Africa (Abrahams, Jewkes & Laubsher, 1999; Jewkes, 2002; Asiyabola, 2005; Sigsworth, 2009; Rohland, 2009; Makama, 2013). Many African cultures treat women as minors, which leaves them dependent on men, thus women are expected to conform and please their husbands, which could potentially create a wide space for violence against women (Kambarami, 2006; Makahamadze, Isacco & Chireshe, 2012). Furthermore, in traditional communities in Africa, it has been found that there is a strict hierarchy within the family unit, where a husband has absolute authority over his wife or wives and the legal system in many African countries contributes to the oppression and suppression of women in and outside of the family unit (Andrews, 1998; Bowman, 2003). A manifestation of patriarchy can be seen in South Africa with the culturally inherited practice of male hegemony over women, where women still tend to be viewed as the property of their fathers and then of their husbands; hence, women are expected to comply with their husbands, while the husbands are permitted, and sometimes even encouraged, to 'discipline' their wives for disobedience (Bowman, 2003; Jewkes, & Morrell, 2010). In this sense, the patriarchal system in South Africa can be seen to play a contributing role towards the continuation of domestic violence against women as men have been given unlimited space to abuse their wives (Rohland, 2009).

In Arab cultures, including Saudi Arabia, the patriarchal system is founded on a hierarchical social structure and has been known to dictate the way social relations in the family are conducted (Haj-Yahia et al, 2012). According to Dobash and Dobash (1979), marital relations are an essential component in maintaining the patriarchal culture, as in these relationships the position of the man as a dominant and controlling figure is regularly reinforced. The system of patriarchy is known to exhort the continuation of

patriarchal practices, which is to encourage and support male supremacy, and thus women are considered to be subordinate to men, leaving women vulnerable to experience domestic violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

In Arab culture, men are expected to have sole hegemony in the family, and this power is based on the man's economic, cultural and social position (Ghanim, 2009; Kelly, 2009). Many Arab men emphasise their authority in their relationship with their wives in that they expect their wives to obey and respect them, blindly (Ghanim, 2009). In this sense, Arab society can be seen to promote and encourage the values and norms that relate to the traditional notions of femininity and motherhood (Haj-Yahia, 2003). According to studies on the perceived causes of domestic violence against women in Arab society, when the husband feels powerful, he needs more power and wants to control his wife, which leads the husband to use violence against her (Haj-Yahia, 2013). Arab culture largely remains an advocate of the idea that a husband is dominant, while the wife is dependent on the husband, thus creating an environment where violence against the wife can become commonplace (Haj-Yahia et al, 2012). A study focusing on the Arab attitudes and views towards abuse against wives found that domestic violence is associated with the patriarchal system that manifests itself in the family structure, marital relationships and gender roles, as patriarchal practices are deeply embedded within Arab culture (Haj-Yahia, 2003).

Like many other cultures, Saudi culture has also adopted patriarchal practices. Through these practices, Saudi society expects men to exert authority and power over women thus widening the gap between the two genders (Almosaed, 2004). In Saudi society, patriarchy represents the idea that males are dominant and in control of females and are free to enjoy privileges as rights as the culture and society deem it acceptable (Becker, 1991; Profanter, 2014; Usta et al, 2015; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). However, in the last decade, Saudi

women have been given the opportunity to pursue and succeed in higher education and are now able to work outside of home, which has led to improvements in their position and has brought some changes to the family dynamic (Hamdan, 2005; Al Alhareth, Al Dighrir & Al Alhareth, 2015), where men are not exclusively the breadwinners as the women can financially contribute towards the household. Nonetheless, men's position in Saudi Arabia remains as it always has, and they are still seen as the head of the family and the main provider, leading them to retain considerable power based on economic, social and cultural status (Profanter, 2014; Al Alhareth et al, 2015). Saudi culture plays a contributing role in maintaining men's status and power, which means "men have freedom to discipline those subordinate to them" (Abadeer, 2015; Human Right Watch, 2016) including their wives who are viewed a weak, irresponsible and incapable of taking care of themselves, much like a child (Deihim & Homball, 2015). The practices of patriarchy can affect female autonomy, whereby if women are oppressed (Kambarami, 2006) it often informs domestic violence perpetrated against them.

3.2.4 Societal Attitudes

Societal attitudes, in general, regarding domestic violence against women allows for the continuation of it and there are layers as to why women stay in violent relationships. In South Africa, the issue of domestic violence is rarely discussed openly and tends to be hidden as many South Africans still consider it to be a private matter between intimate personal partners, which leads to women tolerating violence in their relationships (Bendall, 2010). Of the known reasons as to why many South African women remain in violent relationships, there are two which can be considered to be the most significant: 1) fear of societal judgment and condemnation; and 2) fear of reprisal and retaliation by their partners, and consequently, many South African women tolerate violence in their relationships whilst maintaining the appearance of a happy family unit (Andrews, 1998;

Bendall, 2010; Rohland, 2009).

Similarly, in most Arab societies, women who face domestic violence in their marriages often do not report the incidents, as they too fear being socially shunned and isolated, because even if a woman is able to find the courage to report her husband for domestic violence, she would be considered rebellious and going against establishment and may not find support in her friends and family (Haj-Yahia, 2002b; Al- Badayneh, 2012). Many Arab women also stay in violent marriages due to the social stigma of being divorced as most divorced women are scrutinized and considered to be lacking (Al- Badayneh, 2012). As such, these societal attitudes often serve as a barrier to free women from domestic violence.

The societal attitudes of South Africa and many Arab countries are similar to that of Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, the traditional and conservative culture's perspective has manifested itself in a unique social viewpoint regarding the issue of domestic violence, whereby the problem remains largely ignored (Haj-Yahia, 2002b; Douki et al, 2003; Fageeh, 2014). Domestic violence is still considered private matter and female victims of domestic violence are reluctant to talk about it openly (Eltahawy, 2015; Tønnessen, 2016) as it is believed that domestic violence is an "internal family problem" and has no place in the public sphere (Smartt & Kury, 2007; Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Morse et al, 2012). In Saudi Arabia, many families place an emphasis on the sanctity of family unity and solidarity, even when they face problems such as violence at home. Hence, many Saudi women feel ashamed and are afraid to talk about the problems at home as they fear societal judgement and condemnation (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Jayasundara et al, 2014; Tønnessen, 2016). In many instances, mothers teach their daughters that exposing private problems will be detrimental for the whole family, in particular the girl herself, as it will affect her and her family's public image and reputation. According to a study on spousal

violence against Saudi women in Primary Health Care Centres, it was revealed that the majority of the participants believe domestic violence to be a private matter as it is a family issue, which is why most Saudi women choose not to intervene or report the matter to officials (Eldoseri, Tufts, Zhang & Fish, 2014).

There is also anecdotal evidence that suggests that Saudi women who are abused are discouraged from registering complaints against their abusive husbands (Human Right Watch, 2016). Generally speaking, in Saudi Arabia, family and friends most likely to give women the advice to tolerate the abuse as the woman's and her family's reputation is considered to be more important than the woman's satisfaction in her marriage. Moreover, many Saudi families tend to pressure the abused woman to tolerate their husband's violence in hope that the man will somehow change his ways, implying that society believes that it is the woman's responsibility to change the man's violent habits by adopting the culture of patience and tolerance in the face of violence (Almosaed & Alazab, 2015).

Aside from social and cultural pressures to tolerate domestic violence in marriage, most Saudi women, like other women around the world, consider their children to be their top priority and as such often remain in an abusive relationship because they want a stable environment for their children and/or they fear losing custody of their children (Yount, 2005; Almosaed, 2009; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). For instance, one study shows that the vast majority of the female participants are willing to tolerate any kind of violence because their primary concern is losing custody of the children during divorce proceedings and the subsequent abuse that the children might face at the hands of their father and/or stepmother (Oweis, Gharabeih, Al-Natour & Froelicher, 2009). For Saudi women, the issue of custody is more worrisome as in Saudi Arabia the legal system automatically assigns the custody of the children to the father. Boys, when they are 7 years old, can

choose the parent they want to live with but girls of the same age are automatically transferred to their father's custody (Dray, 1987; Doumato, 2010; Rafiq, 2014). In essence, fear of losing their children leaves Saudi women in a vulnerable position, which allows for the continuation and tolerance of domestic violence against them.

The societal attitudes in Saudi Arabia towards domestic violence can be even more problematic when it comes to the issue of sexual violence. The problem in Saudi Arabia is that the discussion of sex, in any form, is considered taboo, which has wider implications, such as when Saudi women experience sexual violence in their marriages, the victims are either unaware or confused as to whether they were exposed to violence because the widely-held belief in Saudi society is that it is a husband's right to have sex and women are obligated to comply and be dutiful to their husband's wishes (Tønnessen, 2016). All too often, many Saudi women do not feel that they have right to reject sex within marriage due to socio-cultural expectations (Tønnessen, 2016), and continue to tolerate violence and suffer in silence.

In sum, the misuse of religion, the socialisation process, patriarchal practices, and societal attitudes are the four known elements that shape Saudi culture in ways that support the formation of an environment, which often allows Saudi men to subject their wives to domestic violence.

3.3 Gender Inequality and Citizenship

Gender inequality is another known contributing factor towards domestic violence. It has been argued that perpetrators of domestic violence are usually men. Many scholars agree that gender (as opposed to sex) is created by society (Hollander, 2002; Damarin & Erchick, 2010; Usta et al, 2015; Makama, 2013; Sharma & Sharma, 2012; Deribe, Woldemichael, Bernard & Yakob, 2009). The concept of gender has been identified as

“the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (WHO, 2015). Thus, gender inequality is a power imbalance between men and women, which leads women to be socially and financially dependent on men (Mobaraki & Oderfelt, 2010). Consequently, men are in a position of power where they are free to exert control which in turn can leave women at the risk of domestic violence (Kimmel, 2002; Garcia-Moreno et al, 2005; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine 2010; Flood, 2006; Bates, 2012; Gridley, 2016).

It can be argued that women, the world over, are not treated the same as men because a man’s role is assigned more value than a woman’s, and consequently, men are given more power (Carli, 2001; Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Odhiambo, 2012), which is considered the basis of gender inequalities. The imbalance of power between the genders manifests itself in ways that allow men to have more freedom than, and status above, women (Alsaleh, 2012). Men occupy superior positions in significant realms including, but not limited to: political, economic, legal, and cultural power (Jackson, 1998; Dietz, 2003). Gender inequalities position women as subordinates to men by imposing upon them restrictions and limiting their actions (Jackson, 1998; Dietz, 2003). Consequently, gender inequalities deny women opportunities in a variety of realms, including but not limited to, the economic, social, educational and professional arena.

In the developing the world, gender inequalities are considered to be even more pervasive as it tends to be enforced by the family unit (Ganguly-Scrase, 2003; Kabeer, 2005; Jayachandran, 2014; Trask, 2015). Gender inequalities for women in developing countries extend to the issue of autonomy as indicated by the “[response] to a WVS (World Values Survey) question about one’s sense of control over one’s life” and many “[women] in developing countries report having relatively less control over their lives

than those in developed countries, ... particularly ... in India, the Middle East, and North Africa” (Jayachandra, 2014, p.4). Examples of denying females their autonomy is particularly noticeable when it comes to the subject of marriage as it is relatively common practice in many families from developing countries to marry their daughters young, sometimes even before they hit puberty, and often too much older men without their daughter’s consent (Trask, 2014; Varia, 2016), and these marriages heighten the risk factor associated with domestic violence (Varia, 2016). These acts of gender inequality are considered to be both symptomatic and a practice of domestic violence against women. These underlying forces (inequality of power, role of the family in maintaining power inequalities) are integral to the understanding of domestic violence against women and central to the analytical focus in this thesis.

Gender inequality has also been identified in Saudi Arabia, however, for the most part, it remains unacknowledged (Alsaleh, 2012). According to the Annual Global Gender Gap Index 2013, Saudi Arabia ranked 127th out of 133 countries (Bekhouche, Hausmann, Tyson & Zahidi, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, women are seen as weak, particularly in the context of relationships, and thus, men are assigned the role of protectors of and providers for women, which places men in a higher status than that of women (Amzat & Grandi, 2011). One of the most visible manifestations of this inequality in Saudi Arabia is the way in which women cannot be in public without a male chaperone (Hamdan, 2005). Even in the private sphere, Saudi women can still be subjected to gender inequality, a prime example of which is the different rules for divorce for men and women; Saudi men are free to divorce their wives at any time without giving a reason or even informing his wife, while women cannot divorce their husbands without giving explicit and valid reasons and financially compensating them (Kelly, 2009). Gender inequality in Saudi Arabia can expose women to oppression and suppression as there is unlimited personal space and professional opportunities for men, unlike women who face restrictions and

opposition at every turn. Thus, in the private sphere, Saudi women are under male authority, may have limited-to-no autonomy and, generally, are less involved in the decision-making process, even about matters that exclusively affect them. Consequently, Saudi women's independence is constantly under threat and they are susceptible to suffer violence and discrimination (Amzat & Grandi, 2011). Saudi women face further limitations as they do not have the same employment opportunities as men, cannot access justice directly like men, and are not permitted to act as independent entrepreneurs in the same way men are (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

In Saudi Arabia, gender inequality is inextricably linked to citizenship and in order to understand the connection between the two concepts, it is important to consider the definition of citizenship and what it means for women, in general. Citizenship is all about rights, duties, participation, status, and belonging (Heater, 2004), however, their weighting varies depending on time and place. Citizenship is considered the cornerstone of modern society (Turner, 2011) as it enables individuals to be free from discrimination, domination, and to simply be equal (Gould, 1988). Citizens should enjoy all their rights and freedoms that are in the constitution; citizenship should enable individuals to practice and access full rights and duties without exclusion, or being ignored on the basis of gender, race, or religion. In many countries, such equality and citizenship are legally embedded, however, the high rates of domestic violence caused by limited rights for women, world over, indicate that actually this is not the case.

The propensity for limiting rights for women is inherently gendered and it is also the basis upon which women have been excluded from citizenship, both in theory and practice (Walby, 1994). Denying women citizenship has implications for their autonomy, as it leaves them dependent on men, which only further undermines their citizenship (Lister, 1997). Lister (1995) questions the effectiveness of citizenship for women, when the

structure itself was constructed to reinforce male hegemony and, therefore at best, women's citizenship is merely an add-on to a heavily gendered infrastructure rather than a complete inclusion of women in all aspects of society. Therefore, for women to become full citizens they need to have "the right of participation in decision-making in social, economic, cultural and political life" regardless of whether they are in the public or private sphere, and these should be the fundamental features of their basic rights (Gould, 1988, p. 212).

Some Feminist scholars have drawn attention to how women are unable to attain true citizenship as they are excluded from participating, belonging, having status, and exercising rights in society (Abu-Laban, 2009; Preece, 2002; Lister, 1997). Across the world, despite legal strides to give women rights to participate in the public sphere, there is still a tendency for women to be excluded from the public realm because public activities and external relationships are viewed as the sole responsibility of men and therefore the gateway access to the public sphere is heavily gendered in favour of men (Lister, 1997). In general, the public sphere matters more as the public sphere has been elevated to a superior status, leading to societal acceptance of patriarchal values, which is in contrast to the private sphere, considered the domain of women, but even here women have limited autonomy and are typically assigned the role of caregiver, namely, to their house and children (Siim, 2000).

In Saudi society, the issue of women's citizenship is controversial, because Saudi women still have heavily placed restrictions on their mobility, freedom, autonomy, and security (Doumato, 2010) and Saudi women are still not formally recognised by the government as full citizens, which denies them their full right (Human Rights Watch, 2008; Human Right Watch, 2016). Until 2002, Saudi women did not have independent identity cards as they were included within the family identity card and while it listed their names, it did

not have their individual picture because Saudi women were still identified as dependents of their husbands or fathers (Doumato, 2010; Hamdan, 2005; Mobaraki & Söderfeldt, 2010, Human Rights Watch, 2016). This was viewed as a huge hindrance for women because when a Saudi woman goes to the bank, court, or hospital with her face covered and her identity could not be verified by the family identity card, she will not have her needs met. Additional implications of leaving women dependent on the family identity card include cases of husbands, who have more than wife, registering a new born baby under a different woman's name and thus denying the mother rights over her own child (Mobaraki & Söderfeldt, 2010). In light of these issues, the government eventually issued women their own independent identity cards, including their photos. However, there are still restrictions in place for women who want to get identity cards; firstly, women must be at least 22 years of age and, secondly, it is obligatory to get the consent of a male guardian, which is why there are many women in Saudi Arabia who remain unable to obtain identity cards (Doumato, 2010; Mobaraki & Söderfeldt, 2010; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004).

The Director of the Civil Status in Makkah claimed that only approximately one-third of Saudi women were issued the national identity card (Imran & Bandar, 2013), which is indicative of how women in Saudi Arabia are almost entirely dependent on their male guardians. The current practice of male guardianship has been known to impose legal constraints on and social controls over women, as Saudi women are viewed as minors and are thus rendered incomplete citizens. It is important to highlight that the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia has a widespread impact on women's rights, mobility, independence, and is considered to be responsible for the continuation of domestic violence against women (Tønnessen, 2016; Human Rights watch, 2016). The male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia has been identified as a facilitator in keeping women away from public sphere by confining them to the private sphere. The system of

male guardianship is also viewed as a method that is used to imprison Saudi women as men are assigned the role of a woman's guardian and are thus expected to exercise authority and control over her.

In Saudi Arabia, a woman's life is generally controlled by a man from the cradle to the grave through the system of male guardianship, which requires that "every Saudi woman must have a male guardian, normally a father or husband, who is tasked with making a range of critical decisions on her behalf" (Human Rights Watch, 2008). The guardianship system is not compulsory or stipulated under Saudi law, however, all official sectors prevent women from representing themselves and taking autonomous decisions without male guardians (Jackson, 1998; Butler, 2014). The system of guardianship has been known to generate an unlimited space for men to practice their authority over women who are perceived as perpetual legal minors (Human Rights Watch, 2008), and as such Saudi women are "powerless and without agency because of that system" (Tønnessen, 2016, p.9), which has the potential to put them at the risk of domestic violence.

In Saudi Arabia, the system of male guardianship denies women autonomy (Human Rights Watch, 2012), as women are unable to complete simple tasks such as entering government buildings without the male guardian, leading women to feel excluded and marginalized. Furthermore, the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia, in its present form, is commonly used to restrict women by diminishing their ability to take decisions for themselves as the male guardianship system requires women of all ages to obtain permission from a male guardian to work, study, marry, vote, drive, go out in public, travel, release from prison and to obtain an identity card, passport or any official documents, open a bank account, or even access to health care (Jackson, 1998; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004; Hamdan, 2005; Doumato, 2010; Butler, 2015). Even when a Saudi woman wants to start a business from her own home, she cannot begin the

proceedings for opening a company without a male guardian (Hamdan, 2005). In this sense, the male guardianship system as it stands today is a barrier that prevents women from becoming socially empowered and hinders women's personal development (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

The male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia maintains and supports the dominant position of men and it allows men to have control over women, which leads to domestic violence against women continuing, unchecked (Blair, 2013). Consequently, Saudi women are now beginning to challenge the practice of male guardianship, especially since there is no codification for the practice, which makes the guardianship system ambiguous and susceptible to misuse, including violence against women (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

It has been argued that the most visible example of the misuse of the guardianship system are the restrictions placed on women's travel, and even for short trips, women require either a male chaperone or explicit permission from the male guardian (Hammad, 2014). While in the past, restricted mobility had been necessary due to the unsafe nature of the journey across the desert, in modern times, it is no longer required. Due to the improved methods and communal nature of modern transport, travelling any distance has become shorter and safer (Hammad, 2014). The issues with restricted mobility for Saudi women persist even more so with international travel, as passport officers have been known to refuse to issue or renew passports to women unless their male guardian is present or they have his express permission (Al Sayed, 2010), a practice that has been supported by the General Directorate of Passports Department's spokesman, Lt. Col. Ahmed bin Fahad Al-Luhaidan who declared that, regardless of age, no Saudi woman would be issued a passport without a male guardian nor would she be able to renew it (Hammad, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2016). This practice by the passport office is unacceptable to many

Saudi women, who criticise the system, which sometimes “[needs] a whole team of men: two witnesses, two identifiers, and [a male guardian], to be able to renew [the] passport.” (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

There has also been much criticism of the passport application process, which, as mentioned before, requires the male guardian’s presence, and of Al-Luhaidan’s attitude that “women must have a legal guardian” when travelling abroad (Hammad, 2013). Saudi female activists and scholars have argued that Saudi women do not need guardians once they are legally adults (Hammad, 2014). As Saudi women are beginning to make strides in the public sphere by becoming decision-makers, university professors, and deans of their faculties, teachers, school principals, business women, and member of the commercial and industrial chambers, bank managers that are entrusted with peoples’ money, and physicians that are entrusted with peoples’ lives, it is, therefore, evident that Saudi women have the capacity to handle responsibility and are able to protect themselves, whether in the country or abroad, and as such should be allowed apply and renew all official documents pertaining to them by themselves without being dependent on a male guardian (Hammad, 2013; Hammad, 2014).

Aside from restricted mobility, Saudi women, in general, experience oppression and discrimination (Hammad, 2013). Even those who are well educated, have a high social status, and are in positions of relative leadership in society, still experience subjugation. Many Saudi female activists criticise that the Civil Status System still refuses to issue women their own identity cards without a male guardian (Hammad, 2013). This is regardless of her age, whereas boys who are fifteen years of age have the right to an identity card and can obtain without requiring the presence or the approval of a guardian in accordance with Article (67) of the Civil Status System.

Saudi women also face additional obstacles in their daily life, such as requiring a male

identifier and/or agent to simply rent or buy a home, sponsor a maid or driver, and even buy a car etc. (Al-Essa, 2012). In some instances, even when a woman is employed and financially-independent, she is still unable to rent a home as she is “a woman without a man” (Hammad, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, women are treated like second-class citizens as they are generally believed to be incapable of managing and taking decisions for their own lives without a man, thus they are not given the same rights as men and as such, in the absence of equal rights, there can be no freedom for women (Hammad, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2016).

The male guardianship system poses a huge problem for Saudi women because without a man, women’s lives have been known to literally stop as they are unable to do anything for themselves. The current system in Saudi Arabia can be unwilling to make exceptions and adjustments for extenuating circumstances and in the process, many women have been denied their autonomy. There is further anecdotal evidence of how the system of male guardianship can control the lives of women and deprives them from the basic rights. In one case, there was a woman who explained that she and her mother were unable to renew their passports because they did not have a male guardian. The woman’s father had passed away, she was divorced, and her uncle was abroad. Though the woman had brothers, they were either missing or unwilling to help, since they were from a different mother. When the woman went to the passport office, the officer opened her file and the system showed that technically she did have male guardians in the form of her brothers, so they required the brothers to be present, and when the woman explained her situation, they asked her to prove it, which was very difficult. These women, even now, are unable to renew their passports and moreover, they are entirely closed off from the world all because there is no male presence in their life (Human Rights Watch, 2008, 2016).

The male guardianship system is the most significant impediment to women gaining

rights in Saudi Arabia, because it effectively demotes adult women to legal minors who are unable to make key decisions for themselves. Issues of citizenship in Saudi Arabia, which may have been expounded by years of patriarchal cultural practices and gender inequality, are considered to be primarily responsible for domestic violence against women. For a long time, this was an invisible problem but in recent years, Saudi society, and more importantly the Saudi government, has begun to recognise it and to address the problem it has begun implement policies that can empower Saudi women.

3.4 Chapter Summary

From the previous discussions, it can be discerned that the concept of culture, gender inequality and citizenship in Saudi Arabia are interrelated and that has been found to be a contributory factor towards domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi culture as a factor in domestic violence is only fully comprehended when looked at through the lens of the family socialisation process, patriarchy and societal attitudes which find their own explanations and justifications through the misinterpretation of religious texts and the general misuse of religion. These various elements were found to work together to subjugate women and place them in positions of subordination and submission, which is justified by culture. This in turn makes Saudi women completely dependent on men, facilitating an environment where domestic violence thrives. As a consequence of this, Saudi women are made to feel inferior to men which leads to the power imbalance between the genders that manifests itself in limited citizenship (specifically in terms of rights) for the ‘lower and inferior’ gender, the woman; who are seen as perpetual minors remain who are made dependent on their male counterparts in everything they do in their lives, ranging from decision making to stepping out of the house. We have also seen how this limited citizenship which stems from gender imbalance affects the dynamics and progress of the woman and her autonomy and agency

making her even more vulnerable to domestic violence.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In order to achieve the aim of this study, there is the requirement for: (a) an overview of the research design, which includes the approach, methods, interviewing, pilot study and sampling; (b) entering the field, which explains the data gathering process, reliability and validity of the data acquired, the insider and the outsider positions in research, and reflexivity; (c) data collection, which comprises processes of data recording and data analysis; (d) ethical considerations, which outlines the importance of consent, confidentiality and accountability; (e) the research questions, which were constructed specifically for the interviews; and (f) the limitations that arose during the course of this research.

4.2 Approach

To get a comprehensive understanding of an educated Saudi woman's perspective on domestic violence, my field work required approaches from three different angles: (a) learning about an educated Saudi woman's general and specific *understanding* of domestic violence; (b) examining what an educated Saudi woman *believes* to be the factors linked to domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, specifically; and (c) determining what an educated Saudi woman *knows and thinks* about the existing policies in place regarding domestic violence in the country. These aims place the inquiry broadly in an interpretivist phenomenological research paradigm.

In research, a paradigm refers to a pattern, structure and framework or system of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions (Olsen, Lodwick, & Dunlop, 1992:16). A

paradigm is composed broadly of the following: ontology, epistemology methodology and methods (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Identification of the ontological approach at the start of the research process is imperative because ontology impacts the research method via epistemology, research approach, research strategy and methods of data collection (Neuman, 2010). Ontology and epistemology in research are concerned with the researcher's worldview, which can have a significant influence on the outcome of the research (Thomas, 2011). Therefore, it is important to understand what is meant by ontology and epistemology. According to Neuman (2010), ontology is defined as "an area of philosophy that deals with nature of being, or what exists; the area of philosophy that asks what really is and what the fundamental categories of reality are" (p.92). In the research context, ontology helps researchers to understand how people are in the world and that there is no single reality but instead, in a different context, an event has a different reality. Therefore, reality is constructed. Epistemology is "an area of philosophy concerned with the creation of knowledge; [focusing] on how we know what we know or what are the most valid ways to reach truth" (Neuman, 2010, p.93). In essence, epistemology studies knowledge and is the search for the 'truth'. Since 'the truth' is a relative term because two different people can have two different truths about the same subject, it is conceptually related to ontology.

This research is an exploratory, qualitative, interpretive phenomenological study. This approach was crafted to help conceptualize domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia, and to help capture what these women think about its causal links and state provision. While there is some initial contextual comparison with the phenomenon with other countries, the focus then shifts to the progressive development of the Saudi state response to domestic violence.

As this study focuses on the feelings and thoughts of educated Saudi women regarding

domestic violence, qualitative research allows the researcher to develop ideas beyond the initial research question (Cresswell, 2007). Furthermore, qualitative research helps the researcher “seek answers to questions that emphasised how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.10) leading to the cultivation of richer and more in-depth data and also allows the researcher to look beneath the surface of the problem. That is the focus in on gaining better insight into the topic, to better address the root of the problem rather than just treating the symptoms. When conducting qualitative research, a variety of methods can be applied to acquire data. For this research, the semi-structured interview method was chosen (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2004).

For this study, phenomenology emerged as the most productive ontological-epistemological approach, for its concern with the examination of the structures of consciousness in human experiences (Polkinghorne, 1989; Hesse & Leavy, 2010). In phenomenological studies, the emphasis is on the experiences of groups and their interpretation of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006; Howitt & Cramer, 2005). Edmund Husserl was the first philosopher to develop the method of phenomenology and he was also responsible for broadening the concepts and methods of modern science to incorporate the study of consciousness, later also utilized by a variety of disciplines (Wertz, 2005), including social sciences. Phenomenology has been identified as a process by which relationships between individuals and situations can be investigated that gives meaning to the innate human experience (Giorgi, 1989).

Husserl stated that the approach to phenomenology requires the researcher to possess a sense of curiosity and empathy to be better able to comprehend and share in the experiences of the individuals, which is the basis for understanding the meanings and experiential processes of said individuals (Giorgi, 1989). Husserl emphasised that researchers must set aside prejudices, biases, and preconceived ideas about the

phenomenon, so they are open to new ideas (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological researchers have a wide range of individuals they can select for their data collection, and the participants can come from all walks of life, at the discretion of the researcher's interest, as long as they have experienced the phenomenon in some way (Wertz, 2005). The most common way to collect data for phenomenological research is the semi-structured interview (Morrow & Smith, 2000), (See the section below entitled Methods).

This study specifically utilizes a form of *interpretative* phenomenology, which requires the researcher to interpret the meaning of a phenomenon in an individual's life (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2008; Smith, 2004). Interpretive phenomenology also requires the researcher to develop the meaning of the participants' experiences in the context of academic theory and the participants' socio-cultural environments, thereby providing "an interpretative account of what it means for the participant to have such concerns within their particular context" (Larkin et al., 2008, p. 113).

What makes interpretive phenomenology particularly suitable for this study is the focus on the subjective meanings of the phenomenon of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia that is embedded in everyday occurrences (Reiners, 2012), as the participants in this study are all Saudi women whose experience of domestic violence is filtered through society. Phenomenology can thus help the researcher to understand the participants' concerns by giving them a voice and space to express their feelings and thoughts openly, via the interview (Larkin et al., 2008). In this case, phenomenology allowed me to capture some of the ways in which educated Saudi women are trying to make sense of their world, thus giving me the opportunity to learn and understand the hidden and secret aspects of a woman's experience and her relationship to violence (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

The extent to which my research can be considered interpretive phenomenological relates to my aim to interrogate what my participants believe to be causal explanations for the

phenomenon (Miller, 2000). That is, while I cannot claim to have found out what the factors contributing to domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia actually are, engaging with these women's thoughts about causality gives my research added potential policy significance and urgency.

In this sort of research, the researcher's theory is constructed from positing concepts that constitute the subject of the theory, which includes identifying the laws of interaction as well as the conceptual boundaries within which the theory must remain (Dubin, 1978). In the case of my research, which looks to explain the phenomenon of domestic violence against Saudi women through the eyes of educated Saudi women, my research includes: identifying the different types and forms of domestic violence and providing a holistic definition for domestic violence that will underpin the theory; and the contributing factors, such as culture, gender inequality and citizenship (in terms of rights) and the ways in which they are interrelated concepts and work together to create unlimited space for domestic violence to occur. By uncovering the mechanisms behind the phenomenon of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, it can subsequently, help policymakers to effectively implement strategies to combat domestic violence in the country.

4.2.1 Methods

To find the most efficient way to conduct the interviews, I had to choose the most suitable type of interview for this kind of study as well as conduct a pilot study to determine the feasibility of my approach. Based on this, I was able to decide the criteria for the interviewee selection process. Below, I have provided a detailed account of these methods.

4.2.2 Interviewing

There are three broad types of interview: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured.

Structured interviews are not appropriate for this study because they do not allow the kind of flexibility (Punch, 2009) that will help the researcher to gain deeper insights and perspectives of the participants. Furthermore, structured interviews do not allow the participants to express their ideas or feelings (Punch, 2009), which is counterproductive for research that seeks to focus on ideas and feelings of the respondents. Similarly, unstructured interviews are unsuitable for this study as the recommended sample size for this type of interview is too small, which would make the results inaccurate and lacking in diversity of perspectives on the subject of study. Unstructured or narrative interviews also produce redundant content due to repetition and/or irrelevancy as the interview is undirected, and therefore the researcher can find it difficult to thematically organise the data from different respondents (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008).

I adopted the semi-structured interview method in this research for several reasons. First, this method allows the researcher to investigate specific aspects related to the research topic, thereby giving the researcher the opportunity to delve further in depth on the subject. Second, the semi-structured interviews give the participants relative freedom, space and time to express and elaborate, in their own words, on their experiences, ideas and perspectives without limitation. Third, semi-structured interviews are flexible, enabling the researcher to prompt or clarify any ambiguous questions for the participants as well as add or remove questions as needed. The fourth reason is that it is easier to interview and digest results from a larger sample that comes from conducting semi-structured interviews. This in turn allows researchers to collate data from a diverse and relatively large sample group so the findings are not taken as representing the views of only a 'strange' handful of women. The fifth reason for using semi-structured interviews is that it is easier to identify important themes for the study, which let the researcher organize the results of the study more effectively (David and Sutton, 2004).

According to Krueger and Casey (2000), semi-structured interviewing is “... about listening. It is about paying attention. It is being open to hear what people have to say. It is about being non-judgmental. It is about creating a comfortable environment for people to share” (p. xi), which is why the semi-structured interviewing technique that I used was the ‘natural talk’, also known as ‘soft interview’, where the environment informal and friendly for both the interviewer and interviewee (Longhurst, 2010).

4.2.3 Pilot Study

In mid-to-late 2015, I conducted a pilot study. Pilot studies, also known as feasibility studies, are conducted prior to the actual study to test whether the chosen research method is an effective tool in answering the questions posed by the researcher. Conducting a pilot study can give the researcher insight about how the research will potentially proceed, while also highlighting any problems in the research method. This gives the researcher time to amend and adapt the method to be more effective during the actual research process (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002).

My pilot study was conducted with five subjects to refine and review the questions and time management. The five subjects who volunteered to participate were all educated Saudi women who were married. During the pilot study, these participants had difficulty understanding questions related to two concepts in particular: 1) the types of rights given to Saudi women; and 2) the concept of equal rights for both genders.

When these participants were asked about the types of rights given to Saudi women, some of them did not understand the distinction between civil, political and social rights, and those who did only had a vague idea about the different types of rights. Consequently, for the actual study, the questions about rights had to be adjusted to include the different types of rights and provide corresponding examples to avoid confusion. The second point

of ambiguity for the participants of the pilot study was the concept of equal rights for men and women in Saudi Arabia. The question was phrased in such a way that the women did not understand clearly that the question was about equality between the genders in terms of basic human rights as far as citizenship is concerned. When the interview questions were finalised, the researcher ensured the question emphasised the concept of equality was in conjunction with basic human rights in citizenship.

Additionally, during the interview process for the pilot study, I was conscious of time management to determine how long the average interview process would take and how to adjust the interview technique to remain within the time limit for the convenience of the participants. However, the researcher was able to manage time in the interview and did not need to adjust or pace the interview technique.

4.2.4 Sampling

This research uses purposive sampling, where specific individuals are selected for the study, according to the following criteria: place, actors, event, and process (Creswell, 2006). This type of sampling also requires a predetermined location and participants. This kind of sampling is especially beneficial when the researcher aims to describe a phenomenon (Kumar, 2005). For this study I selected 30 women using the following criterion:

- Saudi;
- Female;
- Married or had been married;
- Formally educated, with at least an undergraduate degree

The reasons for setting the above criteria are that married and educated women are more willing to talk about domestic violence, including sexual abuse. Married Saudi women

are more likely to discuss sexual abuse as discussion of sex outside the context of marriage is considered taboo in traditional and conservative Saudi communities.

There were two main reasons for the selection of educated women for this study. First, the researcher's interest in this dimension of Saudi demographic is the educated Saudi women as a vanguard of social change. Second, the less educated and/or uneducated Saudi women are unlikely to have the skills, knowledge or confidence to talk about domestic violence, especially when it comes to ethical issues because these ideas can sometimes be too abstract and complex to explain in simple terms. Furthermore, the less educated and/or uneducated Saudi women are not always able to identify domestic violence and its symptoms due to their acceptance of the status quo as well as the lack of understanding and vocabulary about the issues.

The participants were chosen from one of the largest faculties at a major university in Saudi Arabia, as it has eleven large departments with the staff count of four hundred individuals. This location was chosen for two reasons: 1) to prevent the respondents from being identified or self-identifying; and 2) a diverse range for the sample, as the participants were from both the academic and administrative staff thus providing a wider set of perspectives on the issue of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia.

4.3 Entering the Field

The interviews took place at a major university in Saudi Arabia. To conduct these interviews, I undertook an appropriate community entry by obtaining authorisation from the principal of that university, who then gave me permission to contact the dean of the faculty. The initial plan was to request the dean to arrange a meeting time and a place with all the staff in her faculty. At this meeting, the researcher intended to explain the study, aims and objectives and ask for volunteers for the research. The attendees would

then have been provided with a translated invitation letter, information sheet, consent forms and reply slips, which they could return to me directly but privately at a later date, as the information sheet had all my contact details on it. However, the plan had to be adjusted for two reasons. First, gathering all the staff in one location at the same time would have been a very difficult task as the faculty comprised over four-hundred individuals across eleven departments. Second, to avoid the ethical issues that could arise from the dean sending the email directly, the dean suggested that the translated invitation letter be sent with all the pertinent documents including the researcher's contact details via the IT department instead. This would allow the potential participants to contact me directly or disregard the invitation of their own free will.

I was contacted by 30 participants, either by email, text message or personally returning the reply slip, all of whom volunteered to be a part of the study. The respondents also provided me with a list of convenient times and dates for the interviews. After this I contacted the participants by telephone or email to ask if they had any questions or concerns. Their response was largely to confirm a date and a time for the interviews.

4.3.1 Data Gathering

The interviews were conducted in Saudi Arabia in late 2015 to early 2016, for which I had to travel back to the country. The reason I chose this period to collect the data was that all the staff would be available for interviews due to it being examination season, and therefore the interviewees would not be teaching or grading papers, therefore I was able to conduct up to three interviews per day.

The reason I conducted individual face-to-face interviews, instead of other possible methods, was because I wanted my participants to feel free and comfortable enough to say whatever they wanted to say. If there was more than one interviewee, there was

always a risk of interruption, fear of judgment, being overridden or dismissed and wasting of time by engaging in irrelevant debates. Situations such as these could also have added effect on making other participants reluctant or/and unwilling to talk.

As this research focuses on the perceptions and feelings of the educated Saudi women regarding domestic violence, the interview questions were used as a guide rather than to direct and control the response (Willig, 2008). Therefore, it was important that the questions were formulated to be non-directive but instead to prompt and motivate the respondents to speak openly without influence.

To conduct these interviews, I requested the university to provide a private room and the university willingly agreed by providing two locations: 1) a seminar hall and 2) a private office. Both were used, depending on which location was convenient for the interviewees. In addition to the convenience of the location, the rooms were private and secluded, which gave the women the confidence to speak freely and openly without interruption or fear of being overheard, which was very important due to the sensitivity of the subject matter. The convenience and the familiarity of the locations created a safe and secure atmosphere for the respondents, which enabled the interviews to proceed smoothly.

Aside from the atmosphere, the participants themselves were all very enthusiastic and positive about this research. Thus, they were forthcoming with their ideas and experiences. They were excited by what this research represented to them. First, the idea that a Saudi woman's voice and opinions mattered; second, this was perhaps the first-time an in-depth qualitative research was being conducted about domestic violence, an issue that affects many women in Saudi Arabia; and most importantly, the focus of the research was an in-depth study on the causes of domestic violence rather than just collecting statistics about the incidents of domestic violence. In fact, one of the participants was so inspired by this method of research that she decided to encourage her

students to use interviews in their research and academic papers. Additionally, the interviewees were determined to participate because even though some of the participants had many other professional obligations outside of the university, which on one occasion or another kept them from keeping their appointments, they rescheduled immediately because they did not want to miss out in participating in this study.

Before this study began, I expected to face many obstacles, such as the lack of cooperation from those in charge and/or unwillingness of the women to participate in the research. Nonetheless, it turned out to be the complete opposite. When the IT department informed me that invitation letters had been sent to all the faculty members, almost immediately thereafter I received two emails and two text messages confirming participation from four women. In fact, the closest to a hurdle was when one participant requested her interview not be recorded, which made me despondent at the time. However, when the interview took place, it became clear that the participant just did not want to be recorded, particularly electronically, as she cooperated with me in ensuring that every comment was noted.

4.3.2 Reliability & Validity

Reliability and validity are tools used by the researcher to enable the results for of the study to be more truthful, credible, and of high quality (Neuman, 2010; Howitt & Cramer, 2005). Reliability emphasises the trustworthiness of data and validity emphasises the trustworthiness of interpretations and conclusions (Stiles, 1993).

Triangulation, coherence, catalytic, and testimonial validity can promote credibility and validity (Stiles, 1993). This study used testimonial validity, which is also known as “member checking” (Rager, 2005), and “verification (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002), processes which required the researcher to ensure the accuracy, truth, and

credibility of what has been recorded during a research interview (Stiles, 1993).

For this study, before ending each interview session, I would immediately review, or verify, the participants' responses for accuracy. This process gave me the opportunity to address any misunderstanding or errors and re-confirm a specific aspect of the data (Stiles, 1993). It also enabled me to summarize tentatively, my initial findings.

The reliability of data pertains to how the data from the interviews were compiled, which will be discussed in a later section (see Recording). Additionally, translation and transcription which also fall under the purview of validity will be discussed later in the thesis (See Transcribing & Translating).

4.3.3 The Insider & the Outsider

When it comes to qualitative research, the merits of researchers being either “outsiders” or “insiders” depend entirely on the subject. Researchers who are deemed “outsiders” are considered to be neutral and detached observers, which is in contrast to “insiders” who are researchers that come from the culture/situation that they are researching. It is argued that while ‘outsiders’ produce more objective research, ‘insiders’ are better able to understand the problem(s) their research posits as they are uniquely positioned to understand the experiences of their research subjects (Kerstetter, 2012; Coghlan, 2003; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

For this study, the researcher is considered an insider as the researcher has the same language, culture, and background values and norms as the study population. While I was aware that identifying myself too closely with the participants could have caused ethical complications in the study, my experience of studying abroad in Western cultures distinguished me from the participants and reduced the biases in the research, as I was more open to discuss the topic of domestic violence. In fact, for this research, it was more

advantageous for me to be an insider. First, as I had the same language, I could understand the slang, phrases, and idioms, which made it easier during the transcription and translation process. Second, I had a comprehensive understanding of the culture, values, norms, and taboos, and I was also familiar with how social systems work in Saudi society, which made the participants more receptive to my research and questions. Third, as an insider, I was able to interact with the participants in a natural way, which made the participants feel more comfortable and, therefore, more forthcoming and thus expressed their feelings and thoughts openly.

4.3.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the process which requires the researcher to take into consideration their own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, wider aims in life and social identities and how that can affect the research process (Willig, 2008). During knowledge production, the role of the researcher is of the utmost importance because a researcher's history, experiences and biases could affect the participants. Therefore, through reflexivity, the researcher could adopt a neutral position where they remain objective regardless of whether they agree with the participants' views.

Before I began the interviewing process, in order to be neutral during the data collection process, I had to go through self-scrutiny of my own attitudes and beliefs. In the process, I realised that my worldview had been affected by a positive family environment as well as interactions with Western cultures but I could not let that influence my questions or the way I reacted to the participants' answers.

Consequently, my questions, both in English and Arabic, originated from my knowledge of the literature, reasoning, consultation with my supervisor and were a result of reflections on theoretical considerations regarding the topic. I phrased the words as

neutrally as possible, focused exclusively on Saudi culture and society, and I avoided drawing comparisons between Saudi Arabia and Western countries. The questions were designed to be open, non-leading and non-judgmental.

During the interview, itself, I did not engage in any debates, contradict the participants, direct them to the answers I expected or change their perspectives on any subject. This was particularly challenging especially when the discussion focused on why women remain in abusive marriages as well as the male guardianship system. For instance, when the interviewees were asked why Saudi women are willing to remain in abusive marriages, some of the participants responded that it is a woman's responsibility to change her husband and therefore she should give him a chance and help him to become a better person. At another point in the interview, when the topic of male guardianship arose, a few of the participants supported the practice of male guardianship. In both cases, I accepted the viewpoints and pursued the enquiry further without engaging in a debate on the subject.

4.4 Data Collection

First and foremost, to help with data collection process, I used an interview guide. I began the interviews with a brief statement in the form of summary points about the research objectives, why the research was being conducted, and an overview of the topic by giving the main section headings from my question list. I began with questions that sought their biodata (such as their age, study abroad, work history, number of children etc) and in the process, I built a rapport with them. Building rapport helped to facilitate the interview. I kept the interview guide in front of me to ensure that I did not forget any questions, to keep myself and the participant on track and it also gave me the space to summarize the participant's response, which I later reviewed with them to confirm that I understood their responses correctly.

4.4.1 Recording

In order to ensure reliability of the data (Neuman, 2010; Howitt & Cramer, 2005), I had to collect the information as accurately as possible, I therefore decided to take audio recordings using the digital recorder I borrowed from my university as well as my own mobile phone, to ensure that no data was lost. However, I only began recording after the initial profiles were complete to protect the participants' identities.

By recording the interview electronically as opposed to complete manual recording, I was also able to give the participants my undivided attention, which gave me the opportunity to register facial expressions and body language, which I noted in my interview guide, and thus allowing me to understand their meaning and perspectives better. Additionally, by recording the interview sessions, I was able to focus on gathering richer data and I was able to adapt questions, if needed, to help the participants have a better understanding of what it was that I was trying to ask.

Once the recording session began, I showed the participants a 'Before-and-After' image of Rania Al-Baz, the television presenter in Saudi Arabia, who had been beaten brutally by her husband. After presenting the participants with the image, I began to ask general questions regarding the photo, and then gradually moved into more specific and exploratory questions focused on the root causes and depth of the problem of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. Once the interview was concluded, to ascertain the validity of the data (Stiles, 1993), I used the interview guide to confirm what the participants had said and to ensure that I had not missed any questions or misunderstood any of their responses.

4.4.2 Analysis

In this thesis, the qualitative analysis is based on an in-depth and rich explanation of

context, site, actors, and action (Morrow & Smith, 2000). For the research to have the requisite breadth and depth, the researcher has to take overwhelming and complex data, break it down so as to rebuild and restructure it into categories, theories, stories or themes that are suitable for the study. Consequently, data collection, analysis, and writing are inextricably linked and occur almost simultaneously (Behren & Smith, 1996).

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain that in qualitative analysis concerned with an explanation, there are seven stages: ordering the data, engaging with the data, forming categories and themes, coding the data, providing interpretations via analytic memos, looking at alternative perspectives, and compiling the findings into a report. Each of the phases of data analysis involves data reduction, and the original data is constantly reduced until it becomes manageable for the researcher to convey the meanings and insights found in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

4.4.2.1 Transcribing & Translating

As mentioned earlier (see Reliability & Validity), the translation and transcription processes are included within the concepts of reliability and validity (Neuman, 2010; Howitt & Cramer, 2005). In this thesis, the interpretation of data hinges on the accuracy of the transcription and translation from Arabic to English. As is the case with any language, words, phrases and idioms that exist in Arabic take on a different meaning when translated into English (Shojaei, 2012; Halai, 2007). Furthermore, there are some words or phrases which exist in one language but they do not exist in the other (Filep, 2009). Hence, it is imperative that the translation of the transcripts have “conceptual equivalence” or “comparability of meaning” (Birbili, 2000, p.2). To ensure the translations were as accurate as possible, I had to go through a time-consuming and exhausting process, as detailed below.

After the interviews were completed, I would go home and transfer the recordings to my computer. After this, I began transcribing, in Arabic, the interviews and this process continued daily, even after all the interviews were concluded. The transcribing process took approximately four months as I repeatedly listened to recordings to ensure that I did not miss any information. By doing this, I engaged with the data to the extent that I knew each interview verbatim, and in conjunction with having read the interviews several times, I was able to grasp the participant's expression and meaning, which helped during the translation process.

After returning to my university in the UK, the first step in the translation process was to translate the interviews from Arabic into English. Drawing from my previous experience as a postgraduate and based on the advice of my supervisor, I translated directly each interview word-by-word, even if the response included an idiom or a proverb because it was important that the participants' response was not misrepresented and I would later be able to use quotes, as close to their original words as possible (Hoing, 1997; Filep, 2009). To ensure that every part of the interview was included, I would frequently, tirelessly and repeatedly review each translation and return to it if any content seemed missing.

This was the first step in the translation process, and the translation from Arabic to English was direct and verbatim because as Birbili (2000) contends researchers whose focus is on social issues should initially translate from one language to another exactly as is to ensure authenticity. However, this presented a challenge because there are complexities in the Arabic language and culture that cannot lend themselves to direct translation. For example, the concept of 'divorce' is more complex in Saudi Arabia and there is a distinction between the terms for divorce. In Saudi Arabia, there are two well-known types of divorces, the 'tal'aq' and the 'khull'a', the former is when a man divorces a woman and the latter is when a woman asks for divorce from a man. In the translation

to English, both terms were referred to as ‘divorce’ but this was not accurate since the procedure for the two types of divorce are completely different, which in turn affected the meaning.

Once the first translation was completed, the coding process took place, after which I returned to translate for a second time. This time, I consulted a translator to address the aforementioned issues that arose during the first translation process. While it is essential to ensure the meaning is not being lost to maintain authenticity and reliability, it is equally imperative that the translations make sense, convey the soul and style of the original comments, and uses a natural and comfortable expression (Halai, 2007). During this process, I found that aside from technical terms, such as ‘divorce’, on occasion some of the translation lost meaning because the original sentences in Arabic were either too complicated, not clear enough or using very culturally specific idioms. Hence, in the second translation process, some of the participants’ statements were summarized to make the meaning clear (Filep, 2009). In other instances, idioms were adapted to make sense in English. For example, one of the participants used an Arabic idiom to explain her feelings about domestic violence, which translated to “bitterness that you can taste when you say ‘qaf’ and ‘kaf’”, and this would not make sense to an English speaker so during the second translation it was adjusted to “bitterness at the back of the throat”.

(For an example of the translating and transcribing process, please see Appendix A)

4.4.2.2 Coding & Theming

To be able to analyse the collected data, a researcher must repeatedly listen to and transcribe all of the interviews. Once transcribed, the data have to be read through with the sole purpose of gaining a general understanding of the participant’s expression and meaning, all the while highlighting important comments. The highlighting process,

known as horizontalisation (Moustakas, 1994), involves listing every significant comment relevant to the study and giving it equal weight and credence (Creswell, 2006), all of which help with the understanding of the participants' experience and/or observation of the phenomenon.

An important aspect of analysing qualitative research is coding, which is when the concepts within the data are not just labeled but also interlinked (Richards & Morse, 2012). The purpose of 'coding', whereby themes are identified, and clusters of meaning are developed, is to prepare and organise the data in such a way that a detailed and rich structural analysis can follow (Wertz, 2005). Analysing qualitative research includes, but is not limited to, two types of coding: topic coding and analytic coding. Topic coding is primarily an analytic activity, which requires the researcher to create a category or utilize an already established one from the data and considers its relevance amongst the other ideas that are being developed; reflect on the data it refers to and its relationship with the other coded data. Analytic coding expands on the results from topic coding by illustrating and developing categories, theoretically, and it is meant to help the researcher to go beyond linking data and begin questioning the development of new ideas through the new codes found in the data (Richards & Morse, 2012).

For my research, the coding process began after the first translation. Initially, I was going to use the NVivo program and manually code the data, but the design of NVivo is such that it does not automatically save the data and I was very afraid that I would lose all my data (for example, if the computer crashed while I was using NVivo). Hence, I decided to code all that data manually to ensure that no information was lost. I continuously and consistently, went through every transcript, highlighted repeated keywords and then I used Microsoft Word to organise and arrange the data. This was a two-step process, which first included creating data tables that listed the participants by pseudonyms and their

responses, as they were, to the questions asked. In the second step, using the first set of data tables, I created secondary data tables that contained the participants' pseudonyms and categorised their responses by themes. By doing this, I was able to get a clear picture of the responses, which further helped me to analyse the data more efficiently.

(For an example of the coding and theming process, please see Appendix B)

The advantage of organising and arranging the data in the way discussed above was that I could identify more details and perspectives than I had originally envisioned. For instance, when I went through the theme tables, it opened my eyes to the fact that more than physical violence, Saudi women identified control and believed it is behind the issue of all forms of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, in certain categories, I only expected two viewpoints for each theme to emerge, but I found that there were in fact three groups, which ranged from liberal and open-minded to conservative and traditional, and those that were in between. For example, on the issue of male guardianship, I expected the participants to believe either that it should be removed completely or that guardianship should be removed at a certain age for women. However, there was also a third viewpoint which was in support of the retaining the male guardianship system. For me, it was surprising to find that there are still some educated Saudi women who have conservative values.

After drawing out themes from the raw data, my supervisor recommended that I took those themes and apply them to the three significant outline questions, which addressed the main thesis question. The purpose of this step was to help me to write the data in a narrative style, which would then assist me with the analytical chapters of the thesis. During this process, I focused on the themes that were related to the outline questions, and thus I was able to painstakingly reduce the data and create a structure for the analytical findings chapter.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

In social science research, there is an ethical concern about the finding of a balance between the rights of participants and the potential benefits of a study to a wider society (Smyth & Williamson, 2004). According to Neuman, (2010, p.143) ethics is defined as “what is or is not legitimate to do or what moral research procedure involves”. Therefore, before I even began my research, I needed to consider and address any ethical issues that arose from the research design of my study. Firstly, I had to seek and receive ethical approval from Keele University (see Appendix C). I then approached the university in Saudi Arabia, but they did not require ethical approval per se. However, I had to obtain authorisation to access the participants from the university. For a thesis of this kind, the ethical requirements are informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity in the data collection, analysis and report; all of which are based upon how the researcher presents the data and the participants in their study (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001), as detailed in the sections below.

4.5.1 Consent

Consent is an essential aspect of ethical research. When a study involves human participants, it requires voluntary consent, as well as the option to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time during the research process (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Danby & Farrell, 2005). When I contacted the university in Saudi Arabia, I was informed that I did not need ethical approval from the university itself, but I needed authorisation from the university to access the participants. After receiving authorisation, I was directed to contact the dean of the faculty regarding the access and recruitment of the participants. When I contacted the dean, she explained that she could not recruit participants on my behalf as emailing her staff directly about the research could be considered professional coercion. She then advised me to contact the potential

participants via the IT department to avoid the aforementioned issue and ensure that all participation was voluntary.

Each of the potential participants was contacted by the IT department by email. The reason for sending the email via the IT department would to show the potential participants that I was a legitimate and approved researcher. Consequently, the potential participants felt safe and comfortable enough to open the email and consider participating. In the email, the IT department wrote a brief about the research I wanted to conduct and they also attached, as a PDF file, the invitation letter (see Appendix D), information sheet, consent form for participation and the use of quotes (see Appendix E), and reply slip (see Appendix F), all of which had been translated into Arabic.

In the information document, there was a clear description of study, its aims and objectives, as well as detailing the possibility of any problems that might arise from being involved in the study. By providing the participants with all the risks that could come with the study, they would be able to make an informed decision about whether they wanted to participate or not (Neuman, 2010; Punch 2009; Orb, Eisenhauer, Wynaden, 2001). The consent form for participation was fundamentally a promise of confidentiality for the participants, where the implication is that “private data identifying the participants [would] not be disclosed” to anyone other than the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2004, p.72). The consent form reiterated briefly the description of the study, its aims and objectives, as well as a request for voluntary participation in the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2004; Neuman, 2010; Berg and Lune, 2011), and permission to audio record the interviews.

The participants who agreed to be in the study were given hard copies of the information sheet and consent forms at the beginning of each interview. When each interview came to a close, they were first asked to confirm their consent verbally and then were required

to sign the two aforementioned forms. The researcher kept the signed consent form while the participants were given duplicates.

4.5.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is also a crucial aspect of ethical practices in research, and therefore researchers have to take measures to protect confidentiality, including addressing the circumstances under which confidentiality can be breached (Neuman, 2010; Israel & Hay, 2006).

In this study, the first measure taken to protect each participant's confidentiality was done by assigning each individual a pseudonym, which ensured anonymity (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001) and that would prevent readers from identifying them. Furthermore, as an added measure to protect participants' identities their demographic information in their profiles has been kept intentionally vague. For example, instead of giving the exact age of the participant, they have been assigned an age range, and additionally, the participants are listed under their qualification without reference to the faculty or discipline.

The second measure involved the data that was collected in the research process. The data was stored in an electronic format as well as hardcopies, therefore a two-pronged approach was required to protect the data. Electronic data that had personally identifiable information was, during the data collection process, stored on a password-protected laptop, while the hardcopies of the same information were kept secure in a locked filing cabinet, both of which only the researcher has access to. As the data collection took place in both Saudi Arabia and the UK, the researcher kept the participants' personally identifiable information on one laptop that was on my person at all times, including when I was traveling between the two countries. After the data collection process was complete,

the audio recordings were transferred to my personal Google Drive associated with university email account, to which only I have access, and hardcopies that were stored in the filing cabinet were scanned and made into PDF files. Once the transfer was completed, the audio recordings were erased from the recorder and my phone, and the transcripts were destroyed in Saudi Arabia.

After the study is complete, all data and documents containing personally identifiable information will be destroyed, with anonymised elements (including direct quotes) of this information only available in the thesis, upon which future reports, papers, presentations or summaries will be based.

4.5.3 Accountability

Ethical consideration in this study also extended to the well-being of the participants, who when involved in certain types of research projects could be exposed to physical, emotional, legal, or economic harm (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2004).

Since my study focuses on domestic violence, there was potential that some of participants might experience discomfort as they were discussing such a sensitive topic that could evoke painful memories. Therefore, I made it clear, via the information sheet and in person, to the subjects that if they felt any discomfort at any time during the interview, they had the right to decline answering specific questions and/or leave the interview at any time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2004; Neuman, 2010; Berg & Lune, 2011). In light of the outcomes mentioned above, I also provided the participants with counseling resources. This included the university's own counseling service, which was near the interview locations, as well as a list of private counselors who could help them with any problems that arose as a result of the interviews.

4.6 Interview Outline

After the pilot study concluded, I finalized my interview questions and created an interview guide (see Appendix G) that would answer the main research question is “How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against Saudi women?” These interview questions fell into four separate sets of questions that would allow the researcher to gain more detail on the subject.

Before the questions were asked, the interviewees were presented with photos of Rania Al-Baz, the TV presenter who after being brutalised by her husband was left with 13 fractures and a severely disfigured face (see Appendix H). The reason this photo was shown to the interviewees was so that the researcher could access detailed and in-depth responses regarding the issue of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

After reviewing the images, the researcher asked the four separate sets of questions in the following order:

Set 1 of Secondary Questions

The purpose of the set of questions was to obtain Saudi women’s attitudes towards the incidents of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

1. If you were Rania Al Baz, what would be your feelings?
2. What is your opinion about the incident involving domestic violence against Rania Al Baz and women in general?
3. What pro-active measures would you take, if you were faced with domestic violence?

Set 2 of Secondary Questions

The purpose for the next set of secondary questions was to find out how much educated Saudi women knew about domestic violence and what their background was on the

subject. Therefore, they were asked to define and acknowledge the different types of domestic violence, and the stories they had come across. To get a comprehensive answer, the participants were asked the following questions:

1. After discussing the Rania Al-Baz story, I would like to hear from you as well about the story that you know or hear about Saudi women who have been subjected to domestic violence?
2. After these stories, how would you define domestic violence, and do you think the physical violence is the most common form of abuse? Can you take a moment to think of other forms of domestic violence?
3. Do you consider sexual violence as a type of domestic violence?

Set 3 of Secondary Questions

The third set of secondary questions was used to determine the role culture, gender inequality and citizenship linked up to play as motivating factors behind domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. There were multiple questions within the context of the three sub-topics mentioned above. The research intention behind this set of questions was to get a clear answer regarding the three sub-topics that came directly from the participants' experiences and observations, which included the different factors associated with domestic violence in Saudi society. These questions are listed below:

Culture

1. If you see an abused woman, would you ask her about the abuse? If yes, why? If no, why not?
2. Why do you think that Saudi women have difficulty reporting incidents of domestic violence or requesting a divorce but instead tolerate and stay in abusive relationships?
3. How does society and family view the issue of domestic violence?
4. Do you believe that socialisation, parenting and upbringing which encourage masculinity in boys lead to patriarchy?
5. Do you believe that the Saudi society is patriarchal and encourages the male to be

dominant?

6. Do you believe that patriarchal practice leads to violence?
7. What do you know of Islam's perspective on domestic violence against women?

Gender Inequality

1. Do you think men and women are different? If so? How?
2. Do you have any idea that the Saudi society treats men and women differently? Why not or in what way?
3. Do you believe that men have monopolized the roles of leadership and encourage males to be dominant?
4. Do you agree with the statement that the imbalance of authority and power in marital relationship leads to violence?

Citizenship

1. Do you think that Saudi women enjoy all their rights?
2. Do you think depriving Saudi women of their basic rights leads to domestic violence?
3. What do Saudi women need to have the equal rights as men?
4. Do you believe that in the last ten years' Saudi women have gained more rights?
5. Do you believe that with Saudi women gaining more rights there has been a reduction in the incidents of domestic violence?

Set 4 of Secondary Questions

The purpose of the fourth set of secondary questions was to explore what educated Saudi women knew about the government's infrastructure to protect Saudi women from domestic violence.

1. Are you aware of any laws, regulation, procedures that have been put in place by the Saudi government to protect women?
2. What do you think the government, the NGOs and the society can do to reduce violence against women?

All the questions above served the overall purpose of enabling the researcher to have a

clearer picture and gain more insights into the reality of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

4.7 The Limitations of the Study

In the West, there are numerous studies conducted on domestic violence against women, which are in complete contrast to those of Saudi Arabia where the literature is limited and inadequate, and what does exist uses exclusively quantitative methods. This is a major limitation for this study as the conceptual framework for this thesis had to rely on literature from other countries when it would have been more useful if the literature was directly from Saudi Arabia. In addition, the literature that is available is more focused on the prevalence of the phenomenon rather than the root causes, which is why most of the research utilise quantitative methods; with results are not reliable or accurate since the problem of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia still remains a private and sensitive matter and participants were not always forthcoming. Furthermore, those studies did not produce results on a national level as the research is limited to specific regions with a small sample of participants.

A further limitation for this study is that findings cannot be generalised due three reasons. Firstly, the sample size consisted only of 30 female participants, who did not necessarily reflect the national perspective towards the problem of domestic violence. Secondly, all the participants were from the same metropolitan city, where the outlook is generally more liberal, therefore these participants' viewpoints are not representative of the national attitude towards domestic violence. Lastly, all the participants were exclusively from the academic field, which included administrative and teaching staff and therefore the sample did not include women from different professions that are engaged in combating the problem of domestic violence, such as female lawyers, Shura councilwomen, female civil servants and social workers. All of these women would understand domestic violence on

a practical level and therefore their insight would be invaluable in a study like this. Nonetheless, the study as a result of its coverage and evaluative merit gives insight that cannot be ignored as it attempts to understand the socio-cultural and religious dynamics that underpin the phenomenon of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the methodological approach to this research, followed by detailing the methods used to collect and analyse the data during the field research phase. During the research process, I also addressed the ethical consideration that could arise from a research on domestic violence as it is a sensitive subject. Also, I have listed the final interview questions as well as explained the purpose behind those questions. The focus of this study is to explore the feelings and thoughts of educated Saudi women about domestic violence against Saudi women. Therefore, the qualitative research method was chosen. Though this proved to be time-consuming and demanding, especially during the two phases of data collection and data analysis, it was ultimately beneficial as the research yielded rich and in-depth data to understand the subject for this study. Towards the end of the chapter, I discussed some of limitations that were raised through the course of this research.

In the next three chapters, I present the findings of the study and attempt to provide an in-depth understanding of how educated Saudi women view the problem of domestic violence against women.

5 AN EDUCATED SAUDI WOMAN'S VIEW ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN SAUDI ARABIA

In order to understand the *feelings and thoughts* specifically of educated Saudi women regarding the problem of domestic violence against Saudi women in the Kingdom, it is essential first to get a basic sense of what they *know* about the subject. I therefore attempted to do this by first asking the women to *define* domestic violence, followed by a question about what *types* of domestic violence they had knowledge or experience of. I intended to: a) make it clear to me whether a conversation would be productive, b) help to provoke their thinking about the problem of domestic violence, and c) contextualize whatever they would go on to tell me about their thoughts and feelings towards domestic violence, thereby providing deeper insight into their perspectives on the subject. During the course of the interviews, these perspectives were explored in two ways: firstly, all of the interviewees explained the definitions and types of domestic violence in context of their observations and personal stories of domestic violence against Saudi women; and secondly, by discussing two possible scenarios: 1) where the interviewee was a victim of domestic violence herself; and 2) where the interviewee came across a victim of domestic violence.

Table 1: Participant Profile

Name	Age Range	Degree	Marital Status	Profession
Shahad	31-35	Master	Married	Lecturer and Researcher in Sociology
Najwa	46-50	Master	Married	Lecturer and Researcher in Sociology
Fayza	56-60	PhD	Married	Lecturer in Sociology; Activist and Academic

				Author in Feminism
Khadija	56-60	PhD	Divorced	Head of School, Researcher, Professor in Information Sciences
Samiya	56-60	PhD	Married	Lecturer and Researcher in Sociology, Human Rights Activists
Suhaila	46-50	PhD	Remarried	Lecturer in Islamic Studies
Salwa	41-45	PhD	Married	Lecturer and Researcher in Psychology, Psychologist
Naima	26-30	Master	Married	Lecturer in Psychology
Safiya	46-50	PhD	Married	Lecturer and Researcher in Geography
Wijdan	36-40	Master	Divorced	Lecturer and Researcher in Psychology
Layla	51-55	PhD	Married	Lecturer in Islamic Studies
Badriya	26-30	Bachelor	Married	Trainee Psychologist
Marwa	31-35	Bachelor	Married	Administrative Officer
Ikhlas	56-60	PhD	Married	Professor and Researcher in Arabic Literature
Nora	41-45	Master	Married	Lecturer in Islamic Studies
Zainab	41-45	Bachelor	Married	Administrative Officer
Kareema	51-55	Bachelor	Married	Teaching Assistant in Islamic Studies
Ruwaida	46-50	Master	Married	Lecturer and Researcher in Sociology
Lamiss	21-25	Bachelor	Married	Teaching Assistant and Researcher in Psychology
Fatima	61-65	PhD	Divorced	Professor in Education
Maram	36-40	Master	Married	Lecturer in Media
Rana	41-45	Master	Married	Lecturer in Sociology
Maryam	51-55	PhD	Divorced	Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Feminist Activist
Shereen	31-35	Master	Married	Administrative Officer

Reema	36-40	Master	Married	Lecturer in Sociology
Arwa	46-50	Master	Married	Lecturer in Psychology
Afaf	51-55	PhD	Divorced	Professor in Geography
Kamila	46-50	PhD	Married	Lecturer in Islamic Studies
Ghadeer	36-40	Master	Married	Teaching Assistant in Islamic Studies
Hanan	31-35	Bachelor	Married	Administrative Officer

5.1 Defining Domestic Violence against Women

The definitions of domestic violence against women, as offered by many of my interviewees, were varied and included a wide-range of types of abuse, demonstrating that no two cases/forms/instances of domestic violence are the same (Sanderson, 2010), and this is true of Saudi Arabia.

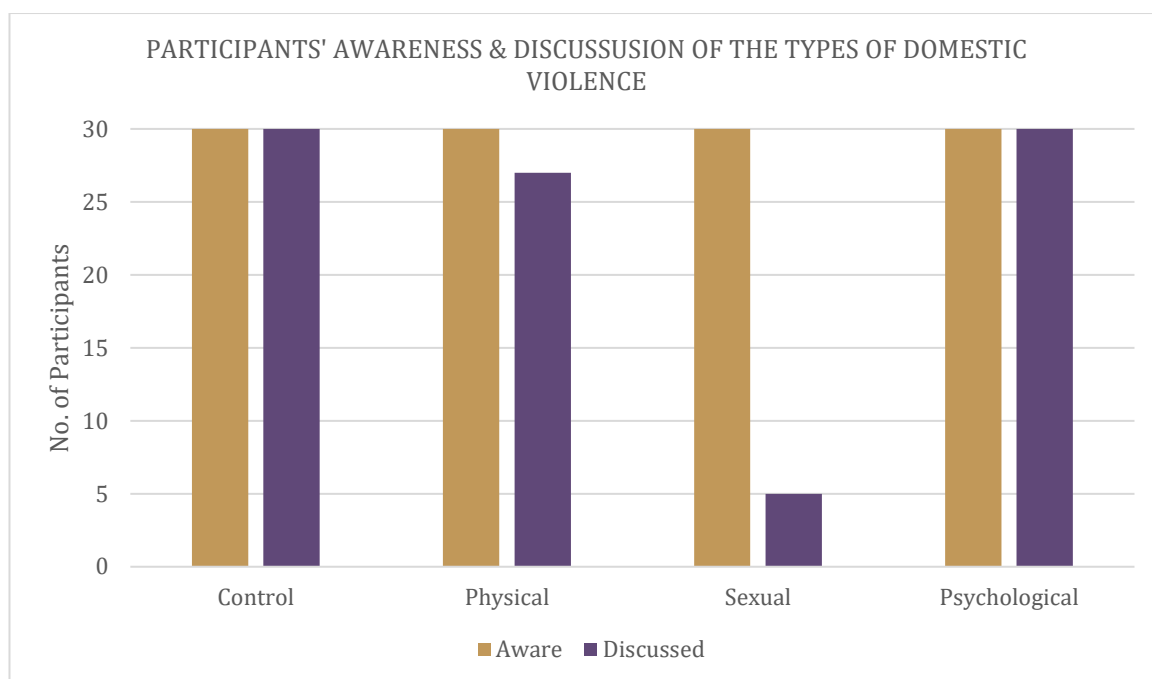
For instance, Samiya, who works for a human rights organisation, stated that domestic violence against women could be any violation of a woman's rights, as noted by the United Nations General Assembly, 1994 and other researchers such as Kaur & Garg, 2008; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005). Samiya further explained that while physical violence is obvious, the negligence that many Saudi women experience should also be considered a form of psychological violence because victims are "[harmed] and [damaged] by both perceived and non- perceived verbal means". Expanding on this, Ikhlas argued that psychological violence was embodied in neglect where the "woman is an object in the house, where no one speaks to her". Ikhlas emphasised that different types of neglect generate a damaging impact on women's lives as they are cast aside as being unworthy of being acknowledged. Reema added that while the most common and well-known types of violence included verbal, physical and psychological abuse, domestic violence against women could be "any type of trespass on freedom of any kind, including

financial or intellectual”. This level of nuanced awareness itself was surprising to me, given that in Saudi society has only recently officially recognised domestic violence and thus, the vocabulary to talk about domestic violence has also only been recently introduced.

Additionally, entirely in keeping with the up-to-date international literature (Ganley, 1995; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Garcia-Moreno et al, 2005; Sully, 2011; Kabeer, 2014), when the participants were asked to define domestic violence against women, 85% of them highlighted that domestic violence of any kind is not a random or sudden act but rather it is systematic set of acts. For instance, Salwa who as a clinical psychologist has observed that domestic violence “is built up step-by-step, which starts with something as simple as a dirty look or a bad word, leading to neglect or degradation and finally degenerating into physical and sexual violence against women as a way to control them”, and thus acts of domestic violence against women are rarely an isolated individual event, but rather as Ganley (1995) points out it is systematic and repeated pattern of behaviour.

The systematic build-up of domestic violence as characterized by these participants also illustrates the ways in which silence among Saudi women regarding the problems within their marriages can contribute to the escalation of domestic violence in their relationship. These participants also explained that many Saudi women do not want to see the dissolution and disintegration of their family unit, and therefore they adopt the practice of tolerance and patience in the hope that they can help the abuser change for the better. Furthermore, based on the discussions with the participants, it can also be surmised that as acts of domestic violence can incrementally increase in magnitude, Saudi women learn to adjust and acclimatize to each act of domestic violence to the point that they will tolerate truly horrific acts perpetrated against them, because they have been gradually accustomed to their suffering.

Table 2. Awareness & Discussion of the Types of Domestic Violence



5.2 The Position of Control within Domestic Violence in Saudi Arabia

One of my most compelling findings was around the relationship between domestic violence and control. During the course of the interviews, one of the most significant themes that emerged was the idea that control is both at the heart and a form of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. This is different from the academic literature which places emphasis on the idea that control is only the motivation behind domestic violence against women (Mullender, 1996; Kaur & Garg, 2008; Rakovec-Felser, 2014). The interviewees also pointed out that Saudi men use the different forms of domestic violence, such as physical, sexual and psychological, to further reinforce their authority and status in the relationship.

Whereas most studies identify control at the heart (in the sense of motivation) of domestic violence, even if it is hidden (Mullender, 1996; Kaur & Garg, 2008; Rakovec-Felser, 2014) the overwhelming majority of the participants in this study, in a context where men already have a lot more ‘control’ gave accounts of control being the predominant and explicit form of domestic violence (as shown in table 2 above). For instance, Safiya recounted the story of a Saudi woman who was subjected to domestic violence, where control was both a form and at the heart of it. In Safiya’s story, the wife was not free to do anything as her husband was “controlling to the point that she was not allowed to move an ornament to a different position”; then when it came to their children, everything “had to go through him first” and when she eventually asked for a divorce, he was in a position to place obstacles in her path to freedom.

This story highlights the way control and dominance permeate the lives of Saudi women where they are not permitted to move freely within their own home, let alone step outside of the house without their husband’s permission (Human Right Watch, 2016), while men have a much wider set of socially and legally endowed freedoms and rights. Safiya’s story would appear to suggest the unique ways in which control is at the heart of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. Control is clearly not a ‘motivation’ in the same way as it might be for men who feel they do not have control; rather, Saudi men have already been given high levels of control and power over women, which they can abuse leading to domestic violence.

Due to the authority and power that Saudi men have already been socially and legally granted over women, husbands are explicitly able to control their wives but there are also more implicit ways in which they can turn their wives’ life difficult. For instance, when we came to the discussion of the types of domestic violence against women, Shahad, a sociology researcher, told me that some types of domestic violence are subtle. Shahad

explained that many a time a husband, “will not refuse requests outright, and he will allow his wife to study and travel but then he will make unreasonable requests beyond her capacity and time that will keep his wife from doing what she wants and when that is ineffective; he will hurl baseless accusations at her about neglecting the house and the children”. In situations like these, on the surface of it, it appears that the husband is supportive and has given his wife her freedom and rights so when he makes a demand (disguised as a request), it becomes difficult for many Saudi women to counter these actions with the claim that this behaviour is an act of domestic violence as she is not explicitly being denied anything she wants.

This kind of underhanded behaviour, in conjunction with the social expectations that dictate that wives should put their husbands and family first (Ghanim, 2009), is a form of domestic violence as it denies women autonomy over their lives; this essentially imprisons them emotionally, socially and intellectually. It is this type of experience that showed me the ways in which the participants were familiar with control as a form of domestic violence, which is frequently used against women. These participants were also critical of the way Saudi men re-enforce their control through implicit ways in ways that deprive women of their rights. Through the interviews, the participants identified two very distinct and obvious forms of control as a form of domestic violence. Firstly, economic violence, where a husband can control his wife through money, and secondly, isolation, where he can abuse his authority to restrict a woman’s mobility thus isolating her from society, even her friends and family.

5.2.1 Economic Violence

Saudi women are exposed to economic violence on a daily basis in the sense that all their financial matters are entirely under the control of men. Saudi women are not free to conduct or control their own financial affairs and need permission from their husbands in

all matters associated with money, from opening bank accounts to pursuing education and/or work (Human Right Watch, 2016). This paves the way for men to abuse their power as they are in a position to deny women their financial independence, thus perpetuating the practice of control as a form of domestic violence.

For instance, when I asked about the different types of domestic violence, Fayza, a sociology professor, narrated a story that was reported in the news where a man who had given his wife permission to work had done so with the intention of taking her salary every month, and when she eventually refused to hand over her money, he ran her over with his car. This is not uncommon, as many participants noted that many Saudi men give their wives permission to open bank accounts, study and work with specific agendas in mind. These husbands want their wives to work which generates additional income over which they have control as they are legally able to deny their wives access to their own finances.

The restrictions placed on the physical mobility of Saudi women further exacerbate this economic violence by creating further opportunity for men to abuse their power. An administrative officer, Hanan was asked to elaborate upon economic violence and she explained that because Saudi women are not allowed to leave the house unchaperoned, they are often unable to access ATM machine, leaving them vulnerable and dependent.

From the discussion on economic violence in the interviews, I extrapolated that Saudi men gain even more control over their wives' using financial matters because the husband will either accompany his wife to the ATM machine or she will give him her card and PIN number. In this way, a wife has no other option and husbands can take advantage of this situation as they have complete access to their wives' account details and have the ability to withdraw funds, often without her knowledge. In terms of economic independence, Saudi women are hindered at every turn because they need permission

from their husbands in order to be financially solvent, to get an education and/or work, and even then, their finances are still not under their complete control, and should they resist or speak out against such behaviour, they can find themselves exposed to other forms of domestic violence.

5.2.2 Isolation

It has been generally argued that isolation is another manifestation of control, (Tolman, 2015; Netto, Moura, Queiroz, Leite & Silva, 2017), and according to the vast majority of the participants, this is particularly true for many Saudi women. In Saudi society, it is legal and socially accepted practice for husbands to place restrictions on their wives' mobility (Human Rights Watch, 2016). These participants suggested that isolation is a reality for many Saudi women, which leads to them being confined in private domains. Safiya explained that in some cases a husband can use his authority over his wife to “deny her permission to visit her family” or “attend any events”, and can demand “his wife to stay at home all the time, depriving her of the little things and anything of value to her”.

From my respondents' accounts, this sort of restriction on women's mobility seemed to apply even in the case where there is major family crisis. For instance, Khadija recounted the story of an acquaintance whose husband placed complete restrictions on her mobility, to the extent that he did not “allow her to visit her sick father”. In this instance, the husband's need for control took precedence over even the duty a daughter has to her father. When Khadija's acquaintance disobeyed her husband's wishes, Khadija recounted that he locked his wife out of the house and threw out her clothes to remind her of his authority over her and no one was in a position to question his actions. This kind of ‘punishment’ can be explained by the belief prevalent in many Arab societies that a husband has the right to discipline his wife for any perceived slight or act of defiance (Haj-Yahia, 1998; Haj-Yahia, 2003; Zaatut & Haj-Yahia, 2016), which in this case was

the act of visiting her ailing father, since the husband had expressly forbidden it.

This sort of restriction was even more extreme in some cases, with other respondents telling me stories of women *never* being allowed to go out at all. For example, Marwa's story was about her friend who experienced isolation as her friend's husband never allowed his wife to leave their home, and "she was not even allowed to visit her parents and siblings or spend any time with friends". So, whenever Marwa's friend wanted to go out, "her husband would make a big problem out of it, claiming that she had no right to go out and do what she wants freely, for her main role is to be a housewife". Marwa's friend was not allowed to work and could only spend a few hours once a week with her parents, otherwise "he would tell her that she was extremely negligent towards him and their children". In situations like these, due the patriarchal practices that grant men legitimate right to control their wives, many Saudi husbands often restrict their wives to the homestead as it is widely believed that women should be confined to the private domestic sphere because their main role is to be a dutiful wife and mother.

5.3 Women's Perception of Physical Violence

All of my interviewees recognised that physical violence had many manifestations including, but not limited to, injury, beating, bruising, burning and torture (Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Tashkandi & Rasheed, 2010). As shown in Table 2, nearly all of the interviewees were able to discuss and give examples of physical violence, which highlights Mullender's (1996) point that "the most familiar form of abuse ... is physical violence" (p.19). Below are just some of the stories about physical violence that a select number of participants recounted.

Based on the discussion with the participants, the persistence of physical violence is connected to the societal attitude that imposes upon Saudi women the culture of patience

and tolerance. Even if the woman is subjected to severe abuse on a regular basis. Thus, Saudi women tend to adopt reconciliatory attitudes, forgiving natures and live with the hope that they are capable of changing the husband's behaviour. Maram recalled the story of a female cousin who experienced physical violence at the hands of her husband; the first time he hit Maram's cousin, it was "on her head with a crystal vase", which caused her to have a concussion and after that she left him, but the couple later reconciled as Maram's cousin had hoped that she could change him. However, on one occasion when Maram's cousin attended a family picnic without her husband's permission, he appeared unexpectedly at the event, and with complete disregard for others, he "beat her with his belt in front of people", as men assume the responsibility of violence as a means of disciplining their wives for their disobedience as being their right and obligation (Haj-Yahia, 1998).

Some of the stories that were shared by other participants highlighted that physical violence occurs when husbands want to maintain control over their wives to prove that they have superiority in their relationship, enabling the power imbalance to continue in marriages. For instance, Ikhlas recounted an occasion when her sister came to visit and had "a big bruise on her eye" because her husband had dragged her from one end of the flat to the other and slammed her face against the door, reacting to this sister's challenge to her husband's authority by wanting to be his equal in the relationship. This was just one of the incidents that Ikhlas recounted about her brother-in-law's behaviour where he used aggressive tactics to maintain his position of dominance and power and to re-enforce what he believed to be his legitimate authority over his wife, often considered to be a "normal aspect of marriage" where male authority over a wife is deemed to be "outside the remit of the law" (Kabeer, 2014, p.4).

It became evident to me during the interviews that men's need for control can also be so

profound that some men will resort to severe abuse even over trivial matters. For instance, Badriya narrated the story of a relative whose husband would “beat her, burn her, torture her and distort her face” over “trivial quarrels about household matters that any normal man would not have even bothered to argue over”. This can be seen as an example of how many Saudi men are reported to infiltrate themselves into every aspect of their wives’ life, using violence in order to continually reinforce their authority and dominance in the relationship (Haj-Yahia, 2003). According to Haj-Yahia (2003) this can be traced back to patriarchal ideology which enforces “masculine sex-role stereotypes, negative and traditional attitudes toward women, non-egalitarian marital role expectations, and familial patriarchal beliefs” (p.193) that are considered significant predictors of physical violence against Arab women. In this sense, the kinds of physical violence to which Saudi women are subjected are linked to context-specific practices of patriarchy, gendered socialisation, and imbalance of gender power in the country.

The role of power in the previous examples is different from the discussions in literature on the subject of domestic violence against women is associated to males compensating for living in traumatic societies and/or when they feel they have no power, forming the motivation to regain a semblance of control by being violent to the women in their lives (Mullender, 1996; Kaur & Garg, 2008; Winstok, 2013; Rakovec-Felser, 2014). As Saudi men have already have been given power and control over women, there is a tendency to misuse this power. This often translates into extreme acts of violence where the Saudi female victims may find themselves at death’s door. Shahad spoke of a close friend whose abusive husband came home drunk one night, “shut the doors, took out the landline connections, hid all the mobile phones, and took to beating his wife from midnight until 7 in the morning, the next day”, which resulted in extensive injuries, including a broken arm and leg. These acts of domestic violence have two crucial components: first, the nature of patriarchal society that men do not want to lose power and control over the

women's life; and second, the consumption of alcohol can lower inhibitions and exacerbate the need for authority and control over their wives, which can lead to extreme manifestations of physical violence.

5.4 Women's Perception of Sexual Violence

While all the participants recognised sexual violence as form of domestic violence, the overwhelming majority of the interviewees were unwilling to discuss sexual violence in depth (as shown in Table 2). This is typical of societies where sex is a taboo subject and therefore individuals find it difficult to discuss sex in general, let alone sexual violence (Dhami & Sheikh, 2000; Freccero et al., 2011).

Only five of the respondents were forthcoming and they were very clear about what they considered sexual violence. Their understanding of sexual violence included marital rape, which is in contrast to the culturally accepted belief that a man has the right to have sex with his wife regardless of her consent (Berman, 2004). One of the participants, Maram, also recognises that when a man “[mocks] or [abuses] a part of your body in the context of sex”, like criticising the shape of a woman's breasts, then it is also considered sexual violence as the psychological and physical violence has underlying sexual connotations (Haddad et al, 2011). The discussion about sexual violence with the five interviewees highlighted how these participants were informed about the problem, thus leading them to believe sexual violence is not a taboo topic, an understanding which allowed them to be more forth-coming.

Patriarchal societies tend to witness more occurrences of sexual violence (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). According to a few of these participants, gender socialisation imposes the ideals associated with masculinity, such as virility, and individuals go to great length to preserve the image of masculinity, through various means including physical abuse or the

violation of a woman's sexual agency. Maryam, an Islamic Feminist scholar, when specifically asked about sexual violence, chose to illustrate her understanding by recounting a story, which highlights that acts of sexual violence are associated with the patriarchal belief that a wife is her husband's property, whereby the man is granted unlimited rights and control over his wife, including unlimited access to her body. Maryam narrated the experiences of a girl who when she went on her honeymoon, "her husband was not able to perform sexually ... so he beat her relentlessly and mercilessly", to the extent she required medical attention.

The husband's behaviour is not uncommon in modern patriarchy, where having sexual mastery over a woman's body and assigning the woman's body as male's sexual property are synonymous with masculinity (Jeffreys, 2009). It has been generally argued that if a man fails to perform sexually and claim a woman's body as his property, it can be emasculating, which diminishes a man's power and status, which in turn can lead to men using violence to reassert their status in the intimate personal relationship dynamics (Charmaz, 1995; Courtenay, 2000).

Maryam added that when it became evident to the girl's husband's parents that their son was impotent, to keep it a secret, they took the girl to a medical facility to "break her hymen" to avoid future scrutiny and to protect their son's status as a male. In this instance, the girl was not sexually abused in the traditional context, but it does adhere to the idea that sexual violence essentially tells the victims that they do not have any rights over their own body. Accordingly, women, once married, belong to their husbands, and thus men (or in this case the husband's family) have sole proprietorship over the woman's body, and women are expected to "reconcile [themselves] with this normatively with centuries of patriarchal culture and socialisation" (Petchesky, 1998, p.188).

One of these interviewees also made links between sexual violence and the patriarchal

expectations that women are meant to please their husbands. These expectations often lead women to confuse violence for expressions of affection. Shereen recalled the experiences of her relative's husband who "when he climaxes during sex, puts out his cigarettes on [his wife's] body", who in turn believes that this is an act of love by her husband and not a form of abuse and control. This can be attributed to the way sex is perceived in Saudi society, where women are frequently unable to distinguish between sex and sexual violence because the discussion of sex is still taboo (Tønnessen, 2016). In this context, many women may not be aware that they are being sexually abused as she may believe that she is performing her wifely duty and fulfilling her female destiny to please her husband, consequently, this abusive behaviour is normalized (Mullender, 1996).

The ways that patriarchy and male power was linked to sexual violence in Saudi Arabia was evident in several accounts. Saudi women are considered their husbands' property that they can use at will, regardless of the woman's needs and will, and this works in conjunction with the reassertion of male dominance, power and control. When the topic of sexual violence came up in the interview, Lamiss, a researcher in psychology, focused on the problem of marital rape and recounted the story of a woman she knew whose husband forced her to have sex with him "just for his own enjoyment", regardless of how his wife felt at the time. Behaviour such as this is linked to the belief that women have consented to sex indefinitely with their husbands by entering the contract of marriage (Maynard, 1993).

Many men seek to maintain power and dominance over women through the sexual violence (Mezey, 2015). In Saudi Arabia, husbands are in a position to misuse and disuse a woman's body at will, which reinforces the power imbalance in the marital relationship. In Badriya's example, the woman's "husband had deserted her for a long time and had

avoided having sex with her”, which in itself is a kind of sexual violence as it deprives women of their sexual needs (Al-Badayneh, 2012). Badriy continued with her story, stating that “on one occasion, however, the husband actually wanted to have sex with her”, and because he put his needs before her comfort, “she was so badly hurt that she had to be hospitalized”. Men have been granted sexual rights over women’s bodies through marriage (Pettman, 1996; Jeffreys, 2009) and as such, in Saudi Arabia, husbands are able to exercise their right to sexual access whenever they want, though it is not the same for women, thus establishing an imbalance of power in the relationship.

Sexual violence is a tool to keep women as subordinate (Tandon, 2008). Elsewhere, I found stories of men often want to maintain their superiority through acts of dominance and control, and any rejection or challenge is viewed as a threat to the man’s power. Maram recalled the story of a Saudi wife who was coerced to have anal intercourse, which caused the woman to suffer from medical complications, and based on medical advice, she refused to participate the next time her husband wanted to have anal sex. In retaliation, the woman’s husband beat her and raped her. In this way, sexual and physical violence frequently go hand-in-hand to reinforce male dominance (Russell, 1990) as men are unable to accept rejection (Tandon, 2008). Since many Saudi men believe they have authority and control over their wives’ body and therefore her refusal is not considered to be of any consequence because she is the property of her husband.

Though largely the interviewees were reluctant to speak about sexual violence, the general consensus was the sexual violence did exist in Saudi Arabia. Five of the participants that were forthcoming believe that sexual violence is prevalent and widespread across the country, which is linked to Saudi society’s attitude towards sex as taboo and it is an intrinsic component of sexual violence against wives in Saudi Arabia and it is exacerbated by dominating and controlling behaviour (Antai, 2011), which is

common to patriarchal values, perpetuating an imbalance of power in favour of men.

5.5 Women's Perception of Psychological Violence

All of the interviewees believe that psychological violence is the most difficult to prove, thus making it the most common and unrecognised form of domestic violence, which corresponds with Mullender's (1996) claim that women can find it difficult to recognise psychological abuse. These educated women have an awareness and clear understanding of psychological violence in that it is a serious form of implicit or invisible violence experienced by women. Since this type of violence does not leave any visible mark, many Saudi female victims do not recognise it as a form of abuse, partly because of the cultural and gender socialisation which forces women to be submissive, compliant and weak in relation to men. Hence when women find themselves in situations where they are frequently subjected to humiliation, insults and denied their rights, they do not question, discuss or challenge the behaviour and instead choose the path of least resistance by remaining silent and blindly obedient.

The vast majority of my participants drew attention to the fact that psychological violence against women is a form of domestic violence that deeply entrenches itself in a woman's psyche leaving a long-lasting impact, the after-effects of which can still be seen long after the violence is over. Wijdan was concerned about how "many victims are unable to recover from psychological violence, which allows the cycle of violence to continue" as psychological violence often destroys the victim's identity, self-esteem, self-worth and self-belief (Kulwicki, Aswad, Carmona & Ballout, 2010; Follingstad & Dehart, 2000). Fayza also highlighted that psychological violence against women caused "harm, humiliation, exclusion" in an intangible way, and that it did not need to be limited to verbal insults but could also be executed through the abuser's manner of behaviour, where "contempt and marginalization" are used to demean women. From the interviews, it

became apparent that the participants were aware about the dangers of psychological violence, which leaves the victim dependent on the abuser as well as removing a sense of initiative and the ability to make decisions.

Through the course of the interview, many of the participants further added that psychological violence includes many different tactics, for instance, terrorising, degradation, and neglect are used to subjugated women. All of these tactics are manifestations of psychological violence, which will be discussed below:

5.5.1 Manifestations of Psychological Violence

The literature on psychological violence explains terrorising as a process by which women are subjected to threats of violence as a means to keep them submissive, as abusive men “use psychological tactics to reinforce their control” (Mullender, 1996, p.23). Ruwaida shared a story that illustrated the ways in which terrorizing is used by husbands to instill fear in their wives to keep them under control and submissive. Ruwaid told me about a woman she had met, who told her that her husband used to terrorise by threatening to kill her and how he would “put [her dead body] in salt so that [she did not] let off a smell”, after which he would leave, claiming that he was going to “fetch the salt”. The way the husband used this tactic ensured that the wife believed that she was at his mercy and therefore, she would agree to whatever choices and decisions he made, and never question him.

During the interviews, in conjunction with other forms of domestic violence several of my participants highlighted that terrorizing as another tactic that husbands use to control their wives, which constantly reinforces the idea that he is superior and she is inferior. For instance, Ruwaida recalled a woman showing her the “four types of instruments that her husband had hanging on the wall: a whip, a rope, a stick and something that he used

to peel the skin”, and he would then force the woman to choose an instrument for her punishment and if she did not, “the punishment would be multiplied”. The purpose of keeping the instruments hanging up on the wall was, according to the wife, a constant reminder of his power over her, with the intent to keep his wife submissive, which Ruwaida found horrific and unbelievable.

Many of my participants spoke of degradation as a manifestation of psychological violence. These participants also observed that degradation allows the abuser to destroy a woman’s spirit to the extent that she does not value herself, leaving herself be completely controlled by the male. For instance, Kareema mentioned that her cousin’s husband was “ill-tempered, rude and foul-mouthed” and he would disrespect and humiliate her cousin every day, and it has got to the point where her cousin is just a broken woman who is numb to the world. Constant verbal degradation is a way to brainwash the victims into losing their sense of self and identity, which allows men to have absolute control and power over their wives (Mullender, 1996), who grow accustomed to such behaviour and treatment, eventually becoming completely subservient and never challenging their husbands on any matter.

During general discussion about domestic violence, the majority of my participants raised the idea of neglect as a common manifestation of psychological violence of their own accord. Since many husbands see their wives as an inanimate object, it enables them to deliberately withhold emotional contact from their wives and disregard their wives’ needs. Khadija’s example illustrated how neglect as a common practice in Saudi society in the way which linked to patriarchal values, gendered socialisation, and power imbalance in marital relationships. Khadija said she encountered many stories like that of her neighbour, whose husband “would go out for long hours to spend time with his friends, without telling her when he would be back and where he was going, while she

sat at home waiting for him” because as a man in an Arab society he is free to do whatever he wants while women are restricted (Abudi, 2011; Usta et al, 2015). Negligence as a manifestation of psychological violence is a consequence of the power imbalance in the marital relationships (Heise, 1998; Antai, 2011; Conroy, 2014; Grose & Grabe, 2014), where the man, who believes he is superior, places his needs and wants are placed before a woman’s needs and wants because she is considered inferior.

5.6 Women’s Attitudes towards Domestic Violence

In order to understand the attitudes of my participants towards domestic violence, I asked two questions. First, what they would feel and think if they were the victims of domestic violence. Second, how they would react and respond if they came across a female victim of domestic violence, and why. These questions and the ensuing discussion were important in highlighting some shifting social norms and expectations that are occurring amongst educated Saudi women, who are the vanguard of change in Saudi society.

Through the participants’ responses to the first question, I found that their answers fell into three categories. The first group is constituted of a few participants who I consider to be traditional/orthodox women and their response reflects the impact that societal attitudes towards domestic violence have had on Saudi women, because these participants believe that wives have a responsibility to tolerate and practice patience in marital relationship. The second group of participants, which constituted the vast majority, are whom I consider ‘empowered’ Saudi women, in the sense that are aware of their rights and want to challenge the status quo; their standpoint could be categorized as one of cultural opposition as it is essential for women to take a stance and resist the culture of tolerance and patience towards domestic violence. The third group, comprised of a couple of participants, were those who stood out to me as being conflicted and/or compromised, in that they have lived experiences of domestic violence and knew it to be wrong but were

not in a position to openly challenge it.

When I asked the first category of participants, to whom I am referring as the traditional and orthodox participants, how they would respond if they were subjected to domestic violence, explained that they would adopt the practice of patience and tolerance. One of these participants, Norah explained that she believes in second chances and that if a husband has “negative characteristics”, women should at least try to “change her husband” because women have been given “wisdom, love and patience” which can make an abusive man a better person.

In this sense, Norah is an example of how gendered socialisation and societal attitudes towards domestic violence (where women expected to practice patience and tolerance in difficult marriage) allows domestic violence to maintain a strong foothold in Saudi society, whereby someone as educated as Norah still believes that an abusive person should be given a chance to reform and which is the responsibility of the wife. The hope with educated women is that they can bring positive change to society as they are in a position to influence the next generation. However, the continued existence of the orthodox and traditional mind-set amongst educated women poses a problem where these beliefs and attitudes towards domestic violence can be passed down from one generation to another, in ways that could be an impediment to empowering Saudi women to free them from domestic violence.

The second category, what I am calling the empowered Saudi women, responded in contrast to the first group. They explained that they would not accept such acts of abuse and they would challenge the culture of tolerance and patience, which they believe leads to the continuation of domestic violence. For instance, Khadija believes prevention is better than cure, especially in the case of domestic violence. During her own first marriage, her husband tended to be controlling and before their arguments escalated to violence,

Khadija decided to separate and divorce him. The other example, Shahad also believes in prevention but approached her marriage differently, as during the engagement period, she explained to her husband-to-be her expectations, requirements and limits, and had her fiancée not agreed, obliged and respected her wishes, she would not have married him.

Khadija and Shahad are examples of Saudi women who challenge the cultural practice of tolerance and patience. These Saudi women are able to challenge these practices because they are educated, financially and socially independent and aware of their rights, which enables them to avoid and/or leave violent marital relationships. Consequently, these women place their sense of self, self-esteem and self-preservation above any societal expectations imposed upon them and they draw the line at any form of abuse, which cannot be crossed in any of their relationships including their marriages.

In the third category, the participants were conflicted about domestic violence against women. This category of response came from women who have been either subjected to or experienced domestic violence in the form of spousal abuse of power (Kaur & Garg, 2008; Rakovec-Felser, 2014), and while they explained that they considered domestic violence an act of injustice, their personal experience meant that they had not felt able to openly challenge spousal aggression. For someone like Suhaila, who had experienced domestic violence in her marriage, the Arabic expression, “bitterness of oppression” had merely been a figure of speech prior to marriage, but after her own experiences of enduring domestic violence, she now can taste that “bitterness” in the back of her throat. From Fatima’s perspective, domestic violence is akin to oppression, where slaves are treated better than female victims of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia because many husbands view their wives as their personal property and expect them to be blindly obedient and accepting of whatever the husbands choose to do.

Both Suhaila and Fatima (unlike Shahad and Khadija) chose not to challenge the

individual perpetrators, because they themselves were conflicted between knowing the abuse was wrong and acquiescing to deeply ingrained societal attitudes. Individually, this led Suhaila and Fatima to make compromises on the basis of deep-seated concerns about societal judgment and condemnation rather than their own safety, which left them suffering domestic violence for a long time. Suhaila's and Fatima's experiences of domestic violence reflect the ways in which the misuses of religion, patriarchal practices and gendered socialisation have intersected to deny women autonomy and agency.

The next discussion with the interviewees brought into focus how they would respond if they knew a woman who was being abused. All participants answered that they would not approach the abused women for two different reasons. First, because of the Saudi societal attitude towards domestic violence in which this is considered a private matter where no one should intervene while the second reason is the belief that in order to end the cycle of violence, Saudi women themselves have to come forward about domestic violence to report it as a social problem, thus challenging and resisting the practices that leaves women to suffer in silence.

Majority of my participants displayed an unwillingness to get involved in issues of domestic violence against women, as domestic violence in marriage is still largely perceived as a personal and private matter (Eltahawy, 2015; Tønnessen, 2016). For instance, Kareema commented that she “would not ask because it might be embarrassing for [her] if [the woman] lies and makes excuses for bruises” because, as studies have revealed, many women in Arab society believe that being open about domestic violence is shameful and they fear societal scrutiny and criticism (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Tønnessen, 2016). Ikhlas explained that many victims, when approached about the abuse, deny any knowledge of it and try to hide it, which has been identified as fairly common practice amongst female victims of domestic violence (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Jayasundara et al, 2014;

Tønnessen, 2016).

On the other hand, some of my participants believe that Saudi women have to empower themselves and challenge the oppressive societal attitude towards domestic violence as a private matter, where they are expected to keep silent about their suffering. Fayza explained that she “would not approach” a female victim of domestic violence, even if it was “[her] sister [she] saw with a bruise” because “over the years, [Fayza has] come to believe that women have to take the first step in order to free themselves from violent relationships”. Based on this discussion with these interviewees, this idea is spreading amongst educated Saudi women as Saudi society is changing and is directly linked to the Saudi government’s efforts to empower women so they are not left in a completely vulnerable position. The steps taken by the Saudi government include the official recognition and criminalization of domestic violence (Al Jazeera, 2013; Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2013; Eltahawy, 2015), giving equal opportunities to Saudi women to pursue higher education and increasing opportunities for women’s employment (Kelly, 2009). All of the Saudi government’s initiatives contribute towards giving women the space to free themselves from violent marriage and thus ending the cycle. Through education and employment opportunities, Saudi women are moving towards autonomy because they are now able to financially support themselves and disregard the stigma attached to divorce; and by criminalizing domestic violence, the Saudi government is encouraging women to see domestic violence as a social problem rather than a private and secret matter.

5.7 The Persistence of Domestic Violence against Women

During the interviews, the vast majority of the respondents also expressed their concern about domestic violence being a commonplace in Saudi society. These interviewees came forward with many stories that they knew on the subject. Their responses fell into two

categories: 1) stories they had heard and observed through their profession; or 2) stories they had experienced personally.

5.7.1 Professional Encounters

Numerous interviewees encountered female victims of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia in a professional capacity. These participants regularly encounter many Saudi women who experience or have experienced violence at the hands of their husbands.

As someone who researches the topic professionally, one respondent told me about the high prevalence of domestic violence. For example, as a researcher, Ruwaida has encountered at least “500,000 cases of domestic violence in her city”. This reflects the participants’ awareness of domestic violence against Saudi women as a social problem of great magnitude, which is related to factors culturally specific to Saudi Arabia, whereby the misuse of religion, patriarchal practices, socialisation and social attitudes create the space for a power imbalance between the genders in a marital relationship, particularly with the existence of the male guardianship system where women are seen as perpetual minors.

Samiya, who works for a human rights organisation, told me about instances of domestic violence occurring when women are financially and socially dependent on their husbands, and can find themselves stuck in a vicious cycle of continuous abuse. Samiya cited the story about “a girl whose husband hit her until she would turn blue [from bruising]” and on one occasion, “he hit her with a hammer until she bled”. Samiya could not contain her disbelief that this girl returned to her husband despite all the violence she had faced and that she now had some financial support (due to the compensation the victim had received). Ultimately, as Samiya observed, the girl returned because she was still dependent on him financially and socially. In these situations, female victims can find

themselves close to death, due to the absence of financial and emotional support that leaves women to adopt the culture of patience and tolerance, which is linked to the perpetuation of the cycle of domestic violence against women.

Fayza who is a professor of sociology, narrated some cases where domestic violence occurs when Saudi men exert control over women. Fayza explained that some of her students are unable to perform academically because her students' partners do not let them leave the home on final exam days or tear up their books and papers, which prevents them from succeeding in education and which is clearly an obstacle to achieving their professional ambitions. Fayza's observations indicate that many women experience domestic violence, to varying degrees, due to the stronghold of patriarchy in Saudi society where men are viewed as superior and women as inferior, a situation which is constantly perpetuated by social expectations and gendered socialisation requiring women to prioritize their husband and family, and if necessary sacrifice their own needs and wants. In this sense, women are confined to the private sphere and if they want to pursue their education and engage with the wider world, they often find themselves in jeopardy, because they can be subjected to domestic violence on a daily basis which impedes their empowerment.

5.7.2 Personal Encounters

Three of the interviewees that recounted their personal experiences with domestic violence, were either victims of domestic violence themselves or they had a family member who had been a victim. The reason these three stories are significant is because these women came forward to describe their experiences in detail, which is in direct contrast to the culture of shame that still prevails in Saudi Arabia and where most women keep their experiences with domestic violence a secret and suffer in silence.

5.7.2.1 Suhaila's Story

One of my participants, Suhaila, who is a lecturer in Islamic Studies, recounted her own story that show the ways in which control is not only the heart of domestic violence (Mullender, 1996; Kaur & Garg, 2008) but also a form of it in Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia's case, domestic violence is linked in ways to context-specific forms of patriarchy, gendered socialisation and power imbalance. Suhaila was married after she completed her undergraduate degree and was a teaching assistant. Suhaila's experience encompassed every type of domestic violence. She explained that before she was married, she "thought the stories of domestic violence against women were a figment of the imagination found in novels and in newspapers".

Suhaila's story provided a vivid illustration of the common Saudi idea that the husband is the head of the household, and in many instances, husbands are encouraged to establish dominance, authority and control over their wives from the onset of their marriage (Johnson, Ollus & Nevala, 2008). Her ex-husband abused her from the first day of their marriage, as soon as they closed their bedroom door. He hurled insults at her, claiming later that he had been told by his family to 'break her jaw the first time you see her', an Arabic idiom that means that women should not be in a position to argue or disagree with their husbands. In this way, it appears that many Saudi husbands have a fear of their wives challenging and/or resisting their husbands' authority and control and leads many husbands to establish an imbalance of power in their relationship from the first day of their marriage using aggressive tactics. These husbands intentionally force their wives to be obedient, submissive and subservient so that they are the 'superior' in the relationship. This gives Saudi men the advantage and freedom to do whatever they want, leaving their wives constantly exposed and vulnerable to domestic violence on a daily basis.

Suhaila also gave an example of gendered expectations (which she linked to her

experienced of domestic violence) that pervaded her marital life on a much more mundane level. During her marriage, she experienced at least one form of domestic violence on a daily basis. Suhaila once wanted a television in their bedroom but her ex-husband would not allow it, even though he was “free to watch whatever he wanted, and he could go out and see the wider world, while he insisted [she] remain ignorant”. Suhaila’s ex-husband even placed restrictions on eating and drinking, and she could only eat when he allowed her to eat. To him, his lunch could not be delayed, even if Suhaila was starving because he did not acknowledge Suhaila as a human being, but rather his property that existed purely to do his bidding, which reflects the gendered expectations permeated and entrenched in many Saudi families.

Suhaila’s experiences with her ex-husband also showcased how patriarchal privileges allows men to view sex with their wives as a right, and therefore do not concern themselves with the issue of consent. Suhaila commented that her ex-husband viewed her as his personal slave and believed that she was only there to meet his needs and wants. Therefore, Suhaila’s ex-husband did not believe he was under obligation to take her feelings and needs into consideration and if she declined sex, he would proceed nonetheless claiming that it was “his right”, as men in Arab societies view sexual access to their wife’s body as their right (Tønnessen, 2016). Suhaila’s ex-husband would further add insult to injury by calling her cold and frigid and on other occasions, he would wake Suhaila up, drag her by her hair, and force her to have sex with him just because “he wanted to humiliate [her]”. In this way, patriarchal privileges socialise men in such a way that they believe it is acceptable to punish women violently for not fulfilling their desires, as they view their own wants and needs as a right, while women are merely a vessel.

Suhaila highlighted how her ex-husband used different tactics to control her, including imprisoning her in own home and taking over her finances. Suhaila’s ex-husband

succeeded in isolating her from society, her family and friends as “he refused to let [her] see other people and [she] was not even allowed to leave the premises to go shopping”. He also refused to give her “the key to [their] house for the first five years and the phone was not allowed in the house for the first ten years of [their] marriage”. Suhaila’s ex-husband even encouraged his own family to control and restrict her movements. The only time she was allowed to leave the house was when she had to go to work, and that was only because she was earning money, which he would then take from her to supplement his own income. In isolating Suhaila and perpetuating economic violence against her, Suhaila’s husband practiced control as a form of domestic violence. Saudi men already have absolute control over women, leading to the abuse of power that creates a space for domestic violence to take place.

Suhaila faced another facet of domestic violence that linked to gendered expectations and patriarchal practices. Suhaila had long since realised that her ex-husband did not want too many children but it did not stop him from getting her pregnant until they had a son. When her firstborn was a daughter, Suhaila’s ex-husband cried and his family were unhappy with Suhaila because of their mistaken belief that it is a woman’s responsibility to decide the gender of her baby. She had a difficult pregnancy with her daughter and had to have a Caesarean section and was very close to death during the entire process, yet there was no sympathy or compassion for her situation and she was the target of constant criticism for failing to provide a male heir. Despite the difficulties in her first pregnancy, Suhaila’s ex-husband insisted that she became pregnant again because he wanted a son, in keeping with the preference for sons that many Arab men have against daughters (Kulwick et al, 2010). The second time she had a son after which Suhaila’s ex-husband declared he did not want any more children, a decision that Suhaila had to accept regardless of her feelings on the matter, since women are expected to please and obey their husbands regardless of their own needs and wants in Arab society (Ghanim, 2009).

Suhaila's experiences exemplify how in Saudi Arabia, where men have already been given complete authority over their wives' social and legal rights (Human Rights Watch, 2016), many men are able to abuse their authority and use control as a form of domestic violence. In Suhaila's case, when her ex-husband was unable to reject her rights outright, he would manipulate the situation to achieve what he wanted. In the first instance, when Suhaila wanted to pursue her postgraduate qualification, her ex-husband changed his mind about the number of children he wanted and insisted that she get pregnant again with the aim of preventing her from pursuing her goals. However, once their youngest child was in kindergarten, Suhaila decided once again to pursue her education and profession, regardless of her ex-husband's objections. The university she was interested in was based in another city, which required her to travel two hours daily. Her ex-husband rejected her decision, claiming that women in his family "do not travel with drivers" and would not allow her to take the bus, thereby restricting her mobility, which is fairly common practice amongst abusers to control their victims. Suhaila discussed many alternative methods of travel but he rejected them all. She also suggested that he drop and pick her to which he responded that was not prepared to die for her sake. When she proposed moving near to the university in the other city and financially support herself, he refused the idea partly because he did not want her to succeed and partly because he wanted her income.

Saudi men have absolute power over women, yet men still resort to implicit and underhanded methods to further their agenda to control women to deprive them further of their rights. Suhaila, when her ex-husband eventually agreed to let her continue her education, it was for his own agenda as her job was in jeopardy without the extra qualifications and therefore he would no longer have access to her income. However, he insisted that she apply for scholarships abroad through her university, as he believed that she would be rejected based on her age, aiming to lower Suhaila's confidence in herself.

When she was accepted by the foreign universities, he was surprised and then reneged on his promise, refusing to accompany her or give her permission to travel abroad, which is a legal requirement for any Saudi women who wants to study outside of the country (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Saudi men have been already given almost complete control over women and this is an impediment to empowering women and prevents them from freeing themselves from domestic violence.

On top of the control already exerted by Suhaila's ex-husband, Suhaila was constantly subjected to verbal abuse on a regular basis. In the 16 years of their marriage, Suhaila's ex-husband constantly berated and humiliated her by making comments on her appearance, declaring that he had not cheated on her even though he had been given an ugly wife. Suhaila was so traumatised by his criticism of her appearance that when her mirror broke, she refused to get a new one because every time she looked in the mirror she would see her own reflection as ugly and old. Verbal degradation is yet another tool frequently used by abusers to lower the self-esteem of their victims (Mullender, 1996), breaking away their confidence and resilience so they become subservient and tolerate and accept violence in their relationships.

Suhaila's life provided an example of how Saudi women can be easily subjected to gender inequality because society allows it and recounted that she eventually filed for divorce. Even then, the abuse continued because of the way the divorce proceedings are conducted in Saudi Arabia, which gives men the privilege and advantage over women because men are free to divorce at will while women cannot (Kelly, 2009) and men can continue abusing their ex-wives even after divorce. After a long court battle, Suhaila was refused a 'talaq', so she sought a 'khul'a' instead where she had to pay her ex-husband money to end the marriage.

The problem with the 'khul'a' is that women only resort to it when husbands refuse to

co-operate and give them 'talaq' and subsequently men are again in a position to use the woman's desperation to leave her marriage as a means of blackmailing her. Many husbands demand huge sums and/or use their children as leverage, whereby women are expected to give up custody of their children to the father to get their 'khul'a'. In many cases, judges often agree to the man's demands, including that of the children's custody and decree that the wives should pay hundreds of thousands of pounds to free themselves from the violent relationship. In these cases, the cycle of violence continues because either the women do not have the resources to procure their freedom, and if they do, demanding that women give up the custody of their children is an impossible condition that many women cannot meet.

Suhaila's attitude towards marriage has been affected by gender socialisation and the societal attitude which is against divorce. In Saudi Arabia, the gender socialisation is such that it has led Suhaila to believe that a woman needs a husband because divorced women are considered easy prey for men and are constantly subject to scrutiny, judgment and criticism from women and men in Saudi society as people are suspicious of divorced women. However, even in her second marriage, Suhaila remains a victim as she is still subjected to control as a form of domestic violence as she is the third wife of a very controlling man. As Suhaila is based in different city to her husband, it is difficult for her to ask for permission on a daily basis for when she wants to go out. The reason for this is that she is not allowed to call him when he is with his other wives and he does not always check his messages, so it is inconvenient for her to ask for permission every time she wants to go out to visit her family or friends. Therefore, she asked her husband for open permission, but he rejected this proposal. Even in her second marriage, Suhaila continues to experience different forms of domestic violence.

Suhaila's experiences show the way control is both at the heart of domestic violence and

a form of domestic violence as it is the consequence of patriarchy, gendered socialisation and gender inequalities. In both of her marriages, her ex-husband and husband were able to exercise dominance and control, pervading her autonomy to the point that she is not free to make her own decisions and her mobility is restricted. The abuse that Suhaila has experienced and continues to experience can be “understood in the context of gendered power relationships” (Mullender, 1996, p.17), where man is free to be as dominant as he wants as men have been granted both social and legal authority over women and women are seen as either subordinates or property.

5.7.2.2 Fatima’s Story

Fatima recounted her daughter’s experience of domestic violence, which highlighted control being a form and at the heart of domestic violence, but more importantly that the continuation of domestic violence is connected to a woman’s fear of losing custody of the children (Dobash & Dobash, 1979) as well as Saudi society’s attitude towards domestic violence in marriage. According to Fatima, when her daughter got married, the groom appeared to be a “good, hardworking, well-bred, and respectful man”, which is why Fatima and her husband did not realise that their daughter was experiencing domestic violence until after she was pregnant. Many Saudi women suffer in silence and adopt the culture of patience and tolerance, which ingrains in them the belief that women should try and change the abuser’s behaviour by giving them a chance. However, these experiences show this placatory behaviour only further exacerbates the situation as the violence continues to escalate over time.

Fatima pointed out that many Saudi men use physical and psychological violence against women to keep them submissive and under control. Fatima’s daughter told Fatima that her husband “would bash her badly”, “used to stir [hot tea] with her fingers” and “even bite and pinch her”. His abuse was not purely physical, it was also psychological, as he

would tell Fatima's daughter to "Go, and look at [herself] in the mirror!" because she was ugly, as well as calling her a "bitch" and a "whore". Actions such as this have one primary purpose and that is to diminish and extinguish the confidence, self-esteem and self-belief of female victims so that they become an empty vessel that is only subservient and compliant to the male's demands.

Fatima explained that her son-in-law further exerted his control by isolating her daughter from her family by taking her abroad and would not let her contact her family for long periods of time. In fact, she was not even allowed to contact the family when she became pregnant and during her pregnancy, her son-in-law continued with the physical abuse to the extent that Fatima's daughter was severely injured, putting both mother and baby at great risk. The only way Fatima's daughter was finally able to communicate with her parents was because Fatima and her husband became very concerned about the absence of contact with their daughter and they called their son-in-law and insisted on speaking to their daughter. On the phone, Fatima's husband felt that Fatima's daughter was not speaking normally to them and this made Fatima and her husband suspicious and they felt that something was wrong. Consequently, Fatima and her husband went to visit their daughter abroad and that was when they found out their daughter was 7 months pregnant and that she was in a violent marriage because they could clearly see evidence of abuse all over her body. Fatima and her husband decided to take their daughter back with them to Saudi Arabia, where Fatima's daughter delivered a baby girl.

Fatima highlighted how her daughter suffered as a consequence of societal attitudes towards domestic violence because in Saudi Arabia the emphasis is on the sanctity of marriage, particularly when there are children involved. So, after the baby was born, Fatima's son-in-law and his family returned and tried to reconcile with her daughter, and because Fatima and her family also believed that it was important to try and save the

marriage especially since there was a child involved, they too agreed to the mediation and process of reconciliation between Fatima's daughter and her husband. However, despite mediation and his pledge not to hurt Fatima's daughter, Fatima's son-in-law was only able to control himself for a few days before he started beating Fatima's daughter again. Fatima's daughter came back to live with her family but while they were at work, Fatima's son-in-law would visit and beat their daughter to the point where she "started to look like a roasted chicken". Fatima's daughter story is one of many in Saudi Arabia where most families wish to reconcile the acrimonious couple, even if the husband is violent. The purpose of trying to reconcile the couple is to save the marriage, whereby the husband is given the opportunity to change for the better (Barakat, 1993; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Haj-Yahia, 2005; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). Children are also a factor in motivating reconciliation as women are afraid of losing custody of their children, especially in Saudi Arabia where fathers tend to be awarded custody of their children over the mothers (Almosaed, 2009; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). However, the reconciliation period often gives the abuser more opportunities to go further and be more daring and vicious in their acts of violence.

Through Fatima's story, it is highlighted how patriarchal values contribute towards the idea and practice that man is entitled to control and own his wife. When Fatima's daughter finally applied for divorce, during the proceedings, her son-in-law's viewpoint regarding the relationship between husband and wife became clear; Fatima's son-in-law and his family believe that wives are slaves and that a "woman becomes one of their properties just like a car", which gives the husband the freedom to do whatever he wants.

Fatima's story also illustrates how Saudi men are able to exercise privilege and power, due to the advantages and options given to them by law, as her son-in-law was able to prolong the divorce proceedings to the extent that Fatima's daughter eventually had to

seek a 'khulla' to be able to legally end her marriage as her husband had no intention of letting her go. In Fatima's daughter's case, there was a family who supported her emotionally and financially, which enabled her to ask for a 'khulla' to free herself from a violent marriage. However, if female victims do not have emotional and/or financial support to enable to free themselves of their abuser, then one has to wonder what kind of life they will lead in their violent marriages.

5.7.2.3 Maryam's Story

Maryam narrated her own story as she has been the victim of psychological violence, control and physical violence, which was in conjunction with patriarchal practices and power imbalance in marital relationships (in favour of the husband), as is often the case in Saudi Arabia. In the early years of her marriage, Maryam's ex-husband indulged in extra-marital relationships although she was unaware of his behaviour. It was only many later years into her marriage, that Maryam began to realise the kind of man her ex-husband was and when she confronted it him with this information, Maryam's life became hell. Saudi society as patriarchy places all the tools of control in the hands of the man, being given a position of dominance over women, who in turn are always required to remain submissive and compliant, creating the gap which acts as a veil, hiding and protecting the faults and flaws of men.

Maryam gave an example of how many husbands want to remain in the position of control as they fear losing their power in their marital relationships. In order to maintain power, husbands tend to adopt aggressive attitudes and practice. In Maryam's story, eventually her relationship with her husband became a constant struggle for power and dominance as her ex-husband would continuously resist any of her suggestions, even as something as simple as painting the house or a suggestion for holiday destination. In instances like these, many husbands will try to reassert their position and power in the relationship,

which they believe they have lost due to their indiscretions, and even a normal request or trivial argument is perceived as a threat to his power, status and authority in the relationship, even if that is not the intention. According to McConnell (1991), abuse is not about the loss of control per se, but rather it stems from wanting to control the victim to maintain their authority and status in relationship.

Maryam continued her story, where she explained that her marriage deteriorated to the point that the emotional violence escalated to physical violence. Her husband's perceived rights over her body and his misconception about religion played a role in his subsequent actions. She recounted how, in the same year, during the holy month of Ramadan, her husband came to her and asked if they could break their fast together, privately, which would then lead to conjugal relations after. At the time, their children were at home and they always break their fast together as a family, therefore if there was a change in this routine it would be suspicious, and she would not be able to explain the reason to her children. Consequently, she declined his request, which her husband found unacceptable and he was furious. Regardless of his anger, she went and broke her fast with her children. After the fast, as she was praying, her husband returned home with a rod that he had just purchased, and he beat her with it while she continued to pray. By the time she finished praying, the rod had broken due to the sheer intensity of the attack.

Maryam's story shows how in Saudi Arabia, due to patriarchy, many men believe they have complete right and proprietorship over their wives' bodies and therefore do not accept any rejection to their perceived ownership, and when they are challenged, they resort to violence as it has been incorrectly ingrained in them that according to Islam any disobedience needs to be met with discipline. This reflects the findings in studies about domestic violence in Arab societies that have found that husbands feel that they have the right to discipline their wives for any perceived act of disobedience (Haj-Yahia, 1998;

Haj-Yahia, 2003; Zaatut & Haj-Yahia, 2016), which in Maryam's case was denying her husband sex because it challenged his manhood because she had declined to comply with his demands.

Above are only of three of the stories that three participants shared but during the interview process, all of the participants were able to give many examples of women they knew who had experienced domestic violence, such as a relative, close friend or a neighbour. The sheer number of the incidents of domestic violence that were shared was surprising as was their willingness to come forward with their experiences, especially those who were former victims of domestic violence themselves, which was in complete contrast to the culture of shame regarding domestic violence that is still prevalent in Saudi Arabia. All these stories clearly show the horrific realities that many Saudi women constantly endure in their violent marriages on a daily basis.

In fact, many of the participants observed that the perpetuation of domestic violence against women in Saudi society is a consequence of Saudi men being allowed to exercise legitimate authority over women. Lemiss explains that one of the reasons that domestic violence continues to persist in Saudi society is because many women are unable to recognise control as a form of domestic violence, citing her friend, as an example, whose husband controls her interactions and restricts her mobility due to his controlling nature is born out jealousy, which her friend views as love. In this way, control as a form of domestic violence is sometimes difficult to identify in Saudi society. Many Saudi women are often confused between the social expectations that have existed for generations where men have legitimate authority and control over their wives, where women are raised to be obedient and accept it as an act of protection that often translates to controlling a woman's actions.

Some of the participants pointed out that the patriarchal privileges and social and legal

authority that Saudi men have been given over women leads to Saudi women experiencing some form of domestic violence at least once in their life. For example, Najwa, who is a researcher in sociology, believes that “there is not a Saudi woman who will not experience abuse at some level and in some form”, which is intrinsically linked to Saudi culture where the misuse of religion (through the intentional mistranslation of the Quran, thus giving men control over their wives), socialisation (where boys are given freedom and authority, and girls are constantly restricted). Furthermore, patriarchal practices and gender inequalities have paved the way to denying female autonomy and the placement of restrictions on women's mobility, which leaves women entirely dependent on her male guardian, thus creating a wider space for domestic violence to occur.

5.8 Conclusion

It was not surprising to see that these educated Saudi women are aware of the definitions of domestic violence and acknowledge the different kinds of it, as well as condemning acts of violence against women. However, it was astonishing how these participants were willing to come forward about the problem of domestic violence and discuss it in detail. For instance, the overwhelming majority of participants openly criticised control as a form of domestic violence in the country, which is in direct contrast to the past where the general consensus was that a husband's control was an intrinsic part of a Saudi woman's life and continued unchallenged as it was considered to be socially accepted practice. The way these educated Saudi women expressed their ideas and concerns about control as both a form and at the heart of domestic violence is reflective of the deeply ingrained nature of domestic violence against women in Saudi society, in ways that lead women to suffer on a daily basis.

During the interviews, the lack of detailed discussion regarding sexual violence raised a

concern as 25 out of the 30 participants had to be repeatedly prompted to talk about sexual violence in detail, and even that was not usually successfully. While all the interviewees recognised sexual violence, and admitted that it existed in Saudi society, the vast majority of the interviewees were unwilling to give examples or discuss sexual violence any further. These participants explained, they were uncomfortable discussing anything related to sex so openly, and this is in keeping with sex being a taboo in Saudi society.

When the discussion turned to how the participants themselves would respond if they were victims of domestic violence, their responses fell in three groups. One group, which constituted of a few participants, had a traditional and orthodox perspective. These participants believe that it is a woman's responsibility to maintain the marriage by adopting the culture of tolerance and patience. The second group, which constituted the majority of my participants, fell into the empowered women category. These participants believe that women should resist and challenge the culture of patience and tolerance by discard the restraints of societal attitudes that allow domestic violence to take place and persist. The third group was comprised of a couple of my participants. These participants were conflicted in that they know it is wrong to prescribe to the culture of patience and tolerance, but they would remain in violent marriages because they fear societal condemnation.

Another issue that arose from the interviews was that none of the participants, despite believing that domestic violence is a major problem, would not approach a female victim of domestic violence to alleviate her suffering. The participants gave one of two different reasons for adopting this practice. First, the majority of my participants believe that all problems relating to marriage are a personal and private matter and it is, therefore, inappropriate if an outsider gets involved even if it is a family member. On the other hand, a few of the interviewees believe that female victims should be the ones to take the first

step to free themselves from violent relationships instead of suffering in silence, especially since the Saudi government has recently criminalised domestic violence and is actively trying to empower women to be independent and autonomous.

The issues mentioned above are some of the contributing factors which explain why domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia persists. In the discourse of this chapter, a key point has emerged in that the problem of domestic violence in the country is a much larger, more layered and complex issue and is explored in the next chapter by delving deeper into culture, gender inequality and citizenship in Saudi Arabia.

6 FACTORS ATTRIBUTED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: AN EDUCATED SAUDI WOMAN'S VIEW

In the previous chapter, the discussion with the interviewees provided a glimpse into their awareness, knowledge and understanding of the definitions and forms of domestic violence as well as their attitudes towards it. The aim of this chapter is to focus on what participants believe to be the main factors associated with the continuation of domestic violence against Saudi women in the Kingdom and explore why it is commonplace.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, in order to investigate this problem of domestic violence against Saudi women in depth, the interviewees were asked a series of questions that were related to issues of culture, gender and citizenship (in term of rights). Throughout the interviews, several problems regarding the conservative and traditional Saudi culture were raised and these represent the main themes to be discussed in this chapter: namely, the misuse of religion, patriarchal practices, family socialisation, and societal attitudes. Each of these factors contributes to the deeply-entrenched gender inequalities that exist within Saudi society, which in turn furthers the 'justification' for maintaining the practice for male guardianship, and lack of female citizenship.

6.1 Socio-Cultural Issues

Culture as a system of meaning is the way in which we make sense of the world that helps in our understanding of our place in said world (Hall,1992). Consequently, our identities are shaped by the cultural world we inhabit. Typically, culture is made up of many different components (Lomax, 2007), and the Saudi culture is no exception.

As discussed in the literature review, there are four components in Saudi culture that contribute to domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia: misuse of religion,

family socialisation, patriarchal practices and societal attitudes. According to the overwhelming majority of the participants that religion is often misused by society to sustain patriarchal attitudes. Moreover, Saudi patriarchy is supported by family socialisation that in turn influences societal attitudes. Thus, Saudi culture creates an environment where domestic violence against women can take place unchallenged.

6.1.1 Religion's Stance towards Domestic Violence

All the participants argued that Islam is a religion that gives women their rights, as suggested in the literature review (Abugideiri, 2005; Alkhateeb & Abugideiri, 2007; Goldstein,2010 Riaz & Abbas, 2013). These participants explained that women in Islam have the right to their autonomy and agency, education, financial independence, the right to choose their own spouse, equal pay in the same positions of employment.

Several of my participants also explained their understanding that the existence of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. For example, Layla, who is a lecturer in Islamic Studies, state that domestic violence in the country is "Inherited from the age of ignorance and come from pre-Islamic era". Fatima added to this point by emphasising that "before Islam, girls were just abandoned at the bottom of wells and women had no rights to the extent that they were not even considered human". Reema elaborated by saying that "in the pre-Islamic era, women were believed to be the tool that the devil used to rot the hearts of men, akin to the way Eve was held responsible for Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Eden", thus rendering women profane and contemptuous.

In this way, women were conditioned to be subservient and submissive, perceptions that prevailed till the advent of Islam. In Islam, women are given equal rights and station to men while men are assigned the responsibility of protecting women (Badawi, 1995; Goldstein,2010). However, over the years, society has manipulated and misused the

religion in order to place the male in a position of dominance, which allows him to impose his control over the female (Douki et al, 2003; Obeid et al, 2010; Ibrahim & Abdalla, 2010; Haddad et al, 2011).

The majority of my participants referred to verses from the Quran, arguing that Islam is an advocate of equality and harmony between men and women in general, and especially in the context of marital relationships, as asserted by Goldstein in his research about Islam (2010). When the discussion turned to Islam's stance on domestic violence, Hanan explained that "marital life in Islam is established upon love, affection, and mercy between the couple". Similarly, Kareema, a teaching assistant in Islamic Studies, cited Surah Al-Baqarah, which is the second and longest chapter in the Quran, where men are told that "[Women] are clothing for you, and you are clothing for them". The word 'clothing', as discussed in the literature review, in this context alludes to the idea that there should be equality and complementation between men and women, on both psychological and physical levels, and that men and women are meant to protect each other in the way clothing protects people from the dangers of the external elements (Ibrahim & Abdalla, 2010; Abugideiri, 2010; Hamid, 2015).

Similarly, in various Hadiths, there are many references as to how women should be treated, in accordance to the examples laid down by the Prophet (PBUH) (Mernissi, 1997; Abugideiri, 2005; Hamid, 2015). Many of the interviewees view that these Hadiths, if adhered to correctly, act as an emancipator/rescuer for women from the shackles of their treatment perpetuated from the pre-Islamic era. For instance, Shereen explained how the Prophet (PBUH) encouraged men to treat all the women in their lives well, especially wives as he often declared that "the best of men are those who are the best to their women". Hanan also pointed out that before the Prophet (PBUH) passed away, he gave a sermon where he re-affirmed Islam's stance on women by outlining how women should

be treated with respect and kindness. This instruction reemphasised that women are the foundation of society and should be valued as such, and therefore in Islam there is no place for violence in any relationship between men and women, especially between husband and wife.

Most of the interviewees also remarked on how the Prophet (PBUH) emphasised the importance and necessity of equality, peace and harmony in marital relationships, where there was no room for subordination or superiority from either partner. The Prophet (PBUH) practised what he preached as Shahad explained that the Prophet (PBUH) “honoured and respected all his wives and considered them his friends and confidants”. Reema also noted that The Prophet (PBUH) is the perfect Muslim role model, especially for husbands, as he never even raised his voice, let alone his hand, against his wives. Layla added that “the Prophet (PBUH) in his spare time used to help with the household tasks, such as cleaning, cooking and sewing”, despite having a great responsibility as the leader of a whole Ummah (Nation).

From these participants’ responses, it appears that between the Prophet’s (PBUH) own example and the Islamic texts, nowhere is it written that it is solely a woman’s duty and responsibility to wash, cook and clean for her husband. If she so chooses, it is out of affection rather than obligation. However, when the teachings of a religion are manipulated, and subsequently over-ridden by gender socialisation and cultural expectations, it leads to depriving women of many human rights.

6.1.1.1 Women's Perception of Misinterpretation of Religious Texts

The discussion regarding the misuse of religious texts by men to propagate violence against women was particularly important as it highlighted the varying attitudes amongst educated and informed Saudi women as they are the vanguards of change in Saudi society.

Through the participants' responses, I found that their answers fell into two categories. The first group, who were in the minority, are traditional/orthodox women who were uninformed about religion. These interviewees believe that in the Quran, God gives men three methods to deal with a disobedient wife, with the last one supposedly giving husbands permission to 'strike' their wives.

However, the overwhelming majority of participants, who I view as empowered and well informed about religion, believe that no statement, neither in the Quran nor the Hadith, encourages/allows husbands to strike their wives. These women stated that the Arabic word "ضرب" (dar'bah), that is generally translated as 'strike' has numerous meanings, including 'to strike' and there is a strong possibility that translators chose this interpretation for a specific reason. All the participants in this group emphasised that some of the religious texts were used by many Saudi men to justify their abuse and further their own agenda of subjugating women even further in Saudi Arabia.

The first group believe that the husband is right to discipline the disobedient wife. For instance, one of the participants, Ikhlas, though highly educated, argued that "in the Quran, God addresses disobedience of wives by providing men with guidelines on how to discipline them". Ikhlas explained that of Surah Al -Nisah, (4:34) there are three steps the husband should follow in their order, the last one being strike; however, she added that "many scholars interpret that the word 'strike' in this verse refers to strike without causing pain". Zainab also believes that disciplining women is mentioned in the Quran "but according to many Islamic scholars' interpretation, the beating is by the use of Miswak which a small relatively soft and small twig". Zainab further explained that the purpose of striking with the Miswak is to cause psychological pain rather than physical harm.

Even though these are highly educated professionals, their responses indicated that they

would accept their husband ‘disciplining’ them because, as they believe, their husbands have been given the right to do so by God. This group’s response also highlighted that many Saudi women depend on others’ interpretations rather than studying the Quran in depth for their own understanding, which leaves them vulnerable to other people’s misrepresentation and misuse of religion. This misinterpretation the religion is far more widespread in Muslim societies than it ought to be, as United Nations Development Fund for Women (2001) found that religion is widely misused to permit men to ‘discipline’ their wives as it is considered a ‘religious commandment’ (Douki et al, 2003; Pan, Daley, Rivera, Williams, Lingle, & Reznik, 2006), even though this is far from the truth.

The problem with the unquestioning acceptance of this specific misinterpretation of religious text is that in lieu of critical analysis and reflection, these women are left to vulnerable to domestic violence. Further still, it permeates into the next generation of women who will also learn to ‘accept’ disciplining as it is a God-given right to man, thus perpetuating a cycle of violence that can continue for generations.

The second category, whom I consider to be empowered and informed Saudi women, responded in contrast to the first group. They believe that religious texts are being misused to further the male agenda and they gave many accounts to support their claims. For example, in Surah Al –Nisah, (4:34). The verse allegedly stipulates that husbands can discipline their wives and allows a husband to hit/strike (physically abuse) his wife. When asked to elaborate on the misinterpreted verse, Fayza, who is a professor of sociology, explained that it is a controversial and problematic interpretation of the verb “ضرب” (dar’bah), which is now often translated to mean ‘strike’, even though it has other meanings. Fayza continued to explain that “there are two steps that a husband is supposed to take before he can allegedly ‘strike’ his wife”: firstly, a husband is supposed to advise his wife; and, secondly, if the first step fails, he should step back from the situation and

not engage in an argument until she calms down. Therefore, Fayza argued that it is illogical for the third step to be a physical ‘strike’. Fayza criticised that the violent interpretation of this word is a consequence of “orthodox male scholars [choosing] to use the meaning that allows a man to hit his wife” because it is “in line with Saudi patriarchal values” as it allows men superiority and power over women. This viewpoint is supported by research that found how the word “ضرب” (dar’bah) has many different meanings, including to travel, to leave, to set up or establish, to give, to condemn, to ignore, to seal, to cover, and to explain, amongst other meanings (Abou El Fadl, 2006; Engineer, 2011; Bouachrine, 2014), and that in the context of this verse, the most logical translation would be “to leave” rather than “to strike” (MacFarquhar, 2007).

Most of the participants from the second group highlighted that the most unfortunate outcome of the misuse of religion is the way it is used to the benefit of men while suppressing and oppressing women, which has also been discussed by many scholars (Badawi, 1995; Douki et al, 2003; Ali, Liu & Humedian, 2004; Hamdan, 2009). Layla, who is a lecturer in Islamic Studies, cited the example of the Qiwama, (Quran, Chapter 4) which is a misused concept by men in Saudi society to enforce unjustifiable authority over women for control and dominance. In this way, it can lead to the unacceptable act of varying levels of violence committed against women. Due to the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the Qiwama, there is constant favoring and justification of the male agenda to quench their great thirst for absolute authority, control and subjugation of their female counterparts. However, the intention behind the Qiwama, as some scholars have argued, is to assign husbands’ responsibility of providing for their wives, who are not active economic agents, as well as protecting and defending their partners (Al-Oadah, n.d.; Engineer, 2008; Engineer, 2011). Instead it is often used incorrectly by men to compel and subject all women to a man’s will by suppressing their individuality and denying their autonomy (Riaz & Abbas, 2013; Orakzai, 2014).

Other participants from the second group also pointed out that in Saudi society, many men choose to interpret the religion in a way that fits in with their agenda where they are free to assert dominance over women, which in itself is a form of domestic violence. Arwa gave the example of how “when a man marries a woman who is confident and empowered, he will view any trivial disagreement from her as an insult and a challenge to what he believes is his God-given authority and status”, which can lead to an escalation of violent acts committed against his wife.

In this way, the problem with the interpretation of the Quran is that often men do not take into consideration the context in which the verses were written or the spirit in which they were intended. Therefore, many Saudi men choose the most literal interpretation that benefits them and allows them to assert authority and control over women. This is particularly disconcerting as *Tafsir* ‘the interpretations’ of the verses of the Quran, assigns every Muslim the individual responsibility of understanding the true meanings of the verse by taking the context of the Quran into consideration.

Elaborating on the issue of the manipulation of religion, several participants from second group raised concerns about the other tactics used by priests who use verses in their sermons to substantiate their point of view on a particular topic but often fail to provide details or context. For example, Reema outlined how the verses regarding polygamy in Islam are strategically and significantly misrepresented to be advantageous to the male agenda. The Quran indicates “a man can marry two, three or four women”, but there are conditions the husband should fulfil if he chooses to have multiple wives. The Quran emphasises these conditions are difficult to meet because they requirements stipulate that all of the wives must be treated exactly the same and equally. This is an impossible task for any human to achieve, which is why the Quran emphasises that it is recommended that men only have one wife. However, Reema argued that these conditions are seldom

emphasised by priests, thus making it appear as if polygamy is available to every Muslim man and this can often pave an easy way for the subjugation and oppression of women. Research has shown that distortion of scripture by men to gain power over women is commonplace, regardless of religion, and it is used by perpetrators as another weapon of abuse against the victim by taking scripture out of context and adapting it to suit their agenda, which is a perversion of religion (Jayasundara, Nedegaard, Sharm & Flanagan, 2014).

A few of the participants from the second group also highlighted that sexual violence is the most common manifestation of misuse of religion. Fayza gave an example of how some Saudi men use certain Hadiths and interpret them in the way to justify their actions to instill fear in their wives, thus keeping them under control and submissive in bed. Fayza elaborated on her point by explaining that "if a husband calls his wife to his bed and she refuses", he will use the Hadith that explains that if a wife rejects her husband's sexual demands "the angels will curse her till morning", in order to coerce his wife into having sex by instilling guilt and fear.

In this way, many husbands ignore that the Hadith is only applicable if a wife refuses to have sex without a legitimate reason. Furthermore, there are also Hadiths that explain to Muslims that people should not mate like animals, clearly implying that men cannot force or impose themselves on women. However, the problem remains that religion is misused by society to give the husband complete authority over his wife's sexual agency, which allows men to demand sex and the wives to consent at any time, regardless of their actual feelings on the situation, as sex is considered a husband's conjugal right by both genders.

According to second group, Islam does not advocate domestic violence, as Kareema argued that "society misuses religion and takes advantage of the ignorance of scripture, to allow customs and cultural practices to dictate the treatment of women under the guise

of religion, thus reinforcing patriarchy and patriarchal practices” because, as many scholars have found, that cruelty, acts of violence and abuse cannot be traced back to any revelatory text (the Qur’an or Hadith) and the onus of this behaviour is entirely on the individual themselves (Douki et al, 2003; Engineer, 2004; Engineer, 2011).

6.1.2 Male Dominance

According to the vast majority of my participants, Saudi men are able to continue their domination of women because men are legally assigned the status of ‘protector’ which is often interpreted as tight control. This is a socially accepted practice which enables patriarchy to maintain a strong foothold in Saudi society. When asked about the effect patriarchy has on encouraging male dominance, Salwa, a clinical psychologist, pointed out how Saudi men acquire their sense of superiority through the belief that women are weak and dependent, which is exacerbated if he has the primary earning status in the family. Salwa explained that men are raised with the mentality that they are superior because they are meant to protect women, which translates into the ideology that men have the right to tell women what to do, when and how to do it. Salwa elaborated that this mind-set, combined with their status as the breadwinner of the family, is used to control women because even if a woman works and earns her own money, it will be because her father/brother/husband was “benevolent and generous” enough to let her because a Saudi woman’s economic agency is dependent on the approval of the men in her life as men are still the head of the family and retain considerable power.

In this way, Saudi women have no autonomy over their existence while men have unlimited power over their own lives as well as women’s, which allows men to continue with their behaviour which can lead to violence against women. It can be argued that patriarchy and male dominance in home and society is a form of and at the heart of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia (Almosaed & Alazab, 2015), because even if women

are educated and financially independent, actually pursuing these opportunities is totally determined by the needs and acceptance of the men in their lives (Deshmukh-Ranadive, 2005).

Most of the participants highlighted that the patriarchal practices and activities in the Saudi society are considered to be at the root of the suffering that Saudi women experience. For example, Nora noted that “a woman’s father or brother can insist that she marry someone they choose, potentially for their own agenda, even if they know that the girl is unlikely to be happy with their choice”. In this way, this practice leads to completely depriving women of their autonomy and agency, since many Saudi women are not allowed to take decisions about their partners, a person with whom they have to spend the rest of their lives. Many fathers or guardians force Saudi girls to marry partners, who are either cousins or relatives, so that their inheritance does not go to a stranger and that their husbands have pure Saudi lineage, come from the same class and have equal status.

In continuing the discussion of how patriarchal practices are a source of women’s suffering in Saudi society, other interviewees highlighted that challenging patriarchal practices gives men open permission and space to commit acts of domestic violence against women. Maram recounted a famous story about a girl who ran away from home because she wanted to marry a man that her brothers did not approve of and though she managed to stay hidden for a while, her brothers were able to track her down, and then they proceeded to severely beat her and left her disabled. This incident is reflective of the deeply-rooted patriarchal ideology that is widespread in Arab society, where in the absence of a husband or a father, the brother is allowed authority over his sister as he is male and this behaviour is both accepted and expected (Haj-Yahia, 1998a).

Patriarchy utilises a hierarchal system, which positions the man at the top of the family

structure (Haj-Yahia et al, 2012; Dobash & Dobash ,1979). According to most of my participants, in Saudi society, male dominance is encouraged on every level, including marital relationships, which renders wives their husband's subordinate, an environment in which domestic violence can thrive. Examples regarding this problem is countless as all of these participants had stories to share and relayed incidents specifically relating to the prevalence of this practice in Saudi society.

For instance, Ikhlas spoke about her own personal family dynamics, where her husband is able to deny Ikhlas her voice and the final decision, regardless of her feelings on the matter, is her husband's as he the man of the house. She recalled a relatively recent incident when her daughter wanted to go to a public place with her friends and though Ikhlas supported her daughter, she knew that the decision would ultimately be made by her husband and her opinion would be of no relevance. Ikhlas explained that ultimately it is "[her] husband's decision that matters" because he is the man, and therefore the head of the household. This is indicative of how in the patriarchal system in Saudi Arabia, husbands are allowed to exercise power over their wives, and consequently women lose autonomy over their own lives and in the process, are limited to the private sphere and have to comply with their husband's expectations and demands.

Ikhlas's second story is also an example of how patriarchy in Saudi Arabia condones male dominance and control over women, which continually strengthens the power imbalance between the genders, subsequently leading to incidents of domestic violence against women. Ikhlas recounted the incident where she and her brother attended her aunt's funeral and she expressed her condolences directly to her male cousin, which her brother found unacceptable and inappropriate, explaining that "if [she was his] wife, [he] would have killed [her]". This is indicative the kind of dominance and control Ikhlas's sister-in-law may well be facing on a daily basis. In this way, the notions of patriarchy remain the

root cause of all abuse against women, because in Arab society, it is culturally-accepted practice that the husband is “the ruler of the family and is regarded as the formal authority to whom the wife ... must ultimately respond” (Haj-Yahia, 1998b, p.597).

Through patriarchal practices, men are granted privileges where they are allowed to take decisions for those around them without needing to consider the opinions of others or the effects of their decisions on these individuals (Waithera, 2011; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015). According to other participants, patriarchy in Saudi society tends to deny women autonomy and a voice, which constantly enables males to make decisions in every sphere of society. For example, Najwa, was critical of the privileges that patriarchy allows men, as even in terms of “domestic life, you’ll find that, unfortunately, the man takes all the decisions even in issues that do not concern him”. Najwa talked about a sketch she wrote about a Saudi man who wanted to take his wife and children on a family day out. However, he took them to a place that he enjoys rather than taking into consideration what his family actually wanted. The purpose of the sketch was to highlight that many Saudi men take unilateral decisions, especially with regard to their families. They rarely take into consideration the feelings or wants of their families, instead focusing on pleasing themselves. In this way, in Saudi society men possess the freedom to choose to do what they want and often ignore other point of view since in patriarchal societies, the rules are laid down by men and women are expected to follow these rules, unquestioningly and unequivocally.

Najwa’s own experiences and observations have emphasised to her the extent of the male privilege that patriarchy grants men, which in turn perpetuates complete and utter dominance of the male gender over the female and eventually develops to domestic violence. Najwa recalled how on one occasion her husband called her a liar but she could not retort, because in Saudi society “even if the man is in the wrong, a woman is not

allowed to criticise or question him because at the end of the day he is male, which makes him ‘superior’”. Najwa further added that in some cases, arguing with one’s husband would be seen as an act of disobedience that would ‘warrant’ disciplining. Research indicates that in Arab society a husband is allowed to beat his wife if she disrespects her husband in front of his friends and/or she is constantly disobedient (Haj-Yahia, 1998a; Haj-Yahia, 2003).

Another participant pointed out that patriarchy is deeply embedded in Saudi culture, which gives men unlimited space to actively engage in the wider world, while ensuring their wives are constantly kept behind closed doors. Arwa illustrated this point by explaining that in general “if a man is away from home, he does not have to call or let his wife know about his plans or where he is because he is the man and the head of the house, and it is not a wife’s right to know where her husband is going or what he is doing”. Arwa added that while “men are free to return as and when they please, women have restricted mobility and are expected to sit at home and wait for their husbands’ return”. In Saudi Arabia, patriarchal practices give unlimited advantages and freedom to men, which is in complete contrast to the way women are treated. Women are restricted at every turn and confined to the private sphere in ways which further serve to reinforce constant male dominance (Dibiase and Gunnoe, 2004; Kaufman, 2004; Usta et al, 2015).

The other participants observed that in Saudi Arabia, as a patriarchal society, men want to be above women; therefore, many Saudi men prefer to marry a compliant and obedient woman. For instance, through her research, Maryam found that in Saudi society, due to patriarchal practices, many men have become so accustomed to female subservience that even if a woman is self-sufficient and capable of earning, she should still be submissive, dependent and obedient in her temperament.

In this sense, the patriarchal society is dedicated the ideology that men are superior to

women. In a patriarchal society, men do not choose women who are smart and successful as wives because they fear that this type of woman would be in a position to compete for the position of head of the household and family. Subservience, obedience and dependency are characteristics in women that many Saudi men find desirable as it allows men to ensure they have overall hegemony and dominance over women. Through patriarchy, men have complete authority and autonomy over a woman's life, and according to Dobash & Dobash (1979) these power differentials give men an exaggerated sense of self and power, which can lead to domestic violence against women as even a trivial disagreement can be seen as a challenge to their male authority.

6.1.3 The Gender Role Doctrines during Upbringing

During the course of interview, most of the participants highlighted that the socialisation of gender roles as the primary method through which patriarchy continues to have an exceptionally strong grip on Saudi society. While socialisation takes place in many different fields such as education, community, religious institutions, and through media, the participants of this research highlighted the home and immediate family as the most significant imposer of traditional gender roles (Crespi, 2004; Abudi, 2011; Usta, Farver & Hamieh, 2015). This then directs and dictates the kind of adults they will become. All the participants also noted that in Saudi Arabia, socialisation is clearly visible through the explicit distinctions made between sons and daughters. This is an unambiguous way of subtly imposing or bestowing upon them their specific gender-related and gender assigned roles, expectations and general placement in society.

When I asked the participants about the effects of family socialisation in Saudi society, most of the participants highlighted that many Saudi families encourage overt masculinity in boys in ways that support patriarchy. For instance, Ruwaida, a researcher in sociology, explained how many Saudi parents constantly tell their sons that “You’re the man” [...]

“You do everything” [...] “You are the male head of the household” [...] “You can do whatever”. This in keeping with the expectations that boys should be strong like their fathers and the breadwinners of their household, as supported by a range of studies discussed in the literature review (Marinova, 2003; Abudi, 2011; Kangethe, Lyria & Nyamanga, 2014; Usta, Farver & Hamieh, 2015). However, the issue lies in the practice of Saudi parents frequently giving their sons absolute authority without teaching them the importance of responsibility and accountability. In contrast, Wijdan described how many Saudi girls are raised with constant reminders, that as “a girl she needs to be obedient and respectful to the men in the family”, as the expectation is that when she grows up, she will accept that she exists exclusively for and in the context of men.

In this sense, through family socialisation men acquire superiority and retain this ranking, never wanting to lose it nor for it to be tempered with, whilst women lose any of their natural authority, equality and even dignity. She is obliged to remain submissive and this continues throughout her upbringing, widening the inequalities in the status of the genders in small steps. One would expect that the texts used to make these injunctions and stipulate the legal system will not be silent on the responsibilities that come with any power, leadership and headship of a household, especially with regard to creating a gender gap where the female becomes inferior. Unfortunately, socialisation in Saudi Arabia is mostly silent about this practice because the cultural emphasis is placed on women meeting set requirements and expectations that fall in line with patriarchal practices.

During the discussion about family socialisation, many of participants observed that many Saudi parents differentiate between their sons and daughters in various ways that affects how men see themselves in relation to women. Men are raised to believe they are superior to and stronger than women and do not need limitations like women. For instance, Maram explained that “even when a boy exhibits signs of immaturity and irresponsibility, he is

still made to believe that he is most capable and more sensible”, and for that matter, superior purely because he is male and destined to be assigned the duty to “chaperone and guide his sister, even if she is more sensible, mature and smarter”.

In this way, a male’s sense of superiority continues to naturally develop and by the time they reach adulthood and they become husbands, they do not wish to lose their status and position, and instead they aspire to more power, authority and control in their relationships with women, and very specifically their wives, all of which is a significant contributing factor that allows violence to occur in marital relationships.

Fayza emphasised that when Saudi parents allow “their son to have complete authority in directing his sisters and controlling their lives even whilst their parents are alive”. This leads to placing males in a position of absolute dominance from a very young age, and consequently instilling within them a sense of male superiority. Though some Saudi parents are raising their daughters to believe that they are equal to men, as Rana commented, the problem remains that cultural beliefs are pervasive and many Saudi daughters remain in their shells with low self-esteem because of the notion that girls are “weak therefore they are incapable of doing many things”, which is why she should consult “her brother as he knows what is in her best interest”.

Ruwaida has observed in many instances parents give authority to brothers, who then would abuse their power by setting up their sisters. Ruwaida provided a generic example, whereby a brother would pretend to give his sister the space to do what she wanted but all the while watching her secretly and waiting for her to make a mistake that he could report to his parents or use the sister’s mistake as a way to exercise authority and discipline her physically. By actively encouraging this kind of practice, it can expound the idea that the female is weak, immature or foolish, thus leading males to believe they have the right to discipline her in order to keep her behaviour in check. The long-term consequence of

this kind of practice is that males who have been given authority over females from a very young age, easily transfer this attitude into the marital relationship, and husbands find faults or falsely accuse women to justify any maltreatment in the form of abuse that these females face. A study about practices in socialisation in an Arab society revealed similar findings, which suggests that many males have been assigned ‘responsibility’ and ‘control’ for their sisters since they were adolescents, mainly as a measure required to monitor their sisters’ interactions with the wider world (Usta et al, 2015), thus ingraining within them idea that men are meant to be in charge of women, which could be argued leaves women vulnerable to domestic violence.

During the course of the interview most of the participants pointed out that the prime agents in socialisation that lead to discrimination against the female are the parents themselves. According to these participants, Saudi parents have one set of rules for male children and a different set of rules for their female counterparts, which consolidate and perpetuate the problem of gender imbalance in the society. When I asked Ghadeer, a teaching assistant in Islamic Studies, about gender socialisation in Saudi Arabia, she pointed out that in many Saudi families “sons are allowed to go out and have fun with their friends but daughters are not”. This is similar to the findings in a study about Arab society, where it was revealed that boys had more freedom of mobility as they could play outside or, when they came of age, go shopping, whilst the girls had their mobility and interaction with the outside world restricted (Abudi, 2011; Usta et al, 2015).

Reema elaborated on the discussion of gendered socialisation in Saudi society by outlining how parents play a significant role in gender imbalance by giving specific domestic roles and duties to females based on their gender. Reema pointed out that many Saudi parents after the family dinner “make the girls clean up while the boys sit and do nothing but chat and entertain themselves” Reema also adds that “daughters are even

asked to tidy their brothers' rooms" and generally clean up after them. In this way, parents instill in their daughters the idea that they exist to serve their brother, thus creating a master/servant dynamic between siblings. A study focused on socialisation in Arab society similarly revealed that while sisters were expected to serve their brothers, the same was not expected of brothers towards their sisters (Usta et al, 2015) and the prevailing practice is that daughters carry out domestic and household tasks while the sons are raised to be actively involved in external work and the public (Abudi, 2011).

Wijdan noted that by imposing different rules according to gender expectations, parents generate the divide between brothers and sisters right from an early age, where "brothers do not feel the need to take responsibility for their sisters and they do not consider them their priority or to have any special place in their minds and their hearts". Wijdan further added that from the male perspective, sisters are meant to serve brothers as they see their mothers serving their fathers and this continues to affect the general dynamics between males and females.

In the way people train over time to acquire skills to function, similarly when these boys turn into men and eventually become husbands, it is just a matter of transferring the 'skills' acquired in childhood, in terms of molesting, enslaving, demeaning and generally maltreating their wives. When males are able to show to the society their 'strengths' as 'men', 'heads of households', 'men in charge' who do not tolerate 'female insubordination', it is only then that they feel they are accepted as men by society. The underlying issue is that the 'training' and 'acquisition' of the skills and strengths that society sees as the best for a man are at the expense of the female gender.

Most of my participants highlighted the consequences of Saudi gendered socialisation. For instance, Shahad explained that gendered socialisation manifests itself in the way men and women eventually see themselves in relation to the each other "leaving women in a

vulnerable position through their dependency on the male” as men are given position of power and authority by the society right from birth. Marwa was able to provide a very significant example of the effects gendered socialisation can have on a male child who gets predatory thirst for power in the household from a very tender age. She spoke about a family where the “son, who is not even a teenager, believes he is the man of the house” and is constantly supported to achieve this by the parents, especially the father.

The long-term effect of these particular socialisation practices has been revealed in a study that showed how some Arab men are unable to find any noteworthy positive characteristics in women, owing to their own sense of male superiority (Usta et al, 2015). Furthermore, the research found that Arab parents raise their sons to believe that males are meant to have dominance over females (Usta et al, 2015), leading to the reinforcement of patriarchal practices, where women are subjugated because men wish to remain on top, all of which is a fertile breeding ground for domestic violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

6.1.4 Societal Inclination that Perpetuate Domestic Violence

As I discussed in the literature review, there are various components that have, arguably, established particular societal attitudes in Saudi Arabia, which perpetuate the continuation of domestic violence against Saudi women. This includes the misuse of religion, family socialisation process and patriarchal practices. These components serve as the foundation for the culture of patience and tolerance, which is specific to Saudi Arabia, preventing many Saudi women from reporting spousal abuse, thereby enabling domestic violence to continue unchallenged and entrenched in the culture of the country. According to most of my interviewees, the most common reason for women not reporting violence and continuing to tolerate it, is the fear of losing their children. This is followed by the widely-held belief that all incidents of domestic violence are a private matter, as many Saudi families are afraid of being judged and are concerned with protecting their

reputation. Additionally, the subject of sex is taboo, which prevents Saudi women from coming forward about acts of sexual violence committed against them. Furthermore, some of the interviewees cited economic dependency as another reason women tolerate domestic violence, as many female victims in Saudi society do not have the financial or emotional support to leave abusive marriages.

6.1.4.1 Fear of Losing Children

In Saudi society, according to the majority of the participants, when a wife reports the incidents of domestic violence it will inevitably conclude in divorce. In the event of a divorce, as outlined in the literature review, Saudi courts mostly award the custody of the children to the husband, while the mothers would be given limited or no access to the children (Drury, 1987; Kelly, 2009; Doumato, 2010; Rafiq, 2014). In a patriarchal society such as Saudi Arabia, men are the heads of the household, placing them in a position of power and control (Ghanim, 2009; Kelly, 2009). Conversely, women are viewed as inferior and are technically second-class citizens who are entirely dependent on men and placed under the guardianship of their husbands (Jackson, 1998; Human Right Watch, 2016). Consequently, in this way, gender bias and the positioning within the family unit plays a role in determining who should be awarded custody of the children, and therefore it is normal for the legislations to reflect this inequality by awarding fathers' custody of their children.

Nearly all my participants emphasised that the most important reason that Saudi women endure violence in the marital relationship (and do not report it) is due to the fear of losing their children. When I asked Samiya, who is a human rights worker, about the reasons Saudi women tolerate instead of reporting violent husbands, she replied that in most likelihood women prioritise their children over their own safety, which leads to women adopting the practice of patience and tolerance. Samiya explained her perspective is based

on the research she conducted on domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, where she found that the “most common reason why [abused Saudi] women tolerate violence in their marriages is because they do not want to lose their children”. Samiya also narrated the story of a woman whose husband is a very controlling man and she is subjected to most forms of domestic violence on a daily basis. He constantly humiliates, degrades and restricts her mobility but she is still married to him for the sake of her children. The woman has two sons that have Down’s syndrome and a very young daughter.

In this type of situation, it is highly unlikely that many Saudi women would even consider divorce as children with medical needs require lifelong support especially from their mothers. If these women were to divorce their husbands, they would lose custody of their children and usually be removed from their children’s life completely and so they would not know if their children were being cared for properly. Even under normal circumstances, where the children do not have any illness and debilitating diseases, many women are likely to remain in violent marriages until the child is an adult and has left home because Saudi women consider children their utmost priority and consequently, consequently, they often sacrifice their own happiness, safety and wellbeing to protect and care for their children.

6.1.4.2 Private Matter

From my personal observations, when a serious social problem is considered as a private matter, it is more difficult to find solutions to resolve it because there are limited avenues for discussions, thereby perpetuating the problem. The majority of the participants stated that the Saudi society and families still view the problem of domestic violence is a private and family matter rather than social problem (Haj-Yahia, 2002b; Almosaed & Alazab, 2015).

6.1.4.2.1 Fear of Societal Judgment and Condemnation

The majority of the participants pointed out that the attitude that domestic violence is a private matter is so deeply ingrained that many Saudi women are unwilling to discuss their problem with anyone, friend or family. If this is done, the primary aim is to ‘maintain’ their marriages and avoid societal interference and public judgments. For instance, while interviewing Wijdan, a lecturer in psychology, our discussion turned to how family and Saudi society view the problem of domestic violence, she narrated her own experience. Wijdan recalled that on “[her] wedding day, [her] mother gave [her] the advice of keeping [her] married life as a secret” and that Wijdan should “never tell anyone about [the] problems she might encounter with [her] husband”. Wijdan’s mother still believes that “small issues become bigger if family and friends know about marital problems” and they “would never let [her] forget and use it as a point of weakness against her”, and it could potentially prevent a reconciliation between the married couple. So, when Wijdan was faced with violence in her marriage, she had to reconsider her decision of asking for a legal action to separate from her violent husband just to satisfy her family’s quest for the maintenance of their privacy and reputation.

In this sense, the problem of domestic violence in Saudi society is considered personal, which is why they do not like others to get involved and since domestic violence is a very sensitive subject, open discussion could leave them exposed to social condemnation, making such discussions difficult for any woman. This in turn hides the problem of domestic violence, left untouched, unmentioned and therefore unresolved in most cases. Many Saudi families are more concerned about their family’s reputation and pride than the happiness of individual female victims. This contributes to the perpetuation of domestic violence because in Saudi Arabia, the issue still belongs to the private arena, and anyone, especially the female, who dares to break convention or go against this norm

of the society is considered disobedient and defiant. This is in contrast to how women are raised and expected to behave, which is to be patient and tolerant in all matters, including abuse in marriages.

Other participants pointed out that the idea that violence in marriage is a private matter exists in many Saudi families, as the issue of reputation and status leads families to be secretive about anything that can tarnish their public image. For example, Shereen, cited her own family as an example. Shereen recalled an incident when Shereen's sister, who had been abused by her husband, came and "stayed with [their] parents for 3 months", Shereen's mother "did not tell anyone in the family". During Shereen's sister's stay, their aunt visited and noticed that "[her sister] was there without her children", and when their aunt enquired the reason, Shereen's mother "made something up but did not tell her the truth".

Shereen's mother, like many other Saudi women, believes that families and relationships should not be publicly discussed, judged or gossiped about and no one should be given the opportunity to learn about the difficulties that a family is facing for the fear of criticism and scrutiny. This belief is commonly held by the vast majority of Saudi society, as it is argued that openly discussing the issue of domestic violence in the community will result in the disintegration of the family unit (Haj-Yahia, 2000; McCue, 2008; Jayasundara et al, 2014; Tønnessen, 2016), which is supposed to be maintained at all costs.

Another interviewee drew attention to the practice where, to maintain the image of a happy and normal family unity, some Saudi families resort to outwardly pretending the marriage is stable, whereas in reality they are separated but still living under the same roof. For instance, Ruwaida narrated the story of a woman she knows whose husband "used neglect her, verbally abuse her and on one occasion hit her, and she began to hate him", and subsequently "the woman and her husband decided to separate but live in the same house

to maintain the image of a normal marriage to their families and friends ". Ruwaida elaborated on this practice by explaining that if the separated couple live in an apartment, they will have separate rooms and no longer communicate with one another but for all intents purposes they appear to be happily married when they go out in public or receive guests. Ruwaida added it is generally women who adopt this practice, especially if they have daughters because a woman's marital status can affect her daughter's marital prospects.

This shows that in Saudi society, a divorced woman is considered defective as she was unable to be a suitable wife and is considered an unsuitable role model for her children, especially her daughter. Society automatically assumes that the daughter of a divorced woman will follow in her mother's footsteps and she too will be unable to adopt a culture of patience and tolerance, thus leading to a divorce.

The examples above are indicative of how many Saudi female victims of domestic violence choose to remain discreet about the abuse they face and adopt silent coping mechanisms. This is because their primary focus is on the wellbeing of the family and preserving, outwardly, of the sanctity of their marriage, which is underscored by the values of the family unit and the cultural emphasis on the family's 'image'. In Saudi culture, a married woman is expected to place the family's reputation ahead of her happiness thus promoting the privacy, secrecy and the perpetuation of dysfunctional and/or unorthodox family structures. Further, it becomes an impediment to conducting research on the problem, which makes studies on this topic rare and potentially inaccurate. This in turn is a barrier to developing effective policies and strategies that can help and protect the female victims of domestic violence.

6.1.4.2.2 *Stigma of Divorce*

In this study, ten out of the thirty interviewees highlighted that the stigma of divorce is another reason for the continuing cycle of domestic violence against women. For instance, Kamila knows of “many women, who have achieved doctorates and are independent in terms of finance and employment, and some of them even hold high-ranking positions and provide for their families but they are still experiencing domestic violence”. Kamila further added that in these instances, many Saudi women refused to get divorced because they ascribe to the belief encompassed in the proverb “Better a man's shadow than that of a wall”.

In this way, many Saudi women are unable to escape violent marriages because the core meaning of this proverb is the idea that it's better to have a husband, even if he is a terrible person, than to be unmarried and live inside the walls of your parents' home. This is further exacerbated for married Saudi women as they will be subjected to constant criticism if they are divorced, as in Saudi society, divorce is synonymous with ‘shame’. Furthermore, a divorced woman is left vulnerable because she is viewed with suspicion with regard to her morals and values and therefore she is considered easy prey by men. Divorced women are also seen as lesser women, sometimes even by her own family, who will treat her as if she is a child and impose rules and regulations upon her and sometimes deny her, her personal space as she is now ‘divorced’ and her inability to maintain her marriage (as the onus of a successful marriage is placed upon the woman) shows her ‘immaturity’ and that relegates her further as a perpetual minor.

6.1.4.3 *Sex and Sexual Topics as Taboo*

While there is discussion of physical and psychological domestic violence against Saudi women, it is not as extensive because the subject is believed to be a private and personal matter and this attitude is further compounded when it comes to sexual violence. Sexual

violence, as highlighted in the literature review, is an even rarer point of discussion as sex and discussion about sexuality is still taboo in Saudi society (Tønnessen, 2016).

The overwhelming majority of the participants also highlighted that discussion of sex and sexual matters is largely out of bounds, as even these educated Saudi women are reluctant to engage in discourse relating to sex. When I asked Lemiss, a researcher in psychology, about her views on sexual violence, she was forthcoming about her opinion and illustrated her point with her own experience. Lemiss explained that recently she had wanted to conduct a confidential survey about sexual violence and privately gave the faculty members the questionnaire to complete. Lemiss found, much to her astonishment, that no one wanted to participate even though they were all educated and academic professionals and she had made it clear that the research would be conducted with utmost confidentiality.

This is indicative of the fact that no matter how educated the woman, the nature of the Saudi society is such that even mentioning sex and sexual problems in private (even to friends) is considered crossing the red line. This is in accordance with the findings of studies conducted in this subject, which revealed the same issue, which is that most Arab women were unwilling to openly come forward about sex and sexual violence (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Tønnessen, 2016).

My experience with my research further supports Lemiss's point, as 25 out of 30 participants were unwilling to comment upon sexual violence and explained that they did not feel comfortable discussing the subject. This is a point of concern because if an educated Saudi woman still ascribes to the conservative and traditional Saudi culture and is unwilling to discuss sexual problems, especially in the context of domestic violence, then it will make the problem worse. By ignoring the problem of sexual violence, educated Saudi women can render the problem non-existent when instead they should be

debating and discussing openly in a way that changes Saudi society's views on sexual violence so that the problem can finally be addressed at the grassroots level. However, in order to discuss sexual violence, first sex has to cease being taboo. This in turn raises question that despite the fact that sex is a normal human function and within the context of marriage it is normal practice, why are restrictions placed on learning about and discussing sex and sexual matters.

Ruwaida's experience as a sociology researcher further supports the contention that sex and sexual matters are taboo topics in Saudi Arabia, when conducting her research into sexual violence, she found "not a single Saudi woman [could] talk about sexual intercourse openly". Ruwaida explained her participants' reticence as a consequence of the cultural belief that anything that connects sex and women is "berated as being shameful, shameful, shameful, and shameful, and everything is shameful". In this sense, Saudi Arabia's societal attitudes demand that women be covered from head-to-toe with intention of making their sexuality invisible. The consequence of this is that women are prevented from learning about sex and sexual matters, which leaves them dependent on their husband's perceptions of sex that may leave them vulnerable to sexual violence without the women even realising it.

Through the course of the interview, a couple of the responses I received highlighted that cultural socialisation and the manipulation of religion are implicated in the establishment of social attitudes towards sexual matters. This in turn directs the mind-set of many Saudi women to perceive sexual matters and any related discussions as taboo. For instance, when I was interviewing Zainab, an administrative officer, I had to repeatedly prompt her for her opinion on sexual violence until she finally expressed her view. Zainab's response reflected the influence of the widely-held societal attitude towards sexual discussions (which in this case is informed by the misinterpretation of religion), as she was evasive

about sex and sexual matters during the interview and concluded the discussion by explaining that “God has ordered us to protect our personal dignity so we should never talk about what happens in the intimate relationship between husband and wife”.

Zainab’s responses are indicative of how the manipulation of religion on the subject of sex is connected to the misunderstanding about sex as a point of discussion in general. In Islam, sex is only ordained within the confines of marriage, and married couples are advised against discussing their personal sexual lives (Hadith), which has been misinterpreted to mean that a general and non-personal discussion about sex and sexual matters is also unacceptable outside of the marriage. This misinterpretation and generalisation prevents women from being able to learn about sex and they are unable to discern between sex and sexual violence, and this then renders them unable to speak out openly against sexual violence.

During the discussion of sexual violence, I found that Ikhlas, who is a professor in Arabic literature, had views on sex and sexual matters that were linked to her personal socialisation that had a long-term impact on her. Ikhlas explained that when she was young, Iklas was not given the opportunity to learn about sex, which permeates into her adulthood as she still considers discussing sex as a sensitive 'no go zone'. The experience that most resonates with her is from her adolescence, when she “used to ask [her] father about religious matters as he was a scholar”. One day, Ikhlas enquired about ‘kudrah’ (the brownish substance that is sometimes present during pre-menstruation) and the ruling on praying because she did not know and was too shy to ask about it, even in school. While her father was not offended, Ikhlas’s mother was disgusted by what she considered Ikhlas’s inappropriate ‘behaviour’ and criticised her by asking, “Have not you got even a bit of modesty?”. Ikhlas noted that even though her “family were educated and [she] knew that there’s no embarrassment in [asking about matters of] religion”, she found out that

discussion about anything even remotely related to sex was considered ‘immodest’, ‘shameful’ and ‘indecent’, even though Ikhlas’s question was to do with prayer and had nothing to do with sex.

It is clear from previous discussions that societal attitude towards sex in Saudi society is a product of a combination of factors: socialisation (where discussing any issue remotely related to sex and sexual problems is considered shameful) and the misinterpretation of some religious text (which tends to suit the male agenda), and this leads to the female victim either remaining ignorant or confused about sex and sexual matters. Consequently, in Saudi Arabia, girls have no way of learning about sex and their conjugal rights, leaving them susceptible to sexual violence that they will most likely suffer in silence. Since Saudi women are unable to come forward and report sexual violence, it paves an unobstructed path for the continuation of sexual violence against the female gender.

6.1.4.4 Dependency & Support

Through the course of interview, more than half of my participants highlighted that both financial independence and emotional support are equally important and the absence of either could prevent a woman from leaving a violent marriage. When I posited the question about why Saudi women stay in violence marriages, Badriya, who is trainee psychologist, cited the example of her friend, who endured violence in her marriage because her family is unwilling to support her emotionally. Badriya stated that when her friend got married, she was told by her father that if she left her husband, she would have to “come back alone without her children”, even though her family would have been able to financially support her and her children. Consequently, when Badriya’s friend’s husband started abusing her, she “stayed in her marriage without telling anyone in her family about the abuse because she knew that they will not give her any form of support, most importantly the emotional support she would need to pick herself up”.

When a family is supportive of Saudi women, they are able to leave their violent husbands, as was the case for Khadija, a professor of information sciences, who recalled that “when [she] decided to get a divorce, [she] lived with [her] parents ... with pride and dignity” but if her family had been emotionally unsupportive, then Khadija would have endured her marriage. Khadija’s situation is not unique in that in Saudi society, when a woman gets divorced she inevitably returns to live with her parents as opposed to living on her own, even if she has the financial means to support herself. This is linked to the constraints of the widely-held cultural belief that Saudi women cannot and should not live on their own as they should be under male supervision and/or control, usually in the form of her father, brother or husband.

Ten out of thirty of the remaining participants highlighted the importance of financial support in deciding whether to leave or stay in their abusive marriages. Reema explained that “if a woman is not financially independent, then she is dependent on her family” and if they are “financially capable of supporting her, then it is likely the family will stand by her side” but if they are unable to help her, then she would remain in the marriage. Shereen gave the example of her relative who remained in an abusive relationship because of her family not being able to support her financially. Shereen explained that her relative has to remain in a marriage where she is constantly blamed and abused by her husband for not getting pregnant, even though it is evident that it is the husband who is infertile, as the woman has been told that she has no medical issues. Shereen added that even though the victim’s mother wants her “to leave her marriage and have a good life”, the victim’s family is poor and would not be able to support her if she left him, which is why Shereen’s relative tolerates the abuse. Many scholars have similarly argued that family income and a woman’s own economic dependence play an integral role in whether women leave or stay in violent marriages (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Smith 1990; Lupri, Grandin & Brinkerhoff, 1994; Naved & Persson, 2005; Kaur & Garg, 2008; WHO, 2012; Almosaed

& Alazab, 2015).

From the participants' experiences and responses, it can be surmised that societal attitudes towards domestic violence against Saudi women are born of culture, such as the issues of child custody, the veil over domestic violence in marriages, sex as a taboo topic, and the availability of financial and emotional support. All of this contributes greatly towards the perpetuation and endurance of domestic violence in Saudi society as women are unwilling to report the incidents of domestic violence. These attitudes prove to be a great hindrance to women wishing to free themselves from domestic violence and enable the continuation of domestic violence against Saudi women. Many Saudi women are forced to endure domestic violence silently because society places obstacles that prevent and/or restrict women from coming forward about the abuse they experience. The general consensus amongst many participants is that domestic violence against women in Saudi society is a product of traditions and customs of the desert, which to date maintain a strong foothold in society with the reason being that emphasis is placed more on society's perception than a woman's wellbeing.

6.2 The Gender Gap

According to most of my participants, one of the outcomes of cultural practices in Saudi society is gender inequality, which manifests itself strongly in the suppression and oppression of women and it gives men wider space for the subjugation of women. When I asked Badriya, who is trainee psychologist, how and why Saudi society treats men and women differently, she stated that "men are assigned the significant roles" over women, which is justified by superficial reasons. Badriya further elaborated on her point by explaining that these superficial reasons include the arguments that women are weaker physically and psychologically. According to Badriya, society argues that women's bodies have a special composition, which is designed to deal with pregnancy, childbirth,

breastfeeding and menstruation which make women weak. It is claimed that these physiological differences are the basis of women's lack of rationality (in the sense that women are deemed too emotional), and therefore their judgement is considered to be less than that of a man in all spheres of life.

Badriya's response shows how patriarchy in Saudi society uses these points of physiological and physical difference to reduce women's status and use it as an excuse to keep women oppressed and devoid of power. This idea is further expounded by intentional misinterpretation of a specific religious text by patriarchy. The text in that is often cited comes from the Hadith where women have been determined to be "lacking in rational and logical thought", though this verse in the Hadith specifically refers to matters of trade and business in an era where women were not privy to the practices. From the available literature as well as from my participants' observations, I found that in Saudi society, this idea frequently appears in sermons as its intention is to suppress and oppress women, and consequently it is a widespread belief amongst men. It is therefore easier for men to gain dominance as they are able to confine women to the private sphere, rendering them minors and making them question their own ability and behaviour.

The subsequent distinction in status between men and women in Saudi society allows men much more freedom than women (Hamdan, 2005; Kelly, 2009). Salwa emphasised that "He is a man. Period. Nothing affects his reputation and the limitations; and restrictions are placed solely on women while men are free to do as they wish".

In this sense, the moment Saudi women gain consciousness, they are subjected to the double standards of their own society, where men are forgiven for their flaws, and everything and anything women do is subjected to scrutiny, criticism and shame. Saudi society uses religious texts in a manner that takes Qur'anic verses and applies them selectively to men and women, where men are told that should they commit sin, they will

be forgiven as God is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful and yet women are told that if they commit a sin, they will be severely punished by God. Thus, in Saudi Arabia, men are effectively free to do as they please because the society provides them with a socially and apparently religiously acceptable cover for all their mistakes. Hence, young males are raised with the belief that *'if you are a man, your sin is forgivable in the eyes of God, society and perhaps even the victim'*. By contrast, even if women commit a far lesser sin, they will forever remain stigmatized as a sinner by society, her family and maybe even herself.

6.2.1 In the Family Unit

While continuing the discussion about gender inequality in Saudi society, most participants pointed out that many Saudi parents actively encourage gender inequality by placing specific and very different expectations on their sons and daughters, where the roles assigned to each gender tends to give males more privileges (as rights) whilst severely restricting rights for the females. For instance, Naima explained that in many Saudi families, “they allow their sons to purchase mobile phones at a younger age than ... the girls”, and this discrimination continues in the way that “[families] allow [their sons] to stay out late and do not question who [they spend] time with while the daughter is closely monitored and the family limits her mobility”. Naima emphasised that this is the reality of many Saudi families and cited the example of a couple she is friends with who “offered their son a variety of options to develop and encourage his interests and skills, such as football and taekwondo, while they ignored their daughter’s interests, pleasure and skills development”.

Naima's observation highlighted how the problem of gender inequality starts, which only continues to increase as they children get older leading to significant levels and varying forms of discrimination against the female throughout her life. One of the reasons

attributed to this inequality, as noted in the literature, is the widely-held belief that the male has more earning potential and will essentially be insurance and financial security for his parents in their old age, therefore he is given every opportunity to succeed in the public realm, while the female child is not (Trask, 2015; Hallman & Roca, 2007). This is indicative of the common cultural belief that girls are a financial burden, as they will be married and leave the homestead, and ultimately become the responsibility of their husbands. Even if daughters have earning potential, they will belong to another household after marriage and therefore they will not be able to provide for their parents.

According to several of my participants, manifestations of gender inequality continue well into adulthood, where women are denied their agency and that leads to their suffering. For instance, Salwa explained that Saudi men are assigned the role of son, husband and father, which they are free to simultaneously fulfil, while being given the opportunity to take on additional public roles without limitations or restrictions. Salwa elaborated that this is in direct contrast to the female experience, as women are confined to three main roles: they are daughters first, when they are married they become wives and once they have children, they are mothers only. In each stage, they are expected to abide by the role assigned to them and have no other expectations or desires from their life, and if they do, they should be sacrificed for the family unit (Joseph, 1994). For example, Suhaila cited her experience with gender inequality, as “when [she] wanted to remarry, [her] entire family was against it and felt that she should stay with and live for her children”.

Suhaila’s story is indicative of how families in Saudi society discourage divorced women from remarrying because there is an expectation that they will now only be ‘mothers’. In this sense, the prevailing culture in Saudi society rejects the idea of remarriage for women because it is widely believed that if a woman has children, then her emotional,

psychological and physical needs should be sacrificed without a second thought. Women who do remarry in Saudi society, are often accused of being negligent and selfish mothers who do not care for the need and feelings of her children as she has chosen to pursue her personal interests at the expense of her children's future prospects. This attitude continues to thrive because there is no consideration for a woman's autonomy, agency and existence.

6.2.2 In Marital Relationships

Most of the participants observed that in Saudi Arabia, marital relationships are another common area where gender inequality exists and pervades. When I enquired further for examples of gender inequality in marriage in Saudi society, Safiya cited the example of 'misyar', which is "a type of marriage that allows men who, for instance, travel for work to other cities, to marry women in the locality to satisfy their needs without having to take any financial or social responsibility for the wife".

In this sense, 'misyar' exists for the convenience of men whilst simultaneously subjugating and oppressing women; in this kind of marriage, women are deprived of their rights as wives. In this way, women are not only left vulnerable to domestic violence, but it is in itself a kind of domestic violence as the husbands are not obligated to take responsibility for their wives. Furthermore, women who have such marriages are looked upon with scorn and disrespect (because society views them as shameless as they accepted this kind of marriage, which is based purely on sex) while the men's reputations remain unaffected (as sex, for society, is only meant for men and it is necessary for men to be able to satisfy their needs).

Samiya cited divorce as another example of gender inequality existing within marital relationships; she explained that "a man can divorce his wife at any time without an open

declaration or her consent”. The rules for divorce in Saudi Arabia make it advantageous for men in every way possible, because in the event that a man wants to divorce his wife, he can do so unilaterally without an explanation, a court hearing or even informing his wife of his intention (Human Rights Watch, 2016). However, if the woman seeks a divorce, men are able to outright deny the divorce or place insurmountable obstacles in her path, which serves to continue the cycle of domestic violence (Kelly, 2009). In this way, there is a constant power imbalance in marriages to the advantage of men, where they are allowed to have absolute control over women in marital relationships, which in itself can be considered a form of domestic violence against women.

6.2.3 In the Education System

One of my participants also highlighted that the problem of gender inequality in Saudi Arabia extends to the realm of education as well, beginning with gender segregation and consequently, there are different rules for male campus and the female campus. Reema, whose incredulity was evident, cited the example of how “on the female campus of the university, the female students are not allowed to leave the campus before 10 o’clock” and that “the female campus is surrounded by the high fences and the gates, which are guarded by two sets of security staff; the female security guards are positioned inside the campus and the male security guards are outside the campus”. Reema further explained how these restrictions are not applied to the male campus and therefore “the male students are free to come and go from their campus as they please and there are no fences or security guards as there are no gates”.

In this way, even in educational establishments, Saudi society imposes strict rules on women that stations them lower than men, for it is mistakenly believed that women are less trustworthy than men, and therefore could fall prey to deviant behaviour if their freedom is not curtailed. The stereotype of women being the weaker sex, incapable of

taking care of themselves and making considered and informed decisions, will allow gender inequality in Saudi Arabia to maintain its stronghold, and this in turn will provide fertile ground for domestic violence.

The majority of my participants also commented on another way in which gender inequality is commonplace in education, namely the limited opportunities given to female students in comparison to their male counterparts. For example, Marwa explained that “men have the freedom to pursue education in all disciplines and as well study abroad, which is not a privilege afforded to women in the same way”. In Saudi Arabia, women are restricted when it comes to pursuing higher education as they need their guardian's approval for any steps that they want to take (Human Rights Watch, 2016). While Saudi men are trained, groomed and given opportunities through education that makes the professional ladder more accessible, women are given limited chances and face restrictions that prevent them from gaining the expertise they need to pursue their ambitions.

In this way, men have been granted these privileges because ultimately, according to the Saudi societal norms and values, as indicated by the literature and most of the participants' responses, the public arena is exclusive to men because it is their responsibility to provide for the family as they are the heads of the household therefore they are given limitless opportunities. This is in contrast to women, who are restricted to the sphere of domestic privacy because ultimately women are expected to marry and have children and therefore it is their fundamental responsibility to take care of the family and household, and thus it is not deemed necessary for women have the experiences that allowed them to engage with and participate in the wider world in the way men do.

The majority of my participants suggested that by limiting and restricting opportunities in the field of education, Saudi women are kept away from positions of leadership. Nora,

an interviewee in this research, explained when it comes to equal opportunity among men and women, in Saudi Arabia, “men are in most of the leadership and managerial positions” as “policies support society’s attitudes in a way that men are given positions of authority and power instead of women”. In Saudi Arabia, the legal and political field, positions of judge and minister, respectively, are exclusively held by men because patriarchal society tends to deny women positions of power (Jackson, 1998; Dietz, 2003).

Women are kept out of power for the positions of judge and/or minister by using invalid excuses such as women being unsuitable as they are too emotional, prone to making hasty decisions when the jobs require clarity and rationality, especially if they are pregnant and breastfeeding. In this sense, using this kind of reasoning continues to marginalize women and deny them any form of power or leadership in conformity with the established societal norms. It is widely acknowledged that women can excel in whichever position they are in provided they are given the same tools such as control, resources and opportunities as their male counterparts. However, Saudi women are not afforded the same privileges as men because women are regarded as the ‘inferior’ sex requiring male control, and therefore men do not tolerate being subordinate to women in positions of power.

6.2.4 In Society's Attitudes towards Women's Accomplishment

While continuing their commentary about gender inequality, several participants remarked that gender inequality is evident in society's attitudes towards Saudi women's professional achievements and success. For instance, Najwa, who is a researcher in sociology, explained that

“when a Saudi woman is able to acquire a position of authority, which is the same as a man, society dismisses her achievement while praising the male. Even if a woman manages to reach a higher station professionally and/or academically, she

would still face comments such as ‘You are still a woman at the end of the day’ thus disregarding her contributions and successes. This is because society treats a woman as if she is incomplete, child-like and naïve, and is constantly waiting for her to make a mistake”.

Najwa added that “the moment a woman does make a mistake, the society mocks her and does not make allowances for the fact that women are human and have limitations just like men”. In this sense, situations like these, men attempt to dishearten women with the intention of keeping their self-esteem low, as they fear strong and confident women would challenge quo, thus threatening male dominance and control. Najwa's comment indicates that there is awareness of how unfair gender inequality is in Saudi society. However, the problem remains that it is an accepted practice which is part of the society's status quo and is not easily challenged.

For example, Layla, a participant, was subjected to this trivializing attitude, for when “[she] presented ideas to a male colleague, in their group dialogue via social media, he was either dismissive of [her] ideas or unnecessarily critical, while he was supportive of similar ideas put forward by male colleagues”. Layla’s experiences reflect the way many Saudi men tend to believe they are superior to women and their desire to retain their position leads to them to oppress and subjugate women via use of power and control. Layla’s male colleague is an example of how most Saudi men possess a sense of male superiority, acquired through lifelong experiences (from childhood to adulthood), where a woman can never be right or more capable than a man, especially in the public arena. This stems largely from a strong desire for power and control which has been instilled in men from childhood. Since men constantly feel the need to gain as much power and control as they can, they take power and control from women whenever they can. Given the situation Layla found herself in, she felt that she had to accept what had transpired as

the status quo, and instead of questioning his discriminatory behaviour, she lamented quietly to herself, while her colleague was able to augment his superior status by taking credit for her ideas.

6.2.5 In the Workplace

According to most of the participants, the workplace in Saudi Arabia is a wide arena where gender inequality is practiced. This is characterized by unequal values and privileges afforded to men and women, and unequal distribution of power and resources. For instance, Fatima stated that “even though [she] is in charge of her department, [she is] called a ‘supervisor of the department’ while the male counterpart is called the ‘head of the department’, which creates a hierarchy on a theoretical level when there is none on a practical level”. In this way, whereby these functional titles are used to create an illusion of difference in position between men and women, where the male appears to be superior to the female because in such a patriarchal society, men in general want to maintain superiority and in the absence of such, they choose to create the appearance of superiority.

Arwa also gave an example of how power imbalance between the genders exists with regard to the decision-making process in the workplace field. Arwa stated that “even though [her] faculty at [her] university was established 10 years before and is bigger than the counterpart on the male campus, the final decision and approval for all matters is still given by the male faculty”. As noted in the literature and by my participants, these incidents merely scratch the surface as they clearly reflect Saudi societal norms and values, where generally men are given precedence to take all decisions whether in the public sphere or the private realm. Therefore, women's participation in the decision-making process is severely limited while men are given preference and opportunities on all levels in the professional environment (Said-Fogahaa & Maziad, 2011). In Saudi society, the inequality between the genders within the context of interpersonal power,

relationships and domestic arrangements permeates into the professional realm, where disparities between power, freedom of movement, opportunities and access to resources continue to discriminate against Saudi women.

The previous discussion about gender inequality in Saudi society is indicative of the different ways in which the power imbalance is created between men and women, prevailing on every level of life, from subjugation at home to being sidelined in the professional sphere, which leaves women vulnerable to domestic violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; True, 2012, Kabeer, 2014).

6.3 The Male Guardianship System

In order to understand participants' views towards the male guardianship system in terms of citizenship as factor that is associated with domestic violence against women in Saudi society, I posited the questions whether Saudi women enjoy citizenship in term of their rights and whether depriving Saudi women of their rights can lead to domestic violence. This particular discussion was important in highlighting the level of awareness that exists amongst educated Saudi women about their rights because they are an in a unique position to be the pioneers of change in Saudi society.

Based on interviewees' responses, their answers fell into two groups. The first group, which were in the minority, held what is considered to be a traditional and orthodox view; these interviewees believe that Saudi women enjoy their rights, that the system of guardianship is for the protection and safety of women, and that there is no link between citizenship and domestic violence. However, the overwhelming majority of participants, who self-identify as empowered Saudi women, believe that Saudi women do not enjoy most of their rights as guardianship still exists, a system which these interviewees identify as a form of domestic violence in itself.

From the first group, Marwa, who is an administrative officer, explained that “Saudi women enjoy their rights and the guardianship system is actually good for women” because men having authority over women is advantageous for women. For this reason, Marwa further added that women should have a male guardian, regardless of age. Afaf, another participant from the first group, stated that “the guardianship system exists to protect and safeguard women”.

The participants for the first group represent the positive attitude that some Saudi women have towards the system of male guardianship. This is linked to the conservative and traditional values imbibed in the Saudi culture, which imposes the idea that men are protectors because women are weak. This belief has been woven through the fabric of gendered socialisation in Saudi Arabia, where women are led to believe that they need men in every aspect and at every stage of their life. Patriarchy is the foundation of this socially-engineered status, which misuses religion to support the male agenda of gaining control over women. In this way, some Saudi women believe that the guardianship system exists to protect them, leaving women willingly beholden and bound to men. This way of thinking in turn can be a hindrance to other women, who may wish for more freedom as the traditional mind-set can be used as justification by lawmakers to prevent female empowerment in the home to free themselves from domestic violence.

6.3.1 Male Guardianship: A Form of Domestic Violence in Itself?

The second category of participants, whom I consider to be empowered Saudi women, responded in contrast to the first group. They explained that lack of female citizenship rights in Saudi society is used to enforce gender inequality, whereby women need men to even exist. In Saudi society, women are deprived of many of their social, civil and political rights because, as Rana pointed out, “absolute male authority over women still exists under the guardianship system”. Ruwaida further emphasised the problem that the

guardianship system presents in that “for even the simplest matters, women are required to bring their male guardian”.

In this sense, male guardianship can lead into a form domestic violence where the guardian is able to misuse and abuse his authority, and even the existence of this authority is a form of domestic violence. Below are just some of the practices that the participants shared, and these stories highlight the many ways that Saudi female rights are violated by the system of guardianship, which in itself is a form of domestic violence.

According to the majority of the participants in the second group, Saudi women should be free to choose their marriage partners, and no one should be in a position to deny a woman her most basic right. However, in Saudi society it is commonplace for this denial of basic right because women require permission from their male guardian to marry. In Saudi Arabia, the male guardianship system grants men absolute control over women to the extent that male guardians can deny a woman’s right to marry for arbitrary reasons (Human Rights Watch, 2008). Wijdan, who is a lecturer in psychology, narrated the story of a girl who wanted to marry a foreigner of whom her male guardian did not approve, so she ran away as she knew that could not get married without her guardian’s permission. Subsequently, “the girl’s male guardian tricked her into returning home by pretending to agree to her marriage, and when she returned home, he severely beat her and then locked her up in [the house]” to keep her from marrying the man she loved.

Wijdan’s story highlights the levels of control male guardians have over a woman’s life. In addition to this, male guardians also have the power to dictate a woman’s future as they have complete authority over the long-term decisions that directly affect her, such as marriage. In Saudi society, it is possible for male guardians to deprive women of happiness by either denying them the husbands they want or insisting the women get married to men of the guardian’s choosing, regardless of whether the prospective husband

is suitable or not.

From the second group, some of the other participants also pointed out that it is often the case that male guards deny women their right to marry in general for purely economic reasons. For example, Safiya explained that some Saudi women are denied their right to marry “because if they are employed and contributing towards the household income, their male guardians want to keep her income to themselves”, which is an example of how the system of guardianship allows males to benefit themselves, without any regard for the woman’s needs and feelings. According to the Human Rights Watch (2016) report, many Saudi women have reported to the court about how they are being denied marriage because their male guardians want the income generated by these women.

During the course of the interview, many participants from the second group raised their concern regarding the distinctions between fact and fabrication about the guardianship system, particularly with regard to healthcare. Although the health regulations in Saudi Arabia do not prohibit women from receiving healthcare without guardian consent (Crisera, 2014, p.17), it remains common practice to reinforce male hegemony in a way which is designed to deny women medical procedures and basic healthcare in the absence of their male guardians. Maram explained how “in some public clinics, doctors put up signs outside their offices, declaring that women must be accompanied by their male guardian”, which leaves women in a completely vulnerable position. Maram cited the example of a woman she knew who was denied an important medical procedure by the hospital until her guardian finally came and gave them authorisation to proceed, even though the delay could have detrimental repercussions. Maram further added with dismay that after the operation, the hospital refused discharge her without her guardian’s permission, and “she had to wait 12 hours because [her guardian] was too busy to pick her up”.

In this way, Saudi women continue to suffer because of misconceptions and the misuse of the power and control of male guardianship regarding healthcare, as male guardians can have direct control on a woman's health and women are once again rendered minors, who are not free to make autonomous decisions, even if it is for their own health. In this sense, the denial of medical care to women comes is linked to society's inability to see the existence of a woman without a man, a situation which leads to ignorance amongst some women and some doctors. Consequently, many medical centres in Saudi Arabia deny women healthcare without a male guardian's approval and/or presence, which subjects women to unnecessary prolonged pain or in extreme cases puts women's life in jeopardy.

According to nearly all the participants in the second group, the issues of male guardianship and women's autonomy pervade into a multitude of institutions, constantly leaving women under male control that places them at risk of domestic violence. Maram explained that, in Saudi Arabia, many establishments such as "banks prohibit women from entering their premises without a male guardian as it is the general practice across the country". This is an example of how the banking system, as it is in Saudi Arabia at present, is designed by men for men. In this way, men can achieve their desire for power and domination by placing the woman entirely under their own control, which in itself is form of domestic violence.

Furthermore, another interviewee, from the second group, also pointed out that in Saudi Arabia women are required to have male guardian accompany them to the all court proceedings, which can be present a difficult conundrum for a female victim of domestic violence. For example, Zainab shared her observations of Saudi court practices, when her sister "wanted to get a divorce so she had to go to court but she could not do so without a male guardian". This is particularly problematic because, as supported by the literature

and participants' responses, if a Saudi woman is petitioning for divorce then the marriage is most likely to be a violent one; however, because of the male guardianship system, there are often obstacles and roadblocks that prevent women from freeing themselves from violent marriages, especially if the male guardian is the abuser, or the male guardian does not approve of the decision or the woman does not have a male guardian at all, leaving women in the continuous cycle of domestic violence.

Several of the participants from the second group also brought into focus the problems that arise from male guardianship in matters of legal estates and wealth, which can also expose women to domestic violence. For instance, Ghadeer explained that “without a male agent, women cannot access their inheritance and it is common for male guardians to illegally seize and deprive Saudi women of their right to inheritance”. In this way, the requirement of male representative in matters associated with inheritance are yet another space where domestic violence can take place because Saudi women are left in precarious situations as they are under the male guardian' control.

Zainab, another participant, recalled the story of a friend who “recently lost her husband, and she has not been able to receive her inheritance because her eldest son, who is now her male guardian, is assigned the role of the ‘agent’ but he has yet to give her access to her money”. In this way, there is no consideration placed on the mother's abilities and effectiveness to handle wealth, even though she is the parent having raised the male heir. In terms of experience and responsibility, a mother should be allowed to handle all matters pertaining to the legal estate and inheritance. However, the practice of male guardianship exacerbates the way Saudi society treats all women as minors (especially if the woman is a mother) and men are given absolute authority (even if it is an incompetent son), which deeply injects a constant sense of inferiority and subordination in women, especially when sons abuse their authority against the family.

According to available literature, in Saudi Arabia, women are required to have their male guardian's consent to pursue any education (Human Rights Watch, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 2016). According to most of the participants from the second group, pursuing education should be an inalienable right that does not require anyone's permission, a right which is denied to Saudi women. For instance, Khadija, who had a high-ranking position in the admissions department at a university, confirmed this by stating all Saudi female applicants had to have their male guardian's signed consent to give her permission to pursue higher education at university, a practice against which Khadija argued that "it is a woman's right to pursue education and she should not need anyone's approval". This practice starts from the early years of education right to higher education and can even extend to work placements. Reema pointed out that "when Saudi female students have to do compulsory work placement, they need permission from their male guardian to be able to complete this vital course requirement". This is indicative of how a Saudi woman's future is totally dependent on the authority of men because of the male guardianship system, a privilege that men are able to abuse. Through guardianship, Saudi men are in a position to deprive women of their right to pursue the education, leaving them completely reliant on men, which in itself is a form of domestic violence against women. However, actions such as denying women education or employment will not be considered a criminal act as it falls under the purview of male guardianship.

Most of the interviewees from the second group explained that when Saudi women want to pursue their education abroad, it becomes a more complex matter and sometimes leads to disappointment. Saudi women are already required to have their guardian's authorisation to study and travel, but they also need to have a male chaperone accompany them for the duration of their degree. For example, Shereen shared her experience, for when she received a scholarship for a foreign university, her father had already passed away so her eldest brother became her guardian, and he was unwilling or at least unable

to chaperone her. Shereen continuously pleaded with her brother to find a way to send her abroad but he steadfastly refused. Eventually, the argument between Shereen and her brother escalated to the extent that her aunt and uncle had to intervene but even then, her brother did not consent to travelling with her.

In this way, women are left vulnerable due to the legal conditions that women need to fulfil before they can travel abroad to study, particularly if they have uncooperative fathers or brothers. The scholarships come with the requirement that Saudi women need to have both permission from their male guardian and be accompanied by the said male guardian during the duration of the study. In this sense, the lives of Saudi women are completely dependent on their guardian's benevolence, which inevitably leads to much tension and frustration as well as leaving women vulnerable to domestic abuse.

Arwa pointed out that many unmarried Saudi women are faced with a dilemma when their guardians themselves are unable and/or unwilling to chaperone them. Arwa explained that this leads to many Saudi women to search for Saudi husbands of convenience and essentially it becomes a "marriage for travel", in order to fulfil the conditions of foreign scholarship. One of the conditions of the foreign scholarships is that a Saudi woman is required to be accompanied by a male guardian. From Arwa's observations, many Saudi female students are so ambitious to study abroad that they are willing to marry even inappropriate men to gain legal permission. Many of these husbands may not fulfil the woman's expectations of a life partner, but these women still remain in these marriages, even if the marriages become violent, just for the pursuance of higher education.

As discussed in the literature review, the male guardianship system allows men to place restrictions on women's mobility. Especially if women want to travel abroad because Saudi women need their male guardian's permission before anything else (Human Rights Watch, 2008; Hammad, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2016), as illustrated by the

experiences of the participants in this study. For example, Fatima, one of the participants, recounted her own experience with restricted mobility, because even though “[she is] a 65-year-old and a financially-independent woman, when [she wants] to travel [she needs] permission from her male guardian”, as required by the government. In Fatima’s case, her son is her guardian, a situation she finds utterly ridiculous “because [she takes] care of all [her] travel arrangements [herself] and yet it is her son who has the authority to allow [her] to travel”.

In this sense, Saudi women of any age, are still subjected to male control as they need their male guardian’s permission to travel which is considered insulting and oppressive. The practice of guardianship was the response to the assignation of men the duty and responsibility to support and protect their women from any harm or hardship as a religious duty in Islam. This has been misinterpreted and misused to achieve absolute control to the disadvantage of women. The situation becomes worse still when the son is assigned as the guardian to the woman who gave birth to and raised him, and yet somehow, he is deemed as more capable and responsible than her simply because he is male.

Khadija also remarked upon the problem of restricted mobility, by citing the example of “[her] colleague whose nephew was given guardianship over her, and any time she wished to travel, he would ask for money in return for giving her his permission”, taking advantage of his position to control his aunt’s actions for his own benefit. In this way, the kind of restrictions placed on female mobility through male guardianship, women are left in a position where they can be easily exploited and exposed to economic violence. The second group regarded the system of male guardianship as degrading and disgraceful, making Saudi women feel as if they have no authority or any value in comparison to the male, even if he is inexperienced and inept, who has absolute power and authority not only over his own life but also the women in his life.

Many participants from the second group are aware and highlighted that international travel for women is being hindered by the current passport office practices because, in Saudi Arabia, women still need a male guardian's consent in order to obtain and/or renew their passport. This observation by my interview participants are in conformity with the findings from the available literature (Hammad, 2013, Human Rights Watch, 2016). Naima explained that the process of issuing/renewing a passport does not require the women in question to be present, yet their male guardian's consent and presence are both mandatory. By doing this, Saudi women are marginalized thus reaffirming the idea that they are perpetual minors, incapable of handling their own affairs, even those relating to their own identity. In Saudi Arabia, this kind of practice renders women as non-citizens, all of which magnifies male hegemony and granting men absolute control over women.

As discussed in the Literature Review, Saudi women face obstacles even when they want to apply for identity cards (Hammad, 2013). Several of the interviewees from the second group criticised that the current procedure in place for obtaining identity cards is unacceptable as it allows men to exert their authority over women. For example, Kamilla stated that women can only obtain identity cards if they have their male guardian's consent and he is willing to act as an identifier, and because of this requirement she knows of many Saudi women who are still without an identity card. Kamilla explained that Saudi women who do not have identity cards are left completely under male control as they are dependent on the family card, which only male guardians are permitted to carry.

In this way, these women are denied their identity and are dependent on their male guardians for their civil rights, which leaves these women as victims of domestic violence through the system of male guardianship. The Human Rights Watch (2016) report showed that the guardianship system in Saudi Arabia prevents women from being able to escape violent family situations because of the restrictions placed on their mobility, and at times

their restricted mobility is used to perpetuate other forms of domestic violence.

Many of the participants from the second group also observed that Saudi women's dependency on men is further expounded by the fact that the right of Saudi women to work is in the hands of their male guardians. Maram pointed out that it is fairly common for male guardians to prevent women from becoming financially independent in Saudi Arabia. To illustrate her point, Maram cited an incident she had personally witnessed where a girl she knew was not allowed to work by her uncle, and the girl essentially became a prisoner in her own home. In this instance, the uncle's action has left the girl suffering as he has exerted control over her, which deprives her from the right to be financially and socially independent yet her uncle's actions, like the behaviour of many other male guardians, are considered legal and are supported by society.

Most of the respondents from the second group were also concerned about how the system of male guardianship gives ex-husbands the freedom to deny Saudi women their rights. Although the ex-husband is no longer a guardian, as he is still able to use their children as leverage. Layla explained that "when a divorced woman wants to travel with her children specifically, she needs the permission of her ex-husband". In this way, a divorced Saudi woman does not have the right freely to be or travel with her children, regardless of whether she has custody or not as the father remains the male guardian for his children and she always needs his permission to take actions that concern and/or include them. Consequently, men still have the space to continue abusing their control over their ex-wives through the children, forcing women to exist in a cycle of domestic violence.

Based on the discussion with the second group, it became evident that the male guardianship system gives men the right to exert control over women and creates an environment where Saudi women are unable to do anything independently, and thereby obliging women remain victims of domestic violence even after divorce. The male

guardianship system essentially renders women second-class citizens by preventing them from receiving their most basic human rights, such as freedom of mobility, and women often exist in a constant state of suffering. Saudi society sees male guardianship as a legitimate male right, thus men are given the licence to continue exerting their abuse of power over women as society justifies their behaviour. Denying women their rights is a form of domestic violence in itself, and it supports an environment where domestic violence can manifest itself in all of its forms, without being recognised for the horror that it is.

The second group's responses and reactions to the problem with citizenship for women in Saudi Arabia and guardianship reflects that educated Saudi women are aware and understand what constitutes domestic violence, even when it is completely concealed. Based on this group's observations, under the guardianship system women are treated no differently now to the way they were treated in the pre-Islamic era. The only difference is that, in pre-Islamic era, women were physically buried alive and now women have their identities buried through the denial of their autonomy, agency, and intellect. In Saudi Arabia, to this day, women are subjected to the strict regulations and restrictions because women are considered to be the only gender who are responsible for bringing scandal and shame to their families and society.

6.4 Conclusion

It is clear from the participants' responses, as well as the literature review, that the Saudi culture has different components, which work in conjunction with one another to create an environment which leaves women at the risk of domestic violence. All the interviewees believe that religion does not encourage or support violence against women for any reason. When the discussion turned to the misuse of religious texts to propagate violence against women, the respondents fell into two groups. The first group, constituted of three

participants, are traditional/orthodox women who are uninformed about religion. These interviewees believe that in the Quran, God addresses disobedience of wives by giving husbands the option, albeit as a last resort, to 'strike' their wives. However, the overwhelming majority of participants, whom I consider empowered and informed about religion, categorically stated that there is no statement in either the Quran or Hadith that allows husbands to hurt their wives. The second group of participants also emphasised that some of religious texts are manipulated by many men to keep men in positions of power and women as their subordinate subjects.

Nearly all the participants pointed out that the patriarchal practices are another element of Saudi culture which supports male hegemony and autonomy over the women. Consequently, many Saudi women are denied their agency and independence. These participants further emphasised that the stronghold that patriarchy has in Saudi Arabia is supported by family socialisation. In Saudi Arabia, family socialisation is a significant problem as the vast majority participants believe that many Saudi families still treat boys and girls differently. Boys are given more freedom and authority over their lives as well as their sisters' while the girls are restricted and limited in every way possible. These three aspects of culture, namely misuse of religion, patriarchal practices, and socialisation have a significant bearing on the prevailing societal attitudes towards domestic violence, which deters women from reporting the incidents of domestic violence and consequently they are unable to escape abusive marriages. This is due for several reasons: 1) fear of losing custody of children; 2) domestic violence is viewed as a private matter; 3) the taboo of sex and sexual topics; and 4) financial dependency and the absence of emotional support.

The vast majority of my participants also discussed the power imbalance in Saudi society, as a consequence of gender inequality, which they face in every aspect of their lives,

beginning with the private sphere and extending to the public realm. The participants criticised that men are given opportunities and privileges that are frequently denied to women.

When the discussion turned to Saudi women's citizenship and rights, the participants' views fell into two groups. The first group, who were in the minority, can be categorized as traditional/orthodox women; these participants believe that Saudi women have their rights and the system of guardianship exists to 'protect' rather than as a mechanism to control women. However, the vast majority of the participants belonged to the second group, who can be categorized as empowered women; these participants suggested that Saudi women's autonomy is severely restricted due to the system of male guardianship. These participants also pointed out that Saudi women cannot exercise their rights, including to the right to marriage, decision-making within the family, education and employment, and mobility, which in itself are forms of domestic violence.

To address the issue of domestic violence against women in Saudi society, conservative and traditional cultural practices, gender inequality and the absence of citizenship for women must be carefully considered. This could begin with the government's recognition of the problem and development of the legal framework to help women free themselves from domestic violence. In the next chapter, I explore what well-educated Saudi women think about the Saudi government's current policies which are in place to protect women from domestic violence.

7 SAUDI WOMEN'S VIEWS: STATE'S RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The focus of this chapter is on the views of educated Saudi women on the provisions made by the state in response to domestic violence in the Kingdom. This includes participants' observations on the structure and functionality of the support system currently in place as well as its effectiveness and adequacy. The last ten years in Saudi Arabia, as most of the interviewees noted, is considered to be the Golden Era for Women, whereby domestic policies were introduced with the aim to actively help empower Saudi women in improving their status, in anticipation that it will contribute towards freeing Saudi women from domestic violence. The state is continuing with its efforts towards empowering Saudi women, most notably with the introduction of Vision 2030, which emphasises the inclusion of women in all spheres of society (HRW, 2016). The vast majority of my participants were aware of, acknowledge and appreciate these efforts, because these policies were designed to improve women's status on every level in society. Through various means, the government is increasing women's opportunities to become independent and self-sufficient, giving them a voice and allowing it to be heard. These policies include increasing opportunities for women in education and in the workplace, incorporating women in politics, and most importantly, recognising and attempting to prevent domestic violence against Saudi women.

7.1 The Effectiveness and Adequacy of the State Response

When the women were asked about the current structures in place to protect women from domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, several mentioned the criminalisation of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. Others added that there had been an increase in the number of organisations dedicated to the protection of female victims of domestic violence. Many

participants also highlighted that the changes in the legal system were helping women free themselves from domestic violence.

7.1.1 Criminalisation & Emergence of Protection Organisations

Most of my participants were aware of the most important action that the government has taken, which is to criminalise domestic violence against women through the introduction of the legal system, Nizam Al-Hemaya min Al-Idha (translated as the Law for Protection from Abuse, henceforth NHA). When I queried my participants further about their understanding and knowledge of the existing laws, regulations, policies and procedure that have been put in place by Saudi government to protect women, Maryam, a feminist Islamic scholar, was thoroughly informed and aware of the policies outlined in the NHA, and she summarized for me, in detail, the legal system that has been introduced. Maryam explained that the NHA works to protect women from domestic violence and support them by,

“firstly, defining physical, sexual and psychological violence; secondly, by creating effective strategies and schemes to deal with domestic violence against women; thirdly, by increasing awareness in society about domestic violence against women; and fourthly, by engaging the government and private NGOs to work together to help protect female victims with the primary aim to enable women enjoy all their rights and limit domestic violence against Saudi women, whilst also encouraging and supporting research and projects related to domestic violence”.

Maryam exhibited a thorough awareness of the law and legal system in place to support female victims of domestic violence and the sanctions to deter perpetrators. Maryam outlined the sanctions taken against the perpetrators of domestic violence, under the

NHA, including “a 10,000 pound fine as well as a prison sentence ranging between one month to a year” and that “the fine is used to fund social services”. In addition to the fine and prison sentence, Maryam pointed out the recent amendments in the law to include that “the abuser could have his guardianship revoked, temporarily or permanently, depending on the severity of the case”. In this way, a significant deterrent is put in place because revoking the male guardianship is tantamount to loss of status and power, a great possession that many male abusers believe to be their right. Of my participants, Maryam represented the way many educated Saudi women keep themselves updated and well informed about the problems that relate to women in Saudi Arabia.

Maryam also highlighted that the NHA has commissioned a special committee that is responsible for determining the punishment a perpetrator receives. According to Maryam, the committee consisted “of three individuals, one of whom must be a legal professional, to oversee the case and pass judgment” and can, on top of the fine, “demand additional compensation for the female victim, which is determined on the basis of individual cases”. Maryam cited the example of “a woman who was so badly abused by her husband, that the committee awarded her 250,000 pounds in compensation”.

Several participants were also aware that through the NHA, the government has also authorised medical professionals to take a proactive approach when dealing with female victims of domestic violence. This is to ensure that all the vital sectors and institutions are working together and are involved in taking responsibility to protect victims of domestic violence in the Saudi society. Salwa, a clinical psychologist, explained that the NHA’s new policies were designed to help change the indifferent attitude of the medical professionals towards domestic violence so now “doctors are encouraged to investigate cases of domestic violence, if they suspect or are informed that a woman has been abused” and “doctors can now contact the police directly, all of which was not the case in the

past”. This is in contrast to previous practice, where the medical sector remained indifferent and/or unwilling to get involved to the cases of domestic violence. There are two reasons attributed to this: 1) they were not authorised to intervene; and 2) the societal attitude towards domestic violence makes it a private matter.

Numerous of my participants commented that while domestic violence against women remains rampant in the country, they were optimistic about the future as they spoke positively about the increasing government support for victims of domestic violence. For instance, Salwa emphasised that the presence and involvement of these organisations has provided women with refuge and various means to protect them, by “[giving] women the space to express their feelings and raise the problem of domestic violence”. Reema’s example included how the government has established hotlines for abused women, which “female victims of domestic violence can use to report the abuse and ask for help and support”.

Samiya, an enlightened female professional that I interviewed added that the government has also authorised many organisations,

“such as Dar Al-Hemaya, Dar Al-Ewa, Social Services Association and Al-Mawada to expand across the country with many branches, with the aim to help female victims of domestic violence by raising awareness about domestic violence and providing temporary shelter for abused women until a court decision has been made regarding their case”.

Furthermore, under the government’s current policy, research about domestic violence is being encouraged in order to understand the phenomenon of domestic violence in Saudi society and Fayza gave the example of “the Commission for the Protection of Women and Children who are collecting and collating data from hospitals and the police to find

out the statistics regarding abused women and children”.

7.1.2 Changes in the Legal System in the Favour of Women

There were many participants who discussed the bold changes in way which the government is attempting to make the legal processes more convenient and easily accessible for women. For instance, as Samiya pointed out “now there are courts specifically assigned to deal with family matters”, which was not the case in the past. Fayza explained that “now it is possible to book the appointments for the family courts online”, which enables women deal with their legal problems relatively independently as they do not need a male guardian for journeys to the court. Afaf highlighted that further measures that have been taken to benefit women, include the recently implemented biometric system which “uses electronic fingerprints for identification so [women] do not need a male identifier in the court”, and secondly, “in contrast to the past, abused women now have the right to contact the judge directly”. These changes are helping to encourage Saudi women to come forward about problems of domestic violence, so they themselves are able to take the first steps to free themselves from domestic violence.

Many of my participants were also particularly impressed and receptive to the new government ruling, which categorically states that all divorce proceedings must conclude within three months. This is primarily due to, as Rana pointed out, past practices where Saudi women could spend many years fighting divorce cases, under stressful conditions, trying to free themselves from violent marriages. Rana explained that in the past divorce cases in Saudi Arabia could be prolonged because husbands were able to indefinitely delay the divorce process as they would intentionally miss court hearings, but now, the ruling states that after the husband’s third absence, the judge will grant the divorce regardless.

Several of my interviewees drew attention to another historic step that the government took with regard to custody battles, which was to instruct the Saudi judiciary to only take into consideration which parent is more suitable, regardless of gender. Fatima explained that in the past fathers would have been given custody of their children automatically, especially if the child was a girl. The ex-husbands would then use the children as a way to control and abuse their ex-wives. The new ruling however requires the courts to consider each case on individual merit and award custody to the more suitable parent.

Through the course of the interview, a few of the remaining participants noted that they were aware of the progress that government had made by reducing impediments and challenges that are faced by divorced women. For instance, Najwa explained that in the past,

“only fathers could have the original family card and women needed their ex-husbands’ permission to have a copy of it, which was a huge hindrance, as it prevented women from being able to accomplish simple tasks such as registering the children at a school [but now] the government is issuing widowed mothers and divorced women their own family card and assigning them as guardians for their children”.

This course of action has had the added benefit of freeing women from violence that can continue post-divorce. This increases independency for women, whether divorced or widowed.

The changes that the government has made to the legal system have been beneficial for women, as highlighted by another participant in the study. Shereen who spoke about her aunt whose “husband passed away and left her with 5 girls and a boy”. In the past, her children would have needed a male representative, but Shereen’s aunt was able to go to

the court and “ask the judge to grant her guardianship as she did not want the children’s uncle to have control over them” and the judge accepted her request, and now Shereen’s aunt is her children’s legal guardian in all matters except for travel.

This research, via my participants' observation and responses highlight the changes that have been the result of the Saudi government learning through the courts, about many cases where male guardians abuse their power, especially against women and children, leaving them more vulnerable. Consequently, the government has taken measures to reduce the obstacles that women face, especially with regard to guardianship problem in the absence of a father, as women are allowed to become guardians and no longer the need rely solely on male relatives. These kinds of developments contribute in decline of Saudi women’s dependency on men, and thus avoiding the potentially violent situations.

Several of my participants discussed the government’s initiative in trying to address the issue of gender inequality in the Kingdom. Kareema told me about “[her] friend’s daughter” who was assigned as “the legal agent of her father’s estate, because even though she had 7 brothers, she was the most capable and responsible child”, which is in contrast to the past where “the role of legal agent would have been automatically assigned to the eldest male in the family”. In this way, such steps contribute towards removing women from vulnerable positions by helping them become more independent and removing them from being under the control of men, whilst also giving the women more autonomy and authority over their lives.

A few of my interviewees were also aware of the positive steps that the Saudi government has undertaken to reduce the obstacles that Saudi women face when trying to obtain their identity cards independently. Badriya explained that,

“in the past women did not have their own identity cards and depended on the

family card to be identified, which did not have their photo on but now women can get their own personal individual photo identity card. Therefore, women no longer need to have their male guardian as their identifier nor do they need his permission to apply for the identity card. To make the process even more convenient for women, a female friend or relative who has an identity card is sufficient for the application. And even if women lose their identification card, they no longer need their male guardian's consent for the reapplication process".

This shows that measures such as the ones mentioned above can do play a role in reducing a Saudi woman's dependency on males, who could exploit a woman's vulnerability, as evidently, they are now able to obtain identity cards through various means, including the support of other women, which narrows the space for domestic violence to occur.

7.2 The Limitations & Inadequacies of the State Response

Though the majority of my participants were generally aware of and optimistic regarding the changes made by the state to address the problem of domestic violence, they also raised major concerns. Many of the participants highlighted that the legislation, procedures and organisations designed to deal with domestic violence against Saudi women are ineffective due to the obstacles placed by traditional and conservative Saudi culture as well as the initiatives still being in the early stages of their development.

7.2.1 Legislative Obstacles in Cases of Domestic Violence

Through the course of interview, several participants pointed out that though the government has reduced the obstacles for women to get divorces, the attitudes within the legal system is still influenced by traditional and conservative Saudi culture. When I asked for opinions regarding the existing structures and support system that are currently

in place to support the victim of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, Fayza who is sociology professor, explained that

“there is a committee called Islaah Daat Al-Bayn, which courts refer women to, and they specialise in marital disputes as well as custody ‘battles’, however they do not have much authority and their aim is to reconcile husband and wife, regardless of the abuse that the woman could face upon her return”.

In this way, culture influences the Saudi legal system in ways which prioritise the reconciliation of families over the well-being of victims. It can be argued that if the marriage is in such dire straits that it has progressed to the courts, then it is beyond possible reconciliation as that could have been achieved without the involvement of external agencies. Women in situations such as these want justice at the end of any arbitration but reconciliation with the perpetrator is diametrically opposite to an abused woman’s needs and therefore, reporting abuse and seeking a divorce becomes a fruitless endeavor.

Due to the frequency of the reconciliatory judgements, the interviewees questioned the effectiveness of these committees. This is a clear example of the tension that exists between culture, misuse of religion and the legal systems that are in place in Saudi Arabia. For when a woman has decided to take legal action to obtain a divorce, it is a clear indication that the situation for the woman is beyond repair as she has taken this step regardless of the societal risks involved, considering that being a divorcee is a shameful tag in the Saudi society, especially for women, but rarely do these committees take this into consideration. Thus, these committees are focused on maintaining the marital relationship that could lead women to endure violence. The committee tends to use even the most insignificant point of agreement between the couples as the basis to reconcile

the pair, especially when there are children involved.

Additionally, these committees tend to prescribe to the idea that though permitted, “Divorce is the most hateful thing in the eyes of God” (Hadith). However, in instances of abuse, neglect and disharmony in marriage, Islam permits divorce and it is not, in this context, a hateful act. Though the state is trying to improve the condition of women, the cultural attitudes within the legal system remain an impediment for Saudi women to free themselves from violence marriage and this is an obstacle to their road to empowerment.

According to many of the participants, the allocation of the custody of children after any divorce is a major concern as it becomes a battle between the genders. It is one of the more significant breeding grounds for male perpetrators where they can continue subjecting women to domestic violence even after divorce. For example, Reema was critical about and furious with the legal system in Saudi Arabia, where women are entirely dependent on the judges’ discretion when it comes to awarding custody for their children. Reema further explained that the primary problem is that the position of judge in Saudi Arabia is exclusively held by men who can exercise biases because of their own gender and societal attitudes, and thus making judgments in favour of men while disregarding a woman’s suffering. Reema cited the story of her colleague’s daughter, who continued to suffer even after her divorce because of a judge’s prejudice,

“[Her] colleague’s daughter, who was tortured by her husband, finally decided to leave him and once she was divorced, her ex-husband denied her access to her three daughters as he had automatically been given custody. He would not even let the girls speak to their mother on the phone. So, the girl chose to find a solution through the legal system in place. Unfortunately, upon presenting her case, the judge in question stated that there were many women who had not seen their children for years, so why was she complaining about not being able to see her

children for six months.”

It is generally perceived that it is a judge’s duty to help and support a victim but, in this case, the first judge discriminated against the women based on gender as the father was given custody. The second judge failed the victim as it is likely that he was unable to understand and empathise with the girl’s suffering, probably due to his position of privilege, as a man and then as a judge. In this instance, the girl lost her children and it is stories like this that stay in the minds of Saudi women and deter them from leaving abusive marriages to free themselves from domestic violence.

The police force is also supposed to be a reliable source of support where female victims of domestic violence can go to find help. However, a few of the participants were concerned about the effectiveness of the police in Saudi Arabia as this is yet another institution that employs only men. For instance, Khadija mentioned that she had always wondered if the legislations that have been introduced in favour of women are truly effective given that “the police might treat [female victims of domestic violence] unfairly because of their gender bias” that is inherent to Saudi society.

In this sense, if women do go to the police station, they are often afraid and/or embarrassed because they have to explain their problem to a man with whom they are not comfortable due to the segregated nature of Saudi society. Furthermore, in Saudi society, if a woman goes to the police about her situation, the cultural attitudes are such that the male officers will criticise and judge her for being rebellious and reckless leading the victim to feel unwelcome and unwilling to report incidences of domestic violence. If a woman is able to submit a report about domestic violence, the police often do not believe her, and she is unable to prove the physical acts of violence as the police officers are all male and women are not allowed to expose any part of their body to a man. The Saudi

police also do not take the complaints made by female victim seriously and instead recommend that she returns with her guardian or a competent male, who may well be the abuser. If the victim is able to bring a male guardian, like her brother, who is not the abuser, then the police usually state that as this is a 'family issue' it can be resolved by and within the family. Consequently, many Saudi women remain in violent relationship because there is no other recourse.

According to most of my participants the NHA, although a good initial step to protect women from domestic violence as discussed early, faces a multitude of criticisms. Firstly, though the NHA has been in place for a few years, the response from some of the participants highlighted that there was not much public awareness about it because subjects such as domestic violence do not receive widespread and highly visible publicity in Saudi Arabia. For example, Maram explained that it is rare to find a billboard or TV advert that would raise awareness about problems pertaining to domestic violence. Furthermore, some of my interviewees, such as Ikhlas and Naima, still had not heard about the NHA which was astonishing, and especially considering that I was aware despite living abroad, reasserted the claims made by the participants about NHA receiving limited publicity in Saudi Arabia. In cases such as these, Saudi women are denied knowledge that can help them to free themselves from violence. This is also indicative of practices that prevent women from freeing themselves from violence in that they are linked to patriarchy in ways that ensure that men retain their position of power while keeping women under male control.

Secondly, one of my participants who was aware of the new law told me that she initially questioned its authenticity. Shereen explained that when she first heard about the law, she thought "it was a joke as that is how it was conveyed by the social media". In this way, many Saudi women, like Shereen, are not fully informed or even aware of the new

legislation. This is not uncommon in Saudi Arabia, as the society usually receives new legislations that benefit women very lightly, to the extent it becomes a joke that is circulated on social media. Thus, many women are confused or uninformed about the law in ways that makes the new legislation redundant and pointless. In the case of the NHA, it is most likely that, one of the reasons that the NHA was circulated as a joke was due to the widely held societal belief that men have legitimate authority to discipline their wives. Therefore, it is not seen as an act of domestic violence, thus the legislation is considered to be of no consequence because it is perceived that this does not apply to a relationship between husbands and wives.

Another criticism levied at the NHA, by several of my participants, was its ambiguity and lack of clarity about the law, including the title of legislation itself. Maram explained that Nizam Al-Hemaya min Al-Idha, which directly translates to ‘System of Protection from Harm’ and this title has been criticised because the layperson, mostly those who are supposed to be its beneficiaries, would not be able to immediately identify that this is a) a law and b) it is specifically about domestic violence. Maram further elaborated by saying that even if people were able to understand the title or be curious enough to read further into all the details of the act, it would still be confusing as they would find the text unclear. From Maram's explanation, it appears that if the act was for a specific target audience to benefit from, then extra effort should have been made to make its content easy to understand to match the ability of the majority of the class it is targeted at. Even if it is impossible to break it down, there should be accessible external agencies to give the extra support required to understand and use this important document.

At this point one would wonder if the lack of awareness could be interpreted as a deliberate act to withhold information from victims. It could very likely be so, given the nature of the Saudi society as seen above in which most males are of the opinion that the

woman cannot and should not be given any voice. The highest decision-making bodies are generally overseen by men, and for that matter the NHA is very unlikely to be exempt from withholding information from reaching the main beneficiaries. It can be implied from the foregone analysis and examples that the systems currently in place in the Kingdom to support female victims are in themselves, in one way or another, a hindrance. Although these systems work well in some societies around the world, it is not as effective in the Saudi society due to its peculiar culture and other factors such as the patriarchy, misuse of religion and societal attitudes and gender biases, leaving women to continue to endure domestic violence.

7.2.2 Procedural Hindrances in Cases of Domestic Violence

Another limitation that was highlighted by numerous participants is the absence of coordination and cooperation between agencies and institutions, as well as bureaucratic practices. Ruwaida pointed out that,

“hospitals, police and protection agencies do not work together when dealing with female victims of domestic violence. At the moment, all three organisations work individually and there is no clear line of communication between them so when a woman is abused, she has to go to the hospital because the police will not deal with her without a medical report. Then she will go to the hospital, unaccompanied, after which she will have to return to the police station to submit the reports and only then might a protection agency get involved. This system is inefficient and ineffective. The police, the hospital and protection agencies need to have systems in place that allows them to work together to help women instead of inconveniencing them ... On top of this, the current legislation is too bureaucratic and therefore medical and legal professionals are not always able to do their jobs effectively, especially when it comes to cases of domestic violence

against women.”

Strategies to deal with domestic violence are ineffective and insufficient when there is an absence of inter-agency co-operation and a persistent adherence to bureaucratic practices by governmental bodies, thereby leaving the female victims of domestic violence as vulnerable as ever (O’Connor, 2004; Amnesty International, 2005; Fatany, 2015).

Other participants also discussed the problem with bureaucratic processes in Saudi Arabia. The system is such that it prevents legal workers from taking immediate action, which is imperative in cases of domestic violence against women, where delays can result in the escalation of violence and/or irreversible situations. For instance, Reema cited an example of how bureaucratic procedures increase problems for women, as she knew of

“... a woman whose ex-husband had taken their son without informing her during the custody battle, so she went to a judge, who issued an order for a custodian to retrieve her son from her ex-husband’s home. The custodian was tricked by the ex-husband’s parents into believing that the son was not there and when the custodian realised his mistake, he was not able to retrieve the boy because he did not have an emergency warrant, which would give him the permission to re-enter the house, as the bureaucratic process took too long and the delay in the legal process allowed the ex-husband to disappear with her son”.

This is just one of the examples of how the bureaucratic process makes it difficult for women to escape the cycle of violence because the abusers can continue with their behaviour as the mechanisms in place to deter them are ineffective in punishing the abusers.

Furthermore, another participant was critical about the hotlines services as they are not

available all the time and due to limited publicity for these services, there is not much awareness about these facilities. To determine the effectiveness of hotline services, though somewhat limited, Ruwaida stated that she conducted an experiment where,

“[she] called the emergency hotline number for abused women and told the operator that [she] had been abused. [She] was told to wait until the operator made contact with the police, which would happen after [she] filled out a form over the phone, and then the case would be assessed and if it was serious enough, the police would come over.”

Ruwaida expressed her concern that if this incident had been a real situation then immediate action would be required by hotline services. However, the hotline service focused on the bureaucratic processes, where an assessment is used to decide the severity of the case and only then do the services intervene. If hotlines are busy dealing with paperwork, then the violence the victim is facing has the potential to escalate to death and the operator would have wasted time, which a real victim of domestic violence would not have. In this sense, the problem is that Saudi society has a specific view towards domestic violence against women, where it is considered a private and internal family matter. This attitude permeates through to the bureaucratic strategy, where the procedures are prolonged because domestic violence against women is not considered a serious problem. This in turn, prevents the victims from coming forward about the violence to which they are subjected, and they continue to suffer in silence.

7.2.3 Unsuitable Shelters

The most fundamental issues for the protection agencies, as believed by nearly 75% of my participants, are the infrastructure itself, budgetary constraints and the limited accessibility of organisations. For instance, Nora pointed out that “most organisations are

not equipped to protect female victims of domestic abuse”. Nora cited an example of this by narrating the story of a Saudi female victim who was under the protection of one of the organisation in the country, but it did not prevent her murder by her guardian. In this specific instance, the employees of these organisations were either not completely qualified or not specialised in the field of social work, and therefore they are unable to provide effective support for victims of domestic violence.

Furthermore, many of these participants explained that these organisations have limited resources and funding which prevents them from providing the necessary support for female victims of domestic violence. Ruwaida highlighted that agencies have set working hours even though incidents of domestic violence against women can occur at any time. For instance, Ruwaida knew of one woman who “ran away from her abusive husband late at night and when she arrived at the organisation it was closed so she slept in the doorway until the organisation opened the next day”. In this way, protections agencies cannot offer 24/7 service, provide permanent residences and/or financial support, which forces many of the Saudi female victims to stay with their abuser or may be left more vulnerable as they find themselves on the street.

Some of these participants also pointed out that the agencies that are dedicated to protecting Saudi women from domestic violence are ineffective due to organisations’ own restricted regulations. For instance, as Fayza explained that an “abused women cannot stay at an organisation for more than 21 days and have to return their guardians, who may be the abusers”. Fayza further highlighted that “organisations do require a signed pledge, which states that the abuser will not abuse the victim again, however, there is no way to enforce this pledge”. This is indicative of poor quality of service and inadequacies in these organisation leads to persistence of domestic violence in ways which leave Saudi women to suffer in silence.

One of the interviewees was concerned about the unhealthy and harsh settings of organisations that surround Saudi female victims of domestic violence. Shahad, who has seen first-hand the kind of accommodation and environment that these women were living in, was critical of the fact that many of these organisations are,

“located in a poor, unsafe and remote areas, and are surrounded by high fences like in prison and that made the atmosphere suffocating and uncomfortable. Firstly, the environment is counterproductive to helping women recover from domestic violence, and secondly, the organisations are designed with intention of making it difficult for abused women to even consider short-term stay”.

Based on these participants’ observations and responses, it appears that these organisations are not designed to provide shelter and accommodation for female victims for any significant length of time. Instead, these organisations are only viable for temporary stays. Since the primary purpose of these organisations is to identify the victim’s situation, then proceed to mediation between the victim and abuser in an effort to ensure that the victim can return home, safely. In this context, the practice stems from the idea that that family unit takes precedence over a female victim’s long-term safety. In these organisations, the female victim is treated as a criminal rather than a victim because if a woman leaves the family (even if it is to escape abuse), she is viewed as rebellious and therefore in need of discipline. This mind-set also contributes to the short duration of the stays permitted for female victims of domestic violence because if she stays too long it encourages what is deemed to be further rebellion and her refusal to be under male control. Many of professionals in these organisations prescribe to the traditional and conservative views towards domestic violence and they tend not to be sympathetic to the plight of female victims.

These limitations continue to occur in Saudi Arabia due to the idea that domestic violence is still considered a private and family matter rather than social and serious problem. The traditional conservative culture and societal attitudes dictate that victims be held accountable for the abuse they experience. Consequently, society views women's refuges and domestic violence organisations with suspicion because it is believed that such facilities and resources will incite and encourage women to leave their families. In this way, if Saudi women are given space away and an escape from their families, then women will have the opportunity to become autonomous which is equated with rebelliousness and that is considered to be shameful and scandalous. Saudi women who want to escape the oppression and subjugation are most likely exposed to criticism, condemnation and brandished with a bad reputation, which keeps most victims from trying to escape their situation, thus perpetuating the continuation of violence.

Based on discussions with the interviewees, the conservative and traditional Saudi culture is considered the root factor for the ineffectiveness and inadequacies of legislations, government institutions and protection agencies. However, the participants also recognised that domestic violence has only recently been recognised as a crime in Saudi Arabia; therefore, all these policies and organisations are in their nascent stage and still in development. According to majority of my participants, Saudi Arabia has taken many, and is continuing to, take positive steps to improve the status of women and they now have many resources available to them, which means they can become increasingly better equipped to enable women to free themselves from violent relationships.

7.3 Women's Perception of Empowering Saudi Women

All the participants were aware and shared their views about the achievements in the last decade in Saudi Arabia, which they unanimously believed has marked the beginning of the journey for female empowerment. These interviewees believe that the increase in

opportunities in education and employment has led to women becoming more independent and self-sufficient. Education is fundamental to gaining equal citizenship and participation in society, as it subsequently improves a woman's economic, legal, political and cultural standing (Hoskins, d'Hombres & Campbell, 2008; Findlow, 2013; Sahabi, Aghabeigpoori, Rezai, & Mohammadpur, 2015), which will help free Saudi women from male dependency. These interviewees also highlighted that Saudi women's entry into the political arena has led to the improvement of women's status in society. Gaining these rights has contributed to the increase in Saudi women's awareness and ultimately giving them the space to realise that they are capable of freeing themselves from domestic violence.

7.3.1 Increasing Opportunities in Higher Education

All the participants highlighted that the Golden Era for Women brought about many positive changes for Saudi women. Most of these participants also pointed out that education for women was a significant beneficiary of this era, as international scholarship programs were introduced to encourage women to pursue higher education. For instance, Khadija emphasised the importance of the scholarship programs in "empowering Saudi women, as going abroad, learning and interacting with different cultures has broadened their perspective and changed their attitudes". Khadija further explained that when these educated Saudi women return, they are armed with new knowledge and ideas (through interactions with foreign cultures) to help bring about positive change for other women in Saudi society and the effects can be seen as education for women is no longer believed to be an option but as essential as breathing.

In this sense, education generally leads women to be increasingly self-aware through which they learn about themselves, their need for autonomy and their rights. Consequently, by opening up educational opportunities, Saudi women have begun to

challenge and resist traditions and customs that hinder their independence and agency. Furthermore, giving Saudi women the opportunity to pursue higher education abroad gives them the chance to become self-reliant and self-sufficient, thus improving their self-confidence and strengthening their personalities.

7.3.2 Increasing Work Opportunities

Numerous participants also spoke highly of the government's efforts towards female empowerment by increasing employment opportunities for women. Ruwaida explained that,

“now Saudi women are everywhere! In the past, Saudi women could not work in a job that put them on the frontline but now they have right to work as cashiers in the supermarkets, customer sales representatives at the shopping malls and call centres, and hospital receptionists”.

In this, there is a complete contrast to the past, when if women did work, it would be a job that required them to be highly-qualified and a position that rendered them invisible. However, opening the workplace to all women, regardless of the level of education, leads to them becoming autonomous as well as visible in public life their male counterparts, which is the good starting point for female empowerment in Saudi Arabia.

During the course of interview, other participants discussed that in the past Saudi women were restricted to pursuing careers in the specific fields, usually in the education sector. However, in the last few years, attitudes are changing, and women are working and moving up the professional ladder in many fields that were previously exclusive to men. For instance, Shereen explained that in recent years she has seen “an increase in women working in managerial positions within the Human Resource departments, essentially placing women in a position of power, which is a contrast to the past, when HR positions

where exclusively held by men”. Shereen noted that “even though segregation is still common practice, companies are making adjustment to accommodate women in the workplace”. Shereen illustrated her point by citing the example of her friends who are working for a car dealership, where the customers are mostly male, but the company has created a separate workspace for women.

This is indicative of how, in recent years, Saudi women are being given opportunities that allows them to show that they are just as capable as men and therefore, they should not be viewed perpetual as minors but rather as fully autonomous adults.

Many of my participants also remarked upon how 2013 was a landmark year for Saudi women for reasons other than the NHA. In 2013, Saudi women also gained the right to practice law, which was a profession previously only exclusive to men. Hanan discussed how,

“Saudi women being allowed to practice law has been an important step as female lawyers are better able and more willing to understand the obstacles that Saudi women face and therefore are in a position to give these women better representation in court, especially with regard to matters of domestic violence”.

In this way, by including Saudi women in the field of law, female victims of domestic violence can now find support in the legal system, whereas in the past these victims would struggle with bias at every turn since the field was dominated entirely by men.

A few of the participants also highlighted that Saudi women are now reaching positions of power and are being given the same level of authority as their male counterparts. An example of this is one of the interviewees themselves, Ikhlas who is the head of her department and she stated that in contrast to,

“the past, when a female vote could be vetoed by a male member of the department, her vote now has equal weight and cannot be vetoed. On top of this, when a female member of the department wants to extend a scholarship or get approval for a proposal, the application can be approved by the female supervisor, who now has the authority to complete the application process, unlike before when it had to be the male head of department who authorised such applications”.

In this sense, a Saudi woman’s opinion is now beginning to have, in many professional arenas, the same importance and value as that of man’s, which is sign of the increase in the empowerment of women.

7.3.3 Involving Women in the Decision-Making Process

Many participants also commented on the Saudi government’s efforts to empower women in the political sphere. Saudi women are now involved in and contribute to the political dialogue in an official capacity. Most of the interviewees believed that the most notable example of Saudi women entering the political realm was the appointment of 30 women on the Shure Council. Khadija told me that the women appointed to the Shure Council have raised many of the challenges that Saudi women face and brought them to the table to find solution. Khadija explained how it was “women on the Shure Council that put forward the proposal for issuing an original family card to divorced and widowed women, which was passed recently and made the lives of many women easier by diminishing male control”, with the intention of reducing the risk of domestic violence against women.

According to several of my participants, female empowerment is occurring on different levels in Saudi Arabia. Arwa explained that Saudi women are becoming decision-makers and are being seen in positions of leadership. For instance, Khadija cited the example of the “Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University, which is ... exclusively for and run

by women”. This university is the first of its kind and most significantly it has a female chancellor (Toth, 2015), which is indicative of the trust that the government has in female leadership and is a step towards creating equality between men and women in Saudi society.

Numerous participants highlighted the faith that the Saudi government has in women is also being exhibited on the national platform. For instance, Arwa cited the example of Noora Al-Fayiz who was appointed the Deputy Minister of Education. Arwa explained that, it “is the first time a woman has been awarded a ministerial position in Saudi Arabia, making her the highest-ranking female official in the country”. In this way, it is a signal to the Saudi public about how important it is to involve women in the decision-making process. Furthermore, on the international stage, Saudi women are being represented, as Safiya stated that “when the King travels to foreign countries on diplomatic visits, there is now also a female delegation that accompanies him”. In this sense, Saudi women are being empowered through the pursuit of gender equality in the country.

An overwhelming majority of the interviewees also observed that Saudi women gaining rights is helping them acquire financial and social independence. These are fundamental elements to female empowerment in the country. Fayza explained that “if women are financially independent they are able to access different resources to free themselves from male control”, such as applying for and being granted the khul’a. Women have also become socially independent in recent years, as Fayza pointed out that “women now have the right to buy or rent homes and cars in their own name, as well as sponsor drivers and housemaids, unlike in the past where even if they had money, they were hindered by the requirement for male identifiers”.

Based on my participants' responses, Saudi women are becoming increasingly independent and do not have to rely on men completely. In this sense, Saudi women are

in a position to avoid being subjected to male control. All the rights that Saudi women have been given so far is leading to empower them and they are now engaging and participating in the wider world, as leaders and decision-makers, which in turn will help women fight for more of their rights until they are equal to men.

7.4 Empowerment & Domestic Violence: Saudi Women's Reflections

According to many of my participants empowering Saudi women by increasing their rights has had an enormous impact on many Saudi women's lives: they are beginning to make informed decisions where possible, demanding their rights where available and fighting for the rights which are still denied to them, and in essence they working towards freeing themselves from male control, which in itself is a form of domestic violence. According these interviewees, many Saudi women have become aware of lack of equality and how it leaves them vulnerable to domestic violence. Thus, empowered women must be aware of the legal and social options available to them and exercise their recently given rights, even when society places obstacles in their path, and for the rights that are not given to them, they have begun to challenge accepted practices to get equal rights.

7.4.1 Awareness as a Tool for Empowering Women

Numerous of my participants highlighted that women who are aware of the options that are available to them turn to well-thought and considered choices rather than accepting decisions made on their behalf and/or forced upon them. When I asked whether empowering women by giving them more rights could lead to reduction domestic violence against women, Maryam, a Feminist Islamic scholar, responded in the affirmative. Maryam believes that it is imperative for Saudi women to be well-read about their rights and refuse to bow down societal and cultural pressures to tolerate abuse in their marriages. Maryam discussed that many Saudi women are unaware of the options

available to them to free themselves from violent marriages, such as,

“Firstly, the husband can give his wife a ‘tal’aq’, which is the man’s option to end the marriage; secondly, the wife can seek a ‘khul’a’ from her husband, which is when a woman pays a fixed amount to her husband to acquire her freedom from the marriage; and finally, there is also ‘faskh’, which is when the court grants the wife freedom without paying compensation to the husband”.

Maryam continued to further elaborate on her point by elucidating that despite the availability of these options, there is still ignorance amongst Saudi women about the forms of legal divorce options available to them. It is only in recent years that the ‘khul’a’ has become more common but even so, it is only for women who are financially independent and have resources. The third legal divorce option, the ‘faskh’, remains unknown to almost all Saudi women.

The likely connection of women’s situations to the patriarchal forces at work in Saudi Arabia is what prevents women from realising that they do not have to remain under male control as there are resources and laws available to help them. However, the more significant impediment to women is that of not knowing the ways they can free themselves from violent marriages. This is linked to societal attitudes and gender socialisation, where Saudi women are raised to believe that the marriage contract is a final and unalterable decision that they have to abide by regardless of their circumstances.

According to one of my participants, awareness of legal processes and procedures can enable women to leave violent marriages. Reema explained that women who are subjected to domestic violence need to be aware of the steps they should take to remove themselves from that situation. Reema felt that many Saudi women are not aware of these procedures. She outlined the procedure of how female victims of domestic violence

should “first go to the hospital to obtain medical reports, which prove that she is abused, and then she should take those reports to the police and legal authorities, to help speed up the divorce proceedings”.

In this way, Saudi women’s lack of awareness is linked to their marginalization and confinement to the private sphere as they are considered secondary citizens who exist only for specific roles, such as a wife and a mother. Thus, Saudi women are expected to sacrifice their lives, needs and wants for their husband and children, and subsequently many women are often unable to challenge domestic violence because they are given limited access to resources and information.

However, another interviewee suggested that Saudi women who are aware are becoming increasingly empowered, in that they are able to exercise their agency, in ways by which they can achieve their goals through making their own choices, even when they face opposition from society. For instance, Lamiss explained that “women gaining more rights has helped them to develop a stronger personality and become more confident in themselves and their ability to be financially secure, which in turn enables women to become self-reliant and free themselves from male control”. Lamiss felt that an increasing number of Saudi women are setting professional and personal goals for themselves, and as such, these women remain unmarried even in their late 20s, 30s and even 40s, (which is a shock to the societal values), but despite criticism of their lifestyle choices, this is essential to their freedom because they are able to support themselves and therefore do not have to be burdened by violent relationships.

One of the interviewees, Shahad, placed emphasis on the importance of the idea that awareness is a tool to empower women and that it leads them to make significant life-choices regardless of societal expectations placed upon them. Shahad cited the example of her female students who, instead of marriage, want to pursue careers after graduation,

and marrying only if and when they are ready, contrary to the expectations and demands of society and their families. Shahad's students, as she explained, did not want to be at the risk of any abusive marriage and by taking a stance against social and familial pressures they are exercising their autonomy and independence. In this sense, there is a generation of women with a different mind-set whose primary focus is not marriage and they want to develop themselves as individuals rather than find themselves confined in roles set by society.

7.4.2 Empowering Women Leads to them Exercising their Rights

Many of my participants observed that many Saudi women have become empowered, and they have begun to challenge the denial of their rights. These participants told me that the problem in Saudi Arabia is that even though the government has started to give women their rights, many people in Saudi society are still resistant and unwilling to accept the new legislations that are beneficial to women. For example, Badriya shared the experience of her friend who had recently been divorced and wanted to rent her own apartment. When her friend went to see the property, the landlord refused to rent it to her without a male identifier, even though women are now entitled to rent properties under their own names using their ID card and it is considered sufficient for identity verification. Badriya added that her friend tried to reason and argue with the landlord, but he refused to relent.

This emphasises that, despite the new regulations, Saudi women are still faced with obstacles, as society refuses to co-operate and adapt to the new changes. Even if a Saudi woman is a professional, can provide full references and documentation regarding her employment status, has her own debit card, she is still asked to provide a male identifier or agent. Under the new legislation, it is not legal to deprive women of their rights because of the absence of a male identifier and it is a categorical violation of the law by society.

Women in Saudi society continue to face opposition and obstacles due to the deeply embedded patriarchy that works in various ways to curtail a woman's autonomy. This is due to the expectation that women are not capable of engaging with the wider world because that arena belongs exclusively to men.

As per many of the participants, there is no shortage of stories in Saudi Arabia where society remains unwilling to treat women fairly, despite the government's efforts to make women independent. For instance, under the new legislation, women are allowed to book hotel rooms in their own name as their identities can be verified through the ID card, a right which Najwa exercised. However, when Najwa arrived at the hotel she had booked, the male receptionist asked for her family card, but she only had her ID card with her. Unfortunately, the male receptionist refused to accept Najwa's ID card, and when she enquired why, he explained that her ID card had her photo on it and since she was woman, he did not consider it appropriate to see her face (acknowledge her visibility) but Najwa persisted, arguing that the ID card was perfectly sufficient under the new legislation.

Due to Najwa's extensive knowledge on the new legislation, she finally got the receptionist to accept her ID card for verification purposes, but this was not the only time Najwa faced challenges with regard to her rights, as she had another story that highlighted how society is resistant to the new legislations. Najwa needed to pick up her cheque from an external institution and the clerk would not accept her ID card unless she hid her photo, and he provided her a pair of scissors and paper to cut out a square to cover the image. After this experience, Najwa asked, "Why? Why do I need to cover my face? And why is my identity card not enough? The government allows me to have my photo to help me access facilities and still society puts up hurdles!".

Najwa's experience with the desk clerk is not uncommon because many people in Saudi society prescribe to the misused religious concept that a woman's face should not be

visible. However, there is no empirical evidence from the Quran that indicates that women are supposed to cover their faces. Regardless, the veil has been imposed on by society for a very long time, the reason for which is attributed to the cultural belief that a woman's face is a source for seduction. Over the years, the presence of the veil has become a social tradition and habit rather than a legitimate Islamic ruling. Unfortunately, society continues to misuse religion and turn it to intellectual and cultural heritage in accordance with the inherited customs and traditions that render women invisible and confine them to the private sphere to curtail their participation in the wider world. In this way, Saudi society continues to make it difficult for women to exercise their rights. However, as many Saudi women are increasingly aware of their individual rights, they are no longer willing to be treated like second-class citizens. Saudi women have become vocal in challenging and criticising the denial of their rights and the discrimination they face, in hopes that society will change its practice and eventually their attitudes.

Another one of my participants told me about the new rules in Saudi Arabia that decreed that women no longer need a male identifier in some government institutes if she has a personal identity card. This participant pointed out that, consequently, many a Saudi woman is becoming proactive in ensuring that they can exercise their rights to its fullest extent wherever possible. Fayza cited the example of her friend, who along with a group of female activists, went to the court to see if the judges were adhering to the new rules. During the course of their investigation, they found that “some judges did not accept the identity card and asked for a male identifier instead”. According to Fayza, this group then decided to contest judges' decision and complained. Eventually they were successful in their efforts as all judges were informed that they had to accept the ladies' personal identity card or they will face some consequences, a situation that caught the attention of the international community.

The above instance is yet another representation of how Saudi society is still denying women their agency and autonomy, which is symptomatic of the wider underlying problem of male guardianship. Due to the long-established practice of male guardianship in Saudi society, many people find it difficult to trust women as they are not seen as adults capable of making their own decisions.

7.4.3 Exercising Rights as a Route to Change

As per most of the participants, while Saudi women have started to gain rights, they are still denied many rights, especially under the restrictive practice of the male guardianship. These interviewees complained about the system of male guardianship and how it made Saudi women vulnerable, and therefore many Saudi women have begun to demand an end to the male guardianship system. For example, Maram explained that “Saudi women do not need men to control their lives or plan on their behalf!”, especially now that Saudi women are highly-educated active decision-makers and qualified professionals.

During the course of the interview, conversations with many of the participants highlighted how Saudi women are now resisting and opposing the system of male guardianship. For instance, Fatima recalled how on one occasion when she was travelling, the officer at the passport checkpoint ridiculously refused to let her pass because she did not have permission to travel from her son, who is her male guardian. Fatima was furious and argued with the officer, “Why do I need my child’s permission when I am independent and responsible for myself? Why do I even need a guardian at this age?” The officer replied, “That this is for your own protection and safety and the guardianship system is a good thing for women!” She argued back, asking “How is my son’s permission to travel going to protect me when my son is not even here?” Fatima arguing her viewpoint in public is a sign that Saudi women are aware of the rights that are being denied to them. However, despite raising objections, they are still in a position to be

denied their rights, as it was Fatima's case, she was not allowed to travel without her male guardian's consent.

In this way, Saudi Arabia, as a patriarchal society, misuses religion as a guise that allows men to be stationed above women. Saudi women are viewed as weak who are prone to making many mistakes as they are the embodiment of seduction that bring about ruin and destruction. This ideology has thus been imposed upon society by placing men as 'protectors' for and against women, which leads women to be treated as perpetual minors who need their guardians' approval and involvement in all matters. This fossilized intellectual heritage leads to male domination and the subjugation of woman who are then discriminated against as she is no more than a second-class citizen.

Another participant pointed out that many Saudi women are beginning to resist male guardianship, thus finally making the practice contentious and highly debated. Reema recalled a debate held at a forum about women's rights and the system of male guardianship where the women had two distinct perspectives. Reema recounted how some of Saudi women in attendance argued to keep the system of male guardianship as 'it is protection for Saudi women', while the empowered and feminist attendees believed ending male guardianship was the only way to true female empowerment and freedom from domestic violence. Despite the surge of opposition to the male guardianship system, by many educated Saudi women, Reema's story and some responses from my own participants, highlight that patriarchy still influences some educated Saudi women to prescribe to traditional, orthodox and conservative values, through religion, in ways that justify unacceptable control over women.

7.5 Conclusion

The vast majority of my participants was aware of and appreciated the steps that the Saudi

government has taken towards freeing women from domestic violence. Firstly, criminalising domestic violence against women is a very big step forward; secondly, the establishment of organisations and resources to help female victims of domestic violence has contributed greatly towards giving women a chance to be free from violent relationships; and thirdly, making amendments to the legal system to see to the reduction in the suffering of Saudi women who are subjected to domestic violence.

However, there were some criticisms of these initiatives, as many of the participants drew attention to the inadequacies and limitations of the recently implemented structures that are meant to protect women from violence. The most common criticism was the ineffectiveness of the NHA due to its lack of publicity, ambiguity and lack of clarity regarding the title of the law itself. The next point of contention are the organisations and resources, which most Saudi women found to be ill-equipped to handle cases of domestic violence due to the lack of expertise, the unavailability as well as restricted regulations and the unhealthy and harsh environment of these organisations. In reference to the changes in the legal system, many of the participants believed that the bureaucratic process hinders the effectiveness of the legal system in protecting women from abuse. These participants also observed that the inadequacies and limitations were linked to the traditional and conservative Saudi culture and also unanimously affirmed that these initiatives are in their nascent stage and they have to be allotted time to develop to become more effective.

According to the participants, the Saudi government had the aim and has worked towards the development of women's status by giving them more rights and opportunities to become self-sufficient, which would in turn help women to free themselves from male dependency in order to reduce the risk of domestic violence. Empowering Saudi women has given them the space to practice autonomy, their agency, gain their independence,

actively make decisions for themselves and the wider society and voice their opinion. The empowerment of Saudi women has had a positive outcome in that many Saudi women have become aware and knowledgeable to the extent that they are challenging societal practices. Saudi women are therefore beginning to take a stance against oppression and suppression, by voicing their concerns and demanding their rights, particularly their autonomy and freedom from male guardianship.

However, despite these changes, the fundamental problem remains that there are still hurdles that leave some Saudi women still suffering in silence. For example, as several of the participants noted there is still widespread lack of awareness and ignorance about rights and resources, which prevents women from leaving violent relationships. The most notable hurdle, as discussed by most of the participants, was the presence of the male guardianship system, which places women under constant male control, which in itself is a form of domestic violence. Despite the obstacles, many of the participants also believe that the change that Saudi Arabia is undergoing right now is just the beginning of a long journey towards freeing women from domestic violence.

8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I present a summary of the main points regarding domestic violence against Saudi women as raised by interview participants and an evaluation of this study. This is then followed by the explanation of the agenda for the future and detailing realistic recommendations for effective social policy, education and safeguarding services to protect Saudi women from domestic violence. Finally, there are suggestions for future research based on the themes that emerged from the findings.

8.1 Concluding Remarks

Through my study, many significant points have been made by the participants regarding the problem of domestic violence against Saudi women. My participants were clearly aware and had a nuanced understanding of the definitions and the types of, and problems surrounding domestic violence. This is despite the fact that the term for domestic violence has only recently entered the Saudi national vocabulary and legislations criminalising domestic violence was only introduced in 2013. The participants' views on the problem reflected the extent to which the topic of domestic violence has permeated into Saudi society.

85% of my participants characterized domestic violence as a systematic escalation of violent acts, which they believe contributes to the way in which Saudi women learn to tolerate abuse and remain silent in violent marriages. These participants pointed out that domestic violence can begin with an insignificant criticism or a dirty look, and because the victim ignores it, the perpetrator grows bolder and the violence gets footing and progresses to an escalated level. These participants also added that by continuously ignoring the escalating acts of violence, the victim becomes accustomed to and eventually

learns to tolerate and live with the abuse.

An overwhelming majority of my participants also highlighted a very significant aspect of domestic violence, which is control as a form of domestic violence. In the past, most of the participants would not have considered control a form of domestic violence because it is a socially accepted practice. Therefore, many women allowed the practice to continue unchallenged because it was not seen as a problem or the source or kind of domestic violence.

When my participants discussed control as a form of domestic violence, it raised a very pertinent question to me: whether control is the motivation for domestic violence given that, in Saudi Arabia, men have already been given complete and legitimate control over women or it is violence in itself. Consequently, in Saudi Arabia, men's need to acquire control over women is not the source of domestic violence, but rather the need to maintain the power and control they already possess, which makes control even on its own a form of domestic violence.

My study also raised concerns regarding the problem of sexual violence. The vast majority of my participants were not forthcoming with clear and open responses about sexual violence and only 5 of the participants were willing to talk about it in any significant way. As per these five participants, this attitude of holding back discussions relating to sexual matters is pervasive in Saudi society and it allows sexual violence to go unchecked. These participants also highlighted that so long as sex remains a taboo in Saudi society, there will be limited-to-no awareness about sexual violence and the problem will remain under the radar, with no viable solution on the horizon.

The participants' responses also drew attention to the conflict that exists within educated Saudi women regarding the problem of domestic abuse. While all the participants

recognised domestic violence is a massive social problem in the Kingdom affecting many women, none of the participants would be willing to approach female victims of domestic violence. The participants were divided in their opinions regarding their unwillingness to get involved. The first group (constituting the majority) were unwilling because they themselves prescribed to the belief that all problems relating to marriage are a personal and private matter; it is therefore inappropriate for an outsider to get involved, even if it is a family member. On the other hand, the second group (comprising a few of my participants) believe that Saudi female victims should be the ones to take the first step to free themselves from violent relationships rather than suffering in silence; especially now that domestic violence has been officially criminalised in Saudi Arabia and the government is actively trying to empower women to be independent and autonomous.

The participants' conflicting attitudes towards Saudi women experiencing domestic violence, in some cases, extended to include themselves. While majority of the interviewees would challenge any act of violence committed against them, there were two other groups (comprising the remaining minority) that gave a different response. The first group of participants would adopt the practice of patience and tolerance if they are subjected to violence in their marriages, despite knowing that domestic violence is wrong. The second group stood out to me as being conflicted and/or compromised, in that they have lived the experiences of domestic violence and knew it to be wrong but were not in position to openly challenge it. This conflict within these two groups of interviewees' views is most likely the result of raised awareness versus the deeply ingrained social practices, which are borne from a culture that dictates that domestic violence is not an issue, must remain a private matter and that the burden and onus of protecting a marriage falls solely on the woman.

The overwhelming majority of my interviewees recounted either a personal experience

with domestic violence or had observed someone else's experience, and sometimes both; their willingness to come forward, especially those who opened up about being victims of domestic violence, was an astonishing experience for me. For I recall a time when women would not even discuss someone else's experience with domestic violence and now victims of domestic violence themselves are forthcoming. This surprised me because their actions were in contrast to the culture of shame that still prevails in Saudi Arabia where most women keep their experiences with domestic violence a secret and suffer in silence.

My interviewees also drew attention to the idea that Saudi culture contributes towards domestic violence. Culture is a complicated structure, and in Saudi Arabia, it is comprised of four key elements: 1) misuse of religion; 2) patriarchy; 3) family socialisation; and 4) societal attitudes. The four components are interlinked and interlaced so intrinsically that it is near enough impossible to focus on each component separately as they feed into each other to create an environment where domestic violence flourishes.

All participants for this study emphasised that Islam is a religion that gives women all their rights and it is categorically against any acts of cruelty or violence especially against women. When the discussion turned to the link between verses from religious texts and domestic violence against women, I found that my participants belonged to two groups. The first group, who are in the minority, consisted of what I consider to be traditional and orthodox women who are misinformed about religion; this group of participants believed that God allows a husband to 'strike' his wife in punishment, if she is disobedient. These participants added that according to many scholars, the interpretation of the word 'strike' is done so with reference to 'miswak', which is a soft and small twig, with intended purpose of causing psychological pain rather physical harm.

Conversely, the second group, whom I consider to be empowered and informed about

religion, constituted the vast majority. These participants pointed out that in the Quran and Hadith there is categorically no place for violence against women in Islam and they provided several examples of how most Saudi men use some notable, specific and incomplete references to religious texts in ways that justify their violence against women. One of the respondents from the second group, Fayza, referred to Surah al-Nissa, verse 4:34, which is often mistranslated and is the foundation for the accepted practice of domestic violence in marriages. These interviewees pointed out that, the Arabic word 'dar'bah' in this verse, is translated to mean 'to strike' even though there are seventeen meanings for the word, including 'to leave'. In choosing 'to strike' as the meaning, society imposes male control over women and justifies physical violence in marriage. Another example, which these participants provided, highlighted how sexual violence is justified in marriage again via the misuse of religion. Society, through the misinterpretation and misuse of religion, has embedded the belief that sex is a man's right and therefore if a woman objects to having sex, as per the misuse of the Hadith, she is defiant in 'God's eyes' and, the "angels will curse her all night". Misuse of religion in this way leads to the persistence of domestic violence against women in the country.

Nearly most of my interviewees identified Saudi Arabia as a patriarchy where men are designated as 'protectors' of women, which often translates to men being positioned as superior to women, while women are considered subordinates. These participants were critical of this practice and provided countless examples. They also highlighted how this practice leads to the curtailment of women's autonomy by men, which is not only accepted but also encouraged in Saudi society. By doing so women are thus confined to the private sphere by men where the controlling behaviour more often than not lead to violence.

The participants also had problems with the family socialisation practice in Saudi Arabia,

as they believe patriarchy in the country is supported by the family socialisation processes. The vast majority of my interviewees drew attention to how most Saudi parents differentiate between the sons and daughters by giving their sons authority to control their sisters. Thus, embedding from childhood the idea that men are in charge and in control while women submit, creating a false sense of superiority for the male and a sense of inferiority in the female.

The misuse of religion, patriarchy and family socialisation come together in ways which create a foundation for a unique set of societal attitudes towards domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. The participants believe the societal attitudes towards domestic violence leave Saudi women vulnerable, force them to tolerate, and make them unwilling to come forward about domestic violence for several reasons: 1) fear of losing custody of children; 2) domestic violence is viewed as a private matter; 3) the taboo of sex and sexual topics; and 4) financial dependency and the absence of emotional support.

The vast majority of my participants suggested that gender inequality is a contributing factor associated with domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, where men are given many privileges while women are severely restricted. During the interviews, there was no shortage of examples provided by the participants; they were critical of the Saudi society as it gives men the freedom to do whatever they want and nothing affects their reputation, which is diametrically opposite to how women are treated. Many participants commented on the distinction between the way men are free to divorce without reason or notice versus the obstacles that women face in order to get a divorce. These participants also cited the example of the 'misyar', a marriage which has been exclusively ordained for the benefit of men; in this kind of marriage it is an acceptable practice that men do not have to take responsibility of any kind for their wives, meanwhile women in such marriages are condemned by society. This kind of gender inequality violates women's rights, which is

tantamount to domestic violence.

When it came to the discussion of citizenship and rights for Saudi women, the participants fell into two groups. The first group, in the minority, consisted of what I consider to be traditional and orthodox women; a group of participants believed that Saudi women have their rights and that the male guardianship system exists for the protection and safety of women. Also, this group did not see any link between citizenship and domestic violence. Conversely, the second group, whom I consider to be empowered, constituted the vast majority; these participants were particularly vocal about citizenship and how it enforces gender equality, in ways that contribute towards domestic violence. According to these participants, Saudi men are given legitimate rights and control over women, regardless of age, whether she is six or sixty, because there is no age of maturity for women. The second group were also critical about male guardianship because, according to them, this system renders women invisible, invalid and incapacitated without a man, as their rights are completely curtailed. These participants provided examples that highlighted that not only does male guardianship provide space for domestic violence, but the system in itself is a form of domestic violence too.

Beyond my participants' awareness of some contributing factor towards domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, the vast majority of the participants were also aware of the government's efforts and existing structures put in place that support female victims of domestic violence. All of the interviewees truly appreciated the initiatives and steps being taken to empower Saudi women, in terms of opening up opportunities for higher education, increasing job options, including Saudi women in the decision-making process or encouraging them to engage with the wider world to make them visible in society. The participants believe that these steps will help women to free themselves from violent marriages.

Despite the general acknowledgement and appreciation of the efforts of the government to curb the rise in the incidents of domestic violence, many of the participants also raised concerns regarding the limitations regarding the inadequacies of policies and structures currently in place to protect women from violence. The most significant concern was that even as at the time of the interviewing, many Saudi women were unaware of the domestic violence legislations and marriage laws. This also extended to a few of my participants in this study, as they thought that the domestic violence legislation was not even real and were not aware of the different ways women could leave violent marriages.

Nearly 75% of my interviewees were also critical of the provisions for shelters and support services because refuges are often built like prisons with limited availability of services and unbelievable poor treatment of victims of abuse, who are often made to feel ashamed and guilty as if they are the criminals. The architecture and infrastructure in place to address domestic violence caters for the cultural expectations more than the safety and the betterment of women. According to these interviews, it is due to this, many female victims are unwilling to come forward about domestic violence and continue to endure it in silence.

With regard to female empowerment in the Kingdom, the interviewees highlighted that there were two sides to this. Firstly, they acknowledged that female empowerment has lead Saudi women to make informed decisions as they are now aware of their rights; in addition, they challenge practices that deny them those rights and are actively demanding the rights still denied to them. However, the participants also noted that women still face obstacles in exercising their rights as Saudi women are still subjected to the male guardianship system despite the reforms; and many resources are still unavailable to them, which leaves them vulnerable. This is due to society's resistance to change, especially when it comes to any rights that gives women autonomy and freedom.

The participants' responses underscored that the conservative and traditional Saudi culture itself is the biggest challenge to the government's initiative to empower women. Eliminating domestic violence from Saudi society requires overcoming the deeply embedded cultural values that leave women vulnerable. While there are significant barriers towards the achievement of the ultimate goals of the reforms, the first steps in a very long journey that lies ahead have been made.

8.2 Evaluation of the Study Method

8.2.1 The Strengths of the Study

This study provides an insight into the problem of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia, through the perspectives of educated Saudi women. The strength of this research is that it utilises qualitative research methods to explore the three interrelated concepts of culture, gender inequality and women's citizenship, which have previously been unspoken topics and this thesis has attempted to be daring in discussing issues of domestic violence in the depth and breadth that it has.

As this study is qualitative in nature, using the semi-structured interview method for data collection in the investigation is a point of strength for this research. Using semi-structured interviews, enabled the researcher to access in-depth the perceptions and beliefs of educated Saudi women regarding the problem of domestic violence against women. Although it was a time-consuming process, the semi-structured interview gave the interviewees the space to openly express their ideas and views in their own words about domestic violence against women. Consequently, this research is built upon rich, detailed and in-depth data about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. An additional strength of this research was that researcher is both an insider and an outsider, which allowed the researcher to communicate with the participants directly and clearly while remaining objective, open-minded and unbiased during the interview process. As

an insider, there were no language and cultural barriers between the researcher and the participants, therefore the nuances of their comments and perceptions were preserved, thus maintaining the accuracy of the qualitative data collected. Being an outsider, the researcher was able to adopt an enlightened and liberal thought-process, and therefore the researcher approached the investigation from a variety of breadth and depth of angles.

8.3 Agenda for the Future

8.3.1 Further Recommendations for Domestic Violence Service Providers

The findings of this study raised concerns about the services effectiveness and efficiency of the available that protect women from domestic violence in Saudi Arabia. The general recommendation is that all individuals involved in supporting and providing services to victim of domestic violence need to be continually informed and updated about the latest developments regarding domestic violence; which could potentially promote a better co-operation between agencies, thereby providing better services to protect women from domestic violence.

All individuals who are involved in the field of domestic violence should be fully trained and formally qualified to deal with the issues that are connected with domestic violence. This group of individuals includes the social welfare staff (e.g. social workers, counsellors, therapists), legal experts (e.g. the police, lawyers, judge), and medical staff (e.g. doctors, nurses). These professionals, mentioned above, who work with domestic violence victims and survivors should continually update and educate themselves regarding current developments both nationally and internationally in every aspect of domestic violence. This includes policy reviews, legislative changes and any debate related to the subject. In addition, these individuals should regularly participate in training by government/organisations enhancing the provisions of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to improve communication skills as well as increase their knowledge

base about domestic violence. This can be achieved in several ways such as cross-training between organisations. By adopting these strategies, such professionals can work more effectively with victims of domestic violence as well as improve inter-agency relations through dialogues and networking.

Domestic violence is a problem that needs co-operation and co-ordination between all relevant agencies. Therefore, effective communication between agencies is imperative to combat this problem. Improving communications can lead to integration between different agencies, which would provide better quality of services to the victims of domestic violence, as agencies would be able to share resources and reduce the overlap of roles, thus increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide. In addition to this, agencies are able to work together to find solutions collectively to problems that they are unable address individually.

8.3.2 Further Recommendations for Raising Awareness through Education

Through my experience with this thesis, I believe that academic participation has a significant role to play in promoting change in the way domestic violence is addressed, as has been noted elsewhere. For instance, in a project looking specifically at issues of ‘outrage’ and how academic study, informed by local experience, can inform access to justice strategies in the UK and India, the combined knowledge and voices of academics, and public, private and third-party partners led to innovative access to justice strategies, both locally and on an international level (Boylan, Brammer, Krishnadas, Patel & Lingam, 2016). This kind of engaged academic work gives food for thought for Saudi Arabia, though of course a project of a similar kind would have to be tailored specifically to the country and the challenges it faces with regard to domestic violence. My suggestion would be to conduct a forum that consists of workshops, seminars, and debates all of which are comprised of voices of experience and observation. This forum would be led

by academics and researchers but also actively include representatives from the medical community, police force, the legal profession, judiciary, Ministry of Social Affairs, Shura Council, social work, charitable foundations and trusts, senior management staff from schools and universities, political activists and victims of domestic violence. By exchanging their knowledge and experiences with one another, it will lead to the respective cooperating community partners to gain a better understanding and insight into the difficulties and challenges they individually face. They would, thus, be able to collaboratively create more cohesive strategies when trying to help victims of domestic violence. A forum of this kind could also help academics and researchers provide a comprehensive report about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. Through such innovation in research, Saudi Arabian policy makers could appreciate the real need for immediate provision of social justice and make the necessary changes to the national policy regarding domestic violence.

The findings of this study suggest that one of the reasons why domestic violence against Saudi women continues is because they are uninformed about their rights and the problem of domestic violence itself. This problem can be addressed by increasing awareness through education across various platforms, as education plays a crucial role in changing the people's mind-set and improving society.

Education is key in tackling most social issues, as it is through education that awareness can be created providing tools necessary for self-sufficiency and independence. In England and Wales anyone under the age of 18 is required to be in full-time education or an apprenticeship (Condrón, 2007). It has been suggested education has contributed in equipping citizens, especially the females, with the necessary tools to lead an independent life instead of going straight into marriage to be fully dependent on males, which, as discussed in this thesis, serves as a breeding ground for domestic violence. Health and

social services and welfare provisions in every secondary school, in England and Wales, have also been imperative in providing the girl child with the knowledge needed to identify and report domestic violence. If the Saudi government could emulate a similar strategy, whilst taking into consideration the context of Saudi Arabia, it would go a long way in preventing, at a grassroots level, domestic violence against women.

Awareness of women's rights and domestic violence needs to begin from an early age through the education system itself. The topics of women's rights and domestic violence needs to be included in the curriculum from primary education to higher education. Furthermore, schools should organise day programmes that exclusively discuss the issue of women's rights and domestic violence by inviting speakers from the relevant sectors of professionals, such as police officers, lawyers, sociologists, psychologists and social workers, to explain the problem in more detail and arranging activities related to the topic. In higher education, women's rights and domestic violence could be made compulsory modules for a variety of disciplines, such as counselling, social work, psychology, education, law, nursing, medicine, and law enforcement. In addition to the curriculum, there could also be a compulsory work experience component where students would have to work in the field to get a comprehensive and practical understanding of the problem. Using these methods to educate students from an early age about women's rights and domestic violence will better equip them to handle issues related women's rights and domestic violence in the future.

Additional recommendations that utilise education to address the issues of women's rights and domestic violence, include establishing and investing in research centres focused exclusively on these subjects. The studies from these research centres could be presented on a regular basis to a wider audience through conferences and workshops on these issues. This will allow for the continuation of discussion and debate from a variety

of perspectives on the women's rights and domestic violence, whereby policy-makers will have a better understanding of the problems associated with these topics. It could therefore help policy-makers to revise existing policies and create new policies that can help improve the situation for women and society in general.

Further suggestions on how to educate women about their rights and the problems of domestic violence include authorising and empowering the media to courageously bring the issues to the forefront without fear or favour. This can be done using advertising campaigns via print media, such as billboards, newspapers, magazines and posters. Moreover, through television and radio networks, experts in the field of women's rights and domestic violence can discuss the issues openly thus increasing people's awareness about the problems women face.

Last, but not the least, social learning can be used to educate women about these issues as well. The government should establish community centres in every neighbourhood, where events and activities can be regularly organised to raise awareness about women's rights and laws regarding domestic violence, and also use this as a way to inform women about any facilities and resources that are now available to help and protect them from domestic violence.

8.3.3 Further Recommendations for the Development of Social Policy

First and foremost, in Saudi Arabia, the issues within the legal system needs to be taken into consideration. The crucial problem with the Saudi legal system is that there is no codification of the law. Currently, the laws and regulations governing the kingdom's criminal, civil and family courts are largely unwritten and therefore, codifying the legal system will bring more clarity and uniformity to judicial rulings. The findings also highlighted that the current legal system is too bureaucratic, which can hinder situations

that need immediate action such as getting quick solutions to end a domestic violence and free victims from violent marriages. Therefore, there should be policies and strategies in place, which would enable the legal system to take immediate action in urgent cases relating to domestic violence. In addition, there were suggestions from the participants that the Saudi courts need to replace the current committee designated to deal with marital disputes, as their primary objective is to reconcile married couples, even in the case of abuse. Instead, the courts should have committees that comprise professionals, such as psychiatrists, sociologists, medical doctors and Islamic academics, who can advise the court on adequate rulings and sentences about domestic violence cases. Furthermore, in Saudi Arabia, organisations that deal with domestic violence, both government and non-government, are not held accountable for any shortcomings. Therefore, setting up a monitoring body would be a way ensure and maintain that these organisations remain responsible, accountable and effective in their roles.

The findings of this study also outlined preventative measures against domestic violence that can be imposed through effective social policy in Saudi Arabia. At the moment, in the country, there are compulsory medical tests that men and women undergo before they can get married, which should now include psychological compatibility tests to ensure that couple are emotionally, sexually and mentally compatible. If the couple are found to be compatible, they could further be made to attend an agreed mandatory fixed term course and counselling sessions and provided with necessary literature about marriage, so they can understand their rights and responsibilities as well as how to handle difficult situations before they get married.

8.4 Emerging Themes for Further Investigation

The findings of this study derived many themes that could be further investigated, two of which are ‘women as a hindrance to their own freedom from violence’ and ‘tokenism in

Saudi Arabia', as discussed below.

8.4.1 Women as Hindrance to Themselves to be Free from Violence

One of the major themes that emerged from this study is that some Saudi women often place hurdles to free themselves from violence. This attitude is a product of the deeply embedded practices of patriarchy, which lead women to adopt the mistaken belief that men are better and superior to women. As such, some Saudi women believe that men are more suitable for leadership roles and belong in the public sphere, while women are better as caregivers and should be advised to prioritise their roles in the private sphere. Some Saudi women also believe that men are better equipped to handle the affairs of women and therefore they cannot exist without a man, and therefore make excuses for male violence against women. This theme should be investigated in more detail as this belief system is one of the reasons that allows for the continuation of domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

8.4.2 Tokenism in Saudi Arabia

The findings also highlighted another key theme, which was that female empowerment in Saudi Arabia was an act of tokenism, of which three notable examples were given. First was the appointment of Nurah al-Fayiz as the Deputy Minister of Education was noted as the most prominent example of tokenism, as it is believed that it was done with the intention of impressing the international community with the progress that Saudi Arabia had made in women's rights. However, Nurah al-Fayiz during her tenure did not bring about any positive change for women in the education system. Next was introduction of women into the Shura council, where the first criticism was regarding the small number of the women appointed, and this followed by the fact that these women were not elected by society. Although women have recently been permitted to work in

the passport office, it was as cited yet another example of tokenism. Despite having the same rank as their male counterpart, female passport officers do not have the authority to complete most procedures without consulting and receiving authorisation from the male officers. The issue of tokenism in Saudi Arabia requires further research and deeper investigation to find out whether female empowerment in Saudi Arabia truly exists or it is truly and purely an act of tokenism as it is being speculated when women are given the positions of authority.

8.5 Researcher's Future

As I have had a growing passion for the topic of domestic violence and I have been engaging with domestic violence against women as a subject of study since 2004, from taking professional courses related to the issues to conducting research about domestic violence against women at both an undergraduate and postgraduate level, this is a subject that has become very close to my heart and I am passionate about bringing forth the necessary changes to society. Even though I am not a victim of domestic violence, I truly empathise and sympathise with the plights of those who do suffer and want to use my knowledge in the subject and my abilities to help women victims of abuse by bringing this problem to the table, so the topic can be discussed openly and freely. My aspiration is to return to Saudi Arabia and through my position as a lecturer and an educator, raise awareness by conducting seminars and workshops, eventually culminating in something more tangible. In association with others who are as passionate about this subject matter as I am, I want to establish a research centre that is dedicated exclusively to the problem of domestic violence against women, where all research pertaining to the subject will be housed and discussed. The end of this thesis will hopefully be the beginning of my journey to make bigger dreams come true.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABC Australia (2016) '#IAmMyOwnGuardian petition to end male guardianship system kicks off in Saudi Arabia', *ABC Australia*, 27 September [Online] Available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-27/saudi-women-file-petition-to-end-male-guardianship-system/7880196> [Accessed on: 14th February 2017]
- Abadeer, A.S.Z. (2015) *Norms and Gender Discrimination in the Arab World*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Abou El Fadl, K. (2006) *The Search for Beauty in Islam: A Conference of the Books*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Abouammoh, A. Smith, L. & Duwais, A. (2014) A Review of Saudi Scholarship Programs to North American Higher Education Institutions. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(11), pp.41-48.
- Abrahams, N., Jewkes, R. & Laubsher, R. (1999) *I Do Not Believe in Democracy in the Home: Men's Relationships with and Abuse of Women*. Cape Town, South Africa: CERSA Medical Research Council.
- Abramsky, T., Watts, C.H., Garcia-Moreno, C., Devries, K., Kiss, L., Ellsberg, M., Jansen, H.A. & Heise, L. (2011) What factors are associated with recent intimate partner violence? Findings from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence. *BMC Public Health*, 11(1), p.109-136.
- Abu-Dayyeh, S. (2015) Path to progress proceeds at snail's pace for Saudi Arabian women. *The Guardian*, 4 September. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/sep/04/saudi-arabia-women-vote-elections-rights-driving> [Accessed 1 March 2017]
- Abudi, D. (2011) *Mothers and Daughters in Arab Women's Literature: The Family Frontier*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV
- Abu-Hilal, M.M., Aldhafri, S., Al-Bahrani, M. & Kamali, M. (2016) *The Arab Culture*

and the Arab Self: Emphasis on Gender. In: R.B. King & A.B.I. Bernardo, (eds), (2016) *The Psychology of Asian Learners*. Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media Singapore. Chapter 8.

Abugideiri, S.E. (2005). A perspective on domestic violence in the Muslim community. *Working Together*, Fall Issue, p.1-4 [online]. Available at: <http://w.faihttrustinstitute.org/resources/articles/DV-in-Muslim-Community.pdf> [Accessed on 28 February 2017]

Abu-Laban, Y. (2008) Becoming A Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada By IRENE BLOEMRAAD. *Canadian Public Administration*, 51(3), pp.527-529.

Abu-Laban, Y. (2009) Gendering the Nation-State: An Introduction. In: Y. Abu-Laban (ed), (2009) *Gendering the Nation-State: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives*. Vancouver: UBC Press. pp.1-18.

Adams, A.E., Sullivan, C.M., Bybee, D. & Greeson, M.R. (2008) Development of the Scale of Economic Abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 14(5), pp.563-588.

Adinkrah, M. (2010) Criminalizing Rape Within Marriage: Perspectives of Ghanaian University Students. *International Journal of Offender Therapy & Comparative Criminology*, 55(6), pp. 982-1010.

Adjah, E.S.O. & Agbemafle, I. (2016) Determinants of domestic violence against women in Ghana. *BMC Public Health*, 16(1), p.368-377.

Afifi, E.M., Al-Muhaideb, N.S., Hadish, N.F., Ismail, F.I. & Al-Qeamy, F.M. (2011) Domestic violence and its impact on married women's health in Eastern Saudi Arabia. *Saudi Medical Journal*, 32(6), pp.612-620.

Agnihotri, A.K., Agnihotri, M., Jeebun, N. & Purwar, B. (2006) Domestic violence against women—An international concern. *Torture: Quarterly Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture*, 16(1), pp.30-40.

Ajeeban, S. (2016) Shura calls «Justice» to educate women about their rights and legal legitimacy. *Al-Jazirah*, 5 October. [online] Available at: <<http://www.al-jazirah.com/2016/20161005/ln43.htm>> [Accessed 26 February 2017]

Al Alhareth, Y., Al Alhareth, Y. & Al Dighrir, I. (2015) Review of women and society in Saudi Arabia. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 3(2), pp.121-125.

Al Alhareth, Y., Al Dighrir, I. & Al Alhareth, Y. (2015) Review of Women's Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 3(1), pp.10-15.

Al Arabiya News (2011) '60% of Saudi men financially exploit their wives: study', *Al Arabiya News*, 25 February. [online] Available at: <https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/02/25/139213.html> [Access 10 February 2017].

Al Dosary, A.H. (2016) Health impact of domestic violence against Saudi women: cross sectional study. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 10(2), p.165-173.

Al Debs, F. (2014) "Judiciary" issues a "historic" decision ... granting divorced women "jurisdiction" over their children. *Alhayat*, 7th September. [online] <<http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/4484319/--منح-----تاريخياً-قرار-القضاء-يصدر-قراراً-تاريخياً-منح>> [Accessed 21 June 2017]

Al-Ghanmi, B. (2015) We have the power to withdraw the state from the parents, OKAZ, 30 January. [online] <<http://okaz.com.sa/article/1040711/>> Accessed 21 June 2017

Al Jaber, M. (2013) Social protection centres... «The safety when you down from the near one»!". *Al Riyadh*, 27 January. [online] Available at: <<http://www.alriyadh.com/805023?> [Accessed 23 February 2017].

Al Jazeera (2013) Saudi Arabia outlaws domestic violence: Landmark legislation is aimed at protecting women, children and domestic workers against domestic abuse, official says. *Al Jazeera*, 30 August. [online] Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/08/20138290272119559.html> [Accessed 23 February 2017]

Al-Rashid, A. (2014) The longest court cases .. divorce, custody, khula '!, *Alriyadh*, 8 August. [online] <<http://www.alriyadh.com/959085>> [Accessed 21 June 2017]

Alriyadh (2009) Minister of Social Affairs submitted a working paper for the Third

Arab Regional Conference on Child Protection: Kingdom has taken several new measures to curb the phenomenon of violence. *Alriyadh*, 5 March. [online] Available at: <<http://www.alriyadh.com/413831>> [Accessed 23 February 2017].

Alriyadh (2013) Examples of four court rulings in custody, *Alriyadh*, 16 June. [online] <<http://www.alriyadh.com/844340>> [Accessed 21 June 2017]

Al Sayed, A. (2010) Suhaila Zainal Abidin: it reached Saudi Arabia, which deals with women as a minor at the age of 60 years explained 'Misyaaar' Impermissible... it stressed that women's freedom is more important than driving a car. *Al-Arabiya News*, 2 June. [online] Available at: <<http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/06/02/110263.html>> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Al Serkal, F., Hussein, H., El Sawaf, E., Al Faisal, W. & Wasfy, A. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence against Women in Dubai: Prevalence, Associated Factors and Health Consequences, 2012-2013. *Middle East Journal of Psychiatry and Alzheimers*, 5(3), pp.19-27.

Al Sibai, B. (2015) Women in the reign of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz. *Okaz*, 23 January. [online] Available at: <<http://okaz.com.sa/article/970266/>> [Accessed 26 February 2017]

Al-Atrushi, H.H., Al-Tawil, N.G., Shabila, N.P. & Al-Hadithi, T.S. (2013) Intimate partner violence against women in the Erbil city of the Kurdistan region, Iraq. *BMC Women's Health*, 13(1), p.37-46.

Al-Badayneh, D.M. (2012) Violence Against Women in Jordan. *Journal of Family Violence*, 27(5), pp.369-379.

Aldraehim, M.S., Edwards, S.L., Watson, J.A. & Chan, T. (2012) Cultural impact on e-service use in Saudi Arabia: The role of nepotism. *International Journal for Infonomics*, 5(3/4), pp.655-662.

Al-Essa, N. (2012) Issuing 'national identity card' did not end the suffering and remained waiting 'for the identifier' ..Women cannot afford to rent a house...!. *Al Riyadh News*, 16 September. [online] Available at:

<<http://www.alriyadh.com/768452>> [Accessed 21 February 2017]

Al-Ghalib,E. (2004) Justice Will be Done, NHRA Tells Rania. *Arab News*, 14 April.
[online] Available at: <<http://www.arabnews.com/node/247621>> [Accessed 27 February 2017]

Al-Ghamdi, A. (2015) «Social Affairs»: the security authorities ignore social protection reports... They do not respect our role. *Al Riyadh*, 18 January. [online]
Available at: http://www.alriyadh.com/1014096_1032138 [Accessed 23 February 2017]

Alhabdan, S. (2015) “Domestic Violence in Saudi Arabia”, Doctor of Juridical Science, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, Bloomington, Indiana. [online]
Available at: <http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/etd/27> [Accessed 16 March 2017]

Al-Hibri, A.Y. (2003) An Islamic Perspective on Domestic Violence. *Fordham International Law Journal*, 27(1), p.195- 224.

Ali, S.K. (2015) Domestic Violence Encountered among Kurdish Women. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(3), pp.27-33.

Ali, S.R., Liu, W.M. & Humedian, M. (2004) Islam 101: Understanding the religion and therapy implications. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 35(6), pp.635-642.

Alkahtani, H., Dawson, R. & Lock, R. (2013) The impact of culture on Saudi Arabian information systems security. In: E. Georgiadou, M. Ross, & G. Staples, (eds). (2013) *Proceedings of the 21st International Conference on Software Quality Management (SQM 2013)*. Southampton: Quality Comes of Age. pp. 201 - 210.

Alkhateeb, M.B. & Abugideiri, S.E. (2007) Introduction. In: M.B. Alkhateeb & S.E. Abugideiri, (eds). (2007) *Change From Within: Diverse Perspectives on Domestic Violence in Muslim Communities*. Great Falls, VA: Peaceful Families Project. pp.13 - 30.

Allen, M. (2012) Narrative Therapy for Women Experiencing Domestic Violence:

Supporting Women's Transitions from Abuse to Safety. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Almodallala, H. (2016) Know Your Rights Skyscape Medical Resource, version 24, mobile app, viewed 14 February 2017 < <https://itunes.apple.com/ie/app/a-rfy-hqwqk/id1128209098?mt=8> e>.

Almosaed, N.F. & Alazab, S. (2015) Why Stay? Saudi Women's Adaption's to Violence. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5(10), pp.146-162.

Almosaed, N.F. (2004) Violence against Women: A Cross-cultural Perspective. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 24(1), pp.67–88.

Almosaed, N.F. (2008) Money and Power in Saudi family. *Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Arts & Humanities*, 6(2), pp.61-87.

Al-Mukhtar, R. (2012) Empowering women: Kingdom leads the way. *Arab News*, 16 May. [online] Available at: <http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/empowering-women-kingdom-leads-way> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Al-Mukhtar, R. (2014) Women no longer need identifiers at Saudi courts. *Arab News*, February 14. [online] Available at: <http://www.arabnews.com/news/524671> [Accessed 16 March 2017]

AlMunajjed, M. (1997). *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc.

Almuneef, M. & Al-Eissa, M. (2011). Preventing child abuse and neglect in Saudi Arabia: are we ready?. *Annals of Saudi Medicine*, 31(6), p.635-640.

Al-Oadah, S. (n.d.). "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women..." | *IslamToday - English*. [online] Available at: <http://en.islamtoday.net/artshow-264-3151.htm> [Accessed 16 March 2017].

Alsaleh, S. (2012) Gender Inequality in Saudi Arabia: Myth and Reality. *International Proceedings of Economics Development & Research*, 39, pp.123-130.

Alsehaimi, A. & Alanazi, A. (2015) The Nature of Domestic Violence against of

Children in Saudi Arabia Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Psychological Abnormalities*, 4(3), pp.146-149.

Alshahry, M. (2014) Maha Muneef «alhayat»: I learned to face of crises through my dealings with the health sector. *Al Hayat*, 17 April. [online] Available at: <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/1837793/> [Accessed 23 February 2017]

Al-Shehry, A., Rogerson, S., Fairweather, N. B., & Prior, M. (2006) *The Motivations for Change Towards E-Government Adoption: Case Studies from Saudi Arabia*. [Paper presented at the eGovernment Workshop 06]. Brunel University, 11 September 2006.

Al-Sulaiman, K. (2015) Provide wives with ‘family cards’!. *Saudi Gazette*, 13 November. [online] Available at: <http://saudigazette.com.sa/opinion/local-viewpoint/provide-wives-with-family-cards/> [Accessed 16 March 2017]

Alsuwaida, N. (2016) Women's Education in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of International Education Research*, 12(4), p.111-118.

Alzahrani, T.A., Abaalkhail, B.A. & Ramadan, I.K. (2016) Prevalence of intimate partner violence and its associated risk factors among Saudi female patients attending the primary healthcare centres in Western Saudi Arabia. *Saudi Medical Journal*, 37(1), p.96-99.

Ammar, N.H. (2007) Wife battery in Islam: A comprehensive understanding of interpretations. *Violence Against Women*, 13(5), pp.516-526.

Amnesty International Ireland (2005) *Justice and Accountability / Stop Violence Against Women*. [pdf] Dublin: Amnesty International Ireland. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Justice-and-Accountability-Stop-Violence-Against-Women.pdf> [Accessed 16 March 2017]

Amzat, J. & Grandi, G. (2011) Gender Context of Personalism in Bioethics. *Developing World Bioethics*, 11(3), pp.136-145.

Andrews, P.E. (1998) Violence Against Women in South Africa: The role of culture and the limitations of the law. *Temple Political & Civil Rights Law Review*, 8(1), p.425-457.

- Antai, D. (2011) Controlling behaviour, power relations within intimate relationships and intimate partner physical and sexual violence against women in Nigeria. *BMC Public Health*, 11(1), pp.511-522.
- Antai, D., Oke, A., Braithwaite, P. & Lopez, G.B. (2014) The Effect of Economic, Physical, and Psychological Abuse on Mental Health: A Population-Based Study of Women in the Philippines. *International Journal of Family Medicine*, 2014, Article ID 852317, pp.1-11.
- Arab News. (2015) Woman ends life at Makkah shelter. *Arab News*, 26 August. [online] Available at: <http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/797071> [Accessed 6 January 2017].
- Arends-Kuenning, M. & Amin, S. (2001) Women's capabilities and the right to education in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 15(1), pp.125-142.
- Asiyanbola, A. (2005) *Patriarchy, male dominance, the role and women empowerment in Nigeria*. [Paper presented at the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP/UIESP) XXV International Population Conference Tours]. France, 18-23 July, 2005.
- Babu, B.V. & Kar, S.K. (2009) Domestic violence against women in Eastern India: A population-based study on prevalence and related issues. *BMC Public Health*, 9(1), pp.129-144.
- Badawi, F. (2014a) «Justice»: the training of 150 judges to deal with the «domestic violence» in Saudi courts. *Al Hayat*, 30 October. [online] Available at: <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/5364824/---العدل---تهيئة-150-قاضياً-للتعامل-مع---> <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/5364824/---العدل---تهيئة-150-قاضياً-للتعامل-مع---> [Accessed 23 February 2017]
- Badawi, F. (2014b) Minister of Justice directs the courts to inform the «social affairs» on domestic violence issues. *Al Hayat*, 25 May. [online]. Available at: <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/2588817/-وزير-العدل-يوجه-المحاكم-بإبلاغ-الشؤون-> <http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/2588817/-وزير-العدل-يوجه-المحاكم-بإبلاغ-الشؤون-> [Accessed 23 February 2017]
- Badawi, J.A. (1995) *Gender Equity in Islam: Basic Principles*. Plainfield, Indiana: American Trust Publications.

- Bagshaw, D., Chung, D., Couch, M., Lilburn, S. & Wadham, B. (2000) *Reshaping Responses to Domestic Violence: Final Report*. [pdf] Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia: University of South Australia. Available at: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.452.2467&rep=rep1&type=pdf&usg=AFQjCNEa5amaFq6FQd4scsD_eJLO5jZ-cg&cad=rja [Access 7 March 2017]
- Barakat, H. (1993) *The Arab world: Society, Culture, and State*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Barnawi, F.H. (2015) Prevalence and Risk Factors of Domestic Violence Against Women Attending Primary Care Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 32(8), pp.1171-1186.
- Bates, E.A. (2012) “The Relationship of Men’s and Women’s Partner Violent to Personality and Psychopathology”, Doctor of Philosophy, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, Lancashire. [online] Available at: [http://clock.uclan.ac.uk/3146/1/Bates_Elizabeth_Final_e-Thesis_\(Master_Copy\).pdf](http://clock.uclan.ac.uk/3146/1/Bates_Elizabeth_Final_e-Thesis_(Master_Copy).pdf) [Accessed 16 March 2017]
- BBC News (2013) Saudi Arabia’s king appoints women to Shura Council. *BBC News*, 11 January. [online] Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20986428> [Accessed 1 March 2017]
- Becker, S. (1991) Treating the American Expatriate in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 20(2), pp.86-93.
- Behrens, J.T. & Smith, M.L. (1996) Data and data analysis. In: D.C. Berliner & R.C. Calfee (eds), (1996) *Handbook of Educational Psychology*, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc. pp.945-989.
- Bekhouche, Y., Hausmann, R., Tyson, L.D. & Zahidi, S. (2013) *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum. [online] Available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf > [Accessed 28 February 2017]
- Bendall, C. (2010) The domestic violence epidemic in South Africa: Legal & Practical

Remedies. *Women's Studies*, 39(2), pp.100-118.

Bensley, L., Van Eenwyk, J. & Simmons, K.W. (2003) Childhood family violence history and women's risk for intimate partner violence and poor health. *American Journalist of Preventive Medicine*, 25(1), pp.38-44.

Berg, B. & Lune, H. (2011) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 8th Edition. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Berman, J. (2004) Domestic sexual assault: A new opportunity for court response. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 55(3), pp.23-34.

Bessel, R. (2015) *Violence: A Modern Obsession*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Birbili, M. (2000) Translating from one language to another. *Social Research Update* 31, University of Surrey. [online] Available at: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU31.html> [Accessed 16 March 2017]

Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011) The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. [pdf] Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf [Accessed 7 March 2017]

Blair, D. (2013) Saudi Arabian domestic violence campaign shows woman in niqab with black eye. *The Telegraph*, 29th April. [online] Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/saudi-arabia/10026185/Saudi-Arabian-domestic-violence-campaign-shows-woman-in-niqab-with-black-eye.html> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Bohlaiga, A., Al-Kakhli, B., Al-Mattar, H., Al-Bahrani, I., Al-Lowaim, K., Al-Baqshi, M., Al-Harhi, N., Al-Harbi, R., Al-Moumen, S., Al-Hammad, Z. & Al-Nasser, Z. (2014) Prevalence and Risk Factor of Abuse against Married Women in Eastern Saudi Arabia. *Journal of General Practice*, 2(2), pp.150-156.

- Boland, V. (2015) Ireland: Embracing Change. *Financial Times*, 29th April. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ft.com/content/45e2c422-e377-11e4-aa97-00144feab7de>> [Accessed 24 January 2018]
- Boonzaier, F.A. & Van Schalkwyk, S. (2011) Narrative Possibilities: Poor women of Color and the Complexities of Intimate Partner Violence. *Violence Against Women*, 17(2), pp.267-286.
- Bouachrine, I (2014) *Women and Islam: Myths, Apologies and the Limits of Feminist Critique*. Landham, Maryland: Lexington Books
- Bowman, C.G. (2003) Domestic violence: Does the African context demand a different approach?. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 26(5), pp.473-491.
- Boy, A. & Kulczycki, A. (2008). What We Know About Intimate Partner Violence in the Middle East and North Africa. *Violence Against Women*, 14(1), pp.53-70
- Boylan, J., Brammer, A., Krishnadas, J., Patel, P., & Lingam, L. (2016) Time for justice, time for change! The place of academic and community partnerships in promoting local and global rights and challenging injustice. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 10(4), pp. 304-315.
- Bragg, H.L. (2003) *Child Protection in Families Experiencing Domestic Violence*. Child Abuse and Neglect User Manual Series. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau & Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. [pdf] Available at: http://secure.ce-credit.com/articles/100938/Child_Protection_domesticviolence.pdf [Accessed 16 March 2017]
- Browning, M. (2013) *Risky Marriage: HIV and Intimate Relationships in Tanzania*. Plymouth: Lexington Books
- Btoush, R. & Haj-Yahia, M.M. (2008) Attitudes of Jordanian society toward wife abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(11), pp.1531-1554.
- Bukhari, F. & Denman, B. (2013) Student scholarships in Saudi Arabia: Implications and opportunities for overseas engagement. In: L. Smith & A. Abouammoh,

(eds), (2013) *Higher Education in Saudi Arabia: Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. Ch.14

Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers (2013) *Law of Protection from Abuse*.

[online] Available at:

<<https://www.boe.gov.sa/ViewSystemDetails.aspx?lang=en&SystemID=309&VersionID=287>> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Butler, T.T. (2015) The Times: Are They a-Changin'? Saudi Law Finally Addresses Domestic Violence with Its Regulation on Protection from Abuse. *Iowa Law Review*, 100(3), pp.1233-1257. [online] Available at:

<<https://ilr.law.uiowa.edu/assets/Uploads/ILR-100-3-Butler.pdf>> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Buzawa, E.S. & Buzawa, C.G. (2003) *Domestic Violence: The Criminal Justice Response*. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Carli, L.L. (2001) Gender and social influence. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), pp.725-41.

Carter, M.J. (2014) Gender socialisation and identity theory. *Social Sciences*, 3(2), pp.242-263.

Casper, L. & Bianchi, S. (2002). *Continuity & change in the American family*. 1st Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Castells, M. (1997) *The Power of Identity (The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Volume II)*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Charmaz, K. (1995) Identity dilemmas of chronically ill men. In: Sabo, D., Gordon, D.F. (Eds.), *Men's Health and Illness: Gender, Power and the Body*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 266-291.

Chhikara, P., Jakhar, J., Malik, A., Singla, K. & Dhatarwal, S.K. (2013) Review Research Paper Domestic Violence: The Dark Truth of Our Society. *Journal of Indian Academy of Forensic Medicine*, 35(1), pp.971-973.

Christopher, F.S. & Sprecher, S. (2000) Sexuality in marriage, dating, and other

relationships: A decade review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(4), pp.999-1017.

Clark, C.J., Hill, A., Jabbar, K. & Silverman, J.G. (2009) Violence During Pregnancy in Jordan Its Prevalence and Associated Risk and Protective Factors. *Violence Against Women*, 15(6), pp.720-735.

Cochran, C. (2009) Women and the Law in Islamic Societies: Legal Responses to Domestic Violence in Saudi Arabia and Morocco. *The Fletcher School Online Journal on Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization*, Spring 2009, pp.1-11.

Coghlan, D. (2003) Practitioner Research for Organisational Knowledge Mechanistic- and Organistic-Oriented Approaches to Insider Action Research. *Management Learning*, 34(4), pp.451-463.

Condron, S. (2007) School leaving age goes upto 18. *The Telegraph*, 12th January [online] Available at: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1539275/School-leaving-age-goes-up-to-18.html>> [Accessed 7 August 2018]

Cohen, R. & Kennedy, P. (2007) *Global Sociology*. 2nd Edition. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press.

Conroy, A.A. (2014) Gender, power, and intimate partner violence: A study on couples from rural Malawi. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(5), pp.866-888.

Cook, D., Burton, M., Robinson, A. & Vallely, C. (2004) *Evaluation of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts/Fast Track Systems*. London: Crown Prosecution Service. [online] Available at: <<https://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/specialistdvcourts.pdf>> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Corrie, T. & McGuire, M. (2013) *Economic Abuse: Searching for Solutions*. [pdf] Victoria, Australia: Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service. Available at: <https://www.kildonan.org.au/assets/Uploads/publications/Economic-Abuse-Final-Report.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017]

Cosc (2010) *National strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-*

2014: *Executive Summary*. Dublin: The Department of Justice and Equality.
[online] Available at:
<http://www.cosc.ie/en/COSC/Final%20Electronic%20NS%20Ex%20Summary%205%20March.pdf/Files/Final%20Electronic%20NS%20Ex%20Summary%205%20March.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Courtenay, W.H. (2000) Constructions of masculinity and their influence on men's well-being: a theory of gender and health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 50(10), pp.1385-1401.

Crespi, I. (2004) Socialisation and gender roles within the family: A study on adolescents and their parents in Great Britain. *The Annals of MCFA, Volume III*. [online] Available at: <http://mariecurie.org/annals/volume3/crespi.pdf> [Accessed 16 March 2017]

Creswell, J.W. (2006) *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among the Five Approaches*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Crisera, V. (2014) *Code of Ethics for Healthcare Practitioners*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: The Saudi Commission for Health Specialties. [online] Available at <<https://www.iau.edu.sa/sites/default/files/resources/5039864724.pdf>> [Accessed 10 January 2018]

Cuddy, A.J.C., Crotty, S., Chong, J., & Norton, M.I. (2010) Men as Cultural Ideals: How Culture Shapes Gender Stereotypes, *Harvard Business School Working Paper*, No. 10-097. Boston, MA.

Cullen-Dupont, K. (2000) *Encyclopedia of Women's History in America*. 2nd Edition. New York, NY: Facts on File, Inc.

Damarin, S. & Erchick, D. (2010) Toward Clarifying the Meanings of "Gender" in Mathematics Education Research. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 41(4), pp.310-323.

Damen, L. (1987) *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension on the Language Classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Danby, S. and Farrell, A. (2005) Opening the Research Conversation. In: A. Farrell, ed

(2005) *Ethical Research with Children*. New York: Maidenhead. pp.49-67.

David, M. & Sutton, C. (2004). *Social Research: The Basics*. London: SAGE Publications.

Deeb, M.J. (2005) Oman. In: S. Nazir & L. Tomppert (eds) (2005) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Citizenship & Justice*. Oxford, Oxfordshire: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc

Deihim, M. & Homball, K. (2015) Women's Rights in the Persian Gulf: Some Relations. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 4(2), pp.119-130.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd Edition. London: SAGE Publications.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2007) *National Women's Strategy 2007-2016*. Dublin: The Stationery Office. [online] Available at: <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB07000395> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Department of Statistics [Jordan] and Macro International Inc. (2008) *Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2007*. Calverton, Maryland, USA: Department of Statistics and Macro International Inc. [pdf] Available at: <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR209/FR209.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017].

Deribe, K., Woldemichael, K., Bernard, N. & Yakob, B. (2009) Gender difference in HIV status disclosure among HIV positive service users. *East African Journal of Public Health*, 6(3), pp.248-255.

Deshmukh-Ranadive, J. (2005) Measuring empowerment: A gender analysis of household and family dynamics. Centre for Women's Development Studies. In: D. Narayan, (ed), (2005) *Measuring Empowerment: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. pp.103-121.

Dewey, C. (2013) Saudi Arabia launches powerful ad campaign against domestic violence. *The Washington Post*, 1 May. [online] Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/05/01/saudi-arabia-launches-powerful-ad-campaign-against-domestic-violence/> [Accessed

1 March 2017]

- Dhami, S. & Sheikh, A. (2000) The Muslim family: predicament and promise. *Western Journal of Medicine*, 173(5), p.352.
- Dibiase, R. & Gunnoe, J. (2004) Gender and culture differences in touching behaviour. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144(1), pp.49-62.
- Dietz, M.G. (2003) Current Controversies in Feminist Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6(1), pp.399-431.
- Dobash, R.E. & Dobash, R. (1979) *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Doherty, D. & Berglund, D. (2008) *Psychological Abuse: A Discussion Paper*. National Clearinghouse on Family Violence. [online] Available at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sfv-avf/sources/fv/fv-psych-abus/index-eng.php> [Accessed 7 March 2017].
- Douki, S., Nacef, F., Belhadj, A., Bouasker, A. & Ghachem, R. (2003) Violence against women in Arab and Islamic countries. *Archives of Women's Mental Health*, 6(3), pp.165-171.
- Doumato, E.A. (2010) Saudi Arabia. In: S. Kelly & J. Breslin, eds (2010) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. pp.1-33. [online] Available at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Saudi%20Arabia.pdf [Accessed 28 February 2017].
- Dray, J.A. (1987) International Conflicts in Child Custody: United States v. Saudi Arabia. *Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review*, 9(2), p.413-443.
- Drury, S. (2015) Education: The Key to Women's Empowerment in Saudi Arabia?. *Middle East Institute*, 30 July. [online] Available at: <http://www.mei.edu/content/article/education-key-women%E2%80%99s-empowerment-saudi-arabia> [Accessed 1 March 2017].

- Dubin, R. (1978) *Theory Building: A Practical Guide to the Construction and Testing of Theoretical Models*. 2nd Revised Ed. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Dwyer, S.C. & Buckle, J.L. (2009) The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), pp.54-60.
- Engineer, A.A. (2004) *The Rights of Women in Islam*. 3rd Edition. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Engineer, A.A. (2011) Rights of Women in Muslim societies. *Socio-Legal Review*, 7, pp.44-70.
- El-Zanaty, F. & Way, A. (2006) *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2005*. Cairo, Egypt: Ministry of Health and Population, National Population Council, El-Zanaty and Associates, and ORC Macro.
- Edleson, J.L. (1999) Children's witnessing of adult domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14(8), pp.839-870.
- Eldoseri, H.M., Tufts, K.A., Zhang, Q. & Fish, J.N. (2014) Adverse health effects of spousal violence among women attending Saudi Arabian primary health-care clinics. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 20(11), pp.717-25.
- Eltahawy, M. (2015) *Headscarves and Hymens: Why the Middle East Needs a Sexual Revolution*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Ellsberg, M. & Heise, L. (2005) *Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists*. Washington DC, United States: World Health Organisation. [online] Available at: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/42966/1/9241546476_eng.pdf [Accessed 7 March 2017].
- Ellsberg, M., Caldera, T., Herrera, A., Winkvist, A. & Kullgren, G. (1999) Domestic violence and emotional distress among Nicaraguan women: results from a population-based study. *American Psychologist*, 54(1), pp.30-36.
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2014) *Violence Against Women: An*

- EU-Wide Survey*. Vienna, Austria: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Available at: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf. [Accessed 18 January 2017].
- Fagan, J. (1996) *The Criminalization of Domestic Violence: Promises and Limits*. Maryland: National Institute of Justice. [online] Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/crimdom.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2017].
- Fageeh, W. (2014) Factors associated with domestic violence: a cross-sectional survey among women in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. *BMJ Open*, 4(2), pp.1-8.
- Fassi, H.A. (2012) Family Counts, and Quick Solutions, *Alriyadh*, 10 June. [online] <<http://www.alriyadh.com/742997>> [Accessed 21 June 2017].
- Fatany, S. (2015) Say no to violence against women!. *Saudi Gazette*, 28 November. [online] Available at: <http://saudigazette.com.sa/opinion/say-no-to-violence-against-women/> [Accessed 16 March 2017].
- Fawole, O.I. (2008) Economic Violence to Women and Girls: Is It Receiving the Necessary Attention?. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse: A Review Journal*, 9(3), pp.167-177.
- Fernández, M. (2006) Cultural beliefs and domestic violence. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1087(1), pp.250-260.
- Fikree, F.F. & Bhatti, L.I. (1999) Domestic violence and health of Pakistani women. *International Journal of Gynaecology & Obstetrics*, 65(2), pp.195-201.
- Filep, B. (2009) Interview and translation strategies: coping with multilingual settings and data. *Social Geography*, 4(1), pp.59-70.
- Findlow, S. (2013) Higher Education and Feminism in the Arab Gulf. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34(1), pp.112-131.
- Firebaugh, G. (2003) *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Flood, M. (2006) The Debate Over Men's Versus Women's Family Violence. *AIIA (Australian Institute of Judicial Administration) Family Violence Conference*,

Adelaide, 23-24 February.

Floyd, K., Schrodtt, P., Erbert, L.A. & Tretheway, A. (2017) *Exploring Communication Theory: Making Sense of Us*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Follingstad D.R., Coyne S. & Gambone, L. (2005) A representative measure of psychological aggression and its severity. *Violence and Victims*, 20(1), pp.25-38.

Follingstad, D.R. & DeHart, D.D. (2000) Defining Psychological Abuse of Husbands Toward Wives: Contexts, Behaviours, and Typologies. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15(9), pp.891-920.

Foran, H.M. (2013) *Family Problems and Family Violence*. 1st Edition. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

Fourcroy, J. (2006). Search results for 'custom, culture, and tradition- what role do they play in a woman's sexuality?'. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 3(6), pp.954–959.

Freccero, J., Harris, L., Carnay, M. & Taylor, C. (2011) *Responding to Sexual Violence: Community Approaches*. (Sexual Violence & Accountability Project Working Paper Series). Berkley, California: Human Rights Centre. [online] Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8d3c/f357954a6362c1365fd1ca21cad4b767df17.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017]

Ganguly-Scrase, R. (2003) Paradoxes of globalization, liberalization, and gender equality: The worldviews of the lower middle class in West Bengal, India. *Gender & Society*, 17(4), pp.544-566.

Ganley, A.L. (1995). Understanding Domestic Violence. *Improving the Health Care Response to Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual for Health Care Providers*, pp.15-42. [online] Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8581/78656243a73d46927025b4fd58287d1bf578.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017]

Garcia-Moreno, C., Heise, L., Jansen, H.A., Ellsberg, M. & Watts, C. (2005) Violence against women. *Science*, 310(5752), pp.1282-1283.

- Garcia-Moreno, C., Jansen, H.A.F.M., Ellsberg, M., Heise, L. & Watts, C. (2005) WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses. Geneva, World Health Organisation. [online] Available at: <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2005/924159358X_eng.pdf> [Accessed 28 February 2017]
- Gelles, R.J. (1985) Family violence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 11(1), pp.347-367.
- Gelles, R.J. (1997) *Intimate Violence in Families*, 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Gesinde, A. (2013) Emotional isolation, degradation and exploitation as correlates of adolescents self-concept in Nigeria. *International Journal of Psychology & Counselling*, 5(3), pp.45-52.
- Ghanim, D. (2009) *Gender and Violence in the Middle East*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Gharaibeh, M. & Oweis, A. (2009) Why do Jordanian women stay in an abusive relationship: Implications for health and social well-being. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 41(4), pp.347-384.
- Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E. & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal*, 204(6), pp.291-295.
- Giorgi, A. (1989) Some theoretical and practical issues regarding the psychological phenomenological method. *Saybrook Review*, 7(2), pp.71-85.
- Goldstein, N. (2010) *Religion and the State*. New York: Facts On File.
- Gould, C. (1988) *Rethinking Democracy: Freedom and Social Co-operation in Politics, Economy, and Society*. 1st Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grabe, S. (2010) Promoting Gender Equality: The Role of Ideology, Power, and Control in the Link Between Land Ownership and Violence in Nicaragua. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 10(1), pp.146-170.

- Gridley, H. (2016) *Inquiry into Domestic Violence and Gender Inequality*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Human Rights Commission. [online] Available at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=616c80fd-9f8d-4f90-8e71-202e8bea67f8&subId=411685> [Accessed 8 March 2017]
- Griffith, R. (2014). Government implementation of domestic violence protection measures nationwide. *British Journal of Community Nursing*, 19(6), pp.302-306.
- Grigsby, E. (2012) *Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*. 5th Edition. Belmont, CA: Cengage Advantage Books.
- Grose, R.G. and Grabe, S., 2014. The explanatory role of relationship power and control in domestic violence against women in Nicaragua: A feminist psychology analysis. *Violence against women*, 20(8), pp.972-993.
- Haddad, L.G., Shotar, A., Younger, J.B., Alzyoud, S. & Bouhaidar, C.M. (2011) Screening for domestic violence in Jordan: validation of an Arabic version of a domestic violence against women questionnaire. *International Journal of Women's Health*, 3(3), pp.79-86.
- Hague, G. (2005) Domestic Violence Survivors' Forums in the UK: Experiments in Involving Abused Women in Domestic Violence Services and Policy-making. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 14(3), pp.191-203.
- Hajjar, L. (2004) Religion, State Power, and Domestic Violence in Muslim Societies: A Framework for Comparative Analysis. *Law and Social Inquiry*, 29(1), pp.1-38.
- Haj-Yahia, M.M. (1998a) Beliefs about Wife Beating Among Palestinian Women: The Influence of Their Patriarchal Ideology. *Violence Against Women*, 4(5), pp.533-558.
- Haj-Yahia, M.M. (1998b) A patriarchal perspective of beliefs about wife beating among Palestinian men from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. *Journal of Family Issues*, 19(5), pp.595-621.
- Haj-Yahia, M.M. (2000) Wife abuse and battering in the sociocultural context of Arab society. *Family Process*, 39(2), pp.237-255.

- Haj-Yahia, M.M. (2002a) The impact of wife abuse on marital relations as revealed by the second Palestinian National Survey on Violence Against Women. *Journal of Family Psychology, 16*(3), p.273-285.
- Haj-Yahia, M.M. (2002b) Attitudes of Arab women toward different patterns of coping with wife abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*(7), pp.721-745.
- Haj-Yahia, M.M. (2003) Beliefs about wife beating among Arab men from Israel: The influence of their patriarchal ideology. *Journal of Family Violence, 18*(4), pp.193-206.
- Haj-Yahia, M. M. (2005) Can people's patriarchal ideology predict their beliefs about wife abuse? The case of Jordanian men. *Journal of Community Psychology, 33*(5), 545-567.
- Haj-Yahia, M.M. (2013) Attitudes of Palestinian Physicians Toward Wife Abuse Their Definitions, Perceptions of Causes, and Perceptions of Appropriate Interventions. *Violence Against Women, 19*(3), pp.376-399.
- Haj-Yahia, M.M., Wilson, R.M. & Naqvi, S.A.M. (2012) Justification, perception of severity and harm, and criminalization of wife abuse in the Palestinian society. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*(10), pp.1932-1958.
- Halai, N. (2007) Making use of bilingual interview data: Some experiences from the field. *The Qualitative Report, 12*(3), p.344-355.
- Hall, S. (1992) The Question of Culture Identity. In: S. Hall, S, D. Heled & T. McGrew, (eds), (1992) *Modernity and its Future*. Polity Press: Cambridge.
- Hassan, F. (2009) *Egypt Violence Against Women Study: Summary of Findings*. [online] National Council for Women, Cairo, Egypt. <at: https://www.cepal.org/mujer/noticias/paginas/7/42837/internal_link_EGYPT_VIOLENCE.pdf>Accessed [Accessed 16 January 2018]
- Abu-Hilal, M.M., Aldhafri, S., Al-Bahrani, M. & Kamali, M. (2016) The Arab Culture and the Arab Self: Emphasis on Gender. In: R.B. King & A.B.I. Bernardo, (eds), (2016) *The Psychology of Asian Learners*. Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media Singapore. Chapter 8.

- Halligan, N. (2016) Saudi women 'could apply for passports' under new proposals. *Arabian Business*, 5 July. [online] Available at: <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/saudi-women-could-apply-for-passports-under-new-proposals-637695.html> [Accessed 1 March 2017]
- Hallman, K. & Roca, E. (2007) *Reducing the social exclusion of girls*. (Promoting Healthy, Safe and Productive Transitions to Adulthood, Brief No. 27). New York: Population Council.
- Hamby, S., Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. & Ormrod, R. (2010) The overlap of witnessing partner violence with child maltreatment and other victimizations in a nationally representative survey of youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34(10), pp.734-741.
- Hamdan, A. (2005) Women and education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and achievement. *International Education Journal*, 6(1), pp.42-64.
- Hamdan, A. (2009) *Muslim Women Speak: A Tapestry of Lives and Dreams*. Toronto, Canada: Women's Press of Canada.
- Hamid, R.M. (2015) Domestic Violence in Muslim Communities. In: A.J. Johnson, ed. (2015) *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*. London: Springer. pp.319 - 342.
- Hammad, S.Z.A. (2013) Saudi women in the Civil Status and Passports. *Al Madina News*, 6th August. [online] Available at: <<http://www.al-madina.com/article/245483/>> [Accessed 21 February 2017]
- Hammad, S.Z.A. (2014) Women And The Lack Of Civil Status... How Long?. *Al Madina News*, 1st April. [online] Available at: <<http://www.al-madina.com/article/295480/>> [Access 21 February 2017]
- Harwin, N. (2006). Putting a Stop to Domestic Violence in the United Kingdom: Challenges and Opportunities. *Violence Against Women*, 12(6), pp.556-567.
- Health Services Executive (2010) *HSE policy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence*. Dublin: HSE. [online] Available at: <<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/Children/HSE%20Policy%20on>

[%20Domestic,%20Sexual%20and%20Gender%20Based%20Violence.pdf](#)>
[Accessed 1 March 2018]

Heater, D. (2004) *Citizenship: The Civic Ideal in World History, Politics and Education*. 3rd Edition. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Heath, R. (2014) Women's Access to Labor Market Opportunities, Control of Household Resources, and Domestic Violence: Evidence from Bangladesh. *World Development*, 57, pp.32-46.

Heise, L. L. (1998) Violence against women: an integrated ecological framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4(3), pp.262–290.

Heise, L.L., Pitanguy, J., & Germain, A. (1994) *Violence against women: The Hidden Health Burden*. World Bank Discussion Papers, No. WDP 255. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Available at:
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/489381468740165817/Violence-against-women-the-hidden-health-burden> [Accessed 9 March 2017]

Hesse-Biber, S.N. & Leavy, P.L. (2007) *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Hesse-Biber, S.N. & Leavy, P.L. (2010) *The Practice of Social Research*. 2nd Edition. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Hester, M. & Westmarland, N. (2005) *Tackling domestic violence: effective interventions and approaches*. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate. [online] Available at:
<<http://dro.dur.ac.uk/2556/1/2556.pdf>> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Hilal, & Denman, (2013) Education as a tool for peace? The King Abdullah scholarship program and perception of Saudi Arabia and UAE post 9/11", *Higher Education Studies*, 3(2), pp.24-40

Hollander, J.A. (2002) Resisting Vulnerability: The Social Reconstruction of Gender in Interaction. *Social Problems*, 49(4), pp.474-496.

Holmes, M. (2007) *What is Gender?: Sociological Approaches*. London: SAGE

Publications.

Home Office. (N.A.). *Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO)*. London: Home Office [online] Available at:
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506148/2016-03-08_DVPO_report_for_publication.pdf>
[Accessed 5 August 2018]

Home Office (2011) *Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan*. London: Home Office. [online] Available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118153/vawg-action-plan.pdf> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Home Office (2013) *Evaluation of the Pilot of Domestic Violence Protection Orders: Research Report 76*. London: Home Office. [online] Available at:
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/260897/horr76.pdf> [Accessed 2 August 2018]

Home Office (2014) *A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls: Action Plan 2014*. London: Home Office. [online] Available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287758/VAWG_Action_Plan.pdf> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Home Office (2015) *A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls: Progress Report 2010-2015*. London: Home Office. [online] Available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409510/VAWG_Progress_Report_2010-2015.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Home Office (2016) *Ending Violence against Women and Girls*. [online] Available at:
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF> [Accessed 2 August 2018]

Honig, H.G. (1997) Positions, power and practice: Functionalist approaches and translation quality assessment. *Current Issues in Language & Society*, 4(1), pp.6-34.

Hoskins, B., d'Hombres, B. & Campbell, J. (2008) *Does Formal Education Have an*

Impact on Citizenship Behaviour?. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission (JRC 45983) [online] Available at:
http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC45983/reqno_jrc45983_does_formal_education_have_an_impact_on_active_citizenship_behaviour.pdf%5B1%5D.pdf [Accessed 12 February 2018]

Howell, K.E. (2013) *An Introduction to Philosophy of Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Howitt, D. & Cramer, D. (2005) *Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology*. 1st Edition. Harlow, England: Prentice Hall.

Human Rights Watch (2008) *Perpetual Minors: Human Rights Abuses Stemming from Male Guardianship and Sex Segregation in Saudi Arabia*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at:
<<https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/saudiArabia0408webwcover.pdf>> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Human Rights Watch (2010) *Looser Rein, Uncertain Gain: A Human Rights Assessment of King Abdullah's Reforms in Saudi Arabia*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at:
<http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/saudi0910webwcover.pdf>
[Accessed 1 March 2017]

Human Rights Watch (2011) *Saudi Arabia: Huge Obstacles for First Woman Lawyer*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at:
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/12/saudi-arabia-huge-obstacles-first-woman-lawyer> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Human Rights Watch (2012) *World Report 2012: Saudi Arabia*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-saudi-arabia> [Accessed 9 March 2017]

Human Rights Watch (2013) *Saudi Arabia: New Law to Criminalise Domestic Abuse: Absence of Enforcement Mechanism Will Inhibit Effectiveness*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at:
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/09/03/saudi-arabia-new-law-criminalise->

domestic-abuse [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Human Rights Watch (2015) *Saudi Arabia: King's Reform Agenda Unfulfilled*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at:
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/23/saudi-arabia-kings-reform-agenda-unfulfilled> [Accessed 3 June 2017]

Human Rights Watch (2016) *Boxed In: Women and Saudi Arabia's Male Guardianship System*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at:
<https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/saudiarabia0716web.pdf>
[Accessed 28 February 2017]

Ibrahim, N. & Abdalla, M. (2010) A critical examination of Qur'an 4:34 and its relevance to intimate partner violence in Muslim families. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 5(3), pp.327-349.

Imran, N. & Bandar, A. (2013) "Civilian Status" "Middle East": Give the Saudi identity cards became 'mandatory' and implemented before the end of 2020. *Middle East News*, [online] March 26. Available at:
<<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=43&issueno=12537&article=722302#.WKxTO3ecbR0>> [Accessed February 28, 2017]

Ipekten Alaman, M. & Yildiz, H. (2014) Domestic sexual violence and sexual problems among gynecology outpatients: An example from Turkey. *Women & health*, 54(5), pp.439-454.

Israel, M. & Hay. I. (2006) *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*. 1st Edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Kelly, S. (2009) Overview Essay: Recent Gains and New Opportunities. In: S. Kelly, J. Breslin, T. Roylance & M. Abdelnaby (2009) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Gulf Edition*. New York, NY: Freedom House. pp.1-8.

Jackson, R.M. (1998) *Destined for Equality: The Inevitable Rise of Women's Status*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Jahromi, M.K., Jamali, S., Koshkaki, A.R. & Javadpour, S. (2016) Prevalence and risk factors of domestic violence against women by their husbands in Iran. *Global*

Journal of Health Science, 8(5), p.175-183.

Jaishankar, K. (2016) *Interpersonal Criminology: Revisiting Interpersonal Crimes and Victimization*. New York, NY: CRC Press.

Janin, H. & Besheer, M. (2003) *Cultures of the World: Saudi Arabia*. 2nd Edition. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation.

Jayasundara, D., Nedegaard, R., Sharma, B. & Flanagan, K. (2014) Intimate Partner Violence in Muslim Communities. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, 51(003).

Jeffreys, S. (2009) *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade*. London: Routledge

Jewkes, R. & Morrell, R. (2010) Gender and sexuality: emerging perspectives from the heterosexual epidemic in South Africa and implications for HIV risk and prevention. *Journal of the International AIDS Society*, 13(1), p.6-11.

Jewkes, R. (2002) Intimate partner violence: causes and prevention. *The Lancet*, 359(9315), pp.1423-1429.

Johnson, H., Ollus, N. & Nevala, S. (2008) *Violence Against Women: An International Perspective*. New York, NY: Springer.

Joseph, S. (1994) Gender and Family in the Arab World. MERIP

Joseph, J. (2012) Perspectives on Gender Inequality and the Barrier of Culture on Education. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, 4, pp.769--789.

Kangethe, N.S., Lyria, K.S. & Nyamanga, A.M. (2014) The Gender Socialisation Question in Education: Influence on Boys' and Girls' Academic Achievement. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(9), pp.279-294

Kabeer, N. (1999) Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), pp.435-464.

Kabeer, N. (2005) Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal. *Gender and Development*, 13(1), pp.13-24.

- Kabeer, N. (2014) Violence against Women as 'Relational' Vulnerability: Engendering the Sustainable Human Development Agenda. Occasional Paper, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA.
- Kalra, G. & Bhugra, D. (2013) Sexual Violence Against Women: Understanding Cross-Cultural Intersections. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(3), p.244-249.
- Kambarami, M. (2006) *Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe*. South Africa: Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (ARSRC). [pdf] Available at: <http://www.arsrc.org/downloads/uhsss/kmabarami.pdf> [Accessed 9 March 2017]
- Kaplan, R.L., Khawaja, M. & Linos, N. (2011) Husband's Control and Sexual Coercion Within Marriage: Findings from a Population-Based Survey in Egypt. *Violence Against Women*, 17(11), pp.1465-1479.
- Karakurt, G. & Silver, K.E. (2013) Emotional Abuse in Intimate Relationships: The Role of Gender and Age. *Violence and Victims*, 28(5), pp.804-821.
- Kattan, M.M., Heredero, C.D.P., Botella, J.L.M. & Margalina, V.M. (2016) Factors of Successful Women Leadership in Saudi Arabia. *Asian Social Science*, 12(5), p.94-107.
- Kaufman, M (2004) Transforming our interventions for gender equality by addressing and involving men and boys: a framework for analysis and action. In: S. Ruxton, ed (2004) *Gender Equality and Men*. 1st Edition. Oxford: Oxfam. pp.19-27.
- Kaur, R. & Garg, S. (2008) Addressing Domestic Violence Against Women: An Unfinished Agenda. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 33(2), p.73-76.
- Kauser, S. & Tlaiss, H. (2011) The Arab Women Manager: Participation, Barriers, and Future Prospects. *Journal of International Business and Economy*, 12(1), pp.35-56.
- Kearns, N. & Coen, L. (2014) Charting the trajectory of domestic violence policy change in the Republic of Ireland since the mid-1990s—a path towards

integration?. *International Journal of Integrated Care*, 14(3). [online]

Available at:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4203113/pdf/IJIC-14-2014025.pdf> [Accessed 9 March 2017]

Kearns, N., Canavan, J. & Coen, L. (2008) Domestic violence in Ireland: an overview of national strategic policy and relevant international literature on prevention and intervention initiatives in service provision. Galway: Children & Family Research Centre [online] Available at: <<http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/media/ilascfrc/reports/outputstabreports/Domestic-Violence-in-Ireland-An-Overview-of-National-Strategic-Policy-and-Relevant-International-Literature-on-Prevention.pdf>> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Kéchichian, J.A. (1986) The role of the Ulama in the politics of an Islamic state: The case of Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 18(1), pp.53-71.

Kéchichian, J.A. (2013) *Legal and Political Reforms in Sa'udi Arabia*. London & New York: Routledge.

Kerstetter, K. (2012) Insider, Outsider, or Somewhere in Between: The Impact of Researchers' Identities on the Community-Based Research Process. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, 27(2), pp.99-117.

Khan, S. (2016) Saudi Arabian women take to Twitter to campaign against male guardianship. *The Independent*, 2 September. [online] Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabian-women-campaigning-end-male-guardianship-human-rights-watch-a7221281.html> [Accessed 13 March 2017]

Kharboush, I.F., Roudi-Fahimi, F., Ismail, H.M., Mamdouh, H.M., Muhammad, Y.Y., Tawfik, M.M., El Sharkawy, O.G. & Sallam, H.N. (2010) *Spousal violence in Egypt*. Population Reference Bureau, September. [online] Available at: <http://www.prb.org/pdf10/spousalviolence-egypt.pdf> [Accessed 8 March 2017]

Kimmel, M.S. (2002) "Gender Symmetry" in Domestic Violence: A Substantive and

Methodological Research Review. *Violence Against Women*, 8(11), pp.1332-1363.

Krantz, G. & Garcia-Moreno, C. (2005) Violence against women. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 59(10), pp.818-821.

Kreager, D. A., Felson, R. B., Warner, C., & Wenger, M. R. (2013) Women's Education, Marital Violence, and Divorce: A Social Exchange Perspective. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 75(3), 565–581.

Krueger, R. & Casey, M. (2000). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Kruman, M. & Marback, R. (2015) Introduction. In: M. Kruman & R. Marback (eds) (2015) *The Meaning of Citizenship*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press

Kulwicki, A., Aswad, B., Carmona, T. & Ballout, S. (2010) Barriers in the Utilization of Domestic Violence Services Among Arab Immigrant Women: Perceptions of Professionals, Service Providers & Community Leaders. *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(8), pp.727-735.

Kumar, R. (2005) *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. 2nd Edition. Singapore: Pearson Education.

Kury, H. & Smartt, U. (2006) Domestic violence: recent developments in German and English legislation and law enforcement. *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice*, 14(4), pp. 382-407.

Kusakabe, K. & Oo, Z.M (2004). *Gender and Power at the Burmese Border*. (Center for International Borders Research Working Paper Series, CIBR/WP04-3). Bangkok, Thailand: Asian Institute of Technology. [pdf] Available at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/CentreforInternationalBordersResearch/Publications/WorkingPapers/CIBRWorkingPapers/Filetoupload,174407,en.pdf> [Accessed 9 March 2017]

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2004) *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. 2nd Edition. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

- Lambert, E. K. (1997) The Origins of Domestic Violence in Ireland: An Historical Perspective. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 17(3), p.16-19.
- Larkin, M., Watts, S. & Clifton, E. (2008) Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp.102-120.
- Leonard, K.E. (2005) Alcohol and intimate partner violence: when can we say that heavy drinking is a contributing cause of violence?. *Addiction*, 100(4), pp.422-425.
- Levesque, R.J.R. (2001) Culture and Family Violence: Fostering Change Through Human Rights Law. 1st Edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Lister, R. (1995) Dilemmas in engendering Citizenship. *Economy and Society*, 24(1), pp.35-40.
- Lister, R. (1997) *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*. 1st Edition. Basingstoke, Hampshire: PALGRAVE.
- Liversage, A. (2014) Secrets and Lies: When Ethnic Minority Youth Have a *Nikah*. In: P. Shah w/ MC Foblets & M. Rohe (eds). (2014) *Family, Religion and Law: Cultural Encounters in Europe*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. pp. 165 - 180.
- Lomax, W. (2007) CIM Coursebook 06/07 Analysis and Evaluation. Oxford: Routledge.
- Longhurst, R. (2010) Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups. In: N. Clifford, S. French & G. Valentine, eds (2010) *Key Methods in Geography*. 2nd Edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lopez, K.A. & Willis, D.G. (2004) Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contributions to nursing knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(5), pp.726-735.
- Lovelace, A. & White, J. (2002) Beliefs, Values & Traditions. 2nd Edition. Jordan Hill,

Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Lupri, E., Grandin, E. & Brinkerhoff, M. B. (1994) Socioeconomic Status and Male Violence in the Canadian Home: A Reexamination. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19(1), pp.47-73.

MacFarquhar, N. (2007) New Translation Prompts Debate on Islamic Verse. *The New York Times*, March 25. [online] Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/25/us/25koran.html> [Accessed 9 March 2017].

Mahoney, P. & Williams, L.M. (1998) Sexual Assault in Marriage: Prevalence, Consequences, and Treatment of Wife Rape. In: J.L. Jasinki & L.M. Williams, eds (1998) *Partner Violence: A Comprehensive Review of 20 Years of Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications. Chapter 4.

Makahamadze, T., Isacco, A. & Chireshe, E. (2012) Examining the perceptions of Zimbabwean women about the Domestic Violence Act. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(4), pp.706-727.

Makama, G. (2013) Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward. *European Scientific Journal*, 19(17), pp.115-140.

Mann, S. & Kelley, L. (1997) Standing at the Crossroads of Modernist Thought: Collins, Smith, and the New Feminist Epistemologies. *Gender and Society*, 11(4), pp.391-408.

Marinova, J. (2003) *Gender stereotypes and the socialisation process*. Brasilia, Brazil: United Nations and International Labour Organisation

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2006) *Designing Qualitative Research*. 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Matczak, A., Hatzidimitriadou, E. & Lindsay, J. (2011) *Review of Domestic Violence policies in England and Wales*. London: Kingston University and St George's, University of London. [online] Available at: <https://eprints.kingston.ac.uk/18868/1/Matczak-A-18868.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

- Maynard, M. (1993) Violence towards Women. In: D. Richardson & V. Robinson (eds) (1993) *Introducing Women's Studies*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Maziak, W. & Asfar, T. (2003) Physical abuse in low-income women in Aleppo, Syria. *Health Care for Women International*, 24(4), pp.313-326.
- McCue, M.L. (2008) *Domestic Violence: A Reference Handbook*. 2nd Edition. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc.
- McCullen, E.Z. (2008) Educations as a Risk Factor for Domestic Violence. In: N.A. Jackson, ed (2008) *Encyclopaedia fo Domesitc Violence*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group. pp. 267-270.
- Mechanic, M.B., Weaver, T.L. & Resick, P.A. (2008) Mental health consequences of intimate partner abuse a multidimensional assessment of four different forms of abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 14(6), pp.634-654.
- Mensch, B.S., Ibrahim, B.L., Lee, S.M. & El-Gibaly, O. (2003) Gender-role Attitudes among Egyptian Adolescents. *Studies in Family Planning*, 34(1), pp.8-18.
- Mernissi, F. (1997) *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*. Translated by M.J. Lakeland. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Meyersfeld, B. (2010) *Domestic Violence and International Law*. Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing
- Mezey, N.J., Post, L.A. & Maxwell, C.D. (2002) Redefining intimate partner violence: Women's experiences with physical violence and non-physical abuse by age. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 22(7/8), pp.122-154.
- Mezey, N. (2015) *LGBT Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Miller, K.I. (2000) Common Ground from the Post-Positivist Perspective: From "Straw Person" Argument to Collaborative Co-existence. In: S.R. Corman & M.S. Poole, eds (2000) *Perspectives on Organisational Communication: Finding Common Ground*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Mills, A. (2009) Reforms to Women's Education Make Slow Progress in Saudi Arabia. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 3 August. [online] Available at:

<http://www.chronicle.com/article/Saudi-Universities-Reach/47519/> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Ministry of Health and Population [Egypt], El-Zanaty and Associates [Egypt], & ICF International (2015) *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014*. Cairo, Egypt and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Ministry of Health and Population and ICF International. [pdf] Available at: <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr302/fr302.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017]

Ministry of Justice (2017) *Ministry of Justice*
<<https://www.moj.gov.sa/ar/eServices/Pages/Details.aspx?itemId=11#>>
[Accessed 21 June 2017]

Ministry of Interior & Civilian Affairs (2017) Ministry of Interior & Civilian Affairs
https://www.moi.gov.sa/wps/wcm/connect/ca8164004d4bb66e85d8d5bed7ca8368/civil_affairs_56women_FP.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-ca8164004d4bb66e85d8d5bed7ca8368-1BAwjeR [Accessed 22 June 2017]

Mobaraki, A.E.H. & Söderfeldt, B. (2010) Gender inequity in Saudi Arabia and its role in public health. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 16(1), p.113-118.

Monazea, E.M. & Abdel Khalek, E.M. (2010) Domestic violence high in Egypt, affecting women's reproductive health. *Population Reference Bureau*, May. [online] Available at: <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2010/domesticviolence-egypt.aspx> [Accessed 8 March 2017]

Morrow, S. L., & Smith, M. L. (2000) Qualitative research for counseling psychology. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent, eds (2000) *Handbook of Counseling Psychology*, 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Wiley. pp. 199–230.

Morrow, V. & Richards, M. (1996). The Ethics of Social Research with Children: An Overview. *Children & Society*, 10(2), pp.90-105.

Morse, D.S., Paldi, Y., Egbaraya, S.S. & Clark, C.J. (2012) “An effect that is deeper than beating”: Family violence in Jordanian women. *Families, System and Health*, 30(1), p.19-31.

- Morse, J., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K. & Spiers, J. (2002) Verification Strategies for Establishing Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), pp.13-22.
- Mouradian, V. (2000) *Abuse in intimate relationships: Defining the multiple dimensions and terms*. National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center. [online] Available at: <https://mainweb-v.musc.edu/vawprevention/research/defining.shtml> [Accessed 7 March 2017]
- Moustakas, C. (1994) *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publication, Inc.
- Mullender, A. (1996) *Rethinking Domestic Violence*. London: Routledge.
- Naved, R. T., & Persson, L. Å. (2005) Factors associated with spousal physical violence against women in Bangladesh. *Studies in Family Planning*, 36(4), pp.289-300.
- Nazir, S. & Tomppert, L. (2005) Challenging Inequality. In: S. Nazir & L. Tomppert (eds) (2005) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Citizenship & Justice*. Oxford, Oxfordshire: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc
- Nelson, S.C. (2016) 'Saudi Arabia Hashtag Calls For An End To Male Guardianship', *The Huffington Post*, 2 September [online] Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/saudi-arabia-hashtag-calls-for-an-end-to-male-guardianship_uk_57c94538e4b01e35922a8cde [Accessed 14 February 2017].
- Netto, L.A., Moura, M.A.V., Queiroz, A.B.A., Leita, F.M.C. & Silva, G.F. (2017) Isolation of women in situation of violence by intimate partner: a social network condition. *Escola Anna Nery*, 21(1), pp.1-8.
- Neuman, W.L. (2010) *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 7th Edition, International Edition. London: Pearson.
- O'Connor, M. (2004) First Country Report from the Republic of Ireland: National Observatory on Violence Against Women. Dublin: National Women's Council of Ireland.

- O'Connor, P. (2000) Ireland: A Man's World?. *Economic and Social Review*, 31(1), pp.81-102.
- Obeid, N., Chang, D. & Ginges, J. (2010) Beliefs about wife beating: An exploratory study with Lebanese students. *Violence Against Women*, 16(6), pp.691-712.
- Odhiambo, C. (2012) The Name Game: Using Insults to Illustrate the Social Construction of Gender. *College Teaching*, 60(1), pp.25-30.
- Office for National Statistics (2014) *Crime Statistics, Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2012/13*. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_352362.pdf [Accessed 7 March 2017]
- Office for National Statistics (2015) *Crime Statistics, Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2013/14*. Available at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_394500.pdf [Accessed 7 March 2017]
- Okaz (2010). Victims without protection. *Okaz*, 8 April [online] Available at: <http://okaz.com.sa/article/325655/> [Accessed 23 February 2017]
- Okour, A.M. & Hijazi, H.H. (2009) Domestic violence and family dysfunction as risk factor for violent behaviour among university students in North Jordan. *Journal of Family Violence*, 24(6), pp.361-366.
- Olsen, M.E., Lodwick, D.G. & Dunlop, R.E. (1992) *Viewing the World Ecologically*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc.
- Orazkai, S.B. (2014) The Rights of Women in Islam: the question of public and private spheres for women's right and empower in Muslim societies. *Journal of Human Rights in the Commonwealth*, 2(1), pp.42-51.
- Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L. & Wynaden, D. (2001) Ethics in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(1), pp.93-96.
- Oweis, A., Gharaibeh, M., Al-Natour, A., & Froelicher, E. (2009) Violence against women: unveiling the suffering of women with a low income in Jordan. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 20(1), pp.69-76.
- Pan, A., Daley, S., Rivera, L.M., Williams, K., Lingle, D. & Reznik, V. (2006)

Understanding the role of culture in domestic violence: The Ahimsa Project for Safe Families. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 8(1), pp.35-43.

Parliament. House of Commons (2017) *Domestic violence in England and Wales* (No. 6337). [online] Available at:
<<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06337/SN06337.pdf>
f> [Accessed 2 August 2018]

Pavan, A. (2016) Higher Education in Saudi Arabia: Rooted in Heritage and Values, Aspiring to Progress. *International Research in Higher Education*, 1(1), p.91-100.

Pence, E. (1987). *In Our Best Interest: A Process for Personal and Social Change*. Duluth, MN: Minnesota Program Development, Inc.

Perez-Morazzani A. & Lopez-Corvo, R.E. (2017) *The Essential Being: Psychoanalytic Understanding of Totalitarianism*. London: Karmac Books.

Petchesky, R.P. (1998) Negotiating reproductive rights: women's perspectives across countries and cultures. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 6(11), pp.186-189.

Peterson, R.A. (1979) Revitalizing the culture concept. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 5(1), pp.137-166.

Pettman, J.J. (1996) *Worlding Women: A Feminist International Politics*. London & New York: Routledge

Phillips, J., Dunkley, A., Muller, D. & Lorimer, C. (2015) "Domestic violence: issues and policy challenges", *Parliament of Australia Research Papers 2014-2015*. [online] Available at
http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DVIssues [Accessed 9 March 2017]

Poelmans J., Elzinga P., Viaene S. & Dedene G. (2008) An Exploration into the Power of Formal Concept Analysis for Domestic Violence Analysis. In: P. Perner, ed (2008) *Advances in Data Mining. Medical Applications, E-Commerce, Marketing, and Theoretical Aspects*. ICDM 2008. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, 5077. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

- Polkinghorne, D.E. (1989) Phenomenological Research Methods. In: R.S. Valle & S. Halling, eds (1989) *Existential Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology*. New York, NY: Springer US. pp.41-60.
- Postmus, J.L., Plummer, S.B., McMahon, S., Murshid, N.S. & Kim, M.S. (2012) Understanding Economic Abuse in the Lives of Survivors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(3), pp.411-430.
- Preece, J. (2002) Feminist Perspectives on the Learning of Citizenship and Governance. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 32(1), pp.21-33.
- Profanter, A. (2014) Achievements and Challenges in the Educational Realm in Saudi Arabia. *European Scientific Journal*, 1, pp.207-222.
- Punch, K. (2009) *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. 1st Edition. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Rabi-ullah, M. & Parvin, S. (2015) Socio-economic Status of Women Influences of Domestic Violence: A Sociological Analysis at Urban Area in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(3), pp.145-158.
- Radford, L. & Tsutsumi, K. (2004) Globalization and violence against women—inequalities in risks, responsibilities and blame in the UK and Japan. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27(1), pp. 1-12.
- Rafiq, A. (2014) Child Custody in Classical Islamic Law and Laws of Contemporary Muslim World: An Analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(5), pp.267-277.
- Rager, K. (2005) Self-Care and the Qualitative Researcher: When Collecting Data Can Break Your Heart. *Educational Researcher*, 34(4), pp.23-27.
- Rakovec-Felser, Z. (2014) Domestic violence and abuse in intimate relationship from public health perspective. *Health Psychology Research*, 2(3).
- Rasoulilian, M., Habib, S., Bolhari, J., Hakim Shooshtari, M., Nojomi, M. & Abedi, S. (2014) Risk factors of domestic violence in Iran. *Journal of Environmental and*

Public Health, 2014, Article ID 352346, pp.1-9.

Reiners, G.M. (2012) Understanding the Differences between Husserl's (Descriptive) and Heidegger's (Interpretive) Phenomenological Research. *Journal of Nursing and Care*, 1(5), pp.119-121.

Renzetti, C.M. (2009) Economic Stress and Domestic Violence. *CRVAW Faculty Research Reports and Papers*, Paper 1. [pdf] Available at:
http://uknowledge.uky.edu/crvaw_reports/1 [Accessed 7 March 2017]

Riaz, S. & Abbas, M.Z, (2013) Diversity of Interpretations Regarding Qawwam in Islamic Thought with Special Reference to Surah An-Nisa. *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research*, 7(11), pp.1-20.

Richards, L. & Morse, J. M. (2012). *README FIRST for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods*. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Roald, A.S. (2001) *Women in Islam: The Western Experience*. London and New York: Routledge.

Robinson, A. (2009) *Independent Sexual Violence Advisors: a process evaluation*. London: Home Office. [online] Available at:
<<http://library.college.police.uk/docs/horr/horr20.pdf>> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

Rohland, N. (2009) *Making Sense of Rape in South Africa: a Feminist Grounded Theory Analysis*. Research Project, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa. [online] Available at:
http://www.psychology.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/117/Nicola.Rohland.pdf [Accessed 10 March 2017]

Russell, D.E.H. (1990) *Rape in Marriage*. Revised Edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Ryan, A.B. (2006) Post-positivist approaches to research. *Researching and Writing your Thesis: a guide for postgraduate students*, pp.12-26.

Rydstrøm, H. (2003) Encountering "Hot" Anger: Domestic Violence in Contemporary

Vietnam. *Violence Against Women*, 9(6), pp.676-697.

SAFE Ireland (2015) *National Domestic Violence Service Statistics Report 2014*.

Athlone, Ireland: SAFE Ireland. [online] Available at:

<http://www.safeireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/National-Domestic-Violence-Service-Statistics-2014.pdf> [Accessed 10 March 2017]

SAFE Ireland (n.d.) *Domestic Violence Services*. SAFE Ireland. [online] Available at:

<<http://www.safeireland.ie/domestic-violence-services/>> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Sahabi, J., Aghabeigpoori, H., Rezai, M. & Mohammadpur, A. (2015) A Study on Levele of Awareness of Civil Rights and Duties and its Effective Factors in Sandaj. *Merit Research Journal of Art, Social Sciences & Humanities*, 3(2), pp.18-26.

Sahli, M. (2014) Dr Modi praises of Social Affairs Zahrani to this problem:... 10.4 million riyals allocated to opening new centres for protection from domestic violence in 14 regions in the Kingdom. *Al Riyadh*, 22 March. [online] Available at: <http://www.alriyadh.com/1032138> [Accessed 23 February 2017]

Said, E. W. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Said-Foqahaa, N. & Maziad, M. (2011) Arab women: Duality of deprivation in decision-making under patriarchal authority. *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World*, 9(1), pp.234-272.

Sanderson, C. (2010) *Introduction to Counselling Survivors of Interpersonal Trauma*. 1st Edition. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Sari, S., Surrati, A. & alfahl, S. (2016) Domestic Violence: Prevalence Among Saudi Women Attending Primary Health Care Centres in Al-Madina Al Monawara City, 2012. *International Journal of Medical Research Professionals*, 2(6), pp.18-28.

Saudi Arabia. (1992) The Basic Law of Governance. No: A/90, 27th Sha'ban 1412 H [1 March]. Available at: <http://www.mofa.gov.sa/sites/mofaen/ServicesAndInformation/aboutKingDom>

/SaudiGovernment/Pages/BasicSystemOfGovernance35297.aspx [Accessed 28 February 2017]

- Saudi Gazette (2014) 'Saudi men lay claims on wives's salaries as 'legal guardians', *Saudi Gazette*, 24 February. [online] Available at: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2014/02/24/Saudi-men-lay-claim-on-wives-salaries-as-legal-guardians-.html> [Access 10 February 2017]
- Saudi Gazette (2014) Saudi men lay claims on wives' salaries as 'legal guardians'. *Saudi Gazette*, 24 February. [online] Available at: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2014/02/24/Saudi-men-lay-claim-on-wives-salaries-as-legal-guardians-.html> [Access 10 February 2017].
- Saudi Gazette (2015) Labor of love: Some wives forced to share salaries in Saudi Arabia. *Saudi Gazette*, 21 February. [online] Available at: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2015/02/21/Labor-of-love-Some-wives-forced-to-share-salaries-in-Saudi-Arabia-.html> [Access 10 February 2017]
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2003) *Research Method for Business Students*. 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Prentice Hall.
- Schuler, S.R., Hashemi, S.M., Riley, A.P. & Akhter, S. (1996) Credit programs, patriarchy and men's violence against women in rural Bangladesh. *Social Science and Medicine*, 43(12), pp.1729-1742.
- Semahegn, A. & Mengistie, B. (2015) Domestic violence against women and associated factors in Ethiopia; systematic review. *Reproductive Health*, 12(1), p.78-90.
- Sen, G. & Mukherjee, A. (2014) No empowerment without rights, No rights without politics: Gender-equality, MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 15(2/3), pp.188-202.
- Sen, P., (1999) Enhancing women's choices in responding to domestic violence in Calcutta: a comparison of employment and education. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 11(2), pp.65-86.
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (1999) The politics of disclosing female sexual abuse: a case

- study of Palestinian society. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 23(12), pp.1275-1293.
- Shamrani, S. (2015) After 29 years .. it proposed 9 amendments to the Civil Status System Shura discusses the wife's right to issuance of «family card». *Okaz*, 7 September. [online] Available at: <<http://okaz.com.sa/article/1014583/>> [Accessed 26 February 2017]
- Sharma, S. & Sharma, M. (2012) Gender equality in the workplace: the perceptive reality. *Social Sciences Directory*, 1(1), pp.19-33.
- Sheridan, L. & Ghorayeb, G. (2004) Lebanon. In K. Malley-Morrison, ed (2004) *International Perspectives on Family Violence and Abuse: A Cognitive Ecological Approach*. London: Routledge. pp. 205-220.
- Shojaei, A. (2012) Translation of Idioms and Fixed Expressions: Strategies and Difficulties. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(6), p.1220-1229.
- Sidahmed, M. (2016) 'Thousands of Saudis sign petition to end male guardianship of women', *The Guardian*, 26 September [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/26/saudi-arabia-protest-petition-end-guardianship-law-women> [Accessed 14 February 2017]
- Sigsworth, R. (2009) '*Anyone Can Be a Rapist...*': *An Overview of Sexual Violence in South Africa*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. [online] Available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/110216/2009-11_AnyoneCanBeARapist.pdf#page=1&zoom=auto,-274,595 [Accessed 10 March 2017]
- Siim, B. (2000) *Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark*. 1st Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Singh, B., Singh, K. & Singh, N. (2014) Couple Interaction and Predicting Vulnerability to Domestic Violence in Uttar Pradesh, India. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(12), pp.2304-2324.
- Smarrt, U. & Kury, H. (2007) Domestic Violence: Comparative Analysis of German and U.K. Research Findings. *Social Science Quarterly*, 88(5), pp.1263-1280.

- Smith, D.E. (1987). *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Smith, J.A. (2004) Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1(1), pp.39-54.
- Smith, M.D. (1990) Sociodemographic risk factors in wife abuse: Results from a survey of Toronto women. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 15(1), pp.39-58.
- Smyth, M. & Williamson, E. (2004) Introduction. In: M. Smyth & E. Williamson, eds (2004) *Researchers and their 'Subjects': Ethics, Power, Knowledge and Consent*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012) *What is culture? A compilation of quotations*. Warwick, Warwickshire: GlobalPAD/University of Warwick. [online] Available at: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills/global_pad_-_what_is_culture.pdf [Accessed 12 February 2018]
- Srivastava, S., Bhatia, M.S., Jhanjee, A. & Pankaj, K. (2011) A Preliminary Survey of Domestic Violence Against Women Visiting a Tertiary Care Outpatient Department. *Delhi Psychiatry Journal*, 14(1), pp.149-52.
- Stiles, W. (1993) Quality Control in Qualitative Research. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 13(6), pp.593-618.
- Straus, M.A., Gelles, R.J. & Smith, C. (1990) *Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Sully, P. (2011) Taking it seriously: Repairing domestic violence sentencing in Washington State. *Seattle University Law Review*, (34), p.963:992
- Survive (2013) *Survive DV » About Us*. Survive [online] Available at: <http://survivedv.org.uk/about-us/> [Accessed 1 March 2017]
- Tandon, N. (2008) *Feminism: A Paradigm Shift*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors.

- Tashkandi, A.A.W. & Rasheed, P. (2010) Physical wife abuse: a study among Saudi women attending primary health care centres. *Journal of the Bahrain Medical Society*, 22(1), pp.23-30.
- Taylor, C. & Albasri, W. (2014) The impact of Saudi Arabia King Abdullah's scholarship program in the US. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(10), p.109-118.
- The National Task Force on Violence Against Women (1997) *Report of the National Task Force on Violence Against Women*. Dublin: Office of the Táinaiste.
[online] Available at:
<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/dvreport.pdf/Files/dvreport.pdf> [Accessed 10 March 2017]
- Therborn, G. (2004) *Between Sex and Power: Family in the world, 1990-2000*. London and New York: Routledge
- Thomas, P.Y. (2011) *Towards developing a web-based blended learning environment at the University of Botswana*. Doctor of Education, University of South Africa, Pretoria. [online] Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/4245> [Accessed 10 March 2017]
- Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000) *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*. National Institute of Justice. [pdf] Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017]
- Tolman, R.M. (2015). The Development of a Measure of Psychological Maltreatment of Women by their Male Partners. In: R.D. Maiuro (ed) (2015) *Perspectives on Verbal and Psychological Abuse*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company
- Toth, B.A. (2015) The Power of "I": Student-Driven Writing at an All Women's University in Saudi Arabia. In: A.K. Hamdan (ed) (2015) *Teaching and Learning in Saudi Arabia: Perspectives from Higher Education*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers
- Tønnessen, L. (2016) *Women's Activism in Saudi Arabia: Male Guardianship and*

Sexual Violence. R2016:01. [online] Bergen, Norway: CHR. Michelsen Institute. Available at: <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/5696-womens-activism-in-saudi-arabia.pdf> [Accessed 10 March 2017]

Tracy, S.R. (2007) Patriarchy and Domestic violence: Challenging Common Misconception. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50(3), pp.573-594.

Trask, B.S. (2015) The role of families in combating discrimination, violence and harmful practices against women and girls and in creating greater gender equality and empowerment. *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development*. United Nations, New York, NY. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2015/sd-agenda2030/BahiraSherif-Paper.pdf> [Accessed 10 March 2017]

True, J. (2012) *The Political Economy of Violence Against Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turner, B.S. (2011) Foreword: Making and unmaking citizenship in neo-liberal times. In: A.S. Ku & N. Pun, eds (2011) *Remaking Citizenship in Hong Kong: Community, nation and the global city*. Abingdon, Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (2001) Integrating Gender into the Third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 21(2), pp.373-385.

United Nations General Assembly (1994) *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (23 February 1994, A/RES/48/104). [online] Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/095/05/PDF/N9409505.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed 1 March 2017]

Usta, J., Farver, J.A.M. and Pashayan, N. (2007) Domestic violence: the Lebanese experience. *Public Health*, 121(3), pp.208-219.

Usta, J., Farver, J.M & Hamieh, C.S. (2015) Effects of Socialisation on Gender Discrimination and Violence Against Women in Lebanon. *Violence Against*

Women, 22(4), pp.415-31.

Van Eijk, E. (2010) Sharia and National Law in Saudi Arabia. In: J.M. Otto, ed (2010) *Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present*. Leiden: Leiden University Press. pp.139-180.

Van Teijlingen, E. & Hundley, V. (2002) The importance of pilot studies. *Nursing Standard*, 16(40), pp.33-36.

Varia, N. (2016) *Ending Child Marriage: Meeting the Global Development Goals' Promise to Girl*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. [online] Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/ending-child-marriage> [Accessed 1 June 2017]

Vidyasagar, G. & Rea, D.M. (2004) Saudi women doctors: gender and careers within Wahhabic Islam and a 'westernised' work culture. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27(3), pp.261-280.

Waithera, D. (2011) *Don't Sleep African Women: Powerlessness and HIV/AIDS Vulnerability Among Kenyan Women*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: RoseDog Books

Walby, S. & Allen, J. (2004) *Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey*. London: Home Office. [pdf] Available at: <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors276.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017]

Walby, S. (1990) *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Walby, S. (1994) Is Citizenship Gendered?. *Sociology*, 28(2), pp.379-395.

Walker, L. (2005) Men Behaving Differently: South African Men since 1994. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 7(3), pp.225-238.

Walker, L.E.A. (2009) *The Battered Woman Syndrome*. 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

Walker, L (2014) The Right to Health and Access to Health Care in Saudi Arabia with a Particular Focus on the Women and Migrants. In: B. Toebes, R. Ferguson,

- M.M. Markovic & O. Nnamuchi, eds. (2014) *The Right to Health: A Multi-Country Study of Law, Policy and Practice*. The Hague, the Netherlands: T.M.C. ASSER PRESS, pp.165-192.
- Watson, D. & Parsons, S. (2005) *Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland: Report on the National Study of Domestic Abuse*. Dublin, Ireland: Stationery Office Dublin. [pdf] Available at: <http://www.lenus.ie/hse/bitstream/10147/296804/1/DomesticAbuseReportNCC.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017]
- Weingourt, R. (1985) Wife rape: barriers to identification and treatment. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 39(2), pp.187-192.
- Wertz, F. J. (2005) Phenomenological Research Methods for Counseling Psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), pp.167-177.
- Whitaker, D.J. & Lutzker, J.R. (2009) *Preventing Partner violence: Research and Evidence-Based Intervention Strategies*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- WHO (2006) *Intimate partner violence and alcohol*. World Health Organisation [online] Available at: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/factsheets/fs_intimate.pdf [Access 10 February 2017].
- Williams, M. & Spencer-Rodgers, J. (2010) Culture and Stereotyping Processes: Integration and New Directions. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4(8), pp.591-604.
- Williamson, E. (2006) *Women's Aid Federation of England 2005 Survey of Domestic Violence Services Findings*. Bristol: Women's Aid. [online] Available at: http://www.lemosandcrane.co.uk/bluesalmon_trial/resources/Women%27s%20Aid%20-%202005%20Survey%20of%20Domestic%20Violence%20Services%20Findings.pdf [Accessed 16 March 2017]
- Willig, C. (2008) *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method*. 2nd Edition. Buckingham, Philadelphia: McGraw Hill

Open University Press.

- Wilt, S. & Olson, S. (1996) Prevalence of domestic violence in the United States. *Journal of the American Medical Woman's Association*, 51(3), pp.77-82.
- Winkleby, M.A., Jatulis, D.E., Frank, E. & Fortmann, S.P. (1992) Socioeconomic Status and Health: How Education, Income and Occupation Contribute to Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease. *American Journal of Public Health*, 82(6), pp. 816-820.
- Winstok, Z. (2013) *Partner Violence: A New Paradigm for Understanding Conflict Escalation*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Women's Aid (2015) *What we believe – Womens Aid*. Women's Aid [online] Available at: <<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-believe/>> [Accessed 1 March 2017]
- Women's Aid (2015) *Women's Aid Impact Report 2015*. Dublin, Ireland: Women's Aid. [online] Available at: https://www.womensaid.ie/download/pdf/womens_aid_impact_report_2015.pdf [Accessed 10 March 2017]
- World Health Organisation & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (2010) *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: taking action and generating evidence*. Geneva: World Health Organisation. [online] Available at: <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241564007_eng.pdf> [Accessed 28 February 2017]
- World Health Organisation (2012) *Understanding and addressing violence against women*. Geneva: World Health Organisation. [online] Available at: <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77432/1/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2017]
- World Health Organisation (2015) *WHO | What do we mean by "sex" and "gender"?*. World Health Organisation [online] Available at: <http://apps.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/> [Accessed 28 February 2017]

- World Health Organisation (2016) *WHO / Violence against women*. World Health Organisation [online] Available at:
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> [Accessed 7 March 2017]
- World Health Organisation (2002) *Intimate Partner Violence and Alcohol Fact Sheet*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organisation. [online] Available at:
http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/factsheets/ft_intimate.pdf [Accessed 10 March 2017]
- World Health Organisation (2013) Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organisation. [online] Available at:
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf [Accessed 10 March 2017]
- Yount, K.M. (2005) Resources, Family Organisation, and Domestic Violence Against Married Women in Minya, Egypt. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(3), pp.579-596
- Yount, K.M., Pham, H.T., Minh, T.H., Krause, K.H., Schuler, S.R., Anh, H.T., VanderEnde, K. & Kramer, M.R. (2014) Violence in childhood, attitudes about partner violence, and partner violence perpetration among men in Vietnam. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 24(5), pp.333-339.
- Zaatut, A. & Haj-Yahia, M.M. (2016) Beliefs about wife beating among Palestinian women from Israel: The effect of their endorsement of patriarchal ideology. *Feminism & Psychology*, 26(4), pp.405-425.
- Zoepf, K. (2016) Sisters in Law: Saudi Women Are Beginning to Know Their Rights. *The New Yorker*, 11 January. [online] Available at:
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/01/11/sisters-in-law> [Accessed 10 March 2017]
- Zurayk, H., Sholkamy, H., Younis, N. & Khattab, H. (1997) Women's health problems in the Arab World: a holistic policy perspective. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 58(1), pp.13-21.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBING AND TRANSLATION	313
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF CODING PROCESS	333
APPENDIX C: KEELE UNIVERSITY ETHICAL APPROVAL	339
APPENDIX D: INVITATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS	341
APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORMS	343
APPENDIX F: REPLY SLIP	350
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE	351
APPENDIX H: IMAGES FOR THE INTERVIEWEES	355

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBING AND TRANSLATION

Participant: Kamila

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of God; the most gracious; the most merciful

انا حفتح مقابلي الآن اني اعرض عليك صور , اذا انتي كنتي تتذكري هادي الحادثة , حادثة رانيا , طبعاً زوجها ضربها سبيلها 13 كسر في وشها السؤال هنا :لو انتي ف مكانها ايش الشعور الي انتي حتشعري فيه ؟ ايش الاجراء الي ممكن تتخذه ؟ و ايش رأيك في الي هية وصلتلو وفي قضيتها عموماً ؟

I will open my interview now; I will show you photos. If you remember this incident, the incident of Rania, of course her husband beat her and caused her [to have] 13 fractures in her face, the question here is: if you were in her place what is the feeling that you would feel? What procedures would you take? And what do you think of what she's reached and of her case in general?

انا ماني متذكرة قضيتها.

I can't remember her case.

عموماً ك قضية امرأة معنفة سواء هية ممثلة او مذيعة , كون انها تعرضت للضرب المبرح يعني نقول 13 كسر في وشها , ايش شعورك ك امرأة تجاه العنف ضد المرأة؟

In general, the issue of abused women, whether she is an actor or an anchor, the fact that she faced agonising beating, I mean, we're talking about 13 fractures in her face, how do you feel, as woman, about abuse towards women?

العنف ابتداء مرفوض ومالو اي مبرر , اني ما اقدر اقول ايا كانت الاسباب ما تعطي صلاحية للرجل او الذكر انو يمارس العنف ضد المرأة , طبعاً احنا المشكلة انو الزوج يعتقد احياناً بمجرد انو تزوج اصبح عندو الحرية التصرف بذي المرأة حتى بالاعتداء بالضرب عليها , طبعاً هذا امر لا يقره دين ولا قوانين , امر مرفوض.

Abuse, firstly, is rejected, and has no justification. I can't say, regardless of the reasons, [they] don't give the man or the male the right to abuse women. Of course, our problem is that the husband thinks sometimes that, by simply getting married, he has the freedom of doing what he wants with this woman, even, through assault or through beating her. Of course, this is something that is not endorsed by religion or [secular] law, [it's] a rejected matter.

طيب ايش الاجراء الي ممكن تتخديه لو انتي فمكانها ؟

Okay, what procedure would you take if you were in her place?

نقول لو ايش الاجراء الي ممكن تتخديه لو انتي فمكانها ؟

Let's say what procedure would you take if you were in her place?

طبعاً اول شي الرفع للسلطات , اخذ الاجراء القانوني , كمان الاقدام على الانفصال , يعني لا يمكن انو بعد هذا بصير استمرارية للحياة الزوجية بين الاثنين خلاص .

Of course, the first thing is reporting [the issue] to the authorities. Taking legal action. Also, I would file for divorce. I mean, after this, there can't be a continuation in marital life between the two; that's it.

طيب لو جيت قولتلك هل انتي فعلاً سمعتي عن قضايا عنف عن نساء معنفات في مجتمعنا قرأتي ؟

Okay, if I come ask you: have you really heard of cases of abuse, of abused women, in our society, have you read [about them]?

في كثير

There are many

طيب عندك قصة راسخة ف ذهنك؟

Okay, do you have a story that is vivid in your mind?

لا والله بس بتشوفي العنف على جميع المستويات يعني سواء عنف لفظي او عنف بالضرب يعني كل الأنواع في او عنف من حيث انو يهجر انا اعتبرو نوع من العنف , ضد المرأة , العنف لما يكون هو يتعاطى مخدرات , بصير مهمل لبييتو , او يعتدي على المحارم حقو هذا أيضا صورة من صور العنف .

No, by God, but you see abuse on all levels, I mean, whether it's verbal abuse or abuse through beating, I mean, all kinds are there, or abuse whereby he leaves her; I consider that a kind of abuse, towards women. Abuse is when he is taking drugs, he becomes negligent of his household, or he assaults his womenfolk, this is also a form of abuse.

مافي قصة راسخة في ذهنك؟

There is no story vivid in your mind?

. لا

No.

طيب لو جيت قولتك انتي تفضلتي وتكلمتي ايش مفهومك للعنف , ايش مفهومك للعن العنف الاسري ؟

Okay if I come tell you: you have kindly spoken, what is your understanding of abuse, what is your understanding on domestic abuse?

العنف الاسري انو هو يعني انسان يعمي إيذاء للطرف الآخر سواء كانت زوجة , سواء كانوا أبناء أو أم لأى نوع منهم طالما بسبيلو أذى على جميع المستويات , سواء زي ما قولتك عنف لفظي او عنف جسدي او عنف بالاهمال .
عدم اخذ الحقوق هاذي كلها صور متعددة للعنف .

Domestic abuse is that a person intends harm to another party, whether it's the wife, whether they are children or the mother, to any of them, as long as it causes harm on all levels. Whether, as I said, it's verbal abuse or physical abuse or abuse through negligence,

not taking rights, all of these are various forms of abuse.

طيب لو جيت قولتلك بالنسبة للعنف هل يوجد فعلا عنف جنسي؟

Okay if come tell you: as for abuse, is there sexual abuse [present]?

في , بس احنا ما نقدر نقول لانو الرجل مثلا يحاول ياخذ حقو قهرا هو شرعا صح هية الزوجة بالنسبة لو مباحة بس حتى هاذي الزوجة الي هية مباحة في أسلوب لأخذ الحق , الحق الشرعي لكن في رجال أحيانا يكون عندهم عنف حتى في ممارسة هذا الحق الشرعي , أحيانا مايراعي انها تكون مريضة او انها تكون متعبة او تكون يعني في وضع ما يسمح , كل الي بهمو انو هو يأخذ هذا الحق الشرعي الي بالنسبة لو .

There is, but we can't say because, a man takes his right by force, it is legally right, she is his wife, but even this wife who is lawful, there is a way to take the right. The legal right, but there are often men who are abusive in exercising this legal right. Sometimes, he doesn't appreciate that she could be ill, or she could be tired, or she could be, I mean, in a situation that doesn't permit. All he cares about, is taking this legal right which is his.

طيب هل تتوقعي بيّفصحو عنو .

Okay, do you suppose they would come out about it.

هذا كثير في مجتمعا ما بيّفصحو عنو .

A lot in our society don't come out about it.

ليش؟

Why?

يمكن نوعية التربية , الخجل الحياء , بخلي انو الوحدة ما تتكلم بهادي الناحية , وكثير احنا عندنا نساء يكونو معنفات ويبستمر في حياتهم ما بيتكلمو أحيانا لمصلحة الأبناء أحيانا لعدم وجود معيل ليها , أحيانا لرفض الأسرة , أحيانا خوف من المجتمع لو انها انفصلت وتطلقت , يعني أسباب متعددة تخلي المرأة انها تتحمل العنف وبتستمر في حياتها

It could be the way of upbringing; shyness and bashfulness, it makes one not talk about this aspect. And we have many women who are abused and go on with their lives and don't talk, sometimes for the sake of the children; sometimes because there is no support for her. Sometimes, it's because the family refuses; sometimes [it's] fear from society if she separates or gets divorced. I mean, many reasons make a woman put up with abuse and go on with her life.

طبيب لو جيت قولتلك انو المرأة المعنفة لها بعض سمات نفسية وجسدية , ايش ممكن من السمات الي

Okay, if I come say that an abused woman has certain psychological and physical traits, what are the possible traits that

من السمات الي انتي تشوف فيها دائما منكسرة , الي دائما منطوية الغير قادرة على حتى انها تعبر عن رأيها , يعني من سمات الي بتكون معنفة .

From the traits that you see, [is that] she is always defeated, that she is always introverted; unable to even express herself, I mean, from the traits of an abused women.

طبيب حسالك سؤال : اذا صادفتي امرأة معنفة قريبة زميلة في أي مكان من المحيط الي انتي موجودة فيه هل انتي تقدري تسألها عن أسباب العنف ؟

Okay, I'll ask you a question: if you come across an abused women; a relative; a colleague, in any place within you're your vicinity, would you be able to ask her about the cause of abuse?

اذا هية ما أبدت رغبة في انها تتكلم ما اقدر , هذا يتوقف على هية رغبتها .

If she does not show that she wants to speak, I can't. This depends on her wish.

طبيب لو جيت قولتلك كيف الاسرة والمجتمع بينظر لقضايا العنف ؟ مثلا بمثال أحيانا تجي البنت زعلانة لبيت أمها وبيت ابوها فالأهل يكتمو فلما يسألو ليه عندكم فلان بقولو لا زوجها بس مسافر او تعبانة , ليش في نظرك دائما عندنا

المجتمع او الأسرة يحاولو , هل همة فعلا بيعتبرو هذه قضية اسرية , قضية خاصة ؟

Okay, if I come ask you: how does society regard cases of abuse? For example, sometimes the girl comes to her mother and father's house upset, so the family keep silent. So when they are asked, 'Why do you have so and so?', they say, 'no, her husband is just travelling', or 'she is ill'. Why, in your opinion, does our society or family try, do they really consider this a family issue; a private issue?

همة ما بيخفوها علشان هية قضية اسرية او قضية خاصة بيخفوها خوفا من العار , انو والله كيف بنتكم مثلا عنفت انضربت او تعدى عليها باللفظ او هاذي , كيف صورتهم عند الناس .

They don't hide it because it's a family issue, or a private issue, they hide it in fear of shame. It's like, 'By God, how was your daughter, for example, abused, beaten or assaulted verbally' or that kind of thing. How will their image be in the eyes of people.

قصدك الواجهة الاجتماعية ؟

You mean the societal facade?

بالظبط انو صورتهم عند الناس بس انو مو أحيانا يكون عشان انو القضية قضية الاسرة , واننا نبغى نحلها وما تكبر , يعني في نسبة بس النسبة الأكبر الخوف من الناس , لانو احنا صار يهمننا رأي النخرين فينا , السمعة , انو ايش يقولو بنت فلان انضربت؟! او زوج فلانة ضربها !

Exactly, that their image in the eyes of people, but it's occasionally because it's a family issue, and that 'we want to resolve it, before it gets bigger'. I mean, there is a portion, but the larger portion is about the fear of people. Because we have become concerned with what others think about us; reputation. That how can they say, 'the daughter of so and so, got beaten'!? Or, 'so and so's husband beat her'!

طيب لو جيت قولتلك , انتي عموما جاوبتيني على هذا السؤال بس ناقشو بسرعة , عموما النساء في الوطن العربي

خصوصا في السعودية تجد صعوبة انها اذا هية معنفة تلجأ للقضاء وتطلب الانفصال زي ما حضرتك تفضلتي وقتلي
كذا خوفا على سمعتها اولادها .

Okay if come tell you: you have generally answered this question, but we'll quickly discuss it. Generally, women in the Arab world; specifically, in Saudi Arabia, [a woman] finds difficulty, if she is abused, to resort to the law, and to ask for separation, as you kindly said, fearing over her reputation and her children.

بالظبط أحيانا لما تحي المرأة ترفع للقاضي ماهو بسهولة هية تقدر توصل صوتها للقاضي .

Exactly, sometimes when a woman tries to report to the judge, it's not easy for her to reach the judge.

زي ما نقول مافي قوانين رادعة؟

As we say, there are no preventative laws?

مافي , الا اذا عشان تثبت تضطر انها تروح لو ضربها تثبت تروح محضر طبي للشرطة , ولسا الى الآن الى الآن ما في كثير من الأسر بتقرو , بنتشوف انو هو عار عيب , مع انو هية حقها , لانو لو هية راحت للقاضي في الاثبات ممكن القاضي يطلقها للضرر , إضافة الى انو لسا الى الآن النساء في بعضهم ما عندهم وعي في حقوقهم , ما عندها وعي بانها انسانة لها حقوق لها كرامة ولها حق انو هية ترفع للقاضي وليها حق انو تطلب الانفصال , هادي كلها درجة الوعي مهمة , الانسان متى يطلب بحقو الا اذا كان واعي بهذا الحق .

There aren't any, except if it's to prove harm, that she goes, if he beats her, to prove, she goes to a medical hearing by the police. And until now, until now, there aren't many families who decide, they see that it's a shame and a taboo. Even though it's her right, because if she goes to the judge with evidence, the judge can get her divorced due to [her] being harmed. In addition, still until now, some women don't have awareness of their rights, they don't have awareness that they are human beings, who have rights, who have dignity, and who have the right to report to the judge and she has the right to file for

divorce. All this is how awareness is important. A person will only ask for their rights if they are aware of such rights.

طيب لو جينا قلنا بالنسبة للأولاد , هل تتوقعي المرأة السعودية عندنا تتحمل العنف تتحمل المصاعب كلو عشان سبب أولادها , هذا يعتبر عائق؟

Okay, if we come say: with regards to children, do you think that Saudi women put up with abuse; put up with difficulties, all for the sake of the children, is this considered an obstacle?

طبعا هاذي السبب الأكبر الي تخلي النساء يتحملو الي هو الأبناء , خاصة اذا كان الرجل هو غير مسؤول , حيقولك الأبناء دول يتشردو حيصيعو من غيري يعني انا اتحمل اسمي كبيرة واقدر اداري حياتي واتحمل لكن دولة صغار لسا كيف؟

Of course, this is the greatest reason that makes women tolerate, which is their children. Especially, if the man is irresponsible. They'll tell you, 'those kids will get displaced; they'll get lost without me, I mean, I can persevere, I'm meant to be an adult and I can conceal my life and put up with this, but those ones are young still, how?'

طيب لو قولتلك هل تعتقدي انو مجتمعنا السعودي بعامل كل من الرجل والمرأة بطريقة مختلفة؟

Okay, if I ask you: do you believe that our Saudi society treats both women and men differently?

طبعا بيعطي الأولوية للرجل على المرأة .

Of course, it gives men priority over women.

كيف؟

How?

مثلا لو هية رفعت امرها للقاضي القاضي ما رح يستمع اليها اذا ما كان عندها اثباتاتها , لمجرد كلام ما رح يستمع بس للرجل يستمعو لانو سهولة الوصول للمجتمع الذكوري ويوصل وجهة نظرو ويوصل رأيو هذا بيعطيلى صلاحية وإمكانية افضل من المرأة .

For example, if she raises her issues to the judge, the judge won't listen to her unless she has her evidence. Just talk, he won't listen. But for a man, they listen to him, because it's easy to get hold of a patriarchal society, and he puts across his perspective, and he puts across his opinion, this gives him priority and ability more than a woman.

يعني ي ما نقول مثلا انو المجتمع بينظر للمرأة دائما بنوع من القيود والحدود وللرجل بيعطيه اكبر مساحة .

I mean, as we say, that society regards women in a restrictive and barring way, and for the man, it gives him a wider space.

طبعا بيعطيلى مساحة اكبر .

Of course, they give him a wider space.

طيب لو جيت قولتلك هل الرجل في مجتمعا محتكر أدوار التسلط والتحكم والمناصب القيادية ؟

Okay, if I come ask you: do men in our society dominate the roles of power and authority and the positions of leadership?

لا في السنوا الأخيرة أصبحت المرأة مشاركة ما هو بس فقط للرجل أصبحت المرأة تشارك وتساهم يعني احنا ممكن خلال الكم سنة الي فاتت دي حصل عندنا نقلة نوعية للمرأة في أشياء كثيرة , يعني زمان صح كانت فقط في الجانب الي هية الخاص بالتعليم الخاص بالهاذي , بس الحين صرنا على كل المستويات , في عندنا نساء بشاركو لذلك ما عاد صار الرجل هو المحتكر .

No, in the past years, women have become partners, it's not like it's just for men, women have started to participate, I mean, we can, over the past few years, we have had a shift in many things for women. I mean, in the past, true, she was only in the educational sector

and so on, but now we are in all sectors. We have women who participate in that, it's no longer the case that a man is dominating.

يعني حتى لو اجي اقولك في مجلس الشورى مثلا 15 في المية وشوية .

I mean, even if I come tell you that in the Advisory Council, for example, there are 15 amongst a hundred or so.

بس برضو نسبة حتى لو كانت نسبة بسيطة كل شيب بيددا في البداية بسيط ثم بعد ذلك يتطور .

But it's still a fraction, even if it's a small fraction; everything starts simple then, later on, develops.

يعني انتي دة حين بتشوفي لأمو الرجل الي هو محتكر ؟

I mean, right now, do you think that, 'no, the man is not dominating'?

مازال الاحتكار موجود.

Still men are the dominance in Saudi society.

طيب هل تعتقدي انو مجتمعنا السعودي مجتمع ذكوري ويشجع الذكورية ؟

Okay, do you think that our Saudi society is patriarchal, and encourages patriarchy?

صح

True

كيف بشجع للذكورية ؟ وضحيلي ؟

How does it encourage patriarchy? Clarify for me?

من منطلق الاسرة في البداية لما بيعطي الولد حق ما بيعطيه للبننت , صح ولا لا؟ لما بيعطيه اولولية على المرأة ,

بتعزز روح الذكورة فيه اكثر , والمجتمع بيمشي على هذا السياق .

On the basis that, in the beginning, when the family gives a privilege to the boy, it doesn't give it to the girl. [Am I] right or not? When it gives him priority over women, it emphasises masculinity in him more, and society follows along those tracks.

لو قولتلك التنشئة الاجتماعية خصوصا الوالدين كيف يكون لهم تعزيزهم لنظام الذكورية , اذكريلي مثال وضحيلي .

If I tell you that societal upbringing, especially the parents, how do they emphasise the system of patriarchy, mention an example; clarify for me.

لما البننت تكون في البيت اخوها كلام الولد يمشي كلامها لأ وانو البننت ما تأخذ أي حق الى في الرجوع لأخوها لو السيطرة , احنا ما قلنا في حقوق وفي واجبات وفي حدود وفي , لكن يظل هو مثله مثلها مالو حق اكثر منها صح ولا لا؟

When a girl is at home, her brother, the opinions of the boy go ahead, her opinions, no. And it's that the girl does not take decision except through going back to her brother who has authority. We did not say that there are rights and responsibilities and limits and, but he remains equal to her; he is not entitled to more than her, [am I] right or not?

فعلا , لو قولتلك انو بعض هاذي الممارسات الذكورية لما نعطي الولد حق في التصرف والتسلط , هل أحيانا هذا يؤدي الى عنف؟

Truly, if I tell you that some of these patriarchal practices, when we give the boy the right to make decisions and have authority, does this, occasionally, lead to abuse?

طبعاً لانو هو بناء عليه الي هو تربي عليه وتنشأ عليه , بحاول بهاذو الأسلوب يعامل زوجته حتى لو حاولت الزوجة هية تخرج عن هذا الامر او عن هذا التسلط هو حيواجهه , حيستنكرو لانو هو تربي على هذا الشئ

Of course, because on this basis, you raise him and bring him up. He'll try, with this manner, to deal with his wife, even if the wife tries to leave this state, or this authority [of

his], he'll confront her. He'll disapprove, because he was brought up upon this.

طيب اريد اعرف ايش موقف الدين الإسلامي من العنف ضد المرأة والمواقف الذكورية ؟

Okay, I want to know: what is the position of the Islamic faith on abuse towards women and patriarchy?

امر مرفوض العنف ضد المرأة والإسلام ساوى بين المرأة والرجل مافي فرق اللهم فقط اعطى أمور تكاليف خاصة

للرجل نظرا لتكوينو وقدراتو وامور خاصة بالمرأة لكن الإسلام مافرق ابدا بين المرأة وبين الرجل , هذا **فيمنا**

الخطأ احنا وهاذي اعرافنا احنا في المجتمع انما ماهي مستمدة لا لدين ولا لعرف مستند لدين و وانما عرف وتقليد تابع لهوا .

[It's] a rejected matter; abuse towards women. And Islam equated between women and men; there is no difference. What's important, is just that it gave specific responsibilities to men, for the sake of building him and his abilities, and things that are related to women. But Islam has never differentiated between women and men. This is [from] our wrong understanding, and these are our customs of our society, but they aren't based on religion or based on customs based on religion, but are just customs and practices based on whims.

طيب لو قولتلك هل انتي تتفقي مع مقولة في خلل في السلطة والقوة في العلاقات الزوجية يؤدي الى عنف ؟ لو قولنا الرجل عنده كمية من الصلاحيات من السلطة من المباحات وفي خلل في التوازن في السلطة والقوة بين المرأة والرجل في العلاقات الزوجية , هل هذا حيادي الى عنف ؟

Okay, if I ask you: do you agree with the saying that there is an imbalance in the authority and power in martial relationships which leads to abuse? If we say that a man has an amount of authorities and permissions, and that [if] there is an imbalance in authority and in power between women and men in marital relationships, will this lead to abuse?

هو يؤدي الى عنف اذا الرجل حاول انو هو يستغل هذي الصلاحيات المعطى لو بناء على انو منحو هية المجتمع مش

الإسلام, ف كيف يستغلها ؟ ف هذا الي حيفرق بين انسان وتاني , في انسان ممكن يستغلها لصالحو انو هو يكون بالنسبة لو القوامة استبداد سيطرة تعسف , تعسف في استخدام الحق حتى وان كان الإسلام اعطاك حق القوامة بس ما يكون في تعسف في استخدامو هذا الحق .

It lead to abuse if the man tries to take advantage of this authority, which was given to him according to society not Islam, so how can he take advantage of it? So this is what will make a difference between a person and the other; there is a person who can use it to his advantage, whereby he takes the principal of male guardianship as a form of tyrannical authority. It's oppression in using the right, even if Islam gave him the right to male guardianship, but, he shouldn't oppressively use this right.

طيب لو جيت قولتلك هل تعتقدي المرأة السعودية متمنعة بجميع حقوقها من مدنية وسياسية واجتماعية؟

Okay if I come ask you: do you believe that Saudi women are entitled to all their rights, that being, civil, political and social?

لا

No

كيف؟

How

لا ما هي متمنعة بكلها كاملة , زيها زي الرجل , سياسيا : احنا الى الآن ما عندنا نساء شاركو في السياسة صح ولا لأ؟ يعني ابسط مشاركة يعني يلي الحين دويها صارت السنة .

No she isn't entitled to all he rights, she is like a man, politically: we, until now, don't have women who have partaken in politics, [am I] right or not? I mean, the simplest of contributions is what just happened this year.

تمت في مجلس البلدية فازو كم وحدة ثلاثة في جدة فازت رشا حفطي ولمى سليمان دولة الي دخلو المجلس البلدي وهذا المجلس البلدي لا يمت للسياسة بصلة , لان هي خدمة مجتمع , لانو للمشاريع والاشياء الي علاقتها بالأمانة والبلدية ماهو شيء سياسي لكن المرأة الى الآن ما خاضت المعترك السياسي , الناحية المدنية المرأة الى الآن ما زالت ما تقدر الا يكون

In the city hall council, there was a number of women who won; three in Jeddah; Rasha Hifdhi and Lama Sulaiman won, those are ones who ran for the city hall council, and this council does not have any relationship with politics, because it is a social service, because projects and issues that are related to integrity and the city hall is not something political. But, women until now have not taken part in politics. [From] the civil aspect, women until now, can only have a guardian and a

طيب هل تعتقدي حرمان المرأة من هاذي الحقوق , كون انها تاخذ قرارها بنفسها في التعليم , هية توقع , اكيد حترجع عندها جوز واكيد حترساليو بس هية يكون قرارها بنفسها هية الي توقع عالوراق هل فعلا هاذي الأشياء ممكن تؤدي الى عنف , حرمانها من حقوقها , كيف؟

Okay, do you think that barring women from these rights, the fact that she takes makes her own decisions in education, of course she will go back to her husband, and surely she will ask him; but her decision should be from her own accord; she signs the papers. Do these issues really lead to abuse, barring her from her rights, how?

طبعاً لانو كثير من الرجال ما بخلي المرأة , يعني ابسط ما فيها يستغلها مادياً , ما يخليها تفتح حساب في البنك , ياخذ راتبها صح ولا لا؟ هاذا بأدي الى عنف؟ بأدي الى عنف .

Of course, because many men don't allow women, I mean in the simplest of cases, he takes advantage of her financially. He doesn't allow her to open a bank account, he takes her salary, [am I] right or not? This leads to abuse? [Yes] It leads to abuse.

انتي من وجهة نظرك لما يكون في وصاية الذكر حتمنحو زي ما تقولي مساحة انو يتحكم ويتسلط وهذا يؤدي الى

عنف .

In your opinion, when there is guardianship for the male, will it grant him, as you say, a space to have power and authority, and this leads to abuse.

طبعاً

Of course

طيب لو قولتلك من وجهة نظرك ايش الي تحتاجو المرأة السعودية عشان تكون مساوية للرجل في الحقوق ؟

Okay, if ask you, from your point of view, what do Saudi women need to be equal to men, in terms of rights?

تحتاج مساحة من الحرية على الأقل في الامور الي تخصها هية , انو هية تكون الكلمة الاخيرة لها وليس للرجل حقها , قراراتها بنفسها .

She needs a space of freedom at least in matters that are private to her, that she has the final word, not her man; her decisions are by her.

هل تعتقدي انو المرأة السعودية في الآونة الاخيرة حصلت على بعض الحقوق ؟

Do you believe that Saudi women in recent times have gained some of their rights?

طبعاً كثير , حق المرأة انها تتعلم حقها في التعليم , حقها في التوظيف , هي كلها حقوق أخذتها , زمان ما كانت موجودة , الحين اصبحت موجودة كأنها أمر مسلم بيه , أيضا حقها تشترط شروط لماتزوج وبقروها القضاة , هاذي نقطة ايجابية بحق المرأة , حقها في انو هية صار عندها اماكن ممكن تشتكي لو حصل عندها عنف , زمان ما كانت في صح ولا لا؟

Of course, many. The right of a woman to education, the right to teach, the right to employment, all these are rights she gained; in the past, they were non-existent. Now they are there, and it's not a matter of negotiation. Also, she has the right to dictate rules when

she is married and the judges endorse them. This is a positive idea in favour of women. Her right in the fact that she has places to report abuse if it happens to her. In the past, there wasn't [any of] this, [am I] right or not?

طيب لو قولتلك حصول المرأة على هاذي الحقوق هل ممكن هاذو يقلص من حالات العنف؟ كون اني انا اصير امرأة عندي شهادة ومتعلمة .

Okay, if I tell you, the attainment of these rights by women, could this reduce cases of abuse? Being a woman with a degree and who is educated.

لا ماهو بالضرورة , احيانا بمارس العنف على ناس اعلى مستوى من التعليم بكونو دكتوراه , هاذو يرجع لمدى وعي المرأة بذاتها وانو ايش المكان الي انا اقول فيه المقبول والمرفوض بالنسبة لي .

No not necessarily, sometimes many women, who have achieved doctorates and are independent in terms of finance and employment, and some of them even have even hold high-ranking positions and provide for their families but they are still experiencing domestic violence. This goes back to how much self-awareness a woman has of herself, and what is the scenario where she can say what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in her right.

طيب انتي ما تتفقي لو انو المرأة مثلا حصلت على حقوقها صارت متحررة او خارجة عن سيطرة الرجل بانو يكون عندها استقلال مادي عندها وظيفي , هاذو ممكن يخرجها من سيطرة الرجل نوعا ما , يعني المفروض انا مستقلة , .. اذا تمارس عليا العنف بطريقة او ما .

Okay, do you not agree that if women, for example, attained their rights, they will be free or out of the control of men, seeing that they will have independence in terms of finances and employment. This could take them out of the control of...men, in a way. I mean, I should be independent, whether I get abused or not.

بس ما زلنا احنا الى الآن المرأة بالنسبة لها تحتاج وجود الرجل انو التكوين العقلي بالنسبة لها انو لازم يكون في رجل

حتى الحين انا اعطيك مثال , ما عندي انا مدرسات مستقلات مدايا وهية الي بتسوي كل شيء والزوج اقل منها تعليم وبالرغم من ذلك بمارس سلطاتو وبمارس سيطرتو عليها طب ليه ؟ لان هية ما زالت الى الآن في تكوينها ماشيين على المثل ظل راجل ولا ظل حيطة.

But we still, until now, have that a woman needs the presence of a man, that her mind-set is that she has to have a man. Even now, I will give you an example, I have teachers who are financially independent, and she is the one who does everything and the husband is less than her in terms of education, but despite this, he is authoritative over her, okay then, why? Because in her mind-set, she goes by the saying that, 'Better a man's shadow than that of a wall'.

طيب لو قولتلك ايش هية الاجراءات الي تتخذها الحكومة السعودية حاليا لحماية المرأة من العنف ؟

Okay, if I ask you: what are the procedures that the Saudi government is taking at the moment to protect women from abuse?

انا بقولك القضاة صار في اذا رفعت المرأة امرها الى القاضي تطلق للضرر , ايضا ان صار في اماكن هي بتلجأ اليها . المرأة ترفع امرها اليها انو حصل عندها تعنيف .

I'm telling you that with judges, if a woman raises her issue to the judge, she can get a divorce on the basis of harm. Also, there are now places that women can resort to, to raise their issues to them, if they get abused.

طيب ايش هاذي المؤسسات هل عندك خلفية ؟

Okay, what are these organisations, do you know?

ما اعرفها بذاتها بس اعرف انو في اكثر من مؤسسة اصبحت موجودة سواء للأبناء او حتى للزوجات او حتى الهادي , زمان ما كان بينسمع هاذا الكلام ما كان احد بيسمع بس الآن في بيسمعولهم وفي بياخدو اجراءات بقضايا .

I don't know them specifically, but I know that there is more than one organisation, which

has become available, whether it's for children or for wives, or even for the like. In the past, no one listened to this talk, no one listened, but now there are those who listen to them and there are those who take legal procedures.

طبيب هل سمعتني عن القانون الي صدر الفين وطلطعشر , قانون العنف الي هوة ضرب الزوجة او الضرب لو غرامة خمسين الف ؟

Okay, have you heard about the law that was passed in 2013, the law whereby beating a wife, or beating, incurs a fine of fifty thousand?

.ايوا هاذا سمعت

Yes, I heard of it..

طبيب ايش رأيك في القانون هاذا ؟

Okay, what do you think of this law?

هي المشكلة هاذا القانون حطوه لما اعتقدو انو همة رح يكافحو فيه العنف الاسري , كم من القضايا الي فيها عنف اسري بتوصل الي القانون ؟ كم ؟ لو انا عندي مثلا نسبة عنف اسري ثمانين في المية كم من الثمانين في المية توصل حق الدولة وتعرف عنها وتعرم الزوج ؟ ولا بتتجاوز النسبة عشرين في المية الي بتوصل للدولة ف يحصل فيها الغرامة.

The problem is that this law, they passed it thinking that they will fight domestic abuse through it. How many of the cases of domestic abuse reach the court? How many? If I, for example, have a domestic abuse incidence of 80%, how much of this 80% reaches the state, who know about it and fine the husband? And the percentage that reaches the state doesn't surpass 20%, which then incurs a fine.

طبيب لو قولتلك ايش مقترحاتك للحكومة والمجتمع الي ممكن همة يساهمو في الحد من حالات العنف ؟ ايش ممكن يصير تقولي للحكومة مثلا نبغي واحد تنين ثلاثة , المجتمع نبغاه يسوي كدة عشان ..؟

Okay if I ask you: what are your proposals to the government and to society which they can carry out to curb the incidence of abuse cases? What can happen, tell the government for example, 'we want 1,2, 3'; 'We want society to does this because...'?

زيادة المؤسسات وابتداء العنف الاسري لازم اي تتين بجو مقدمين على الزواج لازم يكون في دورات تأهيلية بالنسبة لهم وايضا يكون في عندي سلطة تجبر الرجل انو هوة لما يأذي المرأة رح يعاقب احنا ما زلنا الى الآن .

Increasing organisations, and starting with domestic abuse, it has to be that any two that come to get married, there has to be preparatory workshops for them. Also, I should have the authority that forces a man who harms... women, to get punished, we are still until now.

.. قوانين رادعة

Preventative laws...

ما في الآن قوانين لذي الدرجة الي بتخلي الرجل ملزم صح ولا لا؟ مافي يعني بيرفعو امرهم للمحكمة بغيب الجلسة الاولى والجلسة الثانية والجلسة الثالثة وبتطوول وفي قضايا تظل في ردهات المحاكم سنوات صح ولا لا لكن لو أنا ادبتو اول مرة ثاني مرة تالت مرة ما فرق , القاضي يقلو مثلا السلطة يطلق غيابي مع الغرامة .

There aren't, at the moment, laws to this degree that make a man obliged, [am I] right or not? There aren't, I mean they raise their issue to the court, and he is absent in the first hearing, and the second hearing, and the third hearing and it drags on. And some cases stay within the lobbies of the courts for years. [Am I] right or not? But if they give him a first chance, a second chance and a third chance, it makes no difference. A judge should say, for example, that he is divorced, in absence, with a fine.

طيب لو جيت قولتلك المجتمع مابوسعو كوننا افراد في المجتمع , ايش الي انتي ممكن تقترحي عليه عشان يساهم من الحد من حالات العنف ؟

Okay, if I come tell you that society can't, as individuals in society, what can you propose for them to take part in, in reducing abuse cases?

انو ينظر للمرأة مثلها مثل الرجل في الحقوق والواجبات , ماهي مرتبة دون وماهي اقل .

To hold a woman and a man in the same regard, in rights and responsibilities. She is not in a lower class, and she is not less.

يعني نقول نتخلص من العادات والتقاليد البالي .

I mean, we could say get rid of old customs and practices.

لا الي ماهي مستندة الى دين , العادات هادي والاعراف الي عندنا توارثناها , انظر لذا الانسان كائن مساوي لذا الرجل مساوي للرجل بمعنى ايه ؟ بمعنى انو مالو سلطة اكثر منو , مع اعترافي بمزاياه وخصائصه ما قلت انا اعطي قوامة للمرأة ولا اعطي امور للمرأة ولا ,, لا المرأة مرأة والرجل رجل , بس اعطيها حق مثلها مثل الرجل .

No, the ones which are not backed by religion. These customs and practices, which we have, are inherited. Look at this person as an equal to man, 'equal to man' meaning what? Meaning, that he has no extra authority, although I acknowledge his advantages and his special qualities. I am not saying I will give the guardianship to women, or give the matters to women, or... No, a woman is a woman, and a man is a man. But give her rights like the rights of men.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF CODING PROCESS

If you met a woman that has been abused, would you dare to ask her?		
Question	Percentage	Participant perceptions
<p>They would not ask</p> <p>Fear, inserting, and shame, and silencing</p>	<p>26 out of 30 women who would not ask.</p>	<p>“ I’m naturally a person who cannot intervene and intrude into other people’s lives”.</p> <p>“ I consider it private matters”.</p> <p>“We are in a society has a particular ideology, that lives by assigning particular roles to each gender. So it’s the society’s culture that assigned women with a role that encourages male dominance. Therefore, if I tell her or ask her, I could expose her to being embarrassed. As she might not know how to answer. I might try to even advise her or tell her, but she might say that she can’t”.</p> <p>“I don’t like to get involved in other people’s affairs. its because I don’t like anyone who isn’t really close to me, to come and ask me what’s wrong, I wouldn’t want to tell them, because I like to keep things to myself. I wouldn’t let just anyone in onto my personal life, especially if it was something this sensitive”</p> <p>“ but I won’t get involved...I consider it a private matter of hers”.</p> <p>“ for example, if I even see my sister and I feel like there is some bruising on her face, I wouldn’t ask”.</p> <p>“ I feel like it will be embarrassing. She might be lie, she might say she hit the door, or a car accident”.</p> <p>“ From what I’ve experienced with others, I wouldn’t.</p> <p>She might deny”</p> <p>“ It is personal matter. Example, If she had a physical sign of violence, like a broken hand, I might ask her what happened. But if she doesn’t want to talk about it, she might say “I fell down”.</p> <p>“ I feel that it’s a private issue”.</p>
<p>They would not ask</p>	<p>4 out of 30 women who would not ask for their</p>	<p>As these women “Saudi women themselves have to come forward about domestic violence to report it as a social problem, thus challenging and resisting the practices that leaves women to suffer in silence”</p>

	reason	
--	--------	--

How does the family and society perceive domestic abuse?

Participant perceptions	What said
<p>23 of 30 women said DV is personal matter.</p> <p>Protection of personal reputation, avoiding stigmatization, criticized for being inadequate, and protection of family</p>	<p>“Speaking about DV openly doesn’t happen generally.</p> <p>- It’s the culture of the society. The culture that it is shameful, and that women should be patient, she should return to her husband and be patient for the sake of her children. Every woman tells her daughter that their [husband and wife] problems should stay in the house, even stay in the bedroom,”</p> <p>“ Families try to cover up violence and hide My mother always advises us that 'domestic violence must stay between you and your husband, there's no need to speak about it or hear what others have to say, what they tell you won't necessarily be correct.' I support my mother's advice to me to be patient.”</p> <p>“There are no alternatives in the view of the abused woman, and the issue of domestic violence is considered an internal, private, familial issue, and a private issue that is justified more so than rebuked. The girl is brought up on the mentality of patience [upon abuse] and coexisting with reality.”.</p> <p>“The issue of domestic violence is hidden because it is considered private matters and family issues., they have fear of their reputation as an abused women, as well as the fear their husbands' reputation, and fearing over her children’s psychological”.</p> <p>“are still private issues If I was that woman whose girl got abused I’d try my best to better their relationship and treat the problem without letting anyone know that my daughter was abused, whether close or far [in relation].</p> <p>, like the way society would look at her and her husband. Also, in my opinion, and despite the fact I reached a high level of education, I still believe in reconciliation [between the husband and wife]”.</p> <p>“DV could be family matters...As you know Scandal/shame for the family, meaning it affects the</p>

reputation of the family; it could be her husband who is cousin or one of her relatives”.

“it’s considered a family matters. Would say that.. no one should know what occurs between a married couple, except God.. No one should know, apart from God. - The reality now, is that the majority of divorce is.. they call it the (concealed divorce). I mean, do you think that when you enter these homes.. do you think these people are not divorced..? they are actually divorced, but one of them lives upstairs and the other lives down.. I’ve seen many where, she lives in one room and her husband lives in the other room. It is actually divorce, but just in front of others.. that.. but it is divorce.. So that the daughter gets engaged.. I mean, they always say that “when I, as her mum, am divorced.. no groom would approach my daughter”.

“it’s a family matter...”.

“most people see this as a private matter I was in H&M, the husband was holding his belongings, his wife was telling him to come over to look for items on sale for their daughter. He shouted; “enough”, “come here”, “go there”. She quietly walked behind him and couldn’t say a word. They consider it as a shame.. They consider it as diminution. Because any mistake is always blamed on women, not on men as it doesn’t make a difference to society if it was the man’s mistake. The fault is carried by the woman”.

“Yes, Some families don’t like to tell .. are embarrassed. Like my mum for example, my sister came home because she was upset with her husband and she stayed with us for 3 months and my mum didn’t tell anyone in the family. My aunty came and visited us in those 3 months, she doesn’t always visit us.. so she visited once, and asked my mum why she was seeing that Ruqya is always staying with us and that her children weren’t there either, so Ruqya was there without her children. My mum told her.. she just made something up and didn’t tell her the truth.. maintain the structure of the family you know. for example, when I personally upset with my husband, I would never tell a single soul, not even his mom or my mom, even if it was a big problem.... I know that

we will end up reconciliation.. then mum will hold a hatred on my husband because of it and start hating my husband... I mean,

I'm the type to care about my prestige and my husband.. I'm like that.. that's my personality.. I don't want anyone to.

- I mean look, you'll be worried about the family and its reputation and prestige and you want the family to seem.

Example sometimes when we've had a fight, we would go out with his family together as if nothing had happened, even though we're actually not talking to each other at home. But in front of his family it would seem completely normal".

"given that it's a society that has its exclusivity, and considers it a shame; so they prefer to remain silent about DV".

"Its traditions and customs. Women don't want to be stigmatized of being divorced. They would rather tolerate and be patient. If I had a daughter and she had suffered from violence, I wouldn't tell anyone that her husband hit her. Even if people ask me. DV is a sensitive topic, it's a private one too. Its also something that my get settled and resolved. Society's culture".

"Everyone .. family matter. It's no one else's business. The culture of the whole society is that you should be patient with your husband, be patient and let him do with you what he wants. especially if you've had children".

"I think the majority still consider it to be a family affair, and the biggest proof is if a husband hit his wife on the street no would be able to intervene and they would just say, that's her husband or her brother".

"They hide DV in fear of shame. that their image in the eyes of people or their prestige, but it's occasionally because it's a family issue, but the larger portion is about the fear of people. Because we have become concerned with what others think about us; reputation. That how can they say, 'the

daughter of so and so, got beaten'!? Or, 'so and so's husband beat her!'".

"DV is considered a secretive issue because family is worried about the future of their daughter and their reputation"

"Either the family is naturally pacifist. 'It's ok, daughter, its life, and wives should be patient'."

"Family try to cover up the issues of DV for protection the children".

"They consider it private family matters. Because of the way the society views at it, the way they look at women and what other people will say about me. give him a chance. He'll get better. You're doing it for your children.', 'Women who are patient go to heaven' – this type of talk".

"I believe ..private the matter is, and they do not like others to get involved, especially that this topic is very sensitive, and it is hard to be discussed in public.

My personal experience was exactly like that. On my wedding day, my mother gave me the advice of keeping my married life as a secret, take care of your house, and never tell anyone about my problems with my husband, because no matter how small the issue is, it could get bigger once it leaves the borders of the house. She told me that my husband and I could work our issues out and move on, but if others knew about them, they would never allow me to forget about these problems."

"still keep domestic violence a secret. due to the slight chance that this rough time would pass, and that things would eventually go back to normal between the couple. Therefore, the women fear exposing and spreading a bad reputation about her and her husband".

"It is family issue. some families essentially need their daughters to go back to their husbands mainly for the children.. their reputation".

"- I think they keep these matters private in an attempt in an attempt that couple get back together. She think how would the society view her and She

might be afraid of being judged. She might also be shy of being an abused woman”.

“they would ask her to be patient for herself and her kids. They consider it an internal matter and there’s always negativity”.

“Some people keep such matter as a top secret. Maybe there are trying to protect their daughter’s feelings and not causing her the pain.”

“I feel that this issue shouldn’t be exposed. if there was children, then to be considerate of how they would feel”.

APPENDIX C: KEELE UNIVERSITY ETHICAL APPROVAL



Keele
University

Ref: ERP1245

9th September 2015

Maha Mohammed Nahshal
Social Policy Research Centre of Social Science work
Chancellor Building - CBA2.022
Keele University

Keele

Dear Maha

Re: How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia

Thank you for submitting your revised application for review.

I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved by the Ethics Review Panel. The following documents have been reviewed and approved by the panel as follows:

Document(s)	Version Number	Date
Summary Document	3	04/09/2015
Letter of Invitation	3	04/09/2015
Reply Slip – Semi-structured audio recorded Interview	2	16/08/2015
Information Sheet and Consent Forms	3	04/09/2015
Interview Guide	2	16/08/2015

If the fieldwork goes beyond the date stated in your application (31st July 2016), you must notify the Ethical Review Panel via the ERP administrator at uso.erps@keele.ac.uk stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail.

If there are any other amendments to your study you must submit an ‘application to amend study’ form to the ERP administrator stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail. This form is available via <http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/>.

Directorate of Engagement & Partnerships

T: +44(0)1782 734467

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via the ERP administrator on uso.erps@keele.ac.uk stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail.

Yours sincerely

pp C. H. Benjamin

Dr Jackie Waterfield
Chair – Ethical Review Panel
CCRI Manager Supervisor

APPENDIX D: INVITATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS



Keele
University

Dear Madam,

Re: How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

I am Maha Nahshal, a PhD student in School Public Policy and Professional Practice, Social work, at Keele University supervised by Dr, Sally Findlow.

I received your contact information through public records and the Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities at [REDACTED]. I would like to invite you to take part in this study. I am very interested in your feeling and thought about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. My research will focus on how well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. The study will look at the issue of domestic violence through Saudi a cultural lens. It aims to explore socially constructed ideas about gender and gender roles the local context to domestic violence against women.

All that you would be asked to do an approximately one-hour face-to-face interview with me at a time and location that is convenient for you, for example your university. I would ask some questions about your thoughts and feeling about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. Please see the Participant Information Sheet and consent forms enclosed for further details about the study.

If you would like to take part please fill in the reply slip or email me at [REDACTED] when would then meet you for a semi-structured audio-recorded interview at your university at a time which is convenient for you.

If you have any questions about the project, please email me at [REDACTED] or phone me on [REDACTED].

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Yours sincerely,

Maha Nahshal

School Public Policy and Professional Practice, Social work
Chancellor Building, CB A 2.022

[REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

Keele University, Staffordshire ST5 5BG, UK

<http://www.keele.ac.uk>

+44 (0)1782 732000

APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORMS



INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

Names of Researchers: Dr Sally Findlow (Supervisor) and Maha Nahshal (Researcher).

Invitation to Participate

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your interest in this project. I am writing to you to introduce myself and my research. I am Maha Nahshal, a PhD student supervised by Dr Sally Findlow in School of Public Policy and Professional Practice at Keele University. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important you understand what the project involves. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with relatives and friends if you wish to. Ask me [REDACTED] if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this leaflet.

Aims of the Research

My research focuses on how well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. The study will look at the issue of domestic violence through Saudi a cultural lens. It aims to explore socially constructed ideas about gender and gender roles the local context to domestic violence against women.

Why have I been invited?

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a well-educated married Saudi woman that you are likely to have informed views on the issues that I wish to discuss.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely your choice.

The Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities will contact employees to arrange an initial meeting with me, but participation in the study is completely voluntary and will not affect your work or work status. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep, and be asked to sign consent forms. If you take part in the study, you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason for doing so. If you decide not to take part in the study or take part in the study then subsequently withdraw from it, then the researcher will destroy all the data in confidential waste if you decide to withdraw. But, please inform the researcher about your decision using the reply slip and the free post envelope or by email

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited to have approximately one-hour interview with me at a time that is convenient for you and at a place of your choosing, for example, at your workplace. Before starting, the researcher will explain how the interview will run and make sure that you understand the nature of the research. The interview will start by signing the consent forms.

The interview will include answering questions on the topic and you have the right to refuse to answer any question. The interview will be audio recorded, so the researcher can write down what you said word-for-word following the interview and analyse it later on. At the end of the interview, there will be a chance for you to ask questions.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The digital recording made during this research will be used only for research. No other use will be made of it without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed to hear the original recordings.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to stop at any point during the research and all the data will be destroyed in confidential waste if you decide to withdraw.

What are the risks (if any) of taking part?

I know talking about the issue of domestic violence can be a sensitive topic. You might feel discomfort in discussing the topic openly or with a specific question. If this happens, I will let you decide whether or not to carry on with the interview. For additional help, I will advise you who to contact, or I will offer to contact the psychological counselling

unit at the Faculty of Arts so that you can get help if you choose to. Further, I will have printed contact detail available for all the interviewees to hand out at the start of each interview.

What are the benefits (if any) of taking part?

The interview should give you a space to express and interpret your feeling and thoughts about this important topic. Also, taking part in this study would help contribute to research on this topic. The information you provide can contribute to the future development to improve women's status. Well-educated women everywhere have had influence on societies that they can have a greater societal influence and their voices can contribute to political and social change that would contribute to improve women's status.

Who will have access to information about me?

All personal information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be protected. This means that personally identifiable information about you will be kept strictly confidential and no one outside the project will be allowed to see it.

Electronic data containing personally identifiable information will only be stored on a password-protected laptop that only the researcher has access to. Hardcopies of documentation containing personally identifiable information will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet that only the researcher has access to.

Because the research will take place in Saudi Arabia, the researcher will carry the laptop with any participants' personally identifiable information on her person when traveling between Saudi Arabia and the UK. Hardcopies that were in the filing cabinet will be scanned to create PDF files and hardcopies will be destroyed in Saudi Arabia. For added security in the unlikely event that the laptop is lost or stolen, a backup copy of the research – including scanned PDF files of hardcopies -- will be kept on a password-protected USB drive that will be carried by the researcher. Upon arrival in the UK, the backup copy will be uploaded to the secure Keele S Drive and the USB drive will be erased. At the end of this study, or earlier if you ask for this, all information and documents containing personally identifiable information about you will be destroyed.

Anonymity will be ensured. All data will be anonymous, and no one will link the data you provided to the identifying information you supplied (e.g., name). Names will be left out during the transcribing process and consent forms with your name will be stored separately from the data. Further, I will prevent readers from identifying you by changing some of the demographic information that could lead to identifying you like the department in which you work. Only the members of the research team will have access to identity codes on data collection documents. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or summaries.

How will information about me be used?

Your response will be treated with full confidentiality and anyone who takes part in the research will be identified only by false names. The results (including anonymous direct quotes) will be included in the final research report. No individual person will be identifiable in quotes, reports, presentations or summaries. If you wish, we will send you a summary of our findings when the study is finished.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been reviewed and given approval by Keele University Ethical Review Panel.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to me. I will do my best to answer your questions. You should contact me (Maha Nahshal) [REDACTED]. Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher you may contact Dr, Sally Findlow at: [REDACTED]. If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton, who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address: Research & Enterprise Services, Dorothy Hodgkin Building, Keele University, ST5 5BG, [REDACTED].

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study, please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:

Nicola Leighton
Research Governance Officer
Research & Enterprise Services
Dorothy Hodgkin Building
Keele University
ST5 5BG
E-mail: [REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]

If you have any questions or require any further information, either now or at any time during the study, please contact me (Maha Nahshal) [REDACTED]. Alternatively, you can contact me in writing to:

School of Public Policy and Professional Practice
Social Work, Keele University, Staffordshire ST5 5BG.

Thank you for taking time to read this information.



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia

Name and contact details of Principal Investigator: Maha Nahshal, School Public Policy and Professional Practice, Social work, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, United Kingdom Telephone: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]. Please tick box if you

1. I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time
3. I agree to take part in this study.
4. I understand that data collected about me during this study will be anonymised before it is submitted for publication.
5. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature



**Keele
University**

(For use of quotes)

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

Name and contact details of Principal Investigator: Maha Nahshal, School Public Policy and Professional Practice, Social work, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, United Kingdom Telephone: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]

1. I agree for any quotes to be used

2. I do not agree for any quotes to be used

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

APPENDIX F: REPLY SLIP

APPOINTMENT FOR A SEMI-STRUCTURED AUDIO-RECORDED INTERVIEW

Title of the Study: How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.

I would like to meet with you for a semi-structured audio-recorded interview. When would be convenient time for me to interview you at your University?

.....

Reply Slip

I would be willing to meet you on (Date) at..... (Time) at my university.

Date

Signature

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE

CONFIDENTIAL

Code:

“How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia.”

Semi-structured Interview

Maha Nahshal, PhD researcher


School of Public Policy and Professional Practice, social work

Keele University

Staffordshire

ST5 5BG

United Kingdom

Telephone: 

Ethical consent has been gained via Keele University in order to carry out this research

Obtain verbal consent to participate (Check consent form completed)

How well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia

Objectives of this Study

My research will focus on how well-educated Saudi women feel and think about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. The study will look at the issue of domestic violence through a Saudi cultural lens. It aims to explore socially constructed ideas about gender and gender roles the local context of domestic violence against women.

Introduction

I would like to talk to you about the domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia. I am very interested in your feeling and thoughts on this topic. I am going to break this interview into different sections beginning with feeling and thoughts for domestic violence against Saudi women. Then we will talk about your knowledge of the topic, then will move to the factors that lead to continue to the increase in domestic violence in Saudi society, then we discuss Women's awareness of domestic violence as a motivation to lead to change (revise policy or law leading to decrease the incidence of domestic violence).

Part A: Demographic and general information to warm up the interview and make the participants feel more comfortable the following questions are common conversation between Saudi women:

1. Age..... [Year]
2. Do you mind me asking how long you've been married?
3. Can I ask you how many children do you have?
4. I'd like to know if you have experience to study abroad or not?
5. I'd like to know what is your degree?
6. Would you mind telling me if you are an academic or administrator?
7. Do you mind me asking how long you've been working in this University?

Part B: Topic guide for interview

Section 1: To obtain women's feeling and thoughts about domestic violence against women in Saudi Arabia

1. Do you remember the incident of domestic violence for Rania al-Baz or other incidents? If yes, what do you think of it?
2. Do you think her experiences might apply more widely to Saudi women?

Section 2: Women's awareness of the incidents, forms, and prevalence of domestic

violence

1. After discussion Rania al-Baz story, I would like to hear from you as well about the story that you know or hear about Saudi women are subjected to domestic violence?
2. After these stories, how would you define domestic violence, and do you think the physical violence is the most common form of abuse? Can you take a moment to think of other forms of domestic violence?
3. Women who are facing domestic violence can be recognised by some of signs such as, physical or psychological, how would you describe these signs?
4. Would you ever ask a person if they were the victim of domestic violence? Why or why not?
5. Do you wonder why is it so difficult for women who are subjected to violence to report the abuse and leave their husbands?

Section 3: Causes of domestic violence

Main question:

1. Do you think men and women are different? Why not or in what ways?

The following questions will be asked depending on the initial answer:

- a. Do you have any idea that our society treats women and men differently? Why not or in what way?
- b. Do you think that either gender should have a superior role in our society? Why not or in what ways?
- c. In what ways do you see Saudi society as patriarchal (men as dominant group)?
- d. What behaviours have you noticed taking place around you that would support and encourage a patriarchal system?
- e. Do you think that socialisation (parents) has played a role to encourage the system of patriarchy? Why not or in what ways?
- f. Do you have any idea that the practices of patriarchy lead to domestic violence against women? Why not or in what ways?
- g. From your point of view, what is the link between the practices of patriarchy and domestic violence?

Main question:

2. Do you agree that the imbalance of power in the relationships leads to domestic violence against women? Why not or in what ways?

Main question:

3. Do you think that Saudi women enjoy full citizens' rights? (According to Marshall, 1949 citizenship requires individuals to have a membership in a community; their rights (civil, social, and political) and responsibilities derives from their membership in a that community and equality of their status to other members). Why not or in what ways?

The following questions will be asked depending on the initial answer:

- a) Do you think that a lack of women's rights leads to the continued incidence of domestic violence against women? Why not or in what ways?
- b) From your point of view, what do Saudi women need to be a full and equal citizen?
- c) Do you think that Saudi women have more rights (since 2005, when the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) was established and allowed women to study abroad as men and women appointed in the Shura Council)? Why not or can you explain a bit more?
- d) Do you think that expanding more women's rights leads to reduction of domestic violence? Why not or in what ways?
- e) In what ways do you think the Saudi government and society helps to protect women from violence?
- f) What actions would you recommend the government and society take to help reduce the incidence of domestic violence?

After every question where appropriate, I will ask for further explanation (e.g., "Can you explain a bit more?").

Reconfirm consent to participate and ask for permission to use quotes (also need to complete consent form). Thank the participant.

APPENDIX H: IMAGES FOR THE INTERVIEWEES

RANIA AL-BAZ



المشيخة رانيا الباز



