ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COLLEGE-EDUCATED QATARI WOMEN: FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE BOARDROOM
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In Qatar, a small Middle Eastern Country, bordered by Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, over 75% of college students are female but only 34% of the workforce is female. This qualitative study explores the paradox of highly educated and underemployed Qatari women through interviews with six college-educated Qatari women. To date, the majority of the research about the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) focuses on national- regional- and institution-level issues and not on individual experiences. There is a particular void in understanding the individual experience of Qatari women, even though there has been energy at the national level to create policies that expand educational opportunities, and to a more limited extent, workforce opportunities for women. Given this context, this study focuses on college-educated Qatari women's motivation for and experiences with higher education and workforce opportunities.

This study found that this group of highly motivated and highly educated young Qatari women were entering the workforce, challenging the existing paradox; however, it was easier for some women to take advantage of educational opportunities than professional opportunities. Women faced challenges in negotiating professional and personal identities within Qatar's rapidly changing social structure, especially in terms of

shifting gender norms. They experienced points of stress, especially in the workforce and in family relationships though they remained highly motivated to acquire additional education and succeed in the workplace. This study calls for further examination of these issues and of existing paradigms of women and work in MENA.

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COLLEGE-EDUCATED QATARI WOMEN: FROM
THE CLASSROOM TO THE BOARDROOM

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2014

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Acknowledgements

This project is about women's educational and career aspirations, so, above all, I must thank my mother who planted the seed of both in me. Thank you for always taking the time to explain one more thing to a curious child: It looks like it finally paid off.

To my father, Lee Jacobson, and my grandmother, Mary Wagner, I hope I have made you proud.

Thank you to my sister, Tyler, and my brother, Lowell, and to my siblings-in laws, Bradley and Jill (to be); I am lucky to count you as family.

Thank you to my advisor, Dr. Bob Croninger, for your insightful and thorough commentary on this project; it has made me a better researcher. Thank you also to Dr. Steve Selden, my advisor throughout my coursework and proposal. Your support was invaluable during the first half of my doctoral program. Many of my memories of the COE are of your courses and I thank you. Thank you also to Dr. Hanne Mawhinney for making me into a qualitative researcher. Your influence was invaluable on this project. And thank you to my committee Drs. Francine Hultgren, Linda Valli and Steve Klees for your time and attention to my work.

Thank you to my writing group, Kanoe Bunney, Amanda Bowsher and Kathleen Hoyer. With your support the end seemed possible. I know my work is better because of you and I certainly enjoyed the process more with you. Three down and one to go!

Thank you to my colleagues at the University Career Center, especially Becky Weir and Linda Lenoir, for giving me a home on campus.

To my Northwestern and DC friends, thank you for a lifetime of friendship and support!

So many people provided support, love and kindness during this process. Please know how much you mean to me and that I know I could not have done this without you! I am very blessed.

Finally, thank you to the Qatari women who generously shared their stories with me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the 1970s adults in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) averaged only two years of schooling (World Bank, 2008). During a period of remarkable growth, from 1970-2003, the number of students in the MENA region enrolled in secondary school increased threefold and the number of students enrolled in higher education increased fivefold (World Bank, 2008). Today, the majority of MENA countries have reached full primary school enrollment and secondary school enrollment is 64% for females and 69% for males (Unicef, 2014; World Bank, 2008). To make these gains, the region has invested considerable resources in improving its education systems: Over the period of 1965-2003, MENA governments spent an average of 5% of their GDPs on education.[1]

In the State of Qatar,[2] a small Gulf country the size of Connecticut, bordered by Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, there has also been a dramatic social shift in the patterns of schooling.[3] In part because in the last 20 years, Qatar has become one of the world innovators in education policy, completely reforming its K-20 school system borrowing from what they perceive to be "world-class" American and European models. On the 2010 Qatari Census, 60% of women and 34% of men aged 50+ reported never having attended school (General Secretariat for Development Planning, January 2012). Today, surprisingly, girls outnumber boys in the classroom. In 2011, the net enrollment

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[1] As a comparison, East Asian and Latin American countries spent an average of 3% of public expenditures on education during the same time period. Comparison countries in these regions are: China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Peru (Word Bank, 2008).

[2] The closest approximation of the native pronunciation falls between "cutter" and "gutter," but not like "guitar."

[3] The Gulf Cooperation Council countries are: Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

rate in secondary school was 96% for females versus 87% for males. And, even more dramatically, over 75% of students attending colleges and universities in Qatar are female.[4] But while Qatari women have broken educational barriers, they are still not afforded the same social, political and economic opportunities as men.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Index numerically ranks countries by the scope of their gender-based disparities and tracks their progress in closing these disparities. By this measure, Qatar's overall Gender Gap is 116 (out of 142 countries total).[5] But the one area in which Qatar excels in creating opportunities for women is education. Qatar is ranked 53rd for educational attainment and first for enrollment in tertiary education (Beckhouche, Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2013). In contrast, Qatar's ranking for labor force participation is 113: between the classroom and the "boardroom" Qatar's women are slipping from first to 113th place. Qatari women are not translating the gains made in education—where they are now the vast majority of students—to the workforce—where they continue to be the minority of the workforce.

To begin to explore the paradox of women's educational attainment, I designed a qualitative study of female Qatari college graduates. In particular, this study explores tensions arising in gender norms from women's increased access to education and women's (re)negotiation of their identities as young professionals, especially since, despite recent change, Qatar is still a conservative Muslim country. The individual

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[4] No one statistic exists for the higher education system in Qatar but 76% of students at Qatar University, the national university, are female and 60-80% of students at the American universities at Education City are female. For all of the Education City campuses 68% of the Qatari students are female (Ministry of Development and Planning Statistics, August 12, 2012; Qatar University Office of Institutional Planning and Development, 2010; Education City Frequently Asked Questions, n.d.).

[5] The Gender Gap Index measures gender gaps rather than development levels. For example, the level of health care in a country is not measured; rather, the gap in access to health care between men and women is measured. Measuring the gap does not penalize or reward countries based on their levels of development. For more details on the methodology of the index see Beckhouche, Hausmann, Tyson & Zahidi, 2013, p. 3-6.

narratives included in this study portray a group of ambitious young women, eager to take advantage of new educational opportunities, but also confronted with cultural traditions and institutional structures that make the transition to the workplace difficult.

In the following sections, I discuss the returns to education for women, provide the context for the study, describe why I selected Qatar as the site for this study, outline the research design and research questions, and explore the gaps in the literature that led to this study.

Returns to Education for Women

Extensive research shows that girls' and women's' education positively impacts family planning, nutrition and health for their entire families (Benard, 2006; Moghadam, 2004; Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003; Shukri, 1999; World Bank, 2004). For example, girls who have received an education in turn tend to have children, especially female children, who are more likely to receive an education (Shukri, 1999; Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003; World Bank, 2004). And just one additional year of schooling may reduce a women's fertility rate by 5-10%. In addition, smaller families tend be overall healthier, better educated and better-off financially: as it follows that resources can be better allocated amongst fewer individuals. Worldwide studies have also shown that when women have control over household income they spend a greater share of the family budget on the education and health of their children (Cinar & Anbarci, 2001; Shukri, 1999; World Bank, 2004).[6] And with fewer children at home, women can potentially devote more time to income-generating-activities, increasing their families' standard of living (World Bank, 2004). Women who control capital are also more likely

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[6] It remains to be seen if this pattern holds true in MENA (World Bank, 2004). See World Bank, 2004, p. 73-4 for details on studies reviewed.

to have increased status both within their families and society at large. When women

work outside the home it also has political consequences as they are more likely to

exchange information, collectively mobilize and lobby for their rights (Moghadam, 2001,

2004; Ross, 2008; Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003. These general returns to education

for women both contextualize the current study as well as demonstrate the importance of

women's education in Qatar and its impact on their future opportunities—including

workplace opportunities.

Qatar

Qatar was selected as the site for this study because as the wealthiest country in

the world, Qatar's influence far exceeds its (tiny) size.[7] Qatar has the highest per capita

income in the world: While the official per capita income is $102,100, the unofficial

estimate of the per capita income for only Qatari nationals is $400,000 (CIA 2014;

personal correspondence, 2012). Although less than two-percent of the country's land is

arable, the country is rich in petroleum, oil and natural gas. Qatar has made a rapid

transition from "tribal community to modern state" largely since the discovery of oil in

the 1940s (Stasz, Eide, & Martorell, 2007, p. 7). In just a generation, the population has

transitioned from a Bedouin society and an economy centered on pearl-diving, to a highly

urban society (96% of residents live in urban areas) and an economy centered on oil.

Qatar provides an exceptional opportunity to explore the social and individual

challenges that accompany the increased participation of young women in post-secondary

education in this area of the world, including the challenges associated with gaining

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[7] For example, Qatar is home to Al Udeid Air Base, home to the U.S. Central Command Military base. Qatar also owns Al Jazeera television network. Qatar also played a critical role during the Arab Spring, supporting the pro-democracy struggles in Egypt and Tunisia; In Libya, Qatar provided weapons, training and financial support to the rebels.

meaningful employment in a male-dominated society. Rapid changes in the educational and economic opportunities afforded Qataris, including women, highlight tensions between the desire to maintain cultural traditions and economic modernization. Highlighting these tensions provides a significant opportunity to understand the challenges and experiences of young, highly motivated women in this area of the world.

Several factors describe Qatari society and contribute to the extent to which women can take advantage of social reforms: First, despite recent social and economic reforms, Qatar is still a conservative country. The majority of Qataris are Wahhabi Muslims, which is a conservative form of Sunni Islam predominantly practiced in Saudi Arabia; however, Frommerz (2013) called Qatar's interpretation "Wahhabism-lite" because it is more "flexible" than that found in Saudi Arabia (p.19). On the one hand, marriages are still arranged, and men and women are discouraged from socializing, but on the other hand, men and women have more social contact than in Saudi Arabia as more school and work opportunities are co-educational. In addition, while polygamy is allowed under Islamic (Shariah) law, monogamous marriages have increased in recent years, so that in 2007 polygamous marriages accounted for only 15% of marriages (a drop from 20% in 2004) (Anser, 2014). Ultimately, the extent of girls' and women's personal freedom depends on her family, especially her father. He may allow her to pursue education giving her a much broader range of freedoms, or he may restrict her to the home.

Second, Qatar provides a strong example of the workforce issues associated with countries that rely heavily on non-national workers. Qatari nationals make up only 12% of the total population of 2,155,466. The majority of the population is non-national guest

workers, primarily South Asian males between 20 and 30 years old.[8] While other Gulf

Corporation Council (GCC) countries rely heavily on expatriate workers, Qatar has a

higher percentage of non-national (expatriates) workers than other GCC countries.[9]

Because of the large population of non-nationals, the majority of the population is both

young and male; in fact 84% of the total population is aged 15-64, whereas 58% of Qatari

citizens are in this same age range. And the youth population, specifically those ages 15-

24, rose from 57,000 to 252,000 (from1990-2010), while the proportion of Qataris in this

age range actually fell from 43% to 19%. Despite this decline, the national population is

still relatively young with about 20% of Qataris in the 15-24 age group. Finally, in the

total population, there are over three males for every female, though within the Qatari

population—whom this study addresses—there is no gender imbalance (General

Secretariat for Development and Planning, October 2012).

Third, as noted, in the past twenty years Qatar has completely reformed its K-20

education system. In part, Qatar needed to play catch-up because formal education only

became a national priority after the discovery of oil. Prior to the establishment of the

Ministry of Education in 1956, private tutors educated upper-class Qataris but there was

no national education system. In other words, the rapid expansion of educational

opportunities for all Qataris, but especially women, reveal important and telling fault

lines between cultural traditions and the desire to modernize educational and economic

institutions.

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[8] About 75% of non-national workers are semi-skilled or non-skilled workers (General Secretariat for
Development and Planning, October 2012). This group is predominantly males from South Asian
countries, who are in Qatar without their families and have limited interaction with Qatari citizens (General
Secretariat for Development and Planning, January, 2012). The remaining 25% of non-citizens are skilled
and highly skilled workers who are more likely to come from Western countries or other Gulf countries.
[9] Seventy-eight percent of the population in Qatar is non-nationals—the highest in the region (from a low
of 24% in Oman to the next highest of 71% in the UAE) (Anser, 2014).

As in other countries in the region, opening educational opportunities to girls faced numerous challenges in Qatar. The first school for girls only opened in 1956 in a teacher's home with 122 students and four teachers. Education has grown rapidly since this first school: In 2011-2012 there were 219,552 students enrolled in primary through secondary school in Qatar, of whom 82,128 were Qatari (Ministry of Development and Planning Statistics, 2012). Educational attainment has also increased over time: In 2001 6% of men had some post-secondary education versus 10% in 2010, for women 12% had some post-secondary education in 2001 versus 15% in 2010; so, while post-secondary education has increased for both groups, women have actually been outpacing Qatari men since at least the early 2000s (General Secretariat for Development and Planning, January, 2012). There is, however, a striking discrepancy between secondary school attainment in the older generation. For those 25 and older, in 2010, only 32% of women and 42% of men reported having completed secondary school, while for those aged 20-24, 78% of women and 79% of men reported having completed secondary school (General Secretariat for Development and Planning, January, 2012). In fact, historically, the objection to girls' education was so strong that the Education Department of Qatar originally included it in the "non-official education" category, and on days when the school was inspected teachers would hide all non-religious materials because families objected to their daughter studying subjects other than the Quran. Only through this deception were girls able to attend school. Some seriously objected to educating girls because it would teach them to write enabling them to communicate with men and with the outside world (Al-Misnad, 1985).

Nonetheless, since the opening of the first modest school, women have fought to receive an education and in recent years have outperformed and outpaced their male classmates in educational attainment. But the Qatari labor market has not responded to the influx of highly educated female graduates. This phenomenon requires greater attention, especially considering Qatar's need for workers. Approximately 29% of Qataris work with 19% of Qatari men and 9% of Qatari women employed (Qatar Information Exchange, 2012).[10] But Qatari nationals make up only 6% of the labor force, a decrease from 14% in 2001 (General Secretariat for Development Planning, January 2012). The top four industries in which Qataris ages 20-24 work are outlined in table one below.

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[10] These are best approximations that had to be aggregated from various data sources and should be treated as such.

Table 1: Employment by industry for Qataris aged 20-24

	Men	Women
Public administration	68%	48%
Mining and quarrying	12%	7% *
Education	1% *	15%
Financial remediation	4%	11%

*not in top 4

In fact, so few Qataris participate in the labor force that if the number of non-national workers was reduced—even modestly— there would not be enough Qatari nationals to fill the vacated jobs. When Qatari nationals do work they overwhelmingly select employment in the state's outsized bureaucracy, which employs 83% of Qataris. To increase the number of citizens in the workforce, Qatar is investing heavily in its labor nationalization plan, "Qatarization." This program requires that vacant positions must first be offered to a Qatari citizen. If no Qatari takes the position, it can then be offered to a non-Qatari Arab; finally, open positions can be offered to non-Arab foreigners (Stasz et al., 2007). [11] One driver of the education reform plan is to train workers to meet the demands of Qatarization, especially in the private sector where few Qataris have typically been employed. In 2004, only 4% of Qataris worked in the private sector, a decrease of 6% since 1998. Despite Qataris' lack of participation in the private sector, it employs three-quarters of all workers and drives diversification and economic expansion, especially in the 21st century knowledge economy for which Qatari nationals are underprepared and underqualified (Gonzalez, Karoly, Constant, Salem, & Goldman,

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[11] Qatarization mirrors other workforce programs such as "Omanization" in Oman and "Bahrainization" in Bahrain.

2008; Stasz et al., 2007; World Bank, 2004). The government's commitment to the employment of Qatari nationals and the expansion of the private sector, even making it a prominent goal in the country's strategic plan, *Qatar National Vision 2030,* provides another reason to explore Qatari women's' educational and workforce experiences. Because of the push for expanding employment opportunities for Qatari nationals, there is greater opportunity—at least in theory—for women to pursue employment.

Highly educated and underemployed, Qatari women are an unexplored asset to meet the needs of the labor market. But more information is needed about their motivation to enter and their experiences in the workforce. Of particular interest are Qatari women who seek post-secondary education, often in skill-based professional programs, ostensibly meant to prepare them for professional careers.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the empirical literature by contributing first-hand qualitative narratives of recent college-educated Qatari women. To do so, I used an interview design to explore participants' motivation for and experience with higher education and the workforce. I explore the paradox of achievement—the paradox of Qatari women's exceptionally high rate of educational attainment and relatively low rate of labor force participation—through the eyes of these young Qatari women, all of whom have strong educational and career aspirations. Specifically my research questions are:

1. What are college-educated Qatari women's motivations for and experiences with higher education?

2. What are college-educated Qatari women's motivations for and experiences with workforce participation?

Justification for Study

The void in the current research about women's education in Qatar means that there is tremendous room for new scholarship, especially qualitative research. This study focuses on the direct experiences of college-educated Qatari women. I chose this population for several reasons: First, existing studies do not address the experience of individuals but rather focus on national-, regional-, or institutional-level issues. Second, there is a lack of qualitative research on education in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (Bahgat, 1999; Mazawi & Saltana, 2010). Third, the quantitative data that does exist are often used to reinforce a sense of deficit about the region (Mazawi & Saltana, 2010). Ahmad (2009) argues that the limited studies that do exist engage in a pathological framing focusing on a "culture clash" and the "double lives" of Muslim women, or their "liberation" through education rather than on their actual experiences (p. 67). Fourth, though women are a direct target of Qatarization in the *Qatar National Vision 2030*, to date, no qualitative study has assessed this population's attitudes towards Qatarization. Fifth, there are only two studies specifically related to Qatari women, education and the labor market (Bahry & Marr, 2005; Felder & Vuollo 2008). Finally, unlike my study, no qualitative study has specifically prioritized the direct experiences of college-educated Qatari women.

By using a qualitative interview design I focus on the women's own stories. This approach will allow the women's voices—until now not heard in the research literature—to play a central role in understanding women's educational and workforce experiences

while also allowing critical space for emerging theory. Reports by international agencies, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, often assume that girls and women do not participate in the labor market because of a lack of choice. But researchers know very little about the choices girls and women in Qatar do make after leaving college. This study begins to fill that gap.

Conclusion

In Qatar, top-down reforms have created tremendous capacity for the education of women, but not the accompanying labor market placements. The result has been that:

> Women in MENA economies are increasingly well prepared for work in the productive economy and an increasing number, although still the minority, want to participate in the labour force. The labour demand side of the economy does not, however, adequately offer women the opportunity to work. (OECD, 2013, p.4)

Qatar certainly seems an example of this mismatch between supply and demand since over 75% of college students are female, yet only 34% of the labor force is female. The expansion of the education system was a government-initiated plan to distribute newly discovered oil revenue instead of a response to gradual social change (Bahgat, 1999). As such, much of the education and labor market reforms have been mandated from the top down and have not been accompanied by social and cultural shifts (Bahgat, 1999; Bahry & Marr, 2005). This qualitative study focuses on the motivation for and experiences with higher education and workforce participation of six college-educated Qatari women to explore possible reasons for the poor match between educational and professional opportunities, as well as possible social tensions arising from women taking advantage of these new opportunities.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In this chapter I review four bodies of literature to establish a foundation for the study. I begin with an overview and discussion of the special challenges posed by a literature review of this topic—the paradox of Qatari women's exceptionally high rate of educational attainment and relatively low rate of labor force participation. I then discuss the strategies I used to identify and organize the relevant literature into four broad themes: 1) the status of women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 2) labor market policies, 3) education in Qatar and 4) women's motivation for and experience with education and workforce participation. In the conclusion I argue for the need for the current study based on the voids in the literature.

Structure and Parameters

This literature review draws both from multiple streams of literature and from multiple disciplines including: education, sociology, political science, and economics. Typically, literature reviews are situated in a single academic discipline in order to best frame, or bound, the study (Marshall &Rossman, 2006). Because traditions and disciplines define terms and concepts differently, aligning a study with a specific tradition provides support for the chosen terms and concepts and mitigates criticism in favor of alternative definitions and/or theories; however, when there is limited literature on a topic a "creative blending" of strands of literature may be necessary to appropriately frame the research question (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 46). Such an approach more holistically captures a phenomenon. This approach is certainly the case with the topic of this study—the motivation for and experiences with education and workforce participation of young Qatari women.

A Library of Congress literature review on women in Islamic societies summarized this problem: "When researchers assert the primacy of one factor over another, they often find themselves elevating their own scholastic specialty as a primary fact, as when economists assert the primacy of economic development or the world system over religion, or sociologists find that preexisting cultural value patterns of a given locale or sub-group trump religious affiliation, so that religion is the result of such patterns as much as their cause" (Offenhauer, 2005, p. 12). By considering multiple areas of literature I hope to provide a more complete picture and theoretical foundation for the study.

Existing literature on women's education and workforce participation in Qatar is largely summative or reflective and not analytical. Because of the lack of traditional, peer-reviewed journal articles, I focused on what has been called "multivocal literature," defined as "all accessible writings on a common, often contemporary topic" (Ogawa & Malen, 1991, p. 1). Ogawa and Malen note that multivocal literature is common in the field of education. Non peer-reviewed literature is also considered "gray literature," defined by the Third International Conference on Grey Literature, as what "[…] is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers," such as reports, conference proceeding, dissertations, working papers and white papers (Farace & Schöpfel, 2010, p. 1).[12] Based on this approach, I relied on a variety of sources,

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[12] The management of gray (or grey in British English) literature is an emerging field in library science with a dedicated journal and international conference. See www.greynet.org and www.greylit.org for more information. Gray literature is currently most prominently used in the health sciences but its applicability can be applied to other fields as demonstrated by this review.

including journal articles, book chapters, research briefs, white papers and government reports related to women's education and workforce participation in MENA and Qatar.

I located the works presented in this chapter by searching 1) library databases Education Research Complete (EBSCO), Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Web of Science, 2) ProQuest for relevant dissertations, 3) Google and Google Scholar for grey literature not included in library databases, 4) books and book chapters, 5) ancestral searches based on the references in manuscripts relevant to this study and 6) searches of the table of contents of prominent relevant journals in Middle East Studies, in particular *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* and the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. When searching databases for relevant literature I used general keywords such as, "Middle East," "Gulf," "Qatar," "Women," "education" "work" or "labor." But even using very broad keywords, very few directly relevant results were returned. I included manuscripts in the literature review about women's education or labor market participation in MENA or Qatar. I excluded those I judged to be less relevant because they focused on issues unrelated to women, education or the labor market in either MENA or Qatar.[13]

I organized statistics and data from reports cited (e.g., by the World Bank, United Nations, RAND) into three major levels: the MENA region, the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) region, and the country of Qatar. These areas, of course, have important variations in women's education and workforce participation, so I have tried to be specific about the areas referenced by reports. For example, when statistics refer to the

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[13] For example, there are bodies of literature about (among other issues) 1) migrant workers' rights in Qatar, 2) Qatar's role as a U.S. ally and 3) the World Cup to be hosted in Qatar in 2022 that were not relevant to this study.

MENA region as a whole this has been specified. Every effort has been made not to overly generalize from the regional level to the country level.[14]

Shukri (1999) notes important limitations to data collection in MENA, especially in relation to women workers. Women are often under-represented in national accounts and different agencies have different standards of collection leading to inconsistencies. Finally, Census enumerators sometimes ask culturally insensitive questions and therefore, receive incorrect or incomplete data about women's work. For example, modesty standards may lead to under-reporting of women's work in some countries. These gaps in data may lead to estimates that underrepresent women in the labor market, especially in the agricultural sector where women's work is often considered family work.[15]

Census reports and other surveys and reports also do not always distinguish between nationals and non-nationals in their data (Moghadam, 2005). Because GCC countries, in particular, import such a high percentage of their labor forces these reporting issues are quite serious. Reporting is typically better for public sector jobs, which make up the largest proportion of Qatari jobs. This study focuses on educated workers, so, these specific data collection issues about women in the labor force should be less relevant; however, some caution should still be exercised when generalizing national data to Qatari nationals. I am also noting this limitation because it highlights the difficulty with collecting data in this region, as well as helps to explain potential discrepancies among surveys and report figures.

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[14] The majority of reports and articles analyzed in this dissertation used data collected before the Arab Spring, a wave of political protests that began in December 2010, and as of July 2012, resulted in the overthrow of the governments in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Yemen. Data should be interpreted with these political changes in mind.
[15] An anecdote highlights this problem: when men in rural Syria were asked if their wives worked, most replied that they did not. But when asked if they would have to hire someone to replace their wives if she did not assist them most replied that they would, in fact, have to do so (as related by Hijab, 2001).

After reviewing the identified relevant literature and reports, I organized the literature into the aforementioned themes: 1) the status of women in MENA, 2) labor market policies, 3) education in Qatar and 4) women's motivation. The first theme, the status of women in MENA provides a socio-cultural context for why women in MENA and especially Qatar may experience a paradox of being among the highest achievers in terms of higher education and the lowest participants in the workforce. The second theme, labor market policies, discusses the economic and political context of a rentier state: that is, a state where the country's wealth is based primarily on external revenue such as oil production. I argue that Qatar's economy provides an important context from which to understand why Qatar has undertaken such extensive education reforms, including creating opportunities for higher education for women and creating policies to promote access to the workplace. The next theme, education in Qatar, provides a short overview of the history of education and education reform in Qatar. The final theme, women's motivation, examines various theories about why women are driven to succeed in higher education and the workplace.

Status of Women in MENA

Theories about the relationship between women and work in MENA reflect the complicated interaction among social, cultural and economic factors. Women's lower status may explain why even with increased levels of education women are not making corresponding gains in the labor market, or why countries have supported the "development of human capabilities of women but not for their utilization" (United Nations Development Programme, 2003, p. 19). More specifically, the literature on this subject debates whether Islam, culture, economics, or even an oil-based economy is to

blame for women's subordinate status in the Middle East. Some scholars argue Islam explains gender issues in MENA (Cinar, 2001; Hijab, 2001; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Kelly, 2010; Metcalfe, 2011; World Bank, 2004). Still others turn to cultural explanations, such as the persistence of a patriarchal society (Charrad, 2009; Metcalfe, 2006; Moghadam, 2001, 2003, 2005; Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). Finally, some argue economic factors, specifically oil revenues tied to the rentier state explain the unequal treatment of women (Karshenas & Moghadam 2001; Moghadam, 2003, 2005; Offenhauer, 2005; Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003; Ross, 2008; Shukri, 1999).

The most prominent arguments focus on the role of an oil-based economy, Islamic religious beliefs, and patriarchal culture, though a number of scholars have argued that a combination of these factors influence women's education and workforce experience to varying degrees through social structures and state ideology. The next sections examine these factors in greater detail. I begin by discussing arguments that focus on oil-based economies and Islamic beliefs, for these two explanations are often presented as dichotomous arguments for the low level of women's participation in the workforce. I then discuss arguments that emphasize how patriarchal social structures manifest themselves in modernizing societies.

Oil and Economy

Michael Ross (2008) argues that oil and not Islam explains the underrepresentation of women in the labor market in the Middle East. According to Ross (2008), oil-producing states, which have low levels of women working outside the home, have atypically strong patriarchal cultures and political systems—structures that he believes an oil-based economy strengthens. Ross challenges traditional arguments about

why women in MENA have made less progress toward gender equality than women in other regions. Typically, less progressive gender relations in MENA are blamed on Islamic tradition. Ross (2008), however, states "oil, not Islam, is at fault" (p. 107). He continues, "when growth is based on oil and mineral extraction, it discourages women from entering the labor force and tends to exaggerate gender inequalities" (p.107). Moghadam (2005) makes a similar argument: oil impedes "economic diversification, the formation of a skilled and educated work force, and growth of the female labor force" (p. 139).

Economists refer to the reservation wage, or the point at which it is more profitable to work than not to work. For mothers, family responsibilities make this reservation wage high because childcare and household labor would have to be outsourced and their wage would have to be high enough to cover this cost. If a woman's husband has a high income, than a woman's reservation wage will also be high because there is less need for additional family income. According to Ross (2008), an oil boom raises women's unearned income through higher male wages, and through higher government transfers such as government tax cuts and energy subsidies caused by a robust economy. Therefore, during an oil boom a woman's reservation wage also rises and fewer woman seek employment.[16] Ross analyzed oil production and employment data for 169 sovereign states (as of 2000). In a pooled time-series cross-national regression he found that the independent variable "oil rents per capita" has a large, negative effect on the dependent variable "female labor force participation." Including the variable "Islam" in the model had no statistically significant effect, while including

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[16] For a more detailed explanation of this phenomenon see Ross (2008), especially p. 109-111.

the variable "Middle East" in the model reduced the coefficient for female labor force participation by about a quarter (2008, p. 113).[17]

Ross argues that emphasizing oil rents explains the low status of women in mineral-rich countries worldwide, including states in the Middle East, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. Unlike scholars (including Inglehart & Norris, discussed below), who emphasize Islamic or Middle Eastern culture, Ross isolates oil as the most important variable that explains women's status. He argues:

> The extraction of oil and gas tends to reduce the role of women in the work force, and the likelihood they will accumulate political influence. Without large numbers of women participating in the economic and political life of a country, traditional patriarchal institutions will go unchallenged. In short, petroleum perpetuates patriarchy. (2008, p. 120)

Moghadam (2003) proposes a more nuanced explanation for the role of the economy in explaining the status of women in MENA, highlighting the role of state ideology and economic development in creating class structures. For Moghadam, Islam and culture are constants, and state ideology, economic development and class location have a greater impact on women's social position. MENA countries are highly stratified and women have access to education and economic opportunities largely by class location. Middle-class and upper-class women have access to education, connections and wealth unavailable to working-class women. But cultural norms may place greater restrictions on the movement of upper-class women for whom it is less socially acceptable to fraternize with men. On the other end of the spectrum, women most in need of income often have the least access to education that would lead to gainful employment (Moghadam, 2003, 2005).

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[17] The dependent variable "female labor force participation" was significant at .05 and the variable "Middle East" was significant at .01.

Islam

Using data from the World Values Survey/European Values Survey Inglehart and Norris (2003) track patterns of gender discrimination in 74 countries.[18] Controlling for level of human development and democratization, Inglehart and Norris (2003) found that support for gender equality was strongest among young, female, better educated, and less religious individuals. But they also found a greater gap between traditional agrarian societies and egalitarian postindustrial societies than between men and women within each society. Using this measure, the Scandinavian countries (Finland, Sweden and Norway) all rank in the top five while the MENA countries (Morocco, Egypt and Jordan) all rank in the bottom four in gender inequality (Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

Inglehart and Norris argue that attitudes about religion explain discrepancies in attitudes about gender between countries. According to their study, postindustrial countries are far less religious than agrarian countries. For example, in the former group, 20% of the population regularly attends religious services, while in the latter, almost 50% regularly attends services. At the crux of their argument, Inglehart and Norris argue that the type of religion correlates more strongly with beliefs about gender equality than the strength of religious belief. They found that Muslims living in poorer agrarian nations had the most traditional attitudes about gender while Christians and non-denominationals living in postindustrial societies had the most egalitarian beliefs. They argue that these patterns were significant when controlling for variables such as age, gender and education. Therefore, religious beliefs influence broader social structures, including

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[18] Inglehart and Norris do not include data from GCC countries in their analysis and they analyze data from a limited number of MENA countries. Including GCC countries would enhance the analysis, especially because Inglehart & Norris argue that changes in socioeconomic conditions occur in tandem with cultural shifts that include changes in attitudes about gender.

economic opportunities afforded to women. According to Inglehart and Norris, religious beliefs are the primary factor influencing a range of opportunities available to women: They argue "Attitudes towards women vary among adherents toward different religious sects and denominations; in particular, an Islamic religious heritage is one of the most powerful barriers to the rising tide of gender equality" (p. 71).

Clearly, Inglehart and Norris and Ross disagree about the causes of gender inequality, especially in the MENA region. However Ross' economic argument may be better supported. Responding to Ross' article, Norris (2009) argues: "Patriarchal cultures in Arab states did not spring up overnight in the mid-nineteenth century as the result of the discovery and commercial exploitation of refined petroleum; they have enduring historical roots that predate the discovery and production of oil" (p. 556). Ross (2009) responds that while religion explains the *origins* of attitudes about gender, Inglehart and Norris do not sufficiently explain how religious traditions account for *changes* in attitude about gender. Most significantly, they differ on the extent to which economic growth has a "modernizing" effect on gender rights. Ross (2008, 2009) supports a more narrow view of the modernizing effects of economic growth, arguing economic growth that encourages women to enter the labor market is empowering, while growth—such as that based on oil—which encourages women not to join the labor market does not have the same empowering effects.

According to Ross, (2008) Middle Eastern countries with the greatest oil revenue, including Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, have the fewest women in their labor forces, have been the last to grant women suffrage, have the fewest women legislators, and have the lowest scores on the gender rights index. Middle Eastern states

with little or no oil, including Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria and Djibouti, were among the regions' first to grant female suffrage, and tend to score higher on the gender rights index. In his analysis, unlike Inglehart's and Norris', both oil and the Mideast region but not Islam, are linked to gender inequality. In a separate study Kelly (2010) also found the GCC countries scored lowest on issues pertaining to the status of women in a 2005 survey; however, the GCC countries also showed the greatest improvement in a 2010 follow-up survey.

(Neo)Patriarchy

While Ross and Inglehart and Norris debate whether economics or religion most limit women's occupational success, another set of studies looks at the effects of persisting patriarchy in MENA cultures on women's opportunities and decisions.

Sharabi coined the term "neopatriarchal state" as an umbrella term for the collision of tradition and modernity in oil-based capitalism in the Middle East; it is "modernized patriarchy," differentiated from "classic patriarchy," which is based on an agrarian kinship model (Kandiyoti, 1988; Sharabi, 1988, p. 4). In the neopatriarchal state, religion is bound to state authority, and the family, not the individual, is the basis of society. Whatever the external modern structures of society, or state, the internal familial and social structures remain patriarchal with the father as the head of the family and the state (Moghadam, 2004; Shukri, 1999). In neopatriarchal societies, even as state and economic structures modernize, social, and especially family structures remain traditionally patriarchal creating a widening public/private divide.

Building on the work of Sharabi, Moghadam (2004) argues that neopatriarchy has been codified through state legal policies and perpetuated through family structures.

According to Moghadam (2004), Muslim family law that, in effect, renders women legal minors exemplifies neopatriarchal laws. In MENA countries, traditional gender paradigms dictate that the family is the primary unit of society (Hijab, 2001; Metcalfe, 2006; Moghadam, 2004; Sharabi, 1988; Shukri, 1999; World Bank, 2004). Men are assumed to be the primary breadwinners, not only by custom, but also in many countries, by law (Metcalfe, 2006; Moghadam, 2004; World Bank, 2004). Different MENA countries have laws that restrict women's access to the public sphere, specifically, women's time and hours of work, type of work, and mobility, such as requiring a husband or male guardian's permission to travel or to acquire a passport (Kelly, 2010; Metcalfe, 2006; Moghadam, 2004, 2005; World Bank, 2004; World Bank 2011). Such constraints limit women's opportunities in a global economy. For example, economic models may predict a certain reservation wage but (neo)patriarchal norms may intervene to keep women from entering the labor force regardless of wage incentives or government policies (Karshenas & Moghadam, 2001). Simply: culture complicates economics.

In Qatar, while nuclear families are becoming increasingly common, the extended family still exerts an important influence (Al-Ghanim, 2012; Anser, 2014). A woman is first subordinate to all of the men in her birth family and then subordinate to her husband (Al-Ghanim, 2012). But even after a woman is married she continues to be affiliated with her birth family and her father and brother(s) continue to have authority over her. A woman's honor is considered to be connected to her birth family (Al-Ghanim, 2012). While women are traditionally subordinate to men, there is also a status hierarchy among women based on their position in the family (such as grandmother,

mother, married or unmarried sister). These relationships are often more important in determining social position than education or job title (Al-Ghanim, 2012).

Charrad (2009) argues that atypically strong patriarchal cultures predate the discovery of oil. In MENA countries, women's subordination to men is based on historical kin-based solidarities that have created patriarchal networks that perpetuate gender inequality in law, politics and the economy (Charrad, 2009). These tribal or kin ties, which are independent of oil-based economies or religious beliefs, form the basis for political systems in these countries and help to explain gender relations. In fact, Charrad's assessment may help to explain the effect of the "Middle East" variable from Ross' study since oil may interact with these kinship networks in complex ways in the MENA region.

In a 2007 study, Rizzo, Abdel-Latif and Meyer compared Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries' responses on the World Values Survey on key issues such as attitudes towards gender equality, democratic government and religious identity. Although respondents in both sets of countries believed men should have more rights than women, there were differences in the degrees to which this was true. For example, 82% of Arab respondents agreed with the statement "when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women," while in Non-Arab countries 63% of respondents agreed with this statement. However, respondents from both sets of countries valued education for women as 63% of Arab respondents and 66% of Non-Arab respondents disagreed with the statement "A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl"(all responses were significant at .001) (Rizzo et al., 2007). Again, note the trend of

supporting education for women but not yet the trend of translating women's education to the workplace in MENA countries.

Summary

The preceding section explored a nexus of theories about why despite women's gains in educational achievement they are not making similar gains in the labor market. Ross argues that an oil-based economy, regardless of whether or not it is also Middle Eastern or Islamic, reduces opportunities for women. Moghadam also provides an economic argument for gender inequality in the workforce but highlights the role of economic development and class structures promoted by state policies. Contrary to Ross, Inglehart and Norris argue Islamic beliefs are responsible for the low rate of women in the labor force. Finally, Sharabi, Moghadam, and others see economic development as creating (neo)patriarchal structures, sanctioned by the state, that limit women's participation.

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Labor Market Policies

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In this section, I examine labor market policies in the region, particularly in Qatar. I begin with an examination of the theory of the rentier state, a common framework for understanding oil-based economies such as Qatar. I examine the ways in which Qatar is both a classic rentier state and important ways in which Qatar deviates from the rentier state formula, particularly in the labor market reforms that it has promoted, which may have important ramifications for women's opportunities in the labor market.

The Rentier State

The Gulf monarchies, in general, and Qatar, in particular, have undergone rapid social, political and economic change largely since the discovery of oil in the 1940s.

Before the discovery of oil, Qatar's economy was based entirely on pearl diving, which was a brutal and fickle trade. Today, Qatar's society and economy have been entirely transformed by its petroleum-based resources; in fact modern day Qatar enjoys the highest per capita income in the world at $102,100, and unofficial estimates of the per-capita income for Qatari citizens are closer to $400,000 (CIA, 2014; personal correspondence, 2012).

The massive social and economic changes in Qatar are largely attributed to a phenomenon known as the "rentier state."[19] The defining characteristic of a rentier state is that national income is not derived from the productive sectors of the economy or from taxes, but from a "gift of nature" and the majority of the population is not engaged in the generation of this wealth but only in its distribution and utilization (Beblawi, 1987). A rentier state is defined as a state where 40% of government revenue is derived from external rents; in Qatar 87% of revenue is derived from oil and gas rent (Herb, 2005).[20] Due to oil revenue, Qatar's monarch has the resources necessary to govern as a fully-functioning state without taxing or politically negotiating with its citizens. While a financial boon for residents, this wealth also effectively silences political voice because it reduces citizens' stake in the economic and political policies of the state. Consequently, Qatar's leaders have tremendous latitude to create and implement policy without seeking

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[19] The term "Rentier state" was first introduced by Mahdavy (1970). Current proponents of the rentier model include Beblawi (1987), Crystal (1990), Gause (1994), Herb (1999), Luciani (1987), Ross (2001). Recent challenges to the rentier model include (this is a partial list) Foley (2010), Davidson (2012), Kamrava (2012) and Krause (2008).

[20] In a rentier state external "rent" or wealth is defined as a natural resource such as petroleum (Beblawi, 1987). Luciani (1987) points out that it is access to oil revenue and not oil, per se that is important. Further, oil has value only to the extent that it is exported and converted into capitol. However, authors refer to "oil" and not "oil revenue" and I will follow this convention. Further "oil" is an aggregate term that refers to mineral-based fuels including petroleum, natural gas and coal (see Ross, 2001; 2008). Note: in his 2012 book, *The Oil Curse* Ross argues that "oil" should be redefined to include domestic consumption; see Ch. 1 of Ross (2012) for a detailed explanation.

citizen support (Beblawi, 1987; Crystal, 1990; Fromherz, 2012; Guase, 1994; Herb, 1999; Luciani, 1987; Ross, 2001; Teitelbaum, 2009; Tetreault, Kapiszewski & Okruhlik, 2011). Oil wealth creates a state-citizen relationship that is unusually top-down. This relationship is summarized by Giacomo Luciani's maxim, "no representation without taxation" (1987, p. 73). In other words, without the need to bargain with its subjects, the Gulf States remain autocratic and resistant to democracy—specifically, they are dynastic monarchies, in which a ruling family holds state power. Power extends beyond the person of the monarch to the state bureaucracy, which is controlled by the ruling family. In the Gulf, authoritarianism is more than a strategy—it is a political system of liberalized autocracy that defies democratization (Brumberg, 2002).[21]

The development of the rentier state typically follows the following course: first, a ruling family consolidates power and eliminates political opposition. Second, the extended ruling family expands the civil bureaucracy to create multiple layers of state control.[22] Next, the government enacts an expansive social welfare state with the intention of securing political loyalty. Finally, the government controls the economy minimizing the private sector (Crystal, 1990; Gause, 1994; Herb, 1999). Next, I described how this process unfolded in Qatar.

Step one: consolidate power in the ruling family. In Qatar, the development of the rentier state followed the expected four-step course. Oil altered the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of Qatari society. First, politically, power was consolidated in the Al-Thani family. Qatar's modern history began in 1766 when tribes from Kuwait

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[21] This summary is, of course, overly simplistic. For more nuanced accounts of democracy and the rentier state see the large body of work on this subject including, among others: Herb (1999; 2005); Crystal (1990); Ross (2001); Gause (1994).

[22] Not all government employees automatically support the state and it is wrong to conflate high levels of state employment with high levels of state support (Gause, 1999; Herb, 1999), I do not intend to do so.

settled the western shore. Until late in the nineteenth century, Qatar was home to many

rival tribes, lacked a settled population and centralized rule. The combination of tribal

mobility and outside ties limited local rulers' autonomy (Crystal, 1990; Fromherz, 2012;

Herb, 1999). Oil changed everything. Capitol from oil flowed directly to the Sheikh.[23]

(Al-Misnad, 1985; Beblawi, 1987; Crystal, 1990; Fromherz, 2012; Herb, 1999; Kamrava,

2012; Rathmell & Schulze, 2000). In 2010, the personal net worth of Sheikh Hamad bin

Khalifa Al-Thani, the former Emir, was estimated at over $2.4 billion making him the 8th

wealthiest royal in the world (Serafin, 2010).

Step two: expand the civil bureaucracy. This new wealth triggered familial

disputes, including the threat of riots if family members did not receive a larger share of

the oil revenue (Crystal, 1990; Fromherz, 2012; Herb, 1999; Rathmell & Schulze, 2000).

Because Qatar has one of the largest ruling families in the region, with estimates putting

almost half the national population with some tie to the Al-Thanis, maintaining peace

within the family is an important political priority. During the 1950s, Sheikh Ali bin

Abdullah Al-Thani responded by raising family allowances and by asking the British for

assistance.[24] But soon, extended family members were no longer satisfied with direct

allowances and the Sheikh turned to a new distribution method which would have

profound effects on Qatari society: the creation of the state bureaucracy.

Creating high-level government jobs for potential political rivals—usually family

members—was a political strategy to secure favor and avoid confrontation.[25] These

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[23] Also spelled Shaikh; an Arab chief, ruler or prince; "leader" in Arabic.
[24] Qatar was a British protectorate from 1916-1971.
[25] Members of the Al-Thani family serve in prominent government positions including: Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister, Communications and Transport Minister (Fromherz, 2012). Members outside of the Al-Thani tribe but members of the extended family through marriage fill another significant portion of influential positions. For example, Dr. Sheikha Abdulla Al-Misnad, the president of Qatar University and a key player in education reform is a member of the Al-

positions are "shaikhly sinecures" or salaried positions that require little or no work (Crystal, 1990). The expanding civil bureaucracy was a way to secure control over potential political rivals, as well as a way to create layers of control over citizens (Crystal, 1990; Fromherz, 2012; Gause, 1994; Herb, 1999; Teitlebaum, 2009).

Step three: expand the welfare state. Income from oil enables the Qatari government to provide citizens with many social benefits, including free education, health care, water, and electricity; land grants and low cost housing; loans upon marriage; guaranteed public sector jobs; and generous state-sponsored pensions and unemployment—all without paying taxes. In a rentier state the causal mechanism between work and reward is broken because citizens receive compensation and benefits from the state without having to work (Bunglawala, 2011). Typically, this break reduces citizens' motivation to work because they will be compensated regardless of their input.

Qatari men do conform to the characteristics of a traditional rentier state citizen, reporting low motivation for pursuing education and low workforce participation rates; however, Qatari women, in contradiction to the typical expectation for rentier state citizens, are highly motivated to pursue higher education and workforce opportunities. Reasons for women's motivation and deviation from traditional expectations are explored later in this chapter.

Step four: minimize the private sector. Qatar conforms to three of the four expectations of the rentier state: the ruling family consolidated power and expanded the civil bureaucracy (including filling many positions with family members); the government also expanded a social welfare state to secure loyalty and minimize political

Misnad tribe but is related to the Al-Thanis by marriage; she is the Aunt of Sheikha Mozah, Sheikh Khalifa's second wife.

opposition; however, Qatar complicates one expectation of the rentier state: that the

government minimize the private sector. On the one hand, the public sector dominates

Qatar's economy, seemingly reinforcing this principle, but on the other hand, the

government has diligently created policy to support and promote expansion of the private

sector. Expansion of the private sector is just one aspect of the comprehensive labor

market and economic reforms that have been called the regions "most ambitious, far-

reaching, and focused" (Frank, 2006, p. 6).[26] These reforms are discussed in detail in the

following section.

Reasons for Reform

Qatar has few apparent reasons to reform—fewer even than its Gulf neighbors: It

is wealthy, homogenous, and politically stable (Teitelbaum, 2009). Ostensibly, Qatar has

undertaken education and labor market reforms because oil is a non-renewable, finite

resource so it wants to educate its citizens to become part of the knowledge economy;

however, Qatar currently has the third largest deposit of natural gas in the world and

enough reserves for approximately the next 200 years. I agree with Rathmell and

Schulze (2000) who conclude that no definitive answer can be given for why reforms

were initiated. While no conclusive answer can be made for why Qatar voluntarily

initiated reforms, the following section outlines several persuasive theories.

Rathmell and Schulze (2000) hypothesize that reforms were a conscious policy

choice to shore up political power after the 1995 coup in which Sheikh Hamad seized

power from his father (in 2013 Hamad abdicated to his son, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al

Thani). Reforms, including modest democratization, set Qatar apart from its neighbors

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[26] For a chart outlining Qatar's education and labor market reforms see Gonzalez, et al. 2008, p. 32.

and gave it a place on both the regional and world stage.[27] This attention could be especially attractive if the government was trying to detract from political troubles. Another view is that reforms are a "wily survival strategy" to co-opt and contain would be reformists by enacting a limited, state-sponsored and state-controlled reform plan (Davidson, 2012). In this light, the reforms are viewed as a pre-emptive strategy to placate citizens, win support from the younger generation and the large expatriate population (Crystal, 2009; Davidson, 2012; Herb, 1999; Rathmell & Schulze, 2000).

A third argument is that reforms are part of a strategy to build relations with the West (Crystal, 2009; Davidson, 2012; Fromherz, 2012; Rathmell & Shutlze, 2000; Rosman-Stollman, 2009). Women's suffrage, in particular, is noted as a political maneuver that has little impact on women's daily lives since there is no true representative political process in Qatar. But the Western press trumpeted suffrage as a measure of political liberalization gaining the Emir political clout with Western allies (Crystal, 2009). Suffrage was among the "cosmetic reforms" that have been enacted because they look good from the outside, placate Western allies, but do not upset the Qatari population who may not be ready for reform. Similarly, Davidson (2012) calls Education City, a 2,500 acre complex home to the campuses of Western-universities, part of Qatar's soft power strategy: a pragmatic investment that, in part, allows the Qatari government to align itself with a Western power with a powerful military (Davidson, 2012). In both of these strategies, reforms are part of a pre-emptive public relations strategy to contain future demands: by giving now the state can control and contain later.

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[27] These reforms include initiating elections in 1995 for male citizens and in 1997 for female citizens for the Central Municipal Council (CMT), an advisory body; women can run for office on the CMT.

Finally, a few scholars argue that the former Emir and his wife are true reformers using Qatar's oil wealth not to control their citizens, but to "encourage, push and prod Qatar's traditional tribes towards globalization and the adaptation of mainly Western institutions" (Fromherz, 2012, p. 22). Several scholars, including Fromherz (2012) and Rosman-Stollman (2009), argue that Qatari society is more conservative than the Al-Thani family. Fromherz (2012) notes that government reforms may be moving faster than the public at large is comfortable with. He argues that the public is less experienced in international circles and more likely to have attended gender-segregated Qatar University; therefore, they are less likely to be comfortable with reform. Fromherz also notes that in his time teaching at Qatar University (2007-2008), many Qatari students said they supported the Emir because his development plans pushed them outside of their comfort zones (Fromherz, 2012).

On the one hand, the government may be prodding citizens towards reforms with which they are initially uneasy but ultimately satisfied. On the other hand, in a rentier state, "because Exit normally involves considerable loss of income, Voice becomes a dangerous proposition and Loyalty will be popular with a vast majority of the population" (Luciani, 1987, p.74, punctuation in original). As a result, there may be little overt resistance to the government's fast-paced reforms, regardless of the royal family's intentions.

Summary

In recent memory, Qatar has transitioned from "pearling to petroleum, poverty to prosperity" (Crystal, 1990, p.1). Today, 99% of the population lives in urban areas with 74% of the population concentrated in the greater Doha region (CIA, 2014; General

Secretariat for Development and Planning, October 2012). Today, Qatari citizens "can

live almost perpetually in an air conditioned, climate controlled bubble, moving between

five-star hotels, five-star shopping malls and even five-star universities imported

profectus in totum from abroad (Fromherz, 2011, p. 2, italics in original). While the

theory of a rentier state explains much about economic and political change in Qatar,

Qatar also deviates from the theory in its substantial investments in modernization,

particularly educational reforms. I discuss these reforms next.

Education Reform

The literature is largely silent on *why* Qatar chose to reform its education system,

other than restating the Emir's assertion that he wanted to develop a knowledge economy.

At the most basic level, education reform was undertaken because there were the funds to

do so. The few justifications for reform in the literature are vague or incomplete. The

following section outlines possible reasons Qatar may have undertaken its extensive

education reforms focusing on two main drivers: population and economic policy.

Population Drivers: Demand for Increased University Enrollment

As more women and expatriates, in particular, seek opportunities for higher

education, increased demand has driven Qatar to expand its higher education system.

First, Qatar requires an expanded education system to satisfy its rapidly growing

population. In fact, since 1986 the population has more than doubled and the projected

annual population growth of 4% is the world's 5th fastest (CIA World Fact Book, 2014).[28]

Second, as more women graduate from secondary school they are demanding to continue

their education; however, cultural norms do not permit women to study abroad like their

male counterparts, so for some women local higher education opportunities may be the

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[28] This is actually a slight decrease from 2012 when Qatar's population growth was the world's fastest.

only chance for them to continue their education. Third, the large non-national

population, many of whom were born and raised in Qatar, would prefer to pursue higher

education in Qatar, rather than their country of origin creating a large additional

population in need of higher education services (Qatar Statistics Authority, 2014).[29]

Finally, post-September 11, some students perceive that it may be easier to remain in

their home country than to travel to the U.S. for higher education, whether for concerns

over visas or a hostile climate, increasing demand for regional and in-country educational

opportunities (Ghabra & Arnold, 2007; Knight, 2006; Rumbley & Altbach, 2007; Stasz,

Eide & Martorell, 2007; Willoughby, 2008).

For countries in transition—like Qatar— the demand for post-secondary

education is increasing quicker than countries can satisfy with existing institutional

resources (Knight, 2011). Branch campuses, or universities or programs imported in

whole from abroad, have developed in part to help fill this gap.[30] Several drivers are

identified in the literature as contributing to the development of Qatar's branch campus,

Education City, although, much like with the economic reforms outlined in the previous

section, there is no conclusive reason as to why the Emir undertook this particular reform.

Education City. Education City is the site for the branch campuses of (now) six

American universities: Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, Weill Cornell

Medical College in Qatar, Texas A&M University at Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University

in Qatar, The Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar and

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[29] Individuals born in Qatar to non-national parents are considered nationals of the parents' country of origin. Marriage to a Qatari national also does not guarantee citizenship. Only in extreme cases does the Emir grant citizenship to a non-Qatari.

[30] There is no single definition of "branch campus;" for this review a branch campus has a physical presence in the host country and the source university awards the degrees in the name of the source university, where the host country is the country receiving the branch campus and the source university is the exporting or home institution sending the campus (American Council on Education, 2009; Becker, 2009; Knight, 2006; Lane & Kinser, 2012; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007).

Northwestern University in Qatar.[31] Unlike Qatar University, which offers a mix of co-educational and gender-segregated classes, and Arabic and English classes, all classes at Education City are co-educational and taught in English. Each campus is fully funded by the Qatar Foundation and cost approximately $100-200 million with the entire campus costing over $33 billion (Davidson, 2012).

Qatar has made this investment to purportedly target specific economic needs. In a 2007 study, employers reported being especially dissatisfied with Qatari graduates English language skills, communication abilities and technical skills (Stasz et al.). In the past, employers also reported that expatriate workers were better educated, trained and motivated than Qatari workers (Stasz et al., 2007). Education City's programs have specifically targeted these deficits. Now, according to the Qatar's Third National Human Development Report (2012), "The few young Qataris graduating from Education City universities are in great demand and can readily find employment in government-owned companies or in the private sector where salaries for highly educated graduates exceed those of the public sector" (p. 58).

Despite the success of Education City, it currently enrolls only 10% of all Qatari college and university students (General Secretariat for Development and Planning, January 2012). In addition, only about 50% of students are Qatari. One reason for the

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[31] Students at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar (VCUQatar) can earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in fashion design, graphic design, interior design and painting & printmaking and a Master of Fine Arts degree in design studies. Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WMCM-Q) offers a combined six-year program resulting in an M.D. Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) offers undergraduate degrees in chemical, electrical, mechanical and petroleum engineering and graduate degrees in chemical engineering. Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMUQ) offers undergraduate degrees in business administration, biological sciences, computational biology, computer science, and information systems. The Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar (SFS-Qatar) offers a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree with majors in international economics, international politics, and culture and politics. Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) offers degrees in journalism and communications. Two European universities are also part of the campus. University College London Qatar and HEC Paris in Qatar offer master's degrees. For more information see: http://www.qf.edu.qa/enroll

current low enrollment of Qatari nationals is that often they are not prepared for the competitive entrance requirements, which adhere to the standards of the home campus.

With its high admissions standards and limited enrollment, Education City was not designed to accommodate the majority of Qatari post-secondary students. Despite the tremendous resources poured into Education City, the majority of Qatari students continue to attend the national university, Qatar University. Therefore, in 2003, as part of its third wave of education reforms, Qatar also began reforms at Qatar University.

Qatar University. The country's only national university, Qatar University, opened in 1977. Qatar University (QU) is free for Qatari students, as well as students from other GCC countries who meet basic requirements (Stasz et al, 2007). Certain majors are still gender-segregated, and some majors are taught in English and some in Arabic. In 2003, as part of its third wave of education reforms, Qatar began reforms at Qatar University. Prior to reforms, employers reported that Qatar University graduates failed to meet minimal qualifications for employment (Moini, Bikson, Neu & DeSisto, 2009). To address these concerns, the university raised minimum admissions standards, instituted a core curriculum, and focused on student services (Qatar University Reform Plan, 2012).

Although reforms have increased the overall quality of programs at Qatar university, the percentage of Qatari students selecting Qatar University has decreased from 80% in 2005 to 65% in 2009 as students now have more options and some are choosing to attend private or technical colleges (General Secretariat for Development and Planning, January 2012). But Qatar University continues to play an important role in

maintaining Qatari culture. For example, more conservative families are sometimes reluctant to send their daughters to co-educational institutions (Frank, 2006).

Policy Drivers: Qatarization

Qatarization, Qatar's policy to domesticate the labor market, also places increased demands on post-secondary institutions to graduate employable Qatari nationals. Yet these demands tend not to be reflected in actual workforce participation. Despite Qatarization, which sets target quotas of Qatari nationals in both public and private industry, Qatari nationals make up only 6% of the labor force. Further, Qatar's outsized state bureaucracy employs 83% of Qatari nationals (General Secretariat for Development and Planning, January 2012). Qatarization places additional demands on post-secondary institutions to increase the number of professionally qualified graduates, even though Qatari nationals are reluctant to pursue positions outside of the public sector. A study of unemployed Qataris found that reasons for men not accepting positions in the private sector include low wages (50%), undesirable work hours (31%), and low social status (19%) (Gonzalez, Karoly, Constant, Salem, & Goldman, 2008). In a 2007 study, women voiced similar concerns to the men's responses, as well as some gender-specific concerns about working in the private sector. Seventy-six percent of Qatari women cited concerns about working in a mixed-gender environment, 53% cited low social status, and 18% cited low wages as reasons for not wanting to work in the private sector (Stasz et al., 2007). Qatari nationals prefer public sector jobs for a number of reasons, including less competition for jobs and greater prestige, as well as higher salaries, reduced working hours (typically 7:30am-2:30pm), up to 45 days vacation, annual bonuses, marriage

allowances, education allowances, car loans, and land to build a house (Bunglawala, 2011; Stasz et al., 2007).

Summary

In only fifty-eight years Qatar has developed from a country with one school for girls held in a teacher's home to host a $33 billion international co-educational campus. This section reviewed reasons for Qatar's education reforms, including an expanding population demanding university enrollment and a demand to train skilled workers to meet the needs of Qatar's labor force policies. Since the opening of Qatar's first school, Qatari women have fought for quality educational opportunities and their rates of enrollment and educational attainment now surpass those of their male peers.

Women's Motivation

Current international studies have found that women outpace men's higher education attainment due to three main reasons: 1) behavioral and developmental differences between men and women, 2) increased economic opportunities for women since 1968 and 3) increases in the age of first marriage for women since 1970 (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2006; Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006a; Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006b). However, these studies (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2006; Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006a; Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006b) have focused on the United States or Europe but not on the Gulf region with its specific socio-cultural factors. Moreover, studies that do consider Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) women's motivations for pursuing education are either dated (Al-Misnad, 1985) or not specific to Qatar (Benard, 2006).[32]

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[32] The Benard study does not specify to which MENA countries its findings apply which is a shortcoming of the study and limits it applicability to the Qatari-context.

In this section, I discuss the literature about women's motivation to pursue education and workforce opportunities, though the literature is "thin" regarding women in Qatar; nonetheless, the Qatari context is particularly important when considering women's motivation for pursuing education because traditional economic motivators may not be a factor due to the rentier state phenomenon and Qatar's emphasis on modernization reforms.

Women's Motivation for Pursuing Higher Education

Two social factors may help to explain the discrepancy in Qatari men's and women's higher education enrollment patterns: First, Qatar is a conservative country and parents are typically more willing to allow males to leave the country to study. Second, men have career opportunities, such as police and military careers that require only a high school degree (Al-Misnad, 1985; Bahry & Marr, 2005; Stasz et al., 2007; Supreme Council for Family Affairs, 2004). Viable alternatives for male students who do not pursue higher education may decrease the motivation for these students to continue their studies. Unlike men, women do not have as many occupational choices and may pursue higher education as a way to increase their career options. In fact, 67% of Qatari females in the workforce have a college degree compared to only 31% of male citizen workers.

While Qatari men have historically been better educated than Qatari women, this pattern is now reversed for women younger than age 40. This story aligns with international higher education enrollment data in which women have outpaced men in 15 of the 17 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006a). Qatari women aged 25-29 are almost twice as likely as their male peers to have pursued higher education (General Secretariat for

Development and Planning, October 2012; Stasz et al., 2007). Not only are women becoming better educated but men are becoming less educated. Men's rates of enrollment in post-secondary education are declining: 42% of men ages 40-44 have some post-secondary schooling, while only 26% of men ages 25-29 have ever enrolled in higher education (Stasz et al., 2007). In fact, currently, over 75% of students pursuing higher education in Qatar are women.

Recently, trends even show an increase in the number of women receiving scholarships to study at Education City or to study abroad. In 2008-2009, 290 women received scholarships compared to 170 men (Al-Misnad Abdulla, 2012), even though women are less likely to be able to travel abroad to study due to cultural restrictions. Nonetheless, recent data reveal several trends. First, it shows the large and growing gap in men's and women's academic achievements. Second, it demonstrates the increasing acceptance, at least in some families, for women's higher education. Finally, it supports the claim that Qatari women are motivated to overcome cultural barriers to pursue higher education.[33]

Two studies, one by Al-Misnad (1985) and the other by Benard, (2006), consider women's motivation for pursuing higher education. Al-Misnad (1985) outlines four reasons why Qatari girls are high achievers. First, she argues that the lack of employment prospects can offer two alternatives for girls: either they see no incentive to work hard and do well in school; or they become motivated to work hard and are high

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[33] Data from the Qatar Information Exchange (2012) shows that approximately twice as many men as women received scholarships to study abroad for Bachelor's degrees in 2010 (98 men compared to 40 women); however, an equal or slightly higher number of women were pursuing graduate degrees (four men and women were each pursuing doctoral degrees and 18 women and 16 men were pursuing master's degrees). While twice as many men as women received scholarships to study abroad, 98 is still a very small number of students. Al-Misnad Abdulla's figure of twice as many women as men receiving scholarships most likely refers to all educational scholarships (including those for the Education City campuses).

achievers in order to improve their chances at limited employment. Next, on a practical level, while boys are allowed to go outside to play and socialize, girls are confined to the house. Because of this restriction one of their only options for leisure time is to study. These extra hours of study transfer into higher achievement scores for girls. Similarly, boys who drop out of school can find jobs to occupy their day and provide them with an income and friends, but girls who drop out must stay home; therefore, girls are more likely to stay in school rather than have to be confined to the house.

In a study of MENA countries, Benard (2006) found that education is still seen as a novelty and privilege for women, and they are willing to work hard to prove themselves worthy (Benard, 2006). In part because of this novelty affect, women are more willing to try new job fields, such as positions in the private sector (Benard, 2006).

Benard (2006) also found that education provides women some leverage in the selection of a husband, an important advantage given that marriage in these countries is still considered the ultimate goal, or duty, for most women. In addition, elite families are beginning to see education as a suitable occupation for daughters prior to marriage (Benard, 2006).

While the Benard study has findings relevant to this study, it does not specify to which MENA countries its findings apply, which is a shortcoming of the study. The Al-Misnad study is relevant because it is Qatari-specific but it is now outdated (from 1985), which limits its applicability.

Women's Motivation for Working

The previous section outlined reasons women may be motivated to pursue education despite limited returns. Women's motivation for entering the paid workforce is

equally complex. The following section explores the relationship between women and work in MENA countries more generally and then considers the few studies that look specifically at Qatari women and the labor market.

When women do not work, employers fail to take advantage of educated workers and potential human capital. Klassen and Lamanna (cited by the World Bank, 2004) found that if women participated in the labor market average GDP growth in a sample of MENA countries could have been 3% rather than the 2% annual growth actually experienced—identifying women's labor as a lost opportunity cost.[34] MENA governments invest in girls' educations but do not fully realize the returns on this investment if women do not or can not participate in the labor market (OECD, 2013; World Bank, 2004). From an equity perspective, women who would like to work but are excluded from the labor market due to social or cultural barriers are also barred from a basic right to provide for themselves and even to express themselves.

According to a World Bank study (2004), 37% of women's increased labor force participation in MENA can be explained by decreases in fertility, 21% can be explained by greater educational attainment, and 15% can be attributed to the net effect of the changing age distribution in the population: nearly 60% of women are now under the age of 30. Higher education accounted for a 20% increase in female labor force participation. Despite recent improvements, women's participation in the labor force in MENA remains among the worlds lowest (Hijab, 2001; World Bank, 2004; World Bank 2011).

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[34] Klassen and Lamanna (2003) used regression analysis on a panel data set for "MENA countries" that included Algeria, Egypt, The Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia to estimate how much higher income growth might have been with the inclusion of female participation in the labor force based on a ratio of female to male participation rates. For additional details see The World Bank, *Gender Development in the Middle East and North Africa,* 2004, p. 73.

In Qatar the total percentage of women in the workforce ranked 183rd out of 184 countries, behind only The United Arab Emirates (World Bank, 2012). In 1960, only 6% of women worked in Qatar; by 2011, 34% of all women (aged 15+) worked making for an incredible increase of 520% (data from General Secretariat for Development and Planning, October 2012).[35] Despite these gains, women are now only 12% of the total workforce in Qatar, down from 17% in 2002 (World Bank, 2012).[36]

Few studies explore Qatari women's motives for working. Given that high natural resource rents suppress the financial need for their income, other factors may motivate or prevent women from entering the labor market. One study, Bunglawala (2011), considers both male and female students' and graduates' employment preferences and motivations. It is one of the few studies to include qualitative data on women's labor market decision-making; however, Bunglawala (2011) does not state whether her participants are Qatari nationals and this omission limits the findings. The two available studies related to Qatari women and the labor market, Felder and Vuollo (2008) and Bahry and Marr (2005) touch on motivation in their articles. I discuss these studies next.

Bunglawala (2011) conducted interviews between September and December 2010 with male and female Qatari students and recent graduates about their opinions of the labor market and their labor market choices.[37] Of the 13 students Bunglawala interviewed eight said they wanted to work in the public sector while five said they preferred to work in the private sector. An unspecified number of the students who said

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[35] Female labor force participation rate: number of women in the labor force divided by the total number of women of working age (15-64) who are economically active.

[36] Female labor force as a percentage of the total labor force: number of women in the labor force divided by total number of people in the labor force (both women and men).

[37] Bunglawala interviewed both Qatari and Emeriati students. Only data from the Qatari portion of the study is reported here.

that they would like to work in the private sector said that after a few years, they would prefer to transfer to the public sector because of the higher salaries and better benefits. Students cited pay/salary, job security, prestige, and autonomy as reasons they wanted to work in the public sector. Career progression, autonomy, challenge, and salary were the reasons given (in order of preference) for selecting the private sector. Bunglawala noted that students who stated a preference for the private sector had more clearly defined career interests: they were able to specify a specific field, such as banking or accounting, in which they were interested, while most students who stated a preference for the public sector could not be more specific. The preference for public sector jobs has created a "waithood" phenomenon where graduates will wait at home, sometimes for up to 2-3 years, for a public sector job they find appealing to become available.

Bunglawala also found that family was a big influence on students' decision making. The majority of respondents who said they were interested in the private sector or were working in the private sector had a parent or sibling who was also working in the private sector.

Bahry and Marr (2005) surveyed 45 female students from Qatar University about their motives for working. Women reported a variety of motives, including financial, personal and intellectual. The number one reason women said they planned to work was financial. Despite high salaries, two incomes are increasingly necessary to meet the rising standard of living.

In Bahry's and Marr's study, women reported that it is now socially acceptable for them to work, at least until they marry and have children. Some women reported that they preferred to work over the "boredom of staying at home" (p. 109). Additionally,

these few years of outside work may be the only time a woman will experience "self-empowerment" according to a Qatar University administrator and they "want to prove themselves" and gain additional freedom (Bahry & Marr, 2005, p. 109; Felder & Vuollo, 2008, p. 22). While some survey respondents reported financial reasons for working, others reported that family financial stability facilitated their transition to work. For example, Bahry and Marr (2005) found that for some women the ease of hiring household help encouraged them to work outside the home.

In their study, "Qatari Women in the Workforce," Felder and Vuollo (2008) found that women's motivations and attitudes towards work differed slightly by age. Students in both the 1998 and 2006 cohorts said that religious beliefs and parental advice were the top reasons for making career choices, but women in the 2006 cohort also said that they thought that their personal interests should be a consideration when choosing a career.[38] Ninety-seven percent of females and 60% of males in the 2006 cohort reported that they believed women should be able to work outside the home, and 95% of females and 68% of males said they believed more jobs should be open to women (Felder & Vuollo, 2008). Finally, norms about working in a single-gender environment may be shifting. While a 2007 study (Stasz et al.) noted that 76% of Qatari Women cited concerns about working in a mixed-gender environment, Felder and Vuollo (2008) found that 95% of women and 98% of men in the 2006 graduating class reported that a mixed-gender work environment was a very or extremely important characteristic of their future work environment; this is in contrast to the 1998 cohort which ranked a single-gender environment as relatively

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[38] The 2006 cohort included all students, while the 1998 cohort excluded women who were not employed and who were not looking for work. For more details see Felder & Vuollo, p. 20.

important. The 2006 class, which may have experienced mixed-gender classrooms, now expects mixed-gender work environments.

Several studies look at the relationship between education and employments rates. Stasz et al. (2007) followed one group of 99 Qataris who had graduated from secondary school in 1998. For men in this cohort, post-secondary schooling was not correlated with employment. When considering unemployment numbers, Stasz et al. found that 13% of men without a post-secondary degree were unemployed versus 12% of those with more than a secondary degree; however, there was a greater correlation between completing a degree and employment for Qatari women, as 70% of women with only a high school education were unemployed versus 42% of women with at least some post-secondary schooling (Stasz et al., 2007).[39] Furthermore, women who would like to work if a job were available may account for a greater number of "discouraged workers" on census or unemployment surveys, or may not be counted because they report themselves as full-time mothers; men in a similar position are likely to report themselves as unemployed and, therefore, be counted in workforce numbers (World Bank, 2004). Conversely, other studies have found that women with the most education are the most likely to be unemployed (Felder & Vuollo, 2008; General Secretariat for Development and Planning, January 2012; Moghadam, 2005;World Bank, 2004; World Bank, 2011).

While these findings appear contradictory, a closer examination of women's motivations around paid work may help to reconcile these findings. The most highly educated women tend to come from the upper classes and are not financially dependent on paid work. When women's income is not needed to support the family, women may

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[39] Stasz et al. note that the sample size was small and the finding was not statistically significant (p=.11). However, their finding is in keeping with Breslin & Jones (2010) and worth noting.

work for other reasons such as personal fulfillment. Elite women's class status first allowed them access to education and then allowed them greater freedom to make choices about employment. Nevertheless this finding requires further investigation, especially as Felder and Vuollo (2008) found that women reported that they considered competition and lack of jobs to be their greatest barriers to success.

Men's seeming acceptance of mixed-gender environments indicates some acceptance of women's greater role in education and society and may make it surprising that—in what has been termed the "spinsterhood crisis"—as many as 20% of highly educated, middle class women are both not marrying due to lack of opportunity, and facing higher divorce rates when they do marry (Al-Misnad Abdulla, 2012; Anser, 2014; General Secretariat for Development and Planning, October 2012). Women in their twenties are also the most likely to divorce with half of this group divorcing (Anser, 2014).[40] In addition, many women have had trouble advancing beyond entry-level jobs and experience what has been called the "sticky floor" (Kelly, 2010, p.7). Women who were hired under workplace nationalization policies, such as Qatarization, are finding it difficult to advance beyond entry-level positions as cultural pressures that emphasize women's domestic roles discourage women from seeking upper-level positions. These findings point to possible areas of contradiction in the support that Felder and Voullo uncovered for working women and suggest areas for additional research.

Conclusion

The review of the literature reinforces justification for the current study: to understand Qatari women's motivation for and experiences with higher education and workforce opportunities and explore the poor match between educational attainment and

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[40] Qatar's divorce rate is 41% (General Secretariat for Development and Planning, October 2012).

workforce opportunities. Current literature explores several macro-level theories about

women's continuing lower status in relation to men in the region, economic models that

help explain women's access to workforce opportunities, as well as theories about

government reforms, especially in the area of education. These studies address important

system- or structural-level concerns. Yet, few studies focus on the individual as a unit of

analysis. While, some studies do consider women's motivation for pursuing education

and workforce opportunities, there are few of these studies that focus specifically on

college-educated Qatari women. To address this gap, this qualitative study focuses on

the motivation for and experiences with higher education and workforce participation of

six college-educated Qatari women. Having reviewed four related areas of literature that

serve as basis for this study, chapter three describes the research design, and data

collection and analysis methods.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Between February 2013 and October 2013, I conducted six individual interviews with five female Qatari college graduates and one female full-time Qatari undergraduate college student whom I identified via a purposive sample. I interviewed five participants via Skype and one participant via telephone. Two participants were educated in the United States and four were educated in Qatar. I designed the study to answer the following research questions:

1) What are college-educated Qatari women's motivations for and experiences with higher education?

2) What are college-educated Qatari women's motivations for and experiences with workforce participation?

In this chapter, I discuss how I designed and conducted the study. I provide a brief overview of my epistemological and methodological stance, followed by the details of the research design, including challenges and strategies surrounding participant recruitment, sampling, introduction to the participants, informed consent, data analysis and data presentation. The final sections discuss steps taken to enhance validity and possible limitations to the study.

Critical Realism

To explore highly educated Qatari women's labor market participation in Qatar, I designed a qualitative study in the critical realist tradition described by Maxwell (2012). Critical realism fuses a realist ontology with a constructivist epistemology; in other words, it merges the belief "that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions" with the belief that our knowledge and

"understanding of this word is inevitably a construction, created from our own perspectives and standpoint" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 20). To elaborate, Maxwell notes:

> The types of realism that I discuss here do not attempt such a separation [between realism and constructivism]; they hold that while our knowledge of the world is inherently a construction from a particular perspective, there is nonetheless a real world, which can be understood in both mental and physical terms, about which our constructions can be more or less adequate. (p. 20)

Studies conducted in the tradition of critical realism focus on unveiling different constructions of reality while simultaneously seeking to understand the underlying structures that help to shape individual narratives.

> Miles and Huberman (1994) also describe themselves as realists:

> That means we think that social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the objective world—and that some lawful and reasonably stable relationships are to be found among them. […] In other words, social phenomena, such as language, decision, conflicts, and hierarchies, exist objectively in the world and exert strong influences over human activities because people construe them in common ways. Things that are believed become real and can be inquired into. (p.4)

Their conception is consistent with Maxwell's, especially as it captures the dual goals of shedding light on an objective world through understanding people's construction of human activities; however, Miles and Huberman, also acknowledge the existence of hierarchies and conflicts that result from human relationships and the social structures in which they exist. Consistent with a long-standing tradition in qualitative research, critical realism seeks to capture the voices—or constructions of reality—of those not privileged by existing social hierarchies in order to better understand conflicting interests and possibly address social inequalities.

I chose a critical realist approach for this study because it acknowledges the material world, including social inequalities, which is particularly important when considering how labor market trends and economic policies tangibly impact the lives of

women in a changing Islamic world. While acknowledging the importance of the material world, this theory also recognizes that we make sense of the material world through individual experiences. This point is important for this study because it specifically focuses on the individual experiences of the participants, and not on institution- or system-level issues. Realism does not imply that there is a "correct" understanding of the world that the research is trying to uncover and it is compatible with the view that there are multiple perspectives on reality—even if that reality is singular (Maxwell, 2012). In this study, I am seeking to uncover the constructions of young highly educated Qatari women, who, in many ways, have chosen life trajectories that reveal contradictions in both Qatar's education policies and in Muslim culture.

Interviews

I chose qualitative research methods—specifically interviews—because I felt interviews would enable me to best capture the narratives of the young Muslim women who are the focus of the study. As Seidman (2013) argues: "At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth (p. 9)." He outlines three criteria for selecting interviews as the primary method with which I agree: First, he argues that interviewing is a method that is most consistent with participants' ability to make meaning through language; second, interviews affirm the importance of the individual while also allowing possibilities for community and collaboration. Finally interviews are "[…] deeply satisfying to researcher's who are interested in other's stories" (p.14). I selected a qualitative interview design to privilege the personal.

Additionally, I chose qualitative interviews because they allow the researcher to gather in-depth information from fewer participants focusing on how the participants

understand the topic of concern (Leonard, 2003, n.p). Interviews are also an appropriate

data collection method for events that either took place in the past or cannot be observed

(Maxwell, 2012).

As discussed in chapter one, I chose this topic because previous research has

focused on regional-country- or institutional-level issues and there has been little research

on women, themselves, in MENA or Qatar. Interviews, therefore, are particularly

appropriate because they allow women to tell their own stories in their own words.

Interviews that promote women's voices can be an "antidote" to ignoring women's ideas

or having men speak for them, which is particularly important in this region that is still

conservative and prioritizes men's experiences (Reinharz & Chase, 2002, p. 222). While

I am not Qatari (I am American), I share an undergraduate or graduate alma mater with

five of the six participants and am also a highly-educated professional women of

approximately the same age.[41] This joint affiliation established a relationship and formed

the grounds for initial trust, which was especially important in Qatar's relationally driven

society. I also reached out to many participants through alumni or professional online

networks, and through these networks they could see the ways in which we were

mutually connected, which may have enhanced my credibility.[42]

Interviews are both a research method—a data gathering tool to conduct research

within research traditions such as case study, ethnography or narrative research—and,

increasingly a standalone research methodology with a nascent research literature (Kvale

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[41] I was about 10 years older than the average participant, while not exactly age-based peers, our status as highly-educated, unmarried, professional women gave us something in common.

[42] For example, through the professional networking site LinkedIn you can see how many mutual people you know in common. It is possible seeing that we knew people in common (such as professors, staff, students and other alumni) served to enhance my credibility. This may be a further benefit of virtual interviewing that warrants further study.

& Brinkmann, 2009; Brinkman & Kvale, 2014). Many studies use interviews as their primary method but do not acknowledge a methodological rationale for doing so, suggesting, perhaps, the ways in which interviews are both ubiquitous, yet still methodologically murky. There is, however, a growing body of methodological research that argues that: "They [interviews] can be used as a stand-alone data collection method to provide rich information in the respondent's own words" (Leonard, 2003, n.p). This study uses interviews as a "stand-alone" data collection method to focus on the personal stories of the participants.

Leonard (2003) argues that interviews are often considered an "easy" method that "requires little skill" because everyone is accustomed to talking to people; however, "Interviews are not just conversations. They are conversations with a purpose—to collect information about a certain topic or research question" (n.p). Interviews also reveal participants'—sometimes conflicting—views on subjects; in fact, Stake (1995) maintains that "the interview is the main road to multiple realities" (p. 64). What all interviews have in common is that they ask for an observer's account of the topic (Weiss, 1994). Finally, interviews are responsive, allowing researchers to formulate flexible hypotheses and cooperate with participants by asking clarifying questions and probing responses.

Early interview research idealized the participant as a source of unbiased, unfiltered information. But as the field of interview research has advanced, researchers have recognized that this view of participants was idealized and interview researchers face both epistemological and technical challenges. Epistemologically, researchers recognize that the interview is a collaborative construction of meaning between researcher and participant; technically, interview researchers try to create an atmosphere

and formulate questions conducive to the participants' free and open disclosure

(Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti & McKinney, 2012).

Research Design

The previous section discussed my reasons for selecting an interview design and

outlined my critical realist stance. Next, I discuss my research design, including the

specific methods and rationale for those methods, participant recruitment and the sample

of young women interviewed for the study. I also discuss briefly my analysis strategy

and my decision to use vignettes to highlight the themes identified in my analysis.

Data Collection Methods

As discussed, my primary method of data collection was individual interviews.

Because of logistical challenges, I conducted these interviews either by telephone or by

Skype (virtual interviews). I used an interview guide and a standardized open-ended

interview approach for all of the interviews (Patton, 2002). An interview guide outlines

topics to be covered but does not specify order or question wording. A standardized

open-ended interview specifies the wording and sequence of the questions. I combined

these approaches by writing out questions in advance but leaving the order unspecified,

allowing for flexibility during the interview and also allowing for questions to arise

naturally during the interview. This method allows for both coverage and exploration

(Patton, 2002).

I asked questions in three broad categories: First I asked about post-graduation

plans. I specifically did not ask about "career" plans because entering into the study I did

not know if participants would be pursuing professional or paid opportunities and I was

interested in the range of reasons Qatari women choose or do not choose to enter the

work force. Women's workforce participation is often presented as a binary: either women participate or do not participate in the paid labor market and I wanted to consider the full range of post-graduation options, including paid work, unpaid work, graduate school and/or marriage and family. Ultimately, participants in this study all were pursuing paid work and/or graduate school.

Next, I asked questions about their influences on their post-graduation plans. I also asked them questions about why their chose their university, as well as a few questions about their experiences while in college. In many cases, participants may have already touched on these topics when talking about their post-graduation plans.

Finally, I had planned to ask participants their opinion of the changes that have occurred in Qatar in regards to women, education and work; however, most participants had already brought up this subject in the course of the interview without my directly asking. For example, the participants who spoke about feminism did so unprompted, as I did not ask questions about feminism. I believe this was one of the strengths of this method as the themes in chapter four are drawn directly from the participants.

I ended the interview with two questions: "Is there anything you would like to add that you have not already told me." In two of the interviews this question led to insightful commentaries on the speed of social change, which was an important overall finding. Finally, I ended the interview by asking participants if they had any questions for me. A few participants were curious about my research and my doctoral studies. None expressed concerns about participating in the project.

Telephone interviews. While telephone interviews are used extensively for survey research and discussed in the accompanying methodological literature, there are

few examples of best practices for qualitative telephone interviews (Novick, 2008; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Between 1988-2007, Novick (2008) found only 14 articles focusing on telephone interviews for qualitative research—and in only eight of these articles was this subject the primary focus. In this same literature review, Novick (2008) found that the primary qualitative research methods texts, including Patton (2002), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), and Gubrium and Holstein (2002) spend little to no time on best practices for telephone interviews in their texts.[43]

Although less empirical literature has been written about qualitative telephone interviews, they are recommended when interviewers have a small research budget, travel constraints, limited access to the study site or to geographically diverse participants; participants value anonymity, privacy, or convenience; or the research focuses on sensitive questions (Berg, 2007; James & Busher, 2012; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Opdenakker, 2006).

Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) conducted a study in which they interviewed half their participants via telephone and half via in-person interviews.[44] They found no significant differences in the data collected from telephone or face-to-face interviews; they found that neither the number of responses nor the depth of responses differed by mode (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004).

I interviewed one participant by telephone. Originally this interview was scheduled to be conducted via Skype like the other interviews, but this participant

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[43] While Gubrium's and Holstein's (2002) *Handbook of interview research: Context & method* includes a chapter titled "In-person versus telephone interviewing" by Roger Shuy, this chapter focuses on survey interviews. Further, the second edition of this text, *The sage handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (2012), no longer contains this chapter. A chapter on Internet interviewing by James and Busher has been added, but this chapter focuses primarily on email interviews.
[44] Twenty-one interviews were conducted face-to-face and 22 were conducted by phone (Sturges & Hanrahan (2004).

requested a telephone interview. Because telephone interviews have been identified as a

valid means by which to collect qualitative data, and after asking the participant if she

had a private place in which to conduct the interview, I determined that the telephone

interview was appropriate. No differences in data quality were determined between the

telephone or virtual interviews.

        Virtual interviews. Virtual interviews such as via Skype mitigate the most

commonly stated disadvantage of telephone interviews—that the interviewer cannot read

and respond to visual cues from the participant. Skype interviews bridge the divide

between telephone and in-person interviews because they can function either as an online

phone service (voice only) or with a web camera allowing users to video chat. I found

that all of the stated advantages of telephone interviews were all applicable to virtual

interviews: they enable a researcher to work with a small research budget, with travel

constraints, with limited access to the study site or with geographically diverse

participants; to honor participants who value anonymity and privacy; to respect

participants' need for convenience and time constraints; and to broach sensitive

questions.[45] Most critically, the use of virtual interviews allowed me access to a

population to which I would not otherwise have had access.[46]

    There is precedent for using Internet-based tools to conduct research. In fact, Yin

(2003) argues that a researcher "does *not* depend solely on ethnographic or participant-

observer data. You could even do a valid and high-quality study without leaving the

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[45] Berg, 2007; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Opdenakker, 2006. These authors originally discussed these benefits in regards to telephone interviews.

[46] A potential disadvantage to Internet interview is that only individuals with access to technology can be included as participants; however, in this study wireless access was not a concern. For example, a former SFS-Qatar and current main campus staff member noted that the SFS-Qatar campus has better wireless access than the Washington DC campus (personal correspondence, August 2012).

library and the telephone or Internet, depending on the topic being studied" (p. 11, emphasis in original). Marshall and Rossman (2006) also recommend the Internet as a tool for increasing access to distant participants.

Despite this precedent, virtual interviewing is a recent development in data collection with little methodological research that specially refers to conducting interviews via Skype, or a similar VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). For example, though their text, *Online Interviewing*, was published in 2009, James and Busher do not include Skype or other video conferencing techniques in their methods for online interviews. James and Busher (2012) briefly mention VoIP (which includes Skype) as a new technology available for synchronous online interviews that happen in real time; however, they offer no methodological insight or guidance. There is a body of research on "virtual interviews" but this research refers to "online interviews" or "computer assisted interviews" as interviews via email or instant messaging/chat (James & Busher, 2006; James & Busher, 2012; James & Busher, 2009; Kazmer & Xie, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Skype interviews differ from Instant Messenger or chat interviews because they more closely replicate the face-to-face interview experience.

The literature on virtual interviews divides them into either synchronous (take place in real time but online) or asynchronous (do not take place in real time and employ technology such as email).[47] I used synchronous interviews, which "mirror a traditional interview in that they take place in real time but in an online environment" (James & Busher, 2012, p. 179). Synchronous interviews using Skype most closely replicate traditional face-to-face interviews because researcher and participant engage in an immediate face-to-face exchange that allows for real-time clarifications and follow-up.

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[47] For more information on asynchronous Internet interviews see James & Busher (2012).

When beginning this project I was advised that some Qatari women may not be comfortable being seen on camera, so I gave all participants the option before the interview of choosing to turn on (or off) their video camera. I also included a note about this option in the email invitation. In certain circumstances, the option for additional privacy allowed by virtual interviews, such as Skype, could actually be a benefit when recruiting participants.

I conducted a Skype, or virtual interview, with five participants. Skype participants were asked to choose a location that was private and in which they felt comfortable answering interview questions. I confirmed that the location was suitable before beginning the interview. On my end, I spoke with all participants in my home office with no other individuals present.

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment was the greatest challenge of this study. The recruitment process was non-linear, evolving, on-going and interactive throughout the study as I adapted to changes at my proposed research site. Originally, I planned to interview junior and senior students at Georgetown University School of Foreign Services in Qatar (SFS-Qatar), one campus at Education City. I had faculty and staff campus contacts who were supportive of the project and were willing to facilitate access. The University of Maryland IRB approved the recruitment method on October 19, 2012. I also submitted my IRB to the SFS-Qatar IRB on October 19, 2012. I received an initial response on December 4, 2012 that the SFS-Qatar IRB was concerned with SFS-Qatar staff and faculty acting as facilitators in recruiting participants, especially because they felt this

could be seen as a coercive force. I responded with additional information on my rationale for my participant recruitment process.

I received a response on January 22, 2013 saying that faculty and staff could not assist with recruitment of participants in any fashion. An IRB was approved that restricted participant recruitment to posting flyers in common areas. It stated: "The plan for SFS-Qatar staff to pass on information about the study is not appropriate, so the board requests that this method of recruitment not be used in any manner or capacity (January 22, 2013)."[48]

Without a successful means to recruit student participants I shifted my participant pool from current Georgetown students to Georgetown alumnae. As a Georgetown University alumna, I accessed the alumni database and created a spreadsheet of SFS-Qatar alumnae from the classes of 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.[49] I added to this initial list with names of alumnae I found through searches of publicly available information from sites including Facebook, LinkedIn and Google. I connected on LinkedIn with all SFS-Qatar student or alumnae members. University press releases and company web sites also often included information (such as job titles or ethnicity of employees) that helped me to locate personal and contact information for alumnae.

Through this research I developed an initial list of 72 female graduates from 2009-2012.[50] Through Internet research I verified that 35 of the alumnae were not Qatari,

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[48] SFS-Qatar faculty and staff members had told me prior to requesting the IRB that it was highly unlikely that students would respond to fliers or generic email messages. Communication needed to be personalized to generate a response.

[49] I received my master's in English from Georgetown in 2004.

[50] To give some perspective, the 2009 graduating class (the first) had 21 (male and female) graduates, the class of 2010 had 31 graduates, the class of 2011 had 46 graduates, and the class of 2012 had 31 graduates for a total of 129 graduates from 2009-2012. These figures include both male and female, and Qatari and non-Qatari alumni, so the list of the 72 female graduates I was able to compile represents the majority of alumnae from 2009-2012.

so I eliminated them as potential participants, resulting in a contact list of 37 individuals who potentially met my selection criteria: college-educated Qatari women.

In February of 2013, I emailed these 37 SFS-Qatar alumnae from the class of 2009-2012. I described myself as a fellow Georgetown alumna in the emails, including using a "@georgetown.edu" email address to send the recruitment emails, which I thought would be less likely to be deleted or treated as spam. I received six responses from the target sample. An additional seven respondents were interested in participating but were not Qatari and, therefore, were excluded from participation. This round of recruitment yielded three actual interviews. The other three alumna scheduled interviews but ultimately never followed through despite multiple attempts to reschedule. In the process of scheduling an interview, I learned that one potential participant graduated from the main Georgetown (U.S.) campus. At this point, I decided to proceed with the interview and expanded my sample to include college-educated Qatari women from American institutions, including institutions located in Education City and the U.S.

At this point, I continued to research alumnae using the methods described above, ultimately, identifying an additional 84 alumnae from the following schools: Northwestern University in Qatar, NU-Q (34), Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, CMU-Q (29) and Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, VCU-Q (21). Further research determined that 27 out of this group of 84 alumnae were likely to be Qatari women with active email addresses, so I reached out via an initial email to this group as follows: NU-Q (6), CMU-Q (14) and VCU-Q (7) alumni. Because I completed my undergraduate degree at Northwestern University, I identified myself as a fellow

Northwestern Alumna and used a "@alumni.northwestern.edu" email address for the

NU-Q alumnae; for the other schools I used a Hotmail email address.

This round of emails yielded three additional participants: two from branch

campuses in Qatar, as well as an additional canceled interview; and one from a U.S.

campus. A figure representing the participant recruitment process follows:
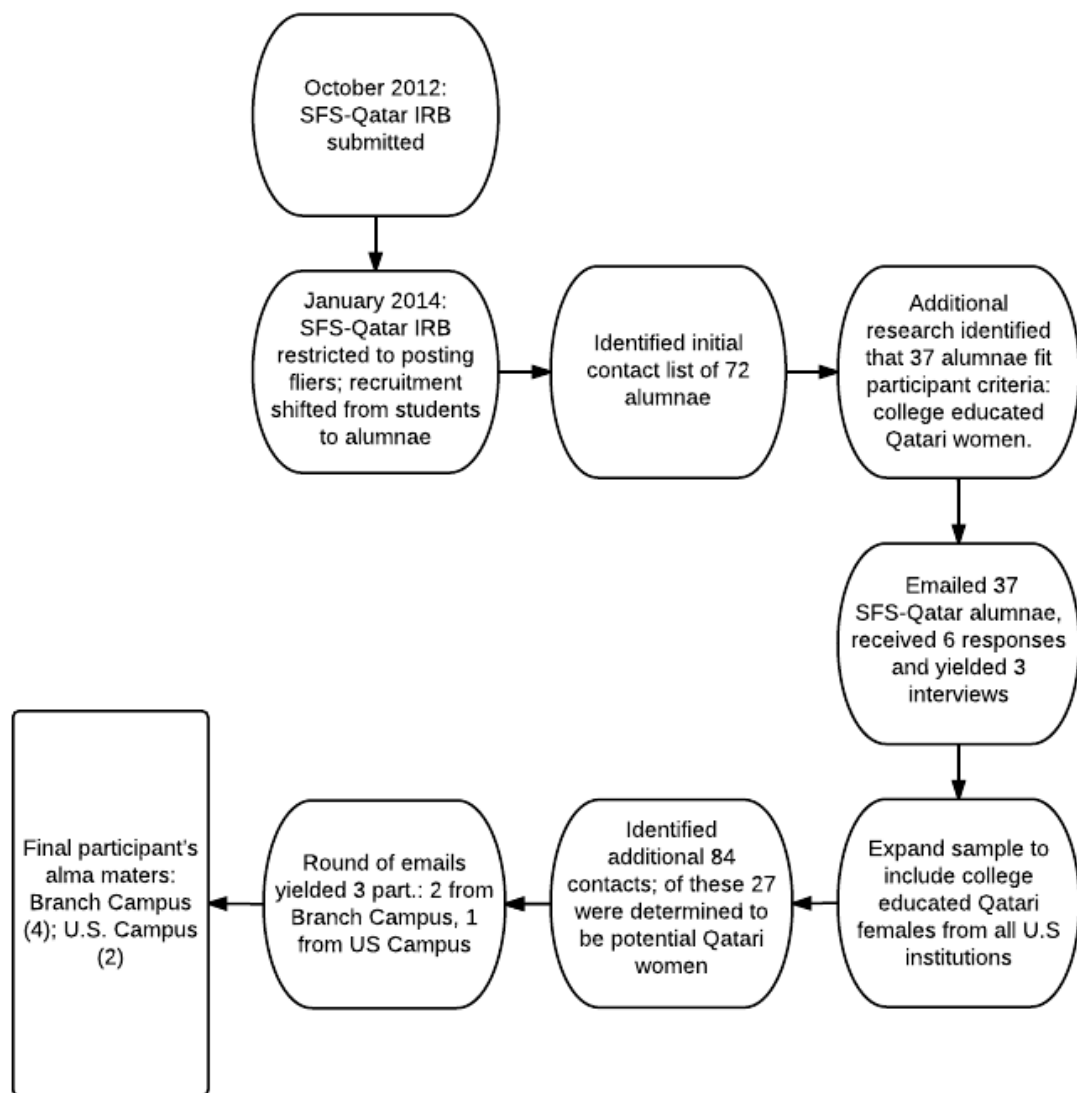
Figure 1

In sum, the final participant's alma maters are: branch campus in Qatar (4); U.S. campus (2). Table 1 (below) details the participants' characteristics. Because the population of Qatar is so small, I have taken several steps to protect individuals' privacy. I used pseudonyms to protect the privacy of individuals. I also identified participants' institutions as "branch campus" or "U.S. campus" to protect the identity of the students who attended U.S. institutions and whose identities would be easier to recognize. For this same reason, I did not report the undergraduate or graduate majors by individual: All participants studied political science or journalism as undergraduates and four of the six participants had received or were currently working on graduate degrees in law, political science or comparative literature. As more Qatari students attend branch campuses and U.S. institutions there will be less risk of identifying one individual. But for now, given the very small size of the Qatari population and the very small number of women in who travel abroad to attend college or graduate school, privacy was a high priority.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

Name[1]	Age[2]	Undergraduate Graduation Year	Institution	Graduate Degree[3]	Graduation Date	Work Status
Noor	27	2011	U.S Campus	NA	--	Working Full-Time
Nurah	27	2007	U.S Campus	MA	2009	Working Full-Time
Dana	25	2011	Branch Campus	MA	2014	Working Full-Time
Sara	24	2009	Branch Campus	MA	2013	Pursuing MA degree
Neha	22	2012	Branch Campus	MA	2013	Pursuing MA degree
Hissah	20	Expected May 2014	Branch Campus	NA	--	Pursuing BA degree

[1]Pseudonyms used to protect privacy
[2] At time of interview
[3] Graduate institution was not included to protect privacy

Sample

I originally chose to focus on graduates from Education City because the Qatari

government has poured over $33 billion into the development of this campus as part of its

strategic plan to develop its economy and transform its higher education system. To date,

no qualitative study has specifically prioritized the direct experiences of college-educated

Qatari women from theses new campuses. Ultimately, I chose to also include women

educated in the U.S. because both women educated at Education City and in the U.S. are

receiving an American education in English that differs from Qatar University, which

offers some mixed and some sex-segregated majors and some English and some Arabic

majors. As discussed in the literature review, Qatar University is the only national

university, so students who choose not to attend the national university opt for an

international education, typically an American-style education. Further, I found little

evidence that participants differed based on whether they were educated by an American

university in the U.S. or in Qatar. The determining factor, in this project, was Qatari

women who enrolled in a postsecondary institution that provided an American-style

education in English.

Participant Sketches

Participants are all young, unmarried women in their 20s (20-27) who had studied

journalism or political science at American universities in Qatar or the U.S. Four of the

women had full-time work experience and two had work experience through internships.

All the participants are highly educated: Two were currently pursuing MA degrees, two

had completed MA degrees and the remaining two had plans to complete MA degrees;

three of the participants also intended to complete PhDs in the next 2-5 years. This

group of highly educated Qatari women provided rich personal perspectives on their experiences in higher education and the workforce.

Dana's Story. Dana graduated from a branch campus in May 2011. At the time of our interview, Dana was balancing family responsibilities with her desire to pursue additional education in the U.S. She was negotiating with her family to get permission to do so. Currently she was beginning a distance master's degree while also working in a legal-related job. Dana spoke very candidly about her experience in the workplace, especially in regards to the cultural "clashes" that occur between English-speaking and Arabic-speaking Qataris.

Hissa's story. Hissa was the youngest participant and the only participant who was still an undergraduate student at the time of our interview. She attended a branch campus and expected to graduate in May 2014. She had recently returned from a required semester abroad during which she was chaperoned by her mother and interned at a publishing company. After graduation she hoped to pursue a job in publishing before returning to graduate school.

Neha's story. Neha was currently pursuing a M.A. at an Ivy League university in the U.S. after graduating from a branch campus in 2012. Neha would like to pursue a Ph.D but is struggling with issues related to who would be an appropriate chaperone, especially due to the length of PhD programs. Currently her mother is her chaperone but she would not be able to leave Neha's younger siblings for the 5+ years required for a Ph.D. program. Neha did not have defined career goals and did not have full-time work experience.

Noor's story. Noor struggled for 4 years to convince her father to allow her to attend college. She eventually succeeded and graduated in 2011 from a large, public university in a mid-size American city. Noor is the only participant who attended Qatari public schools where the language of instruction was Arabic; because of these circumstances, she is the only participant who is still fluent in Arabic. Noor is currently working and hopes to pursue graduate school in the next 12 months.

Nurah's story. Nurah received her bachelor's in 2007 from a U.S. campus and her master's in 2009 from a university in London. She plans to get a PhD and would like to one day represent Qatar as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has four years of work experience in a NGO and has also owned a retail business with her family for over 10 years. Nurah is very career- and education-driven and describes herself as always being on "turbo."

Sara's story. While all the participants spoke freely, Sara was the most outspoken and her views were the most liberal and non-conformist; she even called herself a feminist. While her current relationship with her parents is strained, Sara credits them with helping to shape her feminist views. Sara graduated in 2009 from a branch campus. After graduating she worked for three years before returning to graduate school. At the time of our interview, she was completing for her master's.

Informed Consent

Prior to the interview, participants were asked to review and sign a consent form that described the purpose of the study, their role, efforts taken to ensure confidentiality, known risks and benefits to participants (none).

Participants were also asked to verbally state consent to the interview and to being recorded at the beginning of the interview. Participants were also emailed a consent form and a short biographical form before the interview. Participants were asked to electronically sign the consent form (type their name in the signature line) and return the form to me via email. Participants had the option to skip any question during the interview; none chose to do so. In addition, participants could choose to end the interview at any time and back out of the study, again, none chose to do so.

Data Analysis

With participants' consent, I audio recorded one-on-one interviews and transcribed them myself using Microsoft Word. I then uploaded the transcripts to Dedoose, a web-based qualitative and mixed methods data analysis software tool, for coding. I coded data in a three-step process using organizational, substantive and theoretical codes as described by Maxwell (2005).

In this schema, organizational codes are broad and include topics that could be predicted prior to data collection, such as from the literature review. Although these codes may help to analyze initial data, they are too general to enable genuine analysis (Maxwell, 2005). An example of an organizational code from this study is "chaperone." This code could be predicted from the literature review and helped to examine initial data but is too general to enable genuine analysis.

The second level of codes, substantive codes, is a category that could not have been pre-determined as it derives directly from the data (Maxwell, 2005). This code is still primarily descriptive, but provides initial insights into the data, and may come directly from participants own words, such as short quotes. In the section on family, I

used the In Vivo (or verbatim) code, "right(s)" (including phrases with this word).[51] This

code produced the phrase that is the header for the section on family, "I have every right

to go there," in which Noor discusses her right to travel to the U.S. to pursue her

education.

Finally, theoretical codes develop an abstract framework for the data and are

based on my concepts, as the researcher (Maxwell, 2005).   In the family section, one

theoretical code became "negotiation," which encompassed both the practical negotiation

the women undertook with their families and also their negotiations of their multiple

identities.

Data Presentation

I organized the narrative thematically with a balance on the individual and

collective cases. My use of the concept of the collective case is borrowed from case

study research in which multiple individual cases are analyzed comparatively (Stake,

1995).[52] For this study, I analyzed the interview narratives at both an individual and a

collective level.

To represent the individual, each section opens with a short vignette of one

participant whose experience best represents the section's themes. Miles and Huberman

(1984) explain the use of vignettes as follows:

> A vignette is a focused description of a series of events taken to be representative,
> typical, or emblematic in the case you are doing. It has a narrative story like
> structure that preserves chronological flow and that normally is limited to a

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[51] In Vivo coding originally developed from grounded theory but is now widely used in qualitative analysis:
"In Vivo Coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for beginning
qualitative researchers learning how to code data, and students that prioritize and honor participant's voice"
(Saldana, 2009, p. 74).

[52] Yin (2003) refers to multiple case studies; Other researchers use terms including cross-case, multicase or
comparative cases (Merriam, 1998).

brief time span, to one or a few key actors, to a bounded space, or to all three. (p. 81)

While the vignettes are meant to be representative they come directly from one participants' experience.[53]

Erickson (1986) focuses on vignettes written from field notes, yet his assertions also apply to the vignettes from my interview notes. He asserts that vignettes are rhetorical, analytic and evidentiary (1986). The vignette, with its longer narrative structure and additional context, persuades the reader that researchers' claims about specifics, such as setting and culture, are true (Erickson, 1986). The more descriptive and story-like vignette introduces readers to the analysis that follows.

I organized the rest of the section thematically (for example "The 'Myth of Qatarization'") by weaving participants' quotes throughout the analysis of multiple participants' experiences, both to demonstrate thematic, or issue-based, observations and to give voice to all the participants, who are the essence of the case.

Finally, I included generous passages of text in the written report to "let readers 'see' for themselves", per Wolcott (1990, p. 131), and to give readers access to the primary data—not only my interpretations of it.

Validity

In this study, validity is defined as the credibility of descriptions, conclusions and explanations, and the means used to distinguish between credible and less credible accounts; or in Wolcott's much quoted statement about qualitative validity, it is the steps taken "to not get it all wrong" (Maxwell, 2005; Wolcott, 1990, p. 127). I assessed

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[53] Some researchers write "constructed vignettes" in which they re-write multiple participants stories into one representative narrative and may add representative dialogue; this is not the kind of vignette I used. All quotes come directly from the participant and all experiences are her own.

validity according to Miles' and Huberman's (1994) five (overlapping) criteria for qualitative validity: confirmability, reliability, credibility, transferability and utilization.

To meet the criteria for confirmability, which is a reasonable absence of researcher bias and emphasis on replicability, in this chapter I explicitly outline the processes I used to find participants and analyze data, providing access to "backstage" information (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278).

To meet the standard for reliability, which states that the findings are consistent with the research processes (Miles & Huberman, 1994), I analyzed the data for discrepant evidence and negative cases (Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, I analyzed the data based on whether participants graduated from U.S.- or Qatar-based universities; however, I found no evidence that responses differed based on university location. I also shared work through peer review (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

To assess credibility, or to verify that the findings in the study "make sense," I used verbatim interview transcripts to produce detailed and varied data, rather than relying only on interviewer notes, which may be biased toward the interviewers' initial impressions (Maxwell, 2005). In chapter four, I try to be as accurate as possible about which participant is part of each thematic statement to give as complete a picture as possible of the data (Erickson, 1986; Maxwell, 2005). I support claims that "most" or "many" participants engaged in a specific theme by specifying to which participant I am referring. For example: "Four participants, Noor, Sara, Hissah, and Dana, said that either they themselves had been pressured to get married and/or they had watched their friends being pressured." Erickson (2009) encourages this practice in education research, especially for policy-oriented audiences to counter claims of "cherry-picked" evidence.

While this research is not policy oriented, I agree with Erickson that reporting the frequency (to the extent possible) and full variation within a theme enhances evidence of patterns and supports the conclusions drawn from the data. While I have made every attempt to be as accurate as possible, I want to be clear that if a participant is not named it does not necessarily mean that she agrees or disagrees with the stated view. If someone has a divergent opinion I included that opinion where relevant. But occasionally, I did not have data about all participants about all issues, especially because interviews were semi-structured, so not every participant spoke about all issues. Referring again to the above example, Nurah did not discuss whether she had friends who felt pressured into marriage but may have had an opinion on the subject if probed. Despite these limitations, I believe clarifying statements like "most" and "many" improves credibility.

Next, I focused on transferability, which in this context means the findings have implications to a larger context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I found this concept to be related to Maxwell's principle of theoretical validity in which the researcher moves beyond description to theoretical constructs (Maxwell, 1992). To do so, I fully described the sample to adequately allow comparison with other samples; included detailed description so readers can assess potential fit of findings to their own situation; and used multiple descriptive techniques such as vignettes, long and short quotes and thematic analysis allows the reader to "see" the data for him/herself. A small sample allowed me to go into this kind of detail. I can follow fewer stories in more depth and focus on greater description within each case.

Finally, I satisfied Miles and Huberma's fifth criteria for validity, utilization or ensuring that the findings should offer usable knowledge and stimulate "working

hypotheses" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 280), by including recommendations and areas for future research in the discussion section in Chapter Five.

Study Limitations

Four limitations around access and sample composition merit attention. First, while I found virtual and telephone interviews to be a valid means for collecting qualitative data, following up with in-person interviews would have allowed me to probe further into issues raised in first-round interviews and possibly enrich my data collection. Second, because I relied on individuals who self-selected into certain databases—the Georgetown alumni database and LinkedIn—the sample may be biased towards individuals who chose to participate in these activities. Third, I sent emails to alumna's ".edu" addresses several years post-graduation. While students have the option of email forwarding, it is impossible to know what percentage of students opt into this service. Only one email from the original three rounds of 45 (from a hotmail server not the Georgetown server) came back as undeliverable increasing my confidence that the majority of the other emails were successfully delivered.

Finally, the participants were a relatively homogenous group of young women who were all unmarried and pursuing higher education and workforce opportunities. It is not possible to know if their attitudes towards workforce participation may alter over time, especially with changes to their marital and family status.   Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that individuals outside the immediate sample, or "outliers," can check the representativeness of the data. In this case, it is possible that my participants represent a group of "outliers" themselves. Longitudinal follow-ups, as well as interviews with a

broader range of women, particularly those educated at Qatar University could answer some of these questions.

Conclusion

This group of participants provided rich data with which to describe Qatar women's motivations for and experiences with higher education and the workplace in a changing Muslim world. These well-educated Qatari women were seizing the opportunities brought on by recent social change, and their stories provide insights into how they negotiated emergent cultural, political and economic structures.

Chapter Four: Findings

Due largely to the introduction of the rentier state, Qatar has undergone profound social, political and economic change in the last 70-80 years. The participants' grandmothers were born in a country without a formal education system. Formal schooling did not arrive in Qatar until 1956 when the first school for girls opened with just 112 students. In contrast to their grandmothers, and even their mothers, Dana, Hissah, Neha, Noor, Nurah and Sara were born in a Qatar that has always been one of the world's richest countries and has always allowed girls access to education. Each participant was aware of living in a strikingly different, and still changing, Qatar and understood that she was living during a time of tremendous social change.

This social and cultural change is creating a space for women to (re)negotiate their personal and professional identities. Increasingly, Qatari women are moving "from the classroom to the boardroom," reflecting not only recent college graduates' transition from higher education to the labor market, but also the expansion of career opportunities available to Qatari women in the last ten years. Qatari women—as demonstrated by Dana, Hissah, Neha, Noor, Nurah and Sara—have seized these opportunities. But at the same time, women's changing roles have created both internal and external conflict, especially in relation to traditional roles in the family and workplace.

In this chapter, I describe four major themes that I identified in this study. For the first theme, "'An Internal Sense That We Have Something to Prove:' Education and Motivation," I analyze participants' motivation for pursuing education and workplace opportunities. Next, in the second theme, "'I Have Every Right to Go There:' Education and Family," I analyze how women's participation in these new educational and

workforce opportunities impacts family dynamics. In the third theme, "'I'm Considered a Foreigner in My Own Country:' Education and the Labor Market," I analyze participants' experiences in the labor market, as well as how they negotiated new professional identities. Finally, in the last theme, "'I Don't Think We Knew What Society Wanted From Us:' Education and Society," I analyze participants' struggle to negotiate new identities within the rapidly changing social structure, especially in terms of evolving gender roles and women's place in society.

<div align="center">

"An Internal Sense That We Have Something to Prove:"

Education and Motivation

</div>

Nurah's Story

Nurah knew in the 10th grade that she wanted to study political science, "there was no question in my mind," she says.

> That was partially because my dad [was in the field] and as cliché as it sounds I remember being a little girl and being taken to meetings, and going to the embassy, and going to balls and events and being intrigued by diplomacy. I think I naturally grew into it. That's all I read and that's all I cared about. In 10th grade it hit me: this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.

Today, Nurah works for the executive offices for a major foundation and runs a business with her family. She is planning on pursuing a PhD in the social sciences. She describes herself as having always been on "turbo." She says it is hard for her to imagine herself living without the intense pressure of meeting deadlines and juggling multiple projects. She explains, "It's just become such an important part of me that without it I think I would actually be miserable. I think a lot of Qatari girls are good at that [balancing multiple priorities]."

For Nurah the goal of education is "[…] to improve your standard of life for you, your family, your community. If you have a career you can also have an impact on your

country." Nurah acknowledges that for some Qatari women education is still a "backup

plan" to marriage and can offer more practical purposes, such as increasing personal

freedoms, rather than intellectual and career development. But she says that mentality is

changing as opportunities for women in Qatar have dramatically changed over the last ten

years. She describes these changes: "You can feel a shift in society. We took these

opportunities and ran with it. It's like the floodgates just opened." Nurah also

emphasizes that Qatari women are particularly motivated to succeed because they want to

prove that they deserve these new opportunities:

> I think, to be honest, Qatari women have an internal sense that we have something
> to prove. We are definitely ambitious and committed. Internally, Qatari women
> have this drive to want to fulfill something and to prove society wrong about what
> we do and what our role could be. And I think it happened because everything
> happened so fast.

Nurah's story illustrates the four major motivations for pursuing higher education

that participants identified: a need to prove to society that women deserve and can take

advantage of the opportunities they have been given, a desire for increased personal

development, a desire for greater personal freedom, and finally, an aspiration for

financial self-reliance. For participants, personal development included intellectual

development and community engagement, and personal freedom included using

education as a tool to escape monotony and boredom and delay marriage. While

participants stressed personal development and personal freedom as their primary

motivators, financial self-reliance was an important secondary and shared motivator.

"Something to Prove"

Only a generation ago, most Qatari women had one option for higher education:

Qatar University, which opened in 1977. Participants were very aware of the new

opportunities available to them and sought to take full advantage of them and make up

for opportunities never experienced by their mothers and grandmothers. This drive came

through both in participants' need to "prove themselves," as well as in their ambition and

love of learning.

All six participants expressed a belief that Qatari women have "something to

prove." Dana, Noor and Nurah all used the actual phrase "something to prove,"

specifically, to explain why they thought Qatari women were committed to higher

education. While Hissah, Neha and Sara did not use this exact phrase, they expressed

similar sentiments. Each participant described an intense drive or motivation to seize the

educational opportunities available to her—often because of her gender.

Reflecting on why there is such a culture of learning among Qatari women, Dana

said, "Females think they have more to prove because they started out much later than

men." And, as noted in the opening vignette, Nurah believes women are motivated to

succeed "because everything happened so fast" it's like "the floodgates just opened" and

women want to prove they deserve all of the new opportunities they have been given.

As Nurah said, "Qatari women have an internal sense that we have something to

prove." Noor agreed and described both the opportunities available to and pressure on

her generation:

> People would assume, you're a woman, you can't do this, you can't compete with
> men, just because you're a woman. There is this androcentric way of thinking. She
> [a Qatari woman] needs to be successful, whether at school or outside. Right now
> women are really competing with men. They are just as capable as men. I think
> women really want to prove themselves.

Hissah, Sara and Neha expressed a related sentiment: a drive to pursue education

to demonstrate that Qatari women can succeed and compete in society. For example,

Hissah, Sara and Neha said they pushed themselves to advance in their education and that

it was their internal motivation, rather than the suggestion of their parents or anyone else, that pushed them to take advantage of educational opportunities. Hissah said that she "pushed herself" to advance her education and it was her internal motivation that propelled her to continue her education. Neha said that she put a lot of pressure on herself to get good grades so that she would be accepted into college and could "leave everything here behind" to prove that she could be successful in the things she wanted to do.

This internal "need to prove" motivates many women to pursue higher education, but this "need to prove" can also take a physical and emotional toll. Women have to justify their decisions, such as choosing to pursue higher education, graduate education and careers. An individual's choices can be scrutinized by her immediate family, extended family and society. This pressure can lead to emotional and physical stress on the individual. For example, Dana said:

> It's tough. For some people who don't agree with girls going to coed schools or universities or working in a mixed environment you always have to prove to them that it's not wrong. That you aren't going there to do anything that you aren't supposed to be doing.

The fact that these women still accomplished their goals, despite the pressures for them to comply with more traditional expectations for young women in Qatar, testifies to the strength of their internal drive and motivation to succeed and prove themselves.

While participants said they pursued higher education and workforce opportunities because they wanted to prove to society that they deserved these opportunities, they also expressed a deep commitment to learning for intellectual and personal development. In fact, this commitment was related to their desire to prove themselves as it stemmed from an awareness that their generation was the beneficiaries of

recent government reforms. Hissah summarized this finding: "I think it has to do with a love of learning and an appreciation that we are able to enjoy things that our parents' generation weren't able to enjoy and take part in."

Personal Development

Although the women in this study acknowledged professional aspirations, these goals were not the primary reason they pursued higher education. For participants in this study, higher education is more about intellectual enrichment, a sense of service and personal growth. For Hissah, higher education served all of these purposes. She said she thinks the purpose of education is to be "part of the community at your university, expand your mind, learn more about yourself, become an independent person."

Intellectual development. All six participants stressed intellectual and personal development as their primary motivation for pursuing higher education. In fact, one of this study's strongest findings is the participants' commitment to an intellectual culture. Noor said that the purpose of education should be to give back to society. For Neha "[higher education] is living up to your potential. I would not feel comfortable if I stopped pursuing my education at high school. I would always feel like there was something that I didn't achieve." Dana summarized this finding: For her, higher education is about intellectual development, she said, "For me, it's not about getting a better job, it's about getting more knowledge, studying what you're passionate about, and knowing more about it."

All of the participants were incredibly ambitious and had very high educational aspirations. They had all completed or intended to complete master's degrees within the next two to three years, and three of the participants also intended to complete PhDs.

Nurah had completed a master's degree; Sara and Neha were in the process of completing

masters degrees; Dana was about to start a master's (the same month as our interview);

Noor and Hissah planned to begin master's degrees within the next 12-36 months.

Though currently still an undergraduate student, Hissah had already begun researching a

master's program. In addition to their master's degree, Sara, Neha, and Nurah would like

to pursue Ph.D.s in the U.S. in the next 2-5 years, and Dana would like to pursue a JD in

the U.S. Currently, Hissah does not plan to pursue a Ph.D. but she said she may pursue a

second master's degree to gain an additional specialty; she is also considering a language

certificate to deepen her knowledge and strengthen her general qualifications.

Qatari students are in a privileged financial situation that, in part, assists them in

achieving these ambitious educational goals: the government pays 100% of education

costs, including graduate education, for most students.[54] This financial freedom permits

them to focus on their intellectual ambitions. Neha explained:

> We are very fortunate in that our government pays for our education. We are just
> focused on that one goal—getting that education. We are not concerned about
> money. Our books are paid for, everything is set. Our families and our
> government are putting us in an amazing position where they are asking us to get
> this education and asking us for no more. And that is the least we can do, really.
> And it is something that benefits us, ultimately.

Community engagement. While participants reported that their intellectual

development was their primary reason for pursuing higher education, several participants

believed that education developed their capacity for community engagement and that

they had a responsibility to use their education to benefit society.

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[54] There are some exceptions. Noor did pay tuition at her university until her last semester. Tuition at
Qatar University and Education City is free for Qatari students and there are also generous scholarship
programs for Qatari nationals who are accepted into approved universities in the United States. For more
information see: http://www.sec.gov.qa/En/ServicesCenter/Pages/Supported-Universities.aspx

Neha, Noor and Nurah stressed that one purpose of higher education should be to develop socially aware citizens and empower them to change society. Noor said that the purpose of education is "to be more involved in society, more involved in the workforce. You need to be a productive person." She criticized some people, who want to get their degree just for the sake of the prestige, saying:

> Some people want to get their degree, a Ph.D., for instance, so they can be a called a 'Dr.', and that is completely wrong in my opinion. You need to get higher education because you have so many talents and you want to give it out to the society, and you need to share your education and your experience.

Neha primarily connected career advancement to the opportunity for self and societal improvement. She said that higher education leads to better career opportunities but that its primary purpose should be to make individuals "more aware of our roles in society." Through higher education, she said, "We are more empowered to get the kinds of jobs that we want and change society in the way that we aspire that it one day will be." Nurah summarized this sentiment: "As cliché as it sounds, I just want to make a difference. And you can in a country as small as Qatar."

Personal Freedom

Most of the participants, Noor, Neha, Hissah, Dana and Sara, said that education is a tool that can increase a woman's personal freedom. This freedom took different forms depending on the woman's personal and family situations. The following section details the two major areas in which higher education allowed women additional freedom, differentiating between those areas which were influential for participants themselves and those areas which they observed as being influential for Qatari women, in general.

Escaping monotony and boredom. While women pursue education for intellectual fulfillment, they also do so in order to gain latitude with their activities and movement. Specifically, participants reported that women enroll in higher education to gain independence, travel, delay marriage and fill free time. Several participants mentioned that education gives girls and women additional freedom: For them, as Neha expressed, "education was the out." Qatari girls live at home until they marry. Traditionally, they cannot travel unaccompanied. If women cannot work, additional education is an alternative to staying home with nothing to do. Noor summarized this situation "For a woman, the only option she has is to stay at home, study and get good grades." Noor said that this is not why she, personally, enrolled in college, but she saw many Qatari girls using education as an "out" because they had few other options. Neha also saw education a tool to broaden her options. She said:

> I think education opens up so many opportunities. I remember when I was a teenager and I was becoming disillusioned with how conservative and sometimes confining our culture could be, I immediately recognized that education was the out. That if I got good grades and if I pushed hard enough I would eventually be able to get the freedom that I wanted.

By enrolling in a branch campus, Neha was able to travel to Chicago and DC as an undergraduate and eventually enroll in a MA program at an Ivy League university. Neha said:

> When I speak to other girls they see it the same way, too. You get good grades and you get into a good school, you will be able to travel. Education is a way of opening up so many things, especially for females here. It would open them up to so many experiences they would never have access to unless they went to college.

Delaying marriage. Although none of the women were married, four participants, Noor, Sara, Hissah and Dana, said that either they themselves had been pressured to get married and/or they had watched their friends being pressured. They

emphasized that Qatari girls are expected to get married after high school or college. Nurah emphasized that after high school graduation marriage is the next "natural step" for a large segment of Qatari girls and "There is a lot of pressure for young women to be married." The average age of first marriage for Qatari women is 23-24; participants fell within or slightly outside of this target demographic as they were aged 20-27 (Qatar Statistics Authority, 2014).[55]

Sara said that after graduating from college, she and her female friends were pressured to settle down. She had friends who wanted to attend graduate school but could not because their families pressured them to marry. She said some women who were pressured to choose marriage over graduate school now "regret" it: "A lot of them [my college classmates] really had to give up their dreams of grad school [in order to get married]. Settling down for them meant that they had to give up one or the other." Noor also had friends who were pressured to accept a marriage proposal rather than finish college or enroll in graduate school. Those who were able to juggle marriage and education could do so only because they had their husband's support. Noor explained, "Without that support it's kind of hard, kind of impossible." She also explained that culturally it is still unacceptable to turn down a marriage proposal to pursue education because "people see marriage as the only success."

While some Qatari women's studies can be interrupted by marriage, education can also be a way for a woman to delay marriage for a few years. By working on a college or graduate degree women can gain leverage to negotiate delaying marriage or negotiate a better marriage. For example, Dana said her father turned down all marriage

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[55] Excluding one participant who was still an undergraduate student at the time of our interview, participants were aged 22-27.

proposals while she was in college. She said, "my father wouldn't let me get married when I was in university. If anyone would come to the house for my hand in marriage [he turned them down]." Because marriage is so highly valued, families who put their daughter's education above her engagement make a statement that they value her education. Dana and her siblings were the first cousins from her father's extended family to attend a coed, English-speaking secondary school. She believed that once parents take the first step to send their children to this type of school they "break the ice" and "you realize that your parents put your education before your marriage."

Today, because there are more professional opportunities, participants said there is actually more pressure for a woman to be married to demonstrate that she is not too aggressive or ambitious. A successful woman, especially if she is unmarried, can be seen as a threat. Nurah believed it makes men more comfortable if a working woman is married because an unmarried working woman in her mid-thirties is seen as too ambitious, too aggressive and too committed to her job. Because of the rapid social change, people are "checking one another's actions." According to Noor, "Here, the thing is, with the conservative culture it doesn't matter how much success you have, success is eventually whether you are married or not." Noor said she feels pressured to get married and sees her parents' desire for her to be married as a major obstacle to being able to accomplish her academic and professional goals. While she considers her mother her primary ally she also says that her mother "is nagging all the time" for her to get married. Yet at the same time, even if Noor's parents want her to be married and conform to more traditional social roles they do support her; she said, "my dad turned

down any guy who proposed for me before I finished college. Education is first, and then marriage comes into play. That's my dad."

While the pressure to get married can affect women's opportunities, Sara felt that this pressure was not openly discussed. She explained:

> It's just a disparity. And it's not really spoken about, and it's not out in the open, and it's not something that's really mentioned, and it's not something that men have to face. It's definitely a battle that women really have to talk about.

Despite women's achievements, marriage is still the barometer of success.

Financial Motives

While participants were largely focused on higher education as a tool for personal and intellectual development, participants also acknowledged financial motives for pursuing education. For Sara, Hissah, Dana, and Noor financial motives were important because they explicitly stated that education was a means to financial self-reliance. This point is particularly noteworthy because, as noted, Qatar is the world's richest country and financial motives are rarely mentioned as a reason for women to work. But most participants sought financial self-reliance for either an equity standpoint or from a desire for financial independence. In fact, these four participants said they would like to work so that, unlike many Qatari women, they are not financially dependent on anyone, particularly a man. For example, Hissah stated that she continued to pursue her education so that she would not have to "depend on anybody else for money or anything." And Noor said that she would like to continue to work when she has children because "Many of the women depend on someone for money. They don't have any independence so they are always going to do what he says."

Sara called herself a "feminist" and wanted to pursue her education and career so that she would not be dependent on her father or husband to support her. She said:

> I would have an issue with not working because I would have an issue with not paying half of the bills if I was married. Why, because I would have a problem with not being an equal partner to my partner. To me, part of independence is economic independence. So not being an economic contributor does not give me independence in that household.

Sara thought that despite cultural changes there was still not a "culture for women to work." She argued that because there is no financial need for women to work there is no culture to support working women and no culture to support women having an equal financial partnership with their husbands. She explained, "It's a very patriarchal culture, an extremely patriarchal culture." She argued that Qatari culture replicates a dynamic by which women are subjugated to their husbands because they are financially dependent. Sara said "there is no feminist culture" in Qatar and because most Qatari women are supported financially by their husbands "they do not feel they have equal rights in having a say in [their] household." Instead wives "have to be subjugated to him [husbands] and to his rule and to his sayings." Sara acknowledged that her views are different from the cultural norm. She said that she developed her feminist views from reading Simone de Beavoir and Betty Friedan. And she credited her parents and their moderate views and their non-patriarchal household for helping to shape her opinions.

For Neha and Nurah financial motives were secondary. Nurah was initially critical, during the interview, of women who viewed education only as a "backup plan." She said that education should be a "tool." She said, "If you have a degree you can potentially have a career and improve your standard of life for you, your family, your community. If you have a career you can also have an impact on your country." But then she said that there are times when education is your financial "backup."

> If all else goes wrong and you have issues with your family, financially, or you get a divorce, or, God forbid, something happens to your family, you still have that [your education]. For some women it is their backup plan. They have no intention of having a career. And that is fine. For others, it's a stepping stone to a graduate degree and a better career. I'm assuming that your priorities change as you go along in life.

When prompted, Neha said she thought that paid work is one purpose of higher education. But she thought paid work is only part of higher education's purpose. She said that due to the time commitment required to get a degree, individuals must have a motivation other than money. Neha believed an internal drive influences individuals to continue their education. For Neha, higher education is most about "living up to your potential."

Women's major motivators for pursuing higher education and workplace opportunities were a need to prove to society that women deserve the opportunities they have been given, a desire for increased personal development and personal freedom, and finally, an aspiration for financial self-reliance. Of note: none of the participants drew strong connections between their education and careers. This (dis)connect between education and career is explored in the third section of this chapter, "Education and the Labor Market," specifically in the sub-sections "Transition to the workforce" and "Credentialism," which look at women's difficulty connecting what they learned in the classroom with their experiences in the work place. The next section explores themes related to women's changing familial relationships.

"I Have Every Right to go There:" Education and the Family

Noor's Story

Noor knew she wanted to study political science when she was in middle school. But, when she graduated from high school there was no in-country, post-secondary

option for her to pursue this major.[56] It took Noor four years to convince her family, primarily her father, to allow her to study in the U.S. where she attended a large, public research university in a mid-sized American city and majored in political science and international relations. At first, she says her father wouldn't even let her leave Qatar to study in a neighboring Gulf country. But Noor persisted. First, she enrolled in a program in Qatar to study marketing even though this was not the subject she wanted to study. But, unable to leave the country and with limited in-country options, she had to rely on a backup plan. Slowly, she persuaded her father that the only way she could get the education she deserved was in the U.S. She graduated from college in Qatar and won a one-year U.S. State Department scholarship to a community college in "the middle of nowhere" in the Midwest in the United States. During this year, Noor interned for a Congressman and took classes. She says, "In this one year I tried to broaden my horizons." This year served as a litmus test for her father who saw that Noor was responsible with her freedom in the U.S. She says:

> Little by little my dad felt that I was responsible enough. I know what to do, I speak the language, I tell them everything. I keep them posted. Where do I go, who do I meet. He kind of felt secure that he can let me go again. And he saw that I am keen on continuing my schooling and that I am keen on this one particular major and I don't have any other options and I have every right to go there. And with the help of my mom, of course, we eventually convinced him.

Noor's story illustrates the inherent tension between parents who want their children to pursue education but who also want them to adhere to traditional values regarding marriage and lifestyle choices. Family is a critical theme in the story of Qatari women's changing social roles because every woman in this study had to negotiate with

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[56] Noor graduated from a public Qatari high school in 2003. At the time, Qatar University did not have a program in Political Science (the Department of International Affairs was founded in 2004) and SFS-Qatar was founded in 2005.

her family to be able to pursue higher education but, like Noor, who had an ally in her mother, each woman also had at least one family member who supported her educational and professional goals. Participants described the role of family around five connected themes: parental support, chaperones, sisters, male relatives and extended family. After first looking at the role of parental support, I look at the changing role of chaperones, a complex theme that captures cultural tensions and changing family dynamics. While chaperones can seem like a paternalistic cultural symbol, and for some participants did serve this function, in other ways chaperones represent a family's commitment to their daughter's education and changing family dynamics. In the next three sections, I analyze the ways in which participants negotiated relationships with their sisters, male relatives and extended families.

Parental Support

In this study, parents' objection to education (as reported by the daughters) was not to knowledge or skill acquisition but to social and practical matters, such as being far from home, living independently, or delaying marriage. Parents of daughters in this study may be more liberal on social issues since their daughters are college educated and attended American universities (either in the U.S. or in Qatar); however, even within this group, parents represented a range of views on social issues and struggled with how to support the educational aspirations of their daughters while complying with broader cultural expectations about the role of women in society.[57]

For Noor education is a "right" and she was savvy in her pursuit of this right. She knew that to pursue her education she must negotiate with her family, especially her

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[57] I did not interview parents; in this study parents' viewpoints are described through the lens of their daughters.

father. Even though Noor said that her father was reluctant to allow her certain freedoms, she was successful in travelling for school, securing internships, and ultimately attending a four-year university, unsupervised, in the U.S. Noor was successful in her pursuit of an education through persistence and using incremental experiences to gain her father's trust. Noor's ultimate goal was to attend a four-year college in the U.S.: accomplishing this goal took over four years and demonstrating many steps of increasing independence.

While all of the women had to negotiate with their families to be able to pursue their education, all of the women also had at least one parent who actively supported her educational ambitions. For example, Noor described her mother as being more supportive than her father and, ultimately, her ally in convincing her father to allow her to study abroad. Noor's mother facilitated many of the steps she took to secure her father's confidence. Noor said, "I wouldn't be the person I am without the help of my mother, that's for sure." Noor also used her mother as a mentor. She said she kept her mom updated on all the people she met, which not only helped to establish trust, but also helped Noor to navigate unfamiliar situations. Noor's mother also funded her education by paying her tuition (Noor received a scholarship from her future employer for the last semester). While Noor's mother is traditional and did not want her daughter to go abroad alone to study, she, ultimately, supported her daughter's education. Noor explained:

> As a mother she was always freaking out. She didn't want me to go. But then she wanted me to study and she wanted me to study the things that I wanted to study, so she was very supportive. She thinks it is great what I am doing.

In the end, Noor's mother's support for her daughter's education outweighed her worries about cultural appropriateness.

Sara was somewhat unusual in that her father was the more supportive and liberal parent. She credited this to the fact that he lived abroad for longer than her mother, which Sara thought gave him a broader perspective.

Neha, Hissah, Nurah and Dana describe both of their parents as "completely supportive." For example, Neha said both her parents want her to go "as far as possible" with her education. She said when she got homesick and thought about leaving her master's program to return to Qatar it was her parents who pushed her to stay. She said, "They know this is something I really want, so they are trying to do everything they can to make it happen for me." Neha's mother has also sacrificed for her education by leaving her younger children to chaperone Neha while she is studying in the U.S.

Although it took Noor longer than it took the other five women to convince her father to allow her to pursue her educational aspirations, each of the participants had to negotiate the degree of freedom they would be permitted in terms of where they went to school and their living arrangements. These arrangements often led to greater familial tension than the desire to pursue higher education because they exposed cultural tensions and social norms about the appropriate role for a woman in society. They also risked exposing a family to censure, either through public criticism or criticism within the extended family. These tensions are revealed in how daughters and parents negotiated the role of chaperones, discussed in the following section.

Chaperone

Women who pursue higher education are caught in a rift between traditional culture and values and emerging opportunities. Because of their educations, all of the

participants had opportunities to travel, study or live abroad.[58] Qatari women typically

do not travel or live alone; instead they have a chaperone, most often a family member

who accompanies them. Chaperones are intended to safeguard a woman's reputation and

safety. Noor explained the rationale for a chaperone:

> Well, culturally it is not OK for women to live on their own. So, imagine if I would
> travel on my own in a country like the U.S. The culture is completely different,
> there are lots of horror stories you would hear on the news and on TV related to
> attacks on Muslims, Muslim-hating sentiments, Islamaphobe—all those things, so
> people here are kind of scared that a girl would go to the U.S. to study and live on
> her own.

While all of the participants' families preferred chaperones, not all of the women

reported being required to have one for all academic and professional activities.

Participants were evenly split regarding who did and did not have a chaperone, though

even the participants without chaperones continued to negotiate with their families for

their independence. While all of the participants' families preferred chaperones and half

required them, all the families were willing to balance their daughters' educational and

career opportunities with their requirements for a chaperone.

For these participants, chaperones have become more symbolic and figurative

than full-time monitors. For example, while Neha's family required her to have a

chaperone, her family was supportive of her education and even supported her ambition

to get her Ph.D. While Neha did have a chaperone, her mother travelled back and forth

between Qatar and the U.S., so Neha, effectively, lived alone part-time; however, the

taboo of a girl living alone was eliminated by the presence, even part-time, of her mother.

Her mother's part-time presence gave legitimacy to Neha's living situation. Similarly,

Hissah, the only subject who was still a student at the time of the interview, had recently

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[58] Dana did not study abroad but she did live in the U.S. for three months between her first and second full-time jobs.

returned from a mandatory internship semester, which she completed in London. Her mother accompanied her for this experience. But Hissah said that her parents would have allowed her to live with other students had this been possible. She also said if she was to return to London for a year she would do so on her own and her parents would support this decision.

Although parents demonstrated flexibility in their requirements for a chaperone, the requirement of a chaperone can still limit a woman's educational and professional choices. Dana's family requires chaperones for educational and work trips. Dana is interested in pursuing a JD in the U.S. but can only consider programs in New York because that is where her brother, who would serve as her chaperone, attends college. She is also limited time-wise; she would need to complete her program in the next four years before her brother returns to Qatar. Dana, however, did not find these circumstances limiting. She said, "New York has top universities, so I wouldn't mind going to New York," and she found four years a reasonable time frame in which to pursue her JD.

Unlike Dana, some participants did find the time and location requirements imposed by a chaperone limiting. Neha is currently pursuing a master's degree in the humanities at an Ivy League university in the United States. Her mother travels back and forth between Qatar and the U.S. to chaperone her. Neha would like to pursue a Ph.D., but to do so she must negotiate an acceptable chaperone. Neha said that when she told her mother that a doctoral program would be at least five years her mother was firm that she would not accompany her for that long. Neha admitted that a chaperone is a limiting factor when applying to graduate school because "it is asking so much of people to give

up their entire lives to come with you. I wouldn't want to ask that of anyone really.

Even now it feels weird that I am putting my mom in that position."

Sara, Nurah and Noor negotiated to live independently during their studies. While all three of their families would have preferred them to have had a chaperone, when this was not possible their families allowed them to live alone so they could complete their degrees. In all three of their situations, their families prioritized education over having a chaperone. However, especially for Noor and Sara these were not easy negotiations. Noor spent four years negotiating with her father to be allowed to leave Qatar, and Sara currently has a very tense relationship with her family, in part due to her living situation.

Sara's and Noor's experiences demonstrated that family negotiations are often ongoing. For Noor, just because she was successful in negotiating to attend college in the U.S. does not mean that the negotiations were over. Noor would like to continue her education in the U.S. by getting a master's degree in political science or conflict resolution. But she will again have to convince her father to allow her to leave the country to pursue her education. She said:

> It's hard to convince him that I would go there [to the U.S.] again. So, I don't know what I am going to do this time. So, it's kind of hard. So, we'll see. I'm not really sure because he's hesitant. He doesn't want me to go, but he wants me to study.

Sara is currently pursuing a master's degree in a neighboring Gulf country. She lives in her university's residence halls. She noted that it is "always a struggle" with her family to negotiate her independence. She credited having spent a year on the U.S. campus when she was only 18 with helping her to negotiate living abroad without a chaperone. But she also said she struggled with a lot of "backlash" from her family,

especially her mother and extended family about this decision. Sara also noted that her female classmates also struggled with these same issues. She said, "I think that situation is changing and things are a bit better but these issues are still persistent. These issues are just not spoken about that much."

As Sara and Noor alluded to, chaperones are an important part of preserving a girl's reputation. When Nurah's father was transferred abroad, she was working in Doha. Rather than have her continue to work and live in Doha on her own, her family preferred she move to London for graduate school. She described this situation as a "tough negotiation," but ultimately her family was concerned about the social awkwardness of having her live on her own in Qatar and preferred for her to continue her education abroad on her own. She explained, "I think that all Qatari families would rather have their kids abroad on their own than in Qatar on their own. Even if you have a support system and extended family, it becomes awkward, especially for a girl, to be living alone."

Sisters

While a daughter's education can be a burden on the family, such as by separating the chaperoning parent from other children, educational opportunities made available to one daughter can also create opportunities for other daughters—even those not enrolled in college. For example, Dana had many opportunities to travel for school and work and her older sister chaperoned her on each of these trips, so even though she was not in college, she benefitted from Dana's school- and work-related travel. According to Dana, for her sister, chaperoning was a fun activity that allowed her sister to see new places, spend time with Dana and do new things.

Older female siblings can also facilitate access for younger female siblings by paving the way with their parents. Sara has a younger sister for whom access to education has been easier because of her experience. While Sara said her sister still struggles with many of the same issues she struggled with, in particular un-chaperoned travel, she thinks her parents "relent" more with her sister.   When parents have "conceded" once by allowing a daughter to enroll in the college of her choice or to study and work abroad unchaperoned and no harm comes to her or to the family's reputation, they are more likely to do so a second time.

Male Relatives

As demonstrated by Noor's mother, women have a special place in encouraging their daughters to pursue education, helping them negotiate with family, and securing financial means. But men also play a critical role in women's education. Qatari women live first with their fathers and then with their husbands; thus, they can only pursue education and careers with the support of a male.[59] Fathers, brothers and husbands can block or enable a woman's education in unexpected ways.

Perhaps no other decision affects a girl's ability to continue her education and to pursue a career more than if, when, and to whom she marries. And fathers, largely, control this decision. Two participants, Noor and Dana said that their fathers turned down marriage proposals while they were in college because in their families education comes first.

Sara was the only participant to discuss a romantic partner. Sara had been in a relationship with a non-Qatari classmate for a year and half and was trying to marry, but

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[59] While some of the participants lived alone for a brief period while studying abroad they all said that it would not be acceptable for a Qatari woman to live alone in Qatar.

in Qatari culture it is very unusual to date long-term before marriage or to marry outside the nationality. As Sara explained, "It's not really common to have a love marriage. Let's just put it that way." Sara's relationship with her parents had been deteriorating, in part due to her relationship with her boyfriend, and at the time of our interview she and her parents were not talking on a regular basis. Describing her relationship with her parents, Sara said, "They do not approve of me."

Noor talked about friends of hers who were pressured to get married rather than finish college. Some of these women did graduate because they had supportive husbands, but ultimately, it was the husband's decision if the wife continued her education. Noor explained:

> [Women's education and career] wouldn't happen without the support of the family. Let's say a family is not supportive of a woman interacting with men on a daily basis, or of a women travelling for her job, [then] women can't really achieve much. Women, before marriage, we live with our parents, and, after marriage, women live with our husbands, so it is a male dominated society. There is always a male. Some of those males just play the role as a guardian, but some of them are really dominant and negatively affect their decisions on the woman, whether that's their daughter or their sister or their wives.

Fathers (and sometimes husbands)[60] also decide if, when and where a daughter goes to school. As seen with Noor, when fathers withheld this permission it can change a woman's course of study and lead to protracted negotiations involving multiple family members. Similarly, fathers also impact decisions about if and where a woman will work.

Brothers also serve an important and unexpected role in a woman's ability to pursue higher education. Women with brothers living or studying abroad may have additional opportunities to pursue higher education because the brothers can serve as

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[60] Husbands play a similar role as fathers; since all participants are unmarried I will refer to fathers rather than fathers/husbands for clarity of prose.

chaperones. Dana and Neha both have brothers studying in the U.S. and, if they study in

cities near their brothers, their families would allow them to go to the U.S. to pursue

graduate degrees because their brothers can serve as chaperones. The role of brothers in

Middle Eastern women's education is overlooked in the literature and is an area that

needs to be further explored.

Extended Family

While participants' immediate families were generally supportive of their

education and career goals, their extended families were less supportive and questioned

the extent to which their ambitions took them away from home.

Both Sara's and Neha's extended family questioned the family about the

women's' traveling. Neha was the first woman in her family to travel abroad for school

and her activities, including traveling, internships, and graduate school, raised questions

in the extended family, especially with her grandparents. Since she was in high school

they have watched her educational accomplishments and they questioned the pressure she

puts on herself to excel. They would also prefer her to stay in Qatar and not to travel.

Neha said that "It's different from what they are used to. My immediate family is very

proud, so I am happy for that."

Grandparents' reluctance to see their granddaughters pursue higher education and

careers may be generational, especially since these opportunities are new to Qatar,

particularly for women. But participants faced resistance from members of their

extended families beyond grandparents. Sara's family was put "under the spotlight" from

their extended family because of her education, including her time studying abroad. She

said her immediate family was "reprimanded" by the extended family when she went to

the U.S. at 18 to study abroad. "There was a lot of backlash from the extended family about that as well. I really had to struggle with that."

Nurah's extended family was also reluctant for her to study in the U.S. and expressed "negative" opinions about her choice to attend college there and her desire to return for graduate school. But education is very important to Nurah's family all of whom are very well educated.[61] The extended family's objection was not to Nurah receiving an education, but to her spending so much time living away from the family, especially as Nurah grew up abroad and only recently moved back to Qatar.

Unlike the others, Hissah and Dana described their extended families as being very supportive of their educations. Dana credited this support to her family understanding the importance of education. But she is unusual in that she has an aunt who has a PhD and another who teaches chemistry. Fifty to sixty years ago when Qatar was developing as a country, her grandfather was an early entrepreneur and her relatives attended boarding school abroad, when it wasn't the norm, even for men. In fact, Dana said her grandmother was one of the first Qatari women to learn to read and write.

While chaperones are ostensibly conservative social mores designed to preserve a girl's reputation, they also demonstrate the commitment some families made to their daughters' educations. For example, Neha's mother left her younger children in Qatar to live part-time in the U.S. with Neha so she could pursue her master's degree. The time commitment female chaperones make—even leaving younger children at home like Neha's mother—demonstrates the sacrifice the entire family may make if one daughter is enrolled in higher education. Though achieving their goals often involved protracted negotiations with family members, each participant had at least one family member who

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[61] Her father is one of 12 (6 boys and 6 girls) all of whom are educated; The men in the US.

supported her educational and professional ambitions. This ally led to participants'

success in accessing new opportunities. In fact, several participants were successful in

negotiating to travel or live alone; but participants raised limits about the extent to which

women can live independently. Currently, women have more flexibility to be

independent when living abroad indicating limits to family's flexibility to bend

traditional social boundaries. The next section continues to look at the extent women

have access to opportunities by moving to an analysis of labor market opportunities.

"I'm Considered a Foreigner in My Own Country:"

Education and the Labor Market

Dana's Story

Dana speaks both English and Arabic; however, she considers her first language

to be English and is more comfortable writing in English than in Arabic. At home, she

mostly speaks English with her parents and when they do speak Arabic they speak a

dialect that is different from the formal dialect used by the government.

Because there are a small number of Qatari graduates and an even smaller number

who are fluent in both English and Arabic, employers heavily recruited Dana her senior

year of college. Dana's first job after graduation involved translating court documents.

Because there were so few employees who could work on these translations Dana was

highly valued by her employer. She explains:

> Sometimes I would be on my lunch break—and they would need that court
> document translated ASAP. The person would come and stand on top of my head
> while I'm having my lunch and say 'at least give me the gist of it. Read this
> document right now.' It was a good thing that I was needed. But sometimes it
> got in the way of other things and that would bother me.

Because Dana worked with court documents she says it was intimidating when she did

not know the correct term for something and she worried that if it was misinterpreted it

could have legal repercussions. Dana says that not knowing more Arabic can be limiting. In fact, she cannot apply to public sector jobs because she cannot write fluently in Arabic.

Dana says that sometimes her Arabic speaking co-workers think she is being snobby or acting like she is looking down on them when she edits their English, even though this is part of her job. Her Arabic-speaking co-workers group her with the English-speaking expats rather than with the Arabic-speaking Qataris. Even though Dana is Qatari, in the workplace she is labeled a "foreigner" because of her fluent, un-accented English and her American-style education. Dana says that while she does not consider herself a foreigner, "I see where they are coming from. Because your minds are completely different. We can't even…you know. You can't even understand each other because our lifestyles are so different."

Dana explains that socially Qataris who attended public school and those who attended private (usually British or American) schools self-segregate. But in the workplace everyone is forced to interact causing "clashes." These clashes happen, in part, due to language barriers. Graduates of private (foreign) universities are more likely to speak English while Qatar University (public) graduates are more likely to speak Arabic (or Arabic and English). Dana works with coworkers whose language skills range from perfect English speakers who cannot speak Arabic to perfect Arabic speakers who cannot speak English; these groups cannot communicate with one another even though they are all Qatari and are supposed to share a culture. Dana explains:

> With the Qataris at my job I am considered a foreigner. And I ask why and they say because you are the girl with the perfect English with the English background and the English education that didn't go to public school. And you know, you get labeled. I'm considered a foreigner in my own country.

Participants' new professional roles have led to feelings of isolation. Dana's story illustrates these feelings and introduces six additional themes related to participants' experiences in the labor market including, language skills, the preference for private versus public sector jobs, and challenges with implementing Qatarization, the country's labor nationalization policy. The final three sections in this theme address the remaining topics surrounding the changing culture of work: students' transition to the workforce, alignment between credential-based curriculum and students' goals and, finally, a consideration of students' experiences based on attendance at Education City versus U.S. campuses. These last three themes were addressed by fewer participants but still represent important themes to consider because they point to potential tensions in the workplace, as well as to areas for future study.

Isolation

Dana, Hissah, Neha, Noor, Nurah and Sara have been able to take advantage of unprecedented educational and career opportunities but, in doing so they have become part of an unprecedented educated professional class of Qatari woman, which has led them to describe feelings of isolation. Participants said they felt that they did not fit into the workplace, in part, because there is tension between Qataris who attended Qatar University and Qataris who attended university abroad or the new English-language universities at Education City. Sara thinks this conflict comes from students from the national university viewing students from the American universities as entitled. She even said that there is a "stigma" associated with having attended an American university. She explained:

> A lot of the national university and the community college [students] perceive students from them [Education City] as spoiled and rich because the students who

go to the Education City universities have had private educations and a lot of them came from abroad and they are rich kids.

Sara continued, "Society kind of resents students from foreign education [educated at Educated City or abroad], as well. It's really hard to integrate into the job market if you are coming from these universities." Sara felt isolated due to this perception and said, "It's just a sense of loss."

In addition to tense relationships between Qataris, participants also described tensions between expatriates and Qataris. Dana describes, "In one company if the majority is American you are expected to write in American English. If in another company the majority is British you are expected to write in British English." More than stylistic, Dana described this situation as creating an environment in which it is difficult for participants to fit in: "Even down to those little things, you are being watched."

Tense relationships between Qataris and expatriates can also complicate relationships between Qataris. Participants said that Qataris educated in American schools are often associated more with expatriates than with other Qataris. Dana explained:

> I think they [my coworkers] just take it more defensively as if I'm looking down because sometimes they do feel that they get that from the expats living in Qatar. So, maybe they feel that I am part of that group and not part of my own country's group. There is a bit of segregation.

This segregation can cause tension or conflict in the workplace. Dana described, "For example when I would fix someone's English when they are doing their job, I'm doing it for the sake of them appearing better in front of their boss, but they would take me as being snobby." These layers of segregation create complicated social relationships that make it hard for participants to navigate the workplace.

Language Skills

Language was a site of negotiation for all six participants. Five of the six participants said their English skills are much stronger than their Arabic language skills. Dana, Hissah, Neha, Nurah and Sara said that they are no longer comfortable with their Arabic skills and would prefer, or even require, jobs in English.[62] After years of attending American or British schools, these participants are no longer fluent in Arabic and consider their primary language to be English. Dana noted that the Qatari government "saw that this generation that graduated cannot speak Arabic. How can we be Arabic and not be able to speak Arabic?" In response to this situation the government has added Arabic to the school curriculum. For example, when Dana was in secondary school she had only one or two classes of Arabic a week and every other subject was taught in English. But now, ten years later, her younger brothers attend the same school and they have daily Arabic classes.

Neha expressed similar frustrations with language. Neha attended British secondary schools and stopped studying Arabic in the 10th grade. She said she doesn't watch Arabic TV shows or listen to Arabic music and she feels like she has "neglected" Arabic. Neha explained, "I have cut myself off from the language I was born with." Sometimes this decision isolates her socially because when people are speaking Arabic she tends to be quiet because "It's not a language I feel comfortable socializing in." Neha said her poor Arabic skills are also sometimes an issue at home because her brothers make fun of her when she makes mistakes when speaking Arabic so, typically, she responds in English even when they speak to her in Arabic. She explained, "They speak Arabic so much more eloquently than me. When I speak Arabic I make a lot of

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[62] All five spoke fluent, perfect English with no discernable accent.

mistakes that they catch and make fun of me, so I would rather speak a language in which I don't make a fool of myself."

Two participants agreed that while English was their primary language they had maintained their Arabic skills, if to a lesser degree than their English fluency. Hissah said she felt comfortable speaking both Arabic and English and responded in whichever language she was addressed, though she acknowledged that writing in Arabic can be a challenge. Nurah said that after attending an American high school and college working in a public sector job that required Arabic would be a challenge, but unlike Dana and Neha, she said it would be worth the challenge for the right job.

Noor is the only participant who considers Arabic her primary language and is fluent in both spoken and written Arabic. Unlike the others, Noor attended an Arabic high school. She also continues to use Arabic in her daily professional life as she has a public sector job that requires her to communicate in Arabic. She also writes a weekly column for an Arabic newspaper on Middle East politics and U.S. foreign policy. In fact, while Noor spoke excellent English and attended college in the U.S., she was the only participant with a slight accent and who made occasional, very minor grammar mistakes.

Private Versus Public Sector Jobs

Unlike the majority of Qataris, participants in this study neither expressed a strong desire to work in the public sector nor did they select jobs in the public sector. Four participants expressed a preference for the private sector, one preferred the semi-private, and one was open to either the public or private. Of note, no participant explicitly preferred the public sector. As just discussed, most participants favored jobs in English, which partly explains their preference for the private sector since private sector

business is conducted in English. Only Noor, the participant with the strongest Arabic skills, was equally open to jobs in either sector. Noor's fluency in both written and spoken Arabic influences this decision as she is able to work at a job that requires either English or Arabic (or both).

Participants reported several other critical reasons for seeking private sector employment. Participants reported that private sector jobs are more prestigious and preferred them in spite of longer working hours. Participants also reported that the public sector is disorganized and chaotic and that the private sector is more secure and structured with more accountability and authority. While Sara was the most passionate in her dislike for the public sector, her comments were representative of the participants:

> The public is really bad. In the private sector, the benefits are much better. The actual job is much better. The quality of a job is more meaningful. The environment is much better. The quality of people is much better. The working hours are set. The amount of work is set. The public sector is not regulated. It is a mess. You are removed and placed at the whim of people. It is completely not regulated. I think most people tend to prefer private because it's much more streamlined and stable. In the public sector it's a desk job. Anybody can get that. You don't need to invest four years of your life to get a public job. In the private sector you are actually competing for a job.

Like Sara, Neha is also only interested in working in the private sector. She agreed with Sara that the public sector is disorganized and chaotic and that the private sector would be more secure and structured. She said she has had friends hired by government ministries and the environment was "undefined" and "laissez faire" and she did not want to be part of that kind of environment.

Dana worked for a private company that became semi-private when it merged with a government agency. She said she preferred the private sector because she had more accountability and more authority. She compared the two:

In the public sector, it is much slower because there are so many people who have to OK things before you can do anything. So the process takes longer. In the private, you are given that level of trust where you can do it and if something goes wrong, it is on your shoulders, but at the same time you know what to do and how far to go.

Dana had experience working in both the public and private sectors and acknowledged that she did prefer the shorter working hours in the public sector, but overall she said she preferred the private sector and was willing to work longer hours for what she thought was a higher quality job.[63]

The "Myth" of Qatarization

As discussed in chapter two, Qatarization is a government plan to nationalize the workforce through a variety of programs, including requiring quotas of Qatari employees. Qatarization applies to all government- and joint venture-owned industries or departments.[64] This plan is incredibly ambitious because only 6% of the Qatari workforce is made up of Qatari nationals (General Secretariat for Development Planning, January 2012). Since women are both highly educated and underemployed they are a tremendous potential resource for achieving Qatarization targets. However, three participants, Dana, Noor, and Nurah, had mixed opinions about Qatarization and one, Sara, had a very negative opinion about this policy. A summary of these findings follows.

Dana and Nurah both noted that Qatarization—in theory—is a good policy. But the reality of the policy's implementation differs greatly from the theory. Sara, Noor and Nurah said that the first problem with achieving Qatarization is one of sheer numbers:

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[63] In the public sector Dana worked from 7:30am to 3:30pm. In the private she typically worked from 8:00am to 5:00pm, staying to 7:00 or 8:00pm as needed.

[64] Though there are exceptions, Qataris are legally supposed to hold 51% or more of the capital in companies established in Qatar.

The need to achieve targets set by Qatarization can lead companies to fill positions with less qualified Qatari applicants. Dana has seen this where she worked: "Sometimes a Qatari would be hired just for the sake of being Qatari—for filling that number or that gap of Qatarization and that person wouldn't have the skills, and I think that is unfair."

Sara was the most outspoken against Qatarization; she said, "I really hate it. I couldn't be against a policy more. It's one of the worse policies." She said she thinks that Qatarization has damaged Qatari culture by making youth feel entitled to jobs they are not "worthy of" and that Qatarization has created a phenomenon of "disguised unemployment" where some Qataris have jobs in name only. In some cases a Qatari is hired to fill the position to fulfill Qatarization and then a second employee is also hired who has the proper training and skills. Sara explained that while Qatarization targets were created to level the playing field, in reality they haven't done so because many of the Qataris filling jobs through the policy are doing so in name only. "What's also not spoken about is that the job market is saturated. There is a lot of disguised unemployment that is not spoken about. There are no real jobs in most cases. People just hire people for the sake of Qatarization." Sara also described how Qataris are hired to fill a quota but do not have the skills or experience to perform that job and so do not really have the responsibilities associated with the job. She described this phenomenon:

> I've been offered jobs that when I dug in deep and asked what I would be doing it was basically nothing. It was just a desk job. It's just a title because I'm Qatari. They give you a huge salary just to meet a quota. They basically buy your role, your name and your degree to use you as a statistic.

Language skills are also a barrier to implementation. Applicants are often strong in either English or Arabic but many jobs require fluency in both languages. At Dana's first job, most of the work was in English but they occasionally needed an Arabic speaker

so they hired law graduates from Qatar University. But these individuals often did not

have a strong enough foundation in English for the regular workload. Nurah also

encountered this problem in her job and thinks this issue is a barrier to successful

implementation of the policy. She explained:

> You hear all about 'Qatarization, Qatarization, Qatarization' but then there are so
> many Qatari applicants applying everywhere and they are not getting the jobs
> because of the language requirements. For people who aren't perfect in English,
> people want them to be perfect in English; and for people who are perfect in
> English but not perfect in Arabic, people want them to be the opposite. I feel like
> we are in a limbo phase right now. For Qatarization to work well, I think Qataris
> need to have both perfect English and Arabic. We can't have just one good
> language because we really—when you go into the workforce—you realize
> that you really need both languages.

In part, due to this problem, Nurah questioned what a quality definition of Qatarization

would be: "I don't think we have defined what we want. Not on a government level and

not internally within different institutions. Is it about the numbers or the quality? Or

would you rather have fewer Qataris who are qualified." Ultimately, though three of six

participants were hesitant supporters of Qatarization, at least in theory, in practice, Nurah

summed up its implementation, "Qatarization is a policy that in time, I think, people will

realize is actually a myth."

Transition to the Workforce

Overall, participants had mixed responses when asked if their education prepared

them for workforce. A few respondents felt that education could only prepare you so

much for the workforce. Summarizing this point of view Nurah said, "I wouldn't say the

degree fully prepared me. I don't think any degree really does that." Two of the six

participants, Noor and Hissah, said their educations helped prepare them for the

workplace. While Hissah was still an undergraduate she said she felt that she had been

able to apply the skills and knowledge she learned in the classroom to her internships and she felt well-prepared to enter the workforce.

Sara and Noor, specifically said that their transitions to the workplace were difficult.[65] Sara said that it was "really difficult" and a "shock" and Noor said she "wasn't very pleased" and experienced "culture shock" as the only female in her department. On the extreme end of the spectrum, Sara felt strongly that her education had not prepared her for the workplace. She said:

> Education sometimes just educates you, but it doesn't prepare you for the workforce. And I think that was an issue with [branch campus] and what it did for us. And to prove that, none of us work in any profession that was in the degree that we were supposed to work in. We all took jobs that had nothing to do with the degree we specialized in. So there is a lack in higher education in preparing the student for jobs that are on the market.

While Sara said she not feel adequately prepared for the workforce, Dana said the skills she learned in college helped her to be successful in her career because professors at the branch campus did not "teach you the ropes" and students had to be independent. She said, "My main skill [I learned] was public speaking and confidence. Almost every week you would have to present in front of the class." And now, "When it's a work thing I can say whatever I have to say and get what I need to get done and not be afraid or shy as opposed to how I used to be before."

Students who studied abroad and students who studied at Education City equally reported that their educations helped them become more confident and more well-rounded. All the participants from the Education City campuses specifically said that the curriculum improved their public speaking and presentation skills. All four participants

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[65] Hissah and Neha are still students without full-time work experience.

also said they became more self-confident as they became more comfortable with these skills. Dana said that this exposure "builds your confidence and makes you feel so much stronger when you have to approach a person and talk to them as opposed to being reluctant and afraid to speak up."

Students who studied abroad did point to specific skills that they gained that they said helped them. Noor said that the diversity she experienced in the U.S. enriched her. She enjoyed communicating with a diverse group of people from different ideologies, different religions, and different ethnic groups. While Noor said that her transition to the workforce was difficult, she also said that her education has helped her in the workplace, and "The whole experience of being in the U.S. really enriched my potential." Even Sara who felt the least professionally prepared thought that the exposure to different ideas and people she experienced while studying in the U.S. had the potential to change you. She was part of the first graduating class at her branch campus and part of a small group of only six or seven students who came to the main campus for a semester. She said that you could compare the students who went to the main campus with those who did not and actually see a difference in their development. She explained, "I think it's really necessary, especially in societies that are so small with such a limited population of people to expose people to different thoughts and ideas."

All of the women had internships while they were undergraduates and they all agreed that this experience helped them prepare for their transition to the workplace. They interned at prestigious organizations in Qatar, the U.S. and London. Nurah summed up the groups' collective feelings about internships: "The internships were more

of a reality check, to be honest. They prepared me for life. I learned about responsibility and a 9-5 job."

Credentialism

The Qatari government chose programs for Education City that are credential-based and labor market priorities. Because of this targeting there is not currently a liberal arts college at Education City. Based on data from this study, women have their own reasons for pursuing higher education that diverge from credential-based labor market demands. In some cases, curricular limitations have required women to use a pre-professional degree as a proxy for a liberal arts curriculum. For example, Neha loved to write and wanted to study English or comparative literature, but since there was no program at Education City she enrolled in the journalism school. She created her own liberal arts opportunity from the intended journalism credential.

Noor and Nurah also did not allow themselves to be limited by the curriculum choices offered in Qatar. Rather than choose an available curriculum and work within it, like Neha, they choose to work outside of the existing curriculum options. Noor put off college by four years until she was able to leave the country to study her subject of choice. And when Nurah's major was not offered in Qatar she also chose to study in the U.S. rather than choose a different field of study.

Both Nurah and Neha had narrow views of what careers they can pursue with their degrees. Nurah, educated in the U.S., said she felt that when she did not enter the Foreign Service she was not doing what her degree had prepared her to do. Similarly, Neha felt that public relations was "what a journalism degree would get her" in Qatar. Both participants expressed narrow, credential-oriented views of the relationship between

majors and career. When asked if she thought that her education at the branch campus prepared her for the labor market, Neha said, "That's a really hard question because I studied journalism and I went into creative writing, so really, when I look back, [branch campus] really couldn't have prepared me that well. It's not the institution's fault because I went a different route." Neha saw her journalism degree as leading only to a career in journalism or public relations. Although, she may not have perceived her degree as transferable, in fact, Neha's degree was flexible enough for her to pursue an alternate career path: she was accepted into a MFA program at an Ivy League university.

Participants struggled with navigating a professional identity. Though participants were successful professionally, they sometimes struggled to fit in, which led to feelings of isolation. As a new class of Qatari women, participants struggled to find their professional "fit," which included struggles with transition to the workforce, especially in regards to labor and workforce polices such as, Qatarization, language policies and public versus private sector employment. Women's struggles, especially as they relate to changing gender relations are explored in the final section.

"I Don't Think We Knew What Society Wanted From Us:" Education and Society

Sara's Story

Sara was accepted into SFS-Qatar at 16 and graduated at 20. At 18 she spent a year alone, without a chaperone, studying at the DC campus. Sara says that the year she spent in the U.S. helped her gain perspective on Qatari culture. "I think that kind of exposure really changes you," she says. She continues:

> What's interesting is the difference of culture. In the Western, American culture difference is embraced. To us, 'different' is something to not be embraced. You should be the same to be embraced. And that's a problem because most people are

different. It's normal to be different. No one is the same. That is something I'm trying to come to terms with right now.

Sara says her time at Education City felt like being in a "bubble" and that "in reality this culture that you have been raised in does not allow you the same opportunities as your peers on the main campus." She says that "We were really out of touch with society. I don't think we really knew what society wanted from us."

While other participants spoke about challenges they faced as a new generation of Qatari woman, Sara is the only participant who is outspoken in her belief that Qatari society represses women. Sara describes the effects of living with patriarchal gender norms:

> It's really difficult because when you go out there's always this social preconception. When you go out on a date, the waiter automatically gives the bill to your boyfriend and expects him to pay, automatically. I never get the bill. It just frustrates me every time. No one assumes that women pay. Never. And it's ridiculous.

Sara says that after spending time in the U.S. she looked back and realized some of the ways in which she felt she was "devalued" in Qatar. She elaborates:

> In the U.S., they used to place it [the check] in the middle. It just proves to you how patriarchal it [Qatari society] is. If I go to a store, they assume my boyfriend is paying for me. I'm paying for myself. And just because I am with someone they devalue me. It's so frustrating. It's unbelievable. It happens all the time.

Sara believes that Qatar's patriarchal society is responsible for the low representation of women in the workforce. She explains: "All these small nuisances. It's infuriating. It's not shocking that only 12% [of women] make it to the workforce. It's too much for most people to handle." Sara believes that gender roles have shifted but society has not yet caught up. She elaborates, "Gender roles are no longer the same, but the problem is you are still expected to fill the same roles but the roles no longer fit anymore." Sara is

struggling to define herself as an educated professional Qatari woman. With few role models she is forging her own way.

Although Sara was the most outspoken and her views were the most liberal and non-conformist, all the participants spoke freely, and Sara was not the only participant who characterized her experience in the language of struggle. The Qatari women in this study each made strategic decisions about what and when they wanted to fight. These decisions were different for each participant but each woman had something she had fought to pursue. Sara's story illustrates three themes related to education and society: participants' "fight" and "struggle" to (re)define a personal and professional identity, changing gender roles, and the "invisible clash" between the government and the public.

Language of "Fight" and "Struggle"

Sara's internal and external struggles were a key theme in our conversation; so much so that she repeatedly used the words "fight" and "struggle" to define her story. Sara used the word "struggle" 13 times and the word "fight" five times in our conversation. She characterized her decisions—to study abroad, enroll in a MA program, live alone, and choose whom to date, as a "struggle." She said she thinks that the constant small "nuisances" of living in a patriarchal culture wear women down and many give up rather than continue to fight for their rights, such as pursuing a career. In just this short excerpt Sara uses "fight" five times:

> They tell you that there is equal participation and that women get treated equally in the workforce. I come from a household where girls are treated equally as boys and yet I still had to fight to come here and live alone. I still have to fight for choosing the partner I want to marry. I still have to fight for the basic rights of driving. I still have to fight for basic things that any woman should not have to fight for in this time.

Sara is struggling at every level—with herself, her family, her culture, and her society—to define an identity that respects her personal values in the context of predominant cultural and social norms.

Like Sara, Nurah also described her professional choices as a struggle or "fight." When explaining about her decision not to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Foreign Service or Diplomatic Corps) when she graduated from college in 2007, Nurah said it wasn't her "time to fight" to allow women to be in diplomatic positions. Unlike Sara, perception plays a large role in Nurah's decision:

> It's just people's perception. What would people say? If you go into the Ministry it means that you are super independent, that you travel a lot, and that you don't care. It means a lot of things. It wasn't my time to go into the Ministry and to start something like that.

While Nurah still uses the language of fight and struggle, she is more compliant than Sara. Nurah said, "It was just culturally unacceptable to think that women could be diplomats and live abroad on their own" and she didn't "take it personally." Though Nurah was not able to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she did secure a position at a prestigious foundation and runs a business with her family.

Changing Gender Roles

Though some of the women, like Noor, were the only woman in their department, several participants said they felt comfortable giving men direction or even supervising male colleagues. For example, Dana said, "this is part of your work, you just have to do it." But Dana also acknowledged that sometimes being in a position of authority can lead to strained relations because "Men do feel intimidated when you say 'I need you to do this,' when you are giving the orders, because your position is higher." But she also believed that ultimately "they are just going to have to listen."

In contrast to women's ambition and drive to prove themselves, participants did not characterize men as driven and education-oriented. Nurah laughed when she said that some—"not a lot" of—guys are also ambitious and committed to education and career like women. Qatari men have always been able to secure well paying jobs with only a high school education. Men can enlist in the army or the police force with only a high school degree and are guaranteed steady employment. But Qatari women must have further education to obtain a good job. Men can also socialize, travel and generally circulate more freely than women, so they do not require an education to secure these freedoms. Both Sara and Noor mentioned these reasons as one explanation for why women are more dedicated to their education.

Participants not only characterized men as less ambitious, but some participants reported that some of their male peers are resistant to the changing gender dynamics. Nurah characterized some of her male peers as "very critical, negative and judgmental." She said that the younger male generation will:

> Tell you, not jokingly, completely seriously, and, to me, inappropriately, 'we'll just stay home and let you run the country.' Or 'I'll just find a Qatari wife to pay the bills and I'll be the stay at home dad.' This generation has been exposed to coed education, so there is no reason to think that they wouldn't be OK with all of the changes, but they are not.

Nurah hypothesized that this shift happened because when "[women moved into the workforce] there was suddenly a negative perception [that men] should just stay home because women are taking over, women graduate three to one. They are much more committed in the workplace, they show much more passion and ambition." Nurah argued that for women to graduate from college, get a job, potentially get a graduate degree and juggle marriage challenges the existing social dynamic. The traditional family dynamic has been upset by women's new roles. Nurah explained:

The status quo has changed so much where the dynamics in the family are now threatened. The dad comes home and where is the mom? Because she works and she's committed to her career. What does that look like? What does the modern Qatari family look like? And all of these questions people are asking we don't have the answers yet.

Even though social changes have been more dramatic for women than for men, participants believed that women have adapted to all of the changes in the last ten years better than men. Nurah and Sara agreed that gender roles have changed dramatically over the last ten years and argued that the speed of social change has inappropriately shifted blame to women. Nurah explained:

I think there is a lot of blame on the women—as individuals or as a gender—when really there was a general shift in the country and women seized opportunities. The blame is misplaced. If you are trying to blame someone, if you're looking for a scapegoat, I don't think it would be the women.

Several participants noted that Qatari women have always played an important societal role—that role has just shifted to be more public. Nurah summarized this theme:

Is it because women have changed? Probably not. I've always thought that women in our family generations ago have always been ambitious and committed, relevant to the time. They've never been complacent and laid back and didn't play a role. Now the opportunities are different. We have to come to terms with that. People have to grasp that we are not going back to that time.

"Invisible Clash" Between the Government and the Public

All the women described dramatic changes in the opportunities afforded to women, with many of these changes resulting from modernization policies promoted by Qatar's government and royal family. While each woman benefitted from the educational and professional opportunities brought about by these recent reforms, each also experienced resistance from both family and co-workers related to changing gender roles. Change is happening so quickly that Qatari citizens have had difficulty adjusting to the new "normal." For example, Noor and Nurah both said that the government was

moving faster with reforms than comfortable for people. Nurah said, "The government is trying to go way too liberal and people are still moderate to moderate-conservative. It's kind of like there is an invisible clash between these two."

An example of this clash is the role of her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the second wife of the former Emir and mother of the current Emir, a public figure and a "modern" Qatari woman. Just a small selection of her roles include: (1) internationally, she is a Member of the Steering Committee of the UN Secretary-General's Education First initiative; and Advocate for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the co-leader of the Education and Health cluster of this group; (2) within Qatar she is the Chair of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. She is routinely photographed and seen on TV and also gives speeches domestically and internationally, and is considered a fashion icon—all of which is unusual for a Muslim woman. Many of the participants viewed her as a professional role model. Noor explained: "Right now I think more women are getting out there because of Sheikha Moza. Many of the royal family members, the females, are very active and I think that's given a push for many women to be more active in society." But Noor elaborated:

> The government is fine with women going out there and being on TV, and being in the media, but people here are not so ready for that. Like the royal family, Sheikha Moza, she is a role model for many women, and she is out there, being public and being very outspoken, many people are OK with that, but they are not OK when it comes to their own family. They are very reluctant of letting their girls being on TV or being outspoken or travelling on their own.

Nurah agreed that it is citizens who are sometimes reluctant to embrace reforms that the government is pushing. She said:

> The government is committed to a vision of modernizing the country. To putting Qatar on the map. And it's the people who aren't seizing the opportunities because they are scared, because they like the status quo. They fear becoming too Western; women taking on too much responsibility.

Both Noor and Nurah thought that this reluctance comes both from the conservative Qatari culture and also from the small size of the Qatari population, which makes some people particularly conscientious of reputation. Noor explained, "There are still conservative aspects to that [women in the media and women travelling independently]. I think things here are progressing slowly." Nurah concured, "It's because we're smaller. So people really do care about reputation. What other people say, what other people do, word of mouth becomes really important." Sara agreed, saying, "it's really taboo. All these things that are not really said." On the other hand, Nurah believed that people are challenging this cultural norm. And the six participants were examples of this change as all of them were unmarried and were 20-27 years old—though Noor and Sara said that their families continue to pressure them to get married.

Another manifestation of the disconnect between the government and the general public is the way in which women who study or live abroad are regarded. Noor noted that women who studied abroad can be viewed as "corrupted." She explained that some people see women who have studied and/or lived abroad as not being the "typical Muslim." She explained, "There is a large segment [who see it this way], I would say. They see a woman who lived abroad and studied abroad as someone who knew everything and saw everything in a negative connotation and 'I'm exposed to everything' and therefore I'm corrupted."

While the government has been aggressive about promoting social change, participants reported underlying social tensions and challenges they have navigating a new social order. While participants have embraced opportunities offered by reform,

they also struggled to negotiate identities within new, and sometimes conflicting, social norms.

Conclusion

Hissah, Dana, Neha, Noor, and Nurah and Sara have taken advantage of recent educational and occupational opportunities. Their motivation for doing so stemmed from a complicated interplay of both internal and external factors. Participants were motivated primarily by an internal desire to succeed and to prove to society that "they are just as capable as men." More so than their male peers, participants described themselves as "ambitious," and "driven" and were seizing the opportunities available to them. But embracing these new opportunities involved negotiating new personal and professional relationships. Participants struggled to find a balance between personal freedom and family responsibilities. Participants' immediate families were generally supportive of their educational and professional ambitions—within limits. The pressure several participants felt to get married and the continued belief that marriage—not career—is the ultimate goal for a woman limited some participants' opportunities. Professionally, women sometimes felt like outsiders due to their American-style educations and English-language abilities. Again their ambition set them apart and they expressed interest in atypical opportunities for the average Qatari worker, such as private sector employment. All of these changes led participants to struggle to (re)define their identity as Qatari women within changing gender roles leading to conflict with their male peers. I explore these issues in the final chapter.

Chapter Five: Implications and Discussion

When I undertook this study I expected to find that many women were not working since over seventy-five percent of college students in Qatar are female but only 34% of the workforce is female (General Secretariat for Development Planning, January 2012); however my participants did not fit this pattern because they are participating in the workforce (or about to enter the workforce). This study explored reasons for this discrepancy through qualitative interviews with six college-educated Qatari women to answer the following research questions:

1. What are college-educated Qatari women's motivations for and experiences with higher education?

2. What are college-educated Qatari women's motivations for and experiences with workforce participation?

I found that participants displayed complex internal and external motivation for pursuing academic and professional opportunities and that they used these opportunities for personal development and to acquire new freedoms; however, it was easier for some participants to attain academic credibility than to attain professional credibility indicating that there is a continuing tension between the academic and professional opportunities available to women. Taking advantage of these new opportunities required participants to (re)negotiate their identities as a new generation of Qatari women, causing conflict with normative gender roles, especially within families and with male peers. Participants in this study represent a group of highly educated, career-oriented Qatari women who are vanguards or trailblazers seizing opportunities brought on by the comprehensive reform of the education system; as such they do not represent all Qatari women. It is also

unknown whether some of these findings are based on age or social class, whether this pattern of high workforce participation will fracture when these women marry and have children—or whether a new pattern is emerging. I explore these issues in this final chapter, in which I 1) explore the practical and theoretical implications of the study's four main themes—women's motivation, relationships with family, labor market choices and social change, and 2) make suggestions for alternative theoretical perspectives and areas for future research.

Motivation

The one area in which Qatar excels in closing gender-based disparities is education. Despite an overall ranking of 113 out of 136 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index, Qatar is ranked 53rd for educational attainment and is ranked first for enrollment in tertiary education (Beckhouche et al., 2013). Studies on American women's increased higher education attainment tend to focus on the increase in economic opportunities since 1968 as the motivation for women to pursue higher education (Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006a). But unlike the U.S., Qatar has an economy that is defined by the rentier state phenomenon. The defining characteristic of a rentier state is that national income is not derived from the productive sectors of the economy or from taxes, but from a "gift of nature," such as Qatar's natural gas, and the majority of the population is not engaged in the generation of wealth but only in its distribution and utilization (Beblawi, 1987). Despite an economy that discourages entry into the labor force, Qatari women in this study were very motivated; however, they were motivated to pursue higher education more for intrinsic than extrinsic reasons, which may partially be explained by the Qatari-specific context, which is under-explored in the current literature.

In this study, I found that the main motivators for women to purse higher education and labor market opportunities were more diverse than those previously reported. Intrinsic motivators included: intellectual and personal development; a responsibility to use their education to benefit their community; a sense of "having something to prove" to society; and a commitment to education that comes from an appreciation of opportunities previously denied to women. Extrinsic motivators though less frequently expressed by women, also play a role. They included using education as a tool to gain personal freedom, forestalling marriage and a desire for financial security.

The primary study that discusses Qatari women's motivation for entering the labor force is Al-Misnad's *The development of modern education in the Gulf* (1985). Despite the massive social changes and overhaul of the education system since Al-Misnad's study, three of the four reasons she outlined for Qatari girls' high achievement were reinforced by this study. In 1985, Qatari women had very limited career options and most women worked as teachers. Al-Misnad found that women's limited professional options encouraged some women to be high achievers to set themselves apart so they could take advantage of limited opportunities. Al-Misnad also found that Qatari girls worked harder than Qatari boys in school because they had fewer choices for how to spend their leisure time; in addition, boys who dropped out of school had good career options, such as joining the police force and military, but for girls, a degree was necessary to secure a good job. I found these same three motivators in my study. Al-Misnad found that the fourth reason women pursued education was to enhance their marital prospects. This finding was not replicated in this study and, in fact, participants

reported tensions between men and women due to women's increased educational and professional attainment.

In addition to the motivations identified by Al-Misnad, I found that participants reported more intrinsic motivators: a desire to prove to society that they deserved these new opportunities, a desire to pursue learning for intellectual enrichment and a desire to give back to the community. These more nuanced internal forms of motivation may have been revealed in my study because I used an interview format that privileged the personal narratives of women. I elaborate on women's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for pursuing educational and professional opportunities next.

Intrinsic Motivation

All six participants reported an internal pressure to succeed and said that Qatari women have "something to prove." Nurah summarized both the opportunities available to and pressure on her generation:

> Qatari women have an internal sense that we have something to prove. We are definitely ambitious and committed. Internally, Qatari women have this drive to want to fulfill something and to prove society wrong about what we do and what our role could be.

In addition to wanting to prove that they were worthy of these new opportunities, all six participants also stressed intellectual and personal development as a primary motivator for pursuing higher education. Hissah summarized this finding: "I think it has to do with a love of learning and an appreciation that we are able to enjoy things that our parents' generation weren't able to enjoy and take part in."

While participants saw their intellectual and personal development as a primary reason for seizing new opportunities, several of the women also believed they had a responsibility to use their education to benefit their community. They stressed that one

purpose of higher education should be to develop socially aware citizens and empower them to change society. Neha said women wanted to pursue higher education so "we are more empowered to get the kinds of jobs that we want and change society in the way that we aspire that it one day will be." Nurah summarized this sentiment: "As cliché as it sounds, I just want to make a difference. And you can in a country as small as Qatar."

Extrinsic Motivation

While Qatari women were more motivated by internal than external factors, they were also pragmatic and saw education as a "tool" to personal self-sufficiency. I found they were extrinsically motivated by a desire for personal freedom and financial self-reliance. As the world's richest country with unofficial estimates of the per capita income for only Qatari citizens of $400,000, financial motives are underreported as a motive for women to work (personal correspondence, 2012). But several women were motivated to work both from a desire for financial independence and financial equity. In fact, most participants said, unlike many Qatari women, they did not want to rely financially on a man. Hissah summarized this sentiment, "I don't want to "depend on anybody else for money or anything."

This finding supports research by Bahry and Marr (2005) and Bunglawala (2011) who also found that financial motivation was an important incentive for women to seek employment. The rentier state framework presumes that women would be less motivated to work because there is not a financial need; however, for women in this study, paid employment represented not only financial security, but also independence and respect. Sara summarized this motivation saying, "part of independence is economic independence." The traditional rentier state framework oversimplifies individuals'

economic interests and motivations for paid employment, especially for women for whom paid employment may be motivated by multiple factors including normative values such as the quest for equality.

Similar to the multiple motivations women reported for seeking paid employment, participants also reported that women enroll in higher education not only for intellectual fulfillment but also to gain independence, travel, postpone marriage and fill free time. Qatari girls traditionally live at home until they marry. Conventionally, they cannot travel unaccompanied. Several women mentioned that pursuing higher education gives girls additional freedom and access to otherwise prohibited opportunities: For them, as Neha expressed, "education was the out." This finding reinforces findings from the literature that found that many women enroll in higher education to experience "self-empowerment" (Felder & Vuollo, 2008, p.22) and to prefer work over the "boredom of staying home" (Bahry & Marr, 2005, p. 109; Felder & Vuollo, 2008, p.22).

Family

Middle Eastern states have been described as "neopatriarchal," a term developed by Sharabi (1988) to describe the conflict between tradition and modernity in the oil-based societies of the Middle East. In this form of "modernized patriarchy" internal family structures remain patriarchal regardless of reforms to external state structures (Sharabi, 1988, p. 4). In this study, I saw mixed evidence of a neopatriarchal state, at least as reflected in the family dynamics and relationships of the women in this study.

I found that parental support played a critical role in participants' educational and career success. Participants differed in whether their mother or father was the more supportive parent, but all of the participants had at least one parent who supported her

ambitions. Contrary to a traditional neopatriarchal state, I found fathers played an important role in supporting daughters' educations and careers. While fathers may have worried about their daughters breaking traditional social norms, they, ultimately, supported their daughters in pursuing their ambitions. Even Noor, for whom college was a multi-year negotiation with her father, was eventually allowed to attend college and even live abroad alone. In a traditional conception of a neopatriarchal state, Noor's father would have chosen for her to marry over pursuing education.

Additional changes to traditional family dynamics can be seen in the fracturing of the chaperone system, at least for the women in this study. Traditionally, Qatari women do not live or travel alone; however, at some point, half of the participants lived or traveled without a chaperone for work or school activities. For many of the participants in this study, chaperones were now more about the family keeping up appearances than about actually monitoring or supervising their behavior. While this activity often led to "reprimand" from more conservative members of the family, it demonstrates a tension in traditional norms and the possibility of women's increasing independence. One participant explained, "He [my father] doesn't want me to go, but he wants me to study."

An important observation from this study is the level of commitment that a Qatari family will make to the education of daughters. The entire family was involved, directly or indirectly, in supporting some of the women's educations and ambitions. Some participants' mothers left younger children at home to accompany daughters while they studied abroad and participants' sisters and brothers chaperoned them on school- and work-related trips. The time commitment chaperones invested demonstrated the sacrifice the entire family may make for a daughters' education.

Participants acknowledged that not all Qatari women had their level of freedom and paternal support–that they were exceptions in many ways. Most of the participants' parents were college-educated, several in the U.S., and two participants had fathers who had post-secondary degrees, so these women's parents may have been stronger supporters or women's education or been more liberal on social issues. Furthermore, even among this group there was pressure to get married and to conform to traditional gender norms, especially among members of the women's extended families, which may indicate limits to which women can stretch existing patriarchal norms. But even taking these factors into account, this changing family dynamic may represent an alternative to the traditional representation of a neoptriarchal state in the literature.

Although these personal stories come from a relatively small, homogenous sample of women, who may be privileged by their social and economic class, they suggest a more nuanced treatment of neopatriarchal relationships in Qatari families. Additional evidence of neopatriarchal relationships may have been uncovered if married women or women who attended public institutions were included in the sample. These issues are discussed later in this chapter under limitations and future research.

Labor Market

Four subthemes emerged under the broader theme of labor market participation: a preference for private sector employment; critical beliefs about Qatarization, a government policy meant to promote greater participation in the workforce; the potentially alienating role of language; and expectations regarding employment in a mixed-gender environment. Next, I discuss each in greater detail.

Private Versus Public Sector Employment

Results from this study show that participants' experiences in the labor market do not conform to existing data (Bunglawala, 2011; Gonzalez, Karoly, Constant, Salem, & Goldman, 2008; Stasz, Eide, & Martorell, 2007). From a practical standpoint, this study found that young, highly educated Qatari women preferred jobs in the private sector: a finding that contradicts previous studies, as well as labor force trends. This finding is noteworthy because the Qatari government has invested over $33 billion educating young women, in part to develop its private sector workforce (Davidson, 2012). These findings, though inconsistent with the literature, are consistent with the aims of Qatar's labor force policies.

Statistically, 83% of Qataris work in the public sector and studies have even found that Qataris would rather remain unemployed than work in the private sector (Gonzalez et al., 2008; General Secretariat for Development Planning, January 2012). While previous studies (Bunglawala, 2011; Gonzalez et al., 2008; Stasz et al., 2007) found that Qatari nationals prefer public sector jobs because of higher pay, shorter working hours, higher social status, less competition, and additional benefits (such as vacation time and bonuses), in this study, no participant preferred a job in the public sector. Four women expressed a preference for the private sector, one woman preferred the semi-private, and one was open to employment in either the public or private sector.

The reasons for preferring employment in the private sector provide key insights into the ambition and aspirations of these Qatari women. They strongly favored jobs in English, which partly explains their preference for the private sector since private sector business is conducted in English. But I also found that participants believed private

sector jobs to be *more* prestigious than public sector jobs and preferred them in spite of longer working hours. Participants reported that the public sector is disorganized and chaotic and that the private sector is actually more secure and structured with more accountability and opportunities to exercise authority. Dana, with experience in both the public and private sectors, compared the two: "In the private, you are given that level of trust where you can do it and if something goes wrong, it is on your shoulders, but at the same time you know what to do and how far to go." She liked the extra responsibility she was given in the private sector and was willing to work harder for what she thought was a higher quality job. Sara summarized the differences between the two sectors: "In the public sector it's a desk job. Anybody can get that. You don't need to invest four years of your life [in college] to get a public job."

This group of women preferred the private sector because they wanted to work in a challenging environment that they felt actually made use of their education and skills. They were willing to take a lower salary and work longer hours for what they felt was a more challenging position. This attitude set them apart from the majority of Qataris who, according to the literature, prefer public sector employment.

Qatarization

Qatarization is a government plan to nationalize the workforce through a variety of programs including requiring hiring quotas of Qatari nationals. Since women are both highly educated and underemployed they are a tremendous potential resource for achieving Qatarization targets; however, the women in this study were not supporters of Qatarization.

I found that participants think that Qatarization has damaged Qatari culture by making youth feel entitled to jobs they are not "worthy of" because Qatarization can lead companies to fill positions with less qualified Qatari applicants just to meet the quota. While Qatarization targets were created to level the playing field, in reality it hasn't done so because many Qataris filling jobs through the policy are doing so in name only, at least in the eyes of these women. Qataris are hired to fill a quota but do not have the skills or experience to perform that job and so do not really have the responsibilities associated with the job. Sara explained: "What's also not spoken about is that the job market is saturated. There is a lot of disguised unemployment that is not spoken about. There are no real jobs in most cases. People just hire people for the sake of Qatarization." Ultimately, Nurah summed up Qatarization's implementation, "Qatarization is a policy that in time, I think, people will realize is actually a myth." For the Qatarization plan to be successful it requires better buy-in from female citizens who represent the majority of highly educated workers.

While educated women are a primary resource for the government's Qatarization plan, the views of these women suggest a possible mismatch between the government's interest in increasing the employment rate of Qatari nationals and women's motivation for meaningful, responsible positions in the workforce. For these highly educated women, the employment opportunities afforded through Qatarization do not satisfy their workforce ambitions. To the contrary, they associate Qatarization with creating a workplace unlikely to reward either their educational accomplishments or desire for personal development and independence

Language Skills

The government has vacillated between requiring English as the language of instruction in schools to returning to an emphasis on Arabic-language education. In addition, many middle- and upper-class Qataris are educated in American or British schools where English is the language of instruction. The majority of women in this study were educated in English-speaking schools from middle school through college and as a result spoke better English than Arabic. Only Noor was fluent in Arabic; unlike the others, she attended an Arabic high school and English was her second language. Although the government is now re-emphasizing Arabic language education, a generation of highly educated Qataris does not speak fluent Arabic, which will have lasting social and economic impact.

Language isolated some of the women in this study socially and professionally. Not speaking Arabic makes it difficult for them to interact with others, even with family. Neha described, "I have cut myself off from the language I was born with." Sometimes this isolates her socially because when people are speaking Arabic she tends to be quiet because "It's not a language I feel comfortable socializing in." Professionally, the majority of participants said they would not be able to accept a job that (only) required Arabic due to their language skills. Because there are such a small number of Qatari college graduates and an even smaller number who are fluent in both English and Arabic, candidates who are fluent in both languages are highly sought by employers.

In the work place, language also causes social divisions and conflict between Arabic- and English-speakers who tend to self-segregate. English-speaking participants reported that Arabic-speaking co-workers view them as "snobby" and "look[ed] down on

them." The women who graduated from foreign universities said they felt that their co-workers resented them and that there was a stigma associated with graduating from a foreign university. In fact, Dana was called a "foreigner" because of her fluent, un-accented English and her American education, even though she was Qatari and was born and raised in Qatar.

Mixed-Gender Environment

The generation of women educated in the American university system (in Qatar or abroad) did not express concerns about working with or even supervising men, in contrast to data found in studies as recently as 2007 (Stasz et al.) that found that 76% of Qatari women cited concerns about working in a mixed-gender environment. While my participants were cognizant of gender-related concerns, none of them cited a mixed-gender environment as a factor when selecting employment. For example, Dana said that when she is asked if she feels uncomfortable giving orders to men at work she says:

> I'm like 'no' because this is part of your work, you just have to do it. Yes, men do feel intimidated when you say 'I need you to do this,' when you are giving the orders, because your position is higher, but they are just going to have to listen.

However, there is also evidence in the literature that fear of a mixed-gender environment may be changing or that there is greater variance in the perceptions of Qatari men and women than depicted in the literature. This finding is in keeping with Felder and Vuollo (2008) who found that 95% of women and 98% of men in the 2006 graduating class reported that a mixed-gender work environment was a very or extremely important characteristic of their future work environment. The women in this study, who were highly educated, may be representative of this more open and welcoming attitude toward mixed-gender environments in the workplace.

Social Change

While the women interviewed for this study largely supported the government's reforms, particularly in the realm of education, they noted that not everyone in Qatar shared their views and many said the government was "moving too fast" for most citizens' comfort. Nurah summarized this sentiment:

> The government is committed to a vision of modernizing the country. To putting Qatar on the map. And it's the people who aren't seizing the opportunities because they are scared, because they like the status quo. They [Qataris] fear becoming too Western, women are taking on too much responsibility.

The government has initiated extensive reforms—perhaps, according to these women, even beyond the comfort level of the average citizen.

Women's increased education has created tensions in normative gender relations. And it is younger Qatari men who participants reported being resentful of women's new-found success. The women characterized their peers—the generation of men that grew up with co-education and should theoretically be more accepting of women attending college and working—as not driven, un-ambitious and "very critical, negative and judgmental." These viewpoints cast some doubt on the positive response of male gradates in the Felder and Vuollo study. Rates of higher education attainment support these women's belief that Qatari women are more driven than Qatari men to succeed, at least in terms of education; young Qatari women (ages 25-29) are almost twice as likely as their male peers to have pursued higher education. Qatari men's rates of higher educational attainment are actually declining: only 26% of men ages 25-29 have ever enrolled in higher education, while 42% of men ages 40-44 have some post-secondary schooling (Stasz et al., 2007). These discrepancies in educational attainment have led to a generation of Qatari women who are more accomplished than Qatari men. In the

following section I discuss potential impacts of this shifting gender dynamic, especially its potential impact on the institution of marriage.

Discussion

Central to this study are the broader social changes that have been implemented by the Qatari government. These changes create tensions in existing social institutions but also create tensions for individuals as they seek to negotiate their own identities in a cultural space filled with ambiguity. I found the topic of social change prompted by government policies to modernize Qatar particularly significant because it arose directly from the women: I did not ask questions about whether they thought the government was moving too fast or about the pace of reform, rather this topic either arose holistically in the course of our conversation, or at the end from an open-ended question such as, "is there anything else you think I should know."

One interpretation of the emergence of this theme is that the women in the study are both eager to take advantage of emergent opportunities but cognizant and realistic about the challenges they will face in doing so. While they recognized government reforms had provided them with opportunities, they were also aware—to varying degrees—of political, cultural and social limitations that could block their goals. In this section I discuss four possible challenges that highly educated women in Qatar face: negotiating marriage, taking a position on current social norms, finding meaningful employment opportunities and possible unintended consequences of the establishment of Education City. These are not the only challenges faced by highly educated women in Qatar, but they are challenges that I believe warrant further discussion.

Marriage

Despite recent societal reforms and despite women's high levels of education and early career success, some women are still stymied by a culture that does not embrace their changing role. Women's attitudes towards marriage reveal this tension. Sara explained: "There are not a lot of options for women to work after marriage and there is not an expectation for women to work after marriage. That is the problem."

Regardless of women's ambitions they still needed a man's permission to attend school or work. And ultimately, once they are married it is up to their husbands whether or not they can continue to work. Noor said: "After marriage, women live with our husbands, so it is a male dominated society. There is always a male." Although the women in this study did not reject marriage or children, they recognized that marriage itself would pose challenges to their ambitions. Talking about a woman's ability to work and give back to society, Noor said: "Some of those males just play the role as a guardian, but some of them are really dominant and negatively affect their decisions on the woman. […] Without that support [of the husband] it's kind of hard, kind of impossible." Sara felt that currently women, "do not feel they have equal rights in having a say in [their] household." Instead wives "have to be subjugated to him [husbands] and to his rule and to his sayings." Noor summarized some of the participants' frustration surrounding marriage: "Here, the thing is, with the conservative culture it doesn't matter how much success you have, success is eventually whether you are married or not."

As Qatari women continue to outpace Qatari men in terms of educational and career success, highly educated, Qatari women could find it increasingly difficult to enter into a satisfying marriage, especially if a spouse is intimidated by their success.

Current divorce rates support this theory. Divorce rates in Qatar are higher when the wife's level of education is higher than her husband's (General Secretariat for Development Planning, January 2012). And are also higher among women in their twenties, which may demonstrate that, like my participants, Qatari women are also chafing under traditional gender roles and are willing to exercise their new freedoms (Anser, 2014). The women in this study were aware of the stress in the country's marital structure. One participant, in particular, said that she has seen a high rate of divorce among her peers in as short a time as a few weeks after the marriage. Participants also noted that more women are returning to school after getting divorced.

In what has been called the "spinsterhood crisis," one study found that as many as 20% of Qatari women may not marry due to lack of opportunity (Anser, 2014). On the contrary, based on findings from this study, the idea of a "spinsterhood crisis" may be dated and does not consider highly educated and motivated Qatari women's educational and professional success. Instead of a "spinsterhood crisis" there may be a "husband crisis" in which young educated professional Qatari women do not want to relinquish their (quasi)independence to be "subjugated" to a husband. These women may be choosing to enjoy the (relative) freedom they have already negotiated in their father's household, avoiding a new set of negotiations for personal freedoms that marriage requires. These women may also prefer to postpone marriage to pursue professional success.

Social Norms

All of the women in this study expressed a need to "prove themselves" to men and to society. In fact, one participant said, "Right now women are really competing with men. They are just as capable as men. I think women really want to prove themselves." If husbands prevent wives from pursuing educational and career opportunities there may be a tipping point at which women seeking independence could lead to social unrest. Although the women in this study were ambitious, often crossing normative boundaries to achieve their goals, their attitudes about social norms revealed ambivalence about how far to go in "stretching" those boundaries.

Nurah and Sara each sought greater independence and freedom, though they displayed different attitudes in their acceptance of current social norms and willingness to push boundaries. For example, Nurah said that it wasn't her "time to fight" to enter the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a childhood dream. She said, "It was just culturally unacceptable to think that women could be diplomats and live abroad on their own" and she didn't "take it personally." Unlike Nurah, Sara characterized her professional decisions as a "fight" and was critical of other women who did not fight for their rights. Sara said that in Qatar there is "no feminist culture" and "there is no culture for women to work" making it challenging for women to claim independence in the workplace.

For all of the women in the study, there was the challenge associated with deciding how far to stretch the boundaries of normative acceptance, for transgressing those norms could come at a cost. By backing away from a position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nurah most likely buffered herself from additional stress and costs. She secured an executive position in the private sector and joined her family business; Sara,

despite her academic and professional success, felt isolated and silenced by Qatari culture. She also had strained relationships with her family.

Mismatch Between Education and Career Opportunities

Women are the majority of students pursuing higher education and with the opening of the Education City campuses they have new opportunities for higher education; however, their career opportunities do not yet match their educational opportunities or ambitions. This finding supports previous research that found that "Women in MENA economies are increasingly well prepared for work in the productive economy and an increasing number, although still the minority, want to participate in the labour force. The labour demand side of the economy does not, however, adequately offer women the opportunity to work" (OECD, 2013, p.4). Despite participants' high levels of motivation and educational accomplishments women may not have access to the highest levels of employment opportunities, a fact that women were aware of and had experienced. Kelly (2010) found that women in MENA experience a "sticky floor" in which labor nationalization programs, like Qatarization, encourage women's entry into the workforce but then do not support their advancement. Participants were early in their careers, so it is too soon to tell if they will experience this phenomenon, but it is another reason this topic deserves continued attention.

While one participant said she experienced "culture shock" as the only female in her department, other aspects of the Qatari labor market may make these women's transition to and advancement in the labor market difficult, apart from issues related to gender. First, the Qatari labor market is highly stratified with divisions between Qataris who primarily speak English and those who primarily speak Arabic; divisions between

Qataris educated at Qatar University and American universities; and between Qataris and expatriates. Second, Qatar is highly dependent on expatriate labor, so much so that in 2012 Qatari nationals made up only 6% of the labor force, a decrease from 14% in 2001 (General Secretariat for Development Planning, January 2012).

Unintended Consequences?

While women in this study were successful in pursing their educations—often abroad—it was a complicated, sometimes multi-year negotiation. And participants who pursed degrees (versus short-term study) were ultimately allowed to do so by their families only because there were no in-country options; however, cultural norms still do not permit women to study abroad as freely as their male counterparts, so for some women, a local university may be their only chance to continue their education.

While the new branch campuses at Education City give women additional options for higher education they may also make it harder for women to leave the country to pursue their studies. Families who are reluctant to grant permission for daughters to live independently now have a stronger case for keeping women at home if there are equivalent in-country degree options. These investments in developing local educational options for women may limit other options that women have used to gain independence and acquire advanced degrees.

Indeed, after spending billions of dollars on Education City and on reforms at Qatar University, the government could also cut back on scholarships for Qatari students to study abroad.[66] In fact, there is a historical precedent for this happening. The founding of Qatar University provided a valid reason for the government to stop

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[66] To date, this has not happened, but after spending over $33 bilion on the Education City campus (Davidson, 2011) it is something important to monitor.

sponsoring women's education abroad; as such Al-Misnad argued in 1985 that it did "more harm than good" for women's education. At the time, girls were outperforming boys in secondary school and were being accepting into better universities abroad than were Qatari boys. This unequal placement caused embarrassment and may have exerted pressure on the government to provide higher education locally to keep women at home (Al-Misnad, 1985).

Therefore, the precedent of curtailing women's opportunities after investing in domestic alternatives highlights the possibility that current gains for women may be transient. Although the government is unlikely to roll back education reforms, reforms like Education City may have an unintended consequence of restricting Qatari women's educational choices.

Areas for Future Research

I chose to purse an open-ended, non-directional qualitative approach and to be directed by my data (Creswell, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Maxwell, 2005), as such I chose to use semi-structured interviews and did not adopt a specific theoretical framework for this study; however, in light of my findings, additional insights may be gained about the educational and workforce experiences of Qatari women by researchers who adopt alternative methodological approaches such as ethnography and case study or specific theoretical frameworks such as feminism and cross border education.

By choosing to focus on the personal experiences of the women I interviewed, I did not specifically focus on the broader cultural and social relationships that shape the experiences of young Qatari women. Ethnography, on the other hand, focuses on just these things, bringing to the foreground the interactions and beliefs of individuals in

natural settings. It focuses on describing individuals' interpretation of their world, typically through extensive field work and multiple data collection methods, such as observation, interviews, and artifact collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Wolcott, though, cautions that ethnography is not just a method that relies on long exposure to the field or a set of research techniques but is "[…] much more complicated than collecting data" (quoting Agar, in Wolcott 2008, p. 72) for Wolcott "[…] ethnography finds its orienting and overarching purpose in a underlying concern with cultural interpretation" (2008, p. 72).[67]

While multiple methodological approaches could be used to better understand the educational and workforce experiences of women, ethnography would be especially useful in understanding the role of broader cultural traditions, such as marriage and gender roles, on these phenomena. Ethnography could be employed to describe the experiences of married versus unmarried Qatari women. This study addressed only one segment of the population—young, unmarried and highly educated Qatari women who all studied journalism or political science at American universities in the U.S. or Qatar. Qatari female labor force participation peaks at 25-27 years old (OECD MENA investment Programme, 2013). This trend indicates a need to include a broader range of women, including married women and women with children in future studies, so as to understand their beliefs and attitudes about education and participation in the workforce.

Although participants indicated a desire to continue working once they married and had children, married women were not part of this sample. Future research should consider both the effect of marriage on women's motivation and ambition and the effect

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[67] Wolcott (2008) notes that the others in the field have strayed from this traditional interpretation of traditional ethnography; for more about this subject, see Wolcott 2008 (especially chapter 20).

that women's greater educational and professional accomplishments will have on traditional marriage. As I noted previously, the attitudes of the women in this study towards marriage reveal potential stress points in current social norms, particularly for high achieving women. Ethnography—with its focus on understanding culture and use of multiple research methods— is one methodology that could be used to further explore this subject to investigate if the experiences of unemployed and married women differ from this study's sample.

Similarly, considering the rapidly changing gender relations in Qatar, further research that describes boys' and men's educational and workforce experiences is needed. Qatari boys were described as "lazy," un-ambitious and resistant to change. A qualitative study, such as an ethnography, that describes their experiences and attitudes would provide a point of comparison to Qatari girls, especially in light of rapidly changing gender relations. Such a study could explore an understanding of the growing gender gap in Qatar and what the consequences of the gap may be for various social, economic and political institutions.

In addition to ethnography, future researchers could consider case study as a methodology to further explore the educational and workforce experiences of Qatari women. While there is no one definitive definition of case study, three main case studies methodologists Merriam (1998), Stake (2005) and Yin (2003) agree that case studies focus on a "bounded system," context and description.[68] This focus on a bounded system, which Merriam describes as being able to "fence in" what you are going to study

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[68] The nuances of the variations of the definition of case study are beyond the scope of this discussion; Merriam (1998), Stake (2005) and Yin (2003) provide definitions of case study, as well as specific guidance on how to conduct a case study.

(Merriam, 1998, p. 27), would make Education City and Qatar University appropriate research sites for a case study.

Case studies may allow researchers to compare the experiences of women who attend different types of educational institutions. While I did not find differences based on participants' attendance at a U.S.-based or branch campus, expanding the sample to include women who studied at Qatar University would provide greater diversity in voices, specifically because more conservative families send their daughters to Qatar University where there are some gender-segregated majors. A larger and more diverse sample might have increased the diversity of themes, especially, related to family and personal freedom. Including women who attended gender-segregated schools in the sample would diversify the perspectives on gender relations in the workforce. Considering that the majority of the population is educated at Qatar university, a set of studies that includes this population would provide an opportunity to examine if this population of women is more conservative in terms of attitudes towards opportunities for women than the population of women included in my study.

Finally, given the demographic challenges in Qatar and the fact that both the majority of the labor force and the college population is not Qatari, non-Qatari women should also be studied to better understand the challenges they face in pursuing higher education and careers. When recruiting participants for this study I received many responses from non-Qatari Education City alumnae who wanted to participate, indicating that recruitment of non-Qataris is possible. A set of case studies that included non-Qataris would enhance findings about labor market opportunities since non-Qataris are

94% of the workforce.[69] Similarly, well-planned case studies of the workplace could

follow up on the tensions uncovered between English-speaking and Arabic speaking

Qataris raised in this study. In this vein, comparing the workforce experiences of women

in the public versus private sector would be a productive avenue for future research.

Previous studies have focused on Qataris' attitudes towards a mixed-gender environment;

but concerns about language skills and public versus private sector employment may now

be more salient areas for research. Cases study research could also be used to compare

the educational and workforce experiences of Qatari and non-Qatari women.

     With multiple approaches, such as ethnography and case study, future research

could add the voices of these and other Qataris to enhance what we know—and don't

know—about the motivation for and experiences of Qatari women in the workplace.

Alternative Theoretical Frameworks

     In addition to considering additional research methodologies, researchers could

also consider two theoretical frameworks through which to pursue their studies. In light

of my findings, researchers could consider framing their studies through feminism and

cross-border education. These frameworks could portray the narratives of young, highly

educated Qatari women in new and meaningful ways, as well as reveal important social

and educational issues not revealed by my study.

     My study was designed to explore motivation and experiences in education and

the workforce and not explicitly to explore beliefs about gender; however, the data

revealed at least some evidence that participants considered themselves—to varying

degrees—feminists. I did not frame this study through a feminist lens because I did not

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[69] Note: The majority of the non-Qatari workers are not professional workers, so the experience of college-educated non-Qataris would still does not capture this segment of society.

want to assume a Western preconception of my participants and their experiences. Prior

to data collection, I did not know my participants' beliefs about gender relations or their

willingness to discuss these matters. By not framing the study through an explicitly

feminist lens, this finding arose holistically from the women's description of their

experiences and not through explicit questions about gender. But given this finding, a

study that more explicitly considers gender or uses a feminist framework would be

appropriate. Feminism may be especially compatible with the ethnographic approach

previously described.

Qatar has transformed its higher education system largely through the import of

foreign universities. At Education City, minutes from Qatar's capital, students can attend

mini replicas of American (and some European) universities receiving American degrees.

Education City is part of the growing trend of cross-border education; as such, this study

could have been approached through this field's growing body of literature.[70] I chose not

to do so because I wanted to focus on the direct experiences of women and not on

system-level hierarchies. Future studies could examine Education City and Qatar

University as research sites, as described above; in doing so researchers could also

consider cross-border education's impact on the expansion of opportunities for women.

There are few prior studies on Qatari women's experiences in higher education

and the labor market. And the few existing studies either used survey methods or focused

on women from the MENA region as a collective. This study demonstrates that Qatari

women are willing to discuss their experiences—especially under culturally-appropriate

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[70] In the last 10-15 years, "cross-border education" has emerged as a preferred term to refer to the "movement of people, knowledge, programs, providers, policies, ideas, curricula, projects, research and services across national and regional jurisdictional borders" (Knight, 2011, p. 19).

circumstances. Having a female interviewer was necessary to establish initial trust. In addition, with five of the six participants, I shared an undergraduate or graduate alma mater. This joint affiliation was enough to establish an introduction and make me less of an outsider in a culture that highly values relationships.

Future researchers could consider both additional research methodologies, as well as specific theoretical lens through which to view the experiences of Qatari women in education and the workplace. In addition, future research should also seek out additional voices, such as women who are married, not in the labor force, or not Qatari. Each of these populations would provide a vital piece of the story not addressed by this study.

Conclusion

Despite tremendous social change in the last 10-15 years, Qatar is still a socially conservative country. And while change can seem fast at a societal level, it can be equally slow at a personal level. Sara was not speaking with her parents because of her personal and professional choices. Noor spent four years struggling to convince her father that she deserved to be allowed to pursue her college degree. These women illustrate that social change that appears comprehensive and fast-paced at a macro level can still feel restrictive and slow-moving on an individual level.

To date, Qatar has been a politically stable country. The political unrest of the Arab Spring has not affected Qatar. But how stable is a system in which the more ambitious and accomplished citizens must rely on permission from the less ambitious and accomplished citizens? Women have already discovered that education is their "out," or a mechanism to gain freedom; if men tried to block their ambitions how long will it be until they decide to take that way out? But the pursuit of these educational and occupational

opportunities comes at a cost to many Qatari young women. Understanding these costs,

and how Qatari women negotiate them, is an area of research that warrants our attention.

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