

Social Effects of the Educational Revolution in Qatar: A Gender Perspective

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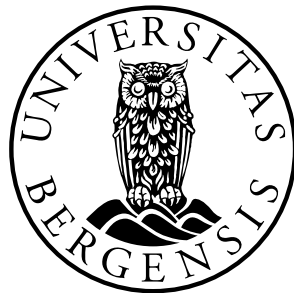


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Preface

The reason for choosing Qatar as my Master Degree topic is due to my connection to Qatar. I lived in Qatar from 1995 to 2000 because my father worked there. My fascination for Arabic language and culture was a result of this stay and has determined my decisions regarding future education and research.

Working with this thesis has been challenging, but for the most part it has given me valuable experiences. The field trips to Qatar in November 2009 and March 2010 were the absolute highlights of my research. Furthermore, this thesis would have been impossible without the help and support of my informants in Qatar. I thank them for providing valuable insights and knowledge about the situation of women in Qatar. Also, I am deeply thankful for their friendliness and hospitality during my stay there.

Acknowledgements are owed as well to my two supervisors. First, I would like to thank Associate Professor Ludmila Torlakova for her guidance and support. Her expertise in Arabic Language has been an irreplaceable support during my years at the University of Bergen. Secondly, I would like to thank Professor Kjetil Bjorvatn at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration for helping me with matters of structure and statistics.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support. I am especially grateful to my father, who in many ways has functioned as my third supervisor.

Sammendrag

Qatar har opplevd en rivende økonomisk utvikling de siste tiårene. Tilsvarende utvikling har vi også sett i de andre Gulf Cooperation Council - landene, som inkluderer Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia og De Forente Arabiske Emirater. Olje- og gassvirksomhet er årsaken til at disse landene har blant de høyeste bruttonasjonalproduktene per innbygger i verden.

De siste årene har vi sett en økt satsning på utdanning i denne regionen. I Qatar frontes den såkalte utdannelsesreformen av førstedamen Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Misnad. Som leder av Qatar Foundation har hun vært med på å finansiere opprettelsen av Education City hvor en rekke anerkjente vestlige universiteter holder til. Økt satsning innenfor utdannelsessektoren har, blant andre faktorer, ført til at antallet kvinnelige studenter ved landets universiteter er bemerkelsesverdig høyt. Statistikk viser at kvinner utgjorde 75 % av det totale antallet studenter ved Qatar University i 2008. Videre synes det å være fornuftig å anta at det høye antallet kvinnelige studenter skal føre til at flere kvinner blir økonomisk aktive. Dette har foreløpig ikke vært tilfelle; Statistikk fra internasjonale og nasjonale undersøkelser viser at antallet nasjonale yrkesaktive kvinner holder seg lavt, til tross for at kvinner er dominerende innenfor høyere utdanning.

I denne oppgaven skal jeg undersøke hvilke jobbmuligheter nasjonale kvinner har i et tradisjonelt og oljerikt land, hvor Qatar er min saksstudie. Hovedfokuset er: Qatar har sett en "Utdannelsesrevolusjon". Hvordan har dette påvirket kvinner? Og, har økt satsning på utdanning ført til at flere kvinner blir yrkesaktive? Arbeidslivsstudier fra Qatar viser at de kvinnene som jobber har et begrenset utvalg med jobbmuligheter. Videre viser det seg at flesteparten av yrkesaktive kvinner jobber innenfor utdanningssektoren og helsesektoren. Ut i fra disse observasjonene er det derfor viktig å skape forståelse rundt de sosiale utfordringene nasjonale kvinner i arbeidslivet i Qatar møter og hva som må til for å fjerne dem? Denne oppgaven har en kvalitativ tilnærming; I november 2009 og mars 2010 gjennomførte jeg dybdeintervjuer med informanter i Qatar. Disse samtalene har, ved siden av allerede eksisterende statistikk, vært hovedkildene til denne oppgaven. I tillegg til intervjuene samlet jeg akademiske kilder fra Qatar, skrevet på arabisk.

Notes on transliteration

Arabic names and words appearing in the text have been transliterated according to the standard below:

ا	ā	ر	r	ف	f
ب	b	ز	z	ق	q
ت	t	س	s	ك	k
ث	th	ش	sh	ل	l
ج	j	ص	ṣ	م	m
ح	ḥ	ض	ḍ	ن	n
خ	kh	ط	ṭ	ه	h
د	d	ظ	ẓ	و	w, ū
ذ	dh	ع	‘	ي	y, ī
		غ	gh	ء	’

short vowels: a i u

long vowels: ā ī ū

diphthongs: aw ay

ta’ marbūṭa: -a (but “-at” in iḍāfa)

nisba ending: -ī (masculine) and iyya (feminine).

Exceptions have been made for Arabic names with an established spelling standard in English, as well as for Arabic words that have been imported into English, such as the Quran (al-qur’ān). I have chosen not to assimilate “sun-letters” as it will not have any effect regarding my topic. In the literature list, the titles of Arabic documents are transliterated.

1 Introduction

Qatar is a small peninsula, an area of only 11,000 square kilometres, which extends into the Arabian Gulf on the north-east coast of Saudi Arabia.¹ The majority of Qatar's local population belongs to the Wahhabi version of Islam which has its roots in Saudi Arabia.² Surrounded by countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, Qatar has, in a Middle Eastern perspective, been in the shadow when it comes to global attention. However, in recent years it has emerged as one of the better known Gulf States.

Qatar's oil history dates back to the 1950s. The discovery of huge offshore gas fields has increased the country's revenues from the oil and gas industry significantly. Through a very rapid development of gas projects, Qatar has become a major supplier to the international energy market. The development of the economy has also allowed Qatar to play a more active political role in the region, even globally. During the last ten years, Qatar has hosted an impressive number of important conferences in its capital Doha. Also, media reports on Qatar's active role in negotiations such as in the Sudan conflict, where Qatar had been mediating in the talks between Sudanese officials and representatives of one of the rebel factions in 2009.³ In addition, Al-Jazeera Satellite Television, which is based in Doha, has won a huge audience with its Arabic and English news reporting.

Similar economic development as in Qatar has been seen in all the states that belong to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.⁴ Oil and gas incomes are the major drivers in this development. These revenues fuel extraordinary wealth and they have also been used to develop the infrastructure

¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, *Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE. Challenges of Security* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), 213.

² William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), 471.

³ CNN.com, "Sudan leader's Qatar visit risks his arrest on war crimes", <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/africa/03/29/sudan.bashir/index.html>, March 29, 2009 (accessed February 25, 2010).

⁴ Deborah J. Gerner, ed., *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000), 240.

of these countries. The GDP per capita in Qatar was in 2009 70,716 compared to 49,359 in Norway.⁵

The population of the state increased, as we can see in Figure 1.1, from 369,079 in 1986 to 522,023 in 1997 then to 744,029 in 2004 and finally to 1,580,050 in 2009.⁶ The population increase is mainly due to incoming migration, especially in the sector working at the huge projects that depend on employment of foreign labour force.

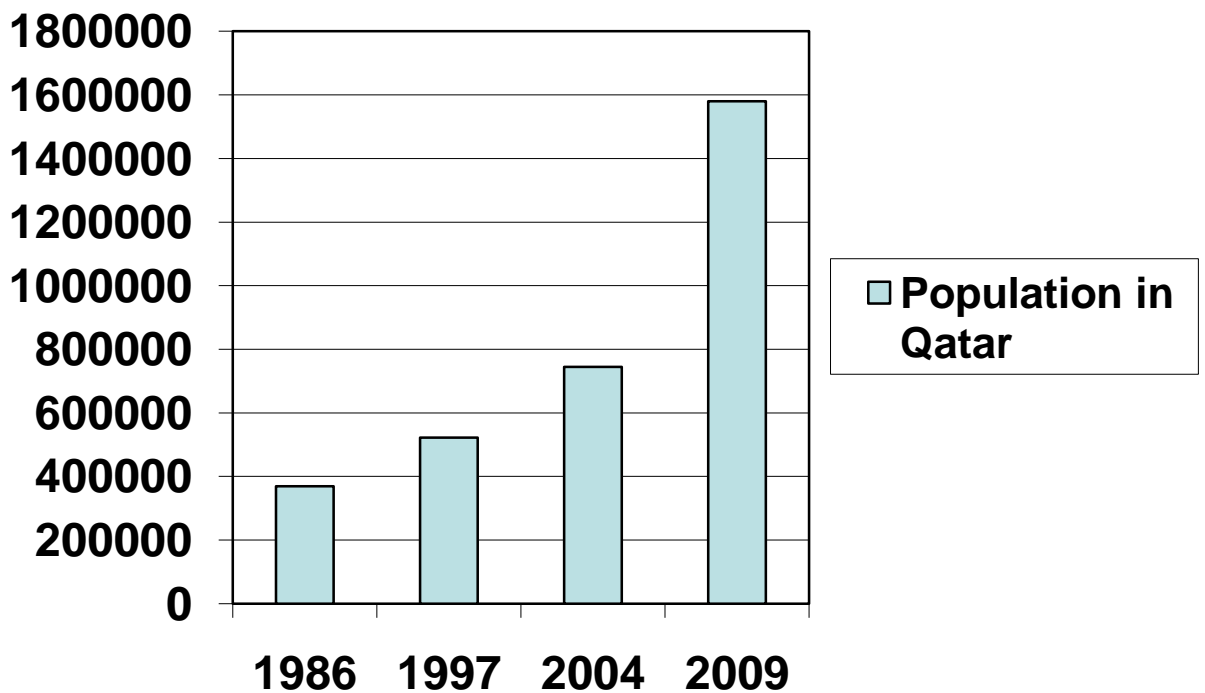


Figure 1.1: The total population in Qatar 2009 (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority, 2009).

The population increase has made a huge difference between number of males and females in Qatar. This is explained by the fact that the majority of the incoming migration is males. Statistics Authority reports that females in 2009 represent less than one fourth of the total population, as we can see in Figure 1.2.

⁵ World Economic Forum, “The Global Gender Gap Report 2009,” 150, 159, <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2009.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2010).

⁶ Qatar, Statistics Authority, *Women and Men in the State of Qatar: A Statistical Profile 2008* (Doha, 2008), 9 and <http://www.qsa.gov.qa/eng/PopulationStructure.htm> (accessed February 25, 2010).

Total Population including Expatriates - 2009

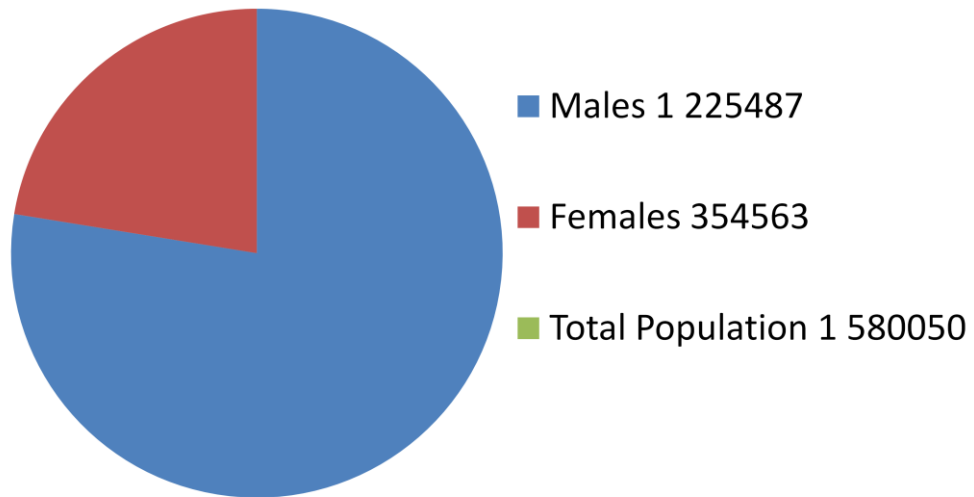


Figure 1.2: Total population by gender, 2009 (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority, 2009).

The industrial developments together with a strong growth in governmental institutions have created huge demands in the labour market. Therefore, one might believe that a strong economy combined with the needs in the labour market should provide the nationals of Qatar with great job opportunities. However, as we have seen explained above, Qatar has been, and still is, highly dependent on a foreign labour force in the industrial sector. There may be several reasons for this situation, where low education and competence may be one explanation. Further, it is important to point out that Qatar has a small national population and the import of foreign labour force has been necessary both during the construction phases and the operation of the new oil and gas projects. The involvement of women in the oil and gas industry has been negligible. I will come back to this crucial point later.

Furthermore, over the last decades, we have observed increased efforts in the field of education in Qatar. Different institutional reforms have been introduced where the goal is to make Qatar a centre of higher education in the Middle East. The most visible driving force in this work is the wife of the Emir, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Misnad, who is serving as the Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and for Education City. She argues that " at the core of this vision is an

aspiration for Qatar to realize its full potential in the global market with a sustainable economy and educated, engaged citizens who have the confidence and skills to be competitive with their peers around the world."⁷ In 2003 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) appointed her as its special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education.⁸ The vision for education has, among other factors, contributed to strengthen the dominance of national female students in higher education. It is noteworthy that females make up 75 % of the students at Qatar University in 2008.⁹

Qatar's aim for an improved educational system has given positive results for female participation in education. On the other hand, statistics from national and international surveys show that the number of female employees is low. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap-report (GAP-report) concludes that the gap between the genders in Qatar is widening and that Qatar is ranked 125 out of 134 countries (where number one is the best and 134 are the worst when it comes to gap between genders).¹⁰ Qatar, as well as most of the Middle Eastern countries performs far below the global average in this report. Even though there have been minimal improvements in reducing the gap between genders, according to the GAP-report, it mentions that it is notable that in Kuwait, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar, the tertiary education enrolment rates of women are higher than those of men. Further it says that these economies have invested large resources in increasing women's educational level and will now need to integrate these women into the economy.¹¹

Not only Qatar, but all the GCC-states have seen a so called "educational revolution". The integration of women into the labour market has, however, been slow. That leads us to the question; why does the number of female employees stay low when the number of female students is high and increasing? When seeking answers to this question, different hypotheses have been developed and tested:

A. Other factors than education and competence dominate the low number of female

7 Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, "Vision," <http://www.mozahbintnasser.qa/output/page3.asp> (accessed February 22, 2010).

8 Qatar, Supreme Council for Family Affairs, *Qatari Women* (Doha: Doha Modern Printing Press 2006), 5.

9 Admission Department at Qatar University, "Undergraduate Prospectus 2009/2010," 3. Also available at www.qu.edu.qa/admissions (accessed May 16, 2010).

10 World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Report 2009," 22.

11 Ibid.

employees. Even though more women take higher education there is still need for other reforms before women's participation in the labour market reaches higher levels.

- B. Another hypothesis may be that women plan to start a family after they have finished education. Educated mothers have knowledge they can bring on to their children. According to this hypothesis it might not be work that is the final goal and outcome of education, rather the quality of family development. The question about the role of religion and tradition will also be crucial in order to understand this hypothesis.
- C. A third hypothesis may be that there has been a mismatch between the educational system which have focused primarily on arts and humanities and the labour force where there is a need for technical skills. While male students have been able to take technical education abroad, for cultural reasons this has not been possible for most Qatari women.
- D. The structure of the economy in the Gulf is based on oil and gas. This type of industry is not considered to be very female friendly and creates more obstacles than benefits in order to integrate women into this labour market. It is reasonable to suggest that the culture and traditions in the Gulf makes it even harder for women to work in the oil and gas industry.

In this thesis I wish to analyze the job opportunities for national women in a traditional oil rich country, using Qatar as my case study. The main focus will be; Qatar has seen an "educational revolution". How has this affected women and how has education improved women's entry into the labour force? As mentioned before, national and international surveys show that the number of female Qatari employees is low. Also, labour force surveys show that women have limited job opportunities after finished education too. According to statistics from Statistics Authority in Qatar, numbers show that most of the women obtain their jobs in public administration, education and health and social work.¹² According to these observations, it is clearly important to improve our understanding of social barriers to women's access to the labour market; and what are the efforts that are required to remove these? As mentioned in the Arab Human Development Report 2009, signs of discrimination against women in the labour market include difficulties experienced by the young and educated women as well as women in jobs without competence requirements, social

¹² Qatar, Statistics Authority, "Bulletin Labour Force Sample Survey 2009 ", <http://www.qsa.gov.qa/eng/LaborForce.htm> (accessed February 24, 2010).

insurance or benefits.¹³ It seems necessary to examine what the potential difficulties facing women in the work situation are in order to understand the mismatch between number of female students and female employees in Qatar?

1.1 The framework of my approach

I intend to use "the educational revolution" in Qatar as my case study. I will integrate my project in an interdisciplinary approach where the study of economy, politics and social anthropology will be among the disciplines. Also, interviews in English and Arabic as well as translation and use of Arabic sources are important factors in my analysis. All translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

Given the limited research on gender disparities in Qatar, a qualitative case study approach was employed in the research. Statistical sampling and quantitative data sampling is another option. As statistics are available from labour force surveys and educational surveys, I decided to combine in-depth interviews with the already existing statistical material. In addition, I will use data from a variety of written sources, both academic literatures, magazines, and research reports. Most of the academic literature are collected during my field trip to Qatar in November 2009, and are mainly Qatari sources written in Arabic.

During my field trip in November 2009 I conducted in-depth interviews with different informants having important knowledge about the development for women in Qatar. The main similarity among the informants was that they were all employed in the educational sector and/or the governmental bureaucracy. During my second field trip in March 2010 I interviewed women working in the private (oil and gas) sector. Their experiences represent a variety of opinions and views. It is important to emphasize that my data from the interviews will not represent the views of all Qatari women. However, the qualitative approach combined with existing literature and statistics should in sum give important answers to the main question in my project. I will give a more detailed description of my informants in chapter five.

¹³ World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2009," 22.

I find it important to emphasize that approaching the study of women in the contemporary Middle East is a challenging task. The portrayal of the Middle Eastern women as an inferior individual compared to men seems to be the common preconception among many Western writers and scholars. According to Lisa Taraki, associate professor of sociology at Birzeit University, Palestine, some scholars and others attempting an objective approach to the study of Middle Eastern women have a heavy intellectual legacy to deal with.¹⁴ One might say that the understanding of the Middle Eastern women is consolidated at the level of culture. Taraki argues that what may be termed as a "culturalist" bias presents a major challenge to those interested in the object study of women's lives in the Middle East. Also, culturalists have approached issues such as women's labour force participation within the broad framework of an essential "Islamic" value system in the Middle East.¹⁵ I will base my thesis on the premise that a combination of social, economic, political, and cultural forces shape the lives of the Middle Eastern women. Also the unitary concept of "the Middle Eastern woman" will obscure the rich diversity in women's lives across the Middle East, so will a unitary concept of "the Qatari woman" within the state of Qatar.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

The thesis has been divided into six main chapters. Chapter two is divided into two parts. The first part is reviewing the background of the Qatari economy. In order to understand the Qatari society and its origin I will describe the transformation from an economy dependent on pearling until the oil and gas-based economy you see today. Also, how did the role of Qatari women evolve throughout this period? The second part describes the establishment of the educational system in Qatar. The third chapter is a review of previous research and literature on gender issues in the GCC-states. There are different theories which refer to the question of education and female participation in the labour force in the Middle East. In order to present my analysis in a broader aspect I will introduce some of the research done on this matter. In chapter four and five I present my analysis of the development of job opportunities for women in a traditional oil rich country. Chapter four is mainly statistical data while chapter

14 Lisa Taraki, "The Role of Women," in Gerner, ed., *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, 293.

15 Ibid.

five includes the in-depth interviews which I conducted during my field trips to Qatar. In chapter six I present the final conclusion and offer suggestions for further research.

2 Background and basis for the thesis

2.1 Review of the Qatari economy

Even though Qatar has been inhabited for millennia, most of the Qataris have descended from a number of migratory tribes that came to Qatar in the 18th century.¹⁶ The population of Qatar fell by tradition into groups dependent on whether they were living in the inland or at the sea, or by a combination of both. Further the population was often divided into the two groups of Bedouins, in Arabic *badu* or *badw*, and the settled people, in Arabic *ḥaḍar*. The settled population of the villages and towns of the north-west, north and east was occupationally oriented towards the sea and its pearl fisheries while the interior part of the country was used by the Bedouins and some of the settled population as grazing grounds.¹⁷

At the beginning of the twentieth century Qatar was nothing more than some villages dependent on the pearl banks. In 1907, the settled population was 27,000 where twenty-five major clans dominated. Most of these clans had branches elsewhere in the Gulf, and therefore the frequent migration, where clans crossed “boarders”, limited the extent of the ruler’s control.¹⁸

The pre-oil economy was based on the pearling industry. Agriculture was impossible due to the climate and the fact that the peninsula was nothing but desert and sand. Therefore, the pearl boats employed most of the Qatari male population.¹⁹ The men left shore for around four months during the summer season and left women, children and the elders behind. It is reasonable to suggest that during these months women were in charge of the family. Doctor Fāṭima ‘Aly Ḥusayn al-Kubaysī supports this argument in her master degree on the national employment in the Qatari society:

¹⁶ Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 113.

¹⁷ Klaus Ferdinand, *Bedouins of Qatar* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 35.

¹⁸ Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 113.

¹⁹ Ibid.

كان الرجال يخرجون في المجتمع القطرية في تلك الفترة إلى رحلات الغوص الشاقة في عرض البحر للبحث عن اللؤلؤ ، وقد كانوا يتكبدون خلال هذه الرحلة التي تستغرق أربعة أشهر في موسم الصيف معاناة البحث عن اللؤلؤ ، بينما تبقى النساء و الأطفال و كبار السن على البر لحين عودة البحارة من رحلتهم الشاقة، وقد كانت المرأة تتحمل رعاية الأسرة خلال فترة تغيب الرجل في رحلة الغوص.²⁰

The males in the Qatari society at that period went away on hard diving journeys out on the open sea in order to look for pearls. And they made (heavy) efforts in their search for pearls during this trip, which lasted for four months in the summer season. While women, children and elders remained until the sailors returned from sea. Further, the women were in charge of the family during the period when the absent men were out diving.

Since Qatar had a large proportion of its inhabitants engaged in pearling the absence of men in the summer season must have been clear and visible. Therefore, women were in charge of the family, and maybe also to a certain degree of the village during the diving season. Women's role in the Bedouin camps was also important, even though Danish researchers who have visited the camps in Qatar explain them as predominant patriarchal segments with a nucleus of very close relatives.²¹ According to Klaus Ferdinand from the University of Copenhagen, the different tribes were well organised and during ordinary daily life everyone had a job to do, and especially the women who supposedly worked all the time. In connection with movement, everyone was busy working, children as well as adults, and here job allocation tended to get mixed. The hierarchy was, however, organized by age and sex, with an almost unexpressed but implicit male dominance at all levels. As an example, Ferdinand writes that the hardest working of all in a three-generation camp was the youngest son's wife, with no children but in an advanced stage of pregnancy, and thereafter came some of the younger girls. Children were also needed in the hard work, and again the girls, and not the boys, had to work the hardest, whether it was a typical women's work, such as taking care of younger siblings and twining thread or less sex-differentiated light tasks such as fetching and carrying, bringing in fuel and tethering camels. In other words, women had an important,

²⁰ Fāṭima 'Aly Ḥusayn al-Kubaysī, *Wazā'if al-dawla fī l-mujtama' al-qatarī: Dirāsa li-dawr al-tahdūthī min 1971 ḥattā 1990* (Doha: Jāmi'at Qatar, 2002), 108.

²¹ Ferdinand, *Bedouins of Qatar*, 187.

hard and difficult role in the Bedouin tribes in the pre-oil society in Qatar.²² The sex segregation was, however, clear and the male dominance even more visible.

Compared to other countries in the Gulf, such as Kuwait, Qatar had a little developed economy at that time. This was due to the country's small size and its distance from the overland trade routes. As a consequence of the small trade sector Qatar never developed a merchant class (even though there were some powerful merchants). Also, a second consequence was that Qatar, before oil, had no emerging working class. The local divers did not double as sailors, as were the case in more settled merchant towns. Also, some of the divers were slaves who returned to the desert economy when the pearling season ended. Due to the fact that there were no economically organized groups in the Qatari society, the ruling family was the only group with sufficient autonomous power and identity. On the other hand, because workers were not as deeply obligated to the merchants, it limited the extent to which the ruler could rely on the merchants to extract and remit revenues from the population. Qatar on the eve of oil age had few institutionalized political structures.²³

With the discovery of oil in 1939 Qatar was about to enter a new era.²⁴ The story of oil, the export and its revenues started, however, in 1949. The discovery of new fields in 1964 increased production and oil revenues were pouring in, as well as the overall economy of the country was significantly strengthened.²⁵

The strengthening of the economy was going to create massive upheavals in the Qatari society. The collapse of the pearl industry in the 1920s, which was a result of the competition from the Japanese cultured pearls, had led the Qatari society into poverty at the eve of oil-age. The discovery of oil was a major change, and the society became influenced by a strong economy. Also, the commercial relationships with the other Gulf States and the West improved, and Qatar became a part of the global society and the world economy.²⁶ It is important to mention that Qatar's foreign relations and economic affairs were under British administration, based on a special treaty arrangement with Britain which had existed since the

²² Ibid., 188.

²³ Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, 114.

²⁴ Ibid., 117.

²⁵ Al-Kubaysī, *Wazā'if al-dawla fī l-mujtama' al-qatarī*, 131.

²⁶ Ibid., 132

end of the nineteenth century. These arrangements had been finally incorporated in treaty form in 1916. In 1935, a 75-year oil concession was granted to the Qatar Petroleum Company, which was owned by Anglo -Dutch, French and U.S. Interests.²⁷ Furthermore, the British received in agreement with the Sheikh of Qatar permission to establish an independent Political Agency in Doha when oil production started in 1949. This existed until Qatar became independent in 1971 and the British terminated their military presence in the Gulf.²⁸

The discovery of oil resulted in a hectic building activity, where public services such as schools, hospitals and the general infrastructure had first priority. The rapid process of change brought about by oil exploitation had by 1959, i.e. within ten years, a remarkable effect on the lives of the inhabitants of Qatar. From being a nomadic people the society underwent a total change into a modern oil economy.²⁹

With the oil came the need for changes in the composition of the labour force. Oil creates three kinds of employment: 1) directly in the various processes of the industry (exploration, production, refining; 2) indirectly in the provision of goods and services to the industry (agriculture, catering, technical services); and 3) through the creation of jobs by governments in receipt of oil revenues (state employment, development programs).³⁰ Import of foreign labour was therefore a necessity when Qatar started its oil production. In 1949, the year oil production started; the population of the state was about 20-30,000. By 1972 the population had risen to 110,000, of which 65,000 was classified as non-Qataris. Furthermore, the immigrants were even more dominant in the labour force. Of the 48,460 people registered as economically active, 40,300 were registered as non-Qataris, leaving a Qatari labour force of only 8,160. Immigrants were therefore five times as numerous as Qataris in the labour force.³¹ The demand for foreign labour force has continued to increase since 1972; in 2005 immigrants counted for 80, 5 % of the total population.³²

²⁷ United States, Department of State, "Background Note: Qatar," <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5437.htm#history> (accessed February 9, 2010).

²⁸ Ferdinand, *Bedouins of Qatar*, 33.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 45–46.

³⁰ Fred Halliday, "Labour Migration in the Middle East," *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) Reports* 59 (1977): 5, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3011699>, (accessed February 24, 2010).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Report 2009 Qatar," http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_QAT.html (accessed February 16, 2010).

The shift from one economy to another caused, as earlier mentioned, major changes in the Qatari society. The study of the role of Qatari women in such a process is interesting. It is important to remember that the role of women changed as the economy shifted from being a simple rural economy into a “money-driven” economy. In the Bedouin camps women did most of the work, including work that was less sex differentiated. We also know that women in the coast villages did a major amount of work during the summer season when the men were at sea diving for pearls. As the oil economy replaced the previous one, women became “redundant”, as there was no need for the work they earlier were doing. In turn this made the women passive. This is in stark contrast to the traditional Bedouin women where they were among the hardest working members in the tribe and a lot depended on them and their contribution.

2.2 Review of the educational system in Qatar

There is little documented research on the educational system in Qatar from late nineteenth century and up to the first part of the twentieth century. However, the use of Quran schools, in Arabic called al-kuttāb (in plural al-katātib) was known in the region. According to one Turkish document that can be traced back to 1890 and to the Ottoman presence in Qatar, there were 15 primary schools in Qatar. Dr. Mozah writes in her Ph. D thesis on the economic and social development in Qatar that these schools were likely to be Quran schools as well. At that stage, education focused on teaching children how to read, write, learn and recite the Quran. It is important to notice that the economy at that time was little developed and the need for a more advanced educational system seemed to be non-existing.³³

The idea of a more advanced system developed as a result of foreign influence. Merchants from other Gulf countries introduced programs, which included the knowledge of Islamic legality, al-sharī'a. Also, a more modern understanding of Arabic language and linguistics were introduced. The opening of the school al-Athariyya in 1913 was the first of its kind in Qatar and was more modern than the al-kuttāb. It must be mentioned that this offer was for

³³ Mūza Sultān al-Jābir, *al-Ṭaṭawwur al-iqtisādī wa-l-ijtimā'ī fi Qaṭar, 1930–1973* (Doha: Jāmi'at Qaṭar, 2002), 343.

boys only, as girls were not allowed.³⁴

Even though the educational system had developed from the original al- kuttāb, there were great needs for further progress as the country entered into a modern oil economy. Therefore, the government used the new riches in order to improve the existing system. The establishment of the Council of Education in 1952/53 is a clear and visible example of the progress being made in Qatar at that time. Also, a large number of new schools were established during the following years. But maybe the most noteworthy initiative is the opening of the first primary schools for girls in 1954. The hiring of two female teachers as well as a female administrator came as a result of this establishment.³⁵ The following years, the number of both girls' schools and pupils increased significantly. As we can see in table.1, the number of girls attending primary schools in the capital Doha reached 3176 in 1964/65 compared to 122 girls in 1956/57. We can also notice that the number of girl's primary schools increased from one school in 1956/57 to 10 schools in 1964/65 and even 13 schools in 1972/73.³⁶

Year	The number of pupils			The number of schools			The number of teachers		
	Masc	Fem	Total	Masc	Fem	Total	Masc	Fem	Total
1956/1957	1098	122	1220	6	1	7	62	4	66
1964/1965	4446	3176	7622	9	10	19	194	155	349
1972/1973	7482	6699	14185	9	13	22	235	285	520

Table 2.1: Number of primary school pupils, schools and teachers (Source: al-Jābir).

The development of the primary educational system did also progress in the rural areas. The opening of a primary school in the village of Al-Khor in 1952/53 was the first outside the capital. The establishment of new schools, both in the central areas as well as in the rural areas, did encourage people to educate their children.³⁷

³⁴ Ibid., 344–45.

³⁵ Ibid., 350–52.

³⁶ ‘Abdullah al-Kubaysī in al-Jābir, *al-Ṭaṭawwur al-iqtisādī wa-l-ijtimā‘ī fī qaṭar, 1930–1973*, 354.

³⁷ Ibid.

In 1958 it was decided to offer education to all male and female Qataris of school age. Further, the educational system continued to develop in 1959/60 with the incorporation of three stages: 1) Elementary (6 years); 2) Preparatory (3 years) and; 3) Secondary (3 years).³⁸ The number of schools continued to increase and the need for qualified teachers became urgent. Therefore, the first Teachers Institute was established in 1967 to help overcome the shortage of qualified staff. Furthermore, the first secondary school for girls opened in 1969/70 alongside a Teacher Training School for girls. With the opening of Qatar University and the Language Institute in 1973, Qatar had developed a complete and modern educational system.³⁹

Today Qatar University has eight colleges: College of Arts and Science, College of Business & Economics, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Law, College of Pharmacy, College of Sharī'a and Foundation Program.⁴⁰ The University has two separate main campuses, one for males and one for females. Further, statistics from 2008 show that the ratio of female students at Qatar University is 77% compared to a ratio of male students of 23%. The ratio of female students is high in every college and will be explained in relation to Figure 4.4.⁴¹

To stimulate further progress, Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, Research and Community Development was established in 1995. The Foundation is a private, non-profit organization that functions as a driver in order to promote innovative education and research. One of the Foundation's major initiatives is Education City which houses a range of educational institutions and research-centres.⁴² In recent years, several Western universities have opened branches in Education City. These campuses are accredited by the same bodies as their home universities. Therefore, students in Qatar attending for example the Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar obtain a Cornell MD-degree. Among other Western universities in Education City there are: Virginia Commonwealth University School of the

³⁸ Qatar News Agency, "Stages of the Development of Education in Qatar," <http://www.qnaol.net> (accessed October 6, 2009).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Admission Department, Qatar University, "Undergraduate Prospectus 2009/2010," 2.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, DC, "Education," <http://www.qatareembassy.net/education.asp> (accessed February 24, 2010).

Arts in Qatar, Texas A & M University at Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, and Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. In contrast to Qatar University, the campuses in Education city have no sex segregation and the 2500 students studying at Education City have equal educational options and opportunities.⁴³

The development in the educational system has been overwhelming. Female student's enrolment rate in Higher Education is, as mentioned before, at a much higher rate than male students.⁴⁴ Further, one has to take different factors into consideration when reading these statistics. Unlike women who continue their university education, male students typically go into business after completing their mandatory schooling. Also, national statistics do not include the high number of male students studying abroad. The idea of sending female students abroad has been, and to a certain degree still is, offensive in Qatar. A female student needs in such a case to be accompanied by a male relative. The increased educational opportunities for women within the state of Qatar are, however, challenging these deep rooted traditions. In a long term perspective, the educated women may make it harder for men to obtain attractive positions in the job market directly after regular school education. However, it remains to see whether the Qatari society is willing to support this change.

There are different theories which refer to the question of education and female participation in the labour force in the Middle East. Therefore, in order to present my own analysis in a broader perspective I will introduce some of the research done on this matter. The following chapter will concentrate on the Gulf region as those countries have many similarities when it comes to economy, tradition, religion and politics. Afterwards I will use Qatar as a case study and present it as an example on how far an oil rich and traditional country has come regarding female participation in the labour force.

When discussing empowerment of women in the Gulf it is important to go beyond what may be seen as the immediate observations. The almost total absence of women in the formal political system of the Arabian Peninsula may seem as an overwhelming challenge. This is an area that has been the exclusive domain for men. However, according to J. E. Peterson⁴⁵, an

⁴³ Helen Ziegler & Associates, "International Universities in Qatar," <http://www.hziegler.com/locations/middle-east/qatar/articles/international-universities-in-qatar.html> (accessed February 24, 2010).

⁴⁴ Qatar, Statistics Authority, *Women and Men in the State of Qatar*, 26.

⁴⁵ J. E. Peterson received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins. His areas of expertise are security of the Arabian

independent historian and political analyst, the absence of women in the formal society does not mean that women lack political importance and influence now, nor did they in the past.⁴⁶ Traditionally women have been a strong voice within the family. Further Peterson argues that in a society that emphasizes the collective identity of the family and the tribe over the individual, family and politics cannot be separated on the local and national level. In other words, despite what may seem obvious, women and their networks play an essential political role in the Gulf society.⁴⁷ And yet, when discussing female participation or maybe more correct the lack of female participation in the modern society, one need to classify empowerment as empowerment in the visible, the wider community outside the home. Hence, for the purpose of my thesis, empowerment of women will be evaluated in the fields of education, the labour force and the political system.

3.1 The role the of economy in a gender perspective

There is often a common belief that Islam has interfered with democratic and reform-friendly social developments. Also, the belief that Islam opposes women that are active in the labour force can be discussed. Some researchers on the other hand, claim that oil, and not Islam, explains why women lag behind on areas such as labour force participations. In “Women in Arab Countries: Challenging the Patriarchal System?” Professor Philippe Fargues⁴⁸ discusses the low empowerment of Arab women and the role of oil. Furthermore, he remarks that Arab countries have a common factor in oil – either directly as in the case of major oil exporters (the Gulf States, among them Qatar) or indirectly for the other countries, where oil wealth has a major impact through for example migrant worker’s remittances.⁴⁹ Because my thesis is related to the Gulf, and especially Qatar, I will focus on the first group, major oil and gas

Peninsula, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Middle East Policy Council, “Resources”, <http://www.mepc.org/resources/peterson.asp> (accessed March 4, 2010).

⁴⁶ J. E Peterson, “The political status of women in the Arab Gulf States,” *Middle East Journal* 43 (1989): 34, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4327879> (accessed September 24, 2009).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Philippe Fargues obtained his Ph.D. in Sociology from the Sorbonne in 1974. He has lectured and researched in Universities such as the University of Paris and the Lebanese University of Beirut. His research interests include migration, population and politics in Muslim countries, as well as family building, demographic methodologies and their application to Middle Eastern and North African counties. The American University in Cairo, “Faculty and staff,” <http://www.aucegypt.edu/ResearchatAUC/rc/cmrs/facstaff/Pages/PhilippeFargues.aspx> (accessed March 4, 2010).

⁴⁹ Philippe Fargues, “Women in Arab Countries: Challenging the Patriarchal System?” *Reproductive Health Matters* 13, no. 25 (2005): 43, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3776227> (accessed May 15, 2010).

exporters.

The oil economy in the Gulf region experienced a boom in the 1970s and early 1980s. The sudden change in the economy enabled Arab governments to establish welfare state systems (health, education etc) through financing development and subsidising consumption.⁵⁰ Even though development activities can contribute to fertility decline, subsidizing consumption has the opposite effect, for example by reducing the cost of having children. This is what happened in a number of Arab countries, and especially in the oil-rich states in the Gulf. These governments were able to satisfy the population through generous oil wealth and also being able to play the forces of conservatism. This so called social conservatism was reflected in particular by a very low labour force participation rate among married women. To a certain extent one can say, according to Fargues that by cutting the costs of fertility and in turn keeping women in the home, oil revenues indirectly promoted high fertility and thereby also “prevented” women to participate in the community outside their homes.⁵¹

Michael L. Ross⁵², Professor at the University of California, supports the argument that oil production reduces the number of women in the labour force, which in turn reduces their political influence. In “Oil, Islam, and Women” he bases this argument with global data on oil production, female work patterns, and female political representation, and by comparing oil-rich Algeria to oil-poor Morocco and Tunisia.⁵³ The main theory of Ross is that oil, and not Islam, promotes less progress toward gender equality in the Middle East. He therefore contradicts, according to himself, most observers who claim that the lack of female participation in the Middle East is due to the region’s Islamic traditions. Also, his argument challenges a common belief about economic development: that growth promotes gender equality. The thesis suggests that different types of economic growth have different consequences for gender relations. If growth encourages women to join the formal labour market it brings about greater gender equality. On the other hand, when growth is based on oil and mineral extraction it discourages women from entering the labour force and therefore

⁵⁰ Ibid., 45

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Michael L. Ross is Professor of Political Science at the University of California (UCLA), and Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies. He has published on the political and economic problems of resource-rich countries, civil war, democratization, women’s rights, and the politics of Southeast Asia. See <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/ross> (accessed March 4, 2010).

⁵³ Michael L. Ross, “Oil, Islam, and Women,” *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008): 107, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/ross/publications.html> (accessed March 4, 2010).

increases gender equalities.⁵⁴ According to this argument, we might believe that the oil industry is harsh against women overall, and that the Middle East is no exception.

Central in Ross' thesis are the consequences of female labour force participation. Female labour force participation is linked to lower fertility rate (according to Fargues oil revenues indirectly promote high fertility). Female labour force participation also affects gender relations more broadly. Studies of female garment workers in Bangladesh show that factory work helps them gain self-confidence to learn to negotiate with men, and learn about health and contraception. Also, the entry of women in the labour force tends to promote female political influence.⁵⁵ In other words, countries where women work in low-wage manufacturing, as for example Tunisia and Morocco, have greater female political influence than in countries without low-wage manufacturing, as for example Qatar. In Qatar, as well as the other Gulf States, the entire economy is dependent on oil and gas revenues and there is no low-wage manufacturing and hence fewer women in the labour force. This observation is based on the assumptions that the labour markets are typically segregated by gender: men work in some occupations and women in others, even if their qualifications are similar. Regarding qualifications, what happens when women in general get higher education? Could it be that women who attend universities can obtain social networks as well as educational degrees, and in turn gain self-confidence to learn to negotiate with men? When attending university, women can exchange ideas and discuss common obstacles in their search for job opportunities after finished education. Therefore, the idea of the university as a social arena can be similar to the idea of the factory as a social arena. On the other hand, if women only study in order to obtain social satisfaction, the need for a job after finished education is not that important. Further, some researchers have raised the question about the quality of education in the Gulf. Has there been a mismatch between traditional and modern learning and the needs of Gulf societies?

3.2 Education in the Gulf

The Gulf monarchies have invested heavily in educational facilities. However, the quality has

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cf. Ross, "Oil, Islam, and Women," 108, citing Amin et al. 1998 and Kabeer and Mahmud 2004.

not always corresponded to the needs of the states. Gawdat Bahgat⁵⁶, Professor of Political Science, has been doing research on this matter. He examines what he describes as three apparent deficiencies in the educational system in the region: First, the mismatch between traditional and modern learning; secondly, the imbalance between indigenous and expatriate labour force; and thirdly, the gap between men and women.⁵⁷

When observing the theories of Fargues and Ross, oil revenues may have been causing less progress for women in the Middle East. On the other hand, Bahgat suggests that there has been a strong connection between oil and education. According to him the Gulf monarchies have invested heavily in the improvements of social services including health care and educational system. The goal for these states has been to share oil revenues among the local population. Thus, most of the social services, including schools have been free or for a minimum charge. Furthermore, the expansion of the educational system was not in response to a well-articulated and comprehensive development plan. One might say that the impressive social and economic achievements were not accompanied by similar changes in domestic culture and values. In other words, the slow social and political development did not correspond to the needs of rapid modernization and economic growth.⁵⁸

The dilemma of combining modernization with traditional values has faced the Gulf monarchies. For a long time language and history were the main focus in public education and there were little focus on for example technical skills needed in the oil industry. One consequence of the mismatch in the educational system has been the region's heavy dependence on expatriates. Foreign workers have been an important part of the labour force in the region for decades. Most of the countries have programs to nationalize their labour force, and the terms "Qatarization" and "Kuwaitization" of domestic employment markets has become important goals for the governments.⁵⁹ However, a process for nationalization of the labour force would most likely result in falling productivity, the output and thereby the national income. Especially this may be the case in Qatar, where the number of locals is very

⁵⁶ Gawdat Bahgat is professor of political science and director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He has published numerous articles on the Persian Gulf in scholarly journals. Middle East Policy Council, "Resources", <http://www.mepec.org/resources/bahgat.asp> (accessed March 5, 2010).

⁵⁷ Gawdat Bahgat, "Education in the Gulf Monarchies: Retrospect and Prospect," *International Review of Education* 45 (1999): 128, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3444942> (accessed September 24, 2009).

⁵⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 132.

low compared to enormous demands in the industrial sector (for more details, see chapter 1). Also, in order to implement a complete “Qatarization” the use of female employees should be a goal. Inclusion of women in the labour force has been complicated, according to Bahgat, because of the restraints imposed on Gulf women both in the educational system and in the work place.⁶⁰

The traditions and practices of sex-segregation have been, and still are, firmly rooted in the Gulf societies. The development of modern education for both genders may be seen as the first and most visible component of change. For a long time many people in the Gulf did not see education for girls as a necessity. However, in the late 1990s, when Bahgat did his research on this topic, almost all the six Gulf monarchies had girls’ enrolment in primary schools equal that of boys. In higher education there was still clear and visible restraints for female students compared to male students. For example, it has been common to send male students abroad for higher education, but, as mentioned before, the idea of sending female students abroad was seen as offensive.⁶¹

The thesis of Bahgat concludes that there has been an impressive expansion of modern education for girls and women in the Gulf States. Also, it shows that education in a relatively short period of time had enhanced women’s opportunity in the labour market. The number of women as a percentage of the adult labour force in Qatar increased from 4% in 1970 to 12% in 1995.⁶² There can be two conclusions drawn from this development: First, in just a couple of decades the proportion of women in the labour force tripled in Qatar. Secondly, in spite of this achievement, Qatar as well as the other Gulf monarchies, lags far behind the rest of the world when it comes to female participation in the labour force.⁶³ Bahgat stresses two main obstacles that have contributed to this last outcome. First, there has been little change in the attitudes of Gulf societies towards the idea of men and women working in the same place. Also, women have been discouraged from joining vocational training programs such as electrical and mechanical engineering.⁶⁴ The tendency has been, as we have seen, to

⁶⁰ Ibid., 133.

⁶¹ Ibid., 134.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ By way of comparison, Norwegian women form 47 % of the total economically active population in Norway. Norway, Statistisk sentralbyrå, “Arbeidet adler kvinnen?” 12, http://www.ssb.no/ola_kari/arbeid_2010.pdf (accessed April 25, 2010).

⁶⁴ Bahgat, “Education in the Gulf Monarchies,” 134.

encourage women to study humanities and arts where the opportunities for work after finished education have been limited.

3.3 Future prospective in the fields of education and labour market

Scholars have been interested in what might be the future prospective in the Gulf monarchies. For example, how can the states combine modernization with the region's traditional values and attitudes? According to Ross, economic growth does not necessarily promote gender equality. He uses the oil-rich countries in the Gulf as examples on how a strong economy can reduce opportunities for women. I believe that such a statement needs to be reconsidered because of several reasons. First, the oil revenues have contributed to improve the educational system which in turn can increase opportunities for women in the labour force. Secondly, the oil industry may be harsh towards women globally. Statistics show that the oil industry in for example Norway is also very male dominate. In 2007, 11.788 Norwegian males worked off shore compared to 1166 Norwegian women.⁶⁵ Despite women being under-represented in the Norwegian oil industry, Norway was ranked as number 3 on the Global Gender Gap-report 2009.⁶⁶ Hence, economic growth can promote gender equality, even though the oil industry in itself is harsh towards females. Further, traditions and religion in the Middle East may be looked upon as possible reasons why women are less economically active than elsewhere. Thirdly, economic growth may increase women's opportunities if the political leadership and administration in the country supports such a development.

Not only do the political leadership and administration need to support a more progressive development, the common attitudes among locals need to change in order to support female labour force participation in the Gulf countries. Peterson recognized already in 1989 that men's attitude towards equality of genders are changing in middle-class and progressive families in the Gulf. He firmly believed that a future change lies in such areas as education. In late 1980s and early 1990s a growing number of Qatari women had obtained masters degrees and 12 Qatari women have earned doctorates by early 1987. Further he argues that

⁶⁵ Camilla Bjørheim, "Traff blink med rosa,"

http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/arbeidsliv/1131103/Traff_blink_med_rosa.html (accessed May 5, 2010).

⁶⁶ World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Report 2009," 8.

such a development was likely to cause enormous strains in the Gulf's traditional societies.⁶⁷ On the other hand, with an increasing number of women with higher degrees there are needs of academic positions. In Kuwait, Peterson says, the shortage of academic positions combined with the abundance of Kuwaiti women with advanced degrees has led to the appointment of women to a number of senior administrative positions at Kuwait University. The situation has been similar in Qatar.⁶⁸ Moreover, one can say that the lack of work related opportunities for women after finished education has led the female students into a few traditional fields of occupation. Teaching is such an example: In Qatar, the number of female teachers has for a long time been higher than the requirements for the country's girl's schools. As a paradox, Qatar is heavily dependent on expatriate teachers for boys. Therefore, five experimental schools were established where female teachers were employed for both girls and boys up to the age of 10. The extension of this practice, where female teachers are allowed to teach both genders, seems to be necessary as so few Qatari males go into teaching.⁶⁹

According to Peterson's theory the crossover of women into non-traditional specializations was a real possibility. Moreover, the countries in the Middle East were likely to allow female students to move into such disciplines as engineering and science. Since Peterson did his research in the late 1980s there has been an enormous development in the Gulf monarchies. Today the educational institutions have a totally different scale than two decades ago. In Qatar for example, Qatar University was the only university ten years ago. Today we have a number of major Western universities where both female and male students can be enrolled. Texas A&M University Qatar and Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar are such examples. These two universities are, as previous mentioned, located in the Education City. The educational improvements have given students more choices to obtain their education within the state of Qatar. Students, both female and male, can obtain same degrees whether they are in Texas or in Doha.

There is a need to integrate well educated Qatari women into the labour market and this should be the next goal for Qatar. During my field trip to Qatar in March 2010 I visited "Qatar Career Fair 2010" at the Doha Exhibition Centre. The place was crowded with young

⁶⁷ Peterson, "The Political Status of Women in the Arab Gulf States," 46.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Qatari females and males with their parents. Under the slogan “Your future in your hands”, more than 100 entities from the government and from the mixed and private sector were represented. The oil and gas industry was clearly visible at the exhibition with major companies such as Qatar Gas, Ras Gas, Maersk Oil and Qatar Petroleum. The purpose of the fair was to offer jobs, training and scholarship offers for nationals. According to the Qatari newspaper *The Peninsula*, the number of women visitors was large. Also, the morning session in one of the five event days was exclusively reserved for women.⁷⁰ The statistics presented in the following chapter may not reflect the impression I got when I visited the career fair. The Qatar Career Fair 2010 indicates that women want to enter the job market and further analysis of the low female participation in Qatar seems to be necessary. Why are Qatari females less economically active than men when they are more numerous at university level? And, are there signs, such as the high number of female visitors at the career fair, showing progress in the enhancement for women in the labour market? It is important to emphasize that change take time, and that it might take years before a positive trend becomes visible in statistics.

⁷⁰ “Fewer, But Target Groups, Visit Career Fair,” *The Peninsula*, Doha, March 20, 2010, http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/Display_news.asp?section=Local_News&month=March2010&file=Local_News201003202400.xml (accessed May 15, 2010).

4 Statistical Profile

The use of statistics and indicators are important in order to understand the current social situation for women and men in Qatar. Furthermore, statistics and indicators have significant importance in policy planning and the design of programs which could enhance women's status and empower them in the job market. The importance of this area has been confirmed by a number of international summits held by the UN throughout the last decades. Qatar is therefore deeply committed to the UN and participates in different symposiums and summits that challenge women's issues globally. In a report presented in the 53rd session of the commission on the status of women, the counselor of the Qatari committee said the following:

قد مهدت الطريق لإحراز تقدم و انجازات في مجال تعزيز المساواة بين الجنسين وتوفير بيئة تمكين للمرأة في دولة قطر، والذي ينم عن إدراك كامل لأهمية مساهمات المرأة القطرية في حركة المجتمع و تطوره، وقد تبلور ذلك الإدراك في عام 1998 بصدور القرار الأميري رقم (53) المعني بإنشاء المجلس الأعلى لشؤون الأسرة، وهي الآلية المؤسسية في مجال النهوض بالمرأة.⁷¹

Qatar has paved the way in order to obtain progress and achievements in the field of strengthening the equality between genders and to implement suitable environments for women in the state of Qatar. These achievements indicate the importance of women taking part in the social movement and its further development. The accomplishment for women was visualized in 1998 by issuing the Emiri Degree number 53; concerning establishment of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. The Council is the official instrument that is concerned with the female advancement in the society.

The enhancement of Qatari women does not come as a result of well-articulated reports and recommendations from the UN. Qatar needs to develop national statistics and indicators

⁷¹ Qatar, Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, "Bayān dawlat Qaṭar amām al-dawra l-thālītha wa-l-khamsīna li-lajnat waḍ' al-mar'a," New York, 2009, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw53/statements_missions/Qatar.pdf (accessed February 9, 2010).

regarding disparities between men and women in order to understand challenges and plan for further progress for women. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs and the Statistics Authority in Qatar (the main producer of statistics in the country) has presented “a statistical profile on men and women in Qatar”. The report aims to identify the extent of disparity between women and men in the social, health, educational, economic and political fields. Also, it aims to establish objective criteria for the assessment of progress towards the attainment of equality and equal opportunities between men and women. Maybe the most important value of the report is to raise the awareness about women’s status and their relation with men.⁷²

The following chapter will focus on the statistical profile between men and women in Qatar in the fields of education and economic participation. Also, statistics on fertility rate and average age at first marriage are important indicators in order to understand the current trends for Qatari women. Hence, the statistics and the indicators might give some explanations about why women are less active in the labour market than men. The data presented in this chapter will be useful in chapter five as I will give reference to it in my analysis.

⁷² Qatar, Statistics Authority, *Men and Women in the State of Qatar*, 5.

4.1 Education

The number of students taking public education rose from 78 343 in 1990 to 136 575 in 2007. The educational system in Qatar consists of first level (primary), second level (preparatory and secondary) and third level (university education).⁷³ From the following diagram we can notice that the ratio of female and male students is relatively equal at primary and secondary level. The increase in the ratio of female students at university level is, however, clear and remarkable.

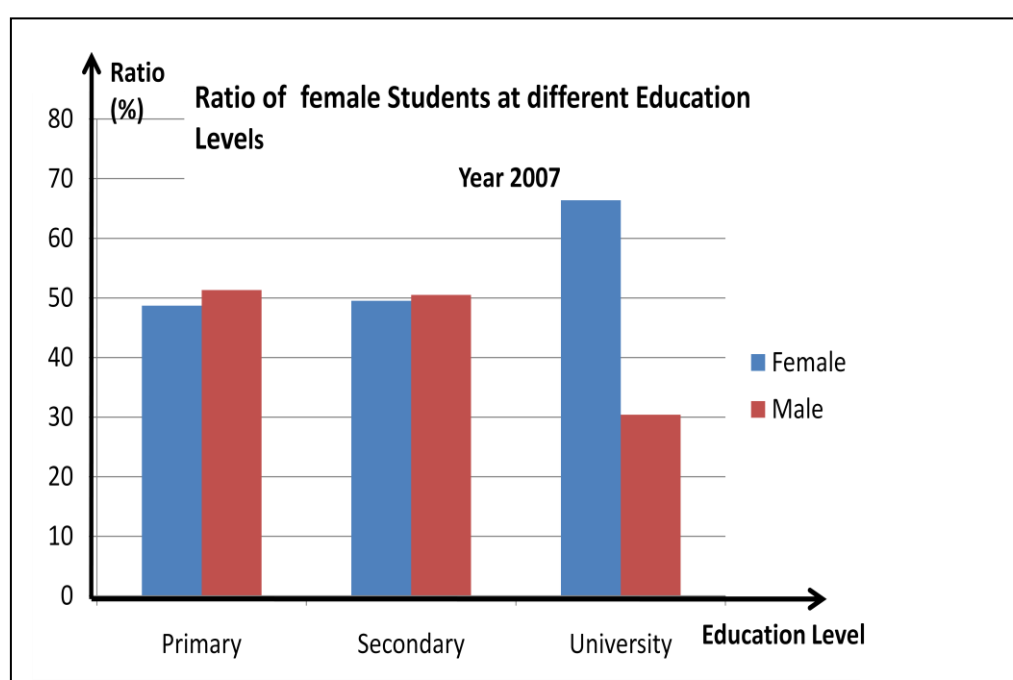


Figure 4.1: Ratio of female and male students (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority, 2008).

The ratio of female students in higher education has been at a high and relatively constant level since 1990 and until today. As we can see in Figure 4.2, the ratio of female students at university level has decreased from 75.7 in 1990 to 69.4 in 2007. The high number of female students compared to the number of male students at university level probably reflects female students' commitment to continue their university education, unlike male students who turn

⁷³ Ibid., 22.

in large numbers to the business and labour market once they finish their secondary school education.⁷⁴

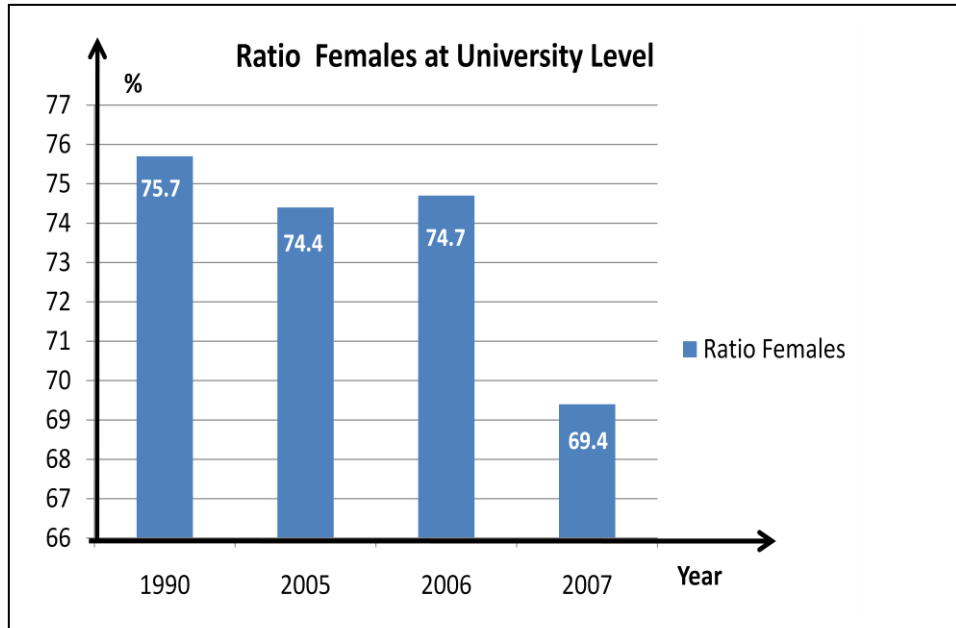


Figure 4.2: Ratio females at university level (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority, 2008).

As discussed in chapter three, for a long time language and history were the main focus in public education in the Gulf monarchies. This has also been the case for Qatar, where the need for technical skills has not been covered by relevant university programs. As a result of this situation, female students in Qatar have not been qualified to work in for example the oil industry. While males can quiet easily get a job or start a business once they finish secondary education, these opportunities are not so open to females. Females were, and still are, highly dependent on a university degree in order to get a career in the oil industry. Furthermore, data shows that there is a high ratio of Qatari female teachers compared to male teachers. This might again be due to the fact that women have limited job opportunities in other areas after finished education and therefore may see teaching in a more positive way than men do. As we can notice in Figure 4.3, the ratio of female teaching staff at primary and secondary level has been high since 1990. We may also see a slightly increasing trend in the female teacher ratio in secondary schools during the last years, 2005, 2006 and 2007.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 26.

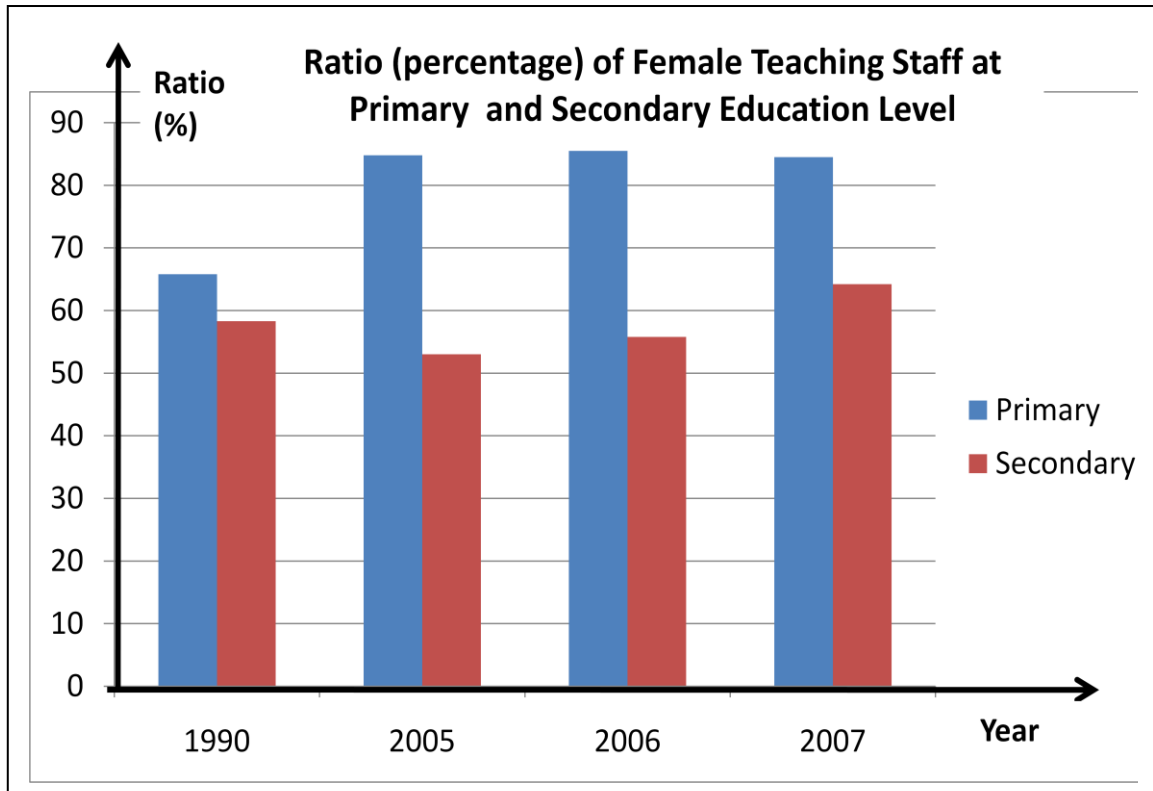


Figure 4.3: Percentage of female staff (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority, 2008).

The educational opportunities for both female and male students have improved over the last two decades. Moreover we can say that the crossover of female students into non-traditional specializations, as Peterson explained in chapter 3.3, has become a reality. Statistics from Qatar University show that female students outnumber male students in every college, including engineering and science.⁷⁵ According to Figure 4.4, the total number of registered female students is 6133 compared to 1861 male students. Further, the figure compares the priorities of female and male students. The biggest difference is found in art & science and engineering, female students still tend to choose arts and science, while male students favor engineering.

⁷⁵ Qatar University, Admissions Department, “Undergraduate Prospectus 2009/2010” (Doha: Qatar University, 2009), 3.

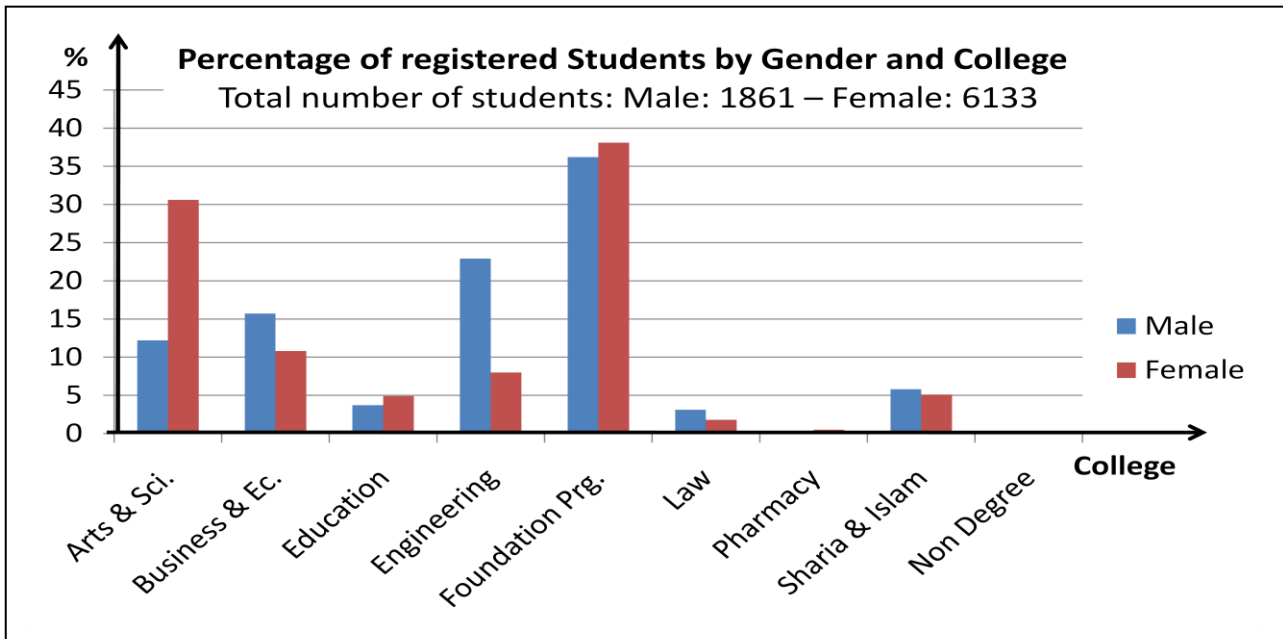


Figure 4.4: Registered students by gender and college (Source: Qatar University, 2008).

It may seem like the trend of female students choosing art over business and economy is at a turning point. As we also can notice in Figure 4.5, 38.1 % of the female students are attending the foundation program where students are taking pre-major specialization.⁷⁶ Data shows that the major priority for female students at this program is business and economics. Figure 4.5 explains the classification of female foundation students by pre-major specialization. It is also important to mention that art and science is divided into two separate parts in Figure 4.5, compared to in Figure 4.4. This means that female students still favor art and science as their number one priority. However, the percentage of females choosing business and economics as their pre-major specialization is increasing and notable.

⁷⁶ More precisely, Qatar University's Foundation Program is an academic entry program designed to bridge any potential gaps between the student's minimum academic skills upon graduating from secondary school and the academic level needed to be successful at the university level. See Qatar University, "Undergraduate Prospectus 2009/2010," 8.

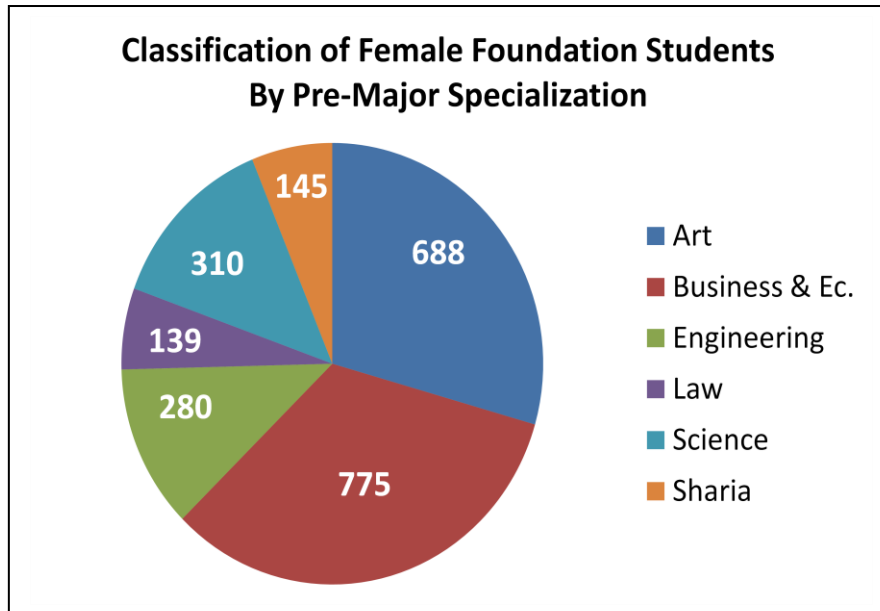


Figure 4.5: Classification of Foundation Students (Source: Qatar University, 2008).

4.2 Economy and employment

Qatar has witnessed a steady economic growth during the years from the 1980s until today. According to Statistics Authority, data shows that economic growth has had its positive impacts on the economic activity rates for the population in Qatar. But, despite the general growth, the gap is still very clear between females and males as the economic activity rate for males (15+) reached 94.5% compared to 49.3% for females.⁷⁷ On the other hand, the proportional distribution of economically non-active females has fallen from 72.5 % in 1986 to 50.7% in 2007. This is described in Figure 4.6.⁷⁸ By comparing female's economic activity ratio in relation to males we notice two trends; first, there is a large drop occurring in the gender gap during the period 1986-2007; secondly, the disparities between the genders still stands as the ratio of females' participation in economic activity is about half of the ratio of males' participation. Further, it is important to remember that the male proportion to the total population is larger than the female proportion due to the foreign immigration and expatriate workers who are mainly males.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Qatar, Statistics Authority, *Men and Women in the State of Qatar*, 37.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

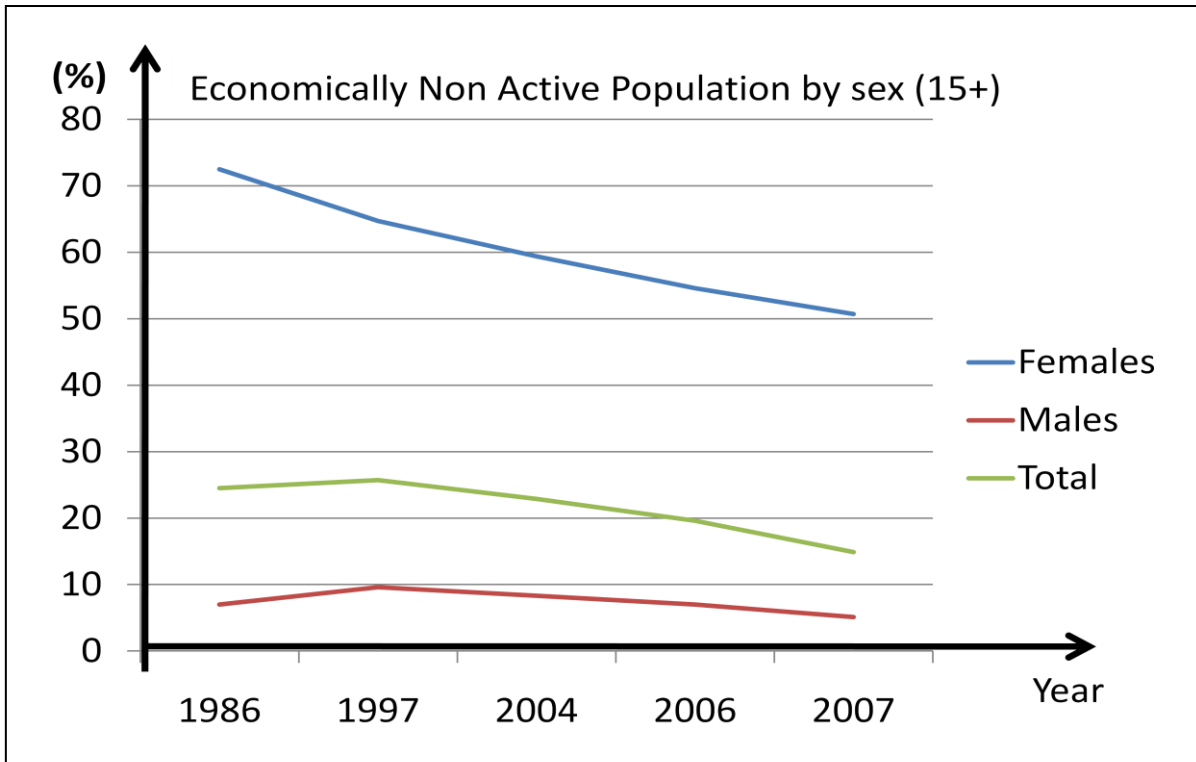


Figure 4.6: Economically non-active population by sex (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority 2008).

Furthermore, numbers from Statistics Authority show that 69.2% of economically non-active females are full-time housewives and 27.44 % are full time students. 73% economically non-active males are full-time students whereas for the remaining 27 % of the males their situation is unfamiliar, meaning that the reasons are other than family related responsibilities.⁸⁰

The number of non-economically active females has increased from 2007 to 2009.⁸¹ Also, as we can see in Figure 4.7, the percentage of full time female students has increased from 27.44% to 36.4%. The percentage of full time housewives has, on the other hand, decreased from 69.2% to 55%. The increase in non-economic activity for females from 2007 to 2009 may be due to different factors. We have the statistical variations that may count for some of the change; there may also be an effect of the new opportunities within the educational system. The new universities in Education City came during this period and working women may have chosen to leave the job to enter university. Reference may here be given to the

⁸⁰ Qatar, Statistic Authority, *Women and Men in the State of Qatar*, 67.

⁸¹ Qatar, Statistic Authority, "Bulletin Labour Force Sample Survey 2009".

reported increase in fulltime students.

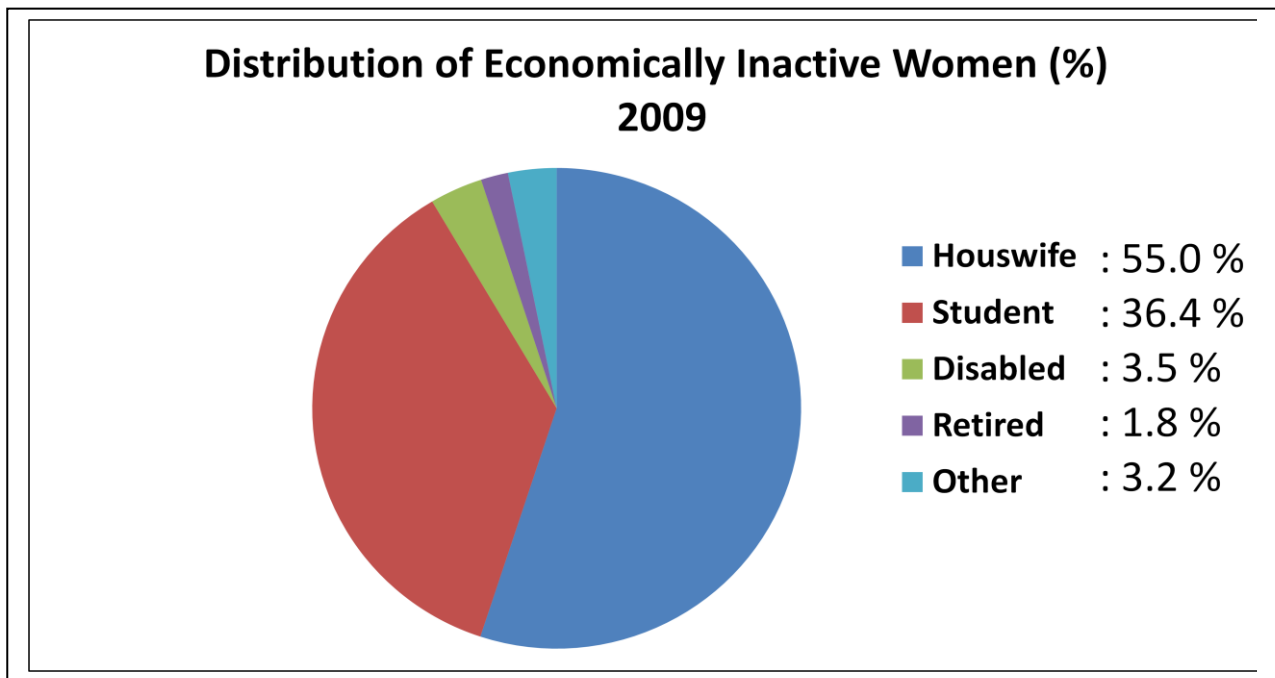


Figure 4.7: Distribution of economically non-active women (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority 2009).

Figure 4.8 shows the distribution of the economically active population based on occupations. It is interesting to notice the concentration of Qatari females in professional specialist occupations, at the rate of 49.7%, followed by clerical occupations in banks and ministries at the rate of 28.8%. According to Statistic Authority, the high ratio of females in professional specialist occupations is because most Qatari females have chosen teaching as their preferred profession. Furthermore other job opportunities for women are found in other professions in educational and clerical positions at governmental ministries. Qatari males are more evenly distributed over all occupations.⁸²

⁸² Qatar, Statistics Authority, *Women and Men in the State of Qatar*, 40.

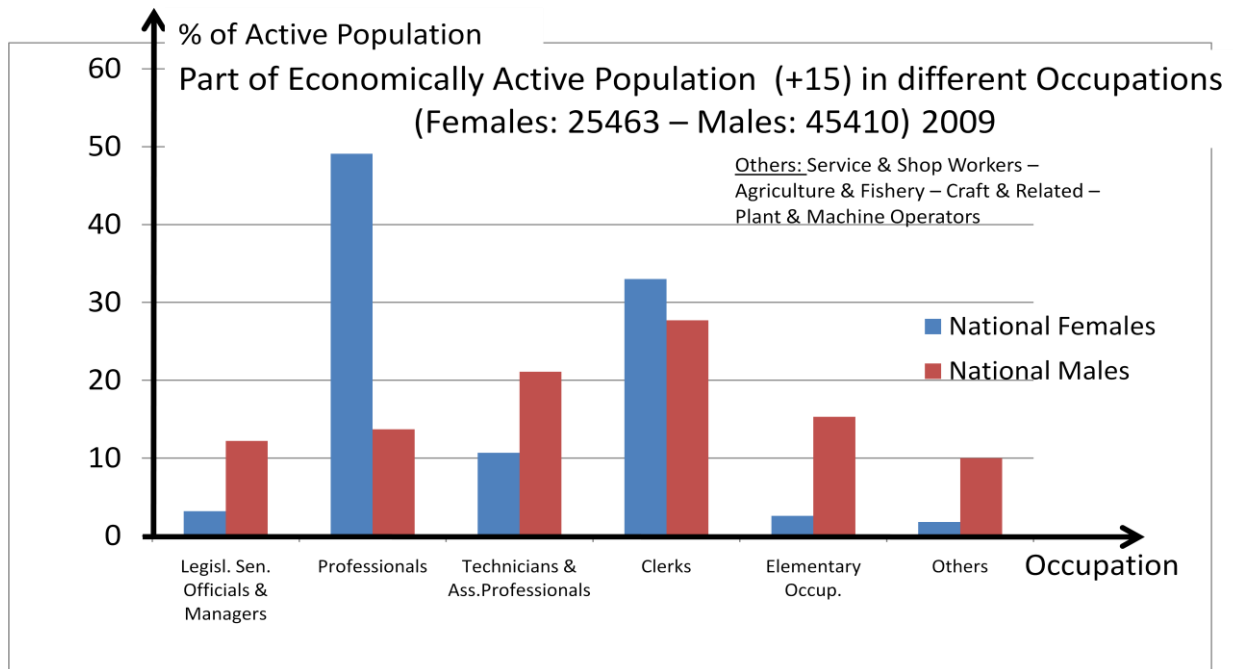


Figure 4.8: Economically Active Population by occupation (Source: Statistics Authority 2008).

Economically active Qataris are strongly concentrated in the governmental sector. As we can notice in figure 4.9, the ratio for the governmental sector range between 68.7% (male) – 74.5% (female) of the total labour force, followed by governmental institutions, counting for 16.8% of the total economic active female workforce. The corresponding figure for the male labour force in governmental institutions is 15.4 %.⁸³ The concentration of nationals in the governmental sector is despite the fact that the private sector is dominating the labour market, employing 78 % of the total labour force.⁸⁴ However, only 5.6 % of Qatari males and 2.4% of Qatari females choose the private sector. The numbers are slightly increasing in the mixed sector, where 10.1% of Qatari males are employed compared to 5.8% of Qatari females.

⁸³ Statistics Authority, “Bulletin Labor Force Sample Survey State of Qatar 2009”.

⁸⁴ Statistic Authority, “Analytical Summery Labour Force Sample Survey Results, 2008,” http://www.qsa.gov.qa/eng/surveys/labor_force_analytical_summary_2008.pdf (Accessed March 29, 2010).

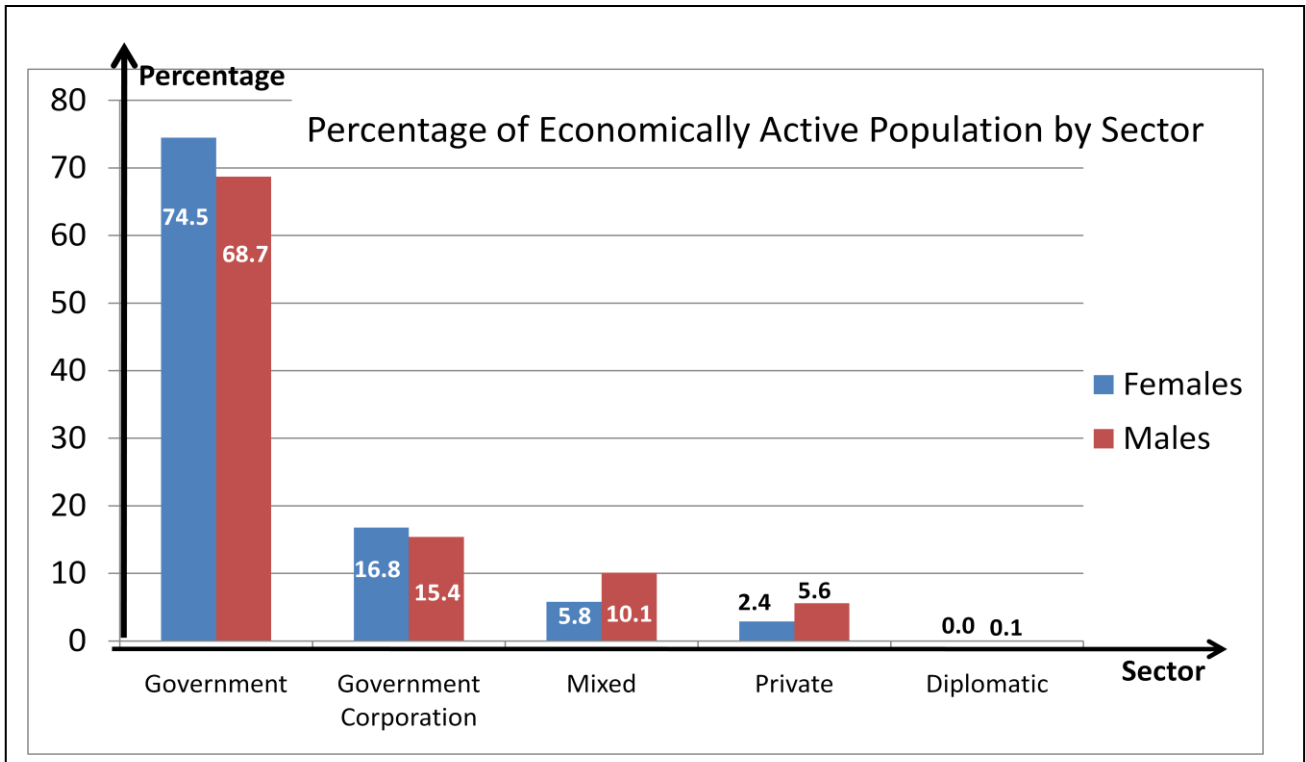


Figure 4.9: Distribution of Economical Active by sectors (Source: Statistics Authority 2009).

As we have seen, there has been a quiet sharp drop for economically non-active females, from more than 70% in 1986 to around 50% in 2007. However, there is still a wide gap between females and males in the economic activity rate. This situation has continued despite the improved conditions and opportunities for women's participation in the labour market. As it will take time before new policies become effective, it is important to look at the family indicators such as analysis of fertility rates and other indicators such as average year for first marriage for Qatari women. These statistics might explain some of the developments in both the educational system and in the labour market.

4.3 Family planning: Average age of marriage, fertility and care burden

Average age of marriage can be regarded as an indicator related to progress for women. We can notice in Figure 4.10, a slow but gradual rise of the first marriage age for females and males in Qatar. The rise of average age of marriage is probably because males and females are waiting to get married until after education is finished. For women, the average age of marriage rose from 19.2 in 1986 to 24.8 in 2004. There has been a slightly fall back from 24.8 to 23.7 in 2007, however this may be due to statistical variations.

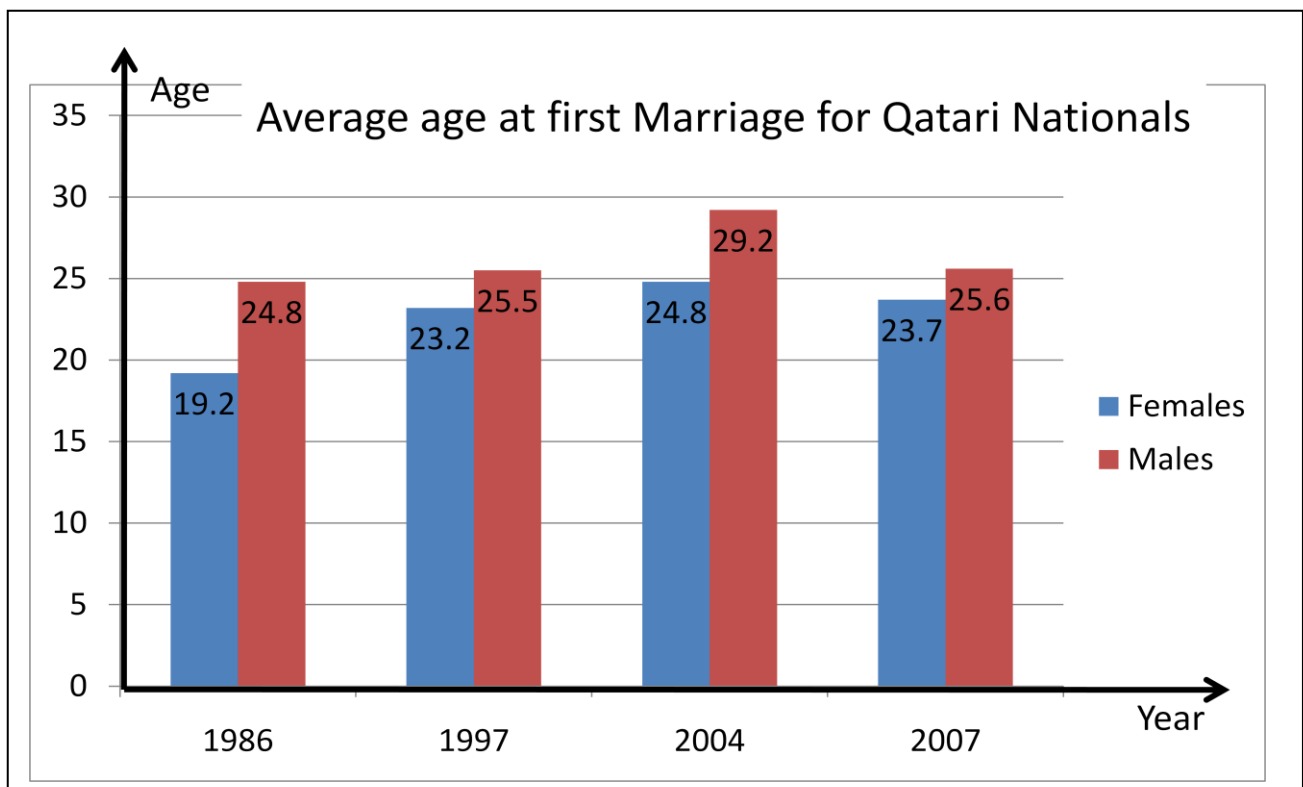


Figure 4.10: Average age at first marriage (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority 2008).

As we can see in Figure 4.11, the fertility rate of Qatari women went from 5.8 in 1986 to 3.9 in 2007, i.e. a reduction of approximately 30%. It is reasonable to suggest that the constant drop in the total fertility rate of Qatari females is due to the increase in women's enrolment in higher education, as well as the increase of economically active women.

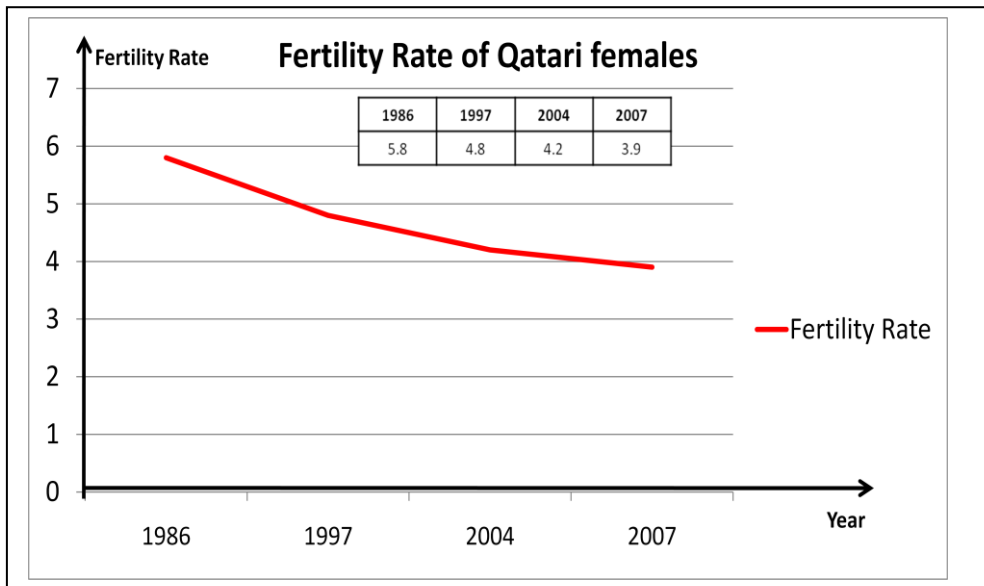


Figure 4.11: Fertility rate of Qatari females (Source: Statistics Authority 2008).

Education seems to be among the most important factors when analyzing reduced fertility. Therefore, it is necessary also to look at the relationship between total fertility rate and the mother’s educational level. The following figure shows that the higher the mother’s educational level is the lower becomes her fertility rate.

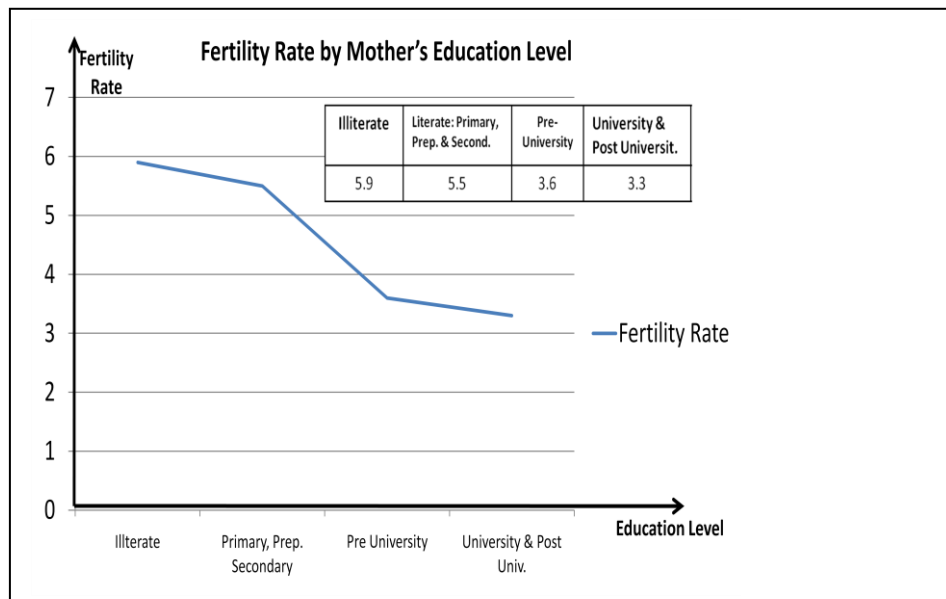


Figure 4.12: Fertility rate by mother’s educational level (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority, 2008).

Furthermore, if we look at the number of children under five years per Qatari women, we

have to assume that the care burden has decreased over the last three decades. The reduced care burden must be seen as a direct consequence of the decline in the total fertility rate. Figure 4.13 shows that the number of children under five years per woman has decreased from around 0.9 in 1986 to around 0.7 in 2007.

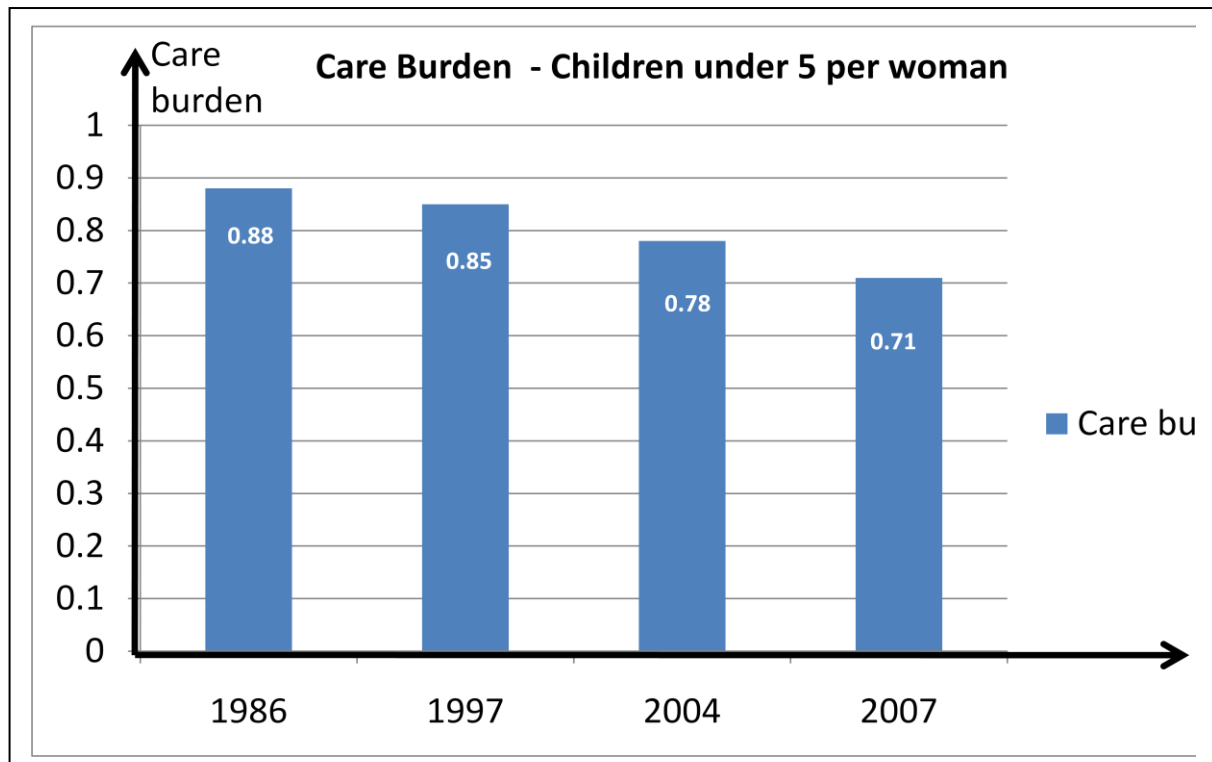


Figure 4.13: Children under 5 per woman (Source: Qatar, Statistics Authority, 2008).

In the educational sector, the ratio of female students at university level has been high compared to male students since the 1980s. As previously mentioned one of the reasons behind this trend may be that male students in large numbers have joined the job market once they finish secondary school. Women on the other hand, have continued their education at university level. The job opportunities for women after finished education have been limited compared to the opportunities for men. This is in contrast to the female dominance at university level. While the economic activity rate reached 94.5 for Qatari males, the total Qatari female's rate reached 49.3%. The majority of Qatari female employees have teaching as their profession as well as clerical positions in the governmental ministries. Qatari male employees on the other hand, are more evenly represented in all occupations. The majority of the Qatari employees force is concentrated in the governmental sector. The reason for the concentration in the governmental sector is most likely the high degree of job-security

compared to the more competitive environment in the private sector. Also, for female employees (and probably also for some males) the governmental sector might be more suitable in order to combine work and family.

Despite the wide gap between genders in the economic activity rate, the statistical data reviewed in this chapter show progress for Qatari females. The proportional distribution of economically non-active female has decreased steadily in the data available from 1986 until 2007. Also, the decrease in the total fertility rate is a clear sign that Qatari females choose to spend more time on education or in the work place. However, there are needs for further analysis in order to understand why Qatari females to such degree are less economical active than men. The next chapter will focus on in-depth interviews with a selection of Qatari as well as non-Qatari informants and evaluation of their experiences and opinions on the development in Qatar.

5 Presentation of analysis

In this chapter I will analyze the job opportunities for women in Qatar. The hypotheses that were made in the introduction are further developed in this chapter.

- Hypothesis A: Governmental support and arrangements for women at the work place.
- Hypothesis B: Family traditions.
- Hypothesis C: The educational system.
- Hypothesis D: The structure of economy and its influence on women's participation in the labour force.

The use of in-depth interviews will be the most important part when testing these hypotheses. Also, I will use data from a variety of written sources, both academic literatures, magazines, and research reports. Most of the academic literature is collected in Qatar and is mainly written in Arabic.

5.1 Choice of informants

As mentioned in the introduction, the main similarity among the informants being used in this thesis is that they were all connected to the educational sector and the labour market. The informants will be anonymous. I will not name any work places or companies. The informants will be named as Informant A, Informant B, Informant C etc.

I have chosen ten main informants. The interviews were conducted during my field trips to Qatar in November 2009 and March 2010.

- Informant A is a Qatari woman who works in one of the major educational institutions

in the governmental sector. She has a PhD from a foreign University and her research on gender has provided the thesis with valuable knowledge. Also, she has provided me with Qatari academic literature written in Arabic.

- Informant B works within the governmental sector. She is combining this job with being an active figure in the cultural debate. Her reflections on women's role in the Qatari society have been very valuable to this thesis, and have given significant insight in the work related problems women face.
- Informant C works within the governmental sector, in the health sector. Besides from her main career, she is involved in different cultural activities. Being in many ways a pioneer, she has proven that Qatari women can obtain high and important positions.
- Informant D is a researcher and a professor and works in one of the non-governmental organizations. His research on job opportunities for Qatari women has contributed with important information. Furthermore, his reflections on future progress and efforts have been crucial in order to identify answers to some of the hypotheses.
- Informant E works within Human Resources in one of the major oil and gas companies. He has contributed with information and opinions/observations about how women in general meet obstacles in this industry. This has given me some answers about why the number of female employees is so low within the mixed/private sector.
- Informant F is a Qatari woman working in Human Resources in one of the major oil and gas companies. She has an IT-education from Qatar University. Being one of few women in this industry, she explained about obstacles and also benefits in the industry.
- Informant G is a Qatari woman working in Human Resources in one of the major oil and gas companies. She graduated from the Education City and her choices regarding education and work may symbolize the new generation of Qatari women.
- Informant H is a Qatari woman working in the administration in one of the major oil

and gas companies. She graduated from Qatar University and chose to work in the mixed sector. She reflected thoughts on religion, culture and arrangements for women at the work place.

- Informant I is a Qatari man who is head of a department in one of the major oil and gas companies. He has taken important actions regarding hiring national female employees. Furthermore, based on his experiences in the industry he describes the difficulties in order to make changes that benefit women in the work environment.
- Informant J is a Qatari woman working as a technician in one of the major oil and gas companies. Being among few women in the department, her experiences might explain why there are so few. Also, her struggle to combine family and a career has made it clear that the companies need to make stronger efforts in order to satisfy their female employees.
- Group A: In addition to the ten main informants I have five more contributors. They are all Qatari women who are working in the mixed sector. As seen in the statistical profile, the ratio of female employees in the private and mixed sector is low compared to the ratio of males. The importance of speaking with and seeking advice from the few women in these sectors is crucial in order to find possible reasons and potential solutions to the mismatch between the genders. Therefore, the conversations with these women have provided the thesis with valuable information about different adjustments and arrangements for female employees in the oil and gas companies.

5.2 Hypothesis A: Governmental support and arrangements for women at the work place

According to Hypothesis A, there are other factors than education and competence that dominate the women's participation in the labour market. The hypothesis is divided into two parts: first, it analyzes the governmental efforts and their effect on the integration of national female employees in the labour market. Secondly, the hypothesis focuses on the situation that female employees meet at the work place and the needs for change and adjustments.

5.2.1 Governmental support

Women's opportunities *may* increase if the political leadership and administration in Qatar support such a development. The efforts to improve the educational system in Qatar have contributed to increased opportunities in higher education for females. On the other hand, the high number of Qatari female students is not reflected in the labour force. Qatari females are, by far, less economical active than Qatari males both in the governmental sector and especially in the private sector. Hence, is it reasonable to suggest that further governmental efforts are needed before women's participation in the labour market reaches higher levels?

The overall view on the government and their support for women's participation in the educational field and in the labour market is overwhelmingly positive. Also, the media portrays the government, and especially His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and his wife, to have provided huge benefits to the country. As Informant D says, "*Formally*, women occupy great opportunities in the Qatari society today. The renewal of the constitution is one example of the changes that have been made. Sheikh Hamad and Sheikha Mozah have done a lot to improve the status of women".⁸⁵ According to my informants, the most visible and vital changes in the Qatari society have happened since 1995, the year Sheikh Hamad came to power. Moreover, Sheikh Hamad turned the country in a new direction, or as Informant F puts it "in the right direction".⁸⁶ In order to better understand these formal changes I will here present the changes which, according to my informants, are most important regarding social enhancements for Qatari women.

The Emir issued decree no 11 in 1999. The decree stipulates the formation of a drafting committee of the permanent constitution and it is seen upon as a historic action. Its original goal was to regulate the country's authorities and its ruling system and define public rights and duties. A public referendum, where every adult national citizen could participate, was held on the 29th of April 2003. The result showed a general consent to the proposed

⁸⁵ Informant D.

⁸⁶ Informant F.

constitution mounting to 96.6%.⁸⁷ The implementation and renewal of the constitution may be seen as a step towards a state based on more democratic values. Formally, men and women are equal as Article 19 stipulates it:

Part two, Article 19:

The State shall maintain the pillars of the society and ensure security, stability, and equal opportunities for all citizens.⁸⁸

Qatari women took part in the elections for the Municipal Council in March 1999. Women participated in the election both as candidates and voters. Although none of the six candidates won any seat the election is seen as a milestone.⁸⁹

The Labour Law, Law No 14 of the year 2004, was adjusted in order to include female employees' rights. Part nine, which contains six articles, deal with issues such as wage, maternity leave and nursing interval (breast feeding). The following three articles deal with these issues:

Part nine, Article 93:

A working woman shall be paid a wage equivalent to the wage payable to a man if she performs the same work and shall be availed of the same opportunities of training and promotion.⁹⁰

Part nine, Article 96:

A female worker who has been employed by an employer for a complete year shall be entitled to maternity leave with full pay for a period of fifty days. Such maternity leave shall include the period before and after the delivery provided that the period following the delivery shall not be less than thirty five days.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Qatar, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Constitution", <http://english.mofa.gov.qa/details.cfm?id=80> (accessed March 27, 2010).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Qatar News Agency, "Qatari Woman," http://www.qnaol.net/QNAEn/Main_Sectors/Family_Society/Pages/QatariWoman.aspx (accessed October 6, 2010).

⁹⁰ Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, DC, "Law No (14) of the Year 2004," http://www.qatareembassy.net/Qatar_Labour_Law.asp (accessed March 27, 2010).

⁹¹ Ibid.

Part nine, Article 97:

The nursing female worker shall be entitled in addition to her entitlement to the rest interval provided for in Article (73) of this law during the year following the year of delivery to a nursing interval which shall not be less than one hour per day. The fixing of the nursing times shall be made by the female worker. The nursing interval shall be calculated as part of the working hours and shall not result in a deduction of wage.⁹²

The implementation of formal rights is an important step towards empowerment of women. Also, governmental and non-governmental organizations have been established in order to maintain women's questions on the agenda. As mentioned earlier, the most visible organization is the Supreme Council for Family Affairs where Sheikha Mozah is the President. The organization shall, among other goals, promote Qatari women and provide them with professional support to increase their job opportunities and to enable them to participate in political life and in economy.⁹³ Furthermore, the Social Development Centre, established in 1996 as a non-profit and private organization, is another important organization that supports family development. Even though Social Development Centre is seen upon as a private organization, it is a branch of Qatar Foundation and is under the patronage of Sheikha Mozah.⁹⁴

The establishment of these institutions is a sign that the government recognizes the importance of enhancing women's situation. According to Informant A, the government care about women's rights and to increase their opportunities and as a result of that different organizations and institutions have been established. As a driving force in this development, Sheikha Mozah serves as a role model for Qatari women. For many of my informants, she is a symbol on the development happening in the country because she combines traditional values with a modern way of thinking and behaving. Informant F says: "Sheikha Mozah should be a role model for women. They (women) have to see what she is doing for the country. She has a family and many children, but still she manages to be busy and work".⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Qatar, Supreme Council for Family Affairs, "About the Council," <http://www.scfa.gov.qa/about/index/1> (accessed March 28, 2010).

⁹⁴ Social Development Center (Qatar), "Welcome to Social Development Center," <http://www.sdc.org.qa> (accessed March 28, 2010).

⁹⁵ Informant F.

The national as well as the regional media have almost daily articles about Sheikha Mozah and her work; either it is an opening of a new educational facility or traveling abroad for a conference. Headlines such as the following are therefore common:

الشيخة موزة: الاصلاح السياسي و الاقتصادي و الاجتماعي يبدأ بالتعليم⁹⁶

Sheikha Mozah: Political, economic and social reforms start with education.

Further, the newspaper *Al-Sharq* continues the headline with following announcement:

قطر بصدد إطلاق مشروع لإبراز دور المرأة في الجزيرة العربية⁹⁷

Qatar launches project in order to enhance the role of women in the Arabian Peninsula.

The above mentioned headline reports on Sheikha Mozah's visit to Saudi Arabia where she was heading the Qatari delegation and also had a meeting with King Abdullah. Topics concerning education and women's enhancement were, according to *Al-Sharq*, discussed. It is also noteworthy that Mozah is without the niqāb in pictures of her. For Qatari women she is a symbol that women can succeed in a world where patriarchy still is making serious obstacles for female participation. As one of the women in Group A says: "Just look at Sheikha Mozah and see what she has done. They (Sheikh Hamad and Sheikha Mozah) changed the society and it all started with the educational system".⁹⁸

All my Qatari female informants are well educated. Some graduated from Qatar University, some graduated from western universities in the Education City in Doha, and some even graduated from a foreign University. They are all agreeing that increased educational opportunities within the state of Qatar are important in order to strengthen the role of women.

⁹⁶ Turkī al-Sudayrī, "Al-Shaykha Mawza: al-Iṣlāḥ al-siyāsī wa-l-iqtisādī wa-l-ijtimā'ī yabda' bi-l-ta'lim," *Al-Sharq*, March 24, 2010; also available at http://www.al-sharq.com/pdfs/files/alsharq1_20100324.pdf (accessed May 14, 2010).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Informant K.

“Before you had only one choice regarding education, now you have many”,⁹⁹ says informant J pointing at the fact that Qatar University was the only university in Qatar less than a decade ago. Informant I agree with Informant J, and remarks that Sheikha Mozah is doing her best in order to change the society: “Frankly, you can say that she has succeeded; you can see the result in the number of girls in the educational sector. That is amazing and things have changed so much.”¹⁰⁰ The result in the educational sector which Informant I is pointing at, is presented in the statistical profile and figures 4.1–4.5.

The government has, according to my informants, made strong efforts in order to improve the educational options in Qatar. With the new universities in Education City, such as Weill Cornell Medical College and A&M Texas, Qatari females have the opportunities to get the same degrees as Qatari males. It is important to mention that, while Qatari males went abroad to study medicine and engineering, this was not earlier an option for most Qatari females due to cultural and religious reasons. However, after the implementation of new educational facilities, the number of national women in non-traditional educational programs is increasing.

Despite efforts being made in the educational sector, the number of female employees is low. Informant B says that the government has to support women even more. As an example, there are still restrictions for Qatari women such as to travel abroad alone. With such existing restrictions, how could one expect men and women to be treated equally at the work place? When commenting the role of Sheikha Mozah, informant B says she is an important image for the outside world. On the other hand, Sheikha Mozah is totally reliable on her husband, Sheikh Hammad’s, support. The patriarchal norms reflect the whole society, and almost every woman is dependent on her husband or father. However, she describes the Emir as a good leader for the country. He gives a good impression on how a man should behave as he is open minded to progress for women.¹⁰¹

All of my ten main informants agree that the government is more progressive than the general public. Informant D differentiates between the formal level, where women possess great opportunities and the actual level, where women still experience many obstacles. The most visible obstacle is the rigid control from the male and as a consequence of that, women have

⁹⁹ Informant J.

¹⁰⁰ Informant I.

¹⁰¹ Informant B.

limited freedom. Further he says that even though women have become highly educated, men still controls the society. The patriarchal society will be discussed further in the second part of hypothesis A, as well as in the other hypotheses as it is crucial in order to understand the low empowerment of women.

The need for further governmental support is still important. Even though the constitution and the labour law have been revised, there are still elements that support the traditional view on women. The labour law stipulates as can be seen from the following articles:

Part nine, Article 94:

Women shall not be employed in dangerous arduous works, works detrimental to their health, morals or other works to be specified by a Decision of the Minister.¹⁰²

Part nine, Article 95:

Women shall not be employed otherwise than in times to be specified by a Decision of the Minister.¹⁰³

The labour law still put restrains on job opportunities for women. It clearly marks that female and male employees have different moral standards and that there are certain areas that are not suitable for female employees. As we saw in Figure 4.8, most female employees (and male employees) are concentrated in the governmental sector. More precisely women are employed in educational occupations and in clerical positions such as in banks and in the ministries. Furthermore, it is quite easy for women to get employed in the governmental sector as it is for both genders. Compared to the private and mixed sector, the jobs in the governmental sector are better arranged and suitable for female employees. However, for women who want to follow a non-traditional career path Article (94) and (95) can limit their job opportunities as they clearly stipulate the differences between gender and occupational status.

It is important to stress that the democratic reforms in Qatar are in line with Islamic principles. Cultural and religious aspects will therefore shape the framework of the governmental efforts.

¹⁰² Embassy of the State of Qatar in Washington, DC, "Law No (14) of the Year 2004".

¹⁰³ Ibid.

It is not reasonable to anticipate that the constitution and labour law in Qatar should follow only secular and western patterns. However, the leadership under the auspices of Sheikh Hamad and Sheikha Mozah is showing progress and willingness to develop its country and its people. Furthermore, the implementations of new governmental policies have to gain foothold in the society before the effects of them become visible. My informants say that the governmental efforts are positive, as more women take higher education and hence are qualified to enter the labour market. However, it may seem like many work places are not ready to accept the high number of qualified females? This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

5.2.2 Policies for female employees

Governmental reforms and policies that support women's progress need to become a priority for the managements in work places. According to my informants, different obstacles prevent females from entering the labour market. Their stories tell me that many companies have not been dealing with issues concerning female employees simply because there were no females in for example the oil and gas industry ten to fifteen years ago. Statistics presented in Figure 4.9, show that 74.5% of economically active women are employed in the governmental sector. Based on this, it is reasonable to suggest that the arrangements for women are more suitable in the governmental institutions than in other sectors. However, my informants have experiences from all the sectors and can tell that women face obstacles in every work place. Such obstacles can be lack of trust because of their gender or it can be related to difficulties with working in a mixed environment. Furthermore, the importance of further analyzing these obstacles seems to be necessary in order to remove them. Questions which need to be investigated may be: What kind of obstacles do women meet in the work place? Why are female employees concentrated in the governmental sector? And further, are the answers that may be found on the previous questions contributing to the fact that many women do not work at all?

The concentration of Qataris in the governmental sector, as explained in Figure 4.9, is regardless gender. According to Informant B, most Qataris want to work in the governmental

sector because it gives more security, for both male and female.¹⁰⁴ There may be several reasons for locals to choose the governmental sector; there are less working hours than in the mixed/private sector, the high wages and better opportunities to combine work and family. Also, it seems easier to combine a job in the governmental sector with personal business affairs.

Back in the 1970s, the only occupations available for women were as teachers, Informant B says. Moreover, the government educated too many female teachers and the need to establish new suitable arenas for women was necessary. Many women started to work in clerical positions, in universities, banks and other ministerial offices, as the government provided them with separate work places where men and women did not need to interact with each other. Gender-segregated work places made it possible for women to enter some occupations as their father or husband would have prevented them to work if it was in mixed environments.¹⁰⁵ Today, the practice of gender-segregated work places is challenged by the developments in the rest of the society. It is therefore difficult for many women to find work places that still are separated. According to Informant A, many female students finish their education with excellent grades and are eager to start working. However, many of them end up as teachers because their father wants them to work in a gender-segregated work place. The dilemma of gender-segregated work places is something that my informants take deep interest in. Most of them support the development in the work places where females and males work alongside each other. Furthermore, they feel that mixed environments are required in a modern society. Informant F says: “One day you are going to meet a man and eventually you have to work with him!”¹⁰⁶ According to her it is better to start with mixed environments in the schools. She refuses the idea of her daughter going to a school or a university with only girls. Further, it will be easier for girls to deal with male colleagues if they are familiar with being surrounded by them at school, she says.¹⁰⁷

There are also disadvantages with mixed environments in the work place. Informant H says the following: “Some girls would like to work but their family won’t allow it as they will not

¹⁰⁴ Informant B.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Informant F.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

approve mixed environments in the work place”.¹⁰⁸ It is almost impossible for these women to work as there are so few gender-separated work places left. The dilemma seems to be clear: The progress in the country has challenged the traditional values saying that men and women should be separated. Many people are still not ready to embrace the modern way of thinking and will therefore prevent their daughters and wives from working in a mixed environment. Informant F says that it is sad that some women cannot work at all. There are jobs that do not need communications between men and women and hence the need for mixed environments is not there. “It is not fair for the women who cannot stay in a mixed environment that she cannot work”, Informant H concludes.¹⁰⁹ It is the same problem in the school system as well. Qatar University is one example; some years ago there was made a proposal that suggested a mixed environment at the university. Many families reacted by threatening to take their daughters out of university if the proposal went through. Many families are still frightened by the idea of sending their daughters to Education City where it is co-existence between the genders. They rather prefer Qatar University and mean that there should be at least one university with separate campuses.¹¹⁰ Almost all the informants have stories that confirm the difficulties by having mixed environments in the schools and the work places. Informant B says that her niece was refused to go to Education City even though she wanted to study there. She continues by saying that her niece was very ambitious, but the males in her family refused her to study in a mixed environment.¹¹¹ Mixed environment is, according to my informants, the main obstacle towards integrating females into the labour market. Informant F says that the segregation between genders is deeply rooted in the culture and that the government needs to take this into consideration: “Why do they not offer them what they need (separated work places), and also keep productivity high? In that way you will get more nationals employed”.¹¹²

It may seem reasonable to suggest that gender-segregated work places should be maintained. With this solution, the number of economically active women could be higher. However, most of my informants consider mixed environments in the work place as a natural development that will benefit both genders. Also, as Informant A explains, it would be good

¹⁰⁸ Informant B.

¹⁰⁹ Informant H.

¹¹⁰ Informant F.

¹¹¹ Informant B.

¹¹² Informant F.

to change the idea and the belief that every relation between men and women is bad.¹¹³ The process where men and women need to interact is un-stoppable. It does, however, also mean that some women are prevented from working. Furthermore, the need to create awareness on the issue of gender-segregation is necessary as it both prevents many women from working and limits other women's job opportunities.

Qatari women, as written in the Labour Law (2004), have the right to 50 days of maternity leave. In addition to that, women are entitled with a full year with one hour per day for breast feeding. Many women feel it is hard to combine work with a family life, despite the efforts being made to ease it. Family issues are probably the main reason why so many Qatari women choose the governmental sector instead of the private/mixed sector. According to one of the women in Group A, it is difficult to manage both work and family. Because of her work in the mixed sector she often stays in the office until five, six and seven in the evenings: "That is why you find most of the women in the educational sector. When you have a family it is easier to combine it with a job in the educational sector (governmental)", she says.¹¹⁴ Informant J also works in the mixed sector and she agrees that it is hard to combine work and family. She emphasizes that she is lucky because her husband's family can take care of her daughter. According to Informant J, the maternity leave is too short as her company only gives her forty days. Also, because she has a long drive to work, the one hour for breast feeding is useless as she does not have time to go to the house in one hour. The arrangements for female employees seem to be a low priority for many companies. One example of limited arrangement is the shortcoming of daycare. According to my informants, the companies in the private and mixed sector need to change their policy on this matter if they want to attract female employees.

My informants say that most of the Qatari women are reluctant to hand over their children to their servants. Therefore, as we noticed in Figure 4.7, the part of housewives is high among non-economical active women. A job in the governmental sector is more attractive, as you work less hours than in the private and therefore have more time with the family. As head of department in one of the oil and gas companies, Informant I give some explanations about why so many Qataris choose the governmental sector instead of the private. He means that there are a lot of restrictions in the private/mixed sector. The governmental sector is better organized in

¹¹³ Informant A.

¹¹⁴ Group A.

order to provide jobs for locals in the ministries. According to Informant I, it is easy for nationals, they graduate and within a month they could have a job in the governmental sector. The support given in private and mixed sectors is not enough in order to attract nationals. For women especially, the lack of support is a major problem. Informant I says that during the last three months he had to push really hard in order to be able to hire *one* female national.

Lack of support towards female employees seems to be a problem that needs to be taken more seriously in the private and mixed sectors than in the governmental sector. Informant I says that these two sectors need to support nationals in general, not only females. According to him, the high number of expats in the companies is one reason for the lack of support towards nationals. While foreign workers occupy a number of great positions, many nationals feel they have no career development. Further he says that in his company, many nationals stay in the same position for years and in the end they may resign and turn to the governmental sector. As the number of Qataris in general is low in the private and mixed sector, this may also indicate that Qatari female employees will meet far more obstacles than their male counterparts. The general view on working women seems to be dominated by patriarchal attitudes and furthermore the reluctance to hire female employees is, according to some of my informants, clear and visible.

According to Informant I, male leaders think in stereotypes about women and therefore feel reluctance to hire them. Some leaders think that it would be a waste to hire female employees as they get pregnant and then will have maternity leave. Furthermore, they think that male employees are much more focused on work; female employees are much more connected to the children and other family related issues. Informant I, on the other hand, means that women are performing as well and as proactive as men, and they deliver good results. Despite of his confidence in female employees, Informant I faced difficulties with his manager because he hired too many females. He explains that male's attitudes toward women depend on how they are raised. Their culture and background play an important role in how they view women's role in the society.¹¹⁵ Informant E works in Human Resources in one of the major oil companies, and he agrees with Informant I. "I do not know if I want to say this in public, but I will say it anyway. It is a "fear" and reluctance from the management to hire women because of their role in the family," he says.¹¹⁶ In other words; they train women, spend a lot of money on them, and

¹¹⁵ Informant I.

¹¹⁶ Informant E.

afterwards many women go back to family life. As a part of the “Qatarization” process, companies are required to hire nationals. However, they rather choose Qatari male employees than Qatari females because then they know that they will stay in the company. “Right or wrong, I do not know because they do not have a long enough history in order to see how long people stay in the company. But, relatively few women choose the oil and gas industry as a career, he adds”.¹¹⁷

Many of my informants tell me that it is difficult for female employee in a male dominant work place. It is little doubt that it is harder for female employees in the private and mixed sectors compared to the situation in the governmental sector. However, stories from my informants tell me that patriarchal attitudes towards female employees are common in all sectors. Informant J started her career in the Health Department (governmental sector). As a newly graduate she presented new ideas and introduced them to her manager. He ignored them with the following message: “I only ask for what you can do, do not do anything difficult!”¹¹⁸ Hence, Informant J was placed in an office where she did her work in fifteen minutes. The rest of the work day she read newspapers. When she wanted to resign, her manager tried to keep her because she was a national female. “You are lucky, most Qatari females would be glad to have a job like this”.¹¹⁹ Moreover, it may seem like many women (and probably also men) may be placed in an office just to increase the number of economical active national women.

Many of my female informants say that men are intimidated by working women. Informant B says that the culture is to blame. Men want to have control over women and are afraid of losing it.¹²⁰ Informant G is a young and well educated Qatari woman and is of same opinion as Informant B. “Some men support women, but at the end of the day they do have this mentality that women cannot be better than me,” she says and follows up with the following sentence “I think that men, even if they will not admit it, and are acting like they are fine with women being leaders, deep inside they do not like to be managed by a woman.”¹²¹ She thinks that the mentality of the new male generation is changing, but they will not fully accept it as she makes the remark “they are going to live with it (it = live with female employees), but deep inside they

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Informant J.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Informant B.

¹²¹ Informant G.

will not accept it.”¹²² The assumptions, that men are intimidated by women, can to a certain degree be crucial when discussing job opportunities for women. If the patriarchal attitudes sustain it could be hard for most women to obtain high positions. Hence, there will only be a limited selection of jobs that are suitable for female employees.

Research on “Qatari women and Leadership Challenges” says that the number of women in decision-making roles is still low and there is a wide gap between the genders. Women’s ability to assume leadership positions in the society faces some major challenges.¹²³ Women with high administrative positions are mainly concentrated in education and health, which are historically fields for women’s occupations. Despite of women entering non-traditional work fields such as economy, media and communication, women’s share of leadership positions in these fields is almost zero.¹²⁴

Surveying the opinions of 1015 persons has given some answers to why the number of female leaders is so low:

- 32.7% of the sample individuals supported women’s ability to assume leadership positions.
- 42% sees that women are eligible for high positions to a certain extent. This percentage shows that a great part of the sample is not completely confident that women can obtain high positions.
- 24.6% are negative towards women occupying leadership positions. This attitude is however more common among males by 36.2% compared to 15% of females.¹²⁵

The research also reveals what kind of sectors people find appropriate for women’s work.

The Following are the results of this survey:

- 88% of the sample group agrees that the educational sector is most appropriate for women’s work.
- 2.8% supported women’s work in the ministries.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Khaltam Ali al-Ghanem, “Qatari Women and Leadership Challenges,” Qatar, The Supreme Council of Family Affairs, <http://www.scfa.gov.qa/studies/> (accessed April 7, 2010).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

- 28% of the sample group supported women's work in the health sector. Other sectors, however, did not receive any support from the sample group.¹²⁶

There are different obstacles preventing women from working as well as making it hard for them to stay in the work place. These obstacles are probably more serious for women seeking leadership positions. On the basis of my own observations combined with the previous mentioned research I see four main obstacles for women to assume leadership positions:

- The high degree of socialization with men in such positions.
- Culture and tradition refuses the idea of women in leadership positions.
- The husband does not allow his wife to assume high positions due to job requirements such as travel, attending meetings, education, etc. also outside the country etc.
- Long work hours and lack of arrangements for women to combine family and work.

The main obstacles seem to be the societal aspects and are connected to culture and traditions. Therefore women's participation in the job market needs more support from society, even from the family. On the other hand, there are also reasons to believe that this situation can change. Many of my informants have liberal and supportive families. Informant G says that she has the freedom to pick whatever she was comfortable with and that her parents are ok with her being independent. Another female informant from Group A says that her family supported her during her education. However, if she wanted to continue her education abroad they would have denied her this opportunity. Family issues are therefore important to analyze further in order to understand women's difficult choices regarding education and work. As a preliminary outcome of this hypothesis one might say that practical arrangements for women, especially in the private and mixed sector, need to be improved. However, in a long term perspective, it will not be enough if the practical arrangements are improved unless the general view on women's role in society changes. Therefore, as Hypothesis B suggests, for long term and lasting improvements, the family traditions are probably the main concern that needs to be addressed.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

5.3 Hypothesis B: Family traditions

Hypothesis B suggests that family is the most important factor when analyzing women's choices regarding education and work. The patriarchal system in the Gulf region has traditionally considered women as mothers and wives and not as much as the ones that provide the economic income for the family. As presented in chapter four, women are by far less economical active than men, and it is reasonable to believe that the patriarchal system still controls women's choices. Furthermore, women are under influence of different males throughout their lifetime: father, brothers and husband. I will divide this hypothesis into two parts: First, women are influenced by their father, mother, brothers and sisters. Tradition, culture and religion play major parts in how parents raise their children and this will influence the choices women later take regarding education and work. Secondly, when women get married their husband's view on women's role in the society will be decisive for whether the wives can work or not, or what kind of work that is suitable for them.

5.3.1 Family and its influence on their daughter's choices

The role of women in Qatar is among the issues discussed by sociologists in *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā'iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*. According to them, Qatari girls are from a young age raised up to believe that they are of less value than their brothers. The patriarchal system in Qatar, as well as the whole region, has caused this development.¹²⁷

هناك فكرة تقليدية سائدة في المجتمعات العربية والخليجية أيضا وثيقة الصلة بمكانة المرأة ووظيفتها ودورها في المجتمع تتمثل في "أن المرأة وجدت لتكون أما وزوجة، وهذه الفكرة متأصلة في الثقافة التقليدية التي يسيطر عليه النظام الأبوي فينظر إلى المرأة من خلال سيطرة الرجال (الأب – الأخ...الخ).¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Fārūq Ismā'īl and 'Alī layla, *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā'iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa* (Doha: Jāmi'at Qaṭar, 1993), 547.
For further reading see chapter thirteen "Dawr al-mar'a al-mutaghayyir fi l-mujtama' al-qaṭarī.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

There is a prevailing and traditional view in the Arabic world as well as in the Gulf, strongly related to the position of women, their functions, and her role in the society that is expressed as follows “Women is made to be a mother and wife.” This idea is deeply rooted in traditional culture where the patriarchal system dominates. So, women are perceived through the domain of men (the father, the brother....etc).

Many of my informants agree with the above mentioned description of the Qatari society. “Everything we do is according to the role of women, and everybody, male and female, thinks that the male is more upper class than the female”, says Informant A.¹²⁹ She considers the gender roles in Qatar clear and visible. According to her, women can do more if they have more space. While some people think that increased freedom for women is against the religion, Informant A says “the religion tells me that I can work”.¹³⁰ However, there are still too many families that put restrictions on their daughters and this will affect the ones who want to work outside the house. Furthermore, we might say that the country has experienced a rapid development were the establishment of educational institutions have a main priority. On the other hand, the society has maintained its traditional values were the view on women is one example. It is important to emphasize, as Informant E says, that changing some aspects of a culture does not mean to destroy everything with it.¹³¹ The need to create public awareness on the dilemma of combining modern thinking with traditional values seems to be necessary.

The role of religion is for many the most obvious factor when analyzing the “submissive” role of Qatari women. When discussing religion with my informants, most of them describe the relationship between religion and culture as a twilight zone. Informant H says that the problem is when you link religion to culture. According to her, conservative forces are preventing women to work in the name of religion and tell them to stay home. However, this is not true, she remarks; it is rather a cultural aspect than a religious one. “It is not written any places in our holy Quran that women cannot work, but when they (the conservatives) speak in the name of religion it becomes even more powerful and people listen,” Informant H says.¹³² Informant I is of same opinion as Informant H when discussing the role of culture. He believes that the view

¹²⁹ Informant A.

¹³⁰ Ibid..

¹³¹ Informant E.

¹³² Informant H.

on women's role in the society relates to the values of the tribal culture.¹³³ As explained in chapter two, the structure of the tribal culture was of patriarchal origin and according to many of my informants the same structure is visible today. Analyzing the various interpretations of Islam and Islamic feminism is beyond the scope of this case study, however it can be mentioned that Islam has not deterred women in non-Arabic Islamic countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan from reaching top positions. Therefore, as my informants say, a broader aspect of religion, culture and traditions impact women's participation in the labour market.

According to Informant E, the father figure, and also the family unit, is always involved in decisions regarding children's education and work. The Human Resource department in Informant's E company did a research around three years ago where they asked the question: "Why did you choose to work in this company? Over 90 % answered that they chose the company because their parents advised them to do so. Family traditions have enormous influence over the children's choices and therefore, as Informant E puts it, "if you want to hire people, go to the parents".¹³⁴ Furthermore, the father figure is especially important also in the culture in Qatar. Informant E continues, as a HR-employee (Human Resources) he has experienced a number of incidents which can be related to family issues. As one example, there was a female graduate who applied for a job in the company. The company wanted to hire her and arranged for it to happen. However, the day after she came to the office with her father who wanted to know if there was a mixed environment in the work area? Because of the policy of mixed environment the female student was not allowed to work in the company, even though she was highly motivated and qualified for the job. Also, Informant E says, there have been cases where women have signed contracts with the company, and they have been informed that a job in this industry involve a lot of traveling to the plant/site. But, when they finished their education, and everything was paid for by the company, they refused to go the plant. In such cases it was common for fathers to come to the office and say "My daughter will not work in Mesaieed (Industrial city in Qatar)!"¹³⁵ Informant E emphasizes that the family is important for both daughters and sons, but daughters have more restrictions than their brothers.

¹³³ Informant I.

¹³⁴ Informant E.

¹³⁵ Informant E.

The Qatari family unit varies from one family to another in terms of how conservative they are. Informant B says that we can distinguish between original Qatari families and non-original Qatari families. In such a frame she considers the original families to be more conservative in their way of thinking than the non-original families. Informant B is from an original Qatari family, thus she is from a conservative family. Even though Informant B has chosen a non-traditional career path, there are restrictions that remind her of her conservative origin. For example, Informant B is a mature woman, but she is not married and still has to live with her parents. Furthermore, it is still prohibited for women to travel alone without a male guardian. And, because Informant B is not married; her father can prevent her from traveling abroad. When that is said, most males do not use this kind of power, it is more a symbolic control of women, she says. Informant B continues by saying that her father has never approved her choices of education and work, but in the end he will not refuse them.¹³⁶

The youngest women among my informants come from liberal families. Therefore they can represent how family influence can be a positive factor for women. Informant G studied in Education City, in a mixed environment, and her family supported her decisions.¹³⁷ Informant F comes from a family with four sisters and all of them are well educated and with good jobs. She says her father pushed them to take education and told them to wait with marriage. He told them “no, finish your education and then go on and live your life!”¹³⁸ The situation is the same for Informant J and one of the women in Group A. Informant J says the following: “My family is open-minded so there have been no problems. They encouraged me and my sisters to take higher education. One of my sisters even studied abroad without any male guardian.”¹³⁹ Also, she did not face any problems with her family when she joined the oil and gas industry. Furthermore, all the informants who works in the mixed and private sector seem to come from liberal families. When asking them (the informants in these sectors) the question “do you think your family is representative in their way of thinking”, their opinions were divided. The informants in Group A, collectively, were of the opinion that *some* families do not like that women work, but they represent a small minority. Further, they think that if I asked the question ten years ago the situation would have been different.¹⁴⁰ The other female informants

¹³⁶ Informant B.

¹³⁷ Informant G.

¹³⁸ Informant F.

¹³⁹ Informant J.

¹⁴⁰ Group A.

in the private and mixed sectors had slightly different opinions. According to Informant G, most of the Qatari families want their girls to work in a field that is suitable for women.¹⁴¹ Informant F is of the opinion that some families really encourage their daughters to do a career, however she know parents who want their daughters to get educated and afterwards get married. As she says “they will even put in her mind that: ok, after education you are supposed to get married”.¹⁴² Further, she continues by telling that some parents will feel safe when they see their daughters with a husband. They might think “we take care of her until she is twenty years old and after that someone else, a husband, will take care of her”.¹⁴³ These attitudes will not encourage their daughters to be active in the labour market, but to get married and have a family. Informant H says that there are differences between families and some will not approve for their daughters to work in a mixed environment. Furthermore, she says “it is a part of our culture for the man to be the breadwinner and to participate in the financial matters, and some families are still living after this tradition”.¹⁴⁴

Family is the cornerstone in the Qatari society. As we have seen, their influence on their children’s choices regarding education and work is regardless of gender. Also, for many of my informants the influence from their families has been positive for their career. However, the overall impression from the in-depth interviews combined with the statistical data presented in chapter 4.2, show that the patriarchal system still is clear and visible in the Qatari society. Furthermore, the family unit, and especially the father figure, is important for women (and men) when they choose education and work. On the other hand, when women get married their husband’s view will decide whether she would work or not.

5.3.2 The roles of husband and wife

Traditionally, men and women have different roles in the Qatari society. While men are taking care of economical matters, women are closely linked up to the role as wife and mother. Many women, even though they are well educated, choose to stay home after they get married and have children. Furthermore, some women point out that it is difficult to find a

¹⁴¹ Informant G.

¹⁴² Informant F.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Informant H.

Qatari husband who will accept her choosing otherwise. According to *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā'iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*, the traditional view on women's role in the society remains and stay strong:

وعلى الرغم من التغيير الذي حدث لدور المرأة فلا زالت النظرة التقليدية قوية لدى الكثيرين في المجتمع والتي ترى أنه لا ضرورة لعمل المرأة ولا أهمية لتعليمها . وأن المكان المناسب للمرأة هو بيتها ومسئولياتها في الحياة مراعاة الزوج وتربية الأبناء . وهذه النظرة التقليدية أثرت على تفكير المرأة نفسها ونظرتها للتعليم والعمل.¹⁴⁵

Despite the changes which have affected the role of women, the traditional view that many in the society hold and that recognizes neither the necessity for women to work nor the importance of educating them, is still strong. The most suitable place for a woman is in her house where her responsibility is to take care of her husband and rear their sons. This traditional view influences the way the woman herself thinks and how she perceives education and work.

The need to enhance the role of women is necessary, Informant D says. Even though women are highly educated, men still controls the society. Women are well qualified to obtain high positions, but values and traditions have to change in the Qatari society in order for them succeed.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, my female informants represent those who have managed to be successful in their jobs. On the other hand, it is interesting to notice that five out of the seven female informants are not married. Also, only one of the women in Group A is married. The female informants differ in age and therefore some of them will probably get married in the years to come. However, some of the informants have deliberately chosen not to get married. Do some women feel like they have to choose between marriage and a career?

Informant A, B and C are not married. These women are of a higher age than the other informants and represent another generation. All of them are well educated and have probably the highest positions among the female informants. Informant B is very clear on the fact that it is difficult to find a Qatari husband who will accept her choices regarding career. Qatari

¹⁴⁵ Ismā'īl and Layla, *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā'iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*, 555.

¹⁴⁶ Informant D.

women are, according to her, not allowed to marry non-Qatari men. On the other hand, Qatari men are allowed to marry non-Qatari women. As a result of this rule, there will be more single women than men. A more dramatic way to say it, some women may be forced to stay single. In such a case, women have no other choice but to work because her family cannot support her economically throughout her life. Informant B means that there are too many restrictions for women. Even if a couple is separated the husband can prevent the wife from traveling abroad. She continues by saying that a woman gets a bad reputation if she travels alone and maybe that is one of the reasons why she is still single? Informant B says that she believes in her own intellect and that women can take their own choices. As mentioned before, Informant B, as well as most of the other informants thinks that men are afraid of losing control. Despite these obstacles, the situation is changing for women in Qatar and Informant B says that her generation is different from her mother's generation. While her mum stayed home with children, Informant B has proven that women can make a career. "I love my mum, but I am not her," she says when comparing her life with her mother's. On the other hand, Informant B feels that the traditional view on women remains strong and that she does not like to be controlled by a man.¹⁴⁷ Informants A and C have not been as specific as Informant B when discussing the matter of marriage. However, when asking Informant A if she is married she says: "No, I am single *al-ḥamdu lillāh!*" According to her, it is necessary to create more awareness on the role of women. Females are doing well in the educational system; however there are too many families that put restrictions on women when it comes to their participation in the labour market. She thinks that a husband should understand his wife and her choices in life. He should consider the family as a unit where family participation is important. If the woman is successful, the whole family is successful. Furthermore, she believes that the young male generation would like their wives to work and says: "Often the husband is arranging the work place for the wife (...)"¹⁴⁸

The two remaining female informants who are not married are in their twenties and therefore represent another generation than the above mentioned informants. They are well educated and both are employed in the oil and gas industry. Informant G is a newly graduate from one of the universities in Education City and was never in doubt whether she should apply for a job or not. She says that a lot of young Qatari women are interested in working; however,

¹⁴⁷ Informant B.

¹⁴⁸ Informant A.

when some women get married they feel like they have to choose between a family and a career. Informant G does not think women have to choose between these two aspects of life. Her mum started working as soon as she graduated and continued to work after she got married. Having a role model like her mum, Informant G says that she would not quit her job if she gets married. Furthermore, it will be important for her to get a husband that is open-minded towards her making a career. She hopes that the new Qatari male generation will change their mentality, but she does not believe that men will fully accept female employees in the work place. People have to be exposed to different cultures where women are respected in the work place. “In that way they can see that it is not intimidating when women work and have leadership positions”, she continues.¹⁴⁹ Informant H agrees with Informant G and says that some women feel like they have to stop working when they get married. She remarks that she will continue to work, even if she gets married, as that it is not her “style” to stay home; it is to be active and work. Furthermore, she says that many women choose to stay home to take care of children, instead of leaving the upbringing the housekeeper raise them.¹⁵⁰ The last statement is crucial as it is important to remember that it is a *choice* for many women to stay home with children. Just as it is important to emphasize that it is not wrong to choose a life without a career. For many women, taking care of the family is the main priority in life and this must be respected. However, it should be a choice: whether to stay home, work or to combine these two.

Among the three female informants who are married, two of them have children. They say it is hard to combine a family with a career, especially in the private and mixed sectors. Informant J says it is hard to spend eight hours away from the children. As discussed in Hypothesis A, the companies do not arrange for daycare and it is therefore hard to find someone who could take care of the children.¹⁵¹ One of the women in Group A agrees with Informant J and says it is hard to stay at work until five, six and seven. That is why so many women choose to work in the governmental sector, where it is easier to combine a job with family.¹⁵² It is reasonable to suggest that many women choose to stay home in order to take care of children. In such a manner, the husband might approve that his wife is working, but it is too hard for them both working when they have children.

¹⁴⁹ Informant G.

¹⁵⁰ Informant H.

¹⁵¹ Informant J.

¹⁵² Group A.

Regardless whether women are married or not, there are common obstacles that either prevent women from working or make it hard for them at the work place. Informant J says that if women speak with men, rumors may damage their reputation and be serious for female employees. Furthermore, she tells that the “jungle bells” ring whenever a woman looks at a man in the wrong way. Therefore, the husband is contacted if a rumor about a woman speaking with a man is spread. Even though Informant J’s husband approves that she works in a mixed environment, she says that deep inside he will never accept it. Furthermore, Informant J does not know if she will continue to work in the company. The main reason is that it is too hard to combine a family with a job in the mixed sector. This is due to the lack of practical arrangements for female employees. Also, rumors and male dominant attitudes in the work place make it harder for women to survive in a mixed environment than it is for men.¹⁵³ In many ways, men have control over women; either it is in the work place or in the house. Further, this control becomes very visible when male colleagues in the work place report on the behavior of female employees to their husbands.

My informants represent a small selection of economical-active women; however, a majority of them mean that male attitudes are obstructing further progress for women. Male attitudes, either they come from the father, husband or male colleagues; prevent women from entering the labour market and to stay there. As a result of the male dominance, some women choose to stay single in order to do a career. Also, the President of Qatar University says in an interview with the Norwegian newspaper *Dagens Næringsliv*: Women who are highly educated have problems with choosing a husband that is not educated and more and more women over thirty choose to stay single instead of getting married. As many Qatari men immediately get a job after mandatory school, women are highly motivated to take an education, and hence become more educated than men.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Informant J.

¹⁵⁴ Anne Flæte, “Revolusjon bak sløret,” *Dagens Næringsliv*, April 17, 2010.

5.4 Hypothesis C: The educational system

Many of the Gulf monarchies have faced the dilemma of combining modernization with religion and traditional culture and values. According to Bahgat, language and history were the main focus in public education in the Gulf region for a long time. This was discussed in chapter 3.3. On the other hand, there was little focus on the technical skills needed in the oil industry. As males were able to study abroad in order to take technical education, most females were not able to do this. The situation has been similar in Qatar; women have been in majority at university level since the 1990s, as seen in Figure 4.2. However, their qualifications have not been attractive in for example the oil and gas industry. Hypothesis C suggests/asks: Has the quality of the educational system caused the low number of economical active Qatari women?

Education is considered as one of the most important factors in the empowerment of women. Not only should education provide women with increased job opportunities, but also give them valuable knowledge about their rights and duties. This is clearly expressed in chapter “*Ta’līm al-mar’a*” in *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā’iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*:

فتعليم المرأة هو أقوى سلاح تحمله لتغيير وضعها¹⁵⁵

Educating women is the most important weapon in changing her position.

According to the above mentioned chapter, the religious approach supports education of girls and women. According to “*Ta’līm al-mar’a*”, the Prophet considers education as a duty for all Muslims:

فهي (اعتباره من الأمور المتعلقة بالدين) تشجع التعليم لأن الدين الإسلامي حث عليه لقول الرسول

¹⁵⁵ Ismā‘īl and Layla, *Al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā’iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*, 556.

And it, the religious approach, encourages education because Islam says so through the words of the Prophet: "To seek knowledge is a religious duty for every Muslim man and woman".

Education has been a main priority in Qatar for a long time. As described in chapter 2.2, the first primary school for girls opened already in 1954. The high ratio of female students at Qatar University, now, and as it has been since the 1990s is a clear sign that education is considered important for both genders. It may, however, seem like the quality of the educational programs has not corresponded with needs in the labour market. As my informants say, the programs at Qatar University did not prepare women for the job market. This statement confirms with the research Bahgat did on the educational systems in the Gulf in the late 1980s. According to statistics presented in Figure 4.2, 75.7% of all students at Qatar University were females in 1990. It is therefore noteworthy, that according to Figure 4.6, that over 70% of all women were economically non-active in 1986. Furthermore, it is necessary to ask: what was, and to a certain degree probably still is, the purpose for women to take higher education?

Females at Qatar University in the 1990s graduated in majors such as history, language and art. When they graduated they became teachers or did not work at all, Informant H says.¹⁵⁷ Informant F is of same opinion as Informant H, and remarks that Qatar University offered limited opportunities for female students in the 1990s. Men had better opportunities compared to women, as they attended other fields like engineering, business and administration. If students wanted to study medicine or programs not available in Qatar they had to travel abroad.¹⁵⁸ However, as Bahgat mentions in his research, it has not been accepted for families to send their daughters abroad. According to Informant F, this is a cultural "thing". Families feel that their daughters should be close to them and that they have to take care of them. Males, on the other hand, went abroad where they studied engineering,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Informant H.

¹⁵⁸ Informant F.

medicine etc. Hence, men became qualified to work in the oil and gas industry, while women had limited opportunities and the few who chose to work mainly became teachers.¹⁵⁹

There can be several reasons why women choose to study even though they are not planning to enter the labour market. One reason can be that an educated mother is attractive because she can influence her children with knowledge:

فالأم المتعلمة أكثر قدرة على تربية أبنائها و بشكل أفضل من المرأة غير المتعلمة.¹⁶⁰

An educated mother is more capable in the upbringing of her children and is more attractive than a mother without education.

Another reason can be that the university functions as a social arena. For some women, the social aspects by studying are just as important as the quality of the educational programs. Also, some women plan to get married after finished education and work might not be the final goal and outcome of education. As stated above, an educated mother will have valuable knowledge that they can bring on to their children and then better contribute in the upbringing of them. A third reason, which will be discussed in Hypothesis D, can be the strong economy in Qatar. Women from wealthy families do not have to work as two incomes have not been necessary in the family economy. However, these women see education as an important benefit as it either serves as a social arena or to bring knowledge to their children. Regardless reason, women have entered the educational institutions in large numbers probably without having any clear plan to enter the labour market.

When proposing the idea that women study without any job related plans for the future, Informant B disagree with it. She means that the majority of women study with an intention to work when they have finished. More women wished to stay home in the 1960s and 1970s, but it is different now. There might be some women, from rich families, that study just for interest. According to her, women are eager to work because of the social arena. It is the same with education, it is a social place for women, either they are among the richest families or

¹⁵⁹ Informant F.

¹⁶⁰ Ismā'īl and Layla, *Al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā'iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*, 557.

among the less rich families.¹⁶¹ Informant C is of same opinion as Informant B, she believes that most women plan to work after they have finished their education. She also says that many women are married when studying, and therefore it should not be any difference between combining studies and family and work and family.¹⁶² Furthermore, the women in Group A say that most women today actually need to work as the life standard in Qatar is so high. They mean that the situation in Qatar is different today than it was twenty, thirty years ago: before it was not expected that women should work, today, many families cannot afford not to let them work.¹⁶³ Informant A agrees with the other informants, and says that most women want to work. The low number of economical active women is therefore not in line with the expectations of the informants. According to Informant A, there are too many women at university level and she means that it is better for them to work. And, as the other informants have mentioned, most of them would like to work. However, many families differ between education and work and put restrictions for their daughters and wives when it comes to their participation in the labour market.¹⁶⁴

The quality in the educational programs in Qatar has improved. The major turning point in this development was the incorporation of Western universities in the Education City. According to Informant F, Sheikha Mozah brought this change to the country as she is the main contributor in this development. With the new universities, women have increased educational opportunities within the state of Qatar. Hence, this will lead to that men and women get more equal qualifications and in turn this might make women more attractive in different occupations. Informant F explains that it is an advantage, especially for females, to have more than one university in the country. When her sisters graduated they wanted to study medicine. However, there was no medical university in Doha so they went to study in other Gulf monarchies. Now, there are different opportunities available in Qatar and both female and male students have access to them, she says. For females who are not allowed to study abroad, the new universities provide them with unique opportunities. Informant F emphasizes that Qatar University has become a good university as well. She graduated from it the year before Education City opened. Before that they only had simple majors such as Arabic language, English and French, now they have established new colleges in engineering,

¹⁶¹ Informant B.

¹⁶² Informant C.

¹⁶³ Group A.

¹⁶⁴ Informant A.

architecture and the situation has changed a lot. The educational options have really become much better, and they are good alternatives to the Western universities.¹⁶⁵ Informant H agrees with Informant F that the quality in Qatar University is improving. When she studied there some years ago, the student's were not prepared for the job market. According to her, most of the colleges lacked good quality, except the Business and Administration College where she studied. Now they are dealing with the problems concerning quality as it is necessary in order for Qatar University to compete with the other universities. As women are entering non-traditional educational fields, attitudes towards them in these occupations need to change. Informant H says that attitudes have changed to a certain degree; when she was little, everyone expected her to become a teacher. Schools were seen upon as the best environments for women. When she said she wanted to study business and administration no one understood her desire to go in that direction. As a consequence of Qatar University's opening of new branches for females, Informant H graduated from the College of Business and Administration and now has a job that is related to her education.¹⁶⁶

Qatari men know they will get good positions, while women have to work hard in order to reach the top, Informant B says. From around 1973 (the year Qatar University was established) to 1994/1995 the highest position a woman could get was as a chairperson of a department. To earn such a position she had to have a Ph.D. In comparison, men could get top positions with "only" Master Degrees. Now, Informant B says, women can reach the top.¹⁶⁷ In 2003, the first woman was appointed Minister of Education. The same year, women were appointed to the positions as President of the Supreme Council of Family Affairs, President of Qatar University and Dean of the Faculty of Shari'a and Law.¹⁶⁸ In an interview with *Dagens Näringsliv*, the President of Qatar University, Sheikha Abdulla al-Misnad says that women are more motivated to take higher education than men. According to her, it is easy for local males to get a job without taking higher education. A young man can easily start working as a security guard or he can work in the police. For women, on the other hand, working in such professions is not acceptable. Therefore, women are dependent on higher

¹⁶⁵ Informant F.

¹⁶⁶ Informant H.

¹⁶⁷ Informant B.

¹⁶⁸ Qatar, Supreme Council for Family Affairs (2004), "Reply by the State of Qatar to the Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/QATAR-English.pdf> (accessed April 23, 2010).

education in order to get a job, either as a teacher or an engineer. The higher education a woman has, the easier it is for her to get a job, she says. Sheikha al-Misnad is a highly educated herself, and has a Ph. D from England.¹⁶⁹

Informant B says that women such as Sheikha al-Misnad are important role models for Qatari women. However, she means that the state, and media, exaggerates the importance of the relatively small number of women that have these positions. Also, as she says, there are no Qatari female ambassadors. She thinks that ambassadors are even more important than ministers, because the diplomacy is a critical area.¹⁷⁰ Another crucial point is that women with well known family names are better represented in leadership positions. The names al-Thani and al-Misnad are common in these positions. It would be a great step for Qatar when someone from the outside, and not from the al-Thani family, reach high positions, Informant B says.¹⁷¹

Informant A says that increased awareness is important for women to understand their rights. Female students are aware of their situation, and their role in society is thoroughly discussed both in classes and also in the hall ways on campus. She continues to say: “we think about the change, about our role, about the society and about the family”. According to her, to create awareness is important whether the students choose to work or not when they have finished education. Furthermore, she also thinks that awareness programs should be available for male students as well. Qatar University does not provide social studies at the male campus and she says the following: “social studies still belong to females in our tradition. It is Arabic Culture”.

Increased awareness about women’s rights is also something that is discussed in *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā’iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*.

"بالرغم من الإنتشار والتوسع في التعليم إلا أن كثيرا من الأسر العربية لا تزال تنتظر إلى تعليم المرأة كنوع من الخطر الذي قد يفتح عينها وعقلها على أمور يجب أن تظل مجهولة . وقد يجعلها تنمرد على خضوعها للرجل داخل الأسرة مما قد يعرض الأسرة للتفكك . " إن أهم امتياز حققه التعليم للمرأة هو أنه

¹⁶⁹ Flæte, ”Revulosjon bak sløret”.

¹⁷⁰ Informant B.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

جعلها واعية بحقوقها وواجباتها وهذه ما أكدته ربع عينة البحث التي أشارت إلى أن زيادة الوعي ارتبط وإلى حد بعيد بتغير اتجاهات الرجل وتغير النظرة إليها وبقدرتها على الاضطلاع بدور متغير قد لا يقل في كثير من الأحيان عن الدور الذي يضطلع به الرجال عادة.¹⁷²

“Despite spread and expansion of the educational sector, many Arabic families still see education of women as some kind of threat that may open their eyes and their intellects to things that must remain unknown. It may make the women rebel against her submissiveness to the man in the family, and that in turn may expose the family to disintegration.” The most important benefit achieved by educating women is that it made them conscious of their rights and duties. One-fourth of the samples in this study indicate that women’s increasing awareness is related to a great extent to men’s changing attitudes and the way they look at women as well as to their [women’s] ability to assume changeable roles, roles that very often may not be less than the roles assumed by men.

There has been little diversity in the educational opportunities available to women in Qatar. Men and women have not been equal in terms of educational opportunities and hence not equal when it comes to work related opportunities. When analyzing my informant’s comments on the educational system there are some crucial points:

- Women’s graduates from Qatar’s educational system in the 1990s and the beginning of 2000 tend to have the same set of skills, and this make it hard for them to find suitable employment, except in the educational sector.
- The educational system in Qatar has improved with the establishment of Education City. Increased opportunities make a growing number of women enter non-traditional educational fields such as engineering and business.
- The society has to a certain degree accepted women entering non-traditional educational fields, but it still imposes restrictions on women entering non-traditional work places. This leads to that many women are qualified to work as engineers and doctors, but other factors such as religion and tradition limit their job opportunities.
- Women need higher education in order to get a job. Men, on the other hand, have

¹⁷²Ismā‘īl and Layla, *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā‘iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*, 557.

more options even without higher education.

In a long term perspective, educated women should enter the labour market. Sheikha al-Misnad believes that highly educated women will obtain leadership positions in the future. The fact that women are more educated than men will change the idea that men are natural leaders. Furthermore, she emphasizes that women must have a strong desire to obtain these positions. The challenge is to make women choose whatever they want, and not what the family or the society expects of them, she says.¹⁷³

5.5 Hypothesis D: The structure of the economy and its influence on women's participation in the labour force

The structure of the economy in the Gulf is based on oil and gas. According to Ross, the strong economy discourages women from participating in the labour force. He suggests that oil, and not Islam, promotes less progress toward gender equality in the Middle East.¹⁷⁴ Such a statement can be interpreted in different ways: Hypothesis D suggests two: first, the strong economy in Qatar does not support women's participation in the labour force as their income is not necessary in the family economy. Secondly, the oil and gas industry is not considered to be suitable for female employees, especially not for females in the Gulf region. Is it reasonable to suggest that the strong economy in Qatar has made more obstacles than benefits in order to integrate women into the economy? If that is the case, what are the obstacles? And, can these obstacles be removed in order to encourage women's entry into this type of industry?

As described in chapter 2.1, women's work became less important when the oil economy replaced the rural economy. With the oil booming, most families did not need two incomes and males were considered to be the economical care takers. The informants in Group A say that the situation is different today. For most Qatari males and females, it is necessary to have two incomes as the life standard is so high, one of the informants comments. "It is difficult for middle class Qataris. Many young people end up living with their parents, because the

¹⁷³ Flæte, "Revulosjon bak sløret".

¹⁷⁴ For further readings, see chapter 2.1.

rents are so high” she continues.¹⁷⁵ Informant J agrees with the informants in Group A, and says that her family is dependent on her income as well as her husband’s income.¹⁷⁶ According to Informant B, Ross’s theory might represent the 1960s and 1970s. Now, women either need to work because of the added income or they work because they want to work.¹⁷⁷ It is important to emphasize that the government in Qatar provide their locals with education and health care free of charge and also several other benefits. However, as the life standard has become so high, many families will not be satisfied with the governmental support. Hence, many women contribute to the family economy by working.

As discussed in chapter 5.2.2, the arrangements for female employees are more suitable for female employees in the governmental sector than in the private and mixed sectors. As the oil and gas sector is included in the private and mixed sectors, we already know from statistics that females face more obstacles than males at this work place. “The oil industry is not kind to women”, Informant E says.¹⁷⁸ He has worked in this industry for over twenty years and tells that the problems women face are the same whether you are in North America or in the Middle East. As the oil industry is a very technically oriented area, very few women tend to do a career in this area. It is a worldwide problem and there are few women holding leadership positions. However, it is especially hard for women in the Gulf area, he says. “We do face problems with female engineers in the oil/gas field. It is not easy for women to visit a completely male dominant plant, especially in this culture; it may be hard in the Western world, but as already said, it is especially hard in this culture”, he continues.¹⁷⁹ As discussed several times, the ratio of females at University level is high and so is the quality of the female students. While it is easy for women to get hired on administrative level, it is more difficult for female engineers. Informant E says that they have female geologists in the company, but he has heard that women face difficulties when they are going to oil rigs, drilling rigs and other field work related facilities. The male dominance is an *obstacle* in the oil industry, and we consider it to be a “non-female friendly” work environment, he continues to say. However, there has been an increase in the number of women seeking scholarship in Informant E’s company.¹⁸⁰ This may be seen as a direct consequence of the increase in

¹⁷⁵ Group A.

¹⁷⁶ Informant J.

¹⁷⁷ Informant B.

¹⁷⁸ Informant E.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

students attending engineering programs. A scholarship is considered to be a lucrative deal for students. All costs regarding education are paid for and the students also get allowances. Females who are traveling abroad can also bring relatives with them as they get paid for as well.¹⁸¹ Even though there has been an increase in women seeking scholarships it remains to see how many of them are willing to continue in the industry afterwards.

According to Informant E, it is hard to attract women to the oil industry. It is not only that the management may be reluctant to hire women (as discussed in chapter 5.2.2), but it is also the reluctance from females. Informant E says that many of the disciplines needed in the oil industry *are not suited for women*. Lack of arrangements at the work places contributes to alienate female employees. As informant E says, his company has absolutely no accommodation for females out on the oil rigs. The male dominant industry does not attract women to apply for jobs. Further, it does not help to attract women if they only see obstacles in order to participate and progress in the job, he says.¹⁸² My female informants in the oil and gas industry have a variety of opinions on this matter. Informant F says that many women are interested to work in the oil and gas industry. She knows many girls who are going to career fairs and apply for jobs. However, the companies seem reluctant in order to hire women and she continues: “Maybe it is just that they do not like to have girls?”¹⁸³ She points at the fact that it is around 50 Qatari women compared to thousands of men in her company. When Informant F was applying for jobs as a fresh graduate, the first offer came from the banking industry. The oil and gas industry did not answer her at first. As she was saying: “I kept on calling them, and they kept on losing my CV. I do not know for what reason, maybe they lost my CV or maybe it was just an excuse?” According to her, the oil and gas companies are looking for men. Maybe it is because women get married, have children and go through all these stages that men do not face, she remarks?¹⁸⁴ Informant G is of another opinion than Informant F. She met no problems when she applied for a job in the oil and gas industry. According to her, she had an advantage because she studied in one of the universities in the Education City, where she obtained three internships while studying. She says that the companies in the mixed and private sectors tend to accept students from the American universities instead of the ones from Qatar University. Informant G says that the companies

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Informant F.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

in the oil and gas industry are attracting women. It is the families and attitudes that are holding women back, not the companies. Her sister is an oil engineer and she works for an international company. She continues to say that her sister is willing to go to the oil field, but not every day. “I do not think any woman would be comfortable with going out to the field every day. It would be an advantage if you find a Qatari woman who is willing to go out in the field”, she says.¹⁸⁵ This last statement is crucial; even the most liberal women feel that there are different limits for men and women in the oil and gas industry.

Informant H says the society partly accept that females go out to the oil fields and construction sites. According to her, there are female interior designers who visit the sites before the construction is finished, but they do not deal directly with the labourers. She continues to say: “I accept the view that it is not good for women because of the climate in Qatar. It is too tough for a woman if you are going to the construction area in the warm weather.”¹⁸⁶ In such a framework, Informant H and and G agree with Informant E that the technical oriented work in the oil and gas industry is not very suitable for females. Administrative work is therefore looked upon as more appropriate for women than technically oriented work. However, there are Qatari women who go to production plants and oil rigs. Informant J tells me that she and the other four women in her department have visited the plants. The only problem for women entering these areas was the dress code. Therefore, her company approved a newly designed outfit that is more appropriate for women to wear. It is like a lab coat, but in two pieces and it is easy to cover the hair. According to her, there are a lot of men out on the plant, and with the new outfit women feel much more secure and safe than before the new outfit became available.¹⁸⁷

Despite the fact that some women work as technical engineers, Informant E believes that other industries are more suitable for women. In the oil and gas industry, the administrative work in Human Resources department is female friendly. Informant E says that it is very easy to find women who are willing to work there. One of the reasons why so many females want to work in Human Resources is because they do not have to travel, but rather stay can stay in an office. Further, he says that the majority of male employees, as well as the females, want to stay in an office in Doha.

¹⁸⁵ Informant G.

¹⁸⁶ Informant H.

¹⁸⁷ Informant J.

“I do not know what have to be done in order for women to fit better into the oil industry?” Informant E says. There will be needs for drastic changes. “I do not mean to be male dominant, but it is necessary to look at the most suitable positions for women”, he continues. The best for the country will be diversified industries. However, there are no productions to speak of in Qatar, which takes raw material and produces them into goods. Oman may be the best example among the Gulf countries where nationals have been used to do manual labour. In countries like Kuwait, UAE and *Qatar*, there are some jobs that are suitable for nationals and some that are not.¹⁸⁸ Informant E therefore agrees with the theory of Ross, that countries where women work in low-wage manufacturing, as for example Tunisia, have greater female political influence than in countries without low-wage manufacturing, as for example Qatar.

Informant H emphasizes that women who can work in mixed environments have increased opportunities in order to get a job in this industry. Combined with the fact that many of them are well educated this should make them attractive for the companies. However, the experiences from my informants tell me that it will be difficult to change the male dominant work culture in this industry. According to my observations the most obvious obstacles are:

- The male dominance makes it hard for women to enter positions in field related work areas. Lack of arrangements, such as accommodation in oil rigs, show that facilities need to be improved for females to enter these areas.
- Both males and females feel that there are different limits for men and women. Hence, technical oriented work where part of the work is done on sites and in the production plants is not considered to be suitable for females.
- Mixed environments, whether it is in the office or out in the field, make it hard for many women to enter this industry. Even though many governmental work places are mixed, the male dominance in the mixed and private sector is even more visible. Hence, families might not approve their women to work there.

It is hard to find and recommend a solution on how to remove these obstacles. First of all, the oil and gas industry is male dominant globally. But, as mentioned, due to culture, values and traditions it is even harder for women in the Gulf to enter this industry. However, there is an increase in the number of females studying engineering as well as an increase in women

¹⁸⁸ Informant E.

applying for scholarships. My informants represent a new generation of women who are eager to participate in the work life. Further, different factors will be decisive for them to succeed.

- Attitudes towards female employees need to change, and especially towards women which assume leadership positions.
- Women may need to engage through different discussing arenas in order to communicate conditions and requirements that have to be addressed to increase suitability of the work place in technical occupations. If women continue to be passive, the present situation will continue.
- The managements need to discover the importance of having female employees. Further, they need to trust them and provide them with prospects of interesting jobs.
- It must be possible to combine family with a job in the oil and gas industry or else the governmental sector will keep on attracting female employees.

Statistics indicate that only 5% of the Qatari labour force is employed in the mixed sector, of whom 78% were males and 22% were females. Furthermore, 7% is employed in the private sector, where 74% were males and 26% were females.¹⁸⁹ First of all, this means that Qataris in general are poorly represented in these industries. However, Qatari females are, by far, less represented than Qatari males. The very low number of nationals in the mixed and private sectors shows that these sectors are far less attractive than the governmental sector. When we then know that women, compared to men, also face many additional obstacles in the mixed and private sector, we can understand the low numbers of females, and that women have limited job opportunities. The statistics show that women tend to choose traditional occupations despite the fact that they are willing to enter in non-traditional educational fields.

¹⁸⁹ Qatar, Statistics Authority, “Analytical Summary Labour Force Sample Survey Results 2008”.

6 Conclusion

In this thesis I have analyzed the job opportunities for women in a typical oil rich country, using Qatar as my case study. The problem investigated was: Qatar has seen an “educational revolution.” How has this affected women and how has education improved women’s entry into the labour force? National reports show that the number of Qatari female employees is low, despite the high number of female students at University level. The mismatch between the high number of female students and the low number of female employees shows that there is a need to improve the understanding of social barriers to women’s access to the labour market. As the economy, religion, culture and traditions are similar in all the Gulf monarchies, the outcomes, conclusions and recommended solutions presented in this thesis can be representative for women’s situation not only in Qatar, but in the whole region.

As a background and basis for this thesis, I found it valuable to describe the transformation from the pre-oil economy, which was based on the pearling industry, and into the oil and gas-based industry we see today. The most interesting part in relation to my main problem definition was to see how the role of Qatari women evolved throughout this transformation period. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the pearl diving boats employed most of the Qatari male population. Women were in charge of the family when the men were out at sea. It might also be reasonable to suggest that women were in charge of the villages as well. Women’s role in the Bedouin camps was also important, even though the dominant patriarchal traditions were clear. These observations show that women had important positions in the pre-oil economy and the camps and villages were dependent on their work.

With the discovery of oil in 1939 Qatar was to enter a new era. Public services, such as hospitals, schools and the general infrastructure became high priorities as a result of the oil exploitation. Also, with the oil Qatar experienced changes in the skills and competence of the labour force. The import of foreign labour became necessary for Qatar to run the industry efficiently. For women, the shift from one economy to the other resulted in vital changes. While women in the Bedouin camps and in the coast villages in the pre-oil economy did a major amount of the work, women in the oil economy became “redundant” as there was no need for the work they earlier were doing. Despite the significant economic development

creating new job opportunities, women became more passive as the oil industry made its entry to the country.

As a result of increased oil revenues, an advanced educational system emerged from the original *al-katātīb*, the Quran schools. While the first modern school for boys opened already in 1913, the opening of the first primary school for girls was in 1954. The following years, the number of both girls' and boys' schools increased significantly. In 1973, Qatar University was established and Qatar had developed a complete and modern educational system. Today Qatar University has improved its educational facilities, and has eight colleges. Also, further progress is seen as several Western universities have been established as a result of one of Qatar Foundation's major initiatives; Education City. As we have seen, the development in the educational system has created increased opportunities for both males and females in Qatar. Especially for females, the new universities have made it possible to enter non-traditional educational fields such as engineering and medicine. The improvements of the educational facilities have a strong connection to oil revenues which have made huge investments possible. For women, even though the oil economy made them more passive in the labour market, the oil riches contributed to improve the educational system which in turn encourages women to enter the universities in large numbers.

The interest and fascination of women's role in the Gulf has led to different theories and research on this matter. In this thesis I have presented four researchers who have contributed to increased understanding of the barriers Gulf women face in the educational system and in the labour market. Their research on the Gulf has been valuable sources for me to present the development in Qatar in a broader perspective. Also, it shows that the Gulf monarchies have many similarities and that Gulf women experience more or less the same obstacles when entering the labour force whether they are in Qatar or in Kuwait.

As many researchers have blamed Islam for the low number of female employees in the Middle East; some of them, as Ross and Fargues, claim that oil explains why females are less economically active in the labour market. The most crucial point in their research is that generous oil wealth in the Gulf contributed to reduce the cost of having children. According to them, oil revenues indirectly promoted high fertility and thereby "prevented" women to enter the labour force.

The theories of Ross and Fargues give us important insight about why women are less economical active in the Gulf than elsewhere in the world. However, it is too easy to draw just one conclusion on such a complex problem. Even though oil revenues may have been causing less progress for women in the 1940, 1950s and 1960s, Bahgat suggests that there has been a strong connection between oil and education. On the other hand, the impressive economic achievements were not followed up with similar changes in domestic culture and values. Bahgat suggests that the educational system had no comprehensive development plan for the educational programs and therefore the quality of education did not satisfy the needs in the labour market. Further he argues that the nationals in the Gulf, and especially national women, have not been well prepared in order to enter the job market in the oil industry. Instead, foreign workers have been an important and dominant part of the labour force in the region for decades. According to Peterson, women entering non-traditional educational fields were going to cause enormous strains in the traditional Gulf societies. For women to enter the non-traditional work fields, traditional patriarchal attitudes towards equality of genders need to change.

There have been major changes in the quality of the educational system in the Gulf. Moreover, the opportunities for students have increased both when it comes to quality and accessibility to different educational fields. Therefore, the need for further research has been necessary in order to understand why the number of female employees in the Gulf still is low. After investigating the theories of Ross, Fargues, Bahgat and Peterson, my impression is that different factors need to be taken into consideration when analyzing job opportunities for women in Qatar. Therefore, when I tested out the four hypotheses I was well aware that one factor does not rule out another. I did not anticipate that only one hypothesis could give a final answer to my main question, rather a mixture of different factors, presented in different hypotheses, could explain why women are less economically active than men.

The most important part in the analysis was the use of in-depth interviews with the informants in Qatar. As a background and basis for the interviews I presented statistical data on the relationship between men and women in Qatar in the fields of education and economic participation. Also, statistics on fertility rate and average age at first marriage were presented.

Hypothesis A: Governmental support and arrangements for women at the work place

The overall view on the government and their support for women was positive. Especially the Emir and his wife were considered to have provided huge benefits to the country. Qatari women have, under the leadership of Sheikh Hamad, gained increased formal rights. The renewals of the Constitution and the Labour Law are among the formal changes that benefits women. Also, the establishments of governmental and non-governmental organizations have been clear signs that the government recognizes women and the need to empower them. Furthermore, the informants point at the importance of increased educational opportunities within the state of Qatar. When speaking of increased educational opportunities, they refer to the establishments of Western universities in the Education City as well as the improvements of Qatar University. Sheikha Mozah is the main responsible person, according to my informants, for this development. Moreover, Sheikha Mozah functions as a role model for my informants, and probably for many other Qatari women. Her courage and open minded way of thinking seems to make women want to identify themselves with her.

Despite efforts being made in the educational sector, statistics presented in chapter five shows that the number of economically active women still is low. Some informants feel that the government needs to do more such as to remove certain restrictions for women in the Constitution. However, my informants make it clear that the leadership under the auspices of Sheikh Hamad and Sheikha Mozah is showing progress and willingness to develop its country and its people. Moreover, the informants differentiate between the formal level, the governmental support of women's situation, and the actual level, where women still experiences many obstacles. The most visible obstacle is the rigid control they are exposed to from the man and the family.

In the second part of Hypothesis A, policies for female employees were discussed. The most crucial point was to analyze what kind of obstacles women meet in the work place. Statistics presented in chapter 4 show that economically active Qataris are overwhelmingly concentrated in the governmental sector. My informants tell that less working hours than in the mixed/private sector, high wages and better opportunities to combine work and family are some reasons why locals choose to work in the governmental sector. Furthermore, it is easier

for females to find gender-segregated work places in the governmental sector. However, it has become more common to have mixed environments in the governmental work places as well, and it is therefore difficult for women from conservative families to find a suitable work place. According to my informants, mixed environment at the work places is the main obstacle for many women to get integrated into the labour market. Even though gender-segregated work places could have attracted more women and increased the number of economically active women, the majority of my informants say that they prefer to work in a mixed environment. To continue to segregate the labour market will lead the country in the wrong direction.

The struggle to combine work with a family is another obstacle that either prevents women from working or makes it hard for them to stay in a work place. Especially for women in the private and mixed sectors, the obstacles seem to be many. The females in these two sectors stay long hours in the office and there are limited arrangements such as daycare. A job in the governmental sector is more attractive, as they work less hours and have more time with the family. For the private and mixed sector to attract more females, the need for further improvements of practical arrangements is therefore necessary.

In addition to the limited arrangements at the work places, lack of practical support towards female employees seems to be a major problem that needs to be taken more seriously, both in the governmental sector and in the private/mixed sector. The general view on the working women is dominated by patriarchal attitudes. Also, according to some of my informants, there seems to be a clear and visible reluctance by many leaders to hire female employees. Furthermore, many of my female informants feel that men are intimidated by female employees and that the culture is to blame for this. The patriarchal attitudes make it even harder for those women who want to obtain leadership positions.

On the basis of my conversations with the informants, which are summarized above, the following points conclude Hypothesis A:

- The government and the policies and initiatives implemented are providing long term direction to the development of integration of women into the national labour force. The most important contributions to this development are:

- I. Improved educational opportunities for women will create new job opportunities for women in areas which earlier were excluded.
 - II. The universities provide social arenas where attitudes are formed and where women can engage and influence future development of culture and traditions.
 - III. The trends towards mixed environments in the universities are an on-going development. Also, foreign students and cultures at university level will change views and attitudes and contribute to make it easier for women to work in mixed environments after education.
 - IV. The government, and especially the Emir and his wife are without exception seen as very positive role models for a development towards gender equality and are admired for their efforts to support women during education and work.
- While the changes in the educational system may be characterized as a revolution, the expectation that this will lead to significant higher employment rate for women is yet to be achieved. The main reasons for this are to be found as factors identified under the other three hypotheses.

Hypothesis B: Family traditions

Family traditions are very important in Qatar, as it is in the rest of the region. Especially for girls and women, family traditions will influence their choices regarding education and work. Further, when women get married their husband's view on women's role will be decisive for whether the wives are allowed to work or not. This will also affect what kind of work that is suitable for women. The patriarchal system in the region is the main cause for this development, and according to *al-Khāriṭa l-ijtimā'iyya li-madīnat al-Dawḥa*, Qatari girls are from a young age raised up to believe that they are of less value than their brothers.

My informants say that the relationship between religion and culture can be described as a twilight zone. While conservative forces are preventing women from working in the name of religion, many of my informants opposes this idea and say that it is not written any places in the Quran that women cannot work. In order to analyze women's participation in the labour market, a broader aspect of religion, culture and traditions needs to be addressed. Many of my informants believe that there are too many families that are conservative and therefore will not

encourage their daughters to work after finished education. For these families, the most important “thing” for women is to get married and have children.

The second part of Hypothesis B was to analyze the roles of husband and wife. Traditionally they have different roles in the Qatari society. While men are taking care of economical matters, women are closely linked up to the role as mother and wife. There are reasons to believe that this traditional view on women’s role in society still remains strong.

Contrary to the traditional view on Qatari women, my female informants have managed to be successful in their jobs. Furthermore, it was noteworthy to discover that five out of seven female informants are not married. Even though there are different reasons for this, some of the informants have deliberately chosen not to get married. Furthermore, it might be reasonable to suggest that the younger male generation will have a different attitude towards working women? However, some informants do not believe that men will fully accept female employees in the work place.

Two of the female informants have children. As already mentioned in Hypothesis A, it is difficult for many women to combine work and family. It is reasonable to suggest that many women choose to stay home in order to take care of children. The husband may approve that his wife is working, but it is too hard for them both working when they have children.

As indicated earlier, when discussing this hypothesis, the family traditions seem to be the dominant factor when it comes to women’s choices regarding education and work. The attitudes they meet from father and husband may prevent them from entering the job market. Also, stories from my informants tell that women who choose to take a job also meet the same attitudes at the work place from male colleagues, and this will make it even harder to remain in the job. To avoid being influenced in a negative direction, some women choose to stay single and direct their efforts towards building up a career instead. By this choice, the woman will avoid the pressure from the husband and his family and it will also make life somewhat easier at the work place.

Hypothesis B gives following conclusion:

- All sources which have been available during the work with this thesis show that family traditions are the main factors when decisions regarding women's education and work are made. While the transformation of the Qatari society has happened so rapidly, the cultural aspects and traditions are so deeply rooted that these factors will continue to influence women's participation in the labour market for a long time. Factors that may impact family traditions are:
 - I. Role models; the Emir and his wife Sheikha Mozah have been mentioned in this respect.
 - II. The ability to create solutions that may be acceptable to larger parts of the society. This could for example relate to improved opportunities to work in separate environments where this is a problem for the family. It could also be related to increased social contact with other women in male dominated work environments etc.
 - III. The need for women to work in order to support the family economy can bring more women into the labour market. As many families are dependent on the wives income in order to sustain the high life standard, the common believe about the man as the main economical care taker may change.
- Family seems to be the dominant factor when analyzing women's participation in education and in the labour force. Further, we have to acknowledge that change on this area takes time. Even though progress is happening at a slow pace, all trends for statistical indicators show positive development. It is also typical that the youngest of my informants seem to have stronger family support than the older informants.

Hypothesis C: The quality of the educational system

Education has been a priority in Qatar for a long time; however, the quality of the educational programs has not corresponded with the needs in the labour market. Females at Qatar University in the 1990s graduated in majors such as history, language and art and after they finished they usually became teachers or did not work at all. While males traveled abroad to study, it has not been accepted by families to send their daughters abroad. Therefore, women in Qatar graduated in majors that were not attractive in the labour market, except for teaching.

Men, on the other hand could either study abroad or they could enter the labour market as trainees without having higher education.

The informants say that most women today want to work after finished education. The low number of economically active women, presented in chapter five, is therefore not in line with the expectations of my informants. They mean that the work place is considered to be a social arena, just as the university is a social arena. However, as Informant A says, there are too many students and most of them want to work, but too many families differ between education and work and put restrictions for their daughters and wives when it comes to their participation in the labour market.

The quality of the educational programs in Qatar has improved. The incorporation of Western universities in the Education City was a major turning point in this development. The increased educational opportunities have been an advantage for females; now they can graduate in whatever fields the males have access to. Furthermore, women seem to be more dependent on high educational degrees in order to get a suitable job. Males can easily start working as a security guard or as a police without having an education. For women, such professions are not acceptable and they therefore need to take higher education.

The educational system in the 1980s and 1990s made it difficult for women to enter the labour market, except for the educational sector. However, today women can enter non-traditional educational fields such as engineering and business. Therefore, when we observe the low number of economically active Qatari women, we cannot blame the educational system any more. The society has to a certain degree accepted women entering non-traditional educational fields, but it still put restrictions on women entering non-traditional work places. It is other factors such as culture, religion and traditions that limit their job opportunities.

Based on statistics presented in chapter four and the in-depth interviews with my informants, the following points conclude Hypothesis C:

- The educational system in Qatar offers great opportunities for national students. Further, the educational programs have improved and students are more prepared for the needs in the labour market. Women are superior at university level and should

therefore be attractive for employers. There will be different factors, both personal and related to the job market, that can be decisive whether they will to enter the labour market and thereby increase the number of economically active women:

- I. With education comes increased awareness about their rights and duties and women might demand to be treated more equal to men at the work places.
 - II. Women are, as mentioned above, better educated than men. In turn, this can make women more attractive in the labour market. Further, this should provide highly educated women with increased opportunities to achieve leadership positions.
 - III. Attitudes programs are needed for the society to accept that women are entering non-traditional work places. Factors such as religion and most of all traditions need to be debated in public in order for the society to move forward on this area.
 - IV. Women must be more independent and get the chance to choose what they want, and not only what the family or the society expects of them.
- In a long term perspective, education should increase the number of economically active Qatari women. Also, increased job opportunities can lead to that Qatari female become more evenly distributed over all occupations, and not only employed in the educational sector and clerical positions in banks and ministries. The society will, however, need to change its view on working women for this to happen.

Hypothesis D: The structure of the economy and its influence on women's participation in the labour force

Ross suggested that the strong economy in the Gulf does not support women's participation in the labour force as their income is not necessary for the family economy. According to my informants, this is not a correct description of the Qatari society today. Many Qatari families need two incomes because the requirements to life standard in Qatar are so high.

The oil and gas industry is included in the private and mixed sectors. We know that females face more obstacles and difficulties than men in these industries. Further, as statistics show, very few women are working within the oil and gas industry. "The oil industry is not kind to

women”, Informant E says. The male dominance in this industry makes it very hard for women to enter positions in plant and field related work areas. Moreover, technical oriented work is not considered to be suitable for females.

It is difficult to find solutions on how to make the oil and gas industry more attractive for women. Even though the oil and gas industry is male dominant globally, the culture, values and traditions make it even harder for women in the Gulf to succeed there. However, there is an increase in the number of females studying engineering as well as an increase in the number of women applying for scholarships in the oil and gas companies. Many of the young women represent a new generation that are eager to participate in the work life, also in the oil and gas industry. Their courage and willingness to take on the problems women face will be decisive for their progress in this industry. The progress will also, as discussed earlier, be dependent on that attitudes towards female employees will change, and then especially towards women which assume leadership positions.

The following factors form the conclusions in Hypothesis D:

- Female employees face many problems in the oil and gas industry. Technically oriented field work is not considered to be very “female friendly “as both males and females confirm this opinion. However, different factors can make it easier for women to work in oil and gas companies:
 - I. Practical arrangements, such as daycare, must be improved in order to attract female employees.
 - II. The managements of the companies need to discover that female employees and their skills may be valuable and an asset for the company.
 - III. National females have to get more meaningful jobs were the chance to advance in the company is possible.
 - IV. Attitudes from male colleagues towards female employees need to change. Awareness programs about women’s rights may be useful for the females themselves, but also for male colleagues who might feel intimidated by working with women.
- Statistics show that the number of female students attending engineering in universities

is increasing. However, as both males and females see that there are different limits for men and women when it comes to technically oriented work, it might not be realistic to believe that the gender gap in the oil and gas industry will decrease so much. On the other hand, my female informants who have joined this industry are representing a new generation of women that are willing to oppose the traditional norms and values. Also, as more men and women study in mixed environments at the universities, it may over time become more natural for Qatari men to see female employees in the oil and gas industry.

Summary:

The specific factors that are discussed under each hypothesis have often been the same or similar. Family traditions have strong impact on all areas, whether this is the girl's decision regarding education or it is related to whether she can work after education or not. Also, as the patriarchal system still dominates the Qatari society, the male control is clear and visible even though women have become highly educated. The control of women has been mentioned numerous times in this thesis, and the effects of control is slowing the progress of integrating women into the labor force as well as it limits their job opportunities within the job market. However, there are signs that the governmental efforts to strengthen women's situation start to make a change. This is, as example, reflected in statistical data that show an increase in the number of economically active Qatari women. Initiatives to change attitudes and behavior that have cultural, religious and traditional aspects will need longer time before the results become visible. The new generation of Qatari males and females, supported by the governmental reforms we see today, will decide whether the gap between economically active men and economically active women will decrease in the future.

Further research:

There are needs for further research on the matters covered in this thesis. For example, as Informant E mentions, there has been no research on the actual achievements of national employees in his company. What kind of level do they obtain? And, how many years do they work? If the average time for students employed by the company is 5-10 years it means that they are doing a career. If the average employment time for recruited students is 3-5 years it

means that female employees go back to their family in many cases. Research can provide documentation about how long women work and their motives for staying in it, or leaving, the company.

New research may bring knowledge about important issues like:

- When women are leaving a work place after a relatively short period of time, the reason for this decision needs further research. Better understanding on this area may provide input for improvement initiatives that may be effective within short time.
- What are the impacts on the women who choose to stay in their jobs for 5-10 years? If research can document that women stay in their job for a long time, the managements may have miscalculated their motivation and attitudes. The management's reasons for reluctance to hire female employees were therefore wrong.
- What are the characteristics of the women that have succeeded in the job market and in business? Reference has earlier been given to family background; the successful women tend to come from a few families. Further research can document what effect "family name" has for women to succeed career wise.
- What is the prize to pay for women who choose to prioritize the job against the will of family, relatives and the norms in the society? Knowledge on this area can provide information whether these women become isolated and loose social networks. Further, increased knowledge can be valuable in order to provide potential support for women who choose to take a non-traditional work decisions.

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