The Paradox of Qatari Females’ Education

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Introduction
In 2019, about 67% of Qatar's higher education graduates were females, as stated by HE Lolwah Al-Khater, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2005, the ratio of Qatari men to women with university degrees of equal qualifications was 46:100. (Felder and Vuollo, 2008, p.7) Working women had an average of 14.1 years of education compared to men, with only 10.7 years of education. (Golkowska, 2014, p.55) However, are these women using their degrees to change the narratives of gender roles in the Qatari culture? To what extent is their education improving their status in Qatari society? Despite more Qatari women graduating with Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D.’s, the hurdles they face daily and the legal and sociopolitical challenges raise questions regarding the contradictions between their education and their assigned roles. What is the purpose of their education if it does not lead to the increase of their social welfare and freedom?

The situation creates a bizarre society whose women are well educated, yet their roles are still confined to traditional roles and jobs in the public sphere. The patriarchal barriers imposed on them by society play a significant role in sustaining the division that exists between men and women. This is giving women mixed messages on their roles, therefore causing them to choose between their public and private lives. Those who manage both are submitting to society's demands on how women should act, causing them lots of apprehensions. Women tend to opt for the framework set by society that allows them to practice empowerment within a limited margin. Although Qatari women are attaining high levels of education and participating more and more in the workforce, their ability to do so relies on what the state and society allow.

This thesis aims to illustrate the paradox that exists with the education of Qatari females. Although the state is motivating women to participate in high degrees in the workforce and education, they are simultaneously confining them through limiting their freedom, legally and culturally. The education of Qatari females is partly a superficial
attempt by the Qatari State that is used for its soft power goals. This is done through the
dichotomous roles Qatari women are assigned and the conflicts that exists between
'modernity' and 'tradition'. Educated Qatari females are being used to help create an illusion
of a 'modern' Qatar, while simultaneously restricted by the State and society.

Chapter 1, titled “Artificial Modernity”, discusses how Qatar constructs a modernized
progressive state through its development strategies. By looking at the Qatar Nation Vision of
2030 and Education City, Chapter 1 discusses how Qatar has been described as "one of the
fastest developing countries in the Gulf region and is becoming increasingly influential on the
world stage." (Arend Küster, 2010, p.16) Moreover, this chapter discusses Qatar's branding
strategy as a sports and tourism destination and how this prevails in creating dichotomous
roles of Qatari women and the integration of tradition and modernity. The second part of this
chapter discusses the actuality that this is simply a persona projected by the Qatari State to
allow it to appear as a progressive developed state.

Chapter 1 aims to answer several questions, including whether these initiatives and
policies truly desire change? It seems as though Qatar is keen on transforming its society into
a modern progressive state that is highly liberal; however, is this the case? The chapter aims
to unveil the exact objectives behind the conception of this portrayal, primarily how Qatar
Foundation and educated Qatari women are used to help create this illusion. Moreover,
Chapter 1 discusses further how women are being assigned two dichotomous roles, the
‘traditional’ role, by assuming their roles and responsibilities as wives, daughters, and
mothers. At the same time, they are required to function as a responsible member of society,
to be engaged in sociopolitical affairs, and actively contribute to national progress.

Chapter 2, titled “The Impediments to Qatari Women’s Freedom”, intends to look
further into how Qatari women are being assigned traditional roles through different means.
This chapter looks into the traditions of Qatar and how they contribute to limiting women’s
autonomy and capability to make further progress with their education. It focuses on four different impediments the Qatari State and society uses to do this. The chapter is by no means attempting to distinguish between Qatar's genuine traditions and the invented traditions. Instead, it aims to point out that similarly to Qatar's artificial modernization, the traditions that exist reveal the insincerity of modernization in Qatar and the true motives behind the preservation of such traditions. Thus, creating contradictions between the image Qatar contrives, opposed to the realities of how society truly operates due to traditions.

The first impediment titled “The Contemporary Tribal Society,” converses the presence of tribalism as a normalized part of the Qatari culture and its effect in sustaining the patriarchal hierarchy. The interviews conducted illustrated how tribal affiliations govern Qatari women’s education and careers.

The next impediment, is the Qatari law and State initiatives and how 'traditional' roles have been subsumed into it. This section is titled “Women as Incomplete Individuals in the Law”. The reality of Qatar’s superficial modernization is patently pronounced in the constitution and State’s initiatives. Many laws preclude women from being full individuals who are able to advance on their own, the most significant being guardianship laws. In addition to the laws formally enacted by the government, there are many unwritten laws that further limit educated Qatari women’s autonomy, perhaps even more than the written laws.

The third impediment is the immediate family. This section is titled “The Qatari Family: The Predetermined Fate of Qatari Women”. Through the employment of the interviews conducted it discusses the influence of the immediate family over educated Qatari women and how this is the most decisive determining factor in their lives and decisions.

This takes us to the final impediment which is the significance of religious institutions in Qatar and their contribution to shaping Qatari women’s identity. It is titled “The Use of Religious Institutions to Reinforce Qatari Women’s Subjugation”. It focuses on The Qatari
State Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs and how religious institutions are used to validate the status of women in Qatar and the laws placed on them.

Chapter 3, titled “Gender, Social Media, and Cultural Diplomacy in Qatar”, reveals the magnitude of the paradox of Qatari women's education. This is done by delving deeper into the interviews with Qatari female graduates from Qatar Foundation to instantiate how Qatar Foundation does not reflect the majority of the Qatari society as these women’s experiences change drastically once they leave Qatar Foundation to start working. The second section looks into “Social Media Between Tradition and Modernity”, and how the emergence of such technologies does not entail modernity and progress, rather further acts as a surveillance mechanism. This section focuses on both Twitter and Clubhouse, in addition to the responses to the Human Rights Watch Report on discriminatory male guardianship laws in Qatar released on the 29th of March 2021. Finally, the last section concentrates on the general soft power and cultural diplomacy goals of Qatar, which assists in revealing the importance of producing two realities for Qatari women.

**Methodology**

This thesis employs interviews for its research. Interviews provide a qualitative research method as it provides information about different aspects of social life and allows for a more in-depth analysis. It stipulates answers that are not acquirable through surveys and other forms of research. It allows for extensive insight into the interviewees' experiences in detail. It allows them to expand on topics that concern them without feeling restricted compared to surveys where further discussion and ability to expand are limited. Moreover, it allows the participants to share stories that otherwise would not have been told.

This thesis includes both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include interviews with Qatari female graduates from Qatar foundation, laws, state initiatives,
examples from social media, and information published on government websites. Secondary sources include books, scholarly articles, and dissertations and Master’s thesis.

**Sampling:**

The interviews conducted in this thesis include interviews with 15 educated Qatari females graduates from Qatar Foundation. Despite all graduating from Qatar Foundation, these females differ in many regards. The subjects include different marital statuses such as single, married, engaged, divorced and even mothers. Moreover, their jobs and the period since their graduation differ significantly. Some have graduated within the last year while others graduated as the first batch of some universities in Qatar Foundation more than 15 years ago. Some of these women are currently employed at different ministries, banks, other private institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGO). In contrast, others have continued to work within Qatar Foundation or resume their higher education in receiving Ph.D.’s and Masters.

The interviews are limited to Qatar Foundation students as it provides insight into the bubble of Qatar Foundation that this thesis examines. It allows for a comparison between these women's experiences within and once they leave Qatar Foundation. Moreover, it helps exhibit whether or not Qatar Foundation is a genuine attempt by the state to progress and empower Qatari women, or is essentially an illusion that does not encompass to the rest of society and does not cultivate sincere change. The interviews would have been extremely different if other female graduates from other universities in Qatar were included. However, the focus on Qatar Foundation allows for the comparison between the appearance of Qatar and the reality as Qatar Foundation and its graduates are placed at the front of that image. Societies views towards the same issues discussed in the interviews and towards Qatar Foundation have been gathered by looking into social media.
The interviews conducted are anonymous to ensure that the participants were comfortable with sharing their experiences and opinions. The participants were told that what they say during the interview will remain anonymous and cannot be linked to them in any way. No identifying information about the participants were collected at any point during the study. Moreover, to ensure their freedom to partake in the interview or not, the participants provided verbal consent after being told that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that they can choose not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time.

**Research:**

The interviews conducted differed in time as different participants expanded more on their experiences and stories compare to others. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes up to an hour and 30 minutes. The interviews included 13 questions that focus on a range of different issues, including the purpose of their education, women empowerment and rights in Qatar, how they navigate their identity in their private and public life, their transition from Qatar Foundation to work, and their families and society's attitudes towards their education in Qatar Foundation.

The interviews were conducted in English, however, some of the participants used some words in the Qatari Arabic dialect that were translated or included in this thesis. The interviews were mainly conducted via video call or phone call. They were recorded, written down, and organized.

**Limitation:**

There were several limitations during the research. The first was finding subjects that were willing to be interviewed and assuring a diverse range of subjects. By making the interviews anonymous and shortening them to 30 minutes, more graduates were willing to participate. Due to the current Covid situation, face-to-face interviews were not an option to
ensure the participants' safety. Other limitations include the apathy to discuss their opinions due to societal reasons.

**Theoretical Framework:**

Multiple theories are employed throughout the chapters. The first is Hisham Sharabi’s (1988) book, *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, to exemplify how neopatriarchal societies never truly desire change, rather, they stop at abstract gestures that create the appearance of change and development. Maria Mies’ (1998) *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, discussed the perspective of women’s labor and how this is connected to capitalist accumulation. She explains that women are not oppressed but rather exploited through making their work invisible and assigning them dichotomous roles.

Pierre Bourdieu’s (2001) *Masculine Domination* and *Language and Symbolic Power* (1992) are retained to illuminate how the dichotomous roles assigned to women become ‘realities’ and the different ways this is achievable such as through the use of religion, tribalism, the biological nature of women, and the law. Moreover, Judith Butler’s (2004) *Undoing Gender* and Valerie Bryson’s (2007) *Gender and the Politics of Time* are further used to explain how these roles have become embedded within what is considered the ‘norm’.

In addition to these theories, *The Invention of Tradition* by Eric Hobsbawm discusses how the state of Qatar and society are able to preserve and construct traditions in order to create those roles and further sustain them. Furthermore, *Tribal Modern*, by Miriam Cooke (2014) investigates the invention of traditions within Qatar explicitly.

Finally, Raymond LM Lee (2013) in "Modernity, Modernities and Modernization: Tradition Reappraised" discusses the relationship between modernity and tradition and how this relation is not a misplaced polarity, but rather, more blurred together. This is used to
discuss the ability of Qatar to preserve the traditional roles of women, while simultaneously modernizing without having to eradicate these traditions.

The use of multiple theories allows for an intricate analysis of the situation of educated Qatari women that is expound through multiple dimensions. Although these are some of the main theories used, other theories are employed throughout the chapters such as elite theory, tribalism, and theories of soft power and cultural diplomacy.
Chapter 1:

Artificial Modernity
“From its humble origins as a fishing and pearling village, Doha has emerged as a growing world city, where ambition and means are fueling exciting experiments in education, health, sports and culture (Fromherz, 2012; Kamrava, 2013; Alraouf, 2008; 2016; 2017).” (Alraouf, 2018, p.4) This chapter will explore how Qatar has been able to develop into this modern State as conveyed by Ali Alraouf (2018). The State of Qatar's development and modernization strategies are difficult to overlook. The National Development Strategy of Qatar tackles all challenges and fields that can provide a solid foundation for the future. This includes enhancing market efficiency, building a diversified economy, addressing core education and training issues, improving general education and higher education, enhancing scientific research and many more. (Qatar National Development Strategy, 2011) This chapter will discuss how Qatar has managed to generate a portrayal of a modernized progressive state through its development strategies which preforms as an illusion that veils the realities of Qatar. This is fundamental as it stipulates an elucidation for the rates of educated Qatari females as compared to their presence in the workforce and high-ranking positions and the paradox of their education.

**Qatar as a Modern State**

Andrew Rathmell and Kirsten Schulze (2010), in their article “Political Reform in the Gulf: The Case of Qatar”, discuss how "Qatar has embarked on a highly publicized programme of political reform involving liberalization and steps towards democratization" ever since the coup of Emir Hamad bin Khalifah Al Thani in 1995. (p. 53) They state that Emir Hamad has made this programme one of the central planks of his rule and has aggressively used these reforms as a means by which to assert Qatar's autonomy and distinctiveness from his GCC neighbours, especially the Saudis from under whose shadow the Qatars are struggling to emerge. Qatar's reforms since the coup have revolved around three themes - encouragement of the economy's private sector, freedom of expression and democratization. (Rathmell & Schulze, 2010, p.53)
They explore the different steps the State of Qatar has taken ever since 1995 including the abolition of the Ministry of Information in 1998, the establishment of AlJazeera news channel, steps towards democratization and the broadening political participation including women. (Rathmell & Schulze, 2010, p.53) Qatar has also been described as “one of the fastest developing countries in the gulf region and is becoming increasingly influential on the world stage.” (Arend Küster, 2010, p.16)

One of the main things Qatar has endeavored to establish this reputation is its attempt to brand itself as a sports and tourism destination. Irene Theodoropoulou and Julieta Alos (2018) state that "Qatar is currently trying to put itself on the global map as a developing country and as an economy with one of the fastest annual growth rates in the world." (p.14) Qatar has invested extensive amount in tourism and sport ever since its bid to host World Cup 2022 and the 2006 Asian Olympic Games. Theodoropoulou and Alos (2018) discuss Qatar's branding strategies from 2006 up to 2015 by looking at advertisements used for big sporting events taking place in the country. They state that these advertisements provide equal representation of both women and men, as compared to other Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia. They argue that through this “the country tries to construct for itself an image of a modern country that embraces both women and men and can thus be seen as an ideal destination for hosting sports events and attracting male and female visitors from all over the world.” (Theodoropoulou & Alos, 2018, p.21)

Qatar’s focus on sport can be seen in its desire to host a number of sporting events such as the 17th IAAF World Championships in Athletics in 2019, Qatar Total Opening and the Men’s Handball World Championship. However, in order to do this, Qatar has to appear as a modern state that is diverse and accepting of all. This can be seen in Qatar’s effort to display itself as a non-homophobic country by welcoming LGBTQ fans to Qatar in 2022 despite the fact that Qatar’s national law criminalizes homosexuality which could also result
in the death penalty for Muslims under Sharia law. Qatar, has even allowed the display of LGBT rainbow flags in the stadiums for the 2022 world cup.¹

While attempting to seem modern, the branding strategy of Qatar as both a tourist destination and a modern state also rely on the ‘uniqueness’ of the Qatari culture and heritage. Theodoropoulou and Alos (2018) discuss how Qatar employs its culture to create mascots and logos for these sporting events. This includes a mascot named Orry that was used for the 2006 Asia Olympic Games. Orry is used in order to make the participating countries and visitors feel more welcome through the use of Orry’s ‘local flavour’. (Theodoropoulou & Alos, 2018, p.32) This relationship between tradition and modernity is repeated throughout Qatar’s branding.

Another example is Souq Waqif. Despite the descriptions of Souq Waqif in the past as being a small market with dusty roads and no electricity, the ‘renovation’ of the old Souq does not satisfy those descriptions. It is a beautiful Souq that looks like a “boutique version of Cario’s Khan al-Khalili”. (Cooke, 2014, p.94) The Souq has been referred to as “fake-old-looking.” (Cooke, 2014, p.95)

The idea that Qatar’s rich traditional culture can exist simultaneously at the foreground of modernity is still used to promote the image of Qatar. An example of this is the Al Bayt Stadium situated in AlKhor which represents a traditional Qatari tent and includes, ironically, a one of the fast food giants, MacDonald’s branch that “mimic the country’s tradition, heritage and hospitality.”²

Moving on from Qatar’s branding strategies, Qatar has also attempted to appear as a modern state through the use of state policy. Rita Felski (2021) in her chapter “Modernity

and Feminism” states that “To be modern is to be on the side of progress, reason, and
democracy or, by contrast to align oneself with “disorder, despair and anarchy.” (p.76) She
further states that to be modern is indeed to be antimodern. Implying that to be modern means
“to define oneself in explicit opposition to the prevailing norms and values of one’s own
time.” (Latham& Rogers, 2021, p.76) To be modern in Qatar therefore, means to be
supportive of women’s rights and equality, as it is in opposition with the expected social
norms in such patriarchal society. The Qatari State focus on women’s rights and
empowerment is extremely significant. Abeer Al-Dosari (2019) states that “As argued by
Kandiyoti (1991) women were initially used as collateral or ‘objects of political discourse’
(p.78)” (p.19) She further states that women’s personal and private lives are also political.
(Al-Dosari, 2019, p.23)

Sarah Mohammed Kamal Al Emadi who is a member of the delegation of the State of
Qatar expressed, in participating in the 72nd Session of the United Nations General
Assembly, that improving the role of women in the Qatari State is a priority in the policy of
the State of Qatar. (MOFA, 2017) She further added that

The State of Qatar is keen to integrate women's issues, particularly those related to enhancing their
participation in economic and political decision-making, providing decent work and promoting social
protection in all national strategies and plans, including Qatar National Vision 2030, and Family
Strategy. (MOFA 2017)

Moreover, the State of Qatar was one of the first Gulf countries that gave women the right to
vote and encouraged their education. Article 96 of The Qatari Labor Law grants women
maternity leaves and breastfeeding hours to motivate them to work. (Law No (14) of the Year
2004, Qatar Labor Law) The Qatar National Vision of 2030 aims to “Enhance women’s
capacities and empower them to participate fully in the political and economic spheres,
especially in decision-making roles.” (2008) This vision covers four main pillars, human,
social, economic and environmental development. In both the Human Developmental and the
Social Development sections, Qatar focuses on improving the position of women as some of its main initiatives. In its desire to create a motivated workforce it also aims to “increased opportunities and vocational support for Qatari women.” Moreover, under social development the National Vision states that

Social development under the Qatar National Vision 2030 encompasses a system dedicated to social welfare and protection for all citizens and to bolstering women’s role in society and empowering them to be active community members. Social advancement also means equal educational, employment and career opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their background or gender and a tolerant and fair society that embraces Islam’s values of peace, welfare, justice and community. Under the QNV 2030, Qatar will serve as a regional and global example with an increased role in the Middle East and the world.³

Additionally, many Qatari women hold some of the highest impressive leadership positions. Some of these palpable figures include Sheikha Maha Mansour Salman Jasim Al Thani, who was Qatar’s first female judge, Dr. Hessa Al Jaber, who manages the telecommunications markets in Qatar, Her Excellency, Lolwah Rashid Al-Khater, who is Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and many more.

Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, who is the second wife of the former Amir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa is a known activist and one of the most influential women in the country. She co-founded and chairs Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and is also the vice-president of the Supreme Education Council. Sheikha Moza also founded Education Above All (EAA) in 2012, which is a Global Foundation that “aim is to contribute to human, social and economic development through the provision of quality education.” ⁴ It focuses on the empowerment of children, youth and women across the globe to receive education and aid them to attend schools. Sheikha Moza, as stated by Mohanalakshmi Rajakumar (2014), is “an embodiment of the delicate balance between

⁴ https://educationaboveall.org/#/about/1
modernization and tradition that the small emirate strikes in foreign policy as well as economic development,” as commonly designated by nationals. (p.128) Sheikha Moza has also been described “as the ‘guiding light’ that steers the country’s ambitious efforts to develop a knowledge society. Her tireless quest for excellence in research and education is challenging established structures and helping to propel the country forward.” (Küster, 2010, p.16) She is able to reassure both the image of the modern Qatari woman while maintaining a feminine modest image of the traditional Muslim Qatari female. Rajakumar (2014) states that Sheikha Moza’s leadership ethos demonstrates Mansoor Moaddel’s assertion that modernism in the Arab world does not always mean discarding of traditional values; in her role as wife and educational champion she balances the feminine ethos acceptable in Islamic society while at the same time empowering and enabling young Arab women to academic achievements previously not possible. (p.130)

Sheikha Moza has played a significant role in the educational reforms in the country. She is also extremely critical of the education system and the educational practices in the Middle East by “highlighting the negatives of “individuals in society [who] are taught not to question their rules.” (Rajakumar, 2014, p.131)

Thanks to Education City, Qatari women have taken advantage of this and increased their enrollment in higher education. Due to different religious and cultural reasons, many women did not consider traveling abroad an option for their education. Therefore, Education City provides them with the opportunity to receive a similar quality of education from the comfort of their own country and home. (Rajakumar, 2014, p.133)

The American Universities with Western curriculums provided to these young women give them opportunities that they would not have otherwise. One of the graduates interviewed conversed how Education City provided her with the opportunity to become an engineer. She graduated from Texas A&M in 2009 and later from HBKU with a master’s degree. She stated that “It was a big thing in Doha that an engineering degree was offered to ladies. Not many
girls were thinking of doing this. There were only 5 girls with me during my first year because Petroleum engineering was not viewed as the place for females to work. There weren’t any role models at all.” She revealed that although many societal barriers and other discouragement prevailed from her experiences with other students and during her internships, it was the law that permitted her to pursue such a degree. Chapter 2 investigates further how despite what this graduate stated, these laws restrict women as their autonomy is dependent on their guardians completely.

As Human Development is one of the four pillars of the Qatar National Vision 2030, the focus on education has been central in Qatar. Sheikha Moza articulated that “Qatar is giving 2.8% of our GDP to research. This is something again that is a breakthrough, as nobody was even thinking of research as a tool or component for advancement in this part of the world”. (Alraouf, 2018, p.3) Not only has Qatar invested in Qatar University to improve its educational program, but also in reforms for the school system. AlRaouf (2018) states that Qatar has adapted a “mixed strategy of traditional and innovative approaches to educational development.” (, p.3)

Education City has created a reputation for Qatar as one of the biggest knowledge hubs in the Middle East. Education City has allowed Qatar to be described as “as a major player in scientific research” and a county that “is transforming itself into a knowledge society, which poses highly interesting and challenging questions”. (Küster, 2010, 16) Education City is described by AlRaouf (2018) as “Qatar Foundation's massive flagship educational project” which is also “perhaps the largest single educational project undertaken anywhere in the world.” (p.4) It comprises six American Universities that include a range of different majors ranging from medicine to art, along with some other Universities that offer Masters programs. Education City is a “a multibillion-dollar complex on Doha’s western outskirts, designed as a center for knowledge and innovation and spearheaded by Qatar
Foundation (QF), a non-profit organization focused on education, science and community development.” (Alraouf, 2018, p.4) Education City is viewed as having a “tolerant and respectful atmosphere”. (Küster, 2010, p.17) As stated by Sheikha Moza, it can also be used as a soft power tool which can “transform” society. By transform societies she means “tackle issues in political, social, cultural, economic areas.” (Alraouf. 2018, p.5)

From what has been discussed, it seems as though Qatar is keen on transforming its society into a modern progressive state that is extremely liberal. However, is this really the case? Are these initiatives and policies able to make this change? And more importantly, do they truly desire change?

Claim vs Reality

Before moving on, the topic of Education City needs to be expanded further. It is important to understand who is part of Education City and what it truly represents. Neha Vora (2019) states in her book *Teach for Arabia: American Universities, Liberalism, and Transnational Qatar* that Qatar Foundation students, more specifically, Texas A&M Qatar, embrace the different aspects of liberal education, even if they contradict or challenge Qatari traditions. (p.4)

However, Qatar Foundation, compared to other universities in Qatar, is particularly exclusive. The students in these American Universities mostly compromise powerful tribes or the ‘elite’. The Qatari government provides sponsorship programs to the majority of Qatari students enrolled in universities; therefore, the exclusiveness of Qatar Foundation is not simply owing to the high tuition costs of these American universities. Rather, it is equated to the broadmindedness and lenience of the elites as compared to the non-elite. In addition, families from the lower classes possess more conservative Islamic views, therefore, oppose Qatar Foundation that they perceive as unorthodox.
Female presence in Western universities is associated with their families views, rather than the females themselves. The females within Qatar Foundation are viewed as daughters before anything else. (Vora, 2019, p.84) Their presence, therefore, is either due to their parents possessing a Western education, or because their parents appreciate good quality of schooling. (Vora, 2019, p.84)

Thus, women’s public and private lives are tied together. The majority of the women interviewed discussed the prominence of their parents support in their decision to enroll in Qatar Foundation. The family’s role as a determining factor of the choices educated Qatari women make will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Going back to Qatar Foundation as comprised of mainly higher-classes, these elite and higher classes are part of the category that Hisham Sharabi (1988) introduces in his book Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society. As Sharabi states, the elites are placed at the front to devise a front of modernization.

Sharabi (1988) discusses that neopatriarchal societies never genuinely desire change. (p.100) Instead, they stop at “abstract gestures” which generates the impression of openness. (Sharabi, 1988, p.124) This explains why the dominant type of individual is the modernized intellectual who is placed in the front. (Sharabi, 1988, p.23) These intellectuals are made up by the elite who replaced the category of the petty bourgeoisie, who hold the most significant contradictions between modernity and tradition, which, as Sharabi (1988) argues, have similar characters to the elites' behaviors in neopatriarchal societies. Moreover, the contradictions between modernity and tradition increase further in neopatriarchal societies. (p.127) These elites work with no aims or significant goals. (Sharabi, 1988, p.131) Also, only a limited number of elite women are able to participate in political issues regarding women publicly.
Qatari female role models are crucial to motivate women to participate more actively in the public sphere. However, female role models in Qatar are mainly limited to elite females. (The 2015 Doha Conference, 2015, p.45) H.H Shaikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad is a paramount example in the discussion on Qatari female role models that fight for women’s rights. (The 2015 Doha Conference, 2015, p.45) Because these role models are limited to the elite class, the middle class and the lower ones are deprived of possibilities that could allow them to ameliorate their conditions. Which brings us to the next point, the issue of class. Golkowska (2014) mentions that these women may not represent all women in society and their concerns. (p.61) Despite the high standards of living of the majority of Qataris, a large number of women are part of the lower-income groups. These women make up 47% of the social insurance receivers. (World Press, 2010, p.23) The majority of women who are the head of the household are included in this percentage. (World Press, 2010, p.23) The issue of class is essential in understanding the roles of women in society and the limits placed on specific classes. Women in different classes hold different beliefs.

Al-Mannai (2006) mentions that many people negatively view feminism as a threatening ideology from the West that endangers traditional values. (p.31) Golkowska (2014) also states that feminism is a controversial topic and “few would identify with it.” (p.60) Nonetheless, the political positions taken by elite women are affecting society from the top-down. They are changing gender norms and endeavor for women’s rights. (Al-Mannai, 2006, p.66) Al-Mannai’s (2006) research reveals that the majority of Qataris believe that women are ready to take on political positions (p.92). However, in Al-Muhannadi’s (2011) research in 2011, despite men being open to women holding political positions, they were antagonistic towards any of their female relatives’ participation in politics. Only a small number of women are socially accepted to publicly raise issues related to women’s rights and
empowerment. This prevents the ability of women to prosper in Qatar and increase their status and social welfare.

The Qatari society believes that women are still inferior to men. Women with advanced degrees are working in lower positions than men. (Al-Muhannadi, 2011, p.12) In 2011, only 3% of the Qatari women’s labor force were in leadership positions, and only 22 women are in high political or leadership positions. (Al-Muhannadi, 2011, p.28) Romanowski and Al-Hassan (2013) state that a “glass ceiling” exists that prevents the employment and promotion of women. (p.3) The majority of Qataris believe that men are more qualified to hold political positions than women. (Golkowska, 2017, p.6) As Al-Muhannadi (2011) states “Tradition maintains segregation and opposes a woman’s right to do as she pleases”, while modernity contradicts that and promotes female empowerment in all sectors. (p.69)

Al-Mannai (2006) discusses the importance of women’s voices in demanding their rights. (p.159) He believes that it should not be left to men to fight for women’s rights as they will never be able to fully comprehend how women feel. (Al-Mannai, 2006, p.165) Although the women in politics motivate other women, it is unclear whether or not they represent different classes of society and their concerns. The lower classes tend to be less educated, and differences in cultural traditions exist, which leads to many lower-class women becoming housewives. It is essential to look at those women who are not considered elites, but acquire university degrees and are actively in pursuit of their rights. They may comprehend and represent the rest of society more closely and possess similar concerns. The participation of exclusively elite women in the promotion of women’s rights is apprehensive. It causes concern and questions whether these women are a deception for the West to view the Qatari society as a developing liberating society. This is a question of future research to investigate. The State of Qatar is particularly concerned with its reputation in the West. This is due to
political and economic reasons discussed further in chapter 3. As discussed previously, with the coming of the 2022 World Cup, Qatar hopes to impart a liberal society that satisfies the West’s idea of modernized. Moreover, the acceptance of elite women can not only be viewed as an appearance for the west, but can also result in the belief that women in Qatar are not oppressed as these females occupy strong political and leading positions.

Educated women, therefore, ‘choose’ to avoid politics. This is for three reasons, the dangers of politics, politics as more appropriate to males, and the idea of Sharaf (honor) and its relation to political jobs as inappropriate. Politics can be viewed as inappropriate for females for two reasons, the first being a male dominated field, and the second is being known publicly, which is avoided in Qatar as it is socially unacceptable for women to appear regularly in media. This results in a lack of political and leading females in Qatar. The exception of elite women is concerning.

The idea of the Neopatriarchal State as an illusion that projects a modernized exterior explains why my focus on Qatar Foundation is extremely significant. Sharabi's (1988) book *Neopatriarchy* discusses a vital issue that is extremely prevalent in Arab societies. This issue focuses on the deformed ‘modernization’ found in Arab societies. Sharabi (1988) states that this is due to dependency relation, which does not lead to modernization but rather a "modernized patriarchy." (p.4) This dependency is the dependency on capitalism, which leads to the neopatriarchal State's creation, which Sharabi (1988) asserts is neither traditional nor modern. (p.4, 7) This idea is somewhat similar to the notion introduced by Miriam Cooke (2014), which is the ‘tribal modern’.

Sharabi (1988) uses the terms authenticity and tradition to explain how the neopatriarchal State is neither traditional nor modern. He states that the neopatriarchal State lacks both genuine traditionalism and authentic modernity equally. (Sharabi, 1988, p.23) Moreover, he states that individuals are driven back to the primary social structures including
tribes, family, religion, and more. (Sharabi, 1988, p.66) Thus, increasing the gap between the appearances of the State and its realities. Through going back to these, the polity gap is exaggerated. (Sharabi, 1988, p.66) Therefore, resulting in the coexistence of extremely contradictory values within society and individuals. Meaning that individuals within neopatriarchal societies preach about liberation and equality and so on, while maintaining their traditional goals and values such as the patriarchal family and tribalism. (Sharabi, 1988, p.66) This is exactly what is found in Qatar. The branding of the Qatari State, discussed prior exemplifies this. The first example was the branding of Qatar as a state that is both rich of culture and traditions while also liberal and progressive in order to promote sport tourism and create a good reputation.

Sharabi (1988) states that a neopatriarchal State is "no more than a modernized version of the traditional patriarchal sultanate." (p.7) Additionally, Sharabi (1988) states that the petty bourgeoisie in neopatriarchal societies feel nostalgia for the golden age and thus, create a desire to go 'back' to the past and traditions. (p.138) However, most Middle Eastern nations are artificial creations formed as a result of colonialism. He states that all neopatriarchal institutions "project a modernized exterior, but internally their structures are essentially patriarchal animated by an elaborate system of personal relations, kinship, and patronage." (Sharabi, 1988, 131) Moreover, that is precisely what Miriam Cooke (2014) argues.

In her book *Tribal Modern*, Miriam Cooke (2014) looks into the idea of what tribal is in the modern world. Cooke (2014) institutes what she refers to as *Barzakh* logic, the space of intersection between two knowledge systems, the indigenous culture, and the colonial-modern. (p.71) The term *Barzakh* is used in the Quran (25:53) to describe the space between life and death in addition to the space between the two oceans that do not mix. (Cooke, 2014, p.71) This term can be utilized to recount many characteristics of the Qatari society. One is
the integration of the aspirations of educated Qatari women and their conflicting roles in society. Qatari females educated in Western universities undergo this conflict on a daily basis. The Qatar Foundation bubble can also be described using this term. Females within this bubble are more accepting of the modernizing ideas and the mixing of cultures, whereas the outside is completely opposed to them. The intersection between the two cultures do not mix, making the Qatar Foundation bubble one side of the *Barzakh* and the rest of the Qatari society the other.

Education City and Qatar Foundation are generally perceived erratically by the Qatari society. It has been given the nickname “Sin City” in Qatar due to its extremely liberal values and Western appearance in addition to the normalization and excessive degree of gender mixing which is not present anywhere else in Qatar. (Vora, 2019, p.80) During a discussion in one of the classes taught at Georgetown University Qatar, the topic of Qatar Foundation as an isolated city in Qatar was brought up. One of the students mentioned that people in Qatar are scared of openness which can stray a person away from religion and tradition. This fear is in view of being scared of becoming like Dubai. She described how Dubai has no mark of being Middle Eastern Muslim country. Moreover, she states that a trepidation exists from people who vocalize their opinions too blatantly and openly, which make up a good portion of people in Qatar Foundation.

Another student also stated that Qatar Foundation, despite its attempt to stimulate knowledge and development, is clearly directed at creating a better reputation than to “transform” society as quoted by Sheikha Moza earlier. The student further states that the purpose of Qatar Foundation’s establishment was to develop society and education using Western ideas and towards the Western belief of what is progressive, however this initiative is just for Qatar Foundation as the State is not attempting to implement these outside. Therefore, it is entirely an appearance.
Qatarization is a governmental initiative that aims to increase Qatari citizens’ employment in public and private sectors, with one of its main focuses being increasing women’s participation. This incentive is one of the focuses of the Qatar National Vision 2030. While the policies set by the Qatari State aim to increase women’s participation in the workforce, the perseverance of traditions is a barrier that prevents this. The reforms that promote women’s work and advancement are all coming from top-down initiatives; therefore, the issue seems to be with the societal views on women. (Shockley 468) However, this is not the case. The State also plays a major role in the preservation of the traditional roles of Qatari women.

Maria Mies (1998) in *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, discussed the perspective of women’s labor and how this is connected to capitalist accumulation. Many Qatari women hold some of the highest impressive leadership positions as discussed beforehand. If women in Qatar were able to reach these astonishing positions, what is the issue then? Although women are educated and working, the belief that this would result in the liberation of women is false. Women who believed that women would be equal and free from all constraints by achieving high ranking leadership positions or participating in politics “find their expectations shattered.” (Mies, 1998, p.17) According to Mies (1998), women are not oppressed; rather they are exploited. They are being “exploited in the name of ‘progress’ and ‘growth’”. (1998, p.18) Their autonomy is an illusion that is created by the capitalistic economy where they appear to possess individual freedom to fulfil their desires. (Mies, 1998, p.40)

Women in Qatar are motivated to participate in the workforce and satisfy the image of a progressive woman for two reasons. The first is what is explained by Mies (1998) as the accumulation of capital, while the second is the need for an image of progress that represents the State of Qatar. While the advancement of women is a priority in the policy of the State of
Qatar, there are countless other laws that aim to maintain the traditional role of women. The laws and state initiatives that restrict Qatari women will discussed further in the next chapter.

**Conclusion**

Qatar Foundation and Education City can be viewed as a form of cosmetic reform which only attempts to improve the appearance and reputation of Qatar, rather than to truly create a change. Vora (2019) states that education within Qatar Foundation goes beyond university campuses, by shaping their cultural identities. (p.6) But does it really? Within Qatar Foundation, this idea of acceptance is manifested. Those within the bubble, are comprised by mainly the elite and higher classes. This can be viewed as a disguise for the West and others to view the Qatari society. A large number of Qataris are opposed to the values within Qatar Foundation and the effects they have on the rest of the society. Thus, it is necessary to compare the principles within Qatar Foundation with the rest of the Qatari society.

Qatari women are used to create an image of a progressive state. However, this image is limited to the surface of Qatar and doesn't extend beyond the illusion it creates. This section looked into the exploitation of women as symbols of modernity and how despite their achievements, their advancement is restricted and constrained as it is determined by the State and society. Women are only able to advance to the point society and the State allows them to. Women and their participation in society is one of the key indicators of progress and development in a country. Therefore, it is necessary to have women in leadership positions to stratify this image.
Chapter 2:

The Impediments to Qatari Women’s Freedom
As discussed in chapter 1, Qatar has created an illusion of a modernized state that hides the true patriarchal and traditional society it truly is. This chapter will look into the traditions of Qatar and how ingrained they are in society. This will uncover how the projection of a modernized state in Qatar is just on the surface and aims to create an umbrella that attempts to conceal the traditional patriarchal State it truly is.

“The Qatari Society is proud of its customs and traditions and holds on to them.” This quote is a true or false question from my younger brother's year 5 Qatar history textbook. The idea of Qatar's rich culture, which is full of traditions, is taught to young kids at schools at an extremely young age and is even written as the first initiative of the Qatar Vision 2030. However, what are the traditions that Qatar is so proud of and wants to preserve? Furthermore, how do these traditions impact educated Qatari women? This chapter will look into Qatar's construction of women's traditional identity and examine how this is a hindrance to their advancement.

This chapter will look into four main impediments of the Qatari culture which play a role in the preservation of these traditions or are included as part of the Qatari 'traditions.' First, the general term of traditions and what they are indeed in the Qatari society will be expounded. The first impediment examines tribalism as a normalized part of the Qatari culture and its effect in sustaining the patriarchal hierarchy of the Qatari State. The second impediment reviews the Qatari law and how 'traditional' roles have been subsumed into it. Taking us to the third impediment: the significance of religious institutions in Qatar in their role in shaping Qatari women's identity. Finally, the last impediment considers the influence of the immediate family over educated Qatari women and how this is the most substantial pivotal consideration in their lives and choices. Throughout the discussion of these traditions, the influence they retain over Qatari women's autonomy will become elucidated. This chapter will argue that through the creation and conservation of 'traditions,' the Qatari State and
society are able to preserve the subordinate roles of women and their inability to act independently with personal autonomy.

**Defining Tradition and the Invention of Traditions**

The belief that women's lack of education is the main reason for their inability to harmonize with male progress amplifies women's oppression as a "cultural lag". (Mies, 1998, p.20) In Qatar's case, the use of the justification of the inequalities between men and women as 'cultural lags' is heavily present. Women's oppression is embedded in the idea that this is the nature of the culture or their nature. This includes Qatar's 'tribal' identity and the use of religious institutions in Qatar.

Eric Hobsbawm introduces the term ‘Invented Traditions’ in 1983 in his book *The Invention of Tradition*. He defines invented traditions as a term that “includes both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less traceable manner within a brief and dateable period”. (p.1) He further states that these traditions are “governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms with the past”. (Hobsbawm, 1983, 1) Hobsbawm (1983) states that these traditions are “deliberately invented and constructed by a single initiator.” (p.4) Hence, this chapter will discuss the traditions that the State of Qatar is preserving and how it can sustain the presence of Qatari customs and traditions which are unselfconscious and invariable, or "deliberately invented and constructed". (Hobsbawm, 1983, p.4). This section is by no means attempting to draw a distinction between the genuine traditions of Qatar and the invented traditions. Rather, it aims to point out that similar to Qatar's artificial modernization, the traditions that exist reveal the insincerity of modernization in Qatar and the true motives of the preservation of such traditions. Thus, creating contradictions between the image Qatar contrives, opposed to the realities of how society truly operates due to traditions.
There is an attempt by the State of Qatar to reconcile and retrieve the past cultural history and identities with modernity. There is a need to 'preserve' the identities and traditions of the Qatari heritage. This is seen in Qatar's branding strategy discussed in chapter 1. With the independence of Qatar, there was a need to define the national identity of Qatar. The Qatari State aims to brand itself as both modern and traditional. National traditions began emerging in the foreground and constructed through narratives of the past. (Liloia, 2018, p.54) Much of the liability of the preservation of Qatari identity to satisfy the narrative of tradition is placed on women due to their position in the patriarchal society. Liloia (2019) states that "The choices of women are deeply impacting the nation's social fabric, which is indicated by the shifting rates of higher education, marriage and divorce." (p. 42)

This burden can be explained through Pierre Bourdieu's (2001) *Masculine Domination*, where he discusses what is viewed as normal. He states that "The division between the sexes appears to be 'in the order' of things’, as people sometimes refer to as what is normal, natural, to the point of being inevitable”. (p.8) This is embedded in everything and functions “as systems of schemes of perception”. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.8) Moreover, Judith Butler (2004) in her book *Undoing Gender* discusses this normalization and the 'norm' further. She states, "A norm operates within social practices as the implicit standard of normalization.” (Butler, 2004, p.41) This is somewhat similar to Bourdieu’s idea of the Habitus and the field. Each of these different fields operated where “they are oriented towards the augmentation of *some* kind of ‘capital’ (e.g. cultural or symbolic capital) or the maximization of *some* kind of ‘profit’ (e.g. honour or prestige).” (Bourdieu, 1991, p.15) Butler (2004) states that the norm can only remain the norm if it is “acted out in social practice and reidealized and reinstituted in and through the daily social rituals of bodily life.” (p.48) Moreover, she cites Foucault's argument that the norm is also found in legal form. Additionally, Ewald argues that this way, “the norm performs this transformative function”
where it is able to become a regulatory mechanism. (Butler, 2004, p.49) Through producing fields, the norm can produce itself within those fields. Thus, making itself more and more of a reality. (Butler, 2004, p.50)

Therefore, it is difficult to observe the deep-rooted mechanisms of things, and the masculine order can accordingly strengthen itself through this. “The strength of the masculine order is seen in the fact that it dispenses with justification,” where the social order which authorizes masculine domination functions as a symbolic machine. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.9)

An example given by Bourdieu on how these symbolic machines function is the use of the body itself as a biological reality to justify the realities of the social structures. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.11) This includes viewing things as opposites. Through classifying things into oppositions, a connection is made between the female body and that which is "private and hidden, even invisible or shameful." (Bourdieu, 2001, p.30) At the same time, males are assigned a different connection that opposes that of the female, therefore connecting them to that which is public and visible. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.30) In addition to the exploitation of women for economic and political reasons, Bourdieu (2001) states that manliness is furthermore a product of “a kind of fear of the female, firstly in oneself.” (p.23) This can be a fear of women's ability to progress beyond men; therefore, there is a need for them to be limited and constrained to avoid this.

Part of this is heavily influenced by the role of women in this tribal society. Claire Jacobson (2014) states that “In the MENA countries, women's subordination to men is based on historical kin-based solidarities that have created patriarchal networks that perpetuate gender inequality in law, politics and the economy.” (p.25) As stated earlier, women were also required to create an image of a modern state. This is in order to consolidate relations with the West. (Jacobson, 2014, p.32) Fatima Hasan Al-Muftah (2015) states that in addition to the difficulties Qatari women face, the image of Arab woman as backward also affects her
drastically. She states, "to the outside observer, the backwardness of her culture is seen in her being severely dominated in her country. There are many works published containing the word "Arab women", and how the structural content view them as inferior in many aspects." (Al-Muftah, 2015, p.26) Moreover, Abeer Al-Dosari (2019) states that “This purview that considers women in the Middle East to be 'oppressed' gives impetus to the invisibility of the agency of women in this region and preserves the hegemonic view of women as 'other' (Ribeiro, 2014).” (p.17)

Jacobson states that women and their suffrage were used as a “cosmetic reform” that looks good from the outside; however, it does not conflict or upset the Qatari population, who may not be ready for specific reforms regarding women. (Jacobson, 2014, p.32) Thus, the education of women can be viewed as a soft power strategy used by Qatar which is expanded further in chapter 3.

In *Tribal Modern*, Cooke (2014) looks into what tribalism is in the modern world. She focused on the GCC countries, predominantly Qatar. Cooke (2014) explains that the State of Qatar is establishing “invented tradition” where she quotes the historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger by stating that these invented traditions have been invented from a tabula rasa. (p.68) These traditions “establish or symbolize social cohesion”, “establish or legitimize institutions, status or relations of authority”, “allow for “the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behavior”(9)”, and finally, it creates a historical narrative that allows for the development of the sense of superiority of the elites. (Cooke, 2014, p.68)

Through this, the 'traditional' culture discussed today is a creation of the past, not the actual past itself. It is a historical narrative that has been created by using symbols from the past to appear as though it is a product or reality of that past. This is being legitimimized by the idea of losing oneself within engulfment of what is alien or, more accurately, Western ideas that do
not line up with the cultural and religious values in Qatar. Thus, a need to construct 'traditions' and maintain them exists.

Moreover, women are given the burden of being the guarantors of the future of the nation. (Mies, 1988, p.194) Besides, in Qatar, the West is represented as if it is the enemy. Therefore, women feel obliged to protect their values and traditions against these invading forces of Western ideology rather than any inside forces. By allowing a few women to rise to high-ranking positions and the promotion of women in Qatar, the State makes it a reality that they stand with women and that the enemy is the outside forces.

An example of this is one of the interviews Liloia (2018) conducts with Latifa Al-Muftah. She discussed her concern for the Qatari culture, which she believed has become lost, and therefore, needs to be restored and protected. She states, “Keeping our morals and values is important. For a while, we lost our tradition, they forgot and lost our culture. Now we are returning to it. We are going back to tradition.” (Liloia, 2018, p.61) However, this is not the case as they are not returning to anything, rather creating the past that determines their future.

'Traditional' culture is being created by adopting significant symbols from the past, thus, appearing as the actual historical narrative. Therefore, it is necessary to counteract the challenges of modernity and Westernization through the use of 'tradition', 'tribalism', and religion. This is a selection of their past or a rearrangement of elements from the past.5

The structures of tribalism and the role of women as bearers of the family honor continue to maintain control over women and restrict them from using opportunities the government gives them.

The Contemporary Tribal Society

5 Eric Hobsbawm, The Invention of Tradition discusses how many of the traditions that are believed to be ancient or from the past are, in reality, invented relatively recently. This book focuses on Welsh and Scottish 'national cultures' and their creation and its process.
In Qatar, tribes are viewed as a "form of social organization that preceded the state". (Alshawi & Gardner, 2013, p.49) The notion of solidarity through kinship is central to the understanding of tribalism. With the rapid modernization of the Qatari State, it would be easy to assume that tribal traditions would dilute. A. Hadi Alshawi and Andrew Gardner (2013) discuss Ibn Khaldun's assumption that tribal affiliations would weaken through the generations. However, this is not the case in Qatar. With oil, the Qatari State had to assess a way wealth would be distributed to prevent retaliation from other tribes and members from within the family. This means the foundation of the distribution of wealth in Qatar was fundamentally tribal. Due to solidarity through kinship, tribes become more in agreement as wealth increases as they aim to maintain their wealth and power within their tribe. Alshawi and Gardner's (2013) findings satisfy this notion as the data collected demonstrates that higher income levels correlate with higher levels of tribal solidarity. (p.52) Moreover, the assumption that better education would result in the weakening of tribal bonds would be the uncultivated assumption as tribalism is usually connected to 'backwardness'. In contrast, education is connected to 'modernity'. Surprisingly, this assumption is also false. From Alshawi and Gardner's (2013) data, a positive correlation exists between education and tribal solidarity. Alshawi and Gardner (2013) argue that this perseverance of tribalism and tribal identity comes solely from the State. This is due to the power the State gives tribes in their ability to hold influential positions and distribute resources. (Alshawi & Gardner, 2013, p.56-57) By doing so, the tribal social order is thus maintained.

Al-Muhannadi (2011) believes that tribal customs are one of the main cultural barriers that exist in Qatar that prevent women from improving their role in society. Al-Muhannadi (2011) gives tribalism in the Qatari society three characteristics; it is incredibly conservative with many customs and traditions. It is patriarchal, and finally, it uses many religious values that can be considered authoritarian. (p.1). Al-Muhannadi (2011) states that “in many cases,
the law codifies the traditional tribe laws.” (p.18) She also states that the Qatari government takes a “hands-off” approach regarding women’s social and cultural issues. This is why traditional customs triumph. (Al-Muhannadi, 2011, p.18) Salah Al-Mannai (2006) agrees with Al-Muhannadi by stating that “Politicians try to attract the support of tribes by avoiding the promotion of any rights for women that might upset tribal chiefs.” (p.29) Women are considered the Sharaf (honour) of the tribes. (Al-Mannai, 2006, p.46) However, it is salient to note that these tribal leaders hold influential positions within the State and allow for its preservation without conflict.

Matias López (2013) explains that according to the definition of elites, they comprise different groups and emerge from different sources, meaning that they are not limited to the political elites. (p.3) The tribes that hold power within Qatar are considered some of the biggest most influential tribes which are part of the ‘elite’. These elites hold influence over countless aspect of political development including economic opportunities, political violence, unity and disunity and much more. (Lopez, 2013, p.7) López (2013) writes that “the concept of ‘elites’ is based on the notion that every society holds a ruling minority, a group that controls and disputes the most important power sources.” (p.1) Satiating Al-Muhannadi’s statement in the state’s desire to please these tribal leaders, López (2013) states that the “Elites dispute power, meaning that they may find more antagonism among themselves than among the lower classes.” (p.3)

The Barzakh logic used by Cooke (2014) is illustrated in Al-Mannai (2006), Al-Muhannadi (2011), and Golkowska (2017) work. The presence of traditional customs aiming to minimize the changes happening through modernization demonstrates the intersection of two knowledge systems. These traditions exist together with modernization. However, they do not confine with the modernizing culture, therefore the two are not mixing.
The interviews conducted illustrated how tribal affiliations and tribalism impacts Qatari women's education and careers. One subject stated that “Tribalism plays a huge role in the rights of women. You are carrying your family's name. It's something you are born with, and it all comes down to it.” Another subject stated that “Women become the carriers of these traditions. Some say they are Bedouins; their daughters cannot do this and that. A woman is the carrier of tradition, and the bodies of women measure progress and modernity.”

One subject discussed the concept of “عار” or a’ib, which roughly translates to disreputable or shameful. She states that tribalism hinders women's advancement due to the existence of the idea of a’ib, which results in the restriction of women's choices. Another answered the same question: “Do you think tribalism is a hurdle to Qatari women's advancement?” by saying,

   yes, there is no other answer. It applies to the dynamics within the tribe and within the family.
   Nevertheless, on a more general level, it is the patriarchy overall. It does not matter what tribe you are from or what family you are from; it is the same patriarchal structure across all tribes. It is always the men of the tribe because they usually control it.

Another stated, in response to a question about the rights of Qatari women, that “We live in a very tribal society, and the government cannot do anything to change that or intervene a lot because many people's lives would be put in danger due to going outside the cultural boundaries.” She further stated in her answer to the question above that “tribalism plays a role in this because families are setting standards for women… From this point of view, they are restricting women and where they can work and especially diplomatic jobs.”

The idea of a’ib was brought up once again by another subject who stated that “a’ib has become worse than haram (forbidden).” She discussed the issue of tribalism extensively by stating that

   we see so many issues and crimes taking place because of the attitude of the tribe against women.
   Culture and traditions are intertwined and affect society as a whole because we have to be part of
society by pretending we follow the same values and leave our mentalities. This is repeated in marriage, work, education and more. I do not want my sister to work here or there, I do not want my wife to get a Ph.D. or become a doctor because she will work late and with men. There is the idea that men decide whom a woman becomes. We forget Islam which is supposed to be the foundation of our lives, because of tribalism and reputation. It is rooted in society to the point where *a’ib* is worse than *haram*.

Another subject also discussed how religion is being mixed with tribalism which she found absolutely “disgusting.” Moreover, the mix between religion and traditions results in the construction of a distorted view people hold of Islam in Qatar which is expanded subsequently in this chapter. Another stated that Islam is against tribalism; therefore, the two should not be mixed.

Furthermore, some discussed how the State favors certain tribes; therefore, women from these tribes are given more privileges than others. One subject stated that “tribalism still exists and it can benefit women, however, it favors women from specific tribes. While it can help one woman, it also works against other women.”

Many of the subjects interviewed believed that tribalism was less apparent today than it was in the past. They stated that the family's role in controlling Qatari women and their influence on their lives was more determined by their immediate families than their tribes. Some stated that although tribalism exists, it affects men and women equally. One subject stated that “living in the modern age, we do not need it, it only limits both women and men… There is no way you can play the situation to your strength.” Another revealed that it depends on the tribe and how involved the tribe is. If they are not concerned, then the immediate family plays a more significant role.

The State of Qatar has countless political and economic aims, which leads to the manipulation of 'fields' by re-imposing 'traditional', 'religious' values and establishing and sustaining the tribal order. For this to work, the State has to make sure that the participants
"believe in the game they are playing" unconditionally. (Bourdieu, 1991, p.14) One subject mentioned that "tribalism as political tool has created certain categories of how women should be. The Bedouin woman is at home and covered. These categories become self-inscribed and tell women how to act and the State promotes it." She further discusses how the understanding of tribalism in Qatar has changed. She remarks that Bedouin women were extremely different than the image they portray today. She states that “the Bedouin woman was very open; she did not even wear the hijab. Their chest would show, and their shaila (headscarf) was transparent. Segregation was not possible because women used to serve Arabic coffee to men. However, now this is impossible, and the majlis is such a separated concept."

In one interview, one subjection stated that, "the whole concept of tribalism is constructed by the modern State… When the State helps, you become proud of your heritage… Furthermore, this is promoted on a governmental level. People are being pressured into being tribal and romanticizing tribalism as tradition, heritage, and culture."

As discussed above, traditions have been created and maintained despite not being authentic traditions. Tribalism, is one of these traditions. Cooke (2014) reveals how her students referred to tribal roots as “everyone’s new thing!” (p.31) The first question that would follow what is your name when first meeting someone is "what is the name of your tribe?" (Cooke, 2014, p.32) She further states that tribalism in Qatar has become more prominent than before as new wealth and power have to be maintained in the hands of these elites and certain tribes. (Cooke, 2014, p.52)

Therefore, it becomes evident that the State's economic and political interests result in manipulating people's interests through the use of different fields. The people's interests are not limited to economic interests; it also includes religious and sociopolitical interests. Bourdieu (1991) discusses how fields which seem to have no interests or go against the
"mundane world of commodities and power" are, in reality, not interest-free. (p.16)

Tribalism, although seems to have "interests in the disinterestedness", in reality, is in disguise and conceals its true interests beneath the notion that it is a barrier to the 'progress' and liberation of women. Therefore, painting the Qatari society as tribal and pertains to Islamic and traditional values satisfies the State's interests. The inherited social backgrounds are used as justification for the established order. (Bourdieu, 1991, p.120) Additionally, Robin Fox (2011) discusses why tribalism persists and how human nature is fundamentally tribal. Fox (2011) states that the behaviors of humans "can be understood as a result of the struggle between past adaptations and novel environments." (p.4) Meaning that humans are attempting to adapt to the novel environments by using specific "mental modules" that help them easily acclimate. (Fox, 2011, p. 5) Fox (2011) states that the human mind requires a tribal mentality to survive as it is one of the basic human needs. (p.6) He states that this tribal system remains the "default system," which helps humans comprehend and arrange necessary observations. (Fox, 2011, p.6) As the State set up the tribal system as the default system, the Qatari society becomes embedded within it and unable to function in any other way.

**Women as Incomplete Individuals in the Law**

According to Article 35 of the Constitution of Qatar “All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex, race, language, or religion.” Despite this statement the most apparent contradiction between tradition and modernity and the roles of women in Qatar exists in the law itself. Despite the ostensible modernized State discussed in the introduction, Qatar intends to draw itself as a progressive modernized state. However, the realities of its superficial modernization are patently pronounced in the constitution and state initiatives.

Although the advancement of women is a priority in the State of Qatar's policy, countless other laws aim to maintain the traditional role of women. Despite the laws that
promote women to work by giving them maternity leaves and breastfeeding hours, the Qatari law still limits mothers' autonomy. Although one of the prominent roles assigned to Qatari women is being 'good' mothers, the custody and guardianship laws limit their independence as mothers. While women are given custody for their children, guardianship is given to their fathers. According to Law No. 40 Article 4, “Guardianship of the minor’s property shall be given to his father or to his paternal grandfather if his father did not choose a guardian.” (Law No 40 of 2004 on the Guardianship over Minors Funds)

The Qatari law grants women custody of their children to take care of them; however, legal custody or guardianship rights are given to their fathers. This makes women work invisible while the father, who may not be involved in the child's life, possesses more recognition and control within the family and outside. Despite women's resistance to this, the weapons they are using are 'weak weapons' as the "weapons of the weak are always weak weapons." (Bourdieu, 2001, p.32) Through using these weapons, women are viewed as hysterical and insane, which only reinforces the negative stereotypes. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.59) Foucault (2010) quotes Creusa in Euripides by stating “where shall we go to demand justice when it is the iniquity of the powerful that destroys us?” (p.135) The act of institution establishes different classes and groups and classifies them, and indicates how they should act and their order within society. Another goal of the institution is to prevent anyone from attempting to step outside the lines or the "magical boundaries" to sustain masculine domination further. Women's labor is denied and made invisible. Through this, the domination is further preserved as women's labor is not acknowledged.

Additionally, Law No. 22 Article 176 states that "The guardian of the Child may retain the passport of the Child save for when travelling when it shall be delivered to the female custodian of the Child." (Law No. 22 of 2006 Promulgating 'the Family Law') Moreover, the laws also limit mother's ability to remarry according to Article 168, which
states that "If the custodian is a female, she must not be married to a husband who is a stranger to the Child, if such marriage is consummated, unless the Court decides otherwise for the Child's interest." (Law No. 22 of 2006 Promulgating 'the Family Law') Therefore, if a mother chooses to remarry, she automatically loses her child's custody unless decided otherwise.

These limits are significantly more rigid for non-Muslim mothers or Qatari women married to foreigners. In the case of non-Muslim mothers, their rights to custody of their children are much more restricted as they only have the custody of their children until the age of 7 according to Article 175. (Law No. 22 of 2006 Promulgating 'the Family Law') Whereas Muslim women have custody until the ages of 13 to 15, according to Article 173. (Law No. 22 of 2006 Promulgating 'the Family Law') Qatari women cannot pass down their nationality to their children. However, a recent law in 2018 gives her children the ability to acquire permanent residence status.

One of the participants interviewed talked about an issue that stems from her personal experience: the ability for Qatari women to pass down their nationalities to their children. She expressed that her "sister wanted to marry a non-Qatari, but this was an issue." She further explained her dismay by saying, "Why would I not be able to have a passport for my kid in the country I live in with my children?" She raises a question that encompasses a larger issue of "Why are we limiting women's choices? Why is this forbidden?" And that this is a central issue as "it determines a woman's whole life."

Another subject with an advanced degree also raised the issue of Tajnees, which is the ability to pass down one’s nationality to their children. Tajnees also means obtaining Qatari nationality after residing in Qatar for decades. She mentions this in the context of how contradictory the constitution of Qatar is. She states that the constitution states that "all citizens are equal according to the constitution, which is one of the first lines you read."
However, she continues by pronouncing that "later on, you see the nationality law, which discriminates against women. This is also on different levels as it grants them different levels of citizenship. Even in the laws of Tajnees, it is men who are more protected as a woman who relies on that law is more vulnerable to being stripped of her nationality compared to men. She also relies on men to give her that nationality. She is either secondary to men, or perhaps completely invisible." Furthermore, although Qatar passed a permanent residency law in 2018, that allows Qatari women married to foreigners to provide the same benefits to their children as children of Qatari men, "the law allows only up to 100 people to apply for a year, and some families that applied are still awaiting a response." (HRW, 2021, p.28)

These guardianship laws can leave women stuck in abusive marriages and leave them with no choice or autonomy of any kind.

Women also spoke of how discrimination in laws relating to marriage, divorce, and decisions concerning children left them trapped in abusive marriages, often waiting years to obtain a divorce, unable to remarry for fear of losing ‘custody’ of their children, and dependent on their ex-husbands, who still act as the legal guardians of their children. Many divorced women must return to having their fathers as guardians. (HRW, 2021, p.4)

Additionally, instead of giving women guardianship of their children if no male relative is willing to take up this role, the State acts as the child's guardian. (HRW, 2021, p.5) Meaning women "are denied the authority to make independent decisions relating to their children's documents, finances, travel, and sometimes schooling and medical treatment" regardless of whether or not they possess custody of their children. (HRW, 2021, p.5)

According to the Human Rights Watch (2021) report titled “Everything I Have to Do is Tied to a Man,” guardianship laws in Qatar "directly contradict both Qatar's Family Law, which provides that guardianship ends when individuals turn 18, and Qatar's Constitution, which provides for equality before the law without discrimination on the basis of sex." (p.2) Guardianship laws mean that "Men, once 18, have full legal capacity and can also become
the guardians of adult female relatives." (HRW, 2021, p.13) Whereas women are treated as minors at any age regardless of their success and achievement. These guardianship laws affect women disproportionately depending on their immediate family, and their relation to their fathers or male guardian, which is discussed later on in this chapter. For example, women whose male guardians are not present in their lives or have passed away face more difficulty with guardianship laws than women on good terms with their guardians. Moreover, "Male guardianship in Qatar is not a cohesive or clear legal system", as it lacks clarity and information about the requirements and degree of discrimination it holds. (HRW, 2021, p.2) Women's guardianships are always in the hands of males. When a woman gets married, her guardianship is passed from her father to her husband.

In addition to the laws formally enacted by the government, there are many unwritten laws that further limit educated Qatari women's autonomy, perhaps even more than the written laws. The examples abound: for example, specific workplaces require guardian permission for women to work. This insinuates that a female requires the legal guardian's permission, which is the male relative of the female, whether father, uncle, brother or husband to work. One of the Qatari graduates interviewed discussed her concern regarding the legal system which maintains the lack of female rights. Despite her workplace not requiring guardian permission to work, she mentioned that MOFA and many other places require this. This could be due to the different work environment of certain places such as those that require trips abroad and long working hours. To prevent any conflict with the families and to ensure that females employed will endure these attributes, certain workplaces may ask for guardian permission. Another subject with an advanced education degree discussed this issue further. She stated that the need for a non-objection letter from a male guardian such as the father, husband or brother means that “Your economic independence is legally and strictly tied to someone.”
One participant stated that this requirement illustrates "the mindset of society that women do need their male guardian's permission to work." She further stated that this limits women's ability to become independent as many "Women want to work for financial independence from their spouse and family." She further states that family law is the main issue as it stipulates the most restrictions on women.

A second issue exists regarding the regulations of working Qatari women was brought up by two of the subjects interviewed. This concern is the issue of equal pay in work. One subject stated that her male colleague received a bonus that far exceeded her bonus. Despite receiving the same rating and being employed for the same duration, his bonus still exceeded hers. He was not married; therefore, the only reason for this bonus was due to his gender. Moreover, she stated that it was written in the policy that education assistance was only for men. She affirmed that she would have never found out about this difference in bonuses if she did not have this conversation with her male colleague. Another subject interviewed discussed unequal pay and the glass ceiling on women in the workplace. Al-Muftah (2015) states that a wage gap also exists where men's monthly salaries exceed women by about 5000 riyals. (p.43) She further states that this inequality also exists in promotions and increments. 53% of women experiences these inequalities in promotions (Al-Muftah, 2015, p.43).

In addition to the previous examples that are not included in the law, "Interior Ministry rules, but not law, provide that unmarried Qatari women under age 25 need permission from their male guardian (in person or an exit permit) to travel abroad." (HRW, 2021, p.5) In addition to male guardians' ability to impose travel bans on their daughters or wives without their knowledge.

Additionally, although rules stating that guardian permission is required for women to obtain a driving license have been lifted, "male guardians may still be able to block women from obtaining a provisional driving license." (HRW, 2021, p.5) The Human Rights Watch
(2021) report also discusses the discrimination women face in obtaining health care, where they require their husband's consent or proof of marriage when seeking sexual and reproductive healthcare, regardless of whether the issue is related to being sexually active or not.

Additionally, divorce rights are highly discriminatory to Qatari women.

Under Qatari law, men can divorce (talaq) by a simple pronouncement or in writing, or even an understandable gesture where they cannot write or pronounce the divorce, and without needing to appeal to a court. They do not have to inform their wife that they wish to divorce but should inform their wife that they have divorced them if they pronounced the divorce outside a courtroom. The law also allows men three months to reconcile with their wife and nullify the divorce.

Although the law does protect women by stating that a husband must "allow his wife to complete her compulsory education and facilitate continuation of her university education within the State", this is only as long as it does “not conflict with her family duties." Moreover, "Qatar's Family Law requires a wife to be obedient to her husband, maintain the house and its belongings, and breastfeed infant children unless there is an impediment." Religious institutions are also used to justify these laws and further limit Qatari women's autonomy by giving them assigned roles as mothers and wives and, more importantly, incomplete individuals or ‘permanent minors’. Al-Ghanim (2019) states that women’s rights given in the laws have been linked to Islam. However,

Contrary to assumptions that inequality is embedded in Islam's religion and legal framework, scholars such as Mir Hossein and Jawad have shown that the real source of gender inequality must be attributed to the patriarchal system and the masculinity culture. In contrast, Islamic values themselves actually point in the opposite direction. (p.58)

The following section will discuss how religious institutions have constructed Qatari women's role and have allowed them to become embedded in the law as they are used as justification for women’s lack of autonomy.

**The Use of Religious Institutions to Reinforce Qatari Women’s Subjugation:**
The Qatari State Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs’ website (https://english.islam.gov.qa/) provides a large number of resources that aims to achieve “a contemporary Islamic society that interacts with the concerns of its nation, and takes the Sharee'ah (Islamic Law) and cultural heritage as their source and methodology, and the middle course in their way of life.” In addition to “preserving, guiding, and developing the religious activity through the promotion of religious awareness, and the magnanimous values and moral principles of the Qatari society, and through its interest in the noble Quran and its sciences”.

The Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs' website dedicates a whole section titled Qawareer (Women) at its home page. This is placed in between two other topics. The first being the importance of reading, and the second which discusses the History of the Sunnah and the Importance of Knowing the Narrators of Hadeeth. This demonstrates how central the topic of women is and the immersed focus on this topic in Qatar.

This section, Qawareer (Women), provides three direct links that discuss three different topics regarding women; “A Woman Is Married for 4 Reasons”, “Building a Happy Home”, and “Your Angry Child is not Aggressive”. These three categories all deal with topics concerning women as homemakers, wives and mothers. The first section, "A Woman Is Married for 4 Reasons", " discusses how a woman chooses to get married for "her wealth, noble ancestry, beauty and religion". Moreover, it discusses what a marriageable woman is and what characteristics she should acquire, including physical and spiritual beauty. It also discloses that a woman must be obedient to her husband by stating that "a righteous woman always shows affection and respect for her husband, does not delay what he likes her to hasten to, nor hastens what he does not like her to do."

The second section, "Building a Happy Home," begins with a very unyielding statement which states that
A Muslim woman should know that happiness, affection and mercy can only be achieved when she preserves her chastity, adheres to her religion, knows her rights and does not exceed them, and obeys her husband as he is her protector and maintainer. A wife should fulfill her tasks efficiently, look after her home and take care of her appearance. This is what a righteous wife, kind mother, and responsible caretaker does at her husband’s home, because she will be held accountable for her trust.

This section continues with similar statements that signify that the woman is only responsible for the home. In contrast, the husband has no domestic responsibilities other than providing for the family. It further elucidates that she should be obedient to her husband and that her actions affect their marriage outcome entirely. Other than being "good-tempered, lenient, kind, gentle, merciful to her family, decisive, not over-demanding, and not irresponsible", there was no mention of the husband's responsibility as a caretaker. His only responsibility is to provide a good atmosphere for the children and not threaten his wife with divorce. Additionally, it states that “women should overlook and forgive their husbands’ shortcomings; they should not annoy them when they are present and should not betray them when they are absent.” These statements create a very unbalanced relationship between the wife and the husband and between their responsibilities.

The final section, "Your Angry Child is not Aggressive", deals with issues that may provoke, frustrate, or be unfair to a child. This section provides instructions on how to react when a child is angry or frustrated due to different things. It further gives tips on how to teach children to control their anger. Although this section is straightforward and does not deal with the gendered issues, it is placed under the section Qawareer (Women), therefore, directed at women, not men.

As with the law, a pattern exists regarding the relation of Qatari women and men. It becomes clear that women are not only subordinate to men, but are also in complete subjugation of them. One of the subjects interviewed addressed this matter by casting doubt on Qatar's genuineness of empowering women and presenting itself as a modernized state.
She states, "The vision tells you they want to promote women, but where is that legally? On the one hand, the State tells you we want women to be empowered, but at the same time, there is not legal structural framework to facilitate this."

These laws and religious identities regarding women are significant as politics creates a vision and makes it real through the construction of legal and social identities. (Bourdieu, 1991, p.130) The legal identities of Qatar reflect the contradictory role of the ‘good’ Qatari woman. The object of the two contradicting roles of women can be explained through Mies’ (1988) argument. Although women are being motivated to work and participate in the labor force, they also needed to be domesticated. (Mies, 1988, p.105) While they are considered cheap labor, their domestication is necessary to “breed more workers.” (Mies, 1988, p.105) While women in Qatar are necessary for both the reputation of Qatar on a world scale and their economic interest, their domestication is also necessary for the accumulation of capital within the dominant powers. Moreover, working class men also benefit from the exploitation of women. Mies (1988) states

Proletarian men do have a material interest in the domestication of their female class companions. This material interests consists, on the one hand, in the man’s claim to monopolize available wage-work, on the other in the claim to have control over all money income in the family. Since money has become the main source and embodiment of power under capitalism, proletarian men fight about money not only with the capitalists, but also with their wives. (p.109)

This explains the modern concept of the family which places women at an inferior position, where the male is considered the ‘breadwinner’. Mies (1988) delves deeper into how women are given these roles. She explains the idea of being a mother and biologically inferior are created and not accurate. Similar Mies, Valerie Bryson (2007) argues that these roles are socially constructed. She uses Simone de Beauvoir’s famous quote “One is not born but rather becomes a woman.” (p.52) Bryson (2007) argues that gender is socially constructed as opposed to sex which is biological. Women, therefore, are completely capable
of taking on ‘men’s roles’ and work. By identifying as male or female, one is not confining themselves to the natural roles; however, the socially constructed roles imposed on them. (Bryson, 2007, p.56) The body itself is being used as a biological ‘reality’ to justify the division, similarly to how religion and tradition are used. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.11) This is used as a “natural justification of the socially constructed differences between the genders”, which explains the reasons for the current division of labor and social orders. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.11) Moreover, Mies (1988) explains that this division is not a result of “some universal sexism” but rather “is a consequence of the capitalist mode of production”. (p.46) Capitalism has changed the definition of women by connecting their roles to biological explanation and their relation with nature. Either way, “female work is devalued. Whether it is wage-work or housework.” (Mies, 1988, p.110) This is the housewifization of women. Even when women are working, their wages are considered as supplementary rather than essential. (Mies, 1988, p.118) To summarize, Bourdieu explains that this “legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction.” This allows them to take advantage of the differences to satisfy a wider hidden agenda. (Bourdieu, 2001, p.23)

Moreover, women’s submission to these roles can be explained by the theory of Habitus. This is “a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways.” (Bourdieu, 1991, p.12) By the virtues of habitus, individuals act in certain ways. It generates how people act and perceive as well as “conquer the conditions of existence of which the habitus itself is a product.” (Bourdieu 1991, p.12) This is inscribed in different fields including education. Bourdieu (1991) states that some disciplines are considered soft disciplines are believed to be more appropriate for women as they are more feminine, as compared to hard disciplines. (p.86) This explains the high rates of women in jobs that are viewed as appropriate for women which include occupations related to education, health care,
and clerical work. (Felder and Vuollo, 2008, p.15) Habitus, in addition to the fields discussed earlier both works together to determine the actions of an individual. The field or social backgrounds provide the justification of certain practices.

**The Qatari Family: The Predetermined Fate of Qatari Women**

As discussed above, the family plays a critical legal role in determining Qatari women's choices. However, this extends beyond the legal constraints. Sharabi (1988) states that the patriarchal family is the core of the issue as people are opposed to social changes. (p.44) He discusses the ethics of obedience and how it is engrained into individuals during their childhoods. He quotes Piaget by stating that this creates a category of "untouchable" "sacred" foundations, including the government, parents, and God. (Sharabi, 1988, p.44)

The Qatari women interviewed were all graduates from Qatar Foundation Universities. These women all mentioned the involvement of their families in their attainment of education within Qatar Foundation. Al-Dosari’s (2019) research also holds the same conclusion as six out of eight of the interviews conducted mentioned their families influence over their academic and professional careers. (p.26) Moreover, throughout the interviews, it was evident that, as Sharabi (1988) states, this group of intellectual elites possess the most contradictory values. One interview stated that Qatari women have to fit into a "cookie-cutter identity" where they possess no autonomy over their own choices and bodies. She stated that despite getting her education in Qatar Foundation and being very 'open-minded' (relative to the rest of the Qatari society), this was entirely due to her family. She stated that a Qatari women's life in Qatar is based on pure luck. It is unreservedly grounded in who her family is. She expresses that “by being born a female, you are automatically going to have lots of obstacles, and not just because of the laws. We have no autonomy in our own lives.” One of the subjects interviewed talked about how family and religion were social norms that one has
to abide by. She stated that "For us, we prioritize family and religion. These are like big hurdles. Sometimes you can navigate around them; other times they are set in stone."

Al-Muftah (2015) cites Dr. Al-Tumini by stating that families who believe women should be locked at home still exist. (p.40) He uses the term 'pudenda' to describe how these family's view women. (Al-Muftah, 2015, p.40) Nonetheless, Al-Muftah (2015) states that many families encourage their daughters to work and receive a good education.

The majority of the females interviewed, if not all, mentioned their parent's involvement in their decisions to get the educations they received or are currently receiving. A graduate from Georgetown University in Qatar stated, "My parents tell me to be grateful for letting me study at Georgetown." Indicating that the choice was entirely within her family's control. Another stated that her "parents were supportive" and that "it all boils down to their parents" and that this is the "biggest factor" that determines a Qatari woman's choices. Another subject gave a similar answer by stating that "Many people are more privileged than others, depending on their environment and family." One girl talked about her extended family and how despite her own immediate family's support for being in Qatar Foundation, her cousin's parents were not as supportive and did not allow for her cousins’ education at QF. Another stated that her education at QF was not what she wanted. She wanted to study abroad; however, she studied in Doha due to her parent's hostility. Another subject was asked about her family's attitude towards education in Qatar Foundation, which she answered by stating that "We come from a family where many our cousins were from Qatar Foundation, so they are very accepting. It depends on the family." One subject said, "My mother wanted me to go to Qatar Foundation and didn't want me to go to Qatar University because it provided a better education," thus giving a more apparent and direct example of the parent's role in determining where Qatari women receive their education from. Qatar University differs from Qatar Foundation in several ways; the first is that Qatar Foundation provides
Western education compared to Qatar University. Qatar University produces students that are much more conservative and less 'liberal' than Qatar Foundation students. Al-Ghanim (2019) states that

More than 30 years ago, Jabir, Fakhroo and Rahman obtained a stark result when surveying Qatari university students' views: the majority stated that women are weak creatures and that God created them to relieve men from the harshness of life. Three decades later, those views have not significantly changed.

A similar answer was given by another subject who stated that "My family is quite supportive of my education, and they pushed me to apply to QF, as they think the quality of education that I'll get from QF will advance my future career and present more and better opportunities in the future." It becomes clear that none of the people interviewed were in Qatar Foundation against their parent's will, and all discussed the gravity of their parent's support and how it contributed to the decision. This demonstrates the contradictions in values these women hold, as discussed in Chapter 1. Regardless of their education, they choose to maintain their traditional values, such as the patriarchal family and tribalism.

Therefore, it becomes apparent that parents or immediate family predetermine the choices of an educated Qatari woman. This is summed up perfectly by one subject's comment, "even if you had the best education, if your family is not okay with what you are doing, it will not work." Furthermore, another participant states that "I would not say it is the lack of rights or privileges that might hinder their advancements as much as it is a case-by-case situation. I think some women's advancement is hindered due to the mentalities of their immediate families." Therefore, the women in Qatar Foundation are a representation of their nuclear family's mentalities and whether or not they commend and encourage their education.

These restraints are not limited to the importance of the family in society but extend to women's legal ability to receive the education they aspire. For a Qatari woman to receive her education, she requires guardian permission. Although this is not direct permission that
prevents her from receiving her education, it is an indirect way of restricting her ability and autonomy.

The Education Ministry wrote to Human Rights Watch that a “student (male or female) is not required to obtain permission from a guardian to accept a scholarship.” However, Qatar’s Scholarships Law requires students to have their guardian or sponsor to act as a guarantor—essentially requiring their permission—to obtain a government scholarship to study abroad or in Qatar, such as at the private universities in Education City. (HRW, 2021, p.42-43)

This only affects children under the age of 18, and women as guardianship do not end for them after the age of 18. (HRW, 2021, p.42) Additionally, for a Qatari woman to study abroad, although she does not require guardian permission, she cannot leave the country without an exit permit to travel abroad. (HRW, 2021, p.42) These restrictions contribute to the education statistics of 2019, which states that Qatari males studying abroad on government scholarships are double those of Qatar women. (HRW, 2021, p.42)

The influence of the immediate family extends further to determine their careers and the motives of their education. One subject stated that "choosing my career was a choice I made with the support of my family." Exemplifying the family's influence was still present even after the daughter had received her education. Another discussed this by stating that women's advancement "depends on the family, as certain families do not prefer the women to go into the working environment." Another stated that some women are expected to "sacrifice university life and education for other requirements" as "their families expect them to compromise their work for social events and others."

Moreover, the need for a non-objection letter from a male guardian to work in some workplaces limits women's ability to apply to several jobs, especially if her guardian is absent or stubborn. The need for a non-objection letter from a male guardian such as the father, husband or brother was mentioned by almost 30% of the female graduates interviewed. One
participant stated that the need for this is extremely "degrading for someone who holds a Ph.D."

Moreover, more than half of the women interviewed answered the question of "What are the motives of your education and your career and why is it so important?" by stating that income is not the main motive of their education. However, the rest had an opposing opinion by stating that "a woman is getting an education to be financially independent even if she is rich." Furthermore, "having a steady income creates a sense of economic independence, and that is empowering for any human being." And that working provides a "safety net" so they can be independent of their families. Another stated that "Women want to work for financial independence from their spouse and family." However, how would a woman achieve financial independence if her family does not want her to? The ability for a woman to be financially independent, if she desired, is also determined by her immediate family.

**Conclusion**

Women in Qatar are constantly reminded to act in accordance with their 'traditions and values'. The State and religion further inflict this. By rooting women's role in Qatar's history, the biological nature of women, and religious institutions, it becomes a reality. The Qatari woman is constantly reminded of who she is and who she should be. Liloia's (2018) interviews demonstrate how women's constructed roles are viewed as reality. From her interviews, all women agreed that they are satisfied with the gender roles within the family and that the man's role is to supply for the family, while the women should take care of the children and the house. (Liloia, 2008, p.42-43) Many stated that these gender roles are a religious duty. (Liloia, 2008, p.46) One female stated that to be free from tradition means to be free from the family, which is not something she desired. This illustrates how deeply rooted these social constructs are embedded into religious, traditional, and biological realities as they are entirely unable to view the family in any other context.
This chapter can be summarized through an interview answer from the Human Rights Watch report (2021), where one female states, "Everything I have to do is tied to a man." (p.13) Although Qatar aims to appear modern, this does not extend to Qatar's realities as it is limited to the surface. State laws and initiatives do not reflect Qatar's vision of gender equality and women's empowerment as an ongoing effort by the State. Qatari women are not free individuals and lack the autonomy to make their own decisions. Being a successful woman in Qatar is attainable by having a supportive 'liberal' family, therefore, based on luck.
Chapter 3

Gender, Social Media, and Cultural Diplomacy in Qatar
As stated in chapter 1, the degree of Qatari women's autonomy is an illusion created by the state of Qatar, where they appear to possess individual freedom and empowerment. Chapter 2 has unveiled how Qatar's modernization is partly a deception that does not reflect the realities of the state and society. Chapter 1 slightly touched on how Qatar Foundation and Education City can be viewed as a form of cosmetic reform that only attempts to create a better image rather than truly change. This chapter aims to look deeper into this statement through the interviews with Qatari female graduates from Qatar Foundation. This will illustrate how Qatar Foundation does not reflect the majority of the Qatari society as these women's experiences with liberal education change drastically to adapt to society outside Education City, especially when they start working. This chapter will further look into examples from social media and discuss how social media works to navigate modernity and maintain Qatari traditions. Finally, this chapter will unpack these examples' significance and illustrate the paradox of Qatari female's education. The last section will discuss the soft power and cultural diplomacy tactics of the State of Qatar and how this paradox fits into the goals of the state and is done deliberately. Moreover, it will discuss how restraining women allows the State to maintain power as it generates society's approval and gives the state legitimacy while it is rapidly modernizing.

**Qatar Foundation Female Graduate’s Experiences**

During the interviews with the female graduates from Qatar Foundation, two questions were asked to examine whether Qatar Foundation truly reflects the rest of society or not. The first was regarding their transition from Qatar Foundation to work, which states, "Did you face any struggles or problems in your transition from University to work?" The second was much more direct and asked the graduates whether they would describe Qatar Foundation as a bubble and whether it prepared them for the 'real' world. In addition to these two questions, four out of the fifteen females interviewed brought up the idea of Qatar
Foundation as a 'bubble' before these questions were asked, and many others brought up the idea without using the term 'bubble.'

Many of the graduates explained that the transition from Qatar Foundation to working outside of it could be described as a cultural shock. Another mentioned that a "cultural division" exists "between Qatar Foundation and the rest of society." This cultural difference was explained by one graduate's answer to the question: "Do you struggle to navigate your identity as a Qatari woman?" She expressed that "it is not a conflict as much as being aware of the different cultures here. For example, when I am with students from QF, I feel more myself." She described herself as more Westernized when other students from Qatar Foundation surround her. She also used the term "chicken nugget" to describe herself. This term is used to describe Qatar Foundation students in Qatar. The term links to the brown exterior of a chicken nugget and the white interior. This term is used in contrast to the term locals, which describes the rest of the Qatari population. The term 'locals' vs 'chicken nuggets' is mainly used by those outside Qatar Foundation to disassociate themselves from the community within Qatar Foundation.

The term 'chicken nugget' is similar to other terms used by other ethnic groups, including 'coconut', 'Oreo', and 'bounty bar'. These terms are used "to accuse someone of betraying their race, or culture, by implying that, like a coconut, they are brown on the outside but white on the inside." They refer to a person who 'acts white', and it has been debated that these terms can be considered racist. This is not because being white is viewed as better and more civilized than local; rather, acting white is considered dishonorable and corrupt as it goes against Islamic and Arab values. 'Chicken nuggets' are viewed as people who are alienated from their own culture and identity. They are perceived as blindly following Western values that contradict Qatari traditions. This is blamed on their Western

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6 https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldhaveyoursay/2010/06/_in_bristol_a_black.html
education and the semi-liberal atmosphere of Qatar Foundation. A female who graduated from one of Qatar Foundation’s Universities may be viewed as disreputable. This is for many reasons, including the fact Qatar Foundation allows genders to mix to a large degree. In addition, many stereotypes of Qatar Foundation female graduates exist; one of them is that they form close friendships with males regularly, which is not acceptable in Qatar. These stereotypes affect females' reputations and diminish their opinions if they raise issues regarding women's rights. Their opinions may be refused by society as these females are viewed as untrustworthy as they are believed to seek complete freedom by opposing Qatari traditions. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Education City is referred to as the ‘Sin City’ of Doha due to being much more liberal and western than the rest of the Qatari society. Qataris within Qatar Foundation are alienated from the rest of the Qatari community due to having different mentalities and not conforming with the rest of society. One graduate further stated that she switches “between languages.” She explained

In some sides of the community, I have to speak only Arabic, and I have to put on a lot of filters because every little thing is looked at negatively. There are so many sides to the community. I am always accommodating the person in front of me. I will change the way I speak depending on the person in front of me. I try to be more careful talking to other people who have a different point of view.

Whether from Qatar Foundation or not, Qatari female graduates constantly feel the need to put on masks as spontaneity is not permissible. These women need to act artificially to adapt to society and maintain a reputable image that will allow them to be included as part of society. A difficulty exists of being sincere for the female graduates, where they feel the need to conceal or tone down their personalities.

This struggle to navigate one's identity and put on a front to fit into society was seen continuously throughout the interviews. A graduate from Georgetown University discussed this in detail by stating that women in Qatar "are expected to act and think in a certain way. If
you are a bit different, it's hard for you to have an identity of your own. It's easier for you to be like everyone else rather than being different and getting questioned." She further states that "being different is not a good thing in Doha", this is why women choose to 'switch' their identities and personalities depending on whom they are surrounded by and their views. This reaction may seem like idleness from Qatari women and acceptance of society; however, it conveys their impotence and lack of strength. Al-Mannai (2006) also states the lack of desire for women to mandate their rights due to the government’s role in oppressing oppositions. He states that this creates an image of politics which makes it seem dangerous and difficult, thus leading to many women avoiding it or avoiding being publicly opposed to it. (Al-Mannai, 2006, p.160)

The critical problem the bubble of Qatar Foundation creates is much bigger than a difference in cultures. Qatar Foundation projects itself as a place where women's rights and empowerment are central, where gender segregation and sexism are significantly reduced. One graduate stated, “In Georgetown, I had all these ideas and thoughts on what I believe in.” Another mentioned that “We live in our perfect world where everyone acted how they wanted and were not judged. Many among us were allowed to be who we are.” One of the graduates added, “At first when I graduated and acted as I did in Georgetown, people were shocked. I got into trouble.” Another indicated how she changed her personality in order to fit into society. She revealed that through doing this, she “became more integrated into the society or maybe just better at hiding who I really am.” One graduate described this as protection “that in QF we live in a bubble that shelters us from the society and its concerns, which should not be the case as many graduating students are shocked after graduation and do not know how to act.”

A current employee at a bank firm who was a graduate from one of Qatar Foundation universities stated that she has been through multiple shifts from one community to another.
She started at a public female-only school and moved to a mixed English school during her primary years. She described this as “jumping from one community to another.” The second shift was going back to the first community she was in when she attended the Academic Bridge Program (ABP). In this community, she mentions, there were stereotypes that everyone was forced to follow. However, when she began attending one of Qatar Foundation universities she found a different ambiance, a positive one. For her final shift, she said

> When I moved to Bank X, another shift in the community occurred. It felt like I was in a bubble once again. When I was in QF, I found all the support I needed, and there were no limits due to being a girl. However, in Bank X, this was not the case. As much as it was a supportive community, I can see the guys getting more opportunities than I am even in training because I am a girl. The effort I am putting into my work is not being reflected in the ways it should be.

Before this, she described Qatar Foundation and the resources and ability to explore topics during her research as something that always made her feel supported. She explained that this made her feel as though she can do much more, and if she had continued with the same level of academic effort, she would have succeeded in reaching her ambitions. However, the last shift she underwent drastically changed her outlook and perspective on things as she came to terms with the reality of women's status in society.

Another issue is gender segregation brought up by a graduate from Texas University who stated that she was the only female in her department when she started working. This led to her being left out of many meetings as Qatari men were not comfortable talking to her and did not think she should attend those meetings. She did not face this in Education City as most people were comfortable working with the other gender.

Despite the majority of graduates agreeing that the shift from Qatar Foundation to work can be considered a shift in communities or cultures, some of the graduates interviewed were not shocked by the transition and did not consider it a significant problem. However, these women all stated that they were aware of the cultural differences between Qatar
Foundation and the rest of society; therefore, they conditioned themselves to prevent experiencing a shock once they exit this community. One of these graduates stated that “the program I was in had lots of internships which helped me understand what kind of environment I will be in.” Another explained that although she was aware of this bubble because she studied in public schools, the majority of the people around her were all extremely shocked. She described it as “very different” and added that “what you learn in QF universities such as Georgetown and North Western, you cannot apply in the real world.” During her education at Qatar Foundation, she believed that she would be able to take what she has been learning and implement it outside of Qatar Foundation's bubble; however, she realized that this was not attainable. Another participant explained that although Qatar Foundation is a bubble, “I made sure whatever I am doing would expose me as much as possible to the environment outside of Georgetown.” She further expanded, “I wanted to avoid that, so I was conditioning myself from the beginning, so I had an internship at a ministry and other places and took part in many activities that exposed me to other communities.” Additionally, her current workplace includes many QF graduates, so she feels in tune with her community.

Social Media: Between Traditions and Modernity

Recently on social media, a new application has gone viral in Qatar called Clubhouse. Clubhouse describes itself as “a new type of social network based on voice—where people around the world come together to talk, listen and learn from each other in real-time.” The invites-exclusive application was launched for iPhone users on April 2020 by Paul Davison and Rohan Seth of Alpha Exploration Co; however, it only gained popularity in Qatar as of March 2021. Although the application quickly began to lose popularity as it was just a trend, there has been an inclusion of a variety of users from Qatar, ranging from fashion influencer Buthiana Al-Janahi, artists such as Ibrahim Al-Baker, to university professors such as Dr.
Turki Alrajaan, who is a Ph.D. - Assistant Professor of Law, and many others such as Aisha Al-Qahtani. Qatar Foundation users were also active on the application and participated in the discussions often. A large majority of the users refrained from using their real names or full names in order to be able to discuss their opinions freely.

This is a voice application that allows users to discuss the topics publicly with a live audience who can interact by using the hand-raising feature. Different 'rooms' discuss different topics. One of the rooms created on this application was called "Are QF students Muslims?" Another was titled "QF vs QU," and another was "Chicken nuggets vs locals."

Although the difference between Qatar Foundation and the rest of society was a trending topic of discussion, most of the topics on Clubhouse discuss topics related to women. This ranges from topics regarding the color of women's Abayas to topics such as "صوت المرأة المسلمة بين الخطاب الذكوري والنسوي" which translates to the Muslim woman’s voice between patriarchal and feminist discourses.

Before exploring the different topics discussed in these rooms, it is essential to understand social media's role in Qatari lives and how it is used to empower or control Qatari women. In Qatar, women and men use social media equally, with the level of internet usage being 90% for males and 87% for females. (Shockley & others, 2020, p.3) In "Social Media Usage and Support for Women in Community Leadership: Evidence from Qatar", Bethany Shockley (2020) & others discuss how social media usage is related to increased support for women in community leadership among Qatari females. However, this is not the case for Qatari men. Shockley & others (2020) look at education and social media as both a link to modernization and social change, which should increase support for women. They argue that education helps give females a voice and empowers them to speak actively. (Shockley & others, 2020, p.2) However, they also state that women on social media, unlike men, use social media carefully to maintain a good reputation and image. Men, on the other hand, use
social media for social connections. (Shockley & others, 2020, p.3) Moreover, Shockley & others (2020) discuss that despite rising female education and independence rates and empowerment, women concurrently fear higher divorce rates, marriage, and job market opportunities. (p.4) Therefore, they come to the conclusion that "women are less empowered than it would appear." (Shockely & others, 2020, p.4) This could further explain that through social media, women are less likely to have a voice due to these fears. They constantly have to maintain a respectable image in order to be recognized by society by adhering to culturally appropriate behaviors and morals. An example of this is how social media helps in selecting a potential life partner. In Mohanalakshmi Rajakumar & others (2017) “Measuring Qatari Women’s Progress through Reactions to Online Behavior” she discusses social media's role in looking at behaviors that may be disqualifiers for potential brides. Before social media, personal networks were used to inquire and seek information about a woman's reputation. However, the newer generations use social media to see if they are a good spouse and whether they should proceed with the engagement. Therefore, maintaining a good image on social media is essential for both men and women. Shockley & others (2020) state

Women's empowerment has not emerged, despite superficial policy changes and their obtaining higher education. True empowerment will require changing gender attitudes in society as a whole, including government policies through messages that should show support for women in the workforce, rather than only as wives and mothers. (p.5)

They explain that this is expounded in social media usage and how men's attitudes differ from women's attitudes (Shockley & other, 2020). Their study, in addition to previous ones, develop "that men tend to hold less egalitarian attitudes than women." (Shockley & others, 2020, p.5) Female social media users are more likely to support women in leadership than women who are not on social media. However, the views do not differ with men, regardless of being a social media user or not.
These differing attitudes between men and women can be seen from an example from ClubHouse. A room titled " حقوق الرجل VS حقوق المرأة", which means "Men's rights VS women's rights", included a large audience where a conversation was taking place concerning women's rights in Qatar. Although the moderators did not discuss their argument in much detail, the audience expressed their opinions regarding this issue. The main question proposed by the moderators was whether Qatari men were deprived of their rights and ignored as compared to Qatari women. The principal argument, posed by men, was related to pretty privilege and how Qatari women are able to use *Wastas* to get out of difficult situations such as speeding tickets due to their gender in addition to getting jobs and promotions. The term *Wasta* refers to the ability to attain benefits from social networks and the reputation one holds due to their connections. (Abalkhail, 2016, 163)

In addition to this argument, the idea that Qatari women lack rights was denied entirely. Continuously, whenever an argument for women was mentioned, the response from one of the male speakers would be, "why does an 18-year-old want to travel without her father's permission anyway?" In addition to other similar responses. Any valid arguments were shut down by the response of why is this necessary? One argument stated that not all women are privileged and have a good relationship with their fathers, meaning that they cannot work or travel. The response to this was that this has nothing to do with the state since it is a family issue. The same speaker stated that most of the laws that people consider against women are those in Sharia, and an example of this is women going out without permission from men.

A male speaker stated that he knew about women who have never seen the streets within their whole lives, got married by force, and aren’t allowed to receive an education. The response to this was appalling as one of the moderators, who were mainly men, believed that the father has the right to control his family in any way he desired. The majority of men
in the room, except for a few, held similar beliefs. In contrast, the women in the room were split. Some were arguing against the claims that women in Qatar have their rights, whereas the rest believed that they do have their rights and that most issues are common family issues. When the example of a girl who had no relations with her father, therefore was unable to drive or work because she required a non-objection letter which she could not obtain, one of the females responded by stating that these are special cases which means she should go to court, ignoring the fact that due to the tribal nature of the Qatari society, going to court is not acceptable as it may bring shame to the family name, in addition to the fact that the court may not be of any help.

“The rights of women in society are different from the rights in the house. They are different things. Closing in on women is a beautiful thing … they are not letting them out because of their Geerah (Jealousy).” Stated one of the male speakers in the room. He further stated, "didn't the country allow her to get her education? After 24, you can travel without permission." He completed this argument later on by stating young women who want to travel alone will go and bring shame by getting pregnant and being promiscuous. When another speaker stated that this is also true for men, he argued that only a small percentage of men who travel do these things, whereas all women naturally stray to fasad (corruption). His final argument to justify everything was that "religion is protection before anything else, it is God who put these laws not me." These laws, he argues, are put there to protect those who were not appropriately raised away from fasad. The persistent referral to religion throughout these arguments demonstrate how the ‘untouchable’ ‘sacred’ foundations, discussed earlier are employed to justify the subjugation of women and their lack of autonomy.

Furthermore, he added that men retain shahwa hayawaniyyah (animal lust) where they cannot control their desires; therefore, women need to be covered as they are fīna. The majority of men in the room agreed with this speaker, with the exception of one, in addition
to a few girls who also agreed. Another female speaker stated in agreement with the previous speaker that "we live in a tribal society, girls travelling without their parents' permission can cause lots of trouble with their family."

Throughout this discussion, it became apparent that many people were in denial that underprivileged women had been stripped from their rights due to their fathers being the ones in control of their lives. Some of the speakers mentioned these rights were permissible in Islam; however, some families do not give these rights to the women in the family. This denial can be seen through the fact that their focus was on the rights for women to travel and book hotel rooms instead of any other example of underprivileged women who have no autonomy and are imprisoned in their own homes. A female speaker mentioned that "احضره مايصير نحن القوانين على حسب مزاج الاهل" ("We cannot put laws based on the parents' mood.")

Another speaker revealed an example of her aunt, who is divorced since 2001. According to the law she states, divorced women are given a piece of land from the government. This is according to Law No. (2) of 2007 on the Housing System. However, up until this day, she has yet to receive this land. She argued that although we have laws that support women, the laws are not being implemented.

One of the graduates interviewed stated, "I use to think all women were privileged because I was looking at things from a privileged position. However, in reality, there are a lot of things that are hidden." Regardless of how many times it was mentioned that underprivileged women lack fundamental rights due to their families' stubbornness and mentalities, a surprising number of people in the room chose to turn a blind eye and refuse these statements as they never witnessed them.

Hence, it is clear that social media isn't used to promote dialogue but rather to reinforce the gap between genders and balance modernity with tradition. As discussed in the previous chapters, women in Qatar have the role of maintaining their family's honor and
reputation. Sarah E. Vieweg and Adam Hodges (2016) in "Surveillance & Modesty on Social Media: How Qatari Navigate Modernity and Maintain Tradition", discusses the subject of modernity and tradition in social media. They use the concept the "discontinuation of modernity" introduced by Anthony Giddens to do this. (Vieweg & Hodges, 2016, p.527) They state that this "speaks to the dilemma that many Qatari find themselves in as they attempt to embrace modernity while maintaining strong adherence to the Islamic religious values that undergird traditional Qatari social structure." (Vieweg & Hodges, 2016, p.527) Vieweg & Hodges (2016) suppose social media act as both a twofold impulsion to modernize and preserve and maintain the tradition. Vieweg & Hodges (2016) state that social media in Qatar further acts as a surveillance mechanism. This is seen mainly on Twitter, where users would bring up issues in society that they deem unacceptable and require attention to be changed or controlled. This includes littering issues and extends to issues related to women being in public spaces or dressing and behaving in a particular manner. Vieweg & Hodges (2016) use the example of littering by disposing of rubbish improperly in public beaches and parks. They state that "participants spoke about the need to continually monitor public behavior in a variety of contexts, such as while driving in one's car, walking in a shopping mall, or participating in social media conversations, among other activities." (Vieweg & Hodges, 2016, p.530) Women are once again given the most responsibility here as their role in maintaining family honor is more substantial than that of men. Vieweg & Hodges (2016) use the example of Muslim women in Scotland given by Asifa Siraj who "writes about women being under a "communal gaze," or a "gaze of surveillance"."(p.530) In Qatar, Vieweg & Hodges (2016) state that the government is able "to surveil "through the eyes" of ordinary citizens to regulate behavior in a top-down manner." (p.531) A Twitter account with the handle @Haya645 shared a tweet stating her concern over women who merely go to places such as the Gate Mall. She referred to women who visit the
Gate Mall as *almutabarajat*, which roughly translates to immodest. Moreover, she used a prevalent quote that regularly circulates in the Qatari society: "this is not part of our customs and traditions." Women are highly criticized for being too promiscuous. From this example, it is easy to see the extent to which women are critiqued on common daily activities and how they are exposed to the “communal gaze,” or a “gaze of surveillance”. Furthermore, “Women who speak out on women’s rights, including through online speech, face intimidation and harassment from government authorities or from society.” (HRW, 2021, p.20)

Moreover, social media and the emergence of such technologies do not entail modernity and progress, not only due to how it is being used as a surveillance mechanism but also due to the idea of moral superiority. (Crane, 2017, p.43) Qataris access to the internet allows them to "see moral depravity and sin promoted by the West", which evokes a sense of moral superiority, hence attempting to avoid anything that could lead to these depravities and sin. (Crane, 2017, p.43)

An example of this is how feminists are highly critiqued in Qatar and are rejected by society. They are believed to corrupt the traditions of the Qatari culture, and their demands for equal rights, such as the removal of the need for a mahram’s permission when travelling is viewed as incongruous. The Qatari government was accused of closing down feminist activist accounts, one of them being @QatarFem, in 2019. It was believed that these women, along with their families, were "called by the police" and "forced to close the account." 8 Tahani Al-Hajri, who is a Qatari writer, social activist and feminist, tweeted in Arabic, stating that "The police called those behind the account and they clearly closed it out of fear. Pray for them to be fine." 9 Additionally, other accounts emerged claiming to be Qatari feminists who focused on shallow topics and purposely attempted to discredit the reputation

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8 https://www.albawaba.com/node/did-qatar-close-accounts-feminists-twitter-1302206
9 Ibid.
of Qatari feminists and their cause. According to three interviewees, the Human Rights Watch report (2021) states that cybersecurity officials summoned one of the women behind the account for interrogation and called her parents. They said she feared abuse and faced severe restrictions at home as a result. One woman said she believes the government does not like organized accounts where individuals behind it can remain anonymous, “but it is okay for women to tweet from their personal accounts.”

Speaking on women's rights in Qatar on social media is controlled by cyber-crimes and security laws. Qatar’s 2014 Combatting Cyber Crimes Law states that spreading “false news” can be punishable by three years in prison. (HRW, 2021, p.21) The term "false news" is not defined; however, it includes content that “violates social values or principles,” or “insults or slanders others.” (HRW, 2021, p.21). According to the Human Rights Watch report (2021), some women “were concerned that speaking about women’s rights could be considered inciting public opinion or disturbing the social order.” (p.21) The Human Rights Watch report (2021) also includes other examples of 6 women who were asked to sign a pledge that prevents them from speaking on political issues and women's rights on social media. (p.22)

Moreover, privacy on social media is an essential component of Qatari women's use of different platforms. This explains the lack of photos Qatari females post of themselves on social media. It is not only an idea of modesty but also "to protect themselves from potentially negative attention." (Vieweg & Hodges, 2016, p.527) Moreover, in "Veiling and Blogging: Social Media as Sites of Identity Negotiation and Expression among Saudi Women," By Hala Guta and Magdalena Karolak (2015), they discuss how Saudi women use social media to be able to express themselves freely. The study illustrates that many women choose to use fake names or only their first names on social media. This allows them to disconnect themselves from their families and disguise their true identities. (Guta & Karolak, 2015, p.115) The example of the feminist accounts illustrates the importance of animosity as
having 'open' or 'modern' views can cause severe reputational damage to the family and the female herself.

Through this, it becomes evident that modern technology is used to preserve traditions and control female's behaviors. & Hodges (2016) summarize this in their statement:

the use of social surveillance among these Qataris provides an important avenue by which they negotiate the challenge of modernizing while preserving traditional values. The difficulty of that challenge is made apparent in Giddens’ statement that “inherent to the idea of modernity is a contrast with tradition” [11]. Yet, as we have illustrated in our analysis, the adoption of modern technologies such as social media afford Qataris a modern means to engage in familiar, relationship-based cultural practices that empower them to uphold traditional religious values and social mores. (p.536)

Although social media can be used as a political tool to discuss problems existing in the Qatari society and use them to advocate for change, this is not always the case in Qatar. Social media users' ability to have an impact relies on the majority of the Qatar population's views. Moreover, it depends on how much damage is caused to Qatar's reputation as a modern state. The motives behind changes due to social media are, therefore, questionable.

According to the Human Rights Watch (January 2021), "Qatar issued a decision to lift the rule that Qatari women must have their guardian's permission to obtain a driving license." This was in January of 2020, which was the same month "Qatar amended its penal code to further restrict the already-narrow space for free expression by setting criminal penalties for spreading "fake news" online." (HRW, January 2021) These changes were followed shortly after major reputable damage was done to the country's modern progressive image as a state that supports women's rights and empowerment. This was due to Noof Al-Maadeed's attempt to seek humanitarian asylum in Britain, after sharing a video explaining the oppression and abuse she faced as a woman in Qatar by her family.

10 https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/qatar
Within the last two years, two young Qatari women have fled their ‘wealthy’, ‘comfortable’ lifestyle to seek asylum somewhere else in the world on two separate occasions. These two women, Noof Al-Maadeed and Aisha Al-Qahtani, stated that they were both exposed to domestic violence by their families. The only way to escape this was by seeking refuge in another country. Noof Al-Maadeed was a student in her final year at Carnegie Mellon University, whereas Aisha Al-Qahtani was a Qatar University student. The responses from the majority of the Qatari population to this were extremely negative. The majority believed that this was due to their spoiled nature, wondering how was it conceivable possible to not be comfortable in their extremely lavish lives? How is it possible for Qatari women to be oppressed while holding a Chanel bag, cruising around with their personal drivers, while simultaneously getting their education in some of the finest, most liberal American universities built inside Qatar Foundation?

Gift-giving is another way of maintaining the domination of power. It is a softer means of exercising power which creates an illusion of progress. Mies (1988) states that this idea of spending money is used as a symbol of progress under capitalism. (p.207) This is a false symbol of progress. This is an issue that Qatari women struggle with consistently as their demands for equal rights are viewed as a demand for more than what they already possess, which is extreme wealth and a tremendously comfortable lifestyle for a large portion of Qataris. This is used to devalue the demands of women for equal rights by using depictions such as the high female education rates. In addition, comparing the conditions of women in Qatar to those in other GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia, is a way of telling women in Qatar that they should be grateful for their situation rather than question it. In other words, “giving is also a way of possessing”. (Bourdieu, 1991, p.24) Women are also “highlighted as mothers and consumers, and obscured as producers.” (Mies, 1988, p.125) Thus, diminishing their role and making them even more invisible.
The motives behind the Qatari penal code changes and rulers can be viewed as an attempt to reconcile or rectify its image as a woman empowering state. On March 29, 2021, the Human Rights Watch released a report titled "Qatar: Male Guardianship Severely Curtails Women's Rights," which discussed how discriminatory restrictions affect women's independence to marry, study, work, travel and more. This report was released shortly after several football teams, including Norway, Germany and Netherlands, began protesting against Qatar 2022 World Cup due to Qatar's treatment of migrant workers and its human rights record which has been a prominent issue of controversy. Because the report has received significant attention on Qatar's social media platform, it is essential to discuss it in this section.

The report includes information from 73 in-depth interviews surrounding how women in Qatar, despite being adults, are treated as minors. The report mentions 27 laws in Qatar that affect different aspects of women's lives and other regulations that are not included within the law. The responses from social media were mixed. The hashtag #قطريات_ ضد_ اسقط_ الولاية, which translates to Qatari women against the overthrow of the state, consisted mainly of Qatari women stating their opposition to the HRW report. Some of these tweets include "HRW! We only say stop interfering! Qatar and Qatari women are none of your business! We can stand for ourselves and speak for our rights! We are happy with our rights that were given to us by Islam and protected by our men and government!"11 and "We as Qatari women refuse external interference and we refuse to compromise our beliefs and values. We have not appointed HRW to speak on our behalf and demand our rights. Our religion has granted us those rights a thousand and four hundred years ago."12 These tweets came mainly from Qatari women to illustrate that they are satisfied with the situation in

11 https://twitter.com/Aishaalkhulaifi/status/1376831930881216512
12 https://twitter.com/mariam_AA2/status/1376886126649225221
Qatar. Their accordance with the current situation of women in Qatar illustrates their lack of awareness and how Qatar was truly able to shape Qatari women's identities, as discussed in the previous chapters. This can be seen with a few tweets from different Qatari females who mocked the oppression of women in Qatar by linking it to insubstantial issues, which, as stated, purposely attempted to disrepute the reputation of Qatari feminist and their cause. One user tweeted an image of a notification from booking.com which states, "Plan your entire trip in advance" by stating, "Omg http://booking.com I wish I could plan my trip in advance but because of male guardianship I can't. If only I had the same right as a man to travel."13 Another user states, "Oh guys, help me, my husband lets me go to work, drive a car, and travel with my families without him. Does that mean that I am being oppressed? @hrw_ar". Both these tweets not only instantiate how feminists are viewed as extreme liberals who want complete freedom and focus on particularly superficial issues, but also demonstrate some Qatari women's privileged viewpoints where they are unable to see or choose to ignore how such laws can affect underprivileged Qatari and non-Qatari women.

Despite this, many tweets show their support for the HRW report. In response to the above tweet mocking the fact that her husband allows her to work and travel, one user responded by stating, "I mean yeah the fact that you're only "allowed" to do those things because a man "allows" you to do them definitely means you're oppressed". Another stated in response to a known coffee shop that tweeted the hashtag stating "Just a question, what would happen if others get to take their rights and live a better life? You and your privileges which have blinded you.” Nonetheless, although the responses on social media were mixed, a larger portion believed that the issues of women in Qatar was not a matter that others should interfere with as it is up to the women within the country to decide whether they are satisfied with the current conditions or not.

13 https://twitter.com/handsaintizer/status/1377554467059605506
In addition to the responses on social media, the Government Communications Office responded to the report by stating that gender equality and the empowerment of women is a fundamental and pivotal pillar of the success and vision of the State of Qatar, which has been at the forefront of defending women's rights at the local and global level which is an ongoing effort by the state.14

**Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy**

This brings us back to Qatar Foundation students who live in an illusion even more extreme than that of the rest of society. A significant paradox, therefore, exists in their education. This paradox is seen from the examples above on social media and Qatar Foundation graduates. Golnar Mehran (2013) in “The Paradox of Tradition and Modernity in Female Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran” discusses the coexistence of modernity and tradition in Iran and how they affect women's education and the motives behind it. She states that

the coexistence of the two merely reflects the dual role assigned to the New Muslim Woman who is asked to be traditional and modern at the same time. What seems contradictory is indeed illustrative of a deliberate policy to create the ideal female citizen who is socialized, politicized, and Islamized and can serve the traditional needs of a religious society as well as the modern demands of the country.

(Mehran, 2013, p.270)

This is indistinguishable from what has been discussed in previous chapters about the roles of Qatari women who are told to be both modern and traditional simultaneously. Mehran (2013) discussed the role of education in empowering women in Iran by increasing the women's consciousness on the importance of equality and their current situation. This includes their ability to question existing gender norms and the causes of the injustices that exist. Education

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14 [https://lusailnews.net/article/politics/qatar/29/03/2021/%D9%85%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1&D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B3-%D9%88%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B4](https://lusailnews.net/article/politics/qatar/29/03/2021/%D9%85%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1&D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%87%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B3-%D9%88%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B4)
is an essential step that is required to improve the situation of women and empower them. (Mehran, 2013, p.271) Mehran's (2013) article aims to portray how Iranian women have taken advantage of the opportunities created for them through the interaction between modernity and tradition. Similar to the dichotomous roles created for Qatari women discussed in the previous chapters, Mehran (2013) defines tradition and modernity by explaining similar roles. She states that the traditional view of women is housemakers and mothers before anything else, while the modern view is women as working and active participants in the public sphere. Women are expected to work and participate in the public sphere while not neglecting their houses and families and taking care of all domestic chores. As Mehran (2013) writes, "The traditional view thus restricts women to the private domain, while the modern viewpoint emphasizes their presence in the public realm." (p.271) The dual role of women in Iran is summarized perfectly by Mehran (2013)

The ideal female citizen successfully responds to the demands of a traditional, Islamizing society while preparing herself for the exigencies of modernization and the demands of a revolutionary ideology. Therefore, the New Muslim Woman abides by the forces of tradition by assuming her role and responsibilities as wife and mother and acts as the pivot of the home and the agent of peace and stability in the family. At the same time, she is expected to act as a responsible member of society, be engaged in sociopolitical affairs, and actively contribute to national progress. (p.273)

Although Mehran’s (2013) article focuses on the situation in Iran, it is not unruly to apply this to Qatar. The dichotomous roles explained by Mehran (2013) are indistinguishable from those established in earlier chapters. Similar to Qatar’s 2030 vision, these roles of women are included in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which states that "women's employment and their social and economic activities to be significant and conducive to social well-being." (Mehran, 2013, p.273) Although women's roles in Qatar have been established and the paradox of education has been discussed, it has not been discussed how this education plays a role in maintaining and rehabilitating these roles. A
question Mehran (2013) poses in her article was "What is the role of women in this Islamized-modernizing-revolutionary society and how does the educational system train female students to fulfill this role?" (p.273)

As seen from the interviews with Qatari female graduates from Qatar Foundation, it is clear that their education and values they accumulate within Qatar Foundation are not being imposed outside Qatar Foundation. This is exceptionally enigmatic as it raises the question of why then, would the state of Qatar want women to be empowered within Qatar Foundation? Al-Mannai (2006) states that “The modernization of the new State has created a social structure that has placed pressure on individual women to move from one social value to another, depending on the social activities involved”. (p.182) Mehran (2013) states that this duality provides women with a 'double message', where on the one hand, women are free to do as they wish and work. (p.274) On the other hand, the priorities of the roles of women are made clear as their role within the family and the domestic sphere is the pre-eminent responsibility. "Thus, the message is clear: female participation in sociopolitical affairs should complement and not substitute for women's responsibilities at home." (Mehran, 2013, p.274)

The modernity Qatar has created is to ease the tensions that exist between modernity and tradition. Instead, it is a constant battle between the two. This was made evident through the countless examples given in this chapter, including the continuous tension between Qatar Foundation and the rest of the Qatari society. Moreover, it was seen with the graduates’ interviews who had to 'condition' themselves and conceal their true identities to conform with society and be accepted outside of Qatar Foundation and within their jobs and workplaces.

Therefore, it is essential to question Qatar Foundation's aims regarding female empowerment and their education and whether these goals are failing or expanding. Moreover, is Qatar Foundation a failure if it does not help its female graduates to change
society? What are the reasons Qatari women are being confined to the level of empowerment and independence they are able to achieve that limits them from applying their 'Qatar Foundation' mentalities to the rest of the Qatari society?

To expand on Qatar Foundation's aims towards the education of Qatari women, it is first necessary to understand the Qatari state's general soft power goals and cultural diplomacy. As discussed in Chapter 1, one of Qatar's main focuses is the nation's branding; however, soft power goes beyond Qatar's nation's branding as a modern yet traditional Islamic state. In Paul Michael Brannagan and Richard Giulianotti's (2018) article "The soft power–soft disempowerment nexus: the case of Qatar", they provide a systematic framework for examining what soft power and soft disempowerment are and use Qatar as a case study to position their argument. Soft power, they state, is more than a form of nation branding as it aligns more with strategies of 'public diplomacy', which also include creating and maintaining mutual understandings, long-lasting relationships and active cooperation. While branding informs others of national uniqueness, public diplomacy seeks to exercise influence by building positive and resilient affiliations, which other parties consider attractive and valuable. (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018, p.1141)

Brannagan and Giulianotti (2018) maintain that three stages exist that are crucial in the state's soft power attainment. (p.1144) The first they refer to as 'positioning', the second is 'credible attraction filter', while the third and final stage is soft disempowerment. In the first stage, positioning relies on what is considered 'attractive' by whom the state aims to attract and what is considered attractive by them. Attraction, they state, is "dependent on intersubjective and cultural factors". (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018, p.1144) In the case of Qatar, the first stage determines how to exert influence. The previous chapters have gathered that the state of Qatar uses traditional and religious ideas, in addition to the creation of a 'modern' state to attract its audience. The audience, as seen above, is both regional Qatari citizens, in addition to Western states and powers. Brannagan and Giulianotti (2018) discuss Joseph Nye's term,
an American political scientist, 'attractive causes'. (p.1148) This term relates to Qatar's creation of a ‘modern’ state as a soft power tactic. These ‘attractive causes’ include humanitarian issues which “can position states with those they help as good global citizens, as well as garnering praise from international humanitarian organizations, both of which in turn can lead to reciprocal cooperation and provision.” (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018, p.1148) This includes the empowerment of Qatari females as it places Qatar in a position where it is different from Saudi Arabia and other states in the region in the sense that they focus on issues of inequality and injustices.

The first stage of positioning is connected to the second stage, the 'credible attraction filter'. This stage requires the senders of soft power "(state ministers, diplomats, officials and emissaries)" and "receivers (those national/international audiences that the state is seeking to attract)" to share a conception of what is considered attractive. (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018, p.1151) This is because the soft power resources can only be considered adequate if the receivers absorb them. Brannagan and Giulianotti (2018) compare this to a water filter jug where soft power's goal is to reach the bottom of the jug. "Only when resources are considered attractive and credible do they successfully pass through the filter to become outcomes." (p.1152) This brings up the notion of soft disempowerment, which should be avoided as they alienate and upset the receivers. As Qatar aims to stratify two receivers, or 'both sides', which are the regional and international receivers, the task of avoiding soft disempowerment may be more difficult. Thus, we begin to see Qatar's use of false realities to play with both sides without being affected as drastically.

In her thesis "Modernity, Wahhabi Islam, and Monarchial Power in Qatar Exhibited in Its Contemporary Art", Christine Crane (2017) looks deeper into Qatar's cultural diplomacy objectives, specifically in the field of art. Her thesis further examines the use of soft power and cultural diplomacy by the State of Qatar as a way to "both to maintain its
power, and as a signifier of its modernity, progress, and international position as a sophisticated yet Islamic monarchy in an international global market, where democracy and postmodern sensibilities are the norm." (Crane, 2017, Abstract) Crane (2017) discusses, similarly to Brannagan and Giulianotti (2018), that Qatar aims to satisfy both regional and international receivers by improving its "international reputation as the only country that is both modern and Islamic in the Persian Gulf Region" in addition to "appeasing local tribal Wahhabi sensibilities." (p.2) Crane (2017) indicates that the state of Qatar can create ""illusory community" to consolidate support for its power through the use of patriotism which allows the institutionalization of classism in Qatari societies. (p.11) By classism, Crane (2017) refers to the special privileges given to the Qatari citizens, which are justified through the use of the idea of tribal lineage. By creating "an ideology of grateful expatriate recipients, fortunate to be employed in Qatar", the Qatari citizens can take on fewer responsibilities of the wealth gap between citizens and expatriates. (Crane, 2017, p.12)

Crane's (2017) thesis provides further insight as she investigates into the reasons for the use of cultural diplomacy by the Qatari State. The ability to institutionalize classism stems from giving social and economic privileges and justifying these privileges given to Qatari citizens through tribal lineage. (Crane, 2017, p.12) The ability to create the "illusory community" is through Qatar's ability to address and ignore "The tension between extreme poverty and wealth". (Crane, 2017, p.12) Although not to the same extreme extent, the same can be said to gender issues in Qatar, where they are simultaneously addressed and ignored. Qatar is able to address these issues through the high rates of education of Qatari females and artificial laws and initiatives such as the Qatar 2030 Vision while simultaneously ignoring them by leaving laws that deny Qatari women autonomy of their bodies and choices.

Crane (2017) explains that "This direct control over culture and education as well as the cultural goals of Qatar's 2030 National … clearly demonstrates the use of soft power and
cultural diplomacy ("Qatar Museums")." (p.27) Crane (2017) uses an example from the constitution, Article 59, which states that "the people are the source of authority", which is not the case. She states that "Even though the tribes in the area may voice concerns, ultimately power, and thus power to modernize, rest with the emir." (Crane, 2017, p.28) Similar to this, Qatari female empowerment is fake empowerment. The state is thus able to fake modernization by 'pretending'. Through this, the state can gain loyalty from citizens that is further maintained through oil wealth distribution. Crane (2017) states that the state of Qatar can further reinstate this loyalty through the creation of a false narrative. Crane (2017) discusses that “These myths redefine the nation as a unique entity, legitimize the Al Thani regime and reconcile monarchial and tribal histories and goals with capitalist success for the merchants and welfare entitlement for the general population of Qataris (440).” (p.29) This constructed “provisional reality” has allowed the state of Qatar to create “a form of modernism without a signified core” which has replaced reality. (Crane, 2017, p.50)

Through this, it becomes clear when Cooke (2014) stated that "the rubbing up of the tribal against the modern in today's Gulf states does not represent a clash of conflicting values, but, rather, the desired effect of common aspirations... (p.10)." These common aspirations are power, control and wealth. The state of Qatar is able, therefore, to create "a modernist bubble for Qatari citizens that does not exist for those outside their privileged class." (Crane, 2017, p.91) Crane (2017) argues that this bubble includes all Qataris, whereas the outside of this bubble includes the expertise who do not indulge in the privileges found within the bubble. Contrary to Crane, this thesis argues that this bubble is even more inclusive as it does not include all Qataris. Instead, a small portion of them which represent the higher classes and elites from more privileged backgrounds.

Finally, it is important to understand the second receiver, which is the western audience Qatar targets. Crane (2017) discusses how upon entering Doha, the image of the
progressive modern state that maintains its culture and heritage is present at the forefront. She states that Hamad International Airport is “a showpiece of Qatari modernity and sophistication… It presents Doha as an open-minded and progressive city”. (Crane, 2017, p.70) The desire to welcome the West and impress them is evident with the iconic teddy bear that welcomes travelers. The desire to impress and satisfy Westerners is not limited to tourists. A recent controversy that took place in Qatar Foundation involves a professor, Professor S. Venus Jin and Professor Jocelyn Mitchell, at Northwestern University in Qatar who was given a $700,000 funding grant to complete her research on "obstacles and successes of women entrepreneurship in Qatar." The controversy is a consequence of the professor’s extremely racist past which involves comments towards Qatari and other non-white ethnicities. Doha News reported that the prominent backlash was due to

The fact that the Qatar National Research Fund failed to find any Qatari women to lead the project has been a source of some of the criticism, particularly considering that Doha has invested so much in female empowerment over the years, with several Arab and Qatari women currently at the forefront of academia.

Mitchell’s racist remarks towards Qatari and Southeast Asian nationalities were included in a blog posted in 2008 titled "You know you're in Qatar if". The contains a list of extremely outrageous comments including "the ratio of ugly women to not so ugly women is 9:1" and "The scent (reek) of sweat, and some "nationalities" literally pushes you back a few feet". Regardless of the fact these comments were addressed by NUQ students and brought attention to 2015 and once again in 2019, Qatar National Research Fund still chose to provide Mitchell with a grant to study research on Qatari women's situation. Although Mitchell eventually withdrew from the research project, this can be analyzed similarly to the giant teddy bear in Hamad International Airport; the Qatari state seeks Western validation.

By understanding Qatar's soft power and cultural diplomacy strategies, it is now possible to look into higher education for women, specifically Qatar Foundation. In her study
“Establishment of an American Branch-Campus Model of Higher Education: Qatar’s Early Goals, Rationales, and Challenges”, Pamela Walsh (2019) attempts to answer the question of “Why did Qatar partner with six North American universities to establish six international branch campuses between 2001 and 2008?” (p. 271) One of the reasons she provides, along with many others, include

- host-country rationales and motives and the bolstering of the national higher-education system's prestige through possession of world-class foreign university host campuses (p. 5). Lane (2011b) also suggested that host countries wish to enhance their reputations. Similarly, Buckner (2011) stated that while some of these countries seem interested in higher-education reforms, the "expensive, private American-style universities' primary role in [Arab] Gulf states . . . is to bring prestige . . . to the Gulf states" (Walsh, 2019, p. 275).

This account aligns with the analysis of Qatar's goals and soft power strategies discussed above. In addition to this, some of the other goals include providing quality education, "Prepare Qatar to Participate in a Global Knowledge Society through Development of Its Human Resources and Its Capacity for Research and Development," and "Promote Societal Engagement and Sociocultural Development." (Walsh, 2019, 280) Walsh (2019) was able to collect these goals through a series of interviews with people connected to the IBC (international branch campus) within the last five years prior to the interviews. During the discussion on the final goal mentioned, Walsh (2019) states that "Qatar participants, directly and indirectly, spoke about Qatar's need for social and cultural change but emphasized that this change must maintain core cultural values." (p. 281) This illustrated the limits imposed on the goals of education due to the emphasis on maintaining core values. These core values line up with the previous discussion of Qatar's ability to create two dichotomous roles for Qatari women. Despite their level of education and achievements, women must maintain the core values imposed on them by society, limiting their ability to use their education to encourage cultural change and development. Crane (2017) states that the role of education in the West is
"is to prepare citizens for participation in democracy, but higher education in Qatar does not serve the same role for citizens; political participation is not expected or allowed.” (p.48) She further discusses that critical thinking and inquiry are not encouraged in Qatar University, whereas in Qatar Foundation, it is restricted. (Crane, 2017, p.48)

As gathered in the interviews with Qatar Foundation female graduates, this is, regrettably, the reality of Qatari women's education as they have to 'condition' themselves to satisfy the roles they are assigned outside of Qatar Foundation. The paradox of their education is a result of the soft power aims of Qatar, which does not intend for genuine modernity, but rather fake empowerment that allows for the image of progress that does not threaten the current structure of power. The opportunities given to women are a form of exploitation in a modern disguise. Qatari women are therefore only free to and able to develop to the extent the Qatari state allows them to.

The Qatari government cannot give educated women the total freedom they are asking because the Qatari society is not ready to accept them. There is a crucial point that needs to be emphasized: the extremely rapid modernization of the country. In less than a few decades, the country was transformed from an archaic place to a 'modern one'. It is in part, only in part, fake because the government cannot impose new rules that free women: it will simply lose its power.

Raymond LM Lee (2013) in "Modernity, modernities and modernization: Tradition reappraised" discusses the relationship between modernity and tradition and how it is not misplaced polarities, but rather, more blurred together. He argues that in "this sense, global modernity has come to be regarded as performing the function of opening up the world through unhindered capitalism to mold common goals of societal development without indicting the meaning and role of tradition." (Lee, 2013, p.412) Meaning that tradition is not
a hindrance to modernity as the two are made to co-exist to pave the way for capitalism. This is done "By reconfiguring tradition and modernity". (Lee, 2013, p.411)

Lee (2013) states that Western modernity has been challenged as new forms of modernities have been emerging worldwide. The modernity Qatar was able to create is thus different from Western modernity. This is for two reasons; the first is the lack of secularism. Islam in Qatar has become integrated in modernity and makes up a large portion of it. When thinking of modernity, secularism is thought to be connected with it. However, as Crane (2017) argues, Qatar and the ruling family have been able to replace the secular aspect of modernity “with capitalism and massive wealth.” (p.41) Crane (2017) states that “The wealth that enables and shapes Qatari modernity is seen by many as an expression of God’s love for his chosen people.” (p.41) Additionally, because Qatari did not require an industrial revolution to accumulate its massive wealth, the secularist mindset that comes with new sciences did not emerge in Qatar.

The second reason the modernity Qatar created differs from Western modernity is due to the lack of democracy. Crane (2017) states that "In Western modernity, democracy is seen as proof that the established political authority is legitimate and not imposed. Personal and emotional patriotism is necessary so nationalism can emerge." (p.42) However, since democracy does not exist in Qatar, Qatar cannot use democracy to claim legitimacy for modernist nationalism. Despite this, Qatar remains a very nationalistic country. This is done through the traditions and culture Qatar is able to use to legitimize the rule of the monarchy, tribal order and distribution of wealth.

Lee (2013) argues that "global modernity is not repressing but reviving tradition." (p.413) This is due to the powers of global capitalism, which "not only contributing to the revival but also the repackaging of traditions". (Lee, 2013, p.413) In Qatar, the repackaging of these traditions has been discussed in the previous chapter regarding Qatar's branding
strategy and the preservation of traditions to maintain the patriarchal power structures. Lee (2013) states that "what is considered as modern must also include a diversity of options, some of which may originate from the invention or reinvention of traditions." (p.411)

Lee (2013) further discusses, "As in the case of Shanghai, people in other rapidly changing societies may also become more nostalgic as they view and experience the transformations around them." (p.418) Lee explains that the desire to preserve traditions is not limited to the state but also extends to the society itself. This is due to feeling threatened by the rapid changes that may impend the traditional values and social bonds. Therefore, to be able to modernize, Qatar needs to preserve traditions to maintain its legitimacy and support from society.

**Conclusion**

The interviews with Qatari female graduates from Qatar Foundation unveiled the reality that these women are unable to implement their knowledge outside the bubble they were once part of. Rather, they are restricted and required to suppress their identities and values. The second part of the chapter allowed for the comparison between these women’s views and those who are active members on social media. This further elucidated how Qatar Foundation students are alienated from the rest of society due to their open-mindedness and liberalism.

Furthermore, this chapter discussed social media’s contribution to restricting women and surveilling them. Despite the ability to use social media as a political tool to empower women, it is employed in contrary to that. Cyber security laws and other societal influences limit educated women’s abilities to use social media platforms as a tool for development and progress.

Nonetheless, there have been circumstances where social media has generated a change. However, these circumstances are partial to matters that caused major reputable
damage to the Qatari state, such as Noof Al-Maadeed’s escape. This displays Qatar’s extreme concern for its image as a ‘modern’ progressive state which lead to the discussion of its soft power and cultural diplomacy goals.

The final section of this chapter explained how modernity is dominated by capitalism; therefore, Qatar aims to fuse modernity and traditions to allow for an unchallenging modernization. Qatar employs false realities to allow it to play both sides while avoiding soft disempowerment. Educated women are being used to permit this. To maintain legitimacy from its citizens and power, while acquiring a name on the global map as a developed country, Qatar is required to maintain both traditions and the image of openness and progress it has conceived.
Conclusion
The Qatari State’s focus on women’s rights and empowerment is one of its focal objectives. Qatar's vision of gender equality is an ongoing effort by the State. Despite this, this thesis argues that these goals are artificial goals that not only create minimal change in society, but are also used as a mean of exploiting the image of Qatari women, especially those within Qatar Foundation.

This was exemplified through two principle avenues. Firstly, through its branding as a sports tourism destination, Qatar was able to brand itself as a capable host country of major sporting events that is extremely developed. Simultaneously, it is able to appear as a country that is rich with beautiful cultures and traditions. Secondly, Qatar is able to portray itself as a woman empowering state through its initiatives and policies, in addition to the few extremely influential women in high positions in the state such as Sheikha Mozah and women’s high education rates and achievements.

While Qatar is capable of the creation of this appearance, the realities of Qatar as an artificial modern state were expounded in this thesis. The reality that Education City and Qatar Foundation do not reflect the Qatari society or state were made perceptible. The implementation of Sharabi’s (1988) theory exhibited how these initiatives and measures are merely “abstract gestures” that allow for the creation of these false realities. These realities are created to deceive both those within Qatar and outside affiliations. Moreover, the exclusiveness of those used to contrive the image of Qatar as a ‘modern’ state is limited to the elites and higher classes. This issue can be used for futures areas for research.

Although educated women are being used to assemble this depiction of Qatar, they are simultaneously given dichotomous roles by being required to execute the responsibilities disposed on them by society and the state. Qatari women are required to be both traditional and modern. They are obliged to participate in education and the workforce and concurrently be full time wives, daughters, and mothers. While they are required to fulfil all these
responsibilities, their autonomies are also confined and stripped away from them. This transpired in chapter 2 where the limitation on educated Qatari women’s autonomy is explicated. Hobsbawm’s theory of invented traditions provide with an explanation to how Qatar is able to deliberately invent and construct traditions through instilling certain values and norms with the past. This includes some of the impediments discussed throughout chapter 2 such as tribalism and Qatari women’s traditional roles.

The four different impediments examined include: tribalism, the law, the immediate family and religious institutions. Despite Qatari women’s advancements, the Qatari law limits and confiscates their autonomy completely through guardianship laws and other rules and regulations that are not part of the law such as travel restrictions and non-objection letters for work. The three other impediments are either used as justification for the laws and regulations that prevail, or are created due to the existence of such laws. Religious institutions and tribalism are used to vindicate the current laws that restrict women, whereas the immediate family’s influence is a result of the ability to restrict women due to guardianship laws. These impediments are compared to what Bourdieu refers to as different ‘fields’ which act as regulatory mechanism to manipulate how different actors perform. Moreover, they create what is known as the ‘norm’ for Qatari women, which is explained through Butler’s theory of undoing gender. As these ideas are reinstituted into women’s daily lives, they become a normalized part of reality.

The findings from the interviews with Qatari female graduates from Qatar Foundation Universities supported the arguments that these ongoing efforts by the state of Qatar to empower women is partly artificial as this empowerment is extremely restricted. The interviews further illustrated the paradox that exists with women’s education as they are unable to use their education outside of the bubble of Qatar Foundation or within the image of the ‘modern’ state. These women themselves were deceived by this image as they were
dismayed by the realities of the limits on women empowerment in Qatar once they departed Qatar Foundation in their transition to work. These women, along with other graduates from Qatar Foundation, were alienated from the rest of society by being categorized as the ‘other’ with stereotypes and terms that made them seem more ‘liberal’ and westernized.

The ability to compare societies views with the educated women interviewed was possible through the use of social media. Social media has been used as a tool for the discussion of political discourse and social issues in order to create a change, however, this thesis demonstrates that this is not the case in Qatar. Social media is used as both a surveillance mechanism and a political tool further used for the construction of Qatar’s image. Women are restricted in their ability to express their opinions and critique the state on women’s issues through cyber-crimes and security laws. The findings further illustrate how Qatar counteracts any threats to its reputation as a progressive ‘modern’ state through enacting new measures that restore its reputation. The research was limited as it was not possible to examine all social media platforms and discussion in Qatar. However, the issue of social media and its roles in the restriction it holds on Qatar can be expound in future research as it provides with a significant topic that transpires in all Qatari women’s lives.

This paradox that educated Qatari women are expected to deal with is finally explained through Qatar’s soft power and cultural diplomacy goals, which are slightly alluded to in previous chapters. This capitulates the answer to one of the principal questions this thesis aims to answer: what is the purpose of this education? The empowerment of women is a sociopolitical affair which aims to empower women for the purpose of appearing modern. However, it does not entail to their independence and self-autonomy. Instead it intends to complement and not substitute women's ‘traditional’ roles and their status within the patriarchal society. As Cooke (2014) explains, traditions and modernity are made to coexist as they represent the desired effect of common aspirations.
Despite the state’s attempt to contrive this image, the Qatari state is slowly giving women their rights in order to both maintain control over women and the ability to appear ‘modern’. The education of Qatari women is not creating a society which is more aware of the need for female empowerment, however, a small portion of these educated women, mainly comprises those within Qatar Foundation, are slowly discerning the paradox of their education. Despite this, only a few of them are optimistic that they will be able to use their education to create a change in society, in contrast to the majority who adjudicate that it is easier for them to conceal their identities to conform with society and by integrating into it instead of embracing their mentalities.
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