

**ANALYSIS OF WOMAN'S ROLE AND
REPRESENTATION IN ARAB WOMAN MAGAZINES**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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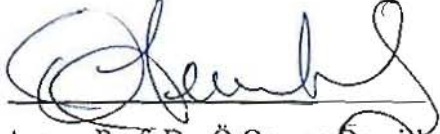
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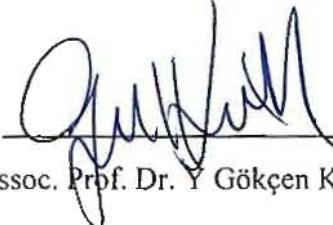
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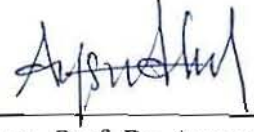
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ABSTRACT

ANALYSIS OF WOMAN'S ROLE AND REPRESENTATION IN ARAB WOMAN MAGAZINES

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The purpose of this master thesis is to examine Arab women's representation evolving in two Arab women magazines, 'Sayidaty' and 'Laha' are Arab magazines which are both considered to represent the Arab countries showcasing stories from all over the Arab world. The image of Arab woman has been widely studied in many research papers and researches. This include studies in the field of advertising and marketing by analyzing Arab advertisements in Arab magazines, this presents an opportunity to investigate magazines that discuss social issues pertaining to woman and her role in society. This master thesis will analyze the role of Arab women reflected through the selected magazines issues from different point of views: Arab feminists, western feminism and Muslim religious scholars.

Keywords: *Woman, Arab Woman, Representation*

ÖZET

Arap Kadın Dergilerinde Kadının Rolü ve Temsilinin Analizi

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YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

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Bu Yüksek Lisans Tezi *Sayidaty* ve *Laha* kadın dergilerinde Arap kadın kimliği temsilini içerik analiziyle incelemeye çalışmıştır. *Sayidaty* ve *Laha*, coğrafi ve kültürel farklılıklarına rağmen Arap ülkelerine hitap eden içeriklere sahip iki dergi olmalarından dolayı tezin örnekleme olarak seçilmişlerdir. Özellikle yazılı basın ve dergi reklamlarındaki Arap kadın imgesi birçok araştırmaya konu olmuştur. Ancak bu tez kadınlara yönelik iki derginin kadın temsilini, Arap kadını ilgilendiren toplumsal sorunlar bağlamında ele almaktadır. Tezin temel amacı, Arap kadın kimliğinin ve kadının toplumsal rolünün *Sayidaty* ve *Laha* dergilerindeki temsil üzerinden analizi olmakla birlikte; bu tez, kimlik tartışmalarını Arap feministlerinin, Batılı feministlerin ve din bilginlerinin konuya yaklaşımlarındaki farklılıkları da ele alarak irdelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Arap kadını, kimlik, temsil*

TO MY PARENTS

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Attempting to draw a definitive and concise picture of the Arab world today might tend to be a hard task, this geographical location of the Middle East has gone through tremendous changes from the early twentieth century and is still changing to this date especially with the Arab Spring, changes that have reconstructed the Middle East with new political regimes along with what they hold of ideologies, examples of such regimes that came to power decades ago are; the Baath party in Syria and Iraq, president Jamal Abdunnasser with his widely political ideology based on his thinking ‘Nassarism’ in Egypt, there is also the Saud family ruling of Saudi Arabia and this applies to all Arab states formed after the end of the Ottoman Empire, never the less, commonality still exist which includes language, traditions and religion. It is crucial not to neglect other factors that had a crucial role in shaping the Middle East, an important one are the colonial times, In their article *Middle Eastern Politics*, Gerner and Schrodt explained that “the current political structures of many Middle Eastern countries were imposed by outside powers, rather than resulting from a gradual, internally driven process” (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008), they further assert shedding light on economic powers:

The presence of powerful multinational corporations (notably international petroleum companies) meant that the new states were immediately drawn into the global political economy without having the opportunity to determine the type of relationship that would be of greatest benefit to their own development (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 124).

Outside influences not just affected the political institutions of these countries but also the formation of the Arab character as well, although this character was the outcome of the mix of all previous factors coming together, one can assume multiple identities started to emerge in the Arab society, and these multiple

identities started to emerge upon the end of the Ottoman Empire and have influenced to a great extent the Arab women as well, perhaps it was most evident in women's image and her dynamism in the social sphere.

The various forms of Arab identities might be explained through colonialism, current regimes and geographical location of each Arab country which forms some cultural norms different from one another, this mesh in factors might all come together forming a diverse Arab culture, which can be explained through the concept of 'Hybridity'. To explain this concept "Hybridity, according to Bhabha, provides an alternative kind of identity that is neither completely defined by the authority of the colonizer nor fully under the control of the colonized (Bhabha, 1994, p. 174) (as cited in AlKarawi & Bahar, 2014, p. 260). The concept of 'Hybridity' was also discussed by Ramadan in his explanation of a western Muslim character, he stated:

Asking whether one is primarily "Muslim" or "American" "Australian," "Italian," "French," or "Canadian," opposes two identities and affiliations that do not belong to the same realm. In the realm of religion and philosophy, that which imparts meaning to life, a human being is first and foremost an atheist, a Buddhist, a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim: her or his passport or nationality cannot answer the existential question. When an individual must vote for a candidate at an election, she or he is first an American, Italian, French, or British citizen involved in national affairs. Depending on the realm or the field of activity, the individual therefore puts forward one identity or another, and that is not contradictory. (Ramadan, 2015, pp. 36-37).

From this perspective although not entirely developed to match an Arab Muslim character formed in the Middle East, but still it explains the concept of hybridity, and gives an understanding on how Arab people can to shift between identities, where a man or women is a member of 'Baath' party but still a Muslim and a Sunni at the same time, how a Jordanian man or women might hold liberal ideas but still holding to his Muslim identity. I am highlighting this dual nature of a Middle Eastern individual in the Arab world in order to explain the diversity that

exist today in the Arab world in an attempt to further be able to explain the wide spectrum depicted in the studied magazine in this thesis paper.

The significance of this thesis paper topic, which I attempted to study the articles of two widely known Arab women magazines, is due to the fact that many other studies have different point of view when tackling Arab women magazines such as Al-Olayan and Karande content analysis of magazines advertisements from the U.S and the Arab world (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000), or conducting a textual analysis of media coverage of first ladies in the Arab world by Elza Ibroscheva (Ibroscheva, 2013). In this master thesis I will analyze the article's texts of specific sections of the magazines, mainly, the 'Features' section in *Sayidaty* magazine and 'Investigations' section in *Laha* magazine, along with image analysis of photos in the articles. Through this analysis I will try to conclude how these magazines are showing Arab women's life experience, what are the issues of biggest concern in these magazines and what roles are they assigning to women (if any) in their published hard copy issues.

The important role magazines play in forming women's view of herself can be explained through Kellner "In a mass mediated image culture, it is representations that help constitute an individual's view of the world, sense of personal identity and gender, playing out of style and lifestyle, and socio-political thought and action." (Kellner, 1995, p. 60).

In this thesis paper I am suggesting that the studied magazines contribute in setting women's perspective about their role in society but still these magazines can't act from vacuum without foundations that women can relate to from their own current reality and social life, I am making this assumption in reference to Wykes and Gunter when they explained their point of view about magazine publications:

Aimed at adult women, these magazines cannot suddenly impose sets of ideas and aspirations that have no cultural consonance either previous or parallel. What they offer in terms of values, themes and stories must resonate with the expectations of women who buy and read them, or they simply would not make sense. (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 90).

As in order for these magazines “to be popular requires acceptability” (Wykes & Gunter, 2005 , p. 89), this stresses out the importance of discussing issues of concern to readers in order to increase their circulation this also can explain why Arab magazines can’t follow through a purely western perspective when it comes to feminism and promoting women’s rights where such themes must be synthesized from an Arab point of view (with what it has to offer from tradition and religion) in order to resonate to a female Arab reader. Also, relying on a western perspective in yielding a description or solution for Arab women situation might not be accurate or inapplicable and might fall short in fully understanding the Arab women character.

Many scholars have contributed to the reason for the big gap between the west and the Arab east where Ibroscheva adds in one of her articles:

Orientalism essentially represents non-Western women as “ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, deistic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.” and Western women as “educated, modern [. . .] having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decisions (Mohanty, 1984, p. 337) (as cited in Ibroscheva, 2013, p. 3).

Other scholars stated:

Feminists also wreak the same havoc on indigenous women’s experiences by imposing western feminist agendas that are not always consonant with their societies’ material realities (Hasan, 2005, p. 31). In doing so, Western feminists often ignore the existing hierarchies among indigenous women (Shanhaz Khan, 2005) and completely ignore inter-group differences (Griffin & Braidotti, 2002) (as cited in Ibroscheva, 2013, p. 3).

Ibroscheva goes on in her interpretation within the frame of colonialism which she states:

Within the critique of colonial discourse, however, the role of Western feminists' framing of the need for female empowerment in the Middle East is of particular importance because it masterfully demonstrates the existing tensions in the field of cultural studies in understanding the mechanisms of creating the image of the (Other) (Ibroscheva, 2013, p. 3).

Basing a critic on the Arab woman from a pure western point of view might not be accurate or relevant which might fail to uplift women's situation, this was observed by Ibroscheva where she explains "That leads to what Roksana Bahramitash (2005, p. 222) described as feminist Orientalism" which "regards Oriental women only as victims and not as agents of social transformation." (Ibroscheva, 2013, p. 3).

Some scholars were critical about western feminist views and how they frame non-western feminism, this includes Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1984, p. 335) describes other scholars by stating:

Has accused Western feminisms of appropriating and colonizing 'the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterize the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and castes' in developing countries. She argued that power is exercised when Western values and culture are used as a universal measure of progress and modernity. (Mohanty, 1984 , p. 335).

Fatima Mernissi (1987) on the other hand asserted that "the tradition of discussing Muslim women "by comparing them, explicitly or implicitly, to Western women," (p.7) leads to "senseless comparisons and unfounded conclusions" (p.7) often limiting the issue to "who is more civilized than whom." (p.7).

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Formation of the Arab Identity

Many factors have their role in forming the Arab identity and character, Hofstede and Hall asserted:

Arab cultural values and norms are formed based on Islamic religious beliefs as well as other cultural factors such as the more collectivistic (Hofstede 1980) and high-context (Hall 1976) nature of Arabic culture. (as cited in Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000, p. 70).

In terms of political governments, the Middle East can be classified as monarchies, Islamic states, nationalist revolutionary republics, and conditional democracies. (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 107), further, these political systems have taken a variety of traditional sources of legitimacy such as custom, a history of family governance, ancestral ties to the prophet Muhammad, a leader's personal attributes, and the royal family's role as a symbol of nationalism (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 117).

The governmental structures of the Arab states are diverse and do not follow one form or ideology, "by the early 1970s, two forms of governance-conservative monarchies and military or single-party revolutionary republics –dominated the political landscape." (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 105). Further, Schwedler and Gerner add:

Some of the revolutionary states functioned under authoritarian personalities leadership (most notably Libya, Syria, and Iraq), whereas others (e.g. Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Tunisia, and PDR Yemen) relied on the strength of a dominant political ideology [...] Lebanon stands out as the one Arab country that had neither a king nor revolutionary leadership in the twentieth century. (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 105).

In his discussion about Muslim identity within a western culture Tariq Ramadan emphasized that one can be an American, a European and a Muslim at the same time, where he mentions the concept of *The Western Islam* in which he explained that although there is only one Islam in terms of principals and doctrines, however, it can include many cultures and interpretations. (Ramadan, 2015).

In viewing the Middle Eastern Muslim identity and contrasting it with a western Muslim in the west, Ramadan explains that:

We can notice many questions that Muslims have, where the identity crisis has several dimensions, on a universal level there are many questions on the long term, in facing globalization and in facing a global culture that is viewed as if being westernized, the Muslim world is facing a deep crisis. Where most of the communities with a Muslim majority are economically backward, and they are in general non-democratic societies and even if they were rich they fail to contribute intellectually or scientifically. The experience of the economic exile...the exiled one fears losing his religion and culture within the western societies which leads him as a natural reaction to isolate himself or hide [my translation]. (Ramadan, 2015, p. 40)

In his explanation of a western Muslim reaction to secularity Ramadan states:

The first natural reaction is to consider the western land as a foreign country that they had to live in as strangers. Moreover, their misconception about secularism and its origins has evolved from a great historical misunderstanding, where the people of north Africa, the Middle East Arabs and Asians, to them secularism is an imported system imposed on them by colonists or a class of elites such as ‘Habib Buraqiba’, or ‘Hafith Assad’ or ‘Saddam Hussein’ through dictatorship policies. Secularism and religious neutrality started to be viewed as an opposition to Islam and a rejection to religion to an extent that requires suppressing measures, where it became historically and realistically impossible to link ‘secularism’ and ‘religious neutrality’ with freedom and democracy. [my translation] (Ramadan, 2015, p.41).

Although Ramadan is providing an explanation of a western Muslim character but it coincides in many ways with the Arab Muslim in the Middle East in terms of explaining their adversity towards secularism. Ramadan further adds:

Muslims in Europe and in the west insist on their presence. Consequently they have reviewed their views about secularity and religious neutrality after the scholars, intellectuals and leaders have understood that the separation between the church and the state didn't dictate the removal of religion but rather has organized its presence within the diverse public sphere to guarantee equality. [my translation] (Ramadan, 2015, p. 42).

The importance of Ramadan's view is to highlight the different context which a Muslim character exists in.

Some Arab countries put restrictions on the mobility of women more than others, in Saudi Arabia, Arebi discusses the matter:

In the early 1980s measures were taken prohibiting women from traveling abroad without a chaperon for study, business, or tourism, and banning them from conducting their own businesses without a male representative who was a family member. This measure was to end over a fifteen-centuries-old traditional right for the Arab woman to be an independent entrepreneur. (Arebi, 1994, p. 17).

When trying to explain the many aspects of Arab woman's life and character, scholars attempted to provide an understanding either from a traditional point of view or drawing a character out of women experience in society. In this regard, in her book 'The Arab Woman and the Modern Thinking' the writer Mufeeda Mohammed Ibrahim states:

Those who call for moderation assign themselves a position between extremism and liberation, they emphasize women's work (job) to develop her character and in order to contribute in woman's financial stability but at the same time they emphasize a women's work in her household which should come as married woman's first priority. [my translation] (Mohammed, 2000, p. 65).

Throughout her book, Mufeeda Mohammed has assigned the role of a wife as the sole role a woman should have, she made clear critic to the western perspective on the role of woman.

In an attempt to give a more understanding of the Arab culture and some specific norms that occur within the society, I would like to add this section from a novel “Girls of Riyadh” written by a Saudi writer Rajaa Alsanea¹, she offered a description and classifications that cannot be ignored about the Saudi women, which in many ways applies to the Arab women in general, although the book is a fictional novel but still it can provide a great insight about the Arab culture, the author in her book’s notes adds “in the interest of fairness, I have to make clear that the girls in the novel do not represent all girls in Riyadh, but they do represent many of them” (Alsanea, 2007, p. viii), from this I can suggest a representation, although not about an entire group, but still it does exist about the Arab woman through the novel. She goes on to explain her classifications she states “classification was that of ‘religious types before and after marriage’...the extremely religious type, the rational moderate religious type and the wild type who mostly ignored the strictures of their religion.” (Alsanea, 2007, p. 77), the classifications include: **(1) The Extremely Religious (‘Bowling to the faith) Type** which could be either, *The sheltered one* where she is brought up in a strict religious family, a woman of this type has never been exposed to any conflicting outside forces. Or she could be *Sheltered but with fantasies*, this woman also has grown up in a sheltered setting, except that fantasies of bursting out into something new, into some kind of liberation, have always pursued her. She is also pure, not because of ignorance of the world ‘out there’, but because of her own will, her self-discipline or the surveillance of her family. **(2) The Moderate Type** who is a *Fashion victim*, this woman changes her behaviour according to the current

¹ Rajaa Alsanea is a Saudi writer, born in 1981, she became famous after publishing her novel “Girls of Riyadh” (which was banned in Saudi Arabia), the book was published in Arabic in 2005 and in English in 2007, and was listed for Dublin Literary Award in 2009.

fashion. If the trend during a certain time is to act all spiritual, attend religious gatherings and wear the hijab outside the kingdom, she will do it and 'go with the flow'. Under the same category there is the *Not religious, but not liberated*, either. This woman is less strict than the extremely religious woman but more observant than the more liberal one. A woman from this group tends to resist sinning because of her morals and principles rather than her actual religious belief. **(3) The Wild Type (or 'Escapee')**, in this category woman could be; *Wild before marriage*, this woman normally reforms after marriage. She might turn into a very committed woman (or at least one of moderate commitment). That depends on her husband, if she marries someone who isn't right for her she remains in the wild category even after her marriage. Or *Wild after marriage*, this woman is usually a member of one of the two sheltered groups, but she goes 'bad' after marriage because she can't acclimatize to the demands of a liberated husband, or because of a rocky marriage or an unfaithful husband. (Alsanea, 2007)

Drawing an analysis about the Arab world can be derived from understanding their governing regimes and the effect of geographical location (where Arab countries with mostly desert nature are more nomadic than other) and how it can affect in forming social norms, from this perspective I can assert Arab states can be split to three categories, 1) Arab Gulf states, 2) Arab Levant states, 3) Arab North African states.

2.1.1. Arab Gulf Countries

The Arab Gulf States border the Persian Gulf and includes: Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. All these states are either monarchies or ruled by a Sultan or Sheikh. Schewedler and Gemer state:

They are all relatively small in terms of both land and population, with little arable land; each has a significant expatriate population that is responsible for much of the economic activity; and all rely on petroleum and natural

gas for a significant portion of their export revenue. The rulers of each country face internal pressures for political liberalization; most have chosen to respond cautiously. (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, pp. 120-121).

Qatar is an oil and gas rich country, religiously conservative, it is ruled by al-Thani dynasty. Qatar's emir Hamad ibn Khalifah al-Thani described by Schwedler and Gerner as:

[He] sees himself as a modernizing ruler. He has allowed for increased political debate in the public arena and has begun to enfranchise the population: on March 8, 1999, some 23,000 Qatari women and men voted in the first-ever elections for a twenty-nine member advisory Municipal council.. Six women were among the more than 200 candidates, although none were elected. (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 121).

Oman on the other hand in the year 2000 held elections for an eighty-two-person Consultative Assembly. Both men and women were granted suffrage rights. (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 121)

It is worth noticing when examining women rights in some of these Arab countries it is not an issue of women only but it is men also who are not granted these rights too except recently. But it should be noted the role that the tribe and the government play in governing the social life in the Arab Gulf and especially for women, Arebi writes:

Women's position in Saudi Arabia today has been affected by the historical transformations caused by the major shift from the primacy of tribe to the primacy of state by the establishment of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1936." Centers of power that have a role in Saudi society are "the royal family, the tribal leaders, and the 'ulama (Arebi, 1994, p. 13)

These three factors although different from one Arab country to another and varies in their strength in society but still they do exist in all Arab countries. It is important to highlight the importance of tribe in the Arab world, the forced and

voluntarily established settlement of the Bedouins² and the creation of national identity embodied in the state have altered in significant ways the concept of tribe and the role of tribal leaders (Said, 1979), Arebi further explains:

The 'idea' of the tribe had to be preserved and even enforced by the state, because its structure, being based on collective will, serves naturally as an effective mechanism of control...the 'ulama's role has also drastically changed. The preservation of religious institutions, according to Islamic political theory, is a function of the state, and the 'ulama's role is determined by this function. This has created a mutual dependency in which the state is always in need of religious support for its development plans, while the 'ulama depend on the state for their survival (Piscatori 1983) (as cited in Arebi, 1994, p. 14).

In my thesis paper I will focus on two Gulf States; Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates since the two selected magazines for this research are originally publications from these two countries, *Sayidaty* magazine from Saudi Arabia and *Laha* magazine from United Arab Emirates.

- **Saudi Arabia**

In describing the social structure of Saudi Arabia the concept of tribal origin plays a crucial role where:

the concept of origin (asl) is strong among many Saudi Arabians. Some people, mainly in Hijaz, are recognized descendants of Muhammad and are known as Ashraf. Many others throughout the kingdom assert patrilineal descent from eponymous ancestors from ancient Arab tribes. Still others stress Arabian origins but without tribal connections. However, Saudi citizenship embraces people with historical origins outside the Arabian Peninsula. Considerations of origin are important

² Bedouins are Arab nomadic group that inhabit the desert

markers and influence social interaction, including marriage (“Culture of Saudi Arabia,” www.everyculture.com).

- **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

The UAE is an Arab country with a federation type of government with seven largely self-governing emirates and no political parties, with a geographical area of (82,880) sq. km, and population of 8.9 million (according to 2009 est. by UAE government), the ethnic groups are; Indian (1.75 million), Pakistani (1.25 million), Bangladeshi (500,000), other Asian (1 million), European and African (500,000), and Emirati (890,000), the country’s literacy for Emirati citizens is 90%. The UAE enjoys a prosperous economy with a GDP of 248\$ billion (for 2009). (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

As for its people According to Country Studies published by U.S Department of State:

Of the total 8.9 million residents, less than 15% are Emirati. The majority of Emirati citizens are Sunni Muslim with a Shi’a minority. Many foreigners are Muslim; Hindus and Christians make up a portion of the U.A.E’s foreign population. (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

The U.A.E’s Economy changed drastically by the sixties, prior to becoming a major oil exporter in 1962 the U.A.E’s economy was dominated by pearl production, fishing, agriculture and herding. Since 1973 petroleum has dominated their economy, with oil reserves of estimated 97.8 billion barrels in 2011 that can last to over 150 years.

From a historical point of view:

The U.A.E was formed from a group of tribally organized Arabian Peninsula sheikhdoms along the southern coast of the Persian Gulf

and the northwestern coast of the Gulf and Oman. For centuries, the sheikhdoms were embroiled in dynastic disputes. It became known as the Pirates Coast as raiders based there harassed foreign shipping (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

In 1819 the British made expeditions to protect India trade from raiders despite signing a peace treaty with principal sheikhs of the coast the raids continued until 1835 and in 1853 they signed a treaty with the United Kingdom where the sheikhs (called the Trucial Sheikhdoms) agreed to a ‘perpetual maritime truce’. It is crucial to explain the formation of the Arab Gulf states and its relationship with the United Kingdom, according to Country Studies published by U.S. Department of State “Primarily in reaction to the ambitions of other European countries, the United Kingdom and the Trucial Sheikhdoms established closer bonds in an 1892 treaty” (U.S. Department of State, 2012), in 1968 the U.K. decided to end the treaty relationships with the seven Trucial Sheikhdoms including Bahrain and Qatar (totaling as 9 emirates) which had been under British protection. The nine attempted to form a union of Arab emirates but they were unable to agree on terms of union where Bahrain and Qatar became independent states. “When the British-Trucial Sheikhdoms treaty expired in 1971 they became fully independent” (U.S. Department of State, 2012), by 1972 all seven emirates formed a union to what we come to know as the United Arab Emirates (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

2.1.2. Arab Levant Countries

The Arab Levant includes Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine. The term ‘Levant’ is “historical geographical term referring to a large area in the eastern Mediterranean” (“Levant,” 2015).

Each country of the Levant has its own political system, where in Syria there is Baathism, it's worth highlighting according to Schwedler and Gerner:

In the 1940s, the Arab Baath Party was founded by two Syrians, Greek Orthodox Michael Alfaq (the group's intellectual leader) and Sunni Muslim Salah al-Din al-Bitar (its political strategist)...the Baathist ideology embraced a set of principles that drew on multiple sources of legitimacy in the Arab world: history, religion, nationalism, development, freedom, and socialism (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 112).

Consequently to this political system, there are no religious restrictions imposed by the state in regard to clothing for women or men in public life.

Jordan is the only remaining monarchy in the Levant, ruled by the Hashemite dynasty, the Hashemite royal family has established historical legitimacy roots for ruling, "The Hashemite name is derived from Hashem, a grandson of Qusai and the great-grandfather of the Prophet Mohammad. The Hashemites of Jordan are thus direct descendants of the Prophet through his daughter, Fatima, and her husband, Ali." ("About Jordan," www.kingabdullah.jo) Jordan has various ethnic groups, some sources confirmed that:

After the Russians invaded the Caucasus in the 10th century AD, the indigenous Muslim Circassian community fled southwards to escape religious persecution. By the late 19th century, they had populated less inhabited areas of Jordan, including Amman. Other ethnic minorities, such as the Chechens, Armenians, Kurds, and Bosnians embellished the Jordanian patchwork, alongside the local Arab people. Today, the country's population of six million retains a rich diversity in appearance and culture. ("About Jordan," www.kingabdullah.jo).

Jordan political system forms a moderate appeal to interpretation of religion, thus in regard to women the state doesn't impose restrictions on female dress.

Despite the fact that the Hashemite dynasty draws its legitimacy from its roots to prophet Mohammed one must still not assume it is a conservative Islamic country as is the case with other Arab countries, the relationship with Islamic sentiments

trying to emerge in this country can be explained by what's been asserted by Schrodtt and Gerner:

Hussein (late king of Jordan) was attempting to deflate dissent around poor economic conditions. Faced with a strong Islamic movement, the king chose to integrate Islamists into the government rather than banning them, as occurred in Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia. In fact, Jordan's Islamists had long been allies of the monarchy in the conflict with leftist in the 1950s and 1960s, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1970. (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 123).

Lebanon on the other hand is one of the most liberal Arab countries, "it stands out as the one Arab country that had neither a king nor revolutionary leadership in the twentieth century. Its creation as an explicitly Christian-dominated Arab state, codified in the 1943 National Pact, made it unique"(Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 105).

Iraq was also ruled by the Baath party (which was overthrown upon the U.S war on Iraq in 2003). It has a diverse ethnic population; Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian, or other 5%. ("Iraq-Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," www.kwintessential.co.uk)

On the other hand, Palestine presents a scene of conflict, as a state of Palestine it is described to include the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

After providing an explanation about the political factors that played major role in forming the Arab world, these factors can be attributed in influencing today's Arabs women's identity through shaping her life experiences, professor Salam

Al-Mahadin emphasized the role which women's experience plays in shaping her role in society and within her family, an example she elaborated on during an interview I conducted with her was the experience of Palestinian woman in Jordan, where since the early years of the seventies Palestinian women were not able to be

fully integrated in public institutions (due to political turmoil that occurred during the seventies between the Jordan military and Palestinian liberation organization residing at that time in Jordan) this absence from the public scene has let her withdraw and focus her efforts internally towards her family and domestic life thus reducing her economic contribution to her household (although this has significantly changed today). These various experiences that women faced in each Arab country had great role in shaping her identity and her role in society. This could be attributed to the political regime and geographical location which dictated specific cultural norms.

2.1.3. North African Arab Countries

This part of the Arab world includes Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Egypt and Mauritania. They all have Arabic as their official language hence other languages may be present in everyday life such as French in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

Morocco is a monarchy and considered to be the most enduring Arab regime “Monarchical government in that country dates back twelve centuries. The Alawi family, which traces its roots to the prophet Muhammad, came to power in the 1660s.” (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008, p. 118).

Egypt is considered one of the most influential Arab countries in the Arab political scene, although in the recent years it has gone through many political upheavals. The ethnic make-up of Egypt consists of Eastern Hamitic stock (Egyptians, Bedouins, and Berbers) 99%, Greek, Nubian, Armenian, other European (primarily Italian and French) 1%, it is worth highlighting that social class is very apparent in Egypt since it determines one’s access to power and position, other attributes of the Egyptian character is that the individual is always subordinate to the family, tribe or group (“Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette,” www.kwintessential.co.uk).

Tunisia, during Arab Spring that struck the Arab world was not an exception where in December 2014 Tunisia completed its first ever democratic presidential election which resulted in the first instance of an Islamic party voluntarily relinquishing power to a secular one (Kranz, 2015). Arabic is the official language, but still English, Italian, German or French are usually the language of commerce. French is less apt to be understood in the far south. English and German are also spoken in major cities (“Tunisia-Language, Customs, Culture and Etiquette,” www.kwintessential.co.uk).

Algeria, The Sahara desert covers more than four-fifths of the land. Oil and gas reserves were discovered there in the 1950s, but most Algerians live along the northern coast. The country supplies large amounts of natural gas to Europe and energy exports are the backbone of the economy. Algeria was originally inhabited by Berbers until the Arabs conquered North Africa in the 7th century. (“Algeria Profile-Overview”, 2015).

Sudan was once the largest and one of the most geographically diverse states in Africa, split into two countries in July 2011 after the people of the south voted for independence (“Sudan Profile-Overview”, 2015).

Mauritania is one of Africa's newest oil producers, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania bridges the Arab Maghreb and western sub-Saharan Africa (Mauritania country profile, 2015).

2.2 Women and Religion

Ever since the venturing of women into the public life in the twentieth century, intermingling with men in the public spheres, and further by the mid twentieth century her emergence especially at the work place has become very apparent, this

caused many conflicting reactions from the other side which is the 'men' side.

According to Saddeka Arebi:

In this Arabian society, in which the construction of images and concepts has historically been a means of institutionalizing consciousness and hence exercising power, women emerge not only as a subject at discourse but also as generators of discourse producing their own texts and forming their own concepts for comprehending the universe (Arebi, 1994, p. 1).

Some women writers from Saudi Arabia have become willing to participate in the game of power when it comes to generating text and started voicing out their opinions in some newspapers, they were determined to traffic in words, provide revisions of major values and institutions by forming their own readings of culture and religion despite the risks (Arebi, 1994), according to Arebi writers in a newspaper began to challenge and express their thoughts in texts such as this piece "men believe that woman is another creature. They claim that she is 'lacking in both mind and religion'; they believe that they (men) are the guardians (qawwamoun) of women" (Arebi, 1994). In response Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Ben Baz, then the director General of Religious Research in 1978 (later to become the mufti of Saudi Arabia) issued the following as a response as a *fatwa*:

Attacking men's guardianship of women is an objection to God and an attack on his Book and on His prudent law. This is a great infidelity (Kufr akhbar)³ by the consensus of Islam's 'ulama...It is absolutely necessary that the newspaper be publically punished by stopping its publication. The women who wrote the article and the editor-in-chief must be tried and disciplined in a deterring manner. (Arebi, 1994, p. 9).

Arebi comments that the "ulama⁴ have used the ultimate weapon that would ensure pushing women away from their territories for a long time to come" (Arebi, 1994, p. 2). This clearly shows the women condition at that time in the 1970s and how it was difficult for women to publish their opinions to enhance women's situation for

³ Kufr akhbar means the greatest of blasphemy

⁴ Ulama is scholar or authority in the "religious hierarchy" of the Islamic religious sciences.

decades to come and this applies to other women magazines and *Sayidaty* is not an exception given the fact despite it is being distributed all over the Arab world it is originally a Saudi Arabian magazine. I would like to state that Saudi Arabia has developed a reputation of women having to adhere to a strict code of dress and restrictions on mobility than any other Arab countries, the reason I am highlighting it because my thesis analysis includes researching a Saudi Arabian magazine.

In trying to explain the deep reasons for the choices women make in regard to their dress and how in the Arab world this could mean more than a fashion preference for color or style, Al-Mahadin adds “The choice to wear a veil is both social and religious, and sometimes even economic.” (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 9), “The practice of veiling did not originate with Islam; neither is it a quintessentially Islamic practice. It existed in ancient Greece, the Balkans, Byzantium and pre-Islamic Arabia as an indication of high class status” (Ahmed, p. 55; El Guindi, p. 149; Kahf, p. 29) (as cited in AlKarawi & Bahar, 2014, p. 256). Tseelon (1995) argues that female identity is realized through the presentation of many selves, and clothes are a vital expression of this self-realization. (as cited in Omair, 2011, p. 27).

When explaining the Islamic Religion it is important to highlight the legal science in the Arab societies has four major sources. (1) The (Qur’an), which is the words of God, revealed by the prophet Muhammad and the rulings which are central to religious beliefs and behavior. The Qur’an has for long determined every aspect of lives, among other things gender status (Stromquist, 1998). (2) The (Sunna), which is the divinely inspired conduct of the prophet, (3) The (Qiyas) i.e. the reasoning by analogy and (3) The (Ijma) i.e. the consensus of opinion and the agreement of qualified legal scholars in a given generation (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000, p. 71).

To further shed light on the role of religion and shari'a⁵ Al-Olayan and Karande explain:

According to the Shari'a, where a problem is not specifically regulated by the Qur'an or Sunna, the method of analogical reasoning must be used to extend the principles inherent in the Qur'an and the Sunna to cover new cases (Coulson 1964, p. 76). Ijma is the agreement of qualified legal scholars in a given generation and is used when analogical reasoning cannot be applied. (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000, p. 71).

When discussing many of the issues presented in the magazines in this study I will find (Ijma) and (Qiyas) are important to explain issues such as women studying abroad, or becoming a marriage contract registrar (where this position was invented in the 20th century so it is not explained in Quran or Sunna). But still it is important to distinguish between religion and tradition, many practices in the Arab world when carefully examined will not have solid religious basis to back them up as they are the creation of tradition, "Shao and Hill (1994, p. 352) stated: "Historically, anthropologists note that traditional societies (notably in developing countries but also in rural parts of advanced markets) are controlled through religious and social conventions" (Gibbs 1982; Merrill 1969) (as cited in Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000, p. 79).

In her explanation of shari'a Mernissi adds:

The sacred law, which incarnates, represents, and expresses the divine will - the experts elaborated a body of religious knowledge, the fiqh. This consisted of, on the one hand, controlling the interpretation of the Koran, the text revealed by God, and, on the other hand, establishing the Sunna (tradition) of the Prophet by putting into writing Hadith, everything that the Prophet said in order to illuminate the way of Islam. (Mernissi, 1987, p. 32).

⁵ Shari'ah is the basic Islamic legal system and law which is derived from the religious principles of Islam

To further analyze the concept, Boero states:

In his theory there is an important analytic distinction between custom and clothing: while the first is an institutional reality, essentially social, independent from the individual, the second is an individual reality, a practice through which the individual actualizes in his identity the establishment of general custom (Barthes 1998: 66–67). (as cited in Boero, 2015, p. 305).

From this perspective if we analyze Rajaa AlSanaa description of Saudi women in her novel ‘Girls of Riyadh’ where she pointed how they might choose upon leaving Saudi Arabia to either remain wearing the ‘Abaya’ and ‘Burqa’ or removing it and wear ordinary western clothing the same goes while they are inside their homes when being with their male relatives they might choose not to cover their hair and body making their ‘Abaya and Burqa’ more of a costume they must adhere to due to their country’s laws and it does not represent a deep religious belief, which leads me to assume if a woman from Lebanon (the most liberal among Arab countries) choose to wear her headscarf at all times can be regarded as more religious than some Saudi woman although for an outer spectator this might not be obvious.

2.3 Women Magazines

In examining the general global magazine publications atmosphere, MacDonald gives a brief description:

From the 1960s, women’s glossies have apparently reflected the sexual liberation and career ambitions that had been nurtured by second-wave feminism. Magazines addressed the aspirational desires of young women at a time of economic growth, reliable contraception and individual freedom with *pride of place given to sex* (MacDonald, 1995) (as cited in Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p.82)

Wykes and Gunter further add:

Those aspirations though were still presented as revolving around men: how you dress for work; freeing yourself from an unreliable man; meeting Mr Right; asserting yourself during sex; how to make your body attractive and where to be seen (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 82).

Women magazines can play a vital role in showing women experiences, her successes and hardships, shedding light on her existence instead of isolating her, where publishing women experience can add significantly to women's status, Arebi states:

Women not only become historical personalities but women's experience becomes the means through which to forge the link between the personal and the political in a manner that obliterates any demarcation between the public and the private. (Arebi, 1994, p. 71).

In a more critical observation Wykes and Gunter highlight:

In many ways the old models of 'coupling' were barely challenged despite the 'feminist claims' of magazines like **Cosmopolitan**, which launched in 1972 in the UK. It was just that instead of settling for one man women gained the freedom to try several – it was as if all their new-found financial independence was worth was the ability to buy versions of themselves that more men would desire. This was the intense contradiction of the post-feminist magazines (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 82).

Publications are constantly trying to assign certain roles for women, women magazine are not an exception, "The media frame images of being a woman by choosing certain words, images, metaphors, descriptions, and visuals" (Van Gorp, 2007) (as cited in Basnyat & Chang, 2014, p. 82). The role that has been played by the media in forming women's identity and femininity in general has been noted by many scholars; Leahy states:

The construction of femininity has been mediated through images and text that define social feminine identity as an emphasized femininity, as noted by Connell in his work on gender hierarchy in society (as cited in Leahy, 1994). This emphasized femininity is promoted in mass media where other forms of femininity such as spinsters, lesbians, prostitutes, madwomen, rebels, midwives, witches, and manual workers are prevented from becoming culturally powerful forms of femininity (Leahy, 1994) (as cited in Basnyat & Chang, 2014, p. 83).

Others have also asserted “From a media framing perspective, text and images are powerful frames that suggest, create, and sustain everyday practices of femininity and masculinity stratification” (Milkie, 2002) (as cited in Basnyat & Chang, 2014, p. 83).

It is important to explain some discourses that might be relevant to this study especially when magazines representing women to be the first to achieve something or venture into a new domain is evident; Kaufer and Al-Malki explained this discourse in a study stating “discourse patterning of precedent-setting is a discourse of ‘firsts.’”. They further go on to explain this concept “The ‘first’ must also be associated with an act, typically a verb, of public opportunity based on accomplishment (first ‘accepted’, first ‘graduated’, first ‘admitted’, first ‘nominated’, first ‘elected’, first ‘appointed’).” (Kaufer & Al-Malki, 2009, p. 114). This concept will be present in the analyzed articles in this thesis paper.

The role of publications should be clearly recognized in affecting its readers otherwise it would be hard to attribute any changes in female reality constructing a relation of affecting and being affected, where magazines contribute in reflecting women’s reality and affecting it with ideas suggested through the text and images displayed throughout their pages, this notion has been emphasized by Wykes and Gunter:

Magazines form a mediating part of an already gendered discourse. That discourse is the broad cultural representation of sexual identity and activity. It generates the symbols that signify what is valuable and desirable in the feminine and pre-empts but informs and is reproduced by the content of magazines and the cut of clothes. (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 73)

Other scholars also highlighted this issue where Arnett claimed “magazines are a medium where gender role identity formation is an especially common theme, particularly in magazines for adolescent girls’ (1995: 522).” (as cited in Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 72).

2.4 The Arab Culture and Language

In explaining this thesis topic it is important to build grounds about the importance of Arabic language and the role it plays since I will be examining Arabic articles text, “Language is both affected by or reflective of socio-cultural issues, and active on them, in that language constitutes our subjective sense of self and therefore our attitudes and actions” (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 67).

This thesis examines Arab women magazines which is a media form that clearly reflect the role played by written words and images in Arab culture, in this regard Arebi states:

The history of the Arabian peninsula reflects a unique interconnection between the poetic and the political in which the symbolic organization of society is based on coordinating cultural affairs in words. The construction of images and concepts becomes a means of institutionalizing social forms through which to exercise power. (Arebi, 1994, p. 9)

Given this explanation it can be argued that magazines publications such as *Sayidaty* and *Laha* can be considered a reflection of Arab culture reality and consequently influence it as well.

The Arabic language has many attributes making it an effective means for communicating across the entire Arab world, according to Beeston (1970) “Arabic is the official language in all Arab countries. Although dialects might vary from country to country, the grammatical system and written language are uniform across the Arab countries” (as cited in Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000, p. 75).

It is worth also to highlight: “In Arabic culture, the best speech is considered to have few words that carry full meaning. Brevity of expression is considered a literary virtue; compressing great meaning into a few words that are easily understood is desired (Faruqi and Faruqi 1986) (as cited in Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000, p. 73).

The importance of the Arabic language to influence others can be emphasized in which Cole and Meeker state:

Historically, the type of leadership in the tribal societies of Arabia has depended on the effective use of rhetoric in debate. Decisions have had to be made by agreement reached through persuasion and debate (Cole 1975; Meeker 1979; Nelson 1974) (as cited in Arebi, 1994). The political power of the poets, however, has sprung from their abilities to legitimate interests through disseminating personal as well as tribal reputation. (Arebi, 1994, p. 9).

The importance of Arabic language and its influence is further explained:

The most important factor of all is that an element of sacredness is connected to Arabic that to this day makes it a religious symbol. That Arabic is as much a symbol as a medium has made ‘the status of those who seek to create in words, and especially for secular purposes, [...] highly ambiguous (Greetz 1983:111) (as cited in Arebi, 1994, pp. 9-10).

Matheson explains the importance of language in forming one sense of self:

Ideologies projected in media texts can be better understood through systematic analysis of such language features. It suggests that people’s sense of who they are and of who others are is not only revealed in language but is constructed there. It also suggests that this identity is a performance rather than an essence – it is something people do rather than something deep within them. And it suggests that magazines are a key site within contemporary culture where identities come to be accorded legitimacy and power (Matheson, 2005, p. 58).

Through this scholarly work we can see the role magazines play in culture.

Matheson also adds, “texts imply certain readers, providing spaces for actual readers to locate themselves with respect to the text and thus shaping the selves they bring to them.” (Matheson, 2005, p. 58).

On the other hand it would be beneficial to examine the generators of language I mean the writers and mainly the female women magazine’s writers. Women journalists publishing in women magazines have opened the door to other women for their issues and problems to be heard in society, and women magazines are an

excellent medium for both women journalist and the women in society to be seen and given a voice in the traditional Arab culture, Arebi Adds:

Women's participation in the institution of literature provides them with the opportunity to be not only in control of themselves but also in control of language. This presents more than a challenge to the claim the center of power makes to protect women and words; it represents a cultural dilemma... for one thing, women are considered the most "private" of private (owra)⁶ to be governed by strict rules of concealment. Words, on the other hand, are considered not only "public" or a means of "publication" but also operate as an agent of revelation (Arebi, 1994, p. 10).

Perhaps this explains why the Saudi magazine *Sayidaty* studied in this thesis is not published in Saudi Arabia rather in Dubai where it has to confront the restrictions of concealment they have on publishing about women. Women have ventured in magazine publishing as writers where Arebi states "today some 95 percent of those who own, publish, edit, and write Arab women's magazines in the Arab world, which number more than three hundred, are females." (Arebi, 1994, p. 11).

In order to justify my assumption that magazines have a role in shaping readers identity, and particularly for the purpose of this thesis paper, women's identity, Matheson argued that:

If we accept Foucault's position that subjectivities are produced by being talked and written about, then the constant talk and writing about us by others are a source of those others' power over us. Such theory, although it perhaps underestimates the power of the individual, can be applied quite immediately to lifestyle magazines, where commercial and cultural forces often lead to discourses of the self which neither editors nor readers feel they own. (Matheson, 2005, p. 61).

He also added:

Every use of language is a performance, a rhetorical achievement, and involves our orientation to certain identity positions available in discourse

⁶ Owra: is a term in Arabic which denoted private parts of the body which to be covered by clothing

and genre. When we perform in discourse, we are signaling to listeners, viewers or readers which discourses are relevant, how we are mixing or juxtaposing discourses, where we fit within them and therefore what kind of self we are, for the moment, projecting. (Matheson, 2005, p. 64).

Arab women magazines and women writers can confront the wrongdoing against women where Arab writers and columnists through their articles contribute in supporting their fellow women, in describing Arab women writers Arebi adds “she chose a method of resistance through words – a peaceful and almost feminine weapon – used for the purpose of preserving blood, not shedding it.” (Arebi, 1994, p. 98), this reflects the specific characteristics of the Arab culture and how women moves within its space, as when compared to the American feminist movement where women went to the streets demonstrating and sometimes going to court to claim their rights. Arab woman on the other hand chose less confrontation since Arab woman went to the streets during the Arab Spring, perhaps this demeanor of avoiding conflict is a characteristic of a certain generation.

Analyzing the historical changes of the status of women in the Arab culture is very important since it will be discussed in the next sections of this thesis, where according to Arebi:

The qualities of strength, courage, sacrifice, wisdom, and independence, recognized as heroic qualities in historical Arab women, are now ironically considered to be signs of failure, deviation, and even of the creeping decadence of the West into their lives. The qualities that led to the realization of these women as great models are exactly the qualities for which women are condemned in the twentieth century. (Arebi, 1994, pp. 102-103).

2.5 Western Feminism vs Arab Feminism

When examining Western Feminism and an Arab Feministic view of woman, the following gives an explanation of the two different definitions of how the West and Arabs conceive women by Lacan “It has been argued that the West is phallogentric because of the woman’s perceived lack, but in the Arab world she is territory that constructs that symptom called ‘man’”⁷ (Jacques Lacan [1975] 1982) (as cited Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 10).

This shows the big difference in perspectives which is important when trying to analyze the Arab views of women which it can’t be through a western point of view.

When discussing Arab women and feminism there are several points of views and scholarly perspectives that should be distinguished: a western feminism and how it sees Arab woman, and Arab women feminist and their encounter to the male power (whether it stems from religion or tradition) and there is a third less perceived point of view where Arab feminists and female scholars engage in reactive encounter to the western feminist view which depicts the Arab women as

demeanor and lacking. This has been highlighted by Al-Mahadin and Yeğenoğlu “she [Arab/ Muslim woman] is the field of struggle par excellence for contested ideologies, be they intra-Arab or Arab and Western” (Al-Mahadin 2004; Meyda Yeğenoğlu 1998) (cited in Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 7).

Further, “Another problem facing feminist media research in the Arab world is the

⁷ Lacan, J. 1975. (1982) ‘The Seminar XXII of 21 January 1975’, trans. J. Rose, in *Feminine Sexuality*, eds J. Mitchell & J. Rose, W.W. Norton & Co., New York.

almost total absence of psychoanalytic theory in Arab media studies, which has, in my view, left a huge gap in research.” (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 10), Al-Mahadin also adds:

There is a pressing need to develop more indigenous psychoanalytic approaches to the forces that drive male–female interactions because without them we are simply set to import theories that bear little relevance to Arab realities. (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 10).

But still a feminist view of Arab women is not well established with clear scholarly fundamentals, Al-Mahadin states:

Developing feminist Arab media studies is a rather difficult task considering there is no systematic tradition for Arab feminist studies on which a critical media tradition could be based Unlike feminist studies in the West, Arab feminism is predominantly defined by individual researchers who largely are organized not by theoretical approach, nor by systematic waves of feminist thought similar to their Western counterparts. (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 8).

Arab women have faced many obstacles to push forward and claim their rights, Saliba adds: “The historical connection between feminism and nationalism in the Middle East and the legacy of cultural imperialism have more often discouraged the examination of "local institutions and cultural processes” (Saliba, 2000, p. 1088).

On the other hand there are some Arab feminist scholars that have adopted a pure western interpretation of women’s situation in the Arab culture, such scholars include Nawal Sa’dawi from Egypt, Ms. Sa’dawi has always been a source of controversy whenever she appeared on television expressing her views regarding women, she explains many problems facing Arab woman through theories such as repression, she analyzes the up-bringing of girls in the Arab world where she explains:

Whereas boys are allowed to go outside and play in the street and socialize with their friends, girls are being isolated at home with the excuse of protecting her from the outside world, a girl start fearing strangers, and

feels that she could be a prey at any time, so she secludes inside the house where safety is presumed to be, but she does not realize that this safety is the danger because it isolates her from society and cuts her roots from life day after day, and her experiences die while she is still alive [my translation] (Al-Sa'dawi, 1990, p. 42).

On the issue of men's fear of woman (fear of her excellence at work or achievements in general) which is a topic discussed in one of the analyzed articles, Nawal Al-Sa'dawi adds:

There are many examples of the extreme fear that man has from woman and from her elements of femininity, this fear is what caused him to expel her from temples and to monopolize from himself the gods and the afterlife as long as she possessed the living life and the ability to create life itself (by giving birth). And this ancient fear the man has is aware of it or he might not feel it or realize it but rather remains in his subconscious [...] scientists say this man's subconscious fear of women is what generated a his feelings of lack, and this feeling of lack is what caused men to distort the true nature of woman [my translation] (Al-Sa'dawi, 1990, p. 399).

The western women has gone through many social changes before becoming the kind of woman she is today, the media and businesses were ready to accommodate these changes and sometimes act as a catalyst to accelerate this change,

MacDonald, Wykes and Gundter explain:

Prior to department stores like Macy's opening in 1860 in the United States and Selfridges in 1909 in London, women had only really circulated out of the home to find a partner or 'venturing out of the home was also allowed in the course of that century for the dispensing of philanthropy to the poor or sick' (MacDonald, 1995: 74). With extraordinary speed, by the time of World War One in 1914 women had become the major shoppers in the UK and the United States. This was recognized by trade, advertisers and the media. (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 42).

Arab women also went through many circumstances that changed her situations, some were political other were economic.

It is important to highlight the western point of view in regard to women's changed role, MacDonald and Wykes and Gunter explain:

The world was seen as changed – of course women could have it all was the message – if they deserved it and worked hard enough. ‘Women could do whatever they pleased, provided they had sufficient will and enthusiasm’ (MacDonald, 1995: 90). If they didn’t have it all they only had themselves to blame and if they did have it all and couldn’t cope they also only had their feminist selves to blame. (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 46)

Further Wykes and Gunter assert “Legislative change and cultural sensibility certainly opened up apparent choices for women but without significantly matching these with changes in masculine roles and power.” (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 45). Which shows despite the progress in western women’s rights but still it is not complete.

In finding the effect the media and magazines in particular have made to the western woman, Wykes and Gunter explain:

She attempts to make herself in the image of womanhood presented by billboards, newspapers, magazines and television ... She is brought up to marry by catching man with her good looks. To do this she must look appealing, earthy, sensual, virginal, innocent, reliable, caring, mysterious coquettish and thin [...] In the background a ten billion dollar industry waits to remodel bodies to the latest fashion. (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 52).

It’s important to examine what has been written about the status of women by western scholars where:

Butcher et al., [...] compared images of women in the media with those of men. The chapter focuses on the way in which parts of women – lips, breasts, legs, hair – signify sexuality whilst simultaneously denying women a holistic identity and role. Such representations refer in fact not to women’s place in the world but to men’s view of women’s place in relation to their place in the world. (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 45)

It is of crucial significance to examine in this thesis paper not just women’s place in the world but also men’s view of women’s place in the world especially due the fact that the editor-in-chief of one of the analyzed magazines *Sayidaty* is a man. Many of the opinions in the analyzed articles are from men although the issue is about women.

Arab women have been portrayed by the western media in a different way than the Arab media, the western point of view entails “The traditional image of the Middle Eastern woman that has long dominated Western media is one of an oppressed and exoticized creature, controlled by men and religion” (Leila Ahmed 1999; Malek Alloula 1986; Rana Kabbani 1986; Myra Macdonald 2006; Edward Said 1979) (as cited in Eltantawy, 2013, p. 765), this thesis paper will try to unravel two Arab women magazines and what role they assign to them and what messages they try to convey to them and about them.

This opposite representation of Arab women has been also discussed by Dr. Salam Al-Mahadin in her article “Towards a poetics of diversity” where she depicted the two conflicting images of Arab women portrayed in cinema, by being covered in western movies and in as she described “skimpy clothes and dancing in sexually provocative ways” in the Arab T.V channels, she then asks a crucial question “How is it possible that both Western and Arab media can capture images of Arab women that bear very little resemblance to the everyday reality of most Arab women’s lives today?”. (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 7), perhaps the answer to this question can be due to the fact that each media platform has its own agenda and strings of power that play a role in shaping its content, and the studied magazine’s affiliation to each of its country has definitely influenced its content.

If we are to apply the concept of influence by media, this can be examined by some of the social norms such as masculinity, According to Wykes & Gunter:

Masculinity already empowered physically, culturally and economically, through the mass media, becomes discursively so, reproducing and legitimating its place in the world because ‘[m]oney and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalise dissent and allow the government and other dominant interests to get their message across (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 75).

To suggest western feminist point of view to explain Arab women’s situation would be of short coming since western feminism has lost its universal objectives

and started tackling matters concerned with specific issues regarding women in western society, Saliba clearly suggested this point of view by stating:

The emergence of "transnational feminism" in the 1990s has brought a turn in scholarship that reflects women's activities in these processes and has provoked debate about culturally specific practices versus "universal women's rights. (Saliba, 2000, p. 1088)

2.6 Feminism Through Islamic Female Scholars

In the twentieth century women entering the work place and educational institutions can be considered a huge change where these places were men only arenas', this opened many questions about women whether in private or public.

Many female scholars have contributed in explaining Islam's opinion about women and her role within culture, some scholars attempted to refute man's justification for power through religion which women has went through and still to this day by some religious scholars.

The different ways religious scholars interpret the Qur'an greatly affect the verdicts and fatwa's they issue especially regarding matters concerning women, Wadud gives an explanation of the interpretation of the Qur'an where she states:

No method of Qua'anic exegesis is fully objective. Each exegete makes some subjective choices. Some details of their interpretations reflect their subjective choices and not necessarily the intent of the text. Yet, often, no distinction is made between text and interpretation. I put the interpretations of woman in the Qur'an into three categories: 'traditional', reactive, and holistic (Wadud, 1999).

Wadud in her book 'Qur'an and Woman' tried to claim women rights through encountering the interpretations made by male Muslim scholars drawing her conclusions from the Qur'an itself. She further adds:

(traditional) tafasir [interpretations] is that they were exclusively written by males. This means that men and men's experiences were included and

women and women's experiences were either excluded or interpreted through the male vision, perspective, desire, or needs of woman. (Wadud, 1999).

Wadud explains another form of interpretation of the Qur'an which "consists primarily of modern scholars' reactions to severe handicaps for woman as an individual and as a member of society which have been attributed to the text." (Wadud, 1999), she describes what she called the 'reactivist' interpreters of the Qur'an as consisting as she explains:

Primarily of modern scholars' reactions to severe handicaps for woman as an individual and as a member of society which have been attributed to the text. In this category are many women and/ or persons opposed to the Qur'anic message (or more precisely, to Islam) altogether. They use the poor status of women in Muslim societies as justification for their 'reactions' (Wadud, 1999).

Although she found these reactionist tackled important issue and have true intentions to uplift women status but still she described them as:

Although they are often concerned with valid issues, the absence of a comprehensive analysis of the Qur'an sometimes causes them to vindicate the position of women on grounds entirely incongruous with the Qur'anic position on woman. (Wadud, 1999).

She further explained that the Qur'an is not a manual of directives which only command the individual reader to do certain actions. Where by citing concrete events it makes conceptual ideas tangible in which the female and male characters are important to demonstrate certain ideas about guidance. Her final conclusion was "I propose to make a 'reading' of the Qur'an from within the female experience and without stereotypes" (Wadud, 1999). As she [Wadud] was concerned with the interpretation of the Qur'an itself rather than its interpretation. Pertaining to the same discussion it's widely perceived that women have been problematized in the Arab world, although through various degrees from one Arab country to another, Arebi states "One of the main characteristics of the contemporary political situation is that women have been placed at the center of

this power struggle, especially between the ‘ulama and the state.” (Arebi, 1994, p. 13). She also gives an explanation on the issue where she encounters Sheikh ‘Ben Baz’ (Saudi Arabia’s mufti till 1999) claim of superiority of men over women where she sees that the Sheikh has transformed women and men from their social element to their biological element to justify the claim of supremacy of men over women which Arebi sees it is not what the Qur’an has intended, she also adds:

In this discourse ‘the woman’ is transformed in many religious interpretations into a physical being, who must be constantly be reminded of her ‘lack,’ ...of being an owra, a source of shame who has to be concealed. The power and effectiveness of this “political anatomy,” to borrow Foucault terminology, is manifested in invoking, as well as evoking, men constant apprehension about honor seen to be invested in their women folk. The ultimate effect of this discourse on women was in mobilizing the efforts of both individuals and institutions to protect this honor. By controlling women, the man is led to believe not only that he protects his own honor but is also made to believe that in so doing he is also accomplishing the mission of protecting the honor of the Islamic civilization against the dangers of Western civilization. (Arebi, 1994, p. 18).

Some of the norms existing today in the Arab culture can have their roots from the Qur’an such as not calling women with their first names but rather ‘the mother of (naming her first son’s name) which is known to be a sign of stature in the Arab culture, given this, Wadud talks about female character:

All references to female characters in the Qur’an use an important cultural idiosyncrasy which demonstrates respect for women. Except for Mary, the mother of Jesus, they are never called by name, Most are wives and the Qur’an refers to them by means of a possessive construction (the idafah) containing one of the Arabic words for wife: imra’ah (woman), nisa (women), or zawj (spouse, or mate) pl. azwaj, and the name of a particular male; for example, the imra’ah of Imran, or the zawj of Adam. (Wadud, 1999).

Wadud further adds:

The roles of the women who have been referred to in the Qur’an fall into one of three categories: 1. A role which represents the social, cultural, and historical context in which that individual women lived-without

compliment or critique from the text. 2. A role which fulfills a universally accepted (i.e. nurturing or caretaking) female function. 3. A role which fulfills a non-gender specific function, i.e. the role represents human endeavours on the earth and is cited in the Qur'an to demonstrate this specific function and not the gender of the performer who happens to be a woman (Wadud, 1999).

She also highlights the idea that in some stories of women in the Qur'an are non-gender specific like the story of the wife of Noah and wife of Lot who were examples of disbelievers and there is the wife of Pharaoh who was an example of a believer.

Wadud proposes portraying women as an individual versus women as a member of society, she states:

For the most part, the Qur'anic consideration of woman on earth centers on her relationship to the group, i.e. as a member of a social system [...] However, it is also important to understand how the Qur'an focuses on woman as an individual because the Qur'an treats the individual, whether male or female, in exactly the same manner: that is, whatever the Qur'an says about the relationship between Allah and the individual is not in gender terms (Wadud, 1999).

This point of view can challenge one of the studied article's opinion where wives who gave birth to baby girls were disdained.

Giving examples defending the Qur'an's equality in its treatment of male and female and discouraging any male scholars who undermine woman status "With reference to the individual, the Qur'an most often uses the term nafs⁸." (Wadud, 1999) which does not show gender. She further adds:

When various social systems determine differences between men and women, they conclude these differences as indications of different values as well. There is no indication that the Qur'an intends for us to understand that there is a primordial distinction between males and females with regard to spiritual potential (Wadud, 1999).

⁸ Nafs means soul whether male or female

Another example Wadud discussed was ‘Balqis’ the Queen of Sheba she states:

Despite the fact that she rules over a nation, most Muslims hold leadership as improper for a woman. The Qur’an uses no terms that imply that the position of ruler is inappropriate for a woman. On the contrary, the Qur’anic story of Balqis celebrates both her political and religious practices. (Wadud, 1999).

In contending to some prominent Muslim scholars and their bias against women, Wadud says:

Al-Zamakhshari, on the other hand, says that men are ‘preferred’ by Allah over women in terms of ‘intelligence, physical constitution, determination and physical strength’, although he cites no place in the text [Qur’an] which states this. (Wadud, 1999).

Her critic continues:

It is interesting to note that even those Muslim authors who issue these interpretations accept that the Qur’an aims to establish social justice. However, it is obvious that their interpretation of social justice does not extend fully to women. (Wadud, 1999).

She further defends her assumption that the Qur’an is non-discriminatory against women by highlighting the Qur’anic verse ‘the most noble of you from Allah’s perspective is who-ever (he or she) has the most *taqwa*.’ Where *taqwa* means piety where she adds “Allah does not distinguish on the basis of wealth, nationality, sex, or historical context, but on the basis of *taqwa*.” (Wadud, 1999). This notion can also be included as how to encounter male patriarchy which some woman scholars depicted through the analyzed articles in this thesis. Wadud further asserts:

Femininity and masculinity are not created characteristics imprinted into the very primordial nature of female and male persons, neither are they concepts the Qur’an discusses or alludes to. They are defined characteristics applied to female and male persons respectively on the basis of culturally determined factors of how each gender should function. They have figured very strongly in interpretation of the Qur’an without explicit Qur’anic substantiation of their implications. (Wadud, 1999).

In explaining the Qur’anic verse “*men are qawwamuna ‘ala women*”, Wadud explains:

As for meaning, Pickthall translate this as 'in charge of'. Al-Zamakhshari says it means that 'men are in charge of the affairs of women' [...]Azizah al-Hibri objects to any translation which implies that men are protectors or maintainers because "The basic notion here is one of moral guidance and caring also because:[...]only under extreme conditions (for example, insanity) does the Muslim woman lose her right to self-determination....Yet men have used this passage to exercise absolute authority over women. (Wadud, 1999).

In her book "The Veil and the Male Elite" Fatima Mernissi encountered many hadiths⁹ being attributed to the prophet Muhammad that condemns women, such hadiths include (those who entrust their affairs to women will never know prosperity), according to Mernissi, "This Hadith is the sledgehammer argument used by those who want to exclude women from politics" (Mernissi, 1987, p. 4) this hadith is highly regarded as being authentic since its being quoted in al-Bukhari's sahih (one of the most prestigious collection of traditions which conveys what Muhammad said), however, Merssini in her book was able to refute the correctness of this hadith as being said by Muhammad, as she explained that it has been conveyed by someone named 'Abu Bakra' whom he is supposed to have heard Mohammad say it, in which Abu Bakra's integrity was questioned since he was condemned many years after the death of Muhammad with false testimony which can be considered according to many Muslim scholars a reason to dismiss him as a reliable source. What needs to be highlighted that Mernissi's refutation of many hadiths which are repeated by religious scholars over the centuries is synthesized from within the religious text and research itself, through the same tactics and attribution methodology set by highly regarded religious scholars as well. This can explain the various opinions presented by religious scholars on the same topic in the analyzed articles in this thesis where it is a matter of how they interpret the Qura'anic and Hadith's text.

⁹ Hadiths are the collections of the records quoting what the prophet Muhammad said verbally or by action on any matter

Mernissi further explains the influence of religion: “since all power, from the seventh century on, was only legitimated by religion, political forces and economic interests pushed for the fabrication of false traditions.” (Mernissi, 1987, p. 9). What Mernissi tried to highlight is that “one can call a Hadith all the “pertinent” information (with regard to what one wishes to justify) attributed to the Prophet” (Mernissi, 1987, p. 34). She further asserts the problem present today can be attributed to many false Hadiths that is attributed to the prophet in an attempt to justify injustices or exertion of power, and in this case, the most who fill victims from it are women, Mernissi stresses her point “If at the time of al-Bukhari – that is, less than two centuries after the death of the Prophet – there were already 596,725 false Hadith in circulation, it is easy to imagine how many there are today” (Mernissi, 1987, p. 45).

Some religious scholars such as Malik Ibn Anas regards that it was not enough to have lived at the time of the Prophet in order to become a source of Hadith (just as in the case of Abu Bakra), he saw that having a certain background to qualify someone to speak and having intellectual capacity was a necessity as well.

During the more recent times Mernissi’s view about the Arab world is:

The problem for the Muslim states, after their quasi-disappearance during the colonial period, was that they found themselves almost feminized – veiled, obliterated, nonexistent. After independence, the state had to dramatize its rebirth. (Mernissi, 1987, p. 21).

In her book Fatima Mernissi concludes that:

When I finished writing this book I had come to understand one thing: if women’s rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because of the Koran nor the Prophet, nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite (Mernissi, 1987, p. ix).

This matches the purpose of this thesis paper to examine through the studied magazines whether they serve women or men’s advancement.

One of the important topics and controversial one in Arab society is 'Polygamy', this issue has gone through many interpretations, Stowasser writes on the topic:

That the topic of polygamy engenders a defensive reaction in modern conservative Muslims is partially due to Western criticism of that institution. While the conservative defense of polygamy is mainly directed at the West, its real target are those modern Muslims who, in accommodation to Western norms, fail to support polygamy as an intricate part of the moral Islamic social order. (Stowasser, 1994)

The discussion of polygamy in the Arab world has gone through many controversies between supporters and rejecters among Islamic scholars, such discussion dates back to the nineteenth century where Stowasser pointed to a prominent Egyptian writer's view 'Mummad Abduh', she writes about him:

Modernist reformists first decried the post-Muhammadan application of the institution as a social problem in modern Muslim societies. The Egyptian theologian Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) wrote in impassioned language about male tyranny and lasciviousness, female exploitation and oppression, the corruption of the new generation, all features of the nineteenth century reality of polygamy gone wrong." Where Abduh called for the abolition of polygamy in Islam. (Stowasser, 1994).

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

During my search for a publication to select for this master thesis and since the general direction was established to assess an Arabic women's publication to accommodate my general interest to the topic, consideration was given to select a publication that can represent Arab women from all the Arab countries, *Sayidaty* and *Laha* magazines can achieve this objective in which their articles discuss issues from various Arab countries where the public figures, celebrities and personalities come from all over the Arab world. It's worth mentioning that other media and marketing professionals when designing their communication messages for the Arab world have found that they can achieve their objectives easily due to the cultural similarities throughout the Arab world where minimal changes are required to accommodate to specific norms in a certain Arab country, this was highlighted by Al-Olayan and Karande:

Many scholars believe that it is difficult to standardize advertising and promotion in different markets (Geier 1986; Hornik 1980; Mueller 1992). An important reason is that cultural differences such as differences in language, traditions, beliefs and music dominate communications. (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000, p. 71)

If we are to apply the same logic we will find the Arab world speaks the same language, have similar traditions, worship the same God (the majority of the Arab world are Muslims), therefore a publications such as *Sayidaty* and *Laha* magazines can communicate and appeal to the Arab world more easily with little variations and adaptations in their articles to match preferences and issues that are specific to each Arab country.

This thesis will analyze two magazines: (1) *Sayidaty* which is a weekly Arabic language magazine, it was launched in March 1987 in Riyadh, this weekly targets primarily families with a focus on housewives, it discusses Arabic social and family affairs (“Magazines”, www.srpc.com/en/magazines), its circulation is about (143,351) (“Monthly Bulletin”, 2007), the magazine content sections include; a Cover Story, Features, Beauty & Fashion, Anisaty¹⁰, Celebrities, Health & Fitness, Life Style, Loved Ones, Education and Occasions, four sections from the content were not present regularly in the published issues which are Anisaty, Loved Ones, Education and Occasions. The magazine is published in Dubai and Beirut and distributed throughout the Middle-East, North Africa, Europe and America. (House, 2009). I will analyze **(44) articles from (17) issues** in *Sayidaty* magazine under the “Features” section for the period between (2003 – 2015), this time frame of 12 years will allow building a concrete understanding of the magazine’s direction and what it is trying to achieve through its topics, but also due to the limitation in finding magazines that dates back to the nineties. The choice to analyze the ‘Features’ section in the magazine is because this section includes articles that discusses woman’s social issues.

(2) *Laha* is an Arabic weekly magazine launched in 2002, it focuses on the modern Arab woman (About Laha, 2015), its content include: Investigations, Entertainment, Beauty and Fashion, Health & Child. It has a weekly circulation of (135, 650) in the Arab world, its readership is (45.3%) for ages between (15 - 24) and (29.1%) for ages between (25 - 35) (Association, 2007). I will analyze **(24) articles from (14) issues** from *Laha* magazine under the “Investigation” section for the period between (2003 – 2015) where this time frame reflects the magazine’s content and direction comprehensively since it started publishing in 2002. The

¹⁰ Anisaty is an Arabic word that means ‘Miss’ or ‘Young Lady’

choice to analyze the 'Investigation' section is because this section discusses women social issues and it coincides with the 'Feature' section that is being analyzed in *Sayidaty* magazine, it is important to highlight that the smaller number of studied articles in *Laha* will not affect the outcome of this thesis research in which the aim of this thesis is not to perform a comparative study between the two magazines, the number of the studied articles from both magazines will be viewed jointly and complement each other in order to build final conclusions in this thesis.

Besides researching the articles analyzing the images accompanying the articles will be conducted, not all images included with the articles are added or analyzed the reason for this is because they don't contribute in adding further understanding to the discussion due to their simplicity or non-explanatory nature. The basis for selecting the images included in this thesis is because they either include many illustrative elements or photos of interviewed people in the article which can be considered rich in information.

I will carry a Qualitative research method using soft data from the articles obtained from the selected magazines, which will include impressions, words, sentences and photos which will require different research strategies and data collection techniques and conveying different assumptions about social life. (Neuman, 2006, p. 151), my methodology will also include a *Nonlinear Research Path* which is research that proceeds in a cyclical, iterative or back and forth pattern.

This research method better serves the purpose of this thesis topic since the analyzed articles discusses social problems and ideas that can be explained through opinions based on ideological and social theories where applying a qualitative method can assist to explain these issues.

LIMITATIONS

Since the research had to rely on old issues of magazines from the past 12 years, it was difficult to collect or find published issues in hard copy for each year for the period between (2003 – 2015) in which a larger sample might have given more insight.

CHAPTER 4

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis Results of ‘Sayidaty’ Magazine

After analyzing (44) articles under the ‘Features’ section in *Sayidaty* magazine, it was found that the topics of Marriage, Women advice, Polygamy and Harassment, respectively, were the most discussed issues in the magazine.

The following will explain in detail each main topic and the underlying articles giving assessment and analysis:

Note: Sayidaty Magazine Articles Summary with main discussed topics is available in Appendix A, Table (1).

1. Marriage

A total of (10) articles discussed ‘Marriage’ among the studied magazine sample, these articles included stories of women experiences from various Arab countries such as Beirut, Saudi Arabia, Cairo, Jordan and Yemen. Among the analyzed articles, the magazine showed a critic towards inexperienced wives in household chores under article title “Today’s Brides Don’t Know How to Fry an Egg” (issue no. 1758, date 15 November 2014) where according to the article’s writer the high quality of life style and women’s attention towards career and education were to blame in which the role of woman as a wife was greatly emphasized, the magazine also highlighted the importance of marriage through articles that showed studies outlining the benefits of marriage to physical and mental health, other articles also were concerned with specific issues that interests one Arab country more than

other, such as social media match makers, which some women in Saudi Arabia, or the Arab Gulf in general, take the role of a match maker as a profession where they are paid for their services, this clearly reflects the nature of these countries where the separation between the sexes is very strict which makes it hard for young people to meet, thus relying on the services of a match maker becomes needed, however still the article was warning young women from imposters on social media who might be only seeking money, apparently the magazine was not concerned to analyze the reasons for such norm but rather attempted to participate in make it safer. The magazine also advocated the role of women as a partner and a friend “There is a Woman in Your House Not a Baby Making Machine and a Servant” (in issue no. 1183, date: 14 November 2003) as one article title suggested. On the other hand, the magazine discussed the issue of divorce although the article held the title “Change in status; Threatening to seek Divorce is a Nightmare that Haunts Couples” (issue no. 1805, date: 10 October 2015) where the title that suggests ‘couples’ never the less the text in the article highlights disadvantages of divorce to women and started with real life stories told by men and how they dealt with their wives threat to get a divorce after an argument which the two stories ended by the women being in a disadvantaged position, the article also denounced the act of seeking divorce by women where some expert opinion were critical against her especially from men experts, finally its worth highlighting this article was from Saudi Arabia. It was noticeable that women were not given a voice in the article by interviewing her for her opinion on the topic. It was clear the magazine didn’t challenge any legal or cultural views to advance women’s status on the issue of divorce such as children’s custody and alimony.

The main image in Figure (1) shows the man’s upper hand in the situation and more advantageous status whereas the woman is more in a defensive mode. Both wearing the Arab Gulf traditional clothes which reflect that the article pertains to Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf in general, but still this discussed topic can be

applied to other Arab countries as well. The experts' photos are also present with their faces only shown, the women wearing the traditional Abaya for both men and women.



Figure 1: Change in status-Threatening to Seek Divorce is a Nightmare That Haunts Couples (issue no. 1805, date: 10 Oct 2015)

Under the category of ‘Marriage’ *Sayidaty* magazine had an article about brides dowries under the title “This is How the Saudi’s received the News of Assigning a Fixed Amount on Dowries, Fifty Thousand Riyal for a Virgin and a Thirty Thousand Riyal for a Previously Divorced Woman”, this article is specifically attributed to the Saudi Arabian culture (although brides all over the Arab world receive dowries upon their engagement but the article interviewed and discussed the amount paid within the Saudi society). The article included opinions of ordinary people; 4 men and 3 women, the men were with the decision of assigning a fixed price for dowries, which they rationed it will increase young men’s

prospects for getting married. However the women were against the decision stating that people come from different financial backgrounds and may be able to pay more, one female interviewee expressed that “a girl’s value is in her dowry”. No expert opinion was included. I find the magazine went in line with the governmental decision to assign a fixed amount on bride’s dowry where no expert opinion was included for further discussion. The issue was discussed through interviewing ordinary people, we didn’t see the article’s writer opinion which might show the magazine’s direction taking the position of passiveness when it comes to government decision but still challenging them indirectly through the audience’s opinion. Further, the use of the term ‘spinster’ in the article is a considerable indicator of the difference between Arab and western culture where the term ‘Spinster’ is abandoned in western magazines and in contrary single women life is celebrated in western magazines. In overall, if contrasted with the western culture we can see the difference where there are not dowries for brides and assigning a higher amount for the virgin bride might come as a discrimination and signaling inequality between sexes from the western point of view, in my opinion even though the context is within the Arab culture, assigning a varied amount of dowries considered to be discriminating for women, in which if we to apply the arguments stated in the Literature Review of this thesis under what the Muslim religious scholars had to say about the fatwa’s and interpretation of religious text in order to regulate every day matters, we will find reaching a decision on this issue is by (Ijma’) which is consensus by opinion or through (qiuas) which is reasoning by analogy where it is not on basis from the Qur’an and Sunna where the issue of dowries was not explicitly assigned in Qur’an nor Sunna, allowing religious scholars to provide their own interpretations and opinions on the issue.

The Image in Figure (2) shows a bride in her bridal gown giving her back to the audience, and giving the image a grey shade, this can be explained as an attempt to hide as much as possible from the model's body due to the revealing nature of the dress given the restriction set on images of women in Arab magazines. But also due to the topic of the article, *Sayidaty* magazine might be reflecting its disagreement on the issue implicitly where it didn't include a happy bride facing the reader.



Figure 2: This is How the Saudi's received the News of Assigning a Fixed Amount on Dowries, 5K Riyal for a Virgin and 3K Riyal for a Divorced (issue 1801, date: 12 September 2015)

Both studied magazines emphasize on marriage as a repetitive topic in their articles this reflects my earlier point of view in literature Review under (Western Feminism vs Arab Feminism) where I highlighted “It has been argued that the

West is phallogocentric because of the woman's perceived lack, but in the Arab world she is territory that constructs that symptom called 'man'" (Jacques Lacan [1975] 1982).

In which marriage becomes man's way of constructing his existence where in a society that patriarchy rules it becomes important for men to maintain the institution of marriage and adapt it to the way he desires.

In another article with the title "Warning to Girls out there: Twitter Match Makers are Scammers, Fraud, Crimes and Blackmail" (issue no. 1760, date: 29 Nov 2014), the article discusses the issue of women who has taken match making as a profession in Saudi Arabia, they request prices ranging from two to five thousand Riyals for their services, but also scams happens where sometimes the Twitter account made by these match makers are nothing but men who want to get women's photos and sometimes blackmail them for it. The need to having to pay for the services of a matchmaker could be an indication of the strictness on couples to meet in some Arab countries, where Arebi has addressed the issue by highlighting how some Arab countries put restriction on the mobility of women and especially in Saudi Arabia (this articles' source was Saudi Arabia), she states:

In the early 1980s measures were taken prohibiting women from traveling abroad without a chaperon for study, business, or tourism, and banning them from conducting their own businesses without a male representative who was a family member. This measure was to end over a fifteen-centuries-old traditional right for the Arab woman to be an independent entrepreneur. (Arebi, 1994, p. 17).

Sayidaty Magazine also discussed other articles in-line to the topic of inequality towards women but still pertaining to marriage, example on such article was "Wives who gave Birth to Baby Girls have to Pay the Price" (issue no. 1238, date: 27 November 2004), the article had stories of women from Egypt, Saudi Arabia

and Lebanon. Starting with a story of an Egyptian man who killed his five daughters as he was frustrated for having only daughters. A medical view was included explaining scientifically that it's because of the male chromosome attribution to a fetus a child is either born a boy or a girl so scientifically a male is the one responsible for having a boy or girl child. The article continued with

experiences of women and the reactions they received when they had their baby girls. Some were positive others were not. On the issue of gender, I highlighted this issue in my Literature Review, under section "Feminism through Female Islamic Scholars" where gender and equality has been widely discussed among religious scholars and female Muslim scholars who wanted to defuse and undermine claims that assign superiority to men and are legitimized through the religious text.

Wadud in this regard she states:

It is also important to understand how the Qur'an focuses on woman as an individual because the Qur'an treats the individual, whether male or female, in exactly the same manner: that is, whatever the Qur'an says about the relationship between Allah and the individual is not in gender terms (Wadud, 1999).

She further adds:

Al-Zamakhshari, on the other hand, says that men are 'preferred' by Allah over women in terms of 'intelligence, physical constitution, determination and physical strength', although he cites no place in the text [Qur'an] which states this. (Wadud, 1999).

Images in Figure (3) at the first page of the article contains generic photos of babies, however showing the diversity of the facial appearances is a characteristic existing in in the Arab world, the next page of the article contains a picture of the 'killer' father to further vilify him and project him as a murderer.



Figure 3: Wives who gave Birth to Baby Girls have to Pay the Price (issue no. 1238, date: 27 Nov 2004)

2. Advising Women

The second most discussed topic in the magazine was providing advice to women on various issues under the titles; “Your Feelings are the Key to Your Family’s Happiness”, “What a Wife Should Do When Her Husband Loses His Vigor” [Figure (4)], “Remove Your Husband’s Distress with 10 Steps” [Figure (5)], “10 Facts about Feeling Lonely for Women and Men”, “To Ladies Before 30: 10 Goals You Should Achieve”, four of the seven analyzed articles are related to marriage in which they discuss how a woman could be a good wife to her husband, these articles are a continuation to the topic of marriage, where first, emphasize the institution of marriage then provide tips on how to maintain it. In another article, although the title suggests being more biased toward woman’s needs which it states “Is He with You As a Husband and a Partner or Just for the Sex” [Figure (6)], however the article is based on a Brazilian study and included tips on what

makes a good wife, tips like (don't be selfish, don't be jealous, love kids, etc), it can be noticed the instructing tone in formulating these tips which includes a lot of (Don't). In continuation in assessing this category "Advising Women"; topics included talking about women's wellbeing and psychology such as goals women should do before thirty and facts about being lonely.

Due to the generic nature of some of the images accompanying the articles, I selected three images from three articles which were of significance to discuss, in Figure (4) we can see a husband and wife cuddling showing an intimate gesture towards each other, it is also important to highlight that they do not look Arab and are wearing winter clothes although the magazine issue indicates it was printed in the month of May which is a summer month which is an indication of following the traditional Arab culture of not highlighting intimacy and covering as much as possible. In Figure (5) the man is emphasized more than the women since the article is about his wellbeing (article title is 'Remove Your Husband's Distress with 10 Steps'), however, it is noticeable the magazine's approach changes with the progress of years (where this issue dates to 2012), where it reduced the strains on images, in which the man is shown wearing an under shirt and showing his shoulders, however, this reduction in strains did not affect the women's image in which she is still protected from un-covering.

Figure (6) the image of the couple reflect Middle Eastern descent which can be attributed due to the magazine's progress through the years showing greater maturity and professionalism when dealing with images that pertains more to the Arab culture, where the year of publishing this issue is 2013. The image reflects intimacy between the couple which is a noticeable shift but still in comparison to western magazines it still implies applying rules of restrictions on images.



Figure 4: What a Wife Should Do when Her Husband loses His Vigor (issue 1316, date: 27 May 2006)

Figure 5: Remove Your Husband's Depression in 10 Tips (issue 1638 date: 28 Jul 2012)

Figure 6: Is He With You As A Husband and a Partner (issue. 1669, date: 2 Mar 2013)

3. Polygamy

The third most discussed topic was 'Polygamy', in a total of (6) articles, this topic was discussed cautiously by the magazine, all the articles didn't bluntly show its adversity toward the issue this can be explained due to the ownership of *Sayidaty* magazine to a Saudi organization in which they do not challenge norms from within the Saudi culture. Rather the magazine had an approach of highlighting how troublesome polygamous marriage can be, in my Literature Review I have highlighted the issue, where Stowasser states:

While the conservative defense of polygamy is mainly directed at the West, its real target are those modern Muslims who, in accommodation to Western norms, fail to support polygamy as an intricate part of the moral Islamic social order. (Stowasser, 1994).

Sayidaty magazine might be projecting implicit adversity towards polygamy but still it does not attack the practice bluntly.

Also throughout the Literature Review in this thesis I included Stowasser comments about the prominent Egyptian scholar ‘Mummad Abduh’:

Modernist reformism first decried the post-Muhammadan application of the institution as a social problem in modern Muslim societies. The Egyptian theologian Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) wrote in impassioned language about male tyranny and lasciviousness, female exploitation and oppression, the corruption of the new generation, all features of the nineteenth century reality of polygamy gone wrong. Where Abduh called for the abolition of polygamy in Islam. (Stowasser, 1994).

This shows the contradicting views on polygamy within the Arab Muslim society. Analyzed articles on polygamy had titles such as “Wives in Polygamous Marriage, Endless Troubles, Poison, Betrayal and Theft” (issue no. 1669, date: 2 March 2013), “Iftar¹¹ of a Polygamous Man, is full of Argument and Preference of the Second Wife” or “Know if Your Husband has a ‘Second Wife’ Symptoms” (issue no. 1316, date: 27 May 2006). Or showing how unfair and vilifying men for choosing to marry a second wife such article had the title “I Refused Giving Birth to the 7th Child, so He Marries his Nurse and Brought Her Home” (issue no. 1183, Date: 14 November 2003). However, only one article among the analyzed sample had a supported polygamy by justifying it, it had the title “In Yemen, Educated Women Don’t Mind Being Second or Even Third Wives”, in this article, expert opinion highlighted that the reason for accepting such marriage is out of fear of not getting married, as for the interviewed young women the reason for accepting being part of a polygamous marriage I can conclude from their answers that they view it as a rational decision, they had no fantasies about marriage where some of them set their conditions and requests from the groom such as having a separate house away from the first wife and having all her financial needs met, this article reflects the specific characteristics of the Yemeni society where in other Arab

¹¹ Iftar is an Islamic practice of fasting especially during the month of Ramadan

countries newlyweds separate house and the brides financial support are a given as requirements from the groom not as requested additional merits.

Image analysis of Figure (7) shows that the characters in the image do not reflect a certain Arab country's culture going in-line with the article's intention of highlighting stories from various countries; Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Palestine, showing the magazine's attempt to appeal to readers from all over the Arab world. But still the facial and physical gestures of the woman in the image hold a negative annotation of the relation between the wives in a polygamous marriage which confirms my assumption that the magazine is not supporting this practice.



Figure 7: Wives in Polygamous Marriage, Endless Troubles, Poison, Betrayal and Theft (issue no. 1669, date: 2 March 2013)

By analyzing image in Figure (8) it does not reflect an Arab culture but rather a western one, this can be attributed due to the restriction on the production of images or deficiency on the magazine's behalf in obtaining high quality and relevant images or performing specialized photo shoots instead of relying on purchased images from online images databases. However, the image shows a troubled woman with her child and the husband's gesture suggests un-satisfaction, which also reflects the negative side of polygamy.



Figure 8: Know if Your Husband has a Second Wife Symptoms (issue no. 1316, date: 27 May 2006)

One article among the analyzed sample showed positivity and acceptance for polygamy under the title “In Yemen, Educated Women Don’t Mind Being the Second or Even the Third Wives” (issue no. 1316, date: 27 May 2006), Expert opinion for young women’s acceptance for this situation is out of fear from not

ever getting married, the young women's reasoning for accepting being a second wife is due to viewing the decision of marriage a rational one, no fantasies about marriage, some have set their conditions such as having a separate house (away from the first wife) and having all her financial needs met.

4. Harassment

The fourth most discussed issue in the magazine was "Harassment", this was part of a campaign that *Sayidaty* magazine has undertaken in several published issues, the articles on this topic varied between giving advice on how to confront this problem, emphasizing the role of education in combatting it, but also discussing how harassment victims resort to silence out fear from society.

Image Analysis of Figure (9) reveals the interviewee's direct eye contact with the audience, the second image is for the interviewee at a European Convention for Early Childhood Researchers which highlights her position as a researcher. In which a clear emphasis is given to reflect her seriousness and professionalism.



Figure 9: Dr. Amal Banona-Confronting Harassment Starts from Education (issue no. 1803, date: 26 Sept 2015)

In Article titled “Civil Rights Activist and International Legal Expert Mrs. Rehab Al-Qadoumi (says) Harassment Victims Resort to Silence out of Fear from Society” (issue no. 1805, date: 10 October 2015), the interviewee highlighted:

Most harassment victims resort to silence instead of reporting the incident to the police out of fear from the societal opinion about them, or a scandal that may hurt their reputation, this silence has led to an increase in harassments in this *Eastern Unjust Society* that does not understand that those are victims who need help to regain their rights from the perpetrator. [my translation].

It is noticeable that the critical view of the Jordanian expert has been included in the article where she describes society as an ‘*Eastern Unjust Society*’. She was very critical towards the present societal norms towards women and greatly emphasized on more stringent penalties should be set on harassers. It was also notable mentioning the role of religion and faith in forming the ordinary Arab person’s character, where its lack can cause delinquency (according to the expert)

where it was also notable the interviewee didn't specifically mention the word 'Islam' explicitly although it can be implicitly understood since the majority of the Arab countries are Muslims.

Figure (10) shows the interviewee body is fully included in the taken photo, since she does not wear the headscarf it can be assumed the magazine justified showing a full image of her is legitimate or acceptable since she chose to be uncovered by *hijab*.



Figure 10: Civil Rights Activist and International Legal Expert Mrs. Rehab AlQadumi–Harassment Victims Resort to Silence out of Fear from Society (issue no. 1805, date: 10 Oct 2015).

5. Women Achievers

Three articles of the analyzed samples were about women as achievers, one article titled “Arab Women of 2006” (issue no. 1348, date: 12 Jan 2007) showcased 41 Arab women, the list included women with the following professions, which their order was according to how many woman from each profession is being interviewed in the article, although not based on scientific theory however it still indicates the attributes of importance the magazine hold to women in society:

- Wife of King of Emir
- Athletes
- Writer/ Poet
- Media or movie maker
- Politician
- Humanitarian
- Business woman or Banker
- Physician
- First woman to do something in certain domain
- Scientist

It is noticeable how the wives of the head of states were given precedence as they were the most interviewed highlighting the magazine’s attempt to assign them the most prominent figures in society, followed by athletes, writers, etc, whereas women scientists were least mentioned.

The other two articles under the ‘Women Achiever’ category were interviews with women; one is a poet with article title “A Young Poet: Lurka Speiti (says): Every Day I Write a Poem That Represents Me” (issue no. 1805, date: 10 Oct 2015), the article was from Lebanon, the other is with a novelist titled “Novelist

‘Fayzah Gan’ (says): I Am So Proud Of My Success And I Refuse To Be Considered A Sociological Case” (issue no. 1348, date: 12 Jan 2007) who is a French poet from an Algerian descent. Introducing two women whose professions pertain to written word coincides with the importance of writing in the Arab world where Arebi writes (which I highlighted in Literature Review) “The history of the Arabian peninsula reflects a unique interconnection between the poetic and the political in which the symbolic organization of society is based on coordinating cultural affairs in words” (Arebi, 1994, p. 9).

Figure (11) shows images of women in a close shot with their faces only showing. Figure (12) shows the Lebanese poet which she can be seen in non-traditional Arab clothing reflecting the liberal attitude in Lebanon. Figure (12) shows the image of the French poet also away from the traditional Arab women image without a head cover, the images of these women under this category ‘Women Achievers’ can be interpreted as the magazine’s desire to introduce varied examples of women to further resonate with the magazine’s wide readership from all over the Arab world.



Figure 11 : Arab Women Of 2006 (issue no. 1348, date: 12 Jan 2007)



Figure 12: A Young Poet: Lurka Speiti (says): Every Day I Write a Poem (issue 1805, date: 10 Oct 2015)



Figure 13: Novelist 'Fayzah Gan' (issue no. 1348, date: 12 Jan 2007)

6. Health

The topic of health was also discussed in three articles among the analyzed sample, all three were related to marriage, the titles as follow “Because of Marital Stress, 90% of Women Gain Weight after Marriage” (issue no. 1387, date: 6 Oct 2007), the second article is titled “Medical Achievement in Saudi Arabia and New Hope for Related Married Couples and Hereditarily Diseases” (issue no. 1431, date: 9 Aug 2008), the third article talks about the benefits of marriage to health and titled “Marriage Enhances Physical Immunity and Heart Muscles” (issue. 1431, date: 9 Aug 2008). This is in-line with the magazine’s emphasis on marriage in the life of Arab woman.

Images in Figure (14) show both men and women from the medical team that was interviewed in the article present in a group photo which reflects leniency on the

restrictions of uni-sex socializing in the Arab world. Figure (15) shows a modern couple with physical touch also apparent reflecting the magazine's direction to lessen restrictions on images of man and women together especially when the image does not include photos of interviewees from society, rather as is the case in this article's photo, it's generic with the purpose to communicate the article's message of positive consequences of marriage.



Figure 14: Medical Achievement in Arabia and New Hope for Related Married Couples and Hereditarily Diseases (issue no. 1431, date: 9 Aug 2008)



Figure 15: Marriage Enhances Physical Immunity and Heart (issue. 1431, date: 9 Aug 2008)

7. Single Women

Single woman topic was discussed in two articles in the analyzed sample, both articles pertain to Saudi Arabia, the first article under the title “The Most

Provocative Question to a Single Lady: Why Are not You Married Yet?” (issue no. 1758, date: 15 Nov 2014), the interviewed women’s answers varied some said “it is God’s wish” in clear reflection of Arab culture’s affinity to religion, others were more aggressive saying “it is none of any ones business”, while one opinion criticized women because they romanticize marriage. The second article with the title “Ladies of 2015: This is Why the Charming Prince is no Longer Desired” (issue no. 1803, date: 26 Sep 2015), where the article is entirely expressed through the opinion of the interviewees, the overall opinion in the article highlights that

marriage is a must in a women’s life and not desiring is a problem, one expert opinion was critical toward women for being single, the article emphasized the role of woman as a wife and a mother and reasoned the following for being single; fear of failure, burden of obligation, psychological problems, desire to study, other failed relationships and need for freedom. It is important to highlight the lack of interest to further discuss issues of single women, but even the perspective in which it is discussed through highlights the issue of un-married woman as a ‘lack’ for not having a husband which confirms the magazine’s attempt to glorify marriage as the only role a woman can have.

When analyzing the images, Figure (16) shows image of women in various looks, one is covered and the other two are not, which reflects the magazine’s diversification in its representation of women across the Arab world which is coherent with its wide readership across the Arab world. Figure (17) reflects a symbolic interpretation of the article’s subject it is less significant in terms associating it with any theories.



Figure 16: The Most Provocative Question to a Single Lady: Why Are not You Married Yet?” (issue no. 1758, date: 15 Nov 2014)



Figure 17: Ladies of 2015: This is Why Charming Prince is no Longer Desired” (issue no. 1803, date: 26 Sep 2015)

8. Woman in Business

This category included interviews with women entrepreneur explaining how they started their businesses, an article with the title “A Success Story for both Emarati and Saudi Business Women” (issue no. 1243, date: 7 Jan 2005) the article talks about the success of both Emarati and Saudi business women and how they were able to break their cultural and traditional barriers, when asked about the reason behind her success one women attributed it due to having a man supporting her and there was a consensus in the article among the interviewees that the increase of women venturing into business is due to governmental support.

The second article with the same topic was found titled “Suha Musa (says): People are unaware of Saudi women’s strength” (issue no. 1795 , date: 1 Aug 2015) , in

this article an interview is conducted with Saudi woman entrepreneur ‘Suha Musa’ who started her own wedding planning business in Saudi Arabia.

Having the two articles under this category coming from the Arab gulf which are oil rich countries, reflects the opportunities that has become available to women, where they started to take advantage of the economic prosperity.

Images in Figure (18) shows both Saudi and Emarati women in traditional black head cover in a clear indication of the specific characteristics of these two country’s culture in regard to the dress code for women.



Figure 18: A Success Story for both Emarati and Saudi Business Women (issue no. 1243, date: 7 Jan 2005)

9. Career Woman

One article with the title “Opening of job Fair at Prince Sultan University in Saudi Arabia – Princess ‘Hussa’ Daughter of Prince Salman (says): Today Women Face Rare Opportunities” (issue no. 1760, date: 29 Nov 2014), the article is about Saudi Arabia, the voice in the article is completely given to princess ‘Hussa’ but still her photo is not included in the article, as per quote from princess Husa “Women should break barriers but within the confines of religion and allowed traditions”.

The article shows honoring and praise of the Saudi Royal family this can be explained due the nature of Saudi Arabia and the big influence of the Royal Family in this country, this was highlighted in the Literature Review, under the ‘Formation of the Arab Identity’ by Arebi “The royal family, the tribal leaders, and the ‘ulama” (Arebi, 1994, p. 13), and these three factors although different from one Arab country to another and varies in their strength in society but still they do exist in all Arab countries.

Images in Figure (19) didn’t include any images of princess ‘Hassa’ or any of the interviewed females. Not including the princess’s photo is in-line with the Saudi traditions of not showing women and including images of the male Saudi princes shows the magazine’s support to the Saudi government.



Figure 19: Opening of job Fair at Prince Sultan University in Saudi Arabia–Princess ‘Hussa’ Daughter of Prince Salman (says) "Today Women Face Rare Opportunities" (issue no. 1760, date: 29 Nov 2014)

Article titled “Women Ask: Are Job Opportunities Only for Pretty Girls” (issue no. 1387 date: 6 Oct 2007), some interviewed women resented not being able to find a job because employers emphasize looks over qualifications. One interviewee reasoned that looks is important, but still there were many discussions about women having a job where opinions varied between supporters and those who were against it, in the Literature Review, under ‘Formation of the Arab Identity’ section, the opinion of Mufeeda Mohammed was included, she is one of those who voiced a critic against moderates, whom she described as those who are between extremists and seculars, where they emphasize on women having a job to develop her character and to contribute to her financial stability but at the same time emphasize a women’s role as a house wife, which she sees a women’s only role as a housewife should come as her first priority (Mohammed, 2000, p. 65). This comes as a critic by Mohammed to those who call for a dual role for women by

having both a job beside her responsibilities at her home. Other aspects that is relevant to this article is the perspective of the interviewed woman in the article where they resented being objectified and only assessed due to their physical appearance, if contrasted with western magazines we will find the opposite is quite clear, this has been highlighted in the Literature Review, under 'Women Magazines' section, when describing western magazines attitude towards women and what women desire, MacDonald writes "Magazines addressed the aspirational desires of young women at a time of economic growth, reliable contraception and individual freedom with pride of place given to sex" (MacDonald, 1995) (as cited in Wykes & Gunter, 2005). This shows the cultural difference between the west and the Arab east while the first celebrates sexuality the second resents being sexualized.

10. First Ladies

In its article titled "Egypt's First Ladies - From the "Spoiled Queen" to the "People's Servant" (issue no.1638 ,date: 27 July 2012), the article described four first ladies of Egypt starting with Queen Nariman, then Jihan Al-sadat, Suzan Mubarak ending with Najla' Morsi (the wife of the former Egyptian president Mohammad Morsi), from the article's title it suggests an implicit critic against Mohamad Morsi's wife and degradation where Queen Nariman is called the 'People's Beloved', Jehan Sadat called the 'Iron lady' and Suzan Mubarak described as a spendthrift that loves appearances. Morsi's wife on the other hand was described as the 'Hajja' (an Arabic feminine name for an elderly, simple and pious woman), describing her as an example of simplicity, implying that Morsi's wife is unworthy of her position, this can be derived from the overall context set in the article where great distinction is set between the former president's wife

‘Najla’ Morsi’ and the other first ladies, mostly reflected in the lexical choice for the name to describe each and the images used, in which ‘Najla’ Morsi’s image appears at the end of the article as well. never the less, *Sayidaty* magazine does not reflect its political adversity or opinion directly rather it communicates it by relying on interviewing an expert that have opinions that resonates with their agenda, and in this article we can see its entirely formulated through the opinion of ‘Hilmi Al-Namnam’ (CEO of Dar Al-Helal, a Lebanese Publishing Company) which shows the magazine’s technique of not voicing its opinion through one of its journalists but rather through one of the interviewees.

Images in Figures (20 & 21 & 22) have all the first ladies in a small size image, solid and powerful or soft and delicate, even Suzan Mubarak (which the article didn’t not describe her positively in the text but rather as a spendthrift) her face is shown smiling, whereas Morsi’s wife displaying her hand as a beggar with the headline “Aged woman (Hajja) Najla’ is an Example of a Simple Woman”. This adversity can be explained due to the magazine’s ownership to a Saudi company where Saudi Arabia during Mohammad Morsi’s (short) presidency in Egypt was not favoring him or his political party the Muslim Brethren.



Figure 20: Egypt’s First Ladies-From the “Spoiled Queen” to the “People’s Servant” (issue no.1638, date: 27 July 2012)



Figure 21: Continue (issue no.1638, date: 27 July 2012)



Figure 22: Wife of former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi (issue no.1638, date: 27 July 2012)

11. Advice to Men

An article with the title “So You’d Avoid Her Danger From Your Home, Do Not Chose Her Vanity Lover” (issue no. 1238, date: 27 Nov 2004), this article is considered to be among the two articles analyzed to critic women, where it provides a list of advice to men on why he should not choose to be with a women that only cares about her appearance. Through this article it can be concluded that the magazine, even though in rare occasions to critic women for the benefit of men, is conveying an implicit message that woman should not flaunt their beauty which this adheres to the strict rules of modest dress and concealment of women practiced in many Arab countries, since the magazine is widely read by woman not men so not many men will get the chance to read it so it will be reasonable to assume the article is intended to indirectly address women and assert some social

behavior. This point was included and explained in Literature Review, under ‘Women Magazines’ section, “The construction of femininity has been mediated through images and text that define social feminine identity as an emphasized femininity, as noted by Connell in his work on gender hierarchy in society (cited in Leahy, 1994)” (as cited in Basnyat & Chang, 2014, p. 83).

It’s clear in this article *Sayidaty* magazine plays a role in constructing femininity for Arab woman.

12. Women’s Civil Rights

One article with the title “New Laws for Acquisition of Nationality that Change the Situation of Women Who is Married to a Saudi Man” (issue no. 1238, date: 27 Nov 2004) highlights women’s civil rights in Saudi Arabia, the article is about new laws for the acquisition of Saudi Arabian nationality where foreign women married to Saudi men can benefit from the law. The lack of many articles among the analyzed sample on the issue of women’s civil rights is an indicator of the magazine’s tendency to not address it, which coincides with the magazine’s direction of not elaborating and implicitly discussing issues of political affiliation.

13. Women in Men’s Domain

Among the less focused on topics was women in men’s domains, with an article under the title “From Horse Riding to Football, Yamani Girls Venturing into Men’s Only Sports” (issue no 1243, date: 7 Jan 2005), this article is specific to the Yemeni culture, and perhaps some Arab Gulf states, especially due to the restrictions to women’s mobility in public life, where there is not any restriction to women riding horses in Arab Levant or North African Arab countries. Such new

venturing into a domain was described by Kaufer and Al-Malki where they explain this discourse in a study stating “discourse patterning of precedent-setting is a discourse of ‘firsts’” (Kaufer & Al-Malki, 2009, p. 114). I have highlighted this in my Literature Review, under ‘Woman Magazines’ section.

Figure (23) shows various women doing sports, all head covered but still wearing their sports training suit. When discussing the role of *hijab* and the function it necessitate, Al-Mahadin writes:

Hijab acts as a taxonomizing tool of oppositional differences; in other words, it singles out the muhajjabba¹² as that which she ‘is not’. Thus, to carry the label of muhajjabba is to invest the woman with values such as chastity, virtue and honour which often far exceed the importance of the religious dimension of hijab. Making a choice to mark oneself as a muhajjabba does not necessarily entail adhering properly to religious modes of dress but it certainly reflects a statement about one’s chastity. (Al-Mahadin, 2013, p. 10)

What I am suggesting in my analysis is that women in the article with their hijab are reflecting the identity of chastity but still that does not negate their identity as a sports woman or a horse rider either.

¹² Mohajjabah an Arabic term which means a women wearing an Islamic head scarf



Figure 23: From Horse Riding to Football, Yamani Girls Venturing into Men’s Only Sports” (issue no 1243, date: 7 Jan 2005)

14. Women in Media

Article under the title “Seven Media Professionals Talk to *Sayidaty* About Saudi Women in Today’s Media: Is She Commoditized and Degraded or Empowered and Dealt with Transparency” (issue no. 1316, date: 27 May 2006), most of the interviewed media figures agreed that television has commoditized women and asked to elevate her position which can be regarded as *Sayidaty’s* attempt to advocate women in various domains at work.

From analyzing Figure (24) it provides a close view about the interviewed people for both male and female figures. The close shot for both men and women is an indication to familiarize the reader with the person and not to distract her/him with the surroundings within the photo, beside is allows more text to be included.



Figure 24: Seven Media Professionals Talk to Sayidaty About Saudi Women in Today's Media: Is She Commoditized and Degraded or Empowered and Dealt with Transparency (issue no. 1316, date: 27 May 2006)

15. Interviews

Another category includes the interviews conducted with public or successful figures, interviews analyzed were with two men and two women, the men were; former minister of culture in Egypt where the article highlighted how he played a vital role in renewing the Egyptian cinematic scene, the article can be explained in light of the magazine's attempt to shed light on various figures and diversify its content without any connection to women's specific issues. However, although the magazine's general view was to promote women's marriage and critic those who chose otherwise, in this article the minister explained he is a single man devoted to his art, still no critic was voiced towards him not even implicitly this can interpreted as dual standard in treatment of men and woman.

The second male figure interviewed was a religious man (Sheikh Ahmad Kubaisi) with the title “Sheikh Ahmad Kubaisi (says): My Mother Made Me” (issue no. 1387, date: 6 October 2007), the interview showed the sheikh’s positive views towards women where he did express that women in the Arab world are oppressed as if he is given the authority to express critic on women’s situation due to his position as a religious scholar.

The other two interviews were both from Saudi Arabia, the first was a women architect who graduated from MIT from the United States, the second was a legal advisor where she was the first Saudi woman in the International Justice Court, both articles are in-line with the ‘patterning of precedent-setting’ or discourse of ‘Firsts’ which is highlighted in Literature Review under ‘Women Magazines’ section.

Images in Figure (25) where the article shows Dr. Huwaida Al-Harithi, a Saudi professor working in Beirut in none-traditional Saudi clothes the (Abaya) which can be attributed due to the interviewee’s current residence in Lebanon. The magazine in this picture shows a different image of Saudi woman.



Figure 25: Dr Huwayda Harthi (says) Women Contribute Greatly Contribute in Maintaining Heritage (issue no.1758, 15 Nov 2014)

The second interview was with a legal expert, where she emphasized her career over any other role. Image in Figure (26) Although the interviewee wears the head scarf but the image shows less religious and cultural strains from other Arab women’s images analyzed throughout this thesis, this can be observed through the color of the scarf where she didn’t follow the traditional black scarf and applying make-up. Al-Mahadin explained this by stating “The choice to wear a veil is both social and religious, and sometimes even economic.” (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 9) which I have highlighted in the Literature Review, under the ‘Formation of the Arab Identity’ section.



Figure 26: Legal Advisor Hala Hakeem (says) The Media is to Be Acused of Taking Me Away from my Family (issue no. 1804, date: 3 Oct 2015)

16. Celebrities

In order to further be able to explain the magazine’s approach when communicating with Arab women I have included additional six articles not under the ‘Features’ section, but rather goes under ‘Celebrities’ the chosen articles are interviews with actresses, TV hosts, film director, all of them are either Lebanese or Egyptians, all of them either appear on the cover page of the issue or interviewed within ‘Celebrities’ section. Including these articles will help to further showcase the contrast and diversity in the magazine, which is a reflection of the diversity among the Arab countries. Diversity and difference in the images of women who appear to be liberal and on the other hand there are the conservative ones which appeared throughout the analyzed articles within the ‘Features’ section.

Figure (27) shows Lebanese actress (Nicole Saaba) posing for a photo shoot, her appeal, fashion choice and even her posture very much coincides with western attitudes but still an important part remains of not revealing too much skin reflects not to totally neglect Arab culture restrictions on women's dress. Their choice of fashion reflects the many ideas they hold about themselves Tseëlon (1995) argued the female identity is realized through the presentation of many selves, and clothes are a vital expression of this self-realization. (Omair, 2011, p. 27). The same analysis applies to the remaining images in Figures (28 & 29 & 30 & 31 & 32), in comment to Figure (32) the Egyptian TV host who wears a headscarf, I think she represents a category of Arab women that meshed together religion and requirements of new Arab society to yield a less strict and less liberal identity.



Figure 27: Lebanese Actress 'Nicole Saba'(issue 1803, date: 26 Sep 2015)



Figure 28: Syrian Actress 'Heba Noor'(issue 1760, date: 29 Nov 2014)



Figure 29: Egyptian Actress 'Ghada Abdelrazeq' (issue 1795 Date: 1 Aug 2015)



Figure 30: Lebanese Singer 'Dina Hayek' (issue 1348, date: 12 Jan 2007)



Figure 31: Lebanese TV Host Diala Makki (issue 1801, date: 12 Sep 2015)



Figure 32: Egyptian TV Host (issue 1053, date: 18 May 2001)

4.2 Analysis Results of ‘Laha’ Magazine

For the purpose of this study (14) magazine issues were selected among which (24) articles were chosen from the ‘Investigation’ section. The ‘Investigation’ section in *Laha* magazine is similar to the ‘Features’ section from *Sayidaty* magazine in terms that both discuss women social issues.

Note: Laha Magazine Articles Summary with main discussed topics is available in Appendix A, Table (2).

1. Marriage

Under the issue of marriage the magazine had this article “The Financial Help A Groom Receives Prior To Getting Married From His Wife To-Be, Could Be Due To Fear Of ‘Humiliation’ Or Out Of Cautiousness From ‘Dependency” (issue no. 787, date: 21 October 2015) the article is specifically from the Saudi culture, it tells stories of wrongly treated women by their husbands when agreed to waive requesting high dowries or expensive home furnishings. Men also were interviewed, one interviewee expressed that he was against receiving any help from his wife or her family in furnishing their home. Whereas another man said he would accept. This practice of ‘Dowry’ clearly coincides with the Arab culture tradition which might be in contrast to what is in the west and rather be critiqued as being demeaning to women since it could be interpreted as assigning a price to women, the support towards the practice throughout the article by Arab women themselves shows the difference in cultural attitudes and norms. However this practice varies from one community or even individual family to another within the same Arab society in the same country, where some families might choose to assign a symbolic price to dowries and contribute in their daughter’s wedding arrangements.

Figure (33) shows a man and women (not sitting together) the man in a traditional Arab gulf dress ‘thob’¹³ is sitting as if signing a contract (in an indication that he is signing a marriage contract) and a bride in a larger picture wearing a headscarf with a smiling face. Also the pictures of experts sought for opinion are included. The image very much coincides with the traditional Arab norms and happy expressions on the bride’s face reflects a positive attitude toward marriage.



Figure 33: The Financial Help A Groom Receives Prior for Marriage from His Wife To-Be Could Be Due To Fear Of ‘Humiliation’ Or Out Of Cautiousness From ‘Dependency’” (issue no. 787, date: 21 October 2015)

In another article titled “Religious Scholars Command Husbands (they say) ‘Do not Interfere in Your Wives Clothing’” (issue no. 787, date: 21 October 2015), the article emphasized that women should wear modestly but still her husband should not dictate to her what to wear. One religious scholar stated that ‘one of the rights

¹³ Thob is the traditional Arab dress for men

men should have is having a modest wife, where a man is not to interfere in her clothes color, style or shape as long as she has decent clothes on. And if he tries to interfere that is not accepted in Shari'a but he still could be fined. From the Literature Review discussed earlier this topic can be related to men's guardianship to woman which is highlighted by Wadud: "In explaining the Qur'anic verse (men are qawwamuna 'ala women), "as for meaning, Pickthall translate this as 'in charge of'. Al-Zamakhshari says it means that 'men are in charge of the affairs of women'" (Wadud, 1999).

Figure (34) does not reflect characters from Arab culture rather they are western man and woman, the woman is smiling in contradiction to the article's title which suggest wrong doing to women. This can be explained that the magazine is trying to reflect happiness and positivity to readers.



Figure 34: Religious Scholars Command Husbands 'Do not Interfere in Your Wives Clothing' (issue no. 787, date: 21 Oct 2015)

The magazine emphasized the topic of ‘Marriage’ with an article titled “Run Away with Your Marriage from the Danger Zone” (issue no. 786, date: 14 October 2015), the article talks about couple’s experiences on how to avoid conflicts in their relationship. Discussed issues included when to ask for something from your husband, and how one should learn to forget his spouse’s mistakes, the article suggests the magazine’s attempt to advise woman on marriage.

When analyzing Figure (35) one of two couples are sitting next to each other facing the camera and the reader which expresses openness, one photo of a women of an interviewed expert her body is not shown although her face facing the reader and smiling.



Figure 35: Run Away with Your Marriage from the Danger Zone (issue no. 786, date: 14 Oct 2015)

Another article with the title “A Decree To Solve Dowry’s High Expenses And To Limit Weddings Excessive Expenses” (issue no. 784, date: 30 September 2015), the article specifically discusses the Saudi Arabian culture on the issue of dowry where the government has set a limit of 50 thousand Saudi riyal as a dowry for a virgin bride and a 30 thousand for a woman who has been married before. The entire article is through men’s opinion and highlights that families should reduce the dowries they request from the groom. The interviewees rationed that such act will increase the number marriages which has dropped significantly in recent years.

By Analyzing Figure (36) it shows the image of a bride with a western facial features and a lace veil on her face, looking unhappy which coincides with the article’s title which suggests a disadvantaged situation to women since she is the one who benefits from the dowry, the photo of the jewelry is a clear characteristic of the Arab culture wedding traditions of buying jewelry for the bride among her wedding preparations.



Figure 36: A Decree To Solve Dowry’s High Expenses And To Limit Weddings Excessive Expenses (issue no. 784, date: 30 Sept 2015)

The next article is with the title “A New ‘Fatwa’ from the Women’s Mufti Arouse Controversy (she says) “Looking for a husband Online is Lawful by Shari’ah” (issue 784, date: 30 September 2015), the article is from Egypt, Many female mufti’s¹⁴ contributed with their opinions in this article were they agreed that it is allowed by Shari’ah that women search for a husband through social media but still within the confines of Shari’ah and not trespassing to sin. It is obvious that a less strict interpretation of the Qur’an is being used in order to explain a contemporary phenomenon. But still discussing this topic shows the importance of religion in the Arab society even in contemporary issues such as online dating.

Figure (37) illustrates the article’s topic, again, the magazine resolved to an online images database where the characters are not with Arab facial expressions. On the other hand, images of women religious scholars appears as well, they show a close image taken to the face that does not reveal the entire body, despite its conservativeness it still deviate from the Arab gulf women’s traditional clothing of ‘Abaya’ in which these women reflect the Egyptian culture.

¹⁴ Female Mufti are female religious scholars who have studied Shari’a, mostly Egyptian women, their reputation has grown the recent years as they share many opinions on women issues



Figure 37: A New ‘Fatwa’ from the Women’s Mufti Arouse Controversy “Looking for a Husband Online is Lawful by Shari’ah” (issue 784, date: 30 Sept 2015)

Another Article with the title “A Court Case and A Fatwa From a ‘Prior’ Egyptian Mufti, “My Husband Left Me To Force To Ask For Divorce” (issue no. 783, date 23 September 2015) shows the injustice that women face from their husbands from one side and also the role of religion in solving societal problems on the other. However, the article title suggested wrong doing against women but the text emphasized the correctness of husband’s acts to change his wives behavior. In a clear rejection to uplift women situation and educate her about her rights.

Figure (38) shows the photos in this article of a woman as a victim or the compromising partner.



Figure 38: A Court Case and A Fatwa From a ‘Prior’ Egyptian Mufti, “My Husband Left Me To Force Me Ask For Divorce” (issue 783, date: 23 Sep 2015)

In continuation in discussing the subject of ‘Marriage’ an article with the title “Before Marriage: A Psychiatric Certificate Is Required” (issue no.710, date: 30 April 2014), the article is from Egypt, stories are told through interviewed people and couples with psychiatric problems, most of the interviewees agreed that couples should go to a psychiatric session prior to getting married to assess themselves.

Image analysis in Figure (39 & 40) shows a combination of photos in the article including two illustrative photos; one is of a man acting as if in psychiatric session, the other two couples having a quarrel and the psychiatric is the mediator, both photos illustrate how seeking a psychiatric help can help couples, reflecting it in a positive way despite the common misconception of seeking mental or psychiatric illnesses in the Arab society.



Figure 39: Before Marriage A Psychiatric Certificate Is Required (issue no.710, date: 30 Apr 2014)



Figure 40: Continue - Before Marriage A Psychiatric Certificate Is Required (issue no.710, date: 30 Apr 2014)

Another article that also goes under the topic ‘Marriage’ is titled “Is Marriage a Constraint to Ambitions And Hopes” (issue no. 710, date: 30 April 2014), the article is from Dubai, it tells the story of a woman who had to throw away her dreams for the sake of marriage and eventually she got divorced, in the article, interviewees that a women should be able to achieve their ambitions, which shows *Laha* magazine’s direction of promoting working woman and having a career.

Figure (41) shows the main article’s photos of a bride and a groom in their wedding dresses looking scared reflecting marriage is a negative endeavor for both men and women (not just women).



Figure 41: Is Marriage a Constraint to Ambitions And Hopes (issue no. 710, date: 30 Apr 2014)

The next examined article is with the title “A Controversial ‘Fatwa’, ‘Orfi’¹⁵ Marriage is Halal” (issue no. 739, date: 19 November 2014), the article is from Egypt, according to the former Egyptian mufti the ‘orfi’ marriage is binding as any marriage, the problem is that it can be abused by some men to harm women, A female religious scholar had an opposite opinion where she sees that ‘orfi’ marriage is not halal (religiously unlawful), however she stated that it can be allowed in some situations, other religious scholars disagreed that ‘orfi’ marriage is legal as a normal marriage, as in their opinion this might cause people to prefer it over the normally documented marriage. Women religious scholars warned other women of the consequences of such marriage. It is evident that *Laha* magazine does not set a final verdict on social issues that requires religious interpretation, and they do state the two opposite opinion if existed.

Figure (42) shows images of women in headscarf with a man next to each, their facial features don’t look middle eastern, one is smiling the other does not look at the reader as if shying away from the reader and the man pictured with her which goes in-line with the Arab culture’s view of women being modest and shying away from men.

¹⁵ Orfi marriage is a kind of marriage in which it is not registered officially or announced



Figure 42: A Controversial ‘Fatwa’, *Orfi* Marriage is Halal (issue no. 739, date: 19 Nov 2014)

Another article titled “My Husband Is The Same Age As My Father” (issue no. 391, date: 19 March 2008), the article is from Egypt, it started with an expert opinion (psychologist) to explain the reason why young women sometimes choose to marry an older man, they attributed it to: (a) To compensate a lost father’s love, (b) Because they consider young men are unreliable (c) Financial greed. Three interviewed women said they would agree to marry an older man whereas other three said they won’t which shows how *Laha* magazine tries to balance two opposite point of views when discussing an issue.

Figure (43) shows the main article’s full page image is for Catherine Zita Jones and her husband Michael Douglas (where there is more than a 20 years age difference between them). Under also the discussion of marriage, this article shows how the magazine’s variation when discussing an issue where it can offer a new angle to discuss a topic.



Figure 43: My Husband Is The Same Age As My Father (issue no. 391, date: 19 Mar 2008)

Article with the title “Sheikh Al-Zendani (says) ‘Friends Marriage, is a Call to Advocate Having Sexual Relationships based On Shari’a Law When Living Abroad” (issue no. 148, date: 23 July 2003), the article is from Kuwait, however, it discusses a Yamani sheikh’s *fatwa* that allows men to marry women instead of having a relationship out of wed-lock when they are abroad. This kind of marriage the sheikh is promoting constitutes married couple don’t have to live together under one roof nor the man have financial obligations towards his household nor wife, This kind of marriage as the sheikh says is best for men and women living abroad.

Figure (44) shows a caricature drawing of a religious man and another simple man, the note next to the simple kneeling man reads (We are the ones who need lesser strains to facilitate our marriage, I have been wanting to marry my cousin for forty years now but still I was not able to save her dowry) this is an indication of the

social class differences where some are calling not to restrict the benefits of ease on marriage to the more financially capable only (assuming who live abroad are more affluent). The next page shows the photo of 'Zandani' sheikh who announced this fatwa. This clearly shows how the religious men and institution in the Arab world tries to influence and regulate people's lives in issues such as marriage which is usually regulated by the state, where Arebi says "One of the main characteristics of the contemporary political situation is that women have been placed at the center of this power struggle, especially between the 'ulama and the state" (Arebi, 1994).



Figure 44: Sheikh Zandani favors 'Friend Marriage'- A Call for Having Sexual Relationships in the West Based on Shari'ah (Issue no. 148, date: 23 July 2003)

2. Career Women

This category shows the variation in the content that *Laha* magazine does which distinguishes it from *Sayidaty* magazine, this is a different category of working women's problems which discusses when a woman is more financially capable. With the title "The Rich Woman, Is She a Predicament to Men" (issue no. 727, date: 27 August 20 14), the article is from Egypt and is discussed through the stories of interviewed women and experts. It includes the story of a women whom her husband took advantage of her, another story of a woman who took advantage of a man to have a child then divorced him, a third one of a wealthy woman who married a younger man and then humiliated him because she was rich. Finally, the story of a man who took all his wife's money, we see the variation is balanced and is not leaning toward one party more than another. However the article emphasized a man's main role in a relationship is to financially support his wife and family where changing that may cause misbalance in a marriage.

Another article that goes under the topic of career woman, with the title "A Problem That Faces Working Women, Women Complain: (My Husband Wants My Salary)" (issue no. 723, date: 30 July 2014), the article in general condemns a man who seeks his wife's salary to support their household.

Figure (45) shows that the article contains images of ordinary women, one of the images includes a man with his identity disguised by blurring his face, although the image is just illustrative and not from real life it shows the magazine might be trying not to personify and condemn a man figure.



Figure 45: A Problem That Faces Working Women, Women Complain: (My Husband Wants My Salary) (issue no. 723, date: 30 July 2014)

Another article that concerns working women is with the title “A Big Scandal And The Religious Scholars Resolve The Issue; Woman Complain Their Husbands Make Them Warranty Them For Their Bank Loans” (issue no. 571, date: 31 August 2011), the article is from Egypt, it is analyzed from a religious perspective, one religious scholar point of view was that one of bank’s decision to reject a wife’s warranty is invalid in which a wife has the right to do so. Another opinion saw this might put the wife in jeopardy especially if the husband fails to pay the amount. Religious figures emphasized that a woman should not be forced to do so. It is evident that the magazine highlighted the disadvantages to woman when acting as a warrantor, showing its intent to protect women’s interest.

Article title “Women That Married Their Careers” (issue no. 366, date: 26 September 2007), From Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan, the article tells stories of

single women and why they chose to stay single, at the end of the of text one of the interviewed women, the writer wrote *'she chose to stay single and paid the price for her decision'* this shows a clear adversity and critique to those who choose not to get married but still it can be considered an exceptional case in which *Laha* magazine has focused on working women careers. All interviewed women are educated. One interviewee said they didn't get married because they wanted to focus on their careers. They all expressed no regrets in which their work has filled their lives.

Images in Figure (46) shows a collage of a working woman in a suit which reflects the topic of the article, and Figure (47) shows also a woman in a business suit, she looks confident and happy rather than stressed out which indicate the magazine is advocating women's work.



Figure 46: Women That Married Their Careers (issue no. 366, date: 26 Sep 2007)



Figure 47: Continue: Women That Married Their Careers (issue no. 366, date: 26 Sep 2007)

In a different approach to tackle the issue of women’s career, there is an article with the title “A Candid Interview With The First Woman Marriage Contracts Registrar, (she says) “I Will Fight Divorce And Encourage Marriage By Calling For An Ease On Its Procedures” (issue no. 391, date: 19 March 2008), the story of an Egyptian woman, she is educated with a master’s degree, in the article she explained how some government officials tried to hinder her appointment to the position of marriage registrar but the court ruled that it’s illegal to deny her this position. She explains that assigning such position is not prohibited in religious scripture where the position itself was invented in the 20th century and so any prohibition coming from traditional norms and not religion. In explaining this pointing of view I have pointed out to this issue in the Literature Review under the ‘Woman and Religion’ where Al-Olayan & Karande explain “The (Qiyas) i.e. the reasoning by analogy and (3) The (Ijma) i.e. the consensus of opinion and the

agreement of qualified legal scholars in a given generation” (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000).

Figure (48) shows the images show an ordinary woman with her family. Reflecting also the role of women as a wife and a worker as well. But also, the simplicity of the interviewee is a reflection of the Egyptian working class.



Figure 48: A Candid Interview With The First Woman Marriage Contracts Registrar (She says) "I Will Fight Divorce And Encourage Marriage By Calling For Easing Its Procedures" (issue 391, date: 19 Mar 2008)

3. Women Civil Rights

In a step that can be considered to advocate women’s right to vote and enhance her civil rights in Saudi Arabia *Laha* magazine included this article “Women Received their Right to Vote and Nominate Them Selves, It is Time of Work Now” (issue no. 783, date: 23 September 2015). In my Literature Review I have highlighted a

text from the *Hadith* which is used as an argument to exclude women from political life, Mernissi has refuted the correctness of this Hadith by questioning the integrity of the person who claimed that Mohammed had said it, however, this clearly reflects the encounter between those who deny women from their civil rights based on religion.

Figure (49) shows the images of women in the black 'Burqa' are in-line with the Saudi Arabia conservative covering of women. Whereas the woman's image at the bottom of the article with her face shown and facing the reader giving her authority to demand her rights where the statement next to her image states 'A Woman is not Just a Participant but Rather She is the Entire Society Because She Up-brings Generations from both Sexes', this highlights women's role as a 'Mother' suggesting her status in society is due to her ability to give birth and raise children. The covered woman in 'Burqa' clearly reflects the social norms of women in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. This image of woman with her headscarf but still wearing headscarf shows the magazine's direction where the woman's face was shown but still not trespassing the cultural traditions and code dress where she is still wearing the black 'Abaya' and headscarf.



Figure 49: Women Got their Right to Vote and Nominate Them Selves, It is Time to Work Now (Issue no. 783, date 23 Sep 2015)

Under the topic of “women’s civil rights” and mainly in Saudi Arabia, the article’s title is “(Faten Bundakji says) There Is Not A Presence for Saudi Women In The Political, Economic And Social Arenas; Faten Bundakji Declares That ‘Women Should be Involved In Elections’” (issue no.685, date: 6 November 2013), Interview with Ms Bundakji from Saudi Arabia, she participated as a nominee for the Saudi municipality elections (although she didn’t win) and she calls Saudi women to pursue gaining more rights. In this article it is clear the magazine is empowering women to advocate women civil participation through women figures showing their experience within public domains.

Figure (50) shows photos of Ms. Bundakji in official events with dignitaries such as the Saudi king. Another photo of her in a Bazar, she is wearing the traditional Saudi *Abaya* with parts of her front hair showing a little bit, in another photo her hand is showing too although still in *Abaya* and posing for a picture, and her consultancy firm logo behind her is shown with her hand crossed showing

authoritarianism. These images show the magazine’s attempt to emphasize women in leading roles rather than being a mother and a housewife.



Figure 50: There Is Not A Presence Of Saudi Women In The Political And Economic And Social Arenas (issue no.685, date: 6 Nov 2013)

4. Women Achievers

An article with the title “Three Women Designers Were Born In Saudi Arabia” (issue no. 787, date: 21 October 2015), interviews are conducted with each designer starting with Fashion Designer (Arwa Al-Ammari) who is educated in the UK, she emphasizes in the article that her success is self-made, and that she also was encouraged by family and friends.

By analyzing the images in Figures (51 & 52), the designer’s clothing is very much consistent with the Saudi Arabian culture nevertheless her hair is a little bit

showing in the front and neck reflecting a less conservative attitude. In all the analyzed images of the designers in this article, their choice of fashion reflects the many ideas they hold about themselves Tseëlon (1995) argued the female identity is realized through the presentation of many selves, and clothes are a vital expression of this self-realization (Omair, 2011). Further Al-Mahadin adds:

The word muhajjabba refers to any female who chooses to cover her hair with a scarf that is clearly distinguishable and identifiable as hijab. This act alone is sufficient to acquire the social label of muhajjabba. What women choose to complement the hijab with is another story, however, as long as the skin is actually covered and only the face, hands and feet can be seen. (Al-Mahadin, 2013).

Al-Mahadin was referring to female candidates who participated in a study she conducted at the University of Jordan. She further goes on in explaining that one: “One cannot help but be taken aback by the infinite interpretations of Islamic dress.” (Al-Mahadin, 2013). Given this explanation, no matter the style of headscarf a woman choose to use she will always acquire the label of a covered woman which what they aim to be.



Figure 51: Fashion Designer (Arwa Al-Ammari)
 (issue no. 787, date: 21 Oct 2015)

In the same article, a second interview was conducted with fashion designer (Aram Qabbani), educated in Saudi Arabia and had some training in London, she emphasized that she is the one who is responsible for her success.

Figure (52) the interviewee is wearing (Abaya) which coherently relates to the Arab Gulf culture. However, the posture and the hair appearing at the front reflect a less conservative appeal.



Figure 52: Fashion Designer (Aram Qabbani) (issue no. 787, date: 21 Oct 2015)

Also a third interview was made with a jewelry designer (Majd Assaf), she emphasized that she travels a lot, got her passion for jewelry design from her grandfather.

When analyzing Figure (53) we can find a western style woman, her eyes are not facing the reader suggesting her posture and fashion choices is enough to show her personality in contrast to the other two photos.



Figure 53: Jewelry Designer 'Majd Assaf' (issue no. 787, date: 21 Oct 2015)

Under this category an article titled “100 Women Change The World” (issue no.685, date: 6 November 2013) interviews Ms Lilian Landaw, a journalist that started her career at BBC (France), she grew up in Lebanon, Switzerland, France and Germany, born to an Arab father and a Cuban mother, she invited 100 women from around the world for a conference in London to discuss and talk about their experiences. The invited women included ordinary women but who have contributed in a small scale to their community. It is important to highlight the criteria which Ms Landaw chose these women according to and considered them worthy for this distinction, her focus was no matter how small their contribution was the important thing was the difference it made in other people’s lives. When analyzing this article it is important to notice Ms. Landaw is working for BBC which is a British company with it comes the values this company holds which can be translated in the decision made for the basis for choosing these women where there is no favoritism to any side.

Figure (54) includes photos of the 100 women in small boxes where all given same importance.



Figure 54: 100 Women Change the World (issue no.685, date: 6 Nov 2013)

5. Under-Age Girls Marriage

This is a new category that does not exist in *Sayidaty* magazine. An article with the title “Human Rights Organization Stops The Marriage Of Two Underage Girls One of Them Is 11 Years Old - Saudi Arabia Excludes Only Saudi Women From

Underage Marriage Law”, (issue no. 723, date: 30 July 2014), the stories told by one hair dresser who had underage brides come to her salon as customers. The article highlighted that Saudi law forbids underage marriage for only Saudi girls whereas foreigners residing in the kingdom can marry Saudi men even if they were underage. Discussing such topic reflects the magazine’s attempt to push forward

women status and advocating women rights, although it can be criticized that the article was too short (only two pages long) for such a wide and important topic.

Figure (55) shows the images shows the scared little underage girls reflecting the magazine's adversity to the issue and portraying a non-ethical nature to this custom.



Figure 55: Human Rights Organization Stops The Marriage Of Two Underage Girls One of Them Is 11 Years Old, Saudi Arabia Excludes Only Saudi Women From Underage Marriage Law (issue no. 723, date: 30 Jul 2014)

In a clear rejection to young girls marriage *Laha* magazine has discussed the topic in a number of issues, in an article titled “In Yemen: Little Girls are forced to become mothers” (issue no. 467, date: 2 September 2009), the article is informative telling the dangers of motherhood at a very young age, telling the stories of women who were forced to marry at a very young age, a clear critic for

both the young bride's fathers and groom, the article explained the negative consequences for these marriages, attributing poverty to the reason why fathers agree to wed their daughters at such a young age. If in comparison to a previous article on the same subject where the first was from Saudi Arabia, it shows *Laha* magazine critiqued Yemen but did not in the case of Saudi Arabia, given the fact that *Laha* magazine is a United Arab Emirates magazine where there are strong factors of sympathy between the two countries.

Figure (56) contains the images shows little girls in shabby clothes drawing sympathy from the reader and reflecting the negativity of this act.



Figure 56: In Yemen: Little Girls are Forced to Become Mothers (issue no. 467, date: 2 Sep 2009)

6. Man and Woman Relations

Article title “When Does a Man Envy a Woman” (issue no. 467, date: 2 September 2009), the article talks about women experiences with their husband’s jealousy due to their success. All interviewees agreed that men put hurdles in face of successful women except for one Emarati female film director who thought that men can help women to succeed. The expert opinion saw men can’t accept a women being more successful than him due to his up-bringing, she explained her point of view logically. This topic of men’s envious of women can be explained through Nawal Al-Sa’dawi’s writings where she highlighted the issue of man’s fear from woman and her sources of femininity, she writes:

This fear is what caused him to expel her from temples and to monopolize for himself the gods and the afterlife as long as she possessed the living life and the ability to create life itself (by giving birth), [...] scientists say this man’s subconscious fear of woman is what generated his feelings of lack, and this feeling of lack is what caused him to distort the true nature of women [my translation] (Al-Sa’dawi, 1990).

Figures (57 & 58) show photos accompanying the article with varied women images, but mostly are liberal women with none Arab traditional clothing, an indication of the magazine’s attempt to reflect a more variant image of Arab woman other than the traditional norm.

Article title “The Religious scholar of Al-Azhar¹⁶ Support ‘Ae’d Al Qarni’ [a Saudi religious scholar], (He says) Religious Scholars Are Demanded To Protect Women” (issue no. 366, date: 26 September 2007). From Egypt, the article starts with ‘Ae’d Al-Qarni’ where he takes the stand to support an oppressed woman by her husband and brothers, the article doesn’t state what was done to help this woman, many references from the Quran were included, ‘Aed Al-Qarni’ encourages religious scholars to support the oppressed. The sheikh appears to state his views in a commanding manner. To further analyze this article, it is important to understand the role religious scholars try to take in society and especially influencing women, Arebi states “One of the main characteristics of the contemporary political situation is that women have been placed at the center of this power struggle, especially between the ‘ulama and the state” (Arebi, 1994). I have highlighted this view in my Literature Review under ‘Feminism through Female Islamic Scholars’. If we are to apply Arebi’s perspective, we will find how the religious institution and it’s scholars are trying to establish a strong presence in women’s lives competing with the state especially in Arab countries where the state and religion are not necessarily bonded together, such as in Syria, Jordan or Iraq. This article’s issue can also be discussed by what Arbei states that:

By controlling women, the man is led to believe not only that he protects his own honor but is also made to believe that in so doing he is also accomplishing the mission of protecting the honor of the Islamic civilization against the dangers of Western civilization. (Arebi, 1994)

And perhaps through this protection the religious scholar rations his demands for protecting women as mentioned in the article, to him he is protecting the honor of the Islamic civilization.

¹⁶ Al-azhar is one of the prominent Islamic universities with Sunni Islam teachings in Egypt, with a wide network of schools all around Egypt

Figure (59) shows a page size image of Sheik Aed Al-Qarni , small sized images of other religious scholars mostly female. The Sheikh's larger image emphasizes his status and the message he is trying to convey.



Figure 59: Religious scholar of Al-Azhar Support ‘Aed Al Qarni’ [Saudi Religious scholar], (saying) Religious Scholars Are Demanded To Protect Women (issue no. 366, date: 26 Sep 2007)

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing (44) articles in (17) issues from *Sayidaty* magazine, and (24) articles in (14) issues from *Laha* magazine, it was found that each magazine although discussed ‘Marriage’ as the main topic throughout its articles, however, each magazine exhibited two different point of views.

Throughout this thesis research, when discussing Arab women issues and scholarly opinions three distinguishable opinions can be observed, a western feministic view along with the Arab female scholars who have adopted it, second, a traditional Arabic view that adheres to social cultural norms and shows adversity to the west, a third feministic Islamic view that draws its interpretations and defends woman’s status within the Arab culture through religious text and its interpretations.

In my view this last perspective of female Islamic scholars can offer open discussions and sound arguments in face of many issues that has taken women’s rights and confined her into isolation in the Arab society. Such scholarly work can yield an interpretation that can encounter the strict religious rules set on women, and the strength of such female Islamic work is that it adheres to the rules of interpretation set by the religious ulama’s themselves so such interpretations are difficult to be refuted but further perhaps with time it can be consolidated with the male generated interpretations to create a new views on women’s issues where woman can no longer be problematized in the Arab world.

Further, *Sayidaty* magazine emphasized the role of women as a housewife and stressed on the importance of ‘Marriage’ as the focal point and interest for Arab women. At some instances the magazine voiced a strong critique towards women

in article titled “Today’s Brides Don’t Know How To Fry An Egg” (issue no. 1758, date: 15 Nov 2014) especially when it pertained to not being a good housewife, although such critique was not explicitly present about women’s rights and wrong doing against her. In *Sayidaty* magazine even if the discussed article’s topic was not under Marriage category but still they were in service of this topic, in which when discussing issues of ‘Health’ we can find articles with titles such as “Marriage Enhances Physical Immunity and Heart Muscles” (issue no. 1431, date: 9 Aug 2008), it is clear the magazine is continually advocating marriage as the natural choice for women.

The emphasis on the topic of ‘Marriage’ might stem from its importance in Arab woman’s life as a corner stone for her identity as stated by Al-Mahadin:

In the Arab world, the woman—specifically her body—is a much contested and debated discursive space. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that it is the “ultimate signifier” with a multitude of signifieds that spill into various aspects of social, political, religious and economic life. (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 8).

She further adds:

Indeed, the Arab world possesses a social order subordinated to and constructed by the female body—specifically how that body should be regulated, landscaped, exposed, covered, disciplined or annihilated. (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 8)

Although Al-Mahadin is talking about women’s body but still it pertains closely to marriage where most of Arab countries do not support premarital relationships so Marriage becomes the means to control the female body.

It was evident that *Sayidaty* magazine was more evolved and mature in terms of discussing married woman’s issues this was present by discussing issues such as ‘Polygamy’ and ‘Harassment’. When discussing ‘Polygamy’ it is important to highlight how the magazine chose to discuss the issue, although it is widely practiced in many Arab countries especially in Arab Gulf countries and most

prominently in Saudi Arabia, but still it's not a normal situation for a woman to accept and accordingly behave neutrally towards the other woman in her husband's life, so problems between the wives in a polygamous marriage are well known to exist in Arab society where it becomes having a harmonic life between polygamous wives is an exception, in this regard *Sayidaty* magazine highlighted the hardships and the troublesome side of a polygamous marriage although still it didn't project an explicit rejection or critique towards the issue, this is an indication that *Sayidaty* magazine embraces the existing cultural norms within the Arab society and when attempting to critique it they tend to do it implicitly, the factors at play for such approach could be due to the ownership of the magazine to the Saudi Research and Publishing Company which was founded by a member of the Saudi royal family.

The wide range of topics discussed within the magazine shows how much the magazine is mature that can be attributed to the long period of its publication since 1987. Throughout the conducted research for this thesis, articles were categorized according to their main topics, it was found the categories that were only present in *Sayidaty* and Not in *Laha* were; Harassment, Polygamy, Health, Single Woman, Woman in Business, Advise to Men and Woman in Media. It was further noticeable that single women issues were not emphasized or discussed frequently this can be a reflection of how the magazine gives more importance to a married woman and her role more than it gives to a single woman.

When analyzing *Laha* magazine the categories which the articles were classified into were not as much as in *Sayidaty* as it included; Marriage, Career Women, Women Civil Rights, Women Achievers, Man and Woman Relation, Under-Age Girls Marriage. On the other hand although the topic of 'Marriage' was the most discussed among the analyzed articles but still a different approach than *Sayidaty*

magazine was applied in which the topics didn't assign the role of women as a housewife, but rather the magazine emphasized discussing the issues when women rights can be denied or she could be mistreated or in a disadvantage position where *Laha* magazine was acting as an informant and an educator to women to help her create an opinion when faced with such situation that might undermine her or her ability to determine what she wants, examples on this were articles such "Religious Scholars Command Husbands 'Do not Interfere in Your Wives Clothing'" (issue no. 787, date: 21 Oct 2015) or "A Court Case and A Fatwa From a 'Prior' Egyptian Mufti, "My Husband Left Me To Force Me To Ask For Divorce" (issue no. 783, date: 23 Sep 2015). It was evident *Laha* magazine viewed more often the wrong doing that women face, where it confronted the injustices although it didn't exert blunt critique towards any authority whether religious or state, it further didn't tackle them from a western perspective of feminist views but rather remained within the confines of the Arab culture point of view when presenting any of its articles where it also tended to analyze topics and inform women of their rights that are given to them either from religious text or stating the legal status on the issue which might be of help to women to claim their rights.

Two topics were discussed by both *Sayidaty* and *Laha* magazine, the first was under 'Women Achievers' category, in *Sayidaty* with the title "Arab Women 2006" (issue no. 1348, date: 12 Jan 2007) and in *Laha* with the title "100 Women Change The World" (issue no. 685, date: 6 Nov 2013) both articles showcases examples of women that had contributed to their societies, *Sayidaty* magazine emphasized on women who are wives of Kings or Head of State where these women's numbers exceeded the number of other women presented in the same article to be followed by women athletes then women writers and it was noticeable that women as scientists were the least mentioned in the article. As for *Laha* magazine in their article the basis for a woman to be exceptional varied and

included more ordinary women but who have contributed even though in a small portion to their communities. This distinction in what makes a woman more important from one magazine to another reflects *Sayidaty*'s magazine philosophy and approach as a woman's magazine of favoritism and paying patronage to heads of state while *Laha* magazine an advocate who wants to empower women. Which reflects the two opposite sides currently present in the Arab society, one wants to keep with tradition and the other calling for change.

When examining the Arab concept of kingship it can be said that it differs from the European model, according to Gerner and Schrodt, in two ways: first, the conflict between the monarchy and the political power of the church that so much characterized the European history between the end of the Roman Empire and the Protestant Reformation has no counterpart in the Arab world. The authority of an Arab monarch still can be challenged on religious grounds, as occurred with the revolt in Arabia of the religiously fundamentalist 'Ikhwan' (brethren) against Abdul Aziz ibn Saud in the late 1920s. But there is no Islamic "pope" (or Confucian bureaucracy) to whom a monarch can appeal for legitimacy independent of his own religious authority, or conversely, who can threaten a monarch by withholding approval (Schwedler & Gerner, 2008). This can explain the direction the magazine took in its article titled "Egypt's First Ladies, from the 'Spoiled Queen' to the 'People's Servant'" (issue no. 1638, date: 28 Jul 2012), where there was implicit adversity towards the former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi.

Sayidaty magazine displayed the its attempt to follow a political agenda that might be dictated upon the it given its ownership to a Saudi entity this was evident in its cover story about the wife of former Egyptian president Mohammad Morsi, under the title "The First Ladies, Has Egypt Changed?" and a Subtitle "Mohammad Morsi, the Egyptian President's Wife: 'Hajja' Najlaa Ali" (issue no.1638, date:

July 2012) where the article reflects an implicit criticism and minimizing of the president's wife character, this coincides with Saudi Arabia's adversity to the Muslim brethren regime during Mohammad Morsi short presidency term in Egypt. This role that *Sayidaty* played in this article can be commented on through Salam Al-Mahadin view as follow:

But what merits our attention as feminist media researchers is, in my view, the political, social and economic agenda which shapes both Arab and western media choice in ways that delimit a certain type of Arab woman and attempt to "discursively condition" the reader/viewer to accept her as a certain norm. (Al-Mahadin, 2011, p. 7)

This is further explained by Zaid:

The third trajectory in reception studies focuses on the concept of the 'resistant audience'; this questions the long held view in critical mass communication research that ideological and institutional forces are the most important determinants of media texts (Zaid, 2014).

In continuation to my conclusion on the topic of polygamy it was observed in *Sayidaty* magazine the topic was tackled as an individual issue rather than a social one effecting large number of women in the Arab world, this reaction can be seen in some writers work as an indication of the general attitude on some sensitive public issues where Saddeka Arebi writes about her text analysis of a female Saudi writer 'Juhayer Al-Musa'ad':

While Juhayer tends to critique the practices of men, women, government officials, and the religious 'ulama, she rarely resorts to confrontation. This is partly because Juhayer often reduces "social problems" to psychological differences or miscommunication between men and women. She does not tend to question the system or suggest structural changes. (Arebi, 1994).

Further, Showing celebrities and famous stars provides great benefits to the magazine and the entertainment industry in general, both *Sayidaty* and *Laha* included many images and interviews with famous people, this serves the magazine commercially and it also sets its in genre different from serious women

magazines and journals, Wykes and Gunter commented:

With film came the growth of the star culture, nurtured by magazines and the press. Images of famous actresses were used to promote fashion and make-up and names were allied with products leading to the sponsorship of radio programmes, initially by Procter and Gamble, hence 'soap opera' (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 42).

The repetitiveness of some topics mainly 'Marriage' is an indication of the magazine's attempt to shape social reality and embed ideas they support in order to become the norm, this was evident by *Sayidaty* magazine where it consistently emphasized the issue of marriage and the role of women as a house wife. Wykes and Gunter state "Cultivation theory argues that media representations of social reality tend to be stereotyped and repetitive" (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 148).

The studied magazine articles didn't emphasize the image of an attractive woman but rather a close images showing her face and avoiding showing her entire body this was evident throughout the analyzed articles, this can be explained due to the conservative nature of the Arab society which the magazine can't ignore, beside, there is the emphasis on women's role as a housewife which led to showing the traditional regular woman (although through fashion and beauty sections models and actresses were shown), Posavac and other state:

Posavac et al. believed that exposure to media representations of body image could affect women's personal weight concerns through a process of social comparison. The women readers of a magazine containing pictures of glamorous fashion models make comparisons between their own bodies and the bodies of attractive models who can be regarded as representing societal standards of beauty. (Wykes & Gunter, 2005, p. 180).

The images of women accompanying the articles reflects the specific cultural heritage and which part of the Arab world is this female coming from, the importance of the message that clothes pertain can be summarized in what Lurie

(1981) concluded “The dress is not exclusively aimed at a practical function, as shelter from the cold, but reflects peoples’ identity” (Lurie, 1981, p. 31).

We can find women from the Arab Gulf, from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or U.A.E they wear ‘Abaya’, whereas from Jordan or Lebanon they more often don’t wear headscarves but rather wear ordinary western clothing which shows the ‘hybridity’ in appeal towards tradition and religion.

Identifying the Arab women solely from her attire might not be sufficient to yield an accurate explanation about herself where many factors play a role in creating this image so her experience differs from the western women’s which is as Boero points out “In the new society, fashion becomes an important tool to communicate the many identities of the postmodern consumer.” (Boero, 2015, p. 322).

I can conclude Arab Muslim women can’t be regarded to show her utmost identity through her fashion especially those of its covering nature. But still there are elements from her choice of covering that we can interpret that show for an example the extent of her religiosity but still a complete understanding of her identity can’t be reached with the fully covered woman.

Although the studied magazines are reflecting the societies they are being sold in but despite of that they still produce conflicting images, especially the variations in the cover pages and interviewed celebrities and the women which are in the ‘Features’ and ‘Investigations’ section in *Sayidaty* and *Laha* magazine (respectively). This diverse approach is apparent in magazines, Matheson states: “As critics of women’s magazines have shown, such magazines instead invite readers to take up identity positions which may change from page to page, and which often conflict.” (Matheson, 2005, p. 59).

Further on the issue of diverse representation of women in the studied magazines in this thesis, where in an attempt to explain the identity of the woman in the magazine's cover story where her looks might suggest a western personality, but when reading the article it clearly reflects her Arab origin and even sometimes it expresses her religious views, How can this be explained? Tariq Ramadan in his book "Islam and Freedom" explains "One must resist the temptation to reduce one's identity to a single dimension that takes priority over every other" (Ramadan, 2015, p. 37). He further adds "I have long been repeating to Muslims and to my fellow-citizens that I am Swiss by nationality, Egyptian by memory, Muslim by religion, European by culture, universalistic by principle, Moroccan and Mauritian by adoption" (Ramadan, 2015, p. 38).

From this perspective it can be explained or suggested that this woman on the magazine cover is; Lebanese by nationality (or whatever Arab country she is from), Muslim by religion, western by culture.

Finally, this master thesis concludes that the studied Arab magazines have engaged in a reciprocal relation with the reader by trying to affect women's views and elevating marriage as the most important aspect in her life but still the content itself was from within women's reality and experiences, and didn't suggest an overall change and new conditions for the Arab woman.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 1: Sayidaty Magazine Articles Summary

No.	Main topic	Article Title	Date	Issue no.
1.	Marriage	Change in status; Threatening to seek Divorce is a Nightmare that Haunts Men	10 Oct 2015	1805
		50 Thousand Riyal For A Virgin And 30 Thousand Riyal For A Divorced Women	12 Sep 2015	1801
		6 Facts that Makes us Believe in the Power of Marriage	26 Sep 2015	1803
		Warning to Girls out there: Twitter Match Makers are Scammers, Fraud, Crimes and Blackmail	29 Nov 2014	1760
		Today's Brides Don't Know How To Fry An Egg	15 Nov 2014	1758
		Marriage in Hadramout, Strange Ceremonies	9 Aug 2008	1431
		Warning to All Men, There is a Woman in Your Home not a Baby Making Machine and a Servant	14 Nov 2003	1183
		Expatriates And The Countries Daughters "Fast Marriage" And "Fast Divorce". They Realize The Ugly Truth After Getting Married	14 Nov 2003	1183
		Husbands' Attitudes that Turns Wife's Beauty into a Nightmare: My Wife is Beautiful, Don't Come Close	6 Oct 2007	1387
		Wives Who Give Birth to Girls Only Have to Pay the Price	27 Nov 2004	1238
2.	Woman Advice	To Ladies Before 30, 10 Goals You Should Achieve	1 Aug 2015	1795
		Remove Your Husband's Distress: 10 Tips to Help Him	28 Jul 2012	1638

No.	Main topic	Article Title	Date	Issue no.
	Woman Advice [continue]	Is He With You As A Husband And A Partner Or Just For The Intimate Relationship “Sex	02 Mar 2013	1669
		10 Facts about Feeling Lonely for Women and Men	15 Nov 2014	1758
		Your Feelings are the Key to Your Family’s Happiness	7 Jan 2005	1243
		What a Wife Should Do When Her Husband Loses His Vigor	27 May 2006	1316
		Know Yourself from Your Birthday Tree	12 Jan 2007	1348
3.	Polygamy	Inner Conflict Leads the Second Wife Friend the First Wife	1 Aug 2015	1795
		“Iftar” of Polygamous Man, Argument and Preferring of the Second Wife	28 Jul 2012	1638
		Wives in a Polygamous Marriage, Endless Troubles, “Poison”, “Betrayal” And “Theft”	02 Mar 2013	1669
		I Refused Giving Birth to the 7 th Child. So He Married His Nurse and Brought her Home	14 Nov 2003	1183
		Know Your Husband if he has ‘Second Wife’ Symptoms	27 May 2006	1316
		In Yemen, Educated Women Don’t Mind Being Second or Even Third Wife	27 May 2006	1316
4.	Harassment	Civil Rights Activist and International Legal Expert Mrs ‘Rehab Al-Qadoumi’ <i>Sub-title: Harassment Victims Resort to Silence Out of Fear from Society.</i>	10 Oct 2015	1805
		In Part of Sayidaty Campaign To Combat Harassment Saudi Legal Experts Says ‘The Harassment Law Must Include Individual Penalty’	12 Sep 2015	1801

No.	Main topic	Article Title	Date	Issue no.
	Harassment	40 Recommendations to Confront Harassment	3 Oct 2015	1804
		Confronting Harassment starts from the Education	26 Sep 2015	1803
5.	Woman Achievers	A Young Poet: Lurka Speiti Explains “Every Day I Write a Poem that Represent Me”	10 Oct 2015	1805
		Arab Women 2006	12 Jan 2007	1348
		Novelist (Fayzah Gan): I am So Proud of My Success and I Refuse to be Considered a Sociological Case	12 Jan 2007	1348
6.	Health	A Medical Breakthrough In Saudi Arabia and New Hope For Relative’s Marriages and Hereditarily Disease	9 Aug 2008	1431
		Marriage Enhances Physical Immunity and Heart Muscles	9 Aug 2008	1431
		Because of Marital Stress, 90% of Women Gain Weight After Marriage	6 Oct 2007	1387
7.	Single Woman	Ladies of 2015: This is Why the Charming Prince is no Longer Desired	26 Sep 2015	1803
		The Most Provocative Question To Single Women: Why Have Not You Got Married Yet?	15 Nov 2014	1758
8.	Woman in Business	Suha Musa (Woman Entrepreneur) says “People are Unaware of Saudi Woman Strength”	1 Aug 2015	1795
		A success Story of Both Emarati and Saudi Business Women	7 Jan 2005	1243
9.	Career Woman	Opening of “Job Fair” at Prince Sultan University in Saudi Arabia - Princess ‘Hussa’ Daughter of Prince Salman said “Today Women Face Rare Opportunities”	29 Nov 2014	1760

No.	Main topic	Article Title	Date	Issue no.
	[continue] Career Woman	Women Ask “Are Job Opportunities for Pretty Girls Only”	6 Oct 2007	1387
10.	First Ladies	Egypt’s First Ladies, from the “Spoiled Queen” to the “People’s Servant”	28 Jul 2012	1638
11.	Advise to men	So you’d avoid her danger from your home, do not chose her vanity lover	27 Nov 2004	1238
12.	Women civil rights	New Laws for Acquisition of Nationality that change the situation of women who is married to a Saudi man	27 Nov 2004	1238
13.	Women in Men Domain	From Horse riding to Football, Yamani girls venturing into men only sports	7 Jan 2005	1243
14.	Women in Media	7 Media professionals talk to Sayidaty about Saudi Women in Today’s Media: is she commoditized and degraded or is transparency	27 May 2006	1316
15.	Interviews	Sheikh Ahmad Kubaisi (says) My Mother Made Me	6 Oct 2007	1387
		Interview with ex-Egyptian Minister of Culture ‘Mr. Farouq Husni’	29 May 2006	1316
		Dr. Huwayda Harithi (says): Women Greatly Contribute in Maintaining Heritage	15 Nov 2014	1758
		Legal Advisor ‘Hala Hakeem (says) The Media is to be Accused of taking Me from My Family	3 Oct 2015	1804
16.	Celebrities	Lebanese Actress Nicole Saba	26 Sep 2015	1803
		Syrian Singer Heba Noor	29 Nov 2014	1760
		Egyptian Actress ‘Ghada’	1 Aug 2015	1795
		Lebanese Singer ‘Dina Hayek’	12 Jan 2007	1348
		Lebanese TV Host ‘Diala Makki’	12 Sep 2015	1801
		Egyptian TV Host ‘Do’aa Amer’	18 May 2001	1053

TABLE 2: Laha Magazine Articles Summary

No.	Main topic	Article Title	Date	Issue no.
1.	Marriage	The Financial Help A Groom Receives Prior To Getting Married From His Wife To-Be, Could Be Due To Fear Of ‘Humiliation’ Or Out Of Cautiousness From ‘Dependency’	21 Oct 2015	787
		Religious Scholars Command Husbands (they say) ‘Do not Interfere in Your Wives Clothing	21 Oct 2015	787
		Run Away with Your Marriage from the Danger Zone	14 Oct 2015	786
		A Decree To Solve Dowry’s High Expenses And To Limit Weddings Excessive Expenses	30 Sep 2015	784
		A New ‘Fatwa’ from the Women’s Mufti Arouse Controversy (she says) “Looking for a husband Online is Lawful by Shari’ah	30 Sep 2015	784
		A Court Case and A Fatwa From a ‘Prior’ Egyptian Mufti, “My Husband Left Me To Force To Ask For Divorce	23 Sep 2015	783
		Before Marriage: A Psychiatric Certificate Is Required	30 Apr 2014	710
		Is Marriage a Constraint to Ambitions And Hopes	30 Apr 2014	710
		A Controversial ‘Fatwa’, ‘Orfi’ Marriage is Halal	19 Nov 2014	739
		My Husband Is The Same Age As My Father	19 Mar 2008	391

No.	Main topic	Article Title	Date	Issue no.
	[continue] Marriage	Sheikh Al-Zendani (says) 'Friends Marriage, is a Call to Advocate Having Sexual Relationships based On Shari'a Law When Living Abroad	23 Jul 2003	148
2.	Career Woman	The Rich Woman, Is She a Predicament to Men	27 Aug 2014	727
		A Problem That Faces Working Women, Women Complain: (My Husband Wants My Salary)	30 Jul 2014	723
		A Big Scandal And The Religious Scholars Resolve The Issue; Woman Complain Their Husbands Make Them Warranty Them For Their Bank Loans	31 Aug 2011	571
		Women That Married Their Careers	26 Sep 2007	366
		A Candid Interview With The First Woman Marriage Contracts Registrar, (she says) "I Will Fight Divorce And Encourage Marriage By Calling For An Ease On Its Procedures	19 Mar 2008	391
3.	Woman Civil Rights	Women Received their Right to Vote and Nominate Them Selves, It is Time of Work Now	23 Sep 2015	783
		(Faten Bundakji says) There Is Not A Presence for Saudi Women In The Political, Economic And Social Arenas; Faten Bundakji Declares That 'Women Should be Involved In Elections	6 Nov 2013	685
4.	Woman Achievers	Three Women Designers Were Born In Saudi Arabia	21 Oct 2015	787
		100 Women Change The World	6 Nov 2013	685

No.	Main topic	Article Title	Date	Issue no.
5.	Under-age Girls Marriage	Human Rights Organization Stops The Marriage Of Two Underage Girls One of Them Is 11 Years Old - Saudi Arabia Excludes Only Saudi Women From Underage Marriage Law	30 Jul 2014	723
		In Yemen: Little Girls are forced to become mothers	2 Sep 2009	467
6.	Man and Woman Relationships	When Does a Man Envy a Woman	2 Sep 2009	467
		The Religious scholar of Al-Azhar Support ‘Ae’d Al Qarni’ [a Saudi religious scholar], (He says) Religious Scholars Are Demanded To Protect Women	26 Sep 2007	366

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