

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE ARABIAN GULF – THE CASE OF QATAR AND

BAHRAIN

BY

FATEMA MOHAMED ALI MOHAMED ALI

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## COMMITTEE PAGE

The members of the Committee approve the Dissertation of  
Fatema Mohamed Ali Mohamed Ali defended on 14/05/2020.

---

Dr. Mazhar Ahmad Al-Zoubi  
Thesis/Dissertation Supervisor

---

Dr. Amani Awad El Jack  
Committee Member

---

Dr. Eirini Theodoropoulou  
Committee Member

Approved:

---

Ibrahim AlKaabi, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

## ABSTRACT

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Title: Impact of Economic Transformations on the Development of the Status of Women in the Arabian Gulf – The Case of Qatar and Bahrain

Supervisor of Dissertation: Mazhar, A., Al-Zoubi

Neoliberal socio-economic paradigms have become a dominant force in modern societies, including those in the Arabian Gulf region. Their rise has resulted in drastic changes within the role of states towards a focus on the market forces and capital accumulation. Seeking to transcend hydrocarbon-based rentier economic development models, many Gulf states have recently sought to shift the social and economic contractual foundations of their societies through systems of diversification, privatization, and limited social liberalization. With a focus on Qatar and Bahrain, this dissertation seeks to identify the comparative manifestations of neoliberal economic transformations in the region and explore their impact on the status of Qatari and Bahraini women respectively. Given their divergent as well as convergent historical and economic trajectories, this dissertation seeks to critically examine the socio-economic policies and politics that have generated and shaped some gendered subjectivities in both countries. More specifically and recognizing the constituent and hegemonic role of collective gendered identities in many so-called “traditional societies”, this study aims to document the multifaceted and contested expressions of social and cultural identities among women in both societies. Through the analysis of the material conditions, the study investigates the discursive, real, and imagined social roles that underlie women’s identity formations and cultural identifications under

shifting and evolving economic conditions. Given my belief that social and cultural analysis should be grounded in economic and social history, my study applies feminist standpoint theory as well as a critical materialist approach. Standpoint theory enables me to document and interpret women's diverse perspectives and subjectivities within the dominant socio-economic structures in Gulf societies, while the critical materialist approach allows me to trace and analyze the structural conditions that have impacted modern socio-economic practices in those societies. One of the main arguments advanced in this study is that while women working under neoliberal socio-economic conditions are influenced by a market-centric discourse that encouraged individualism and independence, neoliberal ideological discourse, conversely, redefines their roles as mothers and providers of care. Although women's economic integration has come to challenge the notion of men as the sole "breadwinners" through their financial contribution to the family's well-being, patterns of patriarchy and power relations have not been transformed accordingly.

## DEDICATION

*To my beloved parents, Zahra and Mohamed,  
Thank you for unconditional love and support.*

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I am eternally grateful to my parents, who have been part of my journey for the last 15 years. Since the beginnings, they supported my decision in 2005 to pursue a bachelor's degree in International Affairs at Qatar University. I still remember my father's words, "if education is a flaming fire, I will push you in myself". You have raised me to embrace excellence and work for it. Without you both, I truly have no idea where I would be if you had not become the parents whom I desperately needed to pick me up when I was down or gave up.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |      |
|--|------|
| DEDICATION .....   | v    |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....  | vi   |
| LIST OF TABLES .....   | xiii |
| LIST OF FIGURES .....  | xiv  |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....                                | 1    |
| ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE.....              | 5    |
| Status and Subjectivity .....                                | 7    |
| Articulating the Problem .....                               | 8    |
| Research objectives .....                                    | 9    |
| Research Questions .....                                     | 9    |
| Research Method and Data Collection.....                     | 9    |
| Literature Review .....                                      | 16   |
| Neoliberalism, Economy and Gender in Feminist Discourse..... | 17   |
| Impact of Neoliberalism on Women .....                       | 20   |
| Impact of Tourism as a Neoliberal Tool.....                  | 22   |
| The Layout of the Dissertation.....                          | 25   |
| CHAPTER 2: EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS.....   | 30   |
| Liberalism vs. Neoliberalism .....                           | 33   |
| What is Neoliberalism? .....                                 | 36   |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Scientific Assumptions of Neoliberalism.....   | 39 |
| The Free-Market and Economic Freedom.....  | 39 |
| Redefining the Role of the State.....  | 40 |
| The Impact of Free-Market.....   | 41 |
| Materialist Feminism.....  | 43 |
| Standpoint Theory.....   | 46 |
| Theorizing Neoliberal Impacts on Women.....  | 50 |
| The Market-Bias and Women.....   | 53 |
| Summary.....   | 57 |
| <br>   |    |
| CHPATER 3: HISTORICIZATION OF THE ECONOMIC RULES OF GULF<br>WOMEN AND IMPACT OF OIL..... | 60 |
| Women and Economy in Pre-Oil Arab Gulf Societies.....                                    | 61 |
| Rentier State Model.....   | 65 |
| Impact of Oil on Arab Gulf Women.....  | 66 |
| The Present of Gulf Women’s Economic Status.....   | 71 |
| Late Rentierism.....   | 75 |
| The Neoliberal State.....  | 78 |
| Implications for Arab States.....  | 80 |
| Summary.....   | 82 |
| <br>   |    |
| CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND ADAPTATION TO                                    |    |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| NEOLIBERALISM .....   | 84  |
| Formation of a Capitalist Class: Beyond Rentierism .....              | 86  |
| The National Economic Visions 2030: The Pathway to Neoliberalism..... | 89  |
| Economic Characteristics .....  | 91  |
| An Overview: Qatar’s Economy .....                                    | 91  |
| An Overview: Bahrain’s Economy.....                                   | 96  |
| Summary .....   | 102 |
| CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....                                  | 105 |
| Differences Between Generations .....                                 | 108 |
| The Freedom to Choose.....  | 108 |
| Impact of Islam.....  | 110 |
| Support of State and Society .....                                    | 110 |
| Women as producers within a neoliberal framework.....                 | 113 |
| Impact of Tourism, Social Media and Innovation .....                  | 113 |
| Productivity and Entrepreneurship .....                               | 115 |
| Empowerment and Economic Independence .....                           | 117 |
| Job is a Source of Social Empowerment .....                           | 117 |
| Income is a Source of Empowerment.....                                | 119 |
| Economic Inequality .....   | 121 |
| Mothering in age of neoliberalism .....                               | 126 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Maneuver Between Motherhood and Work .....                              | 126 |
| New Mother-Worker Model .....   | 127 |
| Women as Organizers of Consumption .....                                | 129 |
| Impact of Family's Economic Conditions .....                            | 129 |
| Dual Financial Contributors as Partners .....                           | 131 |
| Women as Social Organizers .....  | 132 |
| Reproduction and Household Remain a Female's Duty .....                 | 132 |
| Dependence on Other Female-Relatives of Domestic Workers .....          | 134 |
| Working Conditions of Female Factory-Workers.....                       | 136 |
| Summary .....   | 139 |
| CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS .....                               | 141 |
| Women as Producers .....  | 143 |
| Empowerment and Economic Independence .....                             | 147 |
| Women as Mothers and Organizers of Consumption .....                    | 149 |
| The Social Organizers .....   | 152 |
| Bahraini Women in Garment Factories.....                                | 153 |
| Summary .....   | 155 |
| CHPATER 7: NEOLIBERALISM, TOURISM AND ENTERTAINMENT .....               | 158 |
| Tourism, Commodification of Bodies and Dependency Impact.....           | 160 |
| Tourism's Positive Narrative: A Source of Economic Diversification..... | 163 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Tourism and Sex in Local/Global Gender Constructions .....                     | 167 |
| Prostitution before Independence: Legalization, Status and Societal Esteem.... | 169 |
| The Relationship Between Sex and Neoliberalism .....                           | 172 |
| Summary .....  | 182 |
| CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS.....                                    | 185 |
| Research Limitations.....  | 189 |
| Future Research Recommendations .....  | 190 |
| Practical Contributions.....   | 191 |
| REFERENCES .....   | 192 |
| APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL .....   | 215 |
| APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN INTERVIEWS.....                  | 217 |
| APPENDIX C: BRITICH DEGREE .....   | 222 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <i>Table 1. Percentage of Qatari National Female Labor Force in Relation to Hydrocarbon Contribution to GDP, From Planning and Statistics Authority, Labor Force Survey .....</i>                      | <i>70</i>  |
| <i>Table 2. Percentage of Bahraini National Female Labor Force in Relation to Hydrocarbon Contribution to GDP, From Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA), Bahrain Labor Market Indicators.....</i> | <i>70</i>  |
| <i>Table 3. Qatari Participants' Demographic Information.....</i>  | <i>107</i> |
| <i>Table 4. Bahraini Participants' Demographic Information .....</i>   | <i>107</i> |
| <i>Table 5. Coding Results .....</i>   | <i>113</i> |
| <i>Table 6. Coding Results .....</i>   | <i>116</i> |
| <i>Table 7. Coding Results .....</i>   | <i>125</i> |
| <i>Table 8. Coding Results .....</i>   | <i>129</i> |
| <i>Table 9. Coding Results .....</i>   | <i>131</i> |
| <i>Table 10. Coding Results .....</i>  | <i>135</i> |
| <i>Table 11. Coding Results .....</i>  | <i>139</i> |
| <i>Table 12. . Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism 2018, World Travel and Tourism Council.....</i>   | <i>167</i> |
| <i>Table 13. No. of Vehicles and Passenger through King Fahd Causeway, King Fahd Causeway Authority .....</i>  | <i>169</i> |
| <i>Table 14. No. of Registered Cases of Arrest, alwasatnews, 2010 .....</i>  | <i>181</i> |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <i>Figure 1.</i> The trajectory of dissertation and chapters. ....                                  | 29 |
| <i>Figure 2.</i> Real GDP composition 2017, from Qatar Economics Insight, Qatar. ....               | 93 |
| <i>Figure 3.</i> Contributors of GDP 2017, from Central Informatics Organization, Bahrain.<br>..... | 97 |

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The discovery of oil in the Arabian Gulf region has dramatically reshaped the social forces and power dynamics that animate many of the societies in the area. It has brought major political, economic and social changes. Potter (2017) argues, for example, that the sudden prosperity seemed like a dream to the people in this region. Similarly El-Haddad (2003) asserts that Gulf societies have been undergoing radical change since the 1970s, passing through transitions that influenced the family's structure, values, roles, functions and authority. He argues that oil discovery led to deep integration of Gulf societies in the international capitalist market. These changes transformed Gulf societies into urban societies, making cities the unavoidable reality of life in the Gulf. Oil brought modernization and urbanization processes that influenced family relations and social functions. The tendency towards the small size nuclear family encouraged reconsideration of family planning in terms of numbers of children as a source of support and pride. This tendency has appeared more frequently among urban groups who receive modern education. Moreover, oil wealth has enabled Gulf governments to replace traditional services that were provided by the family by generalized public social services. Education, for instance, became a powerful source of socialization, which expanded the world of new generations and challenged the traditional family roles and functions. In this regard, schooling has contributed to the reduction of the educational gap between women and men and reinforced their economic and, to a lesser extent, political participation in their respective societies. Furthermore, the rising standards of living have enabled parents to provide wide-ranging behavioral alternatives for themselves and their children. The desire of these emergent societies to enjoy life meant overcoming traditional family values. In this regard, these changes gave rise to a culture of consumption that attributed great social

and cultural significance to symbols of material differentiation. Another aspect of value change was related to the role of husband and wife within the social structure. The wife's role has changed, with opportunities to leave the house to work, and, as a result, authority within the family is allocated in accordance with the members' contributions. The wife's share in sustaining material well-being in the family has been expanded to become a widespread phenomenon.

Furthermore, and as Al Muftah (2016) contends, Gulf societies have facilitated the employment of their national women through legislation and laws, most importantly the provisions of their constitutions that emphasize equality between the man and the woman in rights and responsibilities, including education and employment opportunities, which are believed to be compatible with female capabilities. The Gulf states, accordingly, have developed strategies to empower women through the establishment of many institutions that support the woman and the family. However, the increased participation in education of Gulf women, as shown in the statistics, is not reflected in the rates of female employment. Despite the implementation of legislation relating to improvements in birth and maternity leave, for example, Gulf states' economic and social empowerment models seem to have led to labor market structures with gender segmentation, where female labor participation is predominately concentrated in the education and health sectors.

It is clear that no modern socio-economic development has transformed women's status or conditions as much as the emergence of economic and legal institutions in modern Gulf societies. While the examination of family laws and legal practices related to women's status in Gulf societies deserves the most serious and critical attention, the primary goal of this study is the investigation of women's status and attitudes under the evolution of economic realities in those societies. In particular,

and with focus on Qatar and Bahrain, this study seeks to identify the comparative manifestation of economic transformations in the region and explores the impact of those transformations on the status, attitudes and identities of Qatar and Bahraini women respectively. For example, although they both believe in a model of educated and working woman, Qatari and Bahraini women differ in terms of their choice preference of when and why to enter the labor market. As mothers, Bahraini women embrace work-life balance, in comparison to Qatari women who have developed a maneuvering mechanism. The wealthy Qatari society shows a limited impact of neoliberalism on women, with men remaining the primary financial contributors and breadwinners; in contrast, a dual-earners model is significantly emphasized by Bahraini women. A working Qatari woman fosters self-regard and satisfaction with limitation of employment opportunities that are due to neopatriarchal constrains, while Bahraini women believe in the job as a mean to facilitate consumption of goods and services. Although garment factory workers and sex entertainers are identified with Bahraini women's experiences in this study, women of the two countries still face discrimination in employment and payment and continue to perceive reproduction duties as a private concern.

In the years following the World War II, economies in all areas of the world had been governed by state-centered regulatory regimes, but in countries located in North America and Western Europe markets were regulated by Keynesian welfare states. By the 1990s, the communist regimes of the East had collapsed, and the vast majority of countries around the world opened their borders and abandoned strict national development strategies. The new regulatory framework of the global economy has been named 'neoliberalism'. The decline of communism has resulted in an extraordinary advance of 'neoliberalism'. One of the key aspects of neoliberalization processes is the

changing role of the states and its relationship with the economy and society. More specifically, neoliberalism, both as an economic and a social model, shifted the responsibility of the state from being the regulator of the economy to the facilitator of economic opportunities. The relationships between the state, the economy and the society may be interpreted along structural inequalities in the domains of gender, class, ethnicity and labor. However, neoliberalism as a political economic ideology, adapts to local contexts, making it critically important to differentiate between the ideal implementation of neoliberalism, which supports the minimal state and self-regulated markets, and existing practices of neoliberalism. With rejection of the state being the producer, the protector and the inducer, a minimal state means decline of safety nets and entire protective system through which societies seeks to remedy imperfections of the market in relation to social justice, and deregulation of the markets, particularly the financial markets (Bresser-Pereira , 2009). In this respect, neoliberalism is practiced differently in each country and interacts with existing local regulations and market projects uniquely.

Notwithstanding its economic foundation, neoliberalism is not only about the free market, it is also a totalizing socio-economic system. Policies such as privatization, trade liberalization, tourism, financial capitalism and consumption constitute key factors in building the free market. Challenging the rentier model, Qatar and Bahrain have pushed towards models of late-rentierism and post-rentierism, respectively, to diversify their economies. In this regard, tourism has become a vital phenomenon that acts on a global scale, bringing about unprecedented changes in the two countries. Travel and hospitality industries, liberalization of trade in services, and spread of information and communication have contributed to the growth of the tourism industry in both countries, albeit differently. It is a vital source of income with a significant

contribution to GDP in both Qatar and Bahrain and a major source of employment. Mirgani (2019) argued that tourism in the Gulf region, particularly in relation to its museum and souvenir merchandise, has contributed to the formation of a new national identity centered around the consumer. In this regard, citizenship is now primarily realized as being in a relationship with the state and the market. National identity is a commodity and citizenship in the region has become closely related to a market-centered mode. Through the tourism industry, Gulf nation-branding efforts have been directed at international markets. The commercial nationalism and consumption of a particular narrative is used to tell and sell a national story. This new national identity is different from the old national identity, which aimed to build a homogenous society based on the efforts of consolidation regardless of tribal affiliations.

#### ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Neoliberalism as a socio-economic policy paradigm is a set of interrelated policies to boost the role of the market and advance the well-being of individuals. Neoliberalism “proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). Regardless of the different perspectives of neoliberalism as a tool to ensure human well-being, it is a structural factor that influences peoples’ lives and choices. In this regard, one of the principal aims of this dissertation is to investigate the impact of broadly conceived neoliberalism on women’s lives in the Arabian Gulf region, with specific focus on Bahrain and Qatar. Through the integration of women in the labor force as producers and based on the notion that young and educated women have to work, new subjectivities have been developed. Women as workers in a neoliberal environment are influenced by a market-centric discourse that encourages

individualism and independence but also redefines their roles as mothers and providers of care. Although women challenge “males as breadwinners” through their financial contribution to the family’s well-being, patterns of patriarchy have not collapsed. Regardless of Gulf women’s current concentration in the public sector – in education and health – neoliberalism still pushes women to the margins of the market as factory workers and in the service of economy, as will be illustrated in the case of Bahrain.

There is no doubt that markets are mirrors of social divisions existing in a society. Race, gender and class determine who can be included and excluded in some markets, and inversely, markets shape race, gender and class dynamics. Indeed, neoliberalism has reversed the benefits of social welfare citizenship, which had been the hallmark of the twentieth century, particularly the early of 2000s. It has created new economic and social contexts through deregulation, privatization, securitization and dismantling of the welfare state. Although educated women of the Gulf have greatly benefited from the impact of oil discovery in the region, as illustrated in rising female participation in labor market, nonetheless, oil discovery and the incorporation of the local economic structure into world markets has reconfigured the existing patriarchal order. This has replaced the old hierarchies with new, regulated social and economic patterns of female exclusion and segregation – as will be discussed in more detail below. Moreover, both rentier as well as neoliberal conceptualizations of the market hide from the view women’s labor in reproduction, which is not paid, not voluntary and invisible to neoliberal policy makers. Although the Gulf countries have introduced laws and legislation relating to birth and maternity leave, reproduction duties remain a private concern for which mothers depend on other female relatives, nannies or private nurseries. In addition, private firms are still reluctant to employ pregnant women. Neoliberalism is founded on the subordination of what society equates with caregiving

and household's responsibilities. This is one of its main features. Feminists have excessively criticized neoliberalism, both as a practice and as an ideology, arguing that it has confined women's opportunities in the labor market, reinforcing neopatriarchal structures and models. In addition, a marker of neoliberalism is the encouragement of a culture of consumption that targets and identifies women as both objects and subjects of consumption.

### Status and Subjectivity

Material and social developments have influenced women's gendered expectations. The meaning accorded to status is derived from subjectivities resulting from market dynamics. Status is explained by studying the self-descriptions that the various participants give about their image, interests, sacrifices, and satisfactions as members of a labor force. Status of female participants is shaped in accordance with their narratives of how to perceive the job position, why to join the labor market, how the salary contributes to empowerment, and how they maneuver between paid and reproduction duties. In addition, narratives suggest that personal development, autonomy and independence, which are obtained as a result of paid employment, are important sources that critically assess women's place in society. It is important to emphasize that these images of status cannot be separated from the discursive practices in which they are immersed, by virtue of being the non-homogenic group. Family and work responsibilities have created contradictions in lives of these women, redefining their social place in their societies. Subjectivity means to take the perspective of an individual self, which is not objective or neutral, and in this dissertation women's experiences are analyzed in terms of how these women see their roles in relation to the impact of the economy in shaping their identities.

## Articulating the Problem

Neoliberal socio-economic paradigms have become a dominant force in modern societies in the United States, the United Kingdom and much of the rest of the world, including the Arabian Gulf region. Classical liberalism has been revitalized by adapting to the economic and social changes globally (Saunders, 2011; Baez, 2007; Turner, 2008). The movement has been away from social states and redistributive policies towards governments that focus more on market activities and capital accumulation. The rise of neoliberalism has resulted in drastic changes within the state's role by cutting social services and redefining individuals as autonomous economic actors. There is abundant literature focusing on neoliberalism and its impact on women. Many studies have focused on the risk, reasons and impact of neoliberal socio-economic strategies worldwide (Boyd, 2016; Young L. , 1998; Leitinger & Olazabal, 1998; Bako, 2011; Povey, 2016). However, very few studies have been devoted to the assessment of the impact of neoliberal economic structures on gender in the Arab region. Although there are some sources related to Jordan and Arab North African countries, the primary focus of these studies is very narrow with emphasis mainly on tourism (Cooper, 2013; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Challenging the traditional rentier model – which was developed by Hussein Mahdavy to explain the impact of oil boom period and state – society relations in states that generate a large portion of their income from rents, Bahrain for the last 50 years has attempted to shift to neoliberal economic policies and to diversify its economy, while Qatar has been more hesitant, pushing economic transformations within a late-rentier framework – which was developed by Mathew Gray to explain the quasi-rentier aspects into the Arabian Gulf's economies that have become more entrepreneurial and responsive due to impacts of globalization and new state economic and development policies . These attempts have been influencing the

two societies. Thus, it is important to start investigating the impact of these shifts on their peoples, especially Gulf women.

#### Research objectives

This study aims to examine the impact of economic transformations, primarily the adoption of neoliberal policies and the gradual abandoning of the rentier character, on the status of Qatari and Bahrain women. This critical study seeks to identify the manifestations of change within Qatari and Bahraini women's identities under neoliberal economic conditions by exploring differences to which this logic is expressed through women's motivations and interest to join the labor force. Additionally, the study aims to measure the extent to which Qatar and Bahrain adhere to neoliberal socio-economic attitudes, best understood as a manifestation of market logic in relation to social, cultural and economic institutions, policies and practices.

#### Research Questions

There is one principal question to be answered in this dissertation:

What is the impact of the economic transformations on the development of the status of Arabian Gulf women in general, and Qatari and Bahraini women in particular?

There are two secondary questions:

1. How have Gulf women's economic roles differed before and after oil discovery and how have the changes impacted (enabled, restricted, or structured) their participation in the labor force (formally and informally)?
2. What are the socio-economic manifestations of neoliberalism within Gulf societies, and how do they shape gendered subjectivities and social agency (broadly conceived) in those societies?

#### Research Method and Data Collection

"If Women's Studies is to be made into an instrument of women's liberation, we cannot uncritically use the positive, quantitative research methodology" (Mies,

1993, p. 66). Feminist scholars have been critical of dominant positivist epistemological principles, despite the absence of clear definition of what constitutes feminist methodology. In this regard, some have contended that there is no such thing as a feminist method (Letherby, 2003; Fonow & Cook, 2005; Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). Accordingly, they reject dual dichotomies characterizing Western thought, which depicts men as the subject and producers of knowledge, excluding women from the realm of rationality and scientific activities. Thus, many feminists focus on women's experiences – and gender as a system that informs particular roles that people take up in society as both men and women, and are fundamentally concerned with the ethical questions that guide the research practices (Maynard, 1994), highlighting the importance of reflexivity and emotion as a source of insight (Letherby, 2003).

Seeking to explore the experiences of a diverse group of Qatari and Bahraini women, semi-structured, qualitative interviews, and particularly face-to-face interviews seemed to be the most appropriate method to obtain data. Maynard (1994) claims that the argument that advocated the qualitative methods to understand women's lives against quantitative methods of inquiry is rooted in the critique that quantitative methods (surveys and questionnaires) represent a masculinist form of knowing, while qualitative methods (semi-structured or unstructured interviews) focus more on the subjective experiences and meanings of those being researched, which are more appropriate to kinds of knowledge that feminists wish to make available. Feminists emphasize the importance of listening, to recording and understanding women's own descriptions and accounts. As the aim of the project is to explore and examine Qatari and Bahraini women's subjective views of the impact of neoliberalism on their lives and status, the employment and utilization of in-depth interviews as a method is well suited to provide the insights central to this goal. Interviews enable the researcher to

gain an understanding of what the interviewees think and their context-specific thoughts (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). After conducting three pilot interviews in January 2018, a revised interview protocol provided the basis for the conversations and which was submitted for IRB. The pilot interviews, which was conducted in Bahrain, were a small-scale implementation of a group of proposed questions to test whether the proposed questions will actually investigate what it is intended to. It aimed to provide the researcher with some early suggestions about the validity of the research, to obtain experience in conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews and to build rapport with the participants. Topics addressed were differences between women's generations, and research participants' views on work, independence and motherhood. The interview protocol is divided into three sections: general information, general questions, and questions about the economy and its impact on woman's identity and subjectivity (APPENDIX A). Participants were asked similar questions to facilitate comparison during data interpretation. The outcomes of the interviews are not intended to be generalized on all Gulf women. Generalizability requires data on large populations that provides the best foundation for producing broad generalizability. The larger the sample population, the more the researchers can generalize the results. This research is meant to study a certain population of a focused locality in a particular context – both Qatari and Bahraini women. To encourage generalizability of the study's findings, it would have to be repeated with the same framework but with different groups of women in the region.

Face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 28 female participants, aged between 26 and 66, in the period between May 2019 and December 2019 in Qatar and Bahrain. Interviews of Bahraini women were conducted during spring and summer breaks, and thus took more time than the interviews with

Qatari women, which were conducted between August and October 2019. Inclusion criteria for selection was based on: (1) research participants were above 18 years of age in order to be able to give their consent, (2) Qatari or Bahraini female nationals (citizens of Qatar and Bahrain), (3) working women without a university degree, and (4) residing in Qatar or Bahrain. As the research aims to examine the impact of neoliberal economic transformations on women, the large age-range enabled me to interview a diverse group of Qatari and Bahraini women from different socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels. There were four research participants who retired from work during the interviewing period, all of whom were Bahrainis – two retiring from the public sector and two from the private sector, while 22 participants were still working: 20 participants in the public sector – thirteen Qatari participants and seven Bahraini participants, and two participants working in the private sector – one Qatari participant and one Bahraini participant. Interviews were conducted in Arabic as it is the native language of all participants. Arabic and English languages were used in the consent form (APPENDIX B). The data collected was translated into English for the purpose of publication of the dissertation.

The research participants were selected through my established connections, which was made possible by the help of family and friends, and subsequent snowballing. A reason behind choosing this type of sampling was that it placed a focus on likely women participants. Also, the Gulf political crises at the time between Qatar and its neighbors (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain) made travelling very difficult and expensive. In addition, Bahraini participants feared sharing information with a student studying in Qatar, while Qatari participants perceived me as an outsider. To overcome suspicion and fear and establish an environment of acceptance and openness, I provided detailed information about the study and requested

written consent once contact was established. I allowed participants to ask me personal questions to know me better, given that during the interviews, participants would be disclosing very private and emotional information about their lives and families. This helped me better understand each participant's experience. However, I did have the feeling of being a foreigner to a few of the participants given their refusal to answer specific questions or share certain experiences. To provide the Bahraini participants with more comfort, my mother was present during some of the interviews. Her presence helped with the trust issues that Bahraini participants expressed when asked for their consent because I have not lived in Bahrain for 15 years. Also, a friend accompanied me during two interviews in Qatar because she introduced me to the two participants, and they felt more comfortable during her presence. Although I used my established connections to choose the research's participants, I did encounter some bitterness and resistance during the interviewing process. Sometimes it took few days to receive the consent by some of the participants because they feared the impact of their participation. I sent some of them the consent form days before meeting them face-to-face so they could think and deliberate the consequences of their participation with their family's relatives. During the interviews, some participants refused to share their personal information such as age, marital status and occupation. Thus, I explained the procedure by which no names or identifying information would be included in any publications or presentations and the responses to these interviews would remain confidential. One of the critical issues I encountered during the interviews was how to simplify the questions. Neoliberalism is not a daily topic for women. Even those participants with a university degree lacked knowledge about the concept. Before starting the interviews, I introduced the topic of the study and focused on the concept of neoliberalism. For some participants, neoliberalism was a new concept, and thus I

tried to explain its economic pillars based on the ideas of free market, minimal state, privatization, trade liberalization and financialization, while others found it be incompatible with Islamic traditions because it encourages liberalization and the loosening of trade and cultural barriers.

The consent form is an important tool to meet the academic institution's requirements, particularly the guidelines of the Institute Review Board (IRB), which focus on voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and the opportunity of withdrawal. There was one potential participant who, when was asked to sign the consent form, panicked and withdrew. Interviews were recorded with permission, and I took notes during the interviews to preserve time required to transcribe and code them. The basis of the research is the researcher-researched relationship. Ethical issues arising from face-to-face interviews should be highlighted. Interviews are a two-way exchange shaped by ideas and feelings of the researcher and researched (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This relationship is controlled by power imbalances. The researcher has the control over the material. I had the power to organize and present data, turning the participants' lives into a text. There was a mixture of feelings, satisfaction on the one hand on obtaining the findings that supported my PhD project but guilt on the other in that I could not help or alter the participants' realities. However, participants were not always in a powerless position as they could deny the researcher's access to their experiences and/or withhold information they deemed private.

To ensure that research is conducted ethically, some researchers hand their interpretation of the data back to the participants. However, I decided not to engage in this strategy for two reasons. First, data interpretation was conducted in English, which constituted a challenge for some participants. Second, women may not take into account the role of patriarchal economic structures when narrating their experiences.

Furthermore, the issues of representation emerge at different stages of the research. Although the research tried to include a diversity of women's experiences, time constituted a challenge to having bigger population samples. The dangers of speaking across difference of sects in the case of Bahrain and of tribalism in the case of Qatar were clear. Speaking for others means engaging in the act of representing their situation, which is based on interpretation (Alcoff, 1995). Objectification may cause potential exploitation (Patai, 1991). By transforming interview transcripts into English, I was at risk of undermining the worthiness of the participants' native language - Arabic. Therefore, I admit the difficulty of retaining the specificity of language in translation. In this regard, as the research seeks to study the meanings in women's subjective experiences, it is important to reflect on the relation between subjective experience and language. The relation between the subjective experience and language is a two-way process, in which language is used to express meaning and language influences how meaning is constructed (Polkinghorne, 2007). Translation between languages involves interpretation and thus the subjective experiences of Qatari and Bahraini women in the source language (Arabic) had to be interpreted and transferred into target language (English) in such a way that the reader understands what participant meant. In addition, rich use of participants' quotes contributes to the trustworthiness of the study, but the translation of quotes posed specific challenges (Temple, 2008). One of the main challenges was to find or use the best English wordings, because in translation the words are literally not the participant's anymore. The support of a professional translator could help but finding a translator who could understand the colloquial languages of Bahraini and Qatari women was difficult. Moreover, seeking to interpret the data is another dilemma. The distance between the meanings as experiences by the participants and the meanings as interpreted in the findings should be as close as

possible (Polkinghorne, 2007). Many of the participants I interviewed had interpretative frames that were different from mine. I tried to work out the conflict between ‘researcher knows, and participant does not’. My relationship with the participants was never an equal one. My personal experiences combined with feminist theory significantly impacted my understanding of the role of gender relations of power and patriarchy on the interview process and the outcome of the research and determined both my research and fieldwork questions. Harding (1987) emphasizes that the beliefs and behaviors of the researcher are part of the empirical evidence for or against the claims advanced in the results. My gender assumptions, beliefs and behaviors were placed within the frame of the picture as I was interviewing the participants and analyzing their responses.

The experiences of the participants were supported by secondary sources and quantitative data from several governmental institutions and international agencies. This method of collection is central to this research because quantitative data represents the one unified identity of Arabian Gulf women and neglects the existence of multiple identities. This dissertation adopts a “standpoint” that the perspectives and experiences of those women (individuals who are excluded or marginalized) can reveal the multiple subjectivities and identities of Qatari and Bahraini women.

#### Literature Review

The rise and development of neoliberal socio-economic ideology has generated a wealth of studies attempting to interpret and analyze its social, political and economic impact on modern societies. Notwithstanding the wide and broad range of discussions that have emerged in this regard, the primary focus of this literature review is limited to the neoliberalism impact on women. This topic has occupied a central status in feminist scholarship. The transformation of labor markets and the rise of service

economies under neoliberal conditions has had a devastating impact on women around the world. In this regard, systematic privatization, deregulation and flexibilization have affected women profoundly and disproportionately. Empirical work was conducted on different countries to examine the costs and benefits of neoliberalism in relation to citizenship, labor market, and education that is discussed below. Most importantly, the shift toward a neoliberal economy has encouraged the development of a service/tourism industry and this has required more women to be involved. Lack of labor market advantages and existing patriarchy keeps women with very limited options for survival. This literature review is divided into three sections. The first section discusses neoliberalism within a gender discourse. The second section elaborates the impact of neoliberalism on women and is based on empirical studies. The third section reviews the impact of tourism, as a neoliberal tool, on women and their survival strategies.

#### *Neoliberalism, Economy and Gender in Feminist Discourse*

The emergence of feminist research has led to the documentation of how women and feminized activities are represented as inferior and marginal to male-oriented activities. The feminist discourse has evolved to recognize the omission of women and to add them to prevailing narratives, correcting androcentric bias. This effort has contributed to the understanding of relationships between women's and men's identities, activities and inequalities of power. The 1990s literature emphasized the gender blindness of neoclassical economics. Other literary works have emphasized that the anti-poverty programs reinforce conservative notions of womanhood and women's role within the family. However, even those in the development institutions, such as the World Bank and the Department for International Development, have never grasped the concept of gender, although they have developed a growing interest in women (Cornwall, Gideon, & Wilson, 2008). For feminists, considering women an empirical

category means inserting them in the picture of economic reality but at the same time raises deeper questions about “how the conceptual structures themselves presuppose masculine experience and perspective” (Peterson, 2005, p. 501). Thus, gender became a governing code, representing the shift towards more constructivist and poststructuralist commitments that conceive gender as analytical.

The impact of globalization matters in the political economy of neoliberalism. “Globalization is a gendered process that reflects both continuity and change” (Peterson, 2005, p. 507). Feminists argue that globalization distributes benefits and costs unevenly between men and women. Men who are privileged continue to dominate the institutions of authority and power. The devaluation of feminized bodies, identities and activities is taken for granted. “It has particular relevance for economics where assessments of value are key” (Peterson, 2005, p. 507). He argued that devalorization is not limited to women but includes men and every work considered to be ‘unskilled, menial and merely reproductive’. He suggests an analytical framing of reproductive, productive (formal) and virtual economies to understand the terrain of globalization. Globalization affects productive economy in six ways. First it has caused the decline in world prices and demand for non-oil primary products that affected the Third World economies, resulting in unemployment and out-migration in search of work. Secondly, de-industrialization affected the industrialized countries, resulting in flexibilization; more temporary jobs with fewer benefits. Flexibilization means greater insecurity of employment and income. Thirdly, the shift towards information-based services, a shift that works in favor of countries with developed technology infrastructure. Fourthly, feminization of labor markets, in which flexibilization becomes the norm. Gender stereotypes perceive women as most suitable for these jobs, including feminized men. Fifthly, the increase in flows of people which affects the personal and collective

identities and cultural reproduction. Sixthly, neoliberal policies are gender-blind. Privatization affects women the most. All these conditions force people to pursue survival strategies and seek income however they can. Such conditions do not only feminize women and men, but also shape who works, and how economies are defined by masculinist ways of thinking. On the other hand, the reproductive economy is influenced by the division between the public and private spheres. Socialization and caring labor continue to be stereotyped as women's work that is unpaid and undervalued. As neoliberal globalization reduces the cultural and material resources necessary for the well-being of families, women become disproportionately responsible for family survival. As a result, women rely on informal work to ensure their own and their family's well-being. However, due to the result of deregulation, flexibilization and worsening conditions in the formal economy, among the limited choices that women have as survival strategies are providing domestic service or being in the sex industry. The virtual modes of economy include financial, informational and cultural markets. Financial markets increase the socialized risks because women-gendered sensitive analysis is absent from the financial order. The informational markets do not transfer goods only but transfer gendered knowledge and thinking and cultural codes. The cultural markets consist of the exchange of aesthetic cultural symbols, which are treated as consumerist goods. As consumerism becomes a way of life, the market creates codes that determine what is worth consuming. Gender and the reproductive economy, including stereotypes, continue to identify women as key consumers whose primary motivation for consumption is to please men and improve family life.

However, the fundamental notion of neoliberal economic policies has been shaken as the relationship between neoliberalism, feminism and empowerment is contested by scholars. Generally, some scholars argue that neoliberal policies have not

been bad for women, as they have contributed to their pathways of empowerment. They believe that neoliberalism destabilized patriarchy and stressed choice. Indeed, neoconservatism suffocated the liberating elements of neoliberalism. While feminists define empowerment as change for women and being able to negotiate and challenge injustice and inequality, institutions like the World Bank reduce it to accommodating women within rather than challenging and transforming the existing social order. Critically important to feminists is the way in which women are represented. Scholars who have contributed to *IDS Bulletin* have indicated that neoliberalism portrays women as the ‘protective mother’, resulting in the heterosexual family becoming the key site for neoliberal governmentality (Cornwall, Gideon, & Wilson, 2008).

#### *Impact of Neoliberalism on Women*

Although neoliberalism has increased labor participation, it reinforces horizontal segregation. Many OECD countries have experienced a significant increase in the participation of women in the labor market. The flexible nature of the neoliberal labor markets could explain why the UK, Canada and Australia perform relatively well compared to other countries with more stringent labor market legislations. Most importantly, a rise in the participation rate of women in the UK, for instance, is directly related to the move towards a service economy, which provides flexible working arrangements. Indeed, the demand for female labor, which requires general skills, is higher in the service sector. However, the rise in the participation of women in the labor market has accompanied an increase in low skilled and low paid jobs for women. A survey in 2015 showed that British women more than men worked in administration and caring. Even at the same occupational level, men and women tend to be assigned different job tasks. Such a trend is referred to as horizontal segregation. There is evidence of increasing feminization of certain sectors in the UK, US, France and

Canada. These sectors are known as ‘pink collar professions’, such as entire subsectors of health and education. A study by the European Union measured the top preferred sectors of work for women. It found that the most preferred sector for women is health and social work, representing 40% of total female employment. Most importantly, segregation starts at schools in term of occupation choices, but occupational segregation is reinforced in the transition from education to employment. Although horizontal segregation exists in countries that have not restructured their labor markets, evidence suggests that horizontal segregation in countries with neoliberal economies, such as the UK, is higher than the rest (Dalingwater, 2018).

Despite appearing gender neutral, neoliberalism has an implicit assumption that “women are subsumed within the household providing important reproductive services, leaving men to be the individuals and heads of households who enter the free market and the public sphere” (Sarker, 2006, p. 19). The implementation of free market policies and structural adjustment, promoted by international institutions such the World Bank, has particular implications for women. Privatization, for example, reduces the size of state bureaucracies, which reduces employment opportunities for middle-class professional women who work as teachers, nurses and social workers. In addition, removal of food subsidies pushes poor household women to adopt survival strategies (Sarker, 2006).

Privatization benefits elites but the dismantling of welfare states undermines the quality of life of many people. Women have suffered from massive unemployment following the decline of social services. In seven out of 18 European countries in 1989, women were pushed out of high-income and high-status positions such as those in public management and universities. Many of them were forced to turn to prostitution or begging. Women also are disproportionately represented among disadvantaged

group in the South. They do not benefit from change because of the patriarchal social structure that privatizes childcare as women's responsibility. Jaggar (2001) commented:

Pre-existing patriarchal social structures tend to limit women's direct access to any new wealth entering Southern economies as a result of economic globalization; women may access wealth through marriage, but often they are not in positions from which they can profit directly from the economic change. (p. 305)

Young (1998), for instance, focuses on the impact of neoliberalism on Mexican women, questioning the assumption that neoliberal reforms instituted in the recent years have been created for women to gain more control over their economic lives and thus lead them into new and stronger positioning. The success of the 1971 Mexican law allowing women to hold positions of authority in ejidos – i.e. land held in common and farmed individually – depended upon how gender neutral the market was. Women were disadvantaged, but men also learnt that legal title to lands does not mean much with the withdrawal of government's support. A women's regional council had no effect on governmental policies or society at large and the Mexican political initiatives were described as women taking care of women.

#### *Impact of Tourism as a Neoliberal Tool*

Anthias (2013) rethinks the intersections between political economy, gender and sexuality. The binary of culture and the economy moved away from political economy, but a new perspective has started to treat economy as culturally embedded. According to this perspective, economic processes do not only offer explanations, but require an understanding of the social and political conditions of existence. They cannot be situated outside their embeddedness in modern societies. It is important to emphasize

that economic processes and mechanisms are not related to the production and reproduction of material life only, but the material and symbolic dimensions intertwine. Indeed, the material consists of cultural and social capitals, and relationships of gender, sexuality and ethnicity. Materiality is not understood in terms of allocation of and struggle for resources, but how race, gender and sexuality operate to naturalize social relations and determine access to material resources. This can be examined through the impact of the neoliberal discourse that reproduces meaning through assumptions of economic growth and financial transactions that are gendered. For instance, trafficking lies within gendered migration, labor contexts and women's realities. Trafficking is not identified with prostitution only, but it relates to other labor conditions such as low-paid workers and maids. Trafficking is not linked to lack of women's agency, but to the perception of it by women migrants as one of the few options for survival. Indeed, feminists privilege gender in understanding sex trafficking, but they fail to involve the intersectionality in terms of the interlocking relationship between gender, race, ethnicity and class issues articulated in specific contexts for specific women. Thus, it is important to analyze prostitution in relation to global capital.

Tourism has been conceived as the key factor for growth in contemporary economies because it can exploit natural resources as a mean of profit accumulation. However, tourism perpetuates inequalities. Wearing (2001) emphasizes that "in many cases, a developing country's engagement with tourism serves simply to confirm its dependent, subordinate position in relation to advanced capitalist societies – itself a form of neo-colonialism" (p. 238). In these countries, tourism is explicitly pursued as a means of earning foreign exchange.

Weitzer (2011) in his article '*Sex Trafficking and the Sex Industry: The Need for Evidence-Based Theory and Legislation*' argues that the oppression paradigm has

perceived sexual commerce as institutionalized subordination of women, but it is challenged based on trafficking being seen as a robust mythology. Proponents of the oppression paradigm are committed to eradicating the entire sex industry, supported by radical feminism. The oppression paradigm's argument is that sexual commerce rests on structural inequalities between men and women and that male domination is intrinsic to sexual commerce. To further discredit prostitution, the oppression paradigm fuses it with sex trafficking. Weitzer (2011) opposes this position, arguing that it is not supported by evidence, and some migrants, as Laura Agustin (2007) emphasizes, like the idea of being found beautiful or exotic abroad. Weitzer (2011) claims that there is a discrepancy between the magnitude of the problem and the number of confirmed cases, while NGO figures are formulated for purposes of advocacy.

Mason (1999) in *'Tourism and the Sex Trade Industry in Southeast Asia'* examines sex tourism and how it is a product of tourism and development. She argues that sex trade as it has existed in Asia can be traced back over hundreds of years. However, its increase was due to the commercialization of the rice trade and Chinese migrants to areas around Bangkok. Also, the arrival of the American military during the Vietnam War sustained the supply/demand relationship. However, after the dispersal of the American troops, the prostitution industry was left without clients. Then tourists filled this demand.

Sanders (2012) in her paper, *'Sex Trafficking in Southeast Asia: How Neo-Liberalism Has Bolstered the Global Sex Trade'*, argues that neoliberal globalization has deepened inequality and exploitation between nations. As a result, "canonization of profitable endeavors and the devaluation of socio-economy" have taken place, making countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines among the main promoters of the sex trafficking industry worldwide. Such factors have contributed to the

vulnerability of individuals, especially women who are exposed to the inequalities of markets. Additionally, the capitalist patriarchy has made women “the nation’s most profitable product”. She opposes the claim that Southeast Asian women who are involved in the sex market choose it as an employment opportunity. In Southeast Asia, women’s involvement is a result of capitalist patriarchy and exploitation that deprive women of other employment options and limit their opportunities to become economically independent. However, the main question is how neoliberalism contributes to the foundations of the sex trade in Southeast Asia. Neoliberalism, which is a market-driven ideology, is built on principles of trade and free markets as engines of growth. However, it imprisons poor countries. One of the methods through which neoliberalism fosters the sex industry is deregulation of borders, resulting in the sexual commodity becoming borderless. “The process of trafficking women has become a more efficient, fluid and seamless process since borders have become unfettered”. For example, Thai women, after neoliberal development efforts since 1981, migrated to Japan to be sex workers. A second method of neoliberalism that fosters the sex industry is privatization. The focus is on profit and not on levels of standards of living. Women are the first to lose the ability to access employment or public social services. A third method is through the strengthening of gender inequality. Women in Southeast Asia have limited access to higher education, property and capital. With little ability to produce income outside the home, they become a financial burden. About 35% of daughters in Thailand and Vietnam are sold into the sex trade.

#### The Layout of the Dissertation

The dissertation has eight chapters, including the introduction and conclusions and discussions. The second chapter addresses the epistemological and theoretical frameworks. It starts by exploring the differences between liberalism and neoliberalism

and their tenets. As a descendent of liberalism, neoliberalism is a modified version favoring free-market capitalism. The chapter discusses assumptions related to free-market economic freedom and the redefinition of the role of the state, because it has been considered a threat to freedom, becoming a forum and referee, and an influencer of the lives of people, their interactions and how they express their beliefs, beyond its conventional role in production and distribution of goods and services. It also discusses the theoretical framework of this dissertation, which is based on materialist feminism and standpoint theory. Materialist feminism emphasizes that women's experiences cannot be understood outside their historical contexts that include the economic developments in a society. The contributions of feminists have been essential, resulting in the inclusion of social reproduction and the analysis of women's oppression. Capitalism and patriarchy have fed the paradigm that has emerged from gendered analysis. Choosing this theory is crucial to identifying the material conditions of women's lives. Additionally, standpoint theory treats women's experiences as an indicator of reality. It allows the researcher to go beneath the surface, challenging the hegemonic knowledge. It is a valuable lens to locate different women's subjectivities as a result of their interactions with the market-economy.

The third chapter historicizes the economic roles of Gulf women before the discovery of oil. The belief that Gulf women have started to play an economic role only after the discovery of oil and opportunities for education is seen as education invalid. Gulf women were merchants, investors, teachers, entertainers, midwives and others. Wives of pearl divers were fully responsible for indoor and outdoor activities when their husbands were absent for months and Bedouin women were influencers of commercial and political lives. Oil has resulted in the withdrawal of Gulf women from the public sphere and limited their participation in the labor force to just a few fields

such as non-tradable sectors. Gulf women are underrepresented in the labor force regardless of their educational attainments.

The fourth chapter discusses the current features of the economies of Qatar and Bahrain respectively to understand the relationships between neoliberalism and the two countries' economic transformations. It explores the change in the role of oil and its contribution to the national income, while highlighting the desire to diversify. To diversify, Qatar and Bahrain needed to liberalize their economies to boost competitiveness in multiple areas, such as business, trade, finance, tourism and entrepreneurship, and particularly in the private sector. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the importance of national visions as an indicator of neoliberal economic reforms.

The fifth chapter is a summary of the interviews. It also elaborates the process of coding and developing categories and themes. The coding process came up with several themes: women as producers within a neoliberal framework, mothering in the age of neoliberalism, mothers as organizers of consumption, as social organizers, the implications of economic inequality, empowerment and economic independence and the working conditions of factory workers.

The sixth chapter analyzes the new identities and subjectivities of Gulf women as producers, as new mothers, as organizers of consumption, as social organizers, as independent women and as factory workers, resulting from their interaction with the market and the patriarchal structure. It embraces the diversity of women's subjectivities, emphasizing that each experience is unique, regardless of the collective group's identity.

The last chapter researches the emergence of a sex-worker subjectivity. It aims to explain how the neoliberal economic policies materialize women's bodies. It

explores the impoverishment of certain groups, which are women in most cases, and how relative poverty acts to push them into the sex trade. The development of air travel contributes to the increasing numbers of those who come to Bahrain for tourist purposes. Opening the market and encouraging the polarization of regional and international investments have contributed to the creation of a 'culture of consumption'. Prosperity of the middle class has motivated more people to buy sex services in a much wider range.

Figure 1. demonstrates the trajectory of the dissertation. The decline of Gulf women's economic roles pre-oil due to the impact of rentierism, resulting in women's withdrawal from the public sphere and concentration in non-tradable sectors. The neopatriarchy structure has been reinforced by the economic transformations taking place in Qatar and Bahrain, towards models of neoliberalism represented in late-renterism and post-rentierism respectively. The economic transformations have demanded specific jobs to be occupied by Gulf women. On the other hand, new gendered subjectivities have been developed.

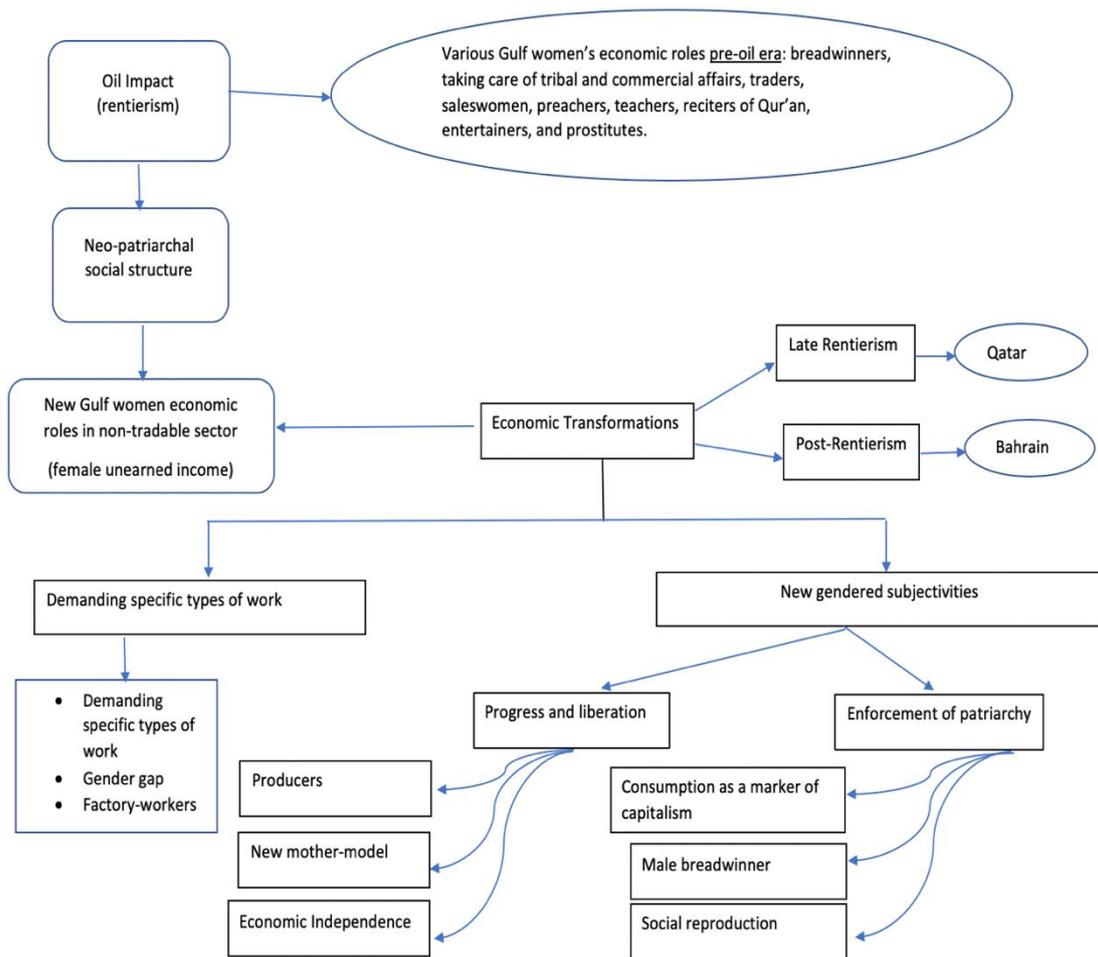


Figure 1. The trajectory of dissertation and chapters.

## CHAPTER 2: EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Over that last fifty years, neoliberalism became the dominant ideology in the United States, the United Kingdom and much of the world. During this time, classical liberalism was revitalized adapting to the economic and social changes globally (Saunders, 2011; Baez, 2007; Turner, 2008). The rise of neoliberalism resulted in drastic changes within the state's role by cutting social services and redefining individuals as autonomous economic actors. Created in the mid-1970s, neoliberalism attempts to exclude rival narratives and other forms of theories to create a powerful theory about the ways in which the world operates (Saunders, 2011; Eagleton, 1991). Although many peoples cannot identify the central tenets of neoliberalism, they structure their lives and beliefs around neoliberalism. It becomes indivisible from their fundamental ideas. Neoliberalism is rarely discussed in Qatar or Bahrain as people become quietly defensive when are called liberal/neoliberal, while many are unfamiliar with the term that defines the state's economic policies. It is perceived as a conspiracy tool or non-Islamic. The state's discourse uses the term 'liberal' to refer to the action taking by the government to change and open the economy. At the surface, the manifestation of neoliberalism might appear to be incongruent. The two governments do not use directly term 'neoliberal' to describe its economy and majority of Gulf citizens do not understand the core ideas of neoliberalism. Then, how can neoliberal ideology be analyzed as the dominant discourse of the two countries? The answer is found in the characteristics of neoliberalism and how it is grounded in the general individual's experiences and consent to certain ideas, policies and institutions. The world people see and interact with, and the interpretations they put on it becomes the only world. It does not only define social, economic and political policies and institutions but also dictates how individuals make day-to-day decisions that structure

their lives. Neoliberalism, as other socio-economic theories, obscures the negative social and economic impacts of their implementation. It provides only a partial picture of its impact in Qatar and Bahrain, which presents a fragmented truth concerning the economic and social conditions that sprung from neoliberalism. As the public face of neoliberalism appears to be largely beneficial for the state and society, a comprehensive examination of the impact of neoliberalism requires understanding the Qatari and Bahraini women's experiences, which may be incongruent with the dominant discourse of neoliberalism.

By examining the fundamental assumptions of neoliberalism, it is possible to understand in which ways it shapes individual's approach to the world, and hence, examining the status and roles of Qatari and Bahraini women. Demonstrations of the ways in which the application of neoliberal tenets manifest assists in understanding the changes to the core roles and status of Qatari and Bahraini women in the household units. Although it is difficult to find one official document as a reference to neoliberalism, Milton Freidman's literary work can assist researchers to understand this ideology. Allocating the dissertation within the lens of neoliberalism provides an analytical ground for the fieldwork. It, additionally, helps the researcher to explain the transformations within the Bahraini government's role in economy and social services. This chapter has three sections. The first section begins with exploring the differences between liberalism and neoliberalism. The historicization of the two terms helps in understanding the similarities and differences. It also important to explain the tenets of liberalism to emphasize the differences between economic liberalism/neoliberalism and liberalism in general. Then, it is followed by a general discussion of the historical development of neoliberalism, stating the importance of the term in comparison to existing liberal approaches. The role of Chicago Boys and Washington Consensus is

highlighted throughout the historical and theoretical narrative of neoliberalism. The third section explains the three assumptions of neoliberalism in relation to the free market, role of the state and impact on society. The first assumption analyzes the role between the free self-regulated market, competitive capitalism and freedom, which can be achieved through the role of private enterprises. While a limited role is allocated to the state, its role is critically important when individual freedoms conflict. It arbitrates and enforces the rules, while having a principal role in cases of monopoly, provision of public goods and care responsibility. Concerning the third assumption, the market works as an appropriate guide for all human actions. It holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing market transactions. This part insists on the role of the market in creating a healthy life when is left alone. The chapter, furthermore, provides an exploration of the ways in which neoliberalism is perpetuated, explaining the features, policies and practices of a neoliberal state. It emphasizes the existence of divergence between theory and practice and that adaptations vary depending on the state form existing prior to transformation.

The second section addressed the theoretical lens used to analyze interviews and guide the research outcomes. The study adopts the neo-Marxist feminist approach, particularly the Materialist Feminism, and uses Standpoint Theory, as an analytical and epistemological tool, to explain women's subjectivities emerging from their interactions with the neoliberal system. Through the development of a materialist foundation for the theory of gender, patriarchy/neopatriarchy and capitalism, in form of neoliberalism, are used as a paradigm of gender analysis. Grounded in truth embodied in women's experiences, standpoint theory accounts for the multiplicity of women's perspectives and diversity of women's experiences. As an epistemological tool, it entails a subjectivist approach to knowledge that privileges the experience of

knowers as the source of knowledge. As an analytical tool, it suggests a way of gathering data for analysis presupposing multiplicity, diversity and complexity. Thus, rather than asserting the truth of any particular claim about Gulf women experiences, it requires the collection of competing claims advanced by Gulf women.

The third section tries to theorize the impact on neoliberal transformations on women. Understanding the impact of neoliberal policies requires the analysis of the impact of the prescriptive policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is hard to find a theoretical model addressing the impact of neoliberalism on women, but a general position regarding the impact can be found in the existing researches and studies about women around the world. To theorize the impact of neoliberalism, it starts with an analysis of the roles of women in society to address the changes that neoliberal reforms have brought to their lives. Understanding women's roles cannot be separated from the analysis of the patriarchal system that neoliberal transformations modify and amplify, which is addressed in this section. It ends with discussing the male-bias in market and the impact of neoliberal market on women's lives.

#### Liberalism vs. Neoliberalism

The term 'liberalism' from the Latin 'liber' means 'free' referring to the philosophy of freedom (Mises, 2005). Liberalism encompasses a group of political, social and economic ideas and doctrines. It is important to emphasize that liberalism today is poorly understood and misrepresented by wrongly identifying it with conservatism. On the other hand, the American use of the term 'liberalism' is associated with 'social democrat' (Butler, 2015). Traditional liberalism, i.e. classical liberalism, which has roots and origins as a political and economic movement in episodes of English history. Liberalism, generally, is defined by Encyclopedia Britannica as a

“political and economic doctrine that emphasizes individual autonomy, equality of opportunity and the protection of individual rights (primarily to life, liberty and property), originally against the state”. In political thought, liberalism is associated with rule of law, non-authoritarianism and civil and political liberties; while in economy, it is associated with an unplanned economy, competitive market and private ownership. In international relations, liberalism means idealism instead of realism, international cooperation and soft power. In addition, a society can be called liberal if tolerance exists in relation to different religions, doctrines and beliefs. The ideas that define the liberal tradition in political thought originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with Baruch Spinoza, John Locke, Adam Smith and other thinkers (Freeman, 2017). It arose early with the development of capitalism and became strong with the development of an industrial middle class since 1750s. Many theories that emerged since the English Civil Wars and French and American revolutions provided the basis for liberalism, but the nineteenth century was the heyday of what can be termed ‘classical economic liberalism’. Adam Smith’s ideas, who lived in the eighteenth century, triumphed in the nineteenth century laying the theoretical foundation in economics for classical economic liberalism (Harrison & Boyd, 2003). Today this economic liberalism is often called *Palaeoliberalism* – old liberalism according to the Greek expression *palaeo*, which means ‘old’ – in contrast to the neoliberalism of current time (Stegmann, 2004). He argued for free markets, no government interference, and free decisions to be made by free individuals as the basis for ever-greater prosperity for all (Harrison & Boyd, 2003).

To understand classical liberalism, there are ten principles that liberals agree on – favoring individual freedom/liberty, primacy of individual, minimizing coercion, toleration, limited and representative government, rule of law, spontaneous order, property, trade and market, civil society and common human values. Classical liberals

want to maximize freedom in political, social and economic life, regardless of different grounds for this conclusion based on the ideas of natural rights, social contract, or requirement for progress. Thus, for classical liberals the individual is more important than the collective. Additionally, they give the monopoly on the use of force to the government, but they want to keep it to the necessary minimum. Human differences are a fact of social life and cannot be eliminated. Given that, toleration will always be a necessary part for peaceful cooperation and well-functioning society. Because power tends to corrupt, classical liberals believe that representative and constitutional democracy is the best means for keeping state's institutions accountable to people. There is no need for large and powerful government, because it is not the basis of social order. Social institutions are the result of free human action. Another principle that restrains power is rule of law, insisting that the law should apply equally to everyone, regardless of race, religion, language and gender. Furthermore, wealth is created by mutual cooperation of individuals in the marketplace, not by governments. It requires respect of private property and free movement of people, goods, services, capital and ideas. In addition, civil society provides a buffer between individuals and governments. People are not isolated and voluntary associations are better at providing individuals' needs than are governments. Lastly, classical liberals uphold the basic principles of life, liberty and property under the law. Politically, they believe in free speech, free association, rule of law, limits on government and strong, trustworthy justice system. Economically, they favor freedom in production and exchange, and the free movement of people, capital and goods. (Butler, 2015).

Classical economic liberalism flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but by the last nineteenth century, other ideas were beginning to take hold. This was due to the social problems brought by economic freedom leading the industrial

society to become a recruiting ground for socialism and communism, with a greater confidence in the post-war economic policy of expansionist policies of British economist John Maynard Keynes. However, for classical liberals, it was inexplicable to manipulate the spontaneous order of social and economic life. Therefore, they regrouped in 1947 at the first meeting of what became the *Mont Pelerin Society*. Recently, the contemporary classical liberals have failed to find a good name for themselves. To be called ‘new liberal’ or ‘modern liberal’ have been annexed, while called ‘liberal’ plain has been captured by those advocates of civil rights, who believe in a big role to be played by the state in promoting equality (Butler, 2015). The recorded usage of the term stretches back to the end of the nineteenth century, when it appeared in an article by the French economist, Charles Gide. Neoliberalism is a revival of liberalism, as the concept itself suggests. Also, Oxford Living Dictionaries define neoliberalism as a “modified form of liberalism tending to favor free-market capitalism”. In other words, liberalism has undergone a process of initial growth, decline and rejuvenation. Neoliberalism is perceived as descending from but not identical to liberalism. It shares some historical roots and some basic vocabulary with economic liberalism. Critically important is to hold economic liberalism and neoliberalism separate from liberalism in general that favors constitutional and legal reforms, tending in the direction of freedom and democracy (Thorsen, 2010).

#### What is Neoliberalism?

Neoliberalism encompasses a variety of economic, social and political ideas, practices and policies operating at the levels of individual vs. institution, local vs. state, and national vs. global. It is set of concepts stemming from various sources. Representing an assemblage of ideas that change confounding, the attempts to define coherently the fundamental aspects of neoliberalism is not easy. However, there are

specific dimensions that act as parameters within which neoliberalism operates. The collections of ideas, practices and policies are united by three beliefs: the free market, minimal state intervention and individuals as rational economic actors. Friedman (1951) believed that humans were living in a period of a new current opinion, which would replace the old collectivism and provide the philosophy that would guide the legislators of the next generations. Different incidents proved that the trend of legislation toward collectivism was shaken. For instance, centralized planning was so necessary to give the state more power to solve the paradox of poverty and to prevent selfish interests, but it resulted in chaos and disorganization. Before the 1970s, economists focused on how to theorize governmental intervention to resolve market failures. During the 1970s, a new wave of ideas about the inability of the government to act altruistically due to the self-interested actions of politicians prevailed. This idea was born after a series of events such as 1973 oil shock, failure of Bretton woods monetary system of fixed exchange rate (Nouri, 2013). Thus, Friedman's belief in liberalism to influence the new direction was the new faith to offer. A new doctrine that avoids these errors, replacing both 19th century individualism and collectivism, is known as neoliberalism, which limits the power of the state to interfere in the activities of individuals while recognizing that there are important functions that must be performed by the state (Friedman, 1951).

The foundations of neoliberalism go back to Adam Smith and his work, *The Wealth of Nations*. Although the arguments of Adam Smith throughout the years have been developed, the fundamental assumptions of neoliberalism remain those proposed by him (Clarke, 2005). Adam Smith's classical economic theory dominated the 19th century. However, the experienced dysfunction; especially the Great Depression (1929-1933), eroded the classic laissez-faire liberalism. This eventually led to the emergence

of centrally managed capitalist economy in Germany (1936-1948) and centrally planned socialist economy in the former Soviet Union following 1917 October Revolution. Indeed, the Great Depression cleared the ground for a rapid expansion of Keynesianism. Thus, proponents of the classical liberal economic theory held the international Walter Lippmann colloquium in Paris in August 1938. The term 'neoliberalism' was accepted to emphasize the differences between neoliberal concepts and 19th century classical liberalism, indicating a new era in economic history. After the end of the World War II, in 1947, the 'Mont Pelerin Society' was established upon the initiative of Friedrich von Hayek. Of the founding group, Hayek, Frank Knight and Milton Friedman became the representatives of the Chicago School (Maczynska & Pysz, 2010). However, there was no actual consensus to explain the resurrection of liberal ideas. When Reagan and Thatcher assumed power in United States and United Kingdom respectively, neoliberal ideas raised practically. This encouraged economists such as Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman to put their theories into operation. These economic ideas were labeled as neoclassical economics, which constitute that ground rule of neoliberalism (Nouri, 2013). Neoliberalism started to supplant Keynesianism as the predominant type of economic theory and policy. The ideas of Friedman and Hayek paved the way for the economic policies of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (Maczynska & Pysz, 2010).

After 1975, spread of the American neoliberalism was made in Chile by 'Chicago Boys' – a group of Chileans most of whom studied at the University in Chicago in the years 1956-1970. Following the coup, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet conferred power over economic ministries to this group. The radical shock therapy in Chile was conceived as the right path. It cleared the ground for neoliberal Washington Consensus (Maczynska & Pysz, 2010). The economic policy of US, with

the UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, took the form of neoliberalism during the presidency of Reagan, which emphasized privatization, deregulation and balancing of the public budget. Since then, neoliberal capitalism has been imposed around the world by financial institutions and interest groups. A clear evidence was the applied set of neoliberal policies in Latin American countries, known as *Washington Consensus* (Astroulakis, 2014). Indeed, neoliberalism has become synonymous with a set of economic policies and prescriptions associated with the Washington Consensus (Cornwall, Gideon, & Wilson, 2008). Washington Consensus encouraged policies such as very little state intervention, minimizing the public sector and privatizing social services (Moutsatsos, 2009). One of the critical steps towards Washington Consensus was macroeconomic stabilization, which implied a transition from centrally planned economy to market-oriented such (Nouri, 2013). Nowadays, neoliberalism has come to exist with the same ideology of encouraging privatization of economies, which permits the international competition of services and products (Adino & Nebere, 2016).

### Scientific Assumptions of Neoliberalism

#### *The Free-Market and Economic Freedom*

The scientific foundation of neoliberalism is the belief that the market is the sole arena for commercial interaction and the market is self-regulated due to the impact of Smith's invisible hand (Nouri, 2013). Based on a type of dogmatic realism, the market is granted absolute autonomy. None should intervene politically in the market because it is wiser than human and if it is left alone, it will lead to economic growth and collective prosperity. Neoliberalism promotes a ruthless competitive individualism. Thus, any outcome of the market is considered fair (Esposito, 2011). The tenet of neoliberalism is "establishing a strong base of private companies to lead and stabilize the economy" (Adino & Nebere, 2016, p. 331), while the state's role is to adjust infrastructure in the market. The free mobility of capital between sectors, regions and

countries is encouraged. Thus, barriers of tariffs, environmental control and punitive taxation arrangements have to be eradicated, which leads to free competition of private enterprises.

Friedman (1962) emphasized that economic freedom is a condition toward the achievement of political freedom. Economic freedom is an end in itself, because it is a component of the notion of freedom as broadly understood. He asserted that only competitive capitalism is the economic organization that provides economic freedom directly, because it separated economic freedom from political power, enabling the one to offset the other. Such belief is a continuity of Benthamite liberalism in the early nineteenth century, which was followed by a reaction toward increasing intervention by government in economic affairs (Friedman, 1951). He indicated that freedom of the individual/family is the ultimate good in judging social arrangements. The society organized through voluntary exchange is free private enterprise exchange economy, called competitive capitalism. But the modern society needs more than household-units, and hence, “specialization of function and division of labor would not go far if the ultimate productive unit were the household” (Friedman, 1962, p. 20). Therefore, enterprises are introduced as intermediaries between suppliers and purchasers.

#### *Redefining the Role of the State*

To prevent physical coercion of one individual by another and to enforce contracts voluntary entrance into, maintenance of law and order is a must. The need for a government arises because absolute freedom is impossible. Individual freedoms can conflict, and it must be limited to preserve another's. Thus, government should decide the appropriate activities to resolve these conflicts. The existence of a free market does not eliminate the need for government. Friedman (1951) illustrated,

the collectivist belief in the ability of direct action by the state to remedy all

evils is itself, however, an understandable reaction to a basic error in 19th century individualist philosophy. This philosophy assigned almost no role to the state other than the maintenance of order and the enforcement of contracts. It was a negative philosophy. The state could do only harm. Laissez-faire must be the rule. In taking this position, it underestimated the danger that private individuals could through agreement and combination usurp power and effectively limit the freedom of other individuals; it failed to see that there were some functions the price system could not perform and that unless these other functions were somehow provided for, the price system could not discharge effectively the tasks for which it is admirably fitted. (p. 91)

Government works as a forum and an umpire to reduce the range of issues that are decided through political means and thus minimizing its role, because the fundamental threat to freedom is power to coerce. However, preservation of freedom requires the elimination of concentration of power, which can be achieved by “removing the organization of economic activity from the control of political authority, the market eliminates this source of coercive power. It enables economic strength to be check to political power rather than a reinforcement” (Friedman, 1962, p. 21). Economic power must be kept separate from political power to serve as a check and a counter to political power. There is an emphasis on government’s role in areas, where market cannot do for itself, namely, “to determine, arbitrate, and enforce the rules of games” (Friedman, 1962, p. 31).

### *The Impact of Free-Market*

Neoliberalism redefines individuals as ‘homo economicus’, a rational economic actor whose decisions and behaviors are determined by the cost/benefit analysis. The free market penetrates every aspect of an individual’s social domain. With minimum

state's intervention, individuals are free to pursue their interest. Their lives are governed by the logic of rational choices to maximize human capital. This logic is applied to everything in life – education, profession decisions, personal relationships ... etc. The market turns human to consumers. As stated by Saunders (2011):

market metaphors and free market logic are used to define how people express their beliefs, how social groups are defined, how individuals make their decisions, and how people engage with one another in social and professional settings. This logical defines every aspect of life and the individual becomes homo oeconomicus. (p. 24)

In neoliberalism, the functions of the market should be beyond production and distribution of goods and services (Astroulakis, 2014). The market is capable of establishing a healthy system by itself if it is left alone without the hand of the state (Adino & Nebere, 2016). Hence, the social good is maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions (Thompson M. J., 2005; Harvey, 2005). The scientific assumption that exchange is a transaction from which both parties necessarily benefit laid the foundations for neoliberalism and extended the role of the market to the sphere of almost all human actions. The market works as an appropriate guide for all human actions. It holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing market transactions. Thus, restrictions on freedom of trade will reduce the well-being of individuals and intensification of the influence and dominance of capital makes it the organizing principle of modern society, i.e. modern economic, political, social and cultural life (Thompson M. J., 2005). Treanor (2005) emphasized that:

neoliberalism is a philosophy in which the existence and operation of a market are valued in themselves, separately from any previous relationship with the production of goods and services, and without any attempt to justify them in

terms of their effect on the production of goods and services; and where the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs. (p. 17)

Indeed, neoliberalism believes that humans exist for the market and not the other way around. Every human being is an entrepreneur managing their own life. Thus, the idea of employability is promoted by neoliberals. It is the moral duty of humans to arrange their lives to maximize their advantage on the labor market. Living by such entrepreneurial precepts, all human and social life, including goods and services, will come into existence as a product of conformity to market forces. Hence, there is no distinction between a market economy and a market society. It reifies both, the market economy and market society. There is only market, i.e. market society, market culture, market values, market persons ... etc. (Treanor, 2005). Hence, whatever social problems that may exist, they are addressed through individualized as opposed to collective solutions. On this point, Margaret Thatcher stated that “there is no such thing as society. There are only individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people and people must look to themselves first” (Keay, 1987).

#### Materialist Feminism

Feminist theorists who identify themselves as Marxist or materialist feminists differ in their understanding of what these descriptive labels mean and type of knowledge they produce. Materialist feminism covers the common elements of Marxist feminism in analysis of history, agency and ideology, socialist feminism of late 1960s and early 1970s and radical feminism. It challenges the “gender-blind” aspects of Marxist analysis but uses Marxist method to criticize liberal and radical feminists for

their lack of attention to differences among women (Isvan, 2016). Rather than assuming that women are induced by gender oppression or liberation, the materialist feminism emphasizes the role of class and history in formation of women's oppression. Thus, women experiences cannot be understood outside of their specific historical context that includes economic organization and specific developments in national history and political organization. After the 1920s, communist societies had little contribution to the development of feminism thought, following the Soviet line that women question was a product of capitalist society. By 1960s, these societies acknowledged that there were still problems facing women due to the burdens combining paid work and domestic responsibilities. The rise of the New Left provided a ground for exploration of socialist ideas.

Materialist feminisms aim to reshape Marxist categories to better accommodate women's oppression, which appears in Marxist analysis as a consequence of asymmetrical relations of production, while kinship, marriage and social relations of reproduction are left out. Thus, many materialist feminists were concerned with bringing the sphere of reproduction into theoretical focus (Isvan, 2016). One of the most important ways that materialist feminisms use to approach discourse is grounded in the material conditions of any given society. These material conditions are not only examined in terms of gender but also in relations to actual lives of women. Materialist feminism focuses on social arrangements, such as family and motherhood, which emphasize the role of women and brings attention to the gendering discourses that promote women's marginalization. Thus, a crucial aspect of materialist feminism is the question of ideology in relation to agency and history (Sullivan, 1999). Engels developed a historical materialist analysis, linking production, reproduction and governance. His definition of historical materialism is still widely embraced. Latter

revisions by the European articulationists were significant as they identified reproduction as the site where modes of production coexist through articulations with each other and with the dominant mode (Isvan, 2016).

Benston (1979) proposed domestic production as the material base of women's oppression. Although they made a major contribution to feminism and Marxism, it was without problematizing the psychosexual foundations of gender. Concerted efforts to revise Marxist theory came from standpoint European feminists of the New Left during 1960s and 1970s. Contributors, such as Mitchell (1966), criticized socialism for its failure to bring women's emancipation and argued that inclusion of reproduction in analysis was not sufficient for materialist feminism. They argued for problematizing the psychosexual foundations of gender relations. The dual systems approach was an effort to integrate psychosexual forces of gender relations and cultural underpinnings of kinship into materialist analysis. Scholars, such as Eisenstein (1979), represented women's oppression as a product of class and gender, i.e. capitalism and patriarchy. Furthermore, the literature on class-gender interactions opened the door for re-interpretations of Marxist class categories. This intersectionist approach developed a formulation, which included sexuality along with gender, class and race as interacting sources of identity (Isvan, 2016). In Hennessy's *A Reader in Class, Differences and Women's Lives*, there was an attempt to return to the Marxist roots of the theory. It links women's identities, bodies, needs and desires to a theory of class, because class binds or separates women. With emphasis on gender issues as class issues and prioritization of destruction of capitalism, material feminism focuses on questions of production and labor.

There was a re-evaluation of the definition of material, resulting in the inclusion of culture, representation and meaning production. The role of discourse as a mediator

between material reality and individual subjectivity became a central focus of materialist feminisms (Isvan, 2016). Dolan (1988) informed that materialist feminism deconstructs the ‘mythic subject woman’ by looking at women as a class oppressed by materialism and social relations. In its early stages, materialist feminism perceived class, race and gender as being of equal importance. Newton and Rosenfelt’s analysis (1985) assumed that women are not universally the same, social change is not limited to white privileged women and women’s relations are determined by race, class and sexual identification. Latterly material feminism refers to a combined study of semiotics and post-structuralism and to a study of the production of meaning as a result of specific configuration of discursive structures of production, consumption and representation. Hennessy’s view on materialist feminism emerged through her critical engagement with works of Foucault, Mouffe and Kristeva. Materialist feminism is a way that rejects the dominant pluralist paradigms and contingency and seeks to establish connections between discursively differentiated subjectivities. This study, through the understanding of materialist feminism as a reading practice, is a way to explain, re-write and make sense of the world, influencing the reality through the knowledge it produces about the subject and its social context.

#### Standpoint Theory

A standpoint is a position in society that involves a level of awareness about an individual’s social location, from which a certain reality comes into prominence. The less powerful members of a society experience a different reality as a result of their oppression. Thus, they develop a double consciousness, in which they become knowledgeable, aware and sensitive to the dominant view of society and their own perspective (Swigonski, 1994). Standpoint theory is a set of theoretical and epistemological propositions to produce alternative knowledge (Kokushkin, 2014).

Building on the work of Georg Hegel, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, its epistemology depends on socially situated knowledge, determined by the knower's social position (McClish & Bacon, 2002). Many theorists, including Nancy Hartsock, Patricia Hill Collins and Chela Sandoval contributed to standpoint theory's epistemological approach. It states that less partial and distorted understanding of the nature and social relations begins from the standpoint of particular marginalized groups of human beings. It aims to destabilize the dominant centric knowledge production that excludes women and other unprivileged groups (Kokushkin, 2014). Reference to feminist standpoint theory could be traced back to Nancy Hartsock's *Money, Sex and Power* (1983). For Hartsock, the concept of a standpoint rests on the fact that there are some perspectives on society, from which the real relations of humans with the natural world is not visible. The feminist standpoint expresses female experiences at a particular time and place, located in a particular set of social relations (Hekman, 1997). Harding (1987) explained that women's experiences should act as a significant indicator of the reality against which hypotheses are tested. It allows researchers to go beneath the surface to reveal the real and concealed social relations. The emergence of feminist standpoint theory appeared as a method for naming the oppression of women grounded in the truth of women's lives, challenging the masculinist definition of truth (Hekman, 1997). The reality is not based on the assumptions and practices that appear natural from the perspective of the lives of men in the dominant group (McClish & Bacon, 2002). Knowledge coming from a specific location can be meaningful if it challenges the premises of privileged knowledge. The standpoint theory extends the claims of Marx. Material life and experiences shape the ways in which people see social relations. Kokushkin's (2014) version of standpoint feminism provided alternative knowledge by taking into account issues of multiplicity, diversity and experiences (Kokushkin, 2014).

Swigonski (1994) identified the tenets that feminist standpoint theory is grounded on. First, it begins from a concrete experience rather than abstract concepts, because life experience structures one's understanding of life. Objective location is required for a position to count as a standpoint, beginning with the life experiences within a particular group and then theories and observations examine how the ruling knowledge structures that group's lives. Beginning this research with the lives of Qatari and Bahraini women makes several issues visible such as housework, motherhood, economic independence and neopatriarchy, which are not visible from the life experiences of most men. Second, suppressing the viewpoint and knowledge of the oppressed group makes it easier for the dominant group to rule. However, the life experience of the subordinated group is more complete, and their perspective can generate critical analysis. Through the focus on Qatari and Bahraini women's experiences, different perspectives may appear in contrast to Gulf male-dominated perspective. Third, knowledge emerges as a result of the struggle waged against the oppressors. Without consciousness, marginalized group are likely to accept the dominant worldview. The research tries to understand the hidden aspects of the relations between women and the social and economic institutions that structures their lives through their struggle. An epistemology generated from the standpoint of an oppressed group such as Gulf women is more valid than the knowledge of those in dominant positions because they understand the perspective of those in power, but the converse does not hold true. Fourth, the daily activities of the less powerful require them to bridge the gap between ideological dualism. The perspective of the 'other' permits various irrationalities and inconsistencies. Fifth, the lives of the marginalized group reveal the ways in which the public world structures their private lives, which are not immediately visible. The research demonstrates the effect of the economic

transformations on the private lives of Gulf women in relation to motherhood, allocation of time, dual breadwinner and caring of each group's members. Sixth, the marginalized group is excluded from the production of knowledge and design of the social order. Thus, they are strangers to dominant social order and their outsider status is valuable for objectivity.

Since its introduction, the standpoint theory has been productively modified and challenged. Hartsock (1989) focused on subjectivity as dynamic process that requires an always reconstruction. This was very important when conducting the interviews. It assisted me in understanding that interviewees' awareness, as well as mine, was recreated throughout the research process. Sharing my subject position with female interviewees guided me through the interpretation process. Throughout the research process, I contributed into raising interviewees' consciousness about themselves and their practices. As interviewees struggled to achieve an understanding of the social order, this theory underlined the value of these women's voices in creating knowledge. Valuing the suppressed knowledge foster a critical understanding of the world from a non-hegemonic perspective. Hill-Collins (2004) studied Black women, arguing that their subjectivity as racialized women enabled them a specific standpoint. She theorized a concept called the "matrix of domination". It helped me conceptualized specific oppressions within the context based on gender, patriarchy, economic duties and social locations. The matrix was used to trace the ways in which market reproduces oppression based on the intersecting of identities of women participating in its institutions. I drew on feminist standpoint theory as a lens to value differently located women's ways of knowing and privilege non-hegemonic subjectivities. However, standpoint theory has been criticized for encouraging essentialist or monolithic categories such as women. I intend to challenge this criticism through the presentation of multiple Gulf women's

experiences and embracing diversity of subjectivities. The notion of collectivity or a group does not necessarily mean invalidation of an awareness of diversity within a collectivity. Experiences should be viewed in terms of intersectionality (McClish & Bacon, 2002).

### Theorizing Neoliberal Impacts on Women

Development of neoliberalism, as emphasized by Friedman, has been accompanied by a reduction in the effects of discrimination on various social groups, playing a role in enabling vulnerable groups to evade social, economic, racial and religious discriminatory factors. Hence neoliberalism contributes in reducing poverty and inequality by securing a free market and free trade. Neoliberalism has eclipsed former modernization and underdevelopment theories, dominating the theoretical framework to development thinking since early 1980s. Modernization relatively improved the position of women. Benefits were directed at men rather than women. Regardless of educational expansion, tertiary level tended to be lower for females. In the industrial sector, women were often paid lower due to the role as a supplementary wage earner. The ideas of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman who emphasize the role of the free market to promote economic growth provided the theoretical basis for neoliberal implementation. Despite talking about gender-free individuals, the assumption is that women are subsumed within the household providing reproduction services, while the man is the head of the household who work and own the public sphere. Thus, the policy prescription was to promote free market policies and structural adjustment programs (Sarker, 2006).

It is important to highlight the argument regarding the social and cultural causes of discrimination against women in the market before analyzing the impact of neoliberalism on them. Traditional gender ideologies vary across cultures. It explains

why women have lower-paid jobs or lower-status jobs, why they should extend their care-giving inclinations to compensate for men's losses in the market and why are regarded an expandable cheap labor supply (Moghadam, *Economic Reforms, Women's Employment and Social Policies*, 1995). It starts with a gender discrimination related to human resources development and access to factors of production in the household. Women have domestic responsibilities and there are cultural attitudes to what are appropriate job types for women and men. The parents usually favor men in term of expenditures on education, health and nutrition. Hence, the household production unit is not capable of moving its most efficient uses in the wider economy (Palmer, 1992). The labor market is a social institution where cultural and social norms shape the experiences of women. Promotion systems, performance criteria and job grades are field of discretion. Gender hierarchies persist even when the demand for female labor increases. Cultural acceptability of paid work and status of the household affect women's experience with formal and informal work. Married women make concessions in their private life in return for permission to work, which results in longer hours of unpaid work to fulfill their household responsibilities or in taking up work that offers more flexibility but pays less (Razavi, Arza, Braunstein, Cook, & Goulding, 2012). Moreover, the market perceives the women's reproduction activities as distortion. Women as labor market entrants, who are tied to other responsibilities, are unable to compete equally in the market. Palmer (1992) argued that reproduction activities act as labor tax on women penalizing their labor time.

For instance, Arruzza (2014) supported 'unitary theory', which claims that patriarchy is not independent from capitalism. It helps to understand how capitalism accumulation perpetuates gender oppression. Throughout history, the model of housewife imposed itself as the hegemonic model; i.e. a natural model, while the

development of capitalism has transformed the role of women amplifying their oppression. At the same time, capitalism needs patriarchal system in order to profit from women's unpaid work. It relies on depreciation of domestic work to make huge savings. Thus, it plays with women in an opportunistic manner. In time of prosperity, women are massively demanded but over-represented in part time, flexible jobs, while in time of recession, women are given incentives to partially retreat from the labor market (Bruneau, 2018).

Analysis of the impact depends on the nature of the policies and the role of women in economy and society that vary between countries. Neoliberal policies may appear to be gender neutral by focusing on GNP, efficiency or productivity is irrelevant to gender (Elson, 1992). The debates about the impact of economic liberalization and structural adjustment on women were concerned with a generalized position about that reduction in state's social expenditure and cutback of subsidies make women vulnerable (Afshar & Dennis, 1992; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1989; Sparr, 1994). Starting with their roles, Stewart (1992) analyzed the several roles of women in society to understand how economic transformations affect women. Women are producers, managers of consumption, mothers and social organizers. Women are producers who contribute to the national economy and generate income for the household. However, in many countries much of women's productive work take places and is consumed in the household. The precise contribution of women in the informal sector within the household is absent or unknown because of weak statistics. Secondly, women are managers of the household consumption, especially for the basic needs. It is part of women's obligation to ensure adequate consumption when circumstances change. The restructuring of the economy puts more pressure on women's time trying to stretch their income to meet the needs of the family. Some women are mothers and carers. They are

responsible for feeding and most of informal health care and education, while ensuring their children have access to formal health care and education. Indeed, their roles go beyond the household to the community that support them during the time of hardship.

### *The Market-Bias and Women*

Male-bias in the market is manifested in ignoring the fact that some forms of work is socially constituted as women's work while other kinds of work are socially constituted as men's work. Restructuring the economy will not result in a smooth reallocation of labor from one kind of work to the other in the face gender barriers. Attention must be directed to the male bias which consists in ignoring the unpaid work women perform to maintain their families' well-being. The work of caring is excluded from the formal economy. Women carry out their unpaid work regardless of economic policy, as this unpaid work is regarded as elastic. Success of economic policies may be won at the cost of longer and harder working days for women. The market is based on an assumption that the household does not require analysis. The household is a conflict site where women are not necessarily passive or do not play a decision-making role (Elson, 1992).

Then, the question arises, is the emphasis on market forces imbued with male bias? Researchers suggest that moving towards a free-market economy has profound wide-ranging effects on the lives of women. Sparr (1994) emphasized how those policies of free-market economy influence women's:

health and safety, educational attainment, income, employment, working conditions, access to land, marital status, family relationships, mental health, self-concept, birth rates, marriage decisions, use of time, where they live, migration decisions, access to information, access to and use of public services, and their understanding of their role and possibilities in life. (pp. 22-23)

The process affects women in several ways, which includes employment opportunities in the formal sector and public sector, household' budget, cutbacks in public expenditures and length of working days. Neoliberal transformations include reduced employment in the public sector or limitations on wages of the public sector. Although more public sector's employees are men and thus they are affected more than women, the public sector provides better jobs for women and the low level of pay drives women to do extra jobs in the informal sector (Elson, 1992). To compensate for a husband's job loss, women look for work outside their homes. Evidence showed that the rates of women's labor force participation has increased in several countries in Southern America and Africa after policies of structural adjustment (Safa & Antrobus, 1992; Joekes, Lycettee, McGowan, & Searle, 1988). When male employment drops, the presence of women in employment increases but job conditions are not necessarily better. Regardless of the pressure on women to earn income, their unemployment rates are higher than for male heads. Hatem (1994) studied Egypt and showed how privatization affected women resulting in women's unemployment to be four times the rate of men. The same impact can be found in Turkey and Sri Lanka (Cagatay & Berik, 1994; Jayaweera, 1994). Neoliberal economic policies influence women's fertility. Women need to control their fertility to increase income-earning activities. In Egypt, for instance, women delayed marriage (Hatem, 1994). Neoliberal economies label state's mandated maternity leaves as 'labor market distortion' and a disincentive to the hiring of women, constituting them as expensive labor. In countries where the government sector is the largest employer, economic reforms threaten women's access to employment as the private sector seems less women-friendly (Moghadam, 1995). In addition, women, as wives, manage the adjustment of the family's budget to the loss of income. Thus, participation in the market represents an additional burden and restriction

and women's free time is sacrificed. The impact of neoliberalism on employment pushes women to work in export-oriented labor-intensive manufacturing like garment production. Women in this sector are vulnerable to the difficulties of the world market. The cutbacks of public expenditures and increased prices of consumer goods burdens women. The intra-household resource allocation system determines to what extent women can allocate the household expenditures to respond to rises food prices or cuts of public expenditures. Any "increases in the housekeeping allowance and reductions in husband's personal expenditures requires conjugal negotiations which are often fraught with tension" (Elson, 1992, p. 59). Furthermore, cutbacks in public expenditure on health and education services shifts more of the burden to the community and household. Women need to spend more time taking care of family members' health and education to moderate the increase in charges. Neoliberal transformations have differentiated impact on the length of working days. Women must master survival strategies. Making a living in the informal sector takes more time. The differences between 'dead-end' activities and profitable activities of the informal sector matters for women. Women are concentrated in the informal sector activities that provides no basis of accumulation (Elson, 1992). Women turn to informal sector work due to lack of stability in formal sector. The low pay pushes women to leave their jobs becoming self-employed. For instance, women preferred to work as export traders in the informal sector in countries, such as Jamaica, Venezuela and Nigeria (Elabor-Idemudia , 1994; African Training and Research Center for Women, 1988). Nevertheless, the tendency towards the casualization of work erodes distinction between the formal sector and informal sector. The governments are making the formal sector jobs flexible, which means loss of job security, pension, and compensation (Elson, 1992).

As producers, much of women's productive work take places and is consumed

in the household. The precise contribution of women in the informal sector within the household is absent or unknown because of weak statistics. Evidence suggests that reduced employment and real wages in the formal sector is worse for women than men. The increased women's participation in the labor force moderated the reduced household income but increased their working hours. While being the managers of household consumption, restructuring the economy puts more pressure on women's time trying to stretch their income to meet the needs of the family. When looking at women as mothers, cuts in services, reduced food subsidies and increased charges increase the time women need to spend on health care and education because of the conditions of health and educational facilities. For the last role as social organizers, their role becomes more important because they need to take over some functions used to be fulfilled by the state (Stewart, 1992).

In the global search for profit and cheap labor, women have become the preferred suppliers of labor power, as their social status makes them vulnerable to economic exploitation. The market exploits the existing gender hierarchies, but through its emphasis on autonomy, individual choice and self-reliance have an effect on gender relations via increasing the necessity of paid work in women's lives. At the same time, women gain some level of authority in the household challenging the notion of traditional family and its financial provisions (Mora, 2006).

Nevertheless, Elson (1992) argued that "state agencies do not always operate in the interest of women, and market do not always operate against the interest of women". States generally perpetuate social and economic ideological processes that subordinate women by treating them as dependents of men rather than as persons in their own right. The states uphold patriarchal family forms in relation to resources access. On the other hand, the market appears to treat women as individuals. They can sell their

labor/products to get income/cash. Access to income lessens their economic independence upon men and brings greater dignity. However, access to market has limited benefits for women because they carry the double burden of unpaid work in reproduction and maintenance of human resources. Even women with high incomes who buy substitutes for their unpaid work, like employing nannies and housemaids, still have responsibility for household management. Generally, neoliberal economies are gender-biased in the following ways:

- Neoliberal policy reforms do not recognize reproductive, legal and cultural constraints on women. Women's mobility between jobs and sectors is not equal to men and in case of women's labor market disadvantages, it is explained in human capital terms;
- Women unpaid reproductive contributions are not considered in national accounts and hence results in poor planning due to inadequate data;
- Women's time is considered elastic and there are no opportunity costs, which transfers the burden of meeting the family's needs into the household. Their wages do not reflect the true opportunity cost of their labor;
- The economic policies that calls for cutbacks in public expenditures and welfare policies revive traditional gender ideology increasing asymmetrical gender relations (Moghadam, Economic Reforms, Women's Employment and Social Policies , 1995).

### Summary

It is important to differentiate between liberalism and neoliberalism. Traditional/classical liberalism flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Adam Smith's laid the theoretical foundation of classical liberalism. Nowadays, as liberalism is misunderstood, the word neoliberal is served. Neoliberalism is a revival

of liberalism, but they are not identical indicating a new era in economic history. Mont Pelerin Society in 1947 paved the way for neoliberal development, but it assumed power during the Reagan and Thatcher reigns. After 1975, the spread of neoliberalism was made in Chile by Chicago Boys. The scientific foundation of neoliberalism is based on three assumptions. The first assumption is the belief that the market is the sole arena for commercial interactions, and it is self-regulated. However, the role of the state remains essential as a forum to protect individual's freedoms and enforce contracts. The third assumption concerns the role of the market, which penetrates every aspect of human's life. Social good is maximized by maximizing market transactions.

Materialist feminism, through the re-shaping of Marxist historical materialism stretched materiality to include culture, representation, class and sexuality. Through the understanding of the material conditions of the two societies, materialist feminism assists in analyzing the gendering discourses that promote women's oppression. Bringing reproduction into focus provides better understanding of the lives of Gulf women. Thus, as a start, women's experiences are the source of knowledge, as entailed by standpoint theory. An investigation of the social location of Gulf women constitutes a reality not based on the assumptions of male-hegemonic perspective.

Regardless of appearing gender-neutral, neoliberalism influences women's roles in society as mothers, producers, managers of consumption and social organizers. Theorizing neoliberal impacts is not independent from the analysis of traditional gender ideology. It explains why women occupy low-paid and flexible jobs. Neoliberalism needs patriarchy and through reinforcing the housewife model, it oppresses women and benefits from their unpaid work. An emphasis on market forces may be imbued with male bias. Neoliberal transformations affect women's employment opportunities when

jobs in the public sectors or wages are reduced or limited. On the other hand, women must compensate for men's job loss by looking outside home for income. They manage the adjustment of family's budget. Seeking jobs outside home forces women to control their fertility. However, women may gain more authority in the household thus changing asymmetrical gender relations.

## CHAPTER 3: HISTORICIZATION OF THE ECONOMIC RULES OF GULF

### WOMEN AND IMPACT OF OIL

The topic of Gulf women is under-researched focusing on the development of their status before and after the discovery of oil. This chapter aims to highlight the role of Gulf women during the pre-oil era, answering these questions: what are the differences within Gulf women's economic roles before and after oil? How have the economic roles and occupations changed? It argues that Gulf women in pre-oil societies had several occupations and were directly involved in the market with an explicit presence in the public sphere, while oil discovery has caused the withdrawal of women from public activities and encouraged reliance on the income of their male-relatives. The chapter is built on Ross' argument as an important scholarly piece. In particular, this dissertation utilizes his argument concerning the impact of oil, not Islam, on Gulf women's underrepresentation in workforce. The argument of this chapter is also built on John Willoughby's work, who argued that educational attainment will enable women to compete in the labor market and replace expatriates.

The chapter starts with exploring the role of women before discovery of oil. It investigates the argument that integration of Gulf women in the market has been due to modernization and changes brought by oil. It discusses the several economic and subsistence activities that pre-oil Gulf women had, as wives of pearl divers, farmers, merchants and tribesmen. The second section discusses the features and meaning of a rentier state to facilitate the testing of Ross' argument regarding the impact of oil on Gulf women. Through the analysis of recent statistical data to test the Ross' argument, the researcher found that the higher the percentage of hydrocarbon sector contribution to GDP, the lower women's participation in the labor force. Furthermore, this chapter analyzes recent statistics about the labor participation of women in different sectors to

investigate Willoughby's argument regarding the role of education on increasing their participation, finding that both national men and women are underrepresented in favor of expat-domination in professional and clerical jobs. The third section discusses the features of the late rentier state, founded by Mathew Gray, as the new path for Qatar's economic transformations toward neoliberalism. The last section covers the features of a neoliberal states, according to Harvey, emphasizing the differences between the template and practices.

### Women and Economy in Pre-Oil Arab Gulf Societies

Literature on the region has widely discounted women's participation before the discovery of oil (Ramazani, 1985; Al-Mahmoud, 2005; Al-Muftah, 2016). Centuries before the discovery of oil, Arab Gulf women played an enormous role in their societies. Exploring the changing roles of the Gulf women before and after the discovery of oil is highly important to understand the development of current Arab Gulf women subjectivities as these roles form a contextual trajectory from which women's identities have been built within state's development programs and economic transformations. The oil wealth has enabled these states to build new political, economic and social systems that gave rise to a 'new' Gulf woman. The following section tries to answer these questions: What were the avenues of women's participation in the economic and mercantile life in pre-oil Arab Gulf societies? What are the differences between the different generations of Gulf women economically?

The economic and subsistence activities pre-oil era defined the role of both men and women in the Arabian Gulf. The main economic activities were fishing, pearling and trading (El Saadi, 2012). It is important to emphasize that ordinary women were more exposed to public interactions due to less social restrictions than those from royal or upper-class families (AlMutawa, 2016). Al Wahaibi (2012) emphasized that along

the coast of the Gulf, pearl diving and fishing allowed women to participate strongly in the market as active members. For pearl diving activities, men used to leave their families for months and women were in charge of maintain the livelihood of the family. Al-Misnad (1985) pointed that at least for the period between June and October each year, Gulf societies were described as ‘women society’. Men were away for long periods and unable to secure reliable income from pearling due to risk of death or losing an arm or a leg. Their modes of participation ranged from taking care of all family members, covering for the absence or illness of the husband, to building houses. They weaved and colored the palm leaves from which houses were built, milked the animals and maintained the equipment of fishing/pearl diving (Krause, 2011). In addition, upper-class women invested in properties and jewelries to support their husbands and to secure their money (Al Wahaibi, 2012). Some upper-class women were merchants who owned pearling and shipping boats (AlMutawa, 2016). Foley (2010) suggested that women were helping their husbands in the market by selling the fish they caught. Women would sell items collected by their husbands, such as pieces of ropes, metal and clothes (Krause, 2011). Men of Dubai repealed a law by the legislative council to ban women from selling fish in the market in 1931, claiming that their wives knew the market better than them (Foley, 2010). Women did everything to sustain the family that included tending the farm, sowing and watering the seeds and harvesting. They used to climb the palm trees to gather dates.

El Saadi (2012) emphasized that Bedouin life would not have been possible without the contributions of women, taking care of tribal and commercial business. She used Charles Doughty’s perception about Bedouin women, who lived with Bedouin in the 1870s and found that Bedouin men married in part because of the need for female labor. Bedouin women were entrusted with difficult and dangerous tasks. They were

responsible for fetching water from wells, which were far from their homes. They used to travel great distances accompanied by no men to collect water or firewood (Krause, 2011). They used to water and herd the animals, milk and process the milk and sometimes sell these dairy products to traders. Some Bedouin women supplemented the income of their households by selling the textiles they made. Other Bedouin women played a major political role in running the tribal affairs. For example, Sheikha Husa bint Al Murr, the grandmother of Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, ruler of Dubai until 2004, held public *majalis* – place where the tribe congregate to discuss various issues, which were attended by men and more crowded than her husband's. Al-Sayegh and Pinto mentioned that she also rallied her armed forces to defend Dubai's tower when it was under attack. Sheikh Zayed's mother, Sheikha Salama bint Buti, ended a long history of bloody succession within the ruling family (Krause, 2011). She that she also helped her son, Sheikh Zayed financially to sustain Al Ain's economy (AlMutawa, 2016). Al Wahaibi (2012) used the example of his grandmother, who was called the 'Sheikha that stopped the army'. Until her death in 2009, she used to hold *majalis* attended by women and men. His grandmother claimed her husband position as the Sheikha of one sect of Al Wahaibi tribe in Muscat against her husband's brother and stopped an invading tribe. Furthermore, the members of some tribes carried the name of their mothers, like Al Rashid tribe. The companions of Wilfred Thesiger, a renowned explorer, were known by their mother's name. Generally, women were the breadwinners, especially when the husbands died.

Furthermore, women in the Arabian Gulf possessed knowledge of the spiritual and healing spheres (Krause, 2011). There were female teachers, midwives, hairdressers, beauticians and matchmakers. There were several women who were known to be knowledgeable about religion working as preachers and *muftiyat*. In

Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, women worked as teachers in Qur'anic schools or sat up their own schools at home to earn income. Moza Selibikhin established the first *kuttab* in Qatar. P3Q Mahmud's *kuttab* became the first girl's school in Qatar. Other women earned an income from reading or reciting the Qur'an or poetic histories in religious ceremonies and events. Women readers were central for Shi'ite groups in the Gulf and gained recognition. Midwives occupied an important role in pre-oil societies with two functions of caring and curing, especially in cases where women would not allow men to come into intimate contact with them. As healers, women treated men and women. It was non-gendered occupation. Hamama Al-Tiniji was an example of female healers who practiced medicine in 1940s and 1950s in Al-Sharja. Other women worked as singers, entertainers, musicians and prostitutes. There were to some extent socially unacceptable. Prostitution was not illegal and always been watched by authorities. The upper-class women and wives of rulers and merchants did not engage in the above occupations. Rich women owned their commercial enterprises such as trading in jewelry or investing in real estate. Other wealthy women invested their money in Islamic charitable endowments (El Saadi, 2012).

Although the women in the Arab Gulf societies were major producers and investors, they were the principle buyers of goods and consumers. Female traders gathered in the marketplace to sell goods to other women. Regardless of how modest the earnings, their income supported women and their families. The support women provided definitely empowered them and gave them the right to make decisions. The above historical image of Arab Gulf women in pre-oil societies leads to the conclusion that women regardless of their social and economic status were not isolated from public economic life. The following questions arise: How did discovery of oil changed women occupations? What is the impact of oil on the status of Gulf women? Answering these

two questions requires an elaboration of the state-model founded in the Arab Gulf states after oil discovery, the rentier state. Rentierism resulted in radical economic transformations that had a substantial impact on the labor force.

### Rentier State Model

The expression 'rentier state' is derived from economic original use of the work 'rent' to describe returns to landowners. It was a return generated without productive effort (Losman, 2010). The political impact of the two oil booms took place in 1970s was the reason behind the emergence of the term 'rentierism'. It came out to explain the impact of oil boom periods and to explain state-society relations in states that generate a large proportion of their income from rents. Published in 1970, Hussein Mahdavy laid the fundamentals of rentierism in writing about pre-revolutionary Iran. The rentier state is autonomous from society. Revenues accrue directly to the state/government which allocates a minimum amount of wealth to society and does not concern itself with a base of support. Democratic inputs are sacrificed because the population in effect is bought off. The state has a strong repressive apparatus and thus opposition is not tolerated or accepted (Gray, 2011).

Arab Gulf states corresponded to this definition of the rentier state. The government is the principal rentier in the economy that plays a crucial role as the mover of economic activities. There are different layers of beneficiaries with the government at the top of the pyramid. Citizenship has become a source of economic benefit as social and economic interests are organized in a manner to capture a slice of this rent. The government is the provider of public goods with a promise to spend money and distribute benefits to the population with no political levy on them (no representation without taxation). This includes a wide range of genuine public goods and services such as defense, education, health, employment, social security, etc. For example, every Gulf

citizen has a legitimate aspiration to be a government employee since the government the major employer. The Arab Gulf rentier states are magnified by the impact of tribes in which buying loyalties and allegiance was a tradition. For instance, the Arab Gulf states developed a system of government land purchase at prices unrelated to market value, such in Qatar, Kuwait and UAE. The governments granted lands to relatives or other loyal members of society it wished as favor. With no taxes, citizens are less demanding in terms of political participation. Local merchants also are favored by existing laws. The big trading houses owed their wealth to some rent situation. Furthermore, the distinction between public service and private interests is blurred. There is a conflict sometimes between holding public office and running private businesses. Several development projects and contracts provided opportunities for private gains, especially for those in public office as an expression of royal gratitude (Beblawi, 1987).

The features of the rentier state do not provide an explanation of the relationship between resource wealth and female labor market outcomes. One of the prominent theories to explain the impact of resources on women's economic activities is proposed by Ross (2008). Does oil perpetuate patriarchy? What is the impact of oil on Arab Gulf women?

#### *Impact of Oil on Arab Gulf Women*

With oil wealth, GCC societies changed and women withdrew from public activities (Metcalf, Sultan, & Weir, 2011). It affected women participation in the market as they started to rely on their husbands who worked in the public sector or oil-related industries. Restrictions on women participation in the public sector made it even harder to join the labor force. The new Gulf women had less economic freedom and public participation. Ross (2008) argued that oil is the main factor behind women's

underrepresentation in the workforce. He stated that with the production of what is called the 'Dutch Disease' – an economic phenomenon where rapid development in natural resources sector is accompanied by a decline in other sector – economy transformed away from the 'traded sector' (agriculture and manufacturing) and towards the 'nontraded sector' (construction and services). The boom in oil production generated a new wealth that made the importation of tradable goods cheaper and increased the demand for non-tradable goods. The new economic transformation influences the number of women in the labor market due to the rise of female unearned income, which is the income that accrues to a woman that she does not earn directly. The woman is less inclined to join the labor market as her family's income raises. On the other hand, the expansion of nontraded sector boosts the demand for male labor and the decline of traded sector reduces the demand for female labor, and hence, prevailing female wages. Furthermore, the oil-rich Gulf governments created a very generous welfare system that supports the male households as the head of the family. With decline in women's participation in the workforce, women lose their political influence. Moghadam (Moghadam, 2013) emphasized that the Gulf countries with the highest oil revenues and capital-intensive production had a small female share of paid employment. Another factor of low female employment pertained to high wages that males earned. She found that the period 1960s-1990s was of low female participation in workforce for oil-rich economies in MENA. In the Gulf countries, women from Eastern Asia work in hospitals, hotels, shops and restaurants. She argues that oil-based growth reinforced a 'patriarchal gender contract', in which men are breadwinners and women are wives and mothers. Taking petroleum production as a percentage of GDP as a measure of resource dependency and comparing it with female labor participation (among nationals and non-nationals, excluding domestic workers), supports Ross'

argument. Table 1 and Table 2 display the contribution of hydrocarbon sector to GDP, percentage of national female labor participation to total labor force and percentage of female labor participation to total labor force. In both Qatar and Bahrain, national women's proportion in the labor force is low, about 2% and 9% consecutively. Despite the decline in the contribution of hydrocarbon sector in Qatar, this sector's contribution is still high constituting above 35% of GDP and resulting in lower participation levels for national and non-national women. Bahrain has a higher labor participation of national women, about 9%. According to Ross' argument, the higher level of female labor participation in Bahrain compared to Qatar is possibly explained by the contribution of the hydrocarbon sector to their economies, i.e. the higher the contribution of hydrocarbon leads to lower female labor participation. Statistical data focuses on the ratios of the female labor force to female population or national female labor to national male labor. The mostly published ratios are misleading as they are intended to emphasize positive conclusions about female labor in the region, aiming to display a dramatic increase in women's employment. For instance, the ratio of female labor force to female total population in Bahrain was 53.13% in 2018 and the ratio of national female to male labor force was 50.1% in 2015. In Qatar, the ratio of female labor force to total female population was 58.9% and the ratio of national female to male labor force was 60.3% in 2018 (The World Bank, 2019). As claimed, such measures are used to provide a clearer picture of women's economic participation in the GCC region because of the impact of the large non-national male labor force (Buttorff, Welborne, & al-Lawati, 2019). Claiming that the male component of labor force overshadows the contribution of women to the labor force does not reflect the true presence and contributions of women in the domestic workforce. It aims to display that women fare relatively well, making their participation looks comparatively high

relative to male counterparts in terms of employment. Based on the findings of this research, Qatar and Bahrain are not very serious when it comes to women's inclusion in the workforce. Notably, non-national women are proportionally more present than national women in Qatar and Bahrain. As suggested by Young (2016), being a woman is not the wholesale barrier to employment but being a national is an obstacle.

Oil brought social change, especially change in education and employment, and particularly the status of women and their share in the social transformation of society (Seikaly, *Women and Social Change in Bahrain*, 1994). Progress in health and education started only in 1950s with the establishment of health and education institutions, and it was then that female participation in the workforce increased. The rhetoric about the importance of education is matched by that of extolling the social roles of women as mothers and child bearers. Education has been seen as a key to eradicate the backward ideas about women (Findlow, 2007). During the first stage of development, women employment was not viewed favorably and there was a growing social attitude that feared the social impact of female employment on the family. Oil wealth and modernization contributed significantly to the creation of the perception of women staying at home and female employment as a recent and modern development (AlMutawa, 2016). Negligence of women's economic roles pre-oil in the public sphere supported a more conservative attitude towards female employment in the region as it has been used to justify social and cultural factor imposed on women in relation to employment opportunities in the public sphere. Baqader (1993) stated that Saudi males were hesitant about marrying a working female in the early 1980s. Several socio-cultural groups resisted female employment (El-Hadda, 2003). Seikaly (1994) pointed that since 1983, Gulf women integration into development was weakened, because of the falling prices of oil, the Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf war. Women's rights and share

in development was easily ignored. The official policy of Gulf government in implementing radical changes in the conditions of women was hesitant as in case of Bahrain and Kuwait and regressive as in case of Saudi Arabia where extremist clerks legitimized women's oppression.

*Table 1. Percentage of Qatari National Female Labor Force in Relation to Hydrocarbon Contribution to GDP, From Planning and Statistics Authority, Labor Force Survey*

| Year | Hydrocarbon Sector Contribution to GDP (%) | National Female Labor Force to Total Labor (%) | Female Labor Force to Total Labor (%) |
|------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2012 | 56.3%                                      | 28,831 (2.1%)                                  | 12.7%                                 |
| 2013 | 50.9%                                      | 31,285 (2%)                                    | 12.7%                                 |
| 2014 | 50.3%                                      | 31,851 (1.8%)                                  | 12.2%                                 |
| 2015 | 45.3%                                      | 34,852 (1.7%)                                  | 13.4%                                 |
| 2016 | 49.5%                                      | 36,646 (1.7%)                                  | 13.2%                                 |
| 2017 | 48.2%                                      | 37,295 (1.8%)                                  | 13.4%                                 |
| 2018 | 36.1%                                      | 38,554 (1.8%)                                  | 13.6%                                 |

*Table 2. Percentage of Bahraini National Female Labor Force in Relation to Hydrocarbon Contribution to GDP, From Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA), Bahrain Labor Market Indicators*

| Year | Hydrocarbon Sector Contribution to GDP (%) | National Female Labor Force to Total Labor (%) | Female Labor Force to Total Labor (%) |
|------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2012 | 26%  | 50,245 (9.2%)                                  | 14.5%                                 |
| 2013 | 28%  | 52,950 (9.4%)                                  | 15.1%                                 |
| 2014 | 20%  | 55,146 (9.5%)                                  | 15.4%                                 |
| 2015 | 20%  | 57,291 (9.3%)                                  | 15.4%                                 |
| 2016 | 19.7%                                      | 57,422 (8.4%)                                  | 14.2%                                 |
| 2017 | 19.21                                      | 58,892 (8.8%)                                  | 15.2%                                 |
| 2018 | 17.7%                                      | 59,555 (8.8%)                                  | 15.5%                                 |

### *The Present of Gulf Women's Economic Status*

Moghadam (2013) emphasized that access to work and employment is studied as an empirical measure of women's status. Women's work in the formal sector of economy is an important indicator of social status for those who believe that women's economic dependence on men is the root cause of their disadvantaged status. Employed women may have greater control over decision-making within the family and community.

The common belief that it is only recently that Gulf women have started playing an economic role is understandable when investigating the percentage of female labor participation in the Gulf region, which dramatically increased from 1% in 1975 (AlMutawa, 2016) to 18.9% in 2011 (Secretariat General of GCC, 2011). The Gulf governments initiatives to push for increased female participation economically and politically may appear more progressive than pre-oil Gulf societies. Gulf governments have invested in women's knowledge and skills, and hence, have made significant strides in improving education provision at all levels and providing free healthcare for women (Metcalf, Saunders, Sultan, & Weir, 2009). Educational attainment has been widely studied as a factor that contributes to the female labor supply (Willoughby, 2008; Spierings & Jeroen, 2007), while the new economic structure and development strategy determine the demand for female labor in public and private sectors. Willoughby (2008) argues that the increase in female educational attainment in the Gulf countries will lead to noticeable increase of female labor participation. He found that despite the presence of a large population of men expatriates in professional, clerical and retail occupation, improvements in female educational attainment will enable Gulf women to compete and replace expatriates. He confirmed, through statistical analysis, that the presence of women in the labor force has increased substantially over the last

two decades, but that Gulf countries still have a disproportionately male workforce. He found that the rise in the share of women in the labor force is correlated with changes in female educational attainment and fertility rates. The rise in share of women workers is correlated with young Gulf women more likely to be literate than men as confirmed by the school enrollment data in schools and institutions of higher education. Fertility rates negatively correlates with increased female labor force activities. With gains in educational attainment and rising female labor participation, childbirth per woman has declined and large numbers of women have restricted their fertility through delayed marriage. Investigating the cases of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia revealed distinctions between Gulf nations. The data cited in his article suggested that feminization of occupations is taking place as more educated women will be able to fill professional and clerical jobs already filled by expats, as in the case of Bahrain. Although the findings of this research confirm his conclusion in relation to the presence of a disproportionately male workforce in the Gulf, but it does not support his projection about the impact of education in the labor force. Indeed, the majority of economically active female populations come from a lower-income class, mainly female migrants, and Gulf female citizens with access to paid employment tend to be educated middle-class women. They are concentrated in community, social and public services (Moghadam, 2013). The data cited in this chapter, Table 3 and Table 4 confirms that Qatari women are concentrated in the defense and education sectors, which employed 12,617 and 10,415 consecutively, while Bahraini women are concentrated in wholesale and trade sector by 6,724, followed by construction and financial services. The expansion of the government sector and public services became an important source of status and livelihood for women (Moghadam, 2013) , and this partially explains the concentration of Qatari women in two main public sectors, defense and education. The

field of education is a sex-segregated sector and thus it has become a female's preferred sector, while integration of women and the majority of Qatari men in a defense and security sector – The Ministry of Interior – is perceived as part of the rentier social contract that perceives the government as the legitimate employer requiring no university degrees. Data about defense and security sector in Bahrain is not available, because of the sectarian employment policy adopted by the government after several political crises. Collected statistical data about Bahraini women confirms that more females are employed in the financial sector that presumably requires a university degree, or in wholesale and trade sector that requires a secondary certificate. Although wholesale and trade sectors are dominated by non-national women and men in both countries, less Qatari women work in this sector compared to Bahraini women. The working environment of this sector may entail direct interactions with men – a behavior rejected by the patriarchal structure – which reduces the desire of Qatari women to join it. Most importantly the economic transformations that took place in both countries have affected or determined women's occupational options. Notably, the national women of two countries surpass men in education and health sector. However, more Qatari women are employed in these two sectors than Bahraini women due to the fact that the public sector in poorer GCC countries, like Bahrain, is overwhelmed and cannot absorb job seekers. In contrast to Willoughby's findings, less Qatari and Bahraini women and men are employed in the professional and scientific sectors. The total participation of two sexes is far less than the total of non-national workers in this sector, making it harder for both, and not only women, to compete and to replace expatriates. If participation of national men with college degrees is lower than half of total male expatriates working in professional, scientific and technical sectors, it will be even harder for women to replace them regardless of their educational attainment.

The following chapter 4 aims to locate the investigation of the status of women in GCC countries in relation to the material developments. A transition from the traditional rentier state model took place in Qatar and Bahrain and other GCC countries. Both countries have defied the economic stereotype associated with rentier states as oil dependent by institutionalizing and pursuing the attainment of a diversified global economy country via a deliberate policy in the form of national visions. Thus, rentier impact as discussed by Ross (2008) is far from being the proper and sole explanatory tenet for Gulf women's present economic status, given the profound changes in the lives of GCC women. As a result, it is important to investigate the relationship between the dynamics of the economy and the status of women in the Gulf region through an exploration of various economic forces that have played a role in shaping their lives. Bahrain has shifted its concentration from oil production into strengthening alternative economic sectors, such as financial and service sectors, because of declining contributions of hydrocarbon. Qatar's economy remains promising and the country has not felt the necessity to expand non-hydrocarbon sectors until recently because of an important event to be hosted in 2022, the World Cup. In this respect, highlighting Gulf diversity and differences between its six countries is essential, being an under-researched topic that is stereotyped as uniform. Qatar has entered what Matthew Gray called 'late rentierism'. Bahrain is explicitly moving towards a neoliberal economic policy, witnessed through its path of liberalization in trade, finance, services and tourism. The below section starts with exploring the key features of late-rentierism and neoliberalism.

*Table 3. Distribution of Labor Force According to Sectors in Qatar, From Planning and Statistics Authority, Labor Force Survey, Statistical Analysis Labor Force Sample Survey 2018.*

|  | Women    |        | Men      |         |
|--|----------|--------|----------|---------|
|  | National | Total  | National | Total   |
| Education                              | 10,415   | 34,361 | 2,296    | 13,355  |
| Health and Social Activities           | 3,797    | 21,258 | 1,960    | 17,443  |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade             | 1,022    | 25,873 | 1,092    | 226,040 |
| Defense and Security                   | 12,617   | 14,697 | 39,822   | 63,356  |
| Financial Activities                   | 2,186    | 5,363  | 2,240    | 9,656   |
| Mining and Quarrying                   | 2,199    | 6,772  | 8,294    | 92,220  |
| Construction                           | 2,199    | 6,939  | 1,470    | 874,010 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical | 112      | 2,264  | 420      | 16,051  |

*Table 4. Distribution of Labor Force According to Sectors in Bahrain, From Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA), Labor Market Indicators, Employment, June 2019.*

|  | Women    |        | Men      |         |
|--|----------|--------|----------|---------|
|  | National | Total  | National | Total   |
| Education                              | 3,168    | 5,319  | 770      | 3,875   |
| Health and Social Activities           | 1,096    | 2,998  | 375      | 1,718   |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade             | 6,724    | 18,311 | 14,305   | 110,008 |
| Financial Activities                   | 3,503    | 4,774  | 5,797    | 11,578  |
| Mining and Quarrying                   | 78       | 150    | 321      | 5,132   |
| Construction                           | 3,955    | 6,263  | 7,984    | 148,476 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical | 1,945    | 2,784  | 3,959    | 14,350  |

#### Late Rentierism

Late rentier theory was developed by Mathew Gray to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional rentier state theory. As the GCC states have become

more globalized, rentier state theory failed to explain the dramatic changes within the political economies of these states, especially in UAE and Qatar. Late rentierism is proposed to explain the incorporated some quasi-rentier aspects into their economic policies, foreign policies and relationship with society. It focuses on factors such state maturity since 1990, impact of globalization, new state economic and development policies, population growth and employment pressure. Gray emphasizes that the state is rentier by virtue as there has not been a dramatic transition to pluralistic democracy or ceding real power to society however they are “more entrepreneurial, supportive of development and responsive than it was previously” (Gray, 2011, p. 23).

Gray described seven features of late-rentier Gulf states that support his argument of the Gulf states becoming entrepreneurial and responsive. The first feature of the late rentier Gulf state is being more responsive to basic societal needs that do not threaten the leadership or amend the system, because of the implied risk of uprisings given the wide-spread use and availability of new technologies and communications. Although they appear more open to change, they still are neo-patrimonial with power closely held by royal families. Neo-patrimonialism means that only very small and important group within society is involved in the generation of the rents and in sustaining the ruling elite regime and explains the mechanisms by which the state distributes oil wealth for legitimacy purposes. This mechanism focuses on a particular style of a leader (shaikh) who is the center of an elite web and all elites subordinate to him. The Gulf states avoid actual democratization despite the presence of relatively weak legislative bodies such as *shura* and parliament councils. They serve the aim of maintaining the political status quo and appearing as being consultative with society whose concerns are impacted by the policies. The second feature is related to the implications of globalization. Rentier states were isolationist in their response to

globalization, but late-rentier states open-up to globalization with caution. The Gulf states managed a process of reforms that included changes at the economic and social levels. Each state pursued different approaches to globalization because of specific economic, cultural, structural and political contexts. For instance, the Dubai model in terms of economic diversification cannot be easily applied beyond Dubai, representing a response to the forces of globalization. Dubai became a regional trade and transport hub since the 1990s. It is open to foreign investment, international trade and tourism. The rulers of Dubai tried to develop the non-oil sector such as investments, finance and international trade. This model is important because it is an attempt to rewrite their rentier bargains with society. The third feature is the existence of economic and development plans. All Gulf states have an economic policy that includes approaches to trade, labor market and fiscal and monetary policies. All Gulf states have development plans such as Qatar National Vision 2030 and Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. Although there is no single model behind development strategies and goals, the Gulf states are hybridist as they exhibit some neoliberal strains and some Islamic compliant economics such as Islamic banking, with a new state capitalism. The fourth feature is the creation of entrepreneurial and new state capitalism, in which the state sets strategic goals and visions and engages economically with the outside rather than seeking to centrally plan or manage the economy. The state capitalism in the Gulf operates oil and gas companies professionally and efficiently. It is a resource-nationalist that treats hydrocarbon as both a political and economic tool. Additionally, it owns other key sectors such as airlines, banks and telecommunications and favors specific private sector firms owned by royals and well-connected individuals. The fifth feature is that the economies of late rentiers are becoming energy driven. While oil and gas revenues still dominate the economy, they are being used to promote economic

diversification. Energy-driven policies encourage sectors related to oil or gas and sectors with comparative advantage. The sixth feature is that late rentiers have started to plan for the long-term survival, because of changing oil price. Two important mechanisms of survival are through diversification and sovereign wealth funds that provide the regimes with long-term funds to ease some problems of resource curse. The seventh feature is the importance of foreign relations to the small and vulnerable late rentier Gulf states. Gulf rulers have started to appreciate the benefits of soft power in terms of stronger trade and investment ties and high levels of foreign investment from key states like the United States. Other strategies seem necessary to late rentiers, such as transnational television stations, most famously Qatar's *Al Jazeera*, or hosting international sport and leisure events or becoming a tourism destination, like Dubai (Gray, 2011).

Gray opposed to tag the economic reforms in GCC countries as economically neoliberal, arguing that the new state capitalism is still rentier and not neoliberal, and liberalization reforms were conducted in a controlled environment and are not unconstrained neoliberal policies. His preference to refer to them as hybridist means that the Gulf exhibits socially cautious neoliberal policies consistent with post-Washington Consensus. Throughout chapter 4 I argue that regardless of the neoliberal template, implementation and adaptations of neoliberalism vary across cultures and over time. Divergence between theory and practice exists in case of Arab Gulf countries, and despite existing economic structures, the GCC countries are liberal product.

#### The Neoliberal State

Harvey (2005) provided a general description of the neoliberal state. He stated

that it favors strong individual property rights, rule of law and free markets and trade, which are critically essential to secure individual freedom. Private enterprises, legally regarded as individuals, are seen as keys to innovation and wealth creation. The individual rights to freedom of actions, choice and expression must be protected and the state must therefore use its monopoly of the means of violence to preserve these freedoms. The elimination of poverty can be secured through free markets and free trade. Neoliberal states seek privatization of assets. The clear private property rights are considered the best way to protect against overexploitation of common property resources, so called 'tragedy of the commons', reduce poverty and improve life quality. As stated by Harvey (2005),

privatization and deregulation combined with competition, it is claimed, eliminate bureaucratic red tapes, increase efficiency and productivity, improve quality and reduce costs, both directly to the consumer through cheaper commodities and services and indirectly through reduction of the tax burden.  
(p. 65)

Thus, individuals' failure or success is attributed to their entrepreneurial virtues rather than to any systemic property. Indeed, all barriers to the free movement of capital between sector, regions and countries have to be removed, except in cases related to the national interest. International competition is healthy since it improves efficiency and lowers prices to control inflations. States should collaborate to reduce barriers to exchange through international agreements, such as those incorporated in the World Trade Organization.

### *Implications for Arab States*

The characters of the neoliberal states are hard to describe, because divergence from the template of neoliberalism presences and adaptations have varied from place to place as well as over time. However, within these pictures of the neoliberal state, two general threads are highlighted. The first thread is that the neoliberal state tends to side with good business climate as opposed to collective rights and capacity of environment. The second thread is the favoring of the integrity of the financial system over the well-being of people and environment. In other instances, the divergence between theory and practice is attributed to the problems of transition that reflect the state form that existed prior to the neoliberal turn. This was applicable to the case of central and eastern Europe after the collapse of communism and developmental states such as Singapore and other Asian countries. The development of structures of state intervention enhances the state's position in international competitions, while the process of neoliberal turn creates the condition for a class, which liberates itself from reliance upon state power. Additionally, the opening of capital market is another character of neoliberal state, which facilitates the diffusion of influence of financial institutions through deregulation. Harvey (2005) clarified,

developmental states become consistent with neoliberalization to the degree that they facilitate competition between firms, corporations and territorial entities and accept the rules of free trade and rely on open export markets. But they are actively interventionist in creating the infrastructures for a good business climate. (p. 72)

In developing countries, the minimalist scope of the neoliberal state has been supported by initiatives to cut expenditures and reduce public employees. The state has witnessed a recent decline in its role as a direct producer and deliverer of goods and services and

increasingly assuming an indirect role to facilitate the market forces. Recent market-driven policies have supported the trend towards a minimalist state, including privatization of public enterprises, contracting out of service, liberalization and deregulation of finance and price control. Another important market-biased policy is the expansion of public-private enterprises. Alliance with private capital includes local and transnational firms, investors and businesses. Another feature is anti-welfare policies by diminishing welfare programs and subsidized services. These policies are accompanied with transforming the state's institutional objectives and structures in the image of the corporate business sector. State's developmental goals are more businesslike objectives such as efficiency, productivity and economic growth (Haque, 2008).

It is important to mention that the Arab states have common features that make them a liberal product, regardless of their relative liberal characteristics. Shalaldah (2008) stated that this perspective is supported by the conditions that determined the shift from the centralism of the Ottoman Empire, as representation of eastern feudalism, to independence and creation of states. The Western liberal thinking had shaped and influenced the political movements. For instance, the western states had aspired the Arab constitutions, forms of election and other political institutions, even if they have only symbolic roles. Most importantly, the economic sector has adopted the market mechanism that includes implementation of liberal policies and openness to international markets. These transformations had allowed the social class, mainly middle bourgeois class, to dominate the state and the market. There are two factors that explain the liberal shift: the structure of local communities in relation to the modes of production and absence of bourgeois revolution, and colonialism that created states compatible with colonial interests, including the Gulf states, which were under colonial

protection. These factors had influenced the social relations, which are capitalist relations. Both factors have created undemocratic states with dependent economies that serve the interests of the ruling families, including the rentier economy. The neoliberal discourse in the Arab states has been linked to the International Monetary Fund through structural adjustment policies, which focus on privatization, the limited government. These policies are justified as tools to achieve efficient exploitation of economic resources, reshape the public-private relationship, lower public expenditures and create a healthy environment for investments.

### Summary

Oil brought changes in education, health and employment. Education has been perceived as the key to liberate women and to encourage their participation in the labor force. Although modernization brought by oil has greatly influenced the lives of Gulf women, oil negatively caused the withdrawal of women from the public activities. The common belief that Gulf women have recently played an economic role is invalid in light of various roles women had in pre-oil societies. The main economic activities were pearling, fishing and trading. Pearl divers used to leave their families for months and women took over all activities to maintain the livelihood of the families. Upper-class women were investors and merchants supporting their husbands. Bedouin women played a crucial role in taking care of tribal and commercial business. Women were healers, teachers, entertainers and midwives. They were major producers and consumers. Oil, as argued by Ross, changed the economic structure of the region pushing women to depend on their male-relatives for financial support and limiting their market participation to non-tradable and sex-segregated sectors. In contrast to Willoughby's argument, and with supporting statistics, Gulf women's educational attainment will not enable them to replace expatriates in the professional sectors.

Although the rentier model had dominated the Gulf discourse for years, the Gulf countries have been more responsive to societal needs and forces of globalization, becoming energy-driven and appreciating the benefits of soft power. As described by Gray, they are late rentiers. The implementation of neoliberal policy plan has been another crucial economic reform. Although Harvey stated the general description of the neoliberal states in relation to individual freedoms, the characteristics of the neoliberal states are hard to describe due to divergence from the template. The prior state form caused this divergence between theory and practice. However, developing countries have been supportive of the trend towards a minimalist state by encouragement of more businesslike objectives in terms of their adaptation of mechanisms of openness to international markets.

The next chapter 4 tries to explore the manifestation of neoliberal transition by locating the aspect of policy implementation within the different fields of economy, including share of hydrocarbon, businesses, finance activities, tourism and private sector.

## CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND ADAPTATION TO NEOLIBERALISM

As for Qatar and Bahrain, the rentier explanation holds insufficient value in the light of the countries' changed socio-political and economic profiles, especially with minimal energy exports and excessive economic dependence on external players, including Saudi Arabia (Cyrill, n.d.). The two countries have passed through intentional economic transformations that have changed the lives of their women and redefined the role of the state in terms of its relations to welfare policies and social services. This chapter tries to answer this question: what are the manifestations of neoliberalism within Gulf economies?

The economic shifts can be manifested within the two countries' orientation toward implementation of neoliberal reforms. The two countries through choice, and motivated by necessity, introduced several neoliberal reforms to diversify the economy and increase competitiveness, despite that the notion of neoliberalism was absent from the discourse. As for Bahrain, the country had suffered from lower economic growth and declining public revenues that made the effort toward further liberalization a necessary driver of growth. It has made choices over a sustained period to liberalize its economy and create a market/regulatory environment that allows foreign property ownership, eliminates taxes and tariffs and encourages privatizing numerous sectors including tourism, telecommunications, transportation, electricity and water and ports and airport services after the creation of the Supreme Privatization Council in 2001. In Qatar, the huge revenues generated from gas have encouraged the country to invest abroad and develop non-hydrocarbon sector. Diversification becomes the pathway for change and evolution. Although the neoliberal process in Qatar is slower due to socio-economic contract, both countries are liberalizing their economies.

Al-Beraidi (2018) provided a historical narrative of liberalization process in the GCC. He emphasized that pre-neoliberalism stage is dated back to the period before the discovery oil, in which the notion of neoliberalism was completely absent in the Arabian Gulf countries. The world, during this period, was interested in intervention policies. The implementation of neoliberal policies has started with the first plans and programs of development in the region, which included ideas such as privatization and freedom of the market, but most critically the dependency on the West has evolved. An explicit interest in neoliberalism has been supported by the adoption of the economic visions regionally. The Qatari National Vision 2030 and Bahraini Economic Vision 2030, which are a neoliberal document, emphasize that dependence on hydrocarbon is a threat that can be solved by diversification; i.e. neoliberalism.

Furthermore, neoliberalism produces variations across different economies. Although neoliberal discourse has specific intellectual and political dimensions, it entails an inherent contradiction between its universal principles and policy implementation. It is contingent upon the specific context in which it is pursued in that it is neither applied in the same fashion across all places nor does it necessarily impact different places in the same way (Birch & Mykhnenko, 2009). These variations are rooted in the three phases of neoliberalism – ‘proto-neoliberalism, ‘roll-back neoliberalism’ and roll-out neoliberalism’, highlighted by Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell (2003). Variations of neoliberalism are strongly linked to the two latter phases, by which roll-back neoliberalism is the phase of globalizing neoliberal process while roll-out neoliberalism is related to how each country sought itself in relation to global economic circumstances, which is very much a state-led project. Each state has a vital role in neoliberalization by implementing and extending the reach of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is context-specific and is not detached from local/national/regional

contexts, which produces distinctive manifestations of neoliberalism, varieties of a single genus (Mosedale , Introduction: Neoliberalism and the Political Economy of Tourism: Projects, Discourses and Practices, 2016). Thus, each state is unique in term of its developed relation to neoliberalism, which entails understanding the historical transformations within the socio-economic sphere. In the case of Qatar and Bahrain, it is not necessary that the implementation of neoliberalism rises to the level of countries like America, Britain and Germany, but it is unprecedented steps in the history of each country. The explicit and complete adoption of neoliberalism is hampered by societal considerations, but it is possible.

This chapter highlights in the first part the theoretical the transformations that took place within the Gulf economy and the establishment of the capitalist class in the region. It emphasizes that rentier-state theory is not capable of providing a comprehensive narrative of capitalism in the region. The chapter consists of analysis of the two countries' visions to determine the aspects of neoliberal transformations that is and will be taking place. Th analysis focuses on neoliberal transformations related to change within the state's role, privatization, and tourism and banking sectors. It thirdly explains the current characteristics of the two economies and in relation to the dominant discourse of neoliberalism. What is the nature of these economic transformations? How and why did they take place?

#### Formation of a Capitalist Class: Beyond Rentierism

The trends of internationalization, i.e. capital's tendency to overcome every spatial barrier to intercourse and financialization experienced their fullest development during neoliberalism's triumphant spread across the world. Adam Hanieh (2011) emphasized that analysis of the Gulf states has been dominated by rentier-state theory since its development by the Iranian economist Hossein Mahdavy. Social stagnation

and political inertia have been linked to rentier-state. When this theory was further developed by Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (1987), a distinction was made between rentier-state and rentier-economy. Beblawi and Luciani's work revolves around the examination of the size of the state and its linkage and role vis-à-vis the economy. This framework has helped in explaining the development of the private sector and merchant classes in the Gulf in the postcolonial era, but more importantly, it helped in explaining the relation between the state and its citizens. However, the term 'capitalism' is absent from the narrative, with an emphasis on state as distinct sphere that can maneuver/deploy economic strategies from the constraints of the capitalist class. It fails to explain how this class was founded, the process of transition to neoliberalism or its impact on the different segments of Gulf societies.

Class formation during the first phases of capitalist development in the Gulf states was marked by a spatial fix and development of a domestic capitalist class through redirection of oil revenues to elites and merchant families. The Gulf states heavily relied on flows of migrant workers, but they were systematically denied any possibility of becoming permanent citizens of the Gulf states. The crucial centrality of the Gulf region to the making of the global capitalism through the control of oil could not be compromised by any attempt by the labor to wrest the control of oil rents. Thus, the spatial configuration of class served as a 'fix' for Gulf capitalism thus increasing the rate of labor exploitation. The redirection of accumulated state revenues became the key fiscal basis of the state and the ruler's authority. The private sector was excluded from involvement in upstream oil production, but oil revenues were redirected to merchant families, through gifts sometimes. Another mechanism of wealth distribution to the wider society is through state apparatus. Jobs in the public sector were seen as a social right and the core of the state apparatus went to members of the ruling family to

sustain the ruling elite's regime, while the circles around the core went to merchant families. The state apparatus became the important mechanism of accumulation as it facilitated access to contracts. Over time, the emerging bourgeoisie group whose members were the initial recipients of state largesse were to develop into massive conglomerates with economic activities in production, sale of commodities and financial accumulation. With rise in state's revenues, all GCC countries embraced ambitious development schemes that included large-scale infrastructure projects as well as industrial development. The emerging Gulf capitalist class was excluded from any direct control or ownership of oil, but this class enjoyed important opportunities in service, construction, food and transportation, and simple manufacturing either in the oil sector or for broader industrialization and infrastructure development. On the other hand, downstream joint ventures, mostly held in partnership with foreign capital, were connected to the general increase in the wealth of the nationals. Furthermore, the interlock between domestic and state capital is clear in case of energy-intensive sectors, like petrochemical, metal industries (rolled steel, aluminum extrusions, and wires) and cement production. Merchants enjoyed the sole agency rights for foreign imports and retail activities. Growing oil revenues stimulated the development of the local banking system under the ownership of large merchant families. Bahrain, for instance, has acted as a key spatial zone for the internationalization of the finance circuit within the GCC (Hanieh, 2011).

At early stages, it is obvious that the adaptation to neoliberalism in the country has been supported by an emerging capitalist class whose members enjoyed agency rights in downstream oil, retail and foreign imports, and banking systems. Moreover, internationalization of capital and individuals has contributed to the plans to liberalize the economy. However, the adoption of the economic vision in 2008 reflects a mature

stage in the process of neoliberalization.

#### The National Economic Visions 2030: The Pathway to Neoliberalism

Qatar National Vision 2030, the first GCC vision published in July 2008, and Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 are a manifestation of the two countries' thriving toward neoliberalism (Alnasif, 2015). A critical review of the language of the two documents reveals the intention to implement neoliberal reforms to reconcile the country's economic and social status. They are a reflection of the leadership's perceptions and prospects of change and its necessity. The two visions emphasize that the economic transformations will result in societal changes. This transformation is a necessity because of the need to reduce dependence on oil and to reposition two countries in the global economy. The Qatari vision mentioned the importance to build "a diversified economy that gradually reduces its dependence on hydrocarbon industries" (p. 29). The diversified economy for Qatar is based on "industries and services with competitive advantages derived from hydrocarbon" and "a knowledge-based economy characterized by innovation, entrepreneurship ..." (p. 29). In Bahrain's vision, there are many examples that support this approach. For instance, it states, "we [the government] aspire to shift from an economy built on oil wealth to a productive, globally competitive economy ..." (p. 3), and also insists on the importance of processing this aim early as possible "to plan a future without oil, we must lose no time ..." (p. 19).

Although the term 'neoliberalism' is absent in the visions, proposed reforms are neoliberal in nature, supported by the role assigned to the private sector, opening up the market, privatization and increasing competitiveness. To start with, the aims of the visions is to increase the income of the citizens and their living standards, a societal change achievable through the transformation of the current economic model – an oil-

based economy, to a private-sector driven economy. Qatar aims to sustain its development through an economy “capable of meeting the needs of, and securing a high standard of living for, all its people for the present and for the future” (p. 11). It emphasizes that achieving sustainable development is possible when the private sector plays its required roles. Qatar wants to promote itself as the regional hub for knowledge, but also for service and industrial activities. The emphasis on the open market is the strategy to overcome risks and challenges. The vision states, “The best security against these risks [economic imbalance and inflation] lies in open and flexible markets” (p. 25). On the other hand, Bahrain’s vision may be more explicit in pushing towards neoliberalism. Bahrain aims to build “an economy that raises a broad middle class of Bahrainis who enjoy good living standards” (p. 3). Bahrain’s vision states that “the most sustainable way of resolving the imbalance [in the public sector] and raising the quality of employment is a transformation to an economy driven by a thriving private sector” (p. 7). In addition to the emphasis on the essential role of the private sector, the vision calls for “opening up Bahrain’s market ever more fully” (p. 14) with an emphasis on reducing the size and costs of government. Privatization constitutes an essential tool in the process of transformation to a neoliberal economy, based on the success of the experience at the international level. The vision emphasizes that ‘Bahrain will follow international experience, which shows that governments significantly reduce costs and increase that quality of public services by outsourcing certain non-core government tasks” (p. 17). Generally, the transformation, according to the vision, is an investment in non-oil sectors, particularly tourism and service sectors.

Furthermore, Bahrain’s vision points to the change within the role of the government, socially and economically. For years, the government has been perceived as the sole service provider. It is rethinking its role, as emphasized by the vision, and

“will gradually move away from mere service provision” (p. 17). With emphasis on the role of the government in health care and education sectors as requirements of attractive living and business environments, the vision indicates that “subsidies ... will exclusively target the needy to reduce costs and avoid overconsumption of scarce resources” (p. 19). Qatar’s vision is silent regarding the change in government’s role in provision of public services but insists on building “efficient delivery mechanisms for public services” (p. 24). However, Qatar’s vision shares the role of government in establishing advanced education and health systems with Bahrain.

With emphasis on developing the lives of citizens, the term ‘woman’ is absent from the neoliberal discourse of the two visions. Regardless of the concentration on issues of social welfare and social justice, emphasis on the socio-economic rights is absent. It neglects the assessment of the impact of neoliberalization on its people (Alnasif, 2015).

### Economic Characteristics

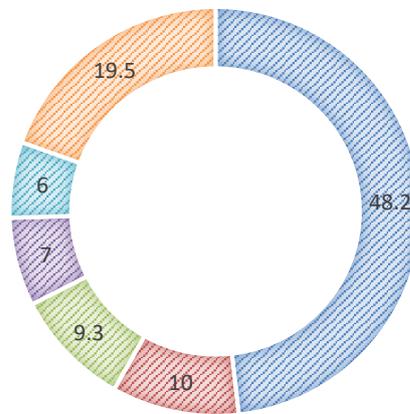
Empowering the private sector, opening the market for competition, shifting to service-based economy and developing a regulatory framework to conduct businesses are the principles of economic neoliberal change within the two countries, with a variation in implementation. Emphasizing the uniqueness of each country’s relation to neoliberalism, this section reviews the principal economic pillars of their economies and the state-led projects to extend the reach of neoliberalism in four fields: business environment, financial sector, tourism sector and private sector empowerment.

#### *An Overview: Qatar’s Economy*

Qatar is the largest exporter of LNG and GTLs in the world. Nearly its gas reserves are contained in the North Field and investment in LNG has started in 1990s. (Ibrahim & Harrigan, 2012). Qatar enjoys a high per capita income due to the high

value of oil and gas output relative to the small size of its population (Vellinga & Abdelgalil, 2007). Indeed, Qatar's economy grew by 1.6% in 2017 in spite of the GCC political crisis. Since 2005, priority of investments focused on non-hydrocarbon sector to realize Qatar's National Vision 2030. The surpluses of hydrocarbon have been used to support major infrastructure projects, including FIFA World Cup in 2022. The share of hydrocarbon GDP has declined from 60.1% in 2011 to 48.2% in 2017. The non-hydrocarbon GDP has grown significantly to reach 19.5% in 2017 (Iley, Pinto, Al-Jehani, & Al-Fakhri, 2018). Expansion in construction, transport services and utilities were made possible by the revenues of hydrocarbon (Ibrahim & Harrigan, 2012). Construction accounts for 21% of non-hydrocarbon output, while manufacturing accounts for 19.5% of this output (Iley, Pinto, Al-Jehani, & Al-Fakhri, 2018). Figure 2 shows the contribution of each sector to Qatar's GDP for year 2017. The hydrocarbon sector's contribution remains high constituting more than 48% of total GDP, followed by non-hydrocarbon contributing about 20%. The contributions of manufacturing and construction are almost the same, about 10%. The finance sector and administration services do not exceed 7% and 6% of total GDP respectively.

■ Oil and Gas      ■ Manufacturing      ■ Construction  
■ Finance, Insurance      ■ Public Administration      ■ Non-hydrocarbon



*Figure 2.* Real GDP composition 2017, from Qatar Economics Insight, Qatar.

### *Business Environment*

Qatar promotes an open economy with low nominal tariffs on import lining at 5% or less. It eased restrictions on direct foreign investment, except oil and gas sectors, with 100% foreign ownership in industry, tourism and service sectors (Ibrahim & Harrigan, 2012). The capital account is liberalized, and foreign investment is encouraged (Vellinga & Abdelgalil, 2007). Qatar has taken several steps to improve trade and investment climate, such as reducing tariffs, removing some restrictions to trade, providing investors more incentives and enhancing trade cooperation (Shachmurove, 2009). Qatar’s investment policies are designed to make money and most importantly preparing for a post-hydrocarbon age. Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) is the largest Qatari investor. As a sovereign wealth fund, it aims to invest the hydrocarbon’s wealth, aiming to establish the country’s reputation as a global financial power (Roberts, 2013).

### *Financial Sector*

Qatar's banking sector has grown in the past decades with a 7% contribution to real GDP in 2017. The banking industry consists of 7 local banks, 4 Islamic banks and 7 foreign banks (Qatar Central Bank, n.d.). Qatar banking sector is one of the smallest in the GCC in terms of total assets, with total assets of 1.39 trillion in 2018 (Kanady, 2018). However, it enjoys stellar financial performance and government support (Tabash & Dhankar, 2014). It is expected to play a critical role in fueling Qatar's vision 2030 based on sustainability of profitability (Ibrahim A. , 2015).

### *Tourism Sector*

Qatar's tourism industry, which is relatively new, boomed after hosting 2006 Asian games. The government formed 'Qatar Tourism Authority', later transformed to Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC) in 2018, to boost the sector. The current infrastructure development is meant to support the jump in tourist numbers (Shachmurove, 2009). The growth in the number of visitors is attributed to the introduction of new events and festivals. Many tourism related structures and activities and documents were introduced such as Doha Exhibition and Conference Center, Hamad International Airport and National Tourism Sector Strategies. Because sport can be considered a positive tourism strategy and always more profitable than conventional tourism, Qatar has focused much of its tourism growth in the sport sector. It has made a 2.8-billion-dollar investment in infrastructure in support of sport sector. It aims to elevate its position in the globe as a sports events and tourist destination. Moreover, Qatar, as the other GCC countries, offers a similar experience undergirded by the four attractions: sun, sand, sea and shopping. This explains why Qatar has started constructing many shopping centers in pursuit of tourism growth (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2015).

Since 2016, series of visa facilitation policies, including visa waivers, were introduced for nationals of many countries, mostly European and US. Thus, it has become the most open country in the Middle East and the 8th most open in the world in term of visa facilitation, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). According to QNTC, Qatar welcomed 1.819 million visitors in 2018. Due to the political crisis, the total of GCC nationals fell by 73% and other Arab nationals fell by 22% compared to 2017, but visitors from Europe, America and Asia increased in 2018. In addition, Qatar's cruise tourism grew by 83% in 2018 with 31 port calls, carrying 64,000 passengers at Doha Port. Tourist accommodation sector grew by 10% throughout 2018, resulting in an occupancy rate reaching 61% (National Tourism Council , 2018).

#### *Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Empowerment*

Qatar has pushed towards a wider scope of public policy, and less privatization compared to Bahrain. The pressure from Qatar's trade partners, primarily USA and neoliberal international organizations, encouraged and pushed forward the policies of privatization in Qatar. In addition, falling oil prices threaten the sustainability of well-paid government jobs. Thus, Qatar declared that privatization is a cornerstone effort to reduce pressure on budget and enhance private sector participation, excluding the oil and energy industry. The government partially privatized some social services but kept its control over them. This is why the privatization process remained slow since officially adopted in 1998 (Mansour, 2007). Qatar Development Bank (QIDB), founded in 1997, is the major financial arm of the government specializing in financing small and medium enterprises (Shachmurove, 2009).

Qatar National Vision recognizes the importance of entrepreneurship. Qatar ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Global Entrepreneurship Index, preceding the GCC and other Arab

countries. However, there are many obstacles. It is very costly to form a Limited Liability Company (LLC) and there are harsh regulations on business creation and bankruptcy. Foreigners are demotivated due to the requirement of a Qatari partner in every venture (Ding, 2015).

#### *An Overview: Bahrain's Economy*

Bahrain has been a commercial crossroads for 4,000 years. Its location in the Arabian Gulf has enabled the country to be a trade hub (BEDB Bahrain, n.d.). Although it was the first country to discover oil, it led the regional transition into the world modern economy by moving away from regional dependence on oil and diversifying its economy (Looney, 1989). Bahrain (and Oman) has been doing its best to develop economically despite being relatively resource rich. Bahrain has been under severe pressure to diversify and to create non-oil economy because of its limited reserves. To diversify, Bahrain needed to liberalize its economy to boost the country's competitiveness in multiple areas, such as business, trade, financial, monetary, fiscal and property rights (Looney, 2009). Since the 1960s, the government of Bahrain encouraged the development of the industrial sector, which focused on oil at the beginning and grew later to include other forms of manufacturing. In 1975, the government started to focus on financial services. As a result, Bahrain became the primary center for banking, communication and transportation in the Gulf region (Looney, 2009).

The share of government services in GDP declined from 23% in 1980s (Looney, 2009) to 12.79% in 2016 (Central Informatics Organization 2017). Oil and gas sectors have fallen from 43.6% in 2000 (Woertz 2018) to 19.21% in 2016 (Central Informatics Organization 2017). This decline reflects the expansion of Bahrain's financial services and manufacturing in recent years, with ratios of 16.51% and 14.92% respectively.

Furthermore, the free trade agreement with the US in 2006 resulted in better global market integration, but its GDP contribution remains low. However, trade in Bahrain remains heavily dominated by GCC regional partners, which accounted for 61.7% of total non-oil exports in 2016 and Saudi Arabia for 33.7%. Indeed, Bahrain is an old trade hub in the Gulf, however; it has been superseded by Dubai (Woertz, 2018). Figure 3 shows the contribution of each sector to Bahrain's GDP for year 2017. The share of hydrocarbon has declines to be less than 20%, in contrast to the increasing shares of the financial sector and manufacturing contributing 16.7% and approximately 15% respectively. The share of governmental services has declined to be less than 13%, while construction and manufacturing sectors contributed 7% each.

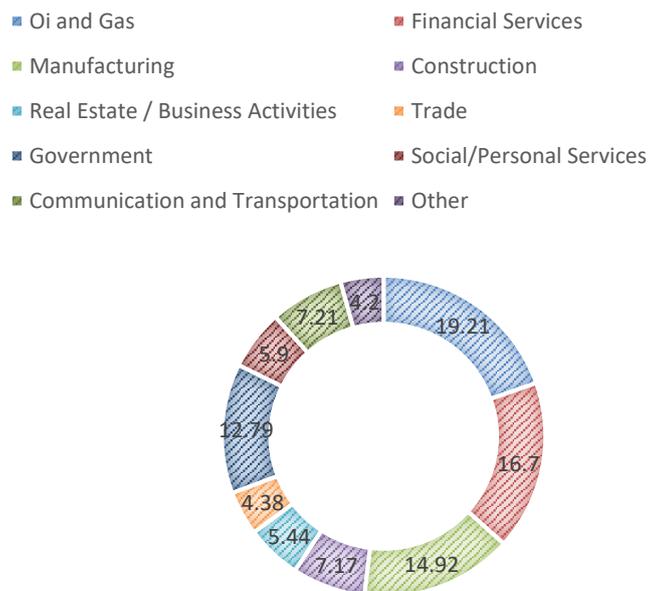


Figure 3. Contributors of GDP 2017, from Central Informatics Organization, Bahrain.

### *Business Environment*

The commercial law system is straightforward, supporting business freedom, but complicated bureaucratic procedures sometimes make obtaining a business license difficult (Looney, 2009). However, government of Bahrain offers many investment

opportunities in several economic sectors, including financial services, business and professional services, information communication technology, and manufacturing. Its oil reserves are being rapidly depleted; therefore, it has encouraged and promoted business opportunities. KPMG (2016 ) reported that doing business in Bahrain costs 30% and 40% less than its competitors, Qatar and Dubai respectively. In addition, it has the lowest real estate and employment costs in GCC. According to the Heritage Foundation 2016, Bahrain is the Middle East's most liberal, ranked 18th worldwide with an open-market economy. Indeed, this rank has been granted due its policies such as zero corporate tax<sup>1</sup>, no free-zone restrictions, no capital gains tax, no income tax<sup>2</sup>, and no property tax<sup>3</sup>. In order to support this modern economy, the government of Bahrain has developed efficient access to every market in the Middle East by air, sea, and land. Moreover, it offers its visitors the best regional/world tourist opportunity to enjoy an exceptional lifestyle. Indeed, tourism has proved to be a significant contributor to GDP in Bahrain and tourism has contributed directly to the Bahraini people's capacities to meet new peoples.

### *The Financial Sector*

One of the pillars of Bahrain's economy is financial services. Bahrain is regarded as the best regulated financial center in the Middle East. It has become the financial capital with an experience of 40 years (BEDB Bahrain, n.d.). The financial sector in Bahrain prospered with the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon, which used to be the financial center of the Middle East. Thus, many banks moved to Bahrain,

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<sup>1</sup> Most companies in Bahrain are not subject to corporate tax, except the 46% corporate tax rate on local and foreign companies operating in oil and gas sector.

<sup>2</sup> Bahrain has imposed no taxes on personal income. In 2006, the government announced it would levy 1% tax on Bahrainis' salaries to fund unemployment scheme.

<sup>3</sup> Bahrain imposed a value-added tax (VAT) in 2019 at a rate of 5%.

which was able to establish itself as a new financial hub within the region (Woertz 2018). According to the last statistics by Center of Informatics Organization for year 2016, the financial services are the largest non-oil contributor to Bahrain's real GDP, making up 16.5%. Bahrain has 403 institutions and 2,885 authorized funds. The financial services employ more than 14,000 people, of whom 62% are Bahraini and 35% women. The Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) leads and supervises the financial services, being the single regulator since 2002. There are several distinctive financial sectors, of which banking has been a core foundation since its establishment in 1970. By September 2016, the banking assets reached US\$ 192.7 bn (BEDB Bahrain, n.d.). Furthermore, Bahrain has been renowned globally for its Islamic finance services and solutions (Al-Shakar, 2017), with total Islamic banking assets stood at US\$ 26.3 bn, constituting more than 13% of total banking assets according to BEDB. It has the highest concentration of Islamic finance institutions in the region, of which 6 are retail Islamic banks and 19 wholesale Islamic banks.

#### *Tourism Sector*

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century marked a turning point for all GCC governments that made a commitment to diversify their economies and sustain development independent from oil resources. "Tourism was recognized as an important factor for future economic growth of post-rentier GCC economies" (Karolak, 2012, p. 3). Bahrain developed its tourism market early alongside the UAE, which built its tourism in the early 1990s. In the mid-1990s GCC countries started to promote tourism, including the building of several tourism attractions and extravagant projects (Mansfeld & Winckler, 2008). Bahrain became the second most popular leisure tourism destination in the GCC after UAE, although two decades ago, many Middle Eastern countries perceived leisure tourism as culturally undesirable or economically

unnecessary (Karolak, 2012; Sharpley, 2002). Bahrain offers both, business and leisure facilities. However, the onset of political unrest in Bahrain in 2011 had a severe impact on the tourism market as international tourist arrivals dropped by 40%. Nevertheless, the recovery period has witnessed tourist arrivals growth by 15% annually post the turmoil (ALPEN Capital, 2016). According to BEDB, tourism constituted about 5% of GDP, contributing US\$ 732 million in 2015. In 2016, Bahrain witnessed the arrival of 12.2 million visitors. The number of employees in 2015 reached 31,500, which constituted 4.2% of Bahrain's total workforce.

The country is accessible by air, land and sea easily. BEDB emphasizes that the liberal visa policy contributes to a steady increase in passenger disembarkments, embarkments and transits through Bahrain International Airport. Bahrain Airport Company (BAC) reported 8 million visitors in 2016. Moreover, the 25 km King Fahd Causeway means millions of GCC population are within driving distance. Bahrain Tourism Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) estimated around 12.2 million peoples to have used the causeway in 2016. Additionally, Bahrain's location in the Arabian Gulf, the world's third most popular cruise destination, supports its tourism activities. The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report 2015-16 ranked Bahrain 25<sup>th</sup> in the world for quality of overall infrastructure. Khalifa Bin Salman Port and road infrastructure contribute to the promotion of the Gulf as a leading choice for cruises. Thus, Bahrain was named the capital of Arab Tourism in 2013, capital of Asian Tourism in 2014, and Gulf capital of Tourism in 2016 (BEDB Bahrain, n.d.).

On the other hand, travel and tourist spending (T&T) was affected due to drop in oil prices. Although T&T recovered from 2012, it declined by 11.1% to US\$ 2.5 billion in 2015. In 2015, more than 80% of total T&T spending in Bahrain (US\$ 2.5 billion) came from leisure activities with US\$ 2.1 billion. Generally, Bahrain's

hospitality sector is likely to grow in line with the regional average, 7.3% comparable to the region's CAGR of 7.6%, backed by recovery of oil prices and the country's tourism promotion activities (ALPEN Capital, 2016). According to BEDB, it is projected to reach US\$ 1 billion by 2020. With the growth of hotels and serviced apartment rooms supply, international tourist arrivals to Bahrain are expected to grow at a CAGR of 4.7% (ALPEN Capital, 2016).

### *Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Empowerment*

With the drop-in oil prices, it has become imminent for Bahrain (and other GCC countries) to become more focused on entrepreneurship as a key driver for the economy. A program like *Rowad* has worked well on the grass roots for entrepreneurship and drove the overall strategy for startups and entrepreneurship in Bahrain. Since 2016, there has been a surge in private sector that allowed the government's resources to be allocated to other areas that need attention. The Economic Development Board (EDB) is leading the support programs for all entrepreneur, startup, and SME (Al-Shakar, 2017).

Although the Gulf states have moved beyond the stage of pure rent-seeking, states' rhetoric about private-driven growth is misleading. It is worth mentioning that Bahrain has one of the most active private sectors in the region, focusing on several industries and services such as tourism, manufacturing, retail and financial services (World Trade Organization 2007). Despite the fact that Gulf private sector has made huge strides since the first oil boom, its activities still rely on rent recycling rather than autonomous diversification. The private sector has lost its pre-oil historical role in development. It was independent and had greater influence on political and economic decision-making process and provider of tax. Today, the private sector is a client of the rentier state. It is subjected to political patronage and connected to the political elite. It

has benefited from the generous state spending but caused barriers to entry to many business activities (Hertog, 2014).

The Gulf states have reaffirmed their political commitment to fiscal reform. There have been wide-range economic reforms and liberalization since 2000s, such as opening new sectors and transferring of functions from state to businesses, like education, health, air transport, heavy industries and telecoms. Recent economic plans focus on reform policies that increase private sectors' growth and expand its role within the economy. Private businesses in the Gulf have matured in their managerial and technological capacities less directly reliant on the state spending in the short run, as they depend less on state direct procurement and more on consumer demand.

#### Summary

As each state has a vital role in neoliberalizing their economies, Qatar and Bahrain have implemented and extended the reach of neoliberalism. Implementation may not raise to the level of countries such as US and Britain, but it is an unprecedented economic transformation throughout the country's history. Economic transformation started earlier with the capitalist class formation. The emergence of capitalist class with agency right in several sectors pathed the way for further neoliberal reforms. In addition, financialization has been one of the principal pillars that the government depends on, while facilitating internationalization.

Nowadays, the economic visions are a manifestation of the country's neoliberal interest. They focus on the role of the market and the private sector in enhancing people's lives. They also emphasize the reduction in the welfare policies. However, there is no mention of the word 'woman' in the text, which raises questions about the impact of such reform on women's lives.

The neoliberalization process has witnessed the decline of government services

in GDP and expansion of financial and manufacturing sectors. Bahrain has become the most popular leisure tourism destination in the GCC, while Qatar is the largest LNG world exporter. Analysis of the four economic fields – business, finance, tourism and private sector, explained the differences between their separate paths towards neoliberalism. While Qatar is hesitant to take wider steps due to socio-economic reasons, Bahrain has taken more explicit and direct steps.

Qatar took steps to increase the contribution of non-hydrocarbon sector to its GDP reaching 19%, but the contribution of the hydrocarbon sector remains significantly high. It has improved its business climate to encourage investment through reduction of tariffs and founded Qatar Investment Authority to lead the future of investments. Its financial sector remains one of the smallest in the region, but with steady growth. Qatar is working to boost its tourism sector, promoting itself as a global sport and events destination. It has taken further steps to support tourism such as the facilitation of visa process. Regardless of international pressure on Qatar to privatize the social services, the process remains very slow and Qatar's government prefers to keep them under its control.

On the other hand, Bahrain has successfully reduced the contribution of non-hydrocarbon sector to below 20% of GDP. It is explicitly proud to emphasize the process of liberalization to promote an open-market economy. Bahrain has been a financial center since the last 40 years with the highest concentration of Islamic banks in the region. Additionally, it is the second most popular leisure destination in the region, facilitated by its location and easy access, with a tourism sector contributing about 5% to GDP and employing more than 4% of Bahrainis. Notwithstanding, Bahrain has one of the most active private sectors in the region, but a private-driven growth remains a misleading rhetoric.

After researching the manifestation of neoliberalism within the economies of the two countries and locating it within the material developments, chapter 5 summarizes the results and the findings of the interviews, according to emerging codes, categories and themes.

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This chapter contains the summary of the interviews. The process used to analyze transcripts from the (28) individual interviews to uncover codes and themes is described in this chapter. There were three levels of analysis: (1) emerging codes, (b) categories and (3) themes. At each level of analysis, comparison was used at two levels: (1) to distill the data further and (2) to demonstrate differences between the two population samples. Twenty-eight participants were interviewed for this study. Table 3 and Table 4 summarize interviewees' demographics, representing the minimum requirements sought for inclusion. Participants' age range is between (26-66), and twenty-two of them are/were employed by the government, with eleven participants in the education sector, and four participants in the health sector. There are five Qatari participants working in the education as teachers, academic or administrators and four in the health sector. For the Bahraini participants, there are six participants who work/worked in education as teachers, two in health, one in accounting field, one in banking sector, and three in garment factories, while only one held several positions in the private sector. Participants are mostly employed by the government, except one Qatari participant and five Bahraini participants who work in the private sector. All Bahraini participants are married, while only four Qatari participants are married, seven are single and three are divorced. To protect the privacy of participants, anonymity was fulfilled by numeric identification instead of participants' names. The letter (P) refers to participant, (Q) refers to Qatar and (B) refers to Bahrain, while the numbers in the middle are randomly assigned for identification purpose.

The first part of the interviews included demographic questions that served as supporting research data and assisted in understanding the experiences of these women. After every three interviews, coding was conducted manually and reviewed for

emerging categories and for the purpose of comparison. It allowed me time before moving on to interview more participants. For the other two parts of the interview's structure, questions were not asked in the same order as they appear in (APPENDIX A). Flexibility in moving between questions was a crucial element during interviewing for the convenience of participants and according to the flow of their responses. Interviews were mostly conducted in participant's houses, except those who welcomed me during their free times at workplaces. For the garment factory-workers, probing was crucial to help them feel comfortable to talk about their experiences. Flexibility meant

All interviews were coded manually through the three levels of analysis. During the first level of coding, each line of transcribed interview text was coded. Each code was structured using a color scheme, either coding it with a new open code or linking it to an existing code. After finishing the coding, I had all the (28) interviews to compare. Emerging codes from Bahraini transcribed interview texts were compared, as well as for emerging codes from Qatari transcribed interview texts. Later the emerging codes from both transcribed texts were compared. In the next analysis phase, I searched for categories emerging from the similarities between the codes to develop the main themes.

This chapter is divided in accordance to the emerging codes and themes. Each theme starts with the interview's questions, but the order of the questions in the chapter are not in the same chronological order during the interviewing process. Under every theme, a summary of the participants' answers of each country is supported by quotations from the transcribed interview texts. There are seven themes: differences between generations, women as producers within a neoliberal framework, economic inequality, mothering in age of neoliberalism, women as organizers of consumption, empowerment and economic independence, women as social organizers and working

conditions of female factory-workers.

*Table 3. Qatari Participants' Demographic Information*

| Numeric Identification | Age | Social Status | Field                          | Sector  | Children |
|------------------------|-----|---------------|--------------------------------|---------|----------|
| P1Q                    | 26  | Single        | Education                      | Public  | No       |
| P2Q                    | 37  | Single        | Oil                            | Public  | No       |
| P3Q                    | 34  | Married       | Administration<br>in education | Public  | No       |
| P4Q                    | 30  | Single        | Administration<br>in education | Public  | No       |
| P5Q                    | 36  | Single        | Oil                            | Public  | No       |
| P6Q                    | 53  | Married       | Education                      | Public  | Yes      |
| P7Q                    | 35  | Married       | Health                         | Public  | Yes      |
| P8Q                    | 35  | Divorced      | Education                      | Public  | Yes      |
| P9Q                    | 32  | Single        | Sport                          | Public  | No       |
| P10Q                   | 31  | Single        | Administration<br>in Education | Public  | No       |
| P11Q                   | 35  | Married       | Health                         | Private | Yes      |
| P12Q                   | 66  | Divorced      | Health                         | Public  | Yes      |
| P13Q                   | 41  | Divorced      | Oil                            | Public  | Yes      |
| P14Q                   | 31  | Single        | Work<br>Authority              | Public  | No       |

*Table 4. Bahraini Participants' Demographic Information*

| Numeric Identification | Age | Social Status | Field                              | Sector  | Children |
|------------------------|-----|---------------|------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| P1B                    | 29  | Married       | Accounting                         | Private | Yes      |
| P2B                    | 37  | Married       | Education                          | Public  | Yes      |
| P3B                    | 32  | Married       | Education                          | Public  | Yes      |
| P4B                    | 40  | Married       | Several<br>(resigned)              | Private | Yes      |
| P5B                    | 42  | Married       | Education                          | Public  | Yes      |
| P6B                    | 41  | Married       | Education                          | Public  | Yes      |
| P7B                    | 40  | Married       | Education                          | Public  | Yes      |
| P8B                    | 31  | Married       | Health                             | Public  | Yes      |
| P9B                    | 57  | Married       | Banking<br>(retired)               | Public  | Yes      |
| P10B                   | 39  | Married       | Garment<br>Factory (no<br>job now) | Private | Yes      |
| P11B                   | 52  | Single        | Garment<br>Factory<br>(retired)    | Private | No       |

|      |    |         |                                 |         |     |
|------|----|---------|---------------------------------|---------|-----|
| P12B | 44 | Married | Garment<br>Factory<br>(retired) | Private | No  |
| P13B | 44 | Married | Health                          | Public  | Yes |
| P14B | 48 | Married | Education<br>(retired)          | Public  | Yes |

## Differences Between Generations

### *The Freedom to Choose*

Division among the participants was obvious when asked about the role of the economic changes to their status in comparison to their mothers/grandmothers – Table 5. The two questions were, *Is your generation different from your mother's (mention differences)? What has changed in the perspective concerning women's work?* For the first questions, Qatari participants focused on three aspects: openness, change in traditions, education and paid work, except one who saw changes and differences between generations are linked to the Islamic awareness and modesty. Islamic awareness was mentioned with bad connotations as the participant believed that it has resulted in backwardness because it is a masculine-dominated discourse. P7Q, a 35-years-old employee in the health sector, emphasized that it is not education itself, but freedom to choose where to work, or where to study is what makes the generations different:

We are different, now the woman is educated. Of course, the members of my mother's generation are educated but they did not have the freedom to choose where to work and where to study – they were not allowed to choose because their lives were attached to their children, to take care of them.

P2Q, a 37-years-old employee in Woqood (petroleum company), stated that women work with men in the same place in comparison to previous generations, whose women were mostly working in sex-segregated sectors:

It is very different. It means that my generation is more open, and we have started to work with men in the same place. Now these places are only for men as long as she is specialized in this field, in comparison to our mothers who were mostly teachers or educational directives.

P10Q, a 31-year-old administrator at university, emphasized that differences are based on the impact of education on how women think. Education level seems to be one of the factors that determine the status of a woman socially and financially. Education is believed by the participant to be a source of empowerment in the labor market and inside the family, reworking the wife-husband relations:

The woman used to finish the secondary, or might not, and would get married because of the limited type of thinking, although there were women who completed university. You can see mothers with a university degree pushing their daughters to study and work, to pursue a post-graduate degree, like Master and PhD. Nowadays even those women with no education, due to some economic conditions push their daughters to study and work; to have a good life. However, there are still those who would tell you get married and your husband will take care of you financially.

P4Q, a 30-year-old university administrator, believed that it is not primarily education and paid employment that make her generation different and better, but how women have to understand the working environment and being selective when comes to choosing a career:

My mother is a university graduate and I am too, but my mother is a teacher. Since the era of my mother, universities were opened, but it was not as important as now. For them, a girl might finish her intermediate school and could be married; they did not have ambition. They did not care about the job description provided by the

employer when that were applying for a job, and they did not bother to check if the job suited their qualifications or not: I mean any job was fine, she would say I want a job, just a job. Now, we care about the job description and if the position's field of knowledge is beneficial and required, because we know that if it is not, it is considered a waste of human capital energy.

Quotes by participants revealed the impact of education on the freedom of choice. They claimed that the educational level is a principal factor that empowers women to join the labor market. Education impacts women's lives in both the private and the public spheres. Educated mothers encourage their daughters to pursue a university degree before marriage because education has an influence on enhancing their family's relation socially and financially.

#### *Impact of Islam*

On the other hand, P1Q, a 26-years-old academic employee, emphasized that one of the aspects of change is related to the increase of Islamic awareness and its impact on openness, arguing that women from her mother's generation were more open because they claimed Islamic awareness had a bad connotation that pushed women backward. Islamic awareness was a masculine-dominated discourse,

Definitely, there are aspects of differences. The woman used to be open-minded, but with spread of Islamic awareness, the society has become very the opposite. It is similar to the phases of changes, and if you see the photos of our mothers, they were wearing short dresses and no hijab, but when Islamic awareness increased, hijab became a must. I think we are starting to be re-open gradually and loosen it up.

#### *Support of State and Society*

Some Bahraini interviewees found that their status was better than the previous

generations, because of the empowering role of paid work. P7B, a 40-year-old teacher in a governmental school, mentioned the woman's role in building the nation has been enforced due to her contribution in the labor market, which has empowered her financially at the family level:

Women of my generation were able to study, work and integrate into the society. Most importantly, she was able to participate with the man in building the country. The woman has become a principal factor for the development of the state at the social, political and economic levels. The country needs her in all sectors. The woman now is empowered to work and participate in elevating the economic level of the family and the country. We used to depend on the salary of our husbands, the sons or the fathers. Nowadays, the woman works, and her salary empowers her to participate in the family and fulfills its members' needs.

M.I.S., a teacher in her 30s, mentioned an essential difference related to woman's responsibilities. She clarified that a dual role in reproduction and paid work has changed women's status:

Life developed and we [women] compete with men outside. We are more open. Raising children is part of women's duties but working outside the home is now part of our duties too. Now we have the opportunity to spend on ourselves or at least we can depend on ourselves during hard economic situations. So why not becoming a working wife, sister, daughter, mother ... etc.

P8P, a 31-years-old nurse in a governmental hospital, is aware about the changes within the economic structures due to the impact of neoliberal transformations, pivoting towards economic openness and investment in the private sector. These changes have enabled women to earn income and to become entrepreneurs:

The drastic economic changes are features of my generation. Changes within

the nature of the economic sector meant a change in the sources of income. There is an increase in women's income. Economic openness is the reason behind the increase in individual projects that increase the income of the family. Women have benefited from these opportunities to start their businesses. Opportunities are available and there is an encouragement to work in the private sector.

The Bahraini interviewees, who believed that each generation is unique, emphasized that the current generation is more open due to the influence of technology and openness, but they lost their traditions and customs, particularly the simplicity of life. The second important change is the role of women in relation to time division and household responsibilities. They believed that women are busy because of their role outside the home that has affected their responsibilities as mothers and wives. P2B, a 37-years-old teacher, focused on the paid work being the unique characteristic of her generation, while paid work was absent in her description of the grandmother's generation:

Our generation is more open because of the nature of the lifestyle impacted by technology, traveling, education and work. My grandmothers' generation was characterized with simplicity and moderation. They lived happily and we are happy.

P5B, a 42-year-old teacher, focused on a principal difference, which is a change in traditions related to women's duties. Her perspective showed that paid work has preoccupied a woman's daily life and most importantly has encouraged consumerism:

With technological development and openness, our traditions changed, we do not have time, we are so busy now. Luxuries are turning into necessities for women. We are consuming under the justification of the need.

Table 5. Coding Results

|                       | Emerging codes   | Categories   | Themes   |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Qatari Interviewees   | Paid employment for women<br>Competition with men<br>Educated young women<br>Freedom of choice<br>Change in traditions<br>Decline in openness because of Islam's impact                      | Freedom to choose where to study and work<br><br><br><br><br>The negative role of Islamic traditions on women's backwardness | Differences between generations<br><br><br><br><br>Differences between generations |
| Bahraini Interviewees | Dual role of reproduction and paid job<br>Change of traditions<br>Educated young women<br>Openness and technological developments<br>Decline of societal rejection of female paid employment | Support of society and state for women's education and work  | Differences between generations  |

### Women as producers within a neoliberal framework

#### *Impact of Tourism, Social Media and Innovation*

When interviewees were asked, *how does economy encourage female labor?*, Qatari participants emphasized that women's involvement in the labor force constitutes one of the main features of their generation – Table 6. The factors according to them are the economic development and women's skills that have empowered them to compete with men. P14Q, a 31-years-old working woman, stated that it becomes a part of the women's role to seek a job to fulfill the requirements of development,

The Perspective of the 60s and 70s generations was different from the 80s, they

used not to allow woman to work and practice her role, but with development, openness, she has been seen in leadership positions, like ministers and consultants.

P1Q clarified that changes within the economic conditions have made woman's paid job desirable,

Everything has become acceptable. At the beginning, it was undesirable to find a woman in the market, but after development and changes in economic conditions, it is normal to see her in the market, she is expected to be in the market.

P9Q, a 32-years-old working in the sport federation, highlighted the role of social media in increasing the appearance of women in the public, which was a result of the development taking place in the country and a focus on education and sport tourism:

Traditions and customs changed in terms of saying 'no' to women, this is shameful, and the female should not do this or that Since the 2000s, there has been a radical change because of the impact of the social media, women are open and aware because of the role of education, sport tourism, festivals and forums. All of these policies require the female presentation and is no longer limited to men.

P5Q, a 36-year-old employee of Woqood, went further to emphasize that women now are innovative and are not accepting the conventional jobs offered by the market:

What I know is that women were allowed to work in specific jobs; the mother could be a housewife, a doctor, a teacher, a worker in sewing shops, or to start her own business. Our current time is different. There are more fields; she is innovative in creating new types of work because she has the green light to innovate new ideas.

When the participant was asked to clarify who gave women the green

light, her answer was the state, family and society. Importantly, state feminism in the Arabian Gulf becomes a primary mean of achieving identity-building and stability. This was achieved through women's education empowerment and establishing the framework within which women are expected to take up public roles. In a very conservative society, such as Qatari society, the family and the society have a reluctant role rejecting various public appearance of Qatari women.

### *Productivity and Entrepreneurship*

The majority of the Bahraini sample's interviewees highlighted the positive influence of neoliberal transformations. The economic openness that the country is seeking has changed the family's culture, structure and roles of its members. Openness reduced the number of children resulting in nuclear families and the role of the wife and the husband changed as both have become income earners. The differences between generations are attributed to the economic transformations. Most importantly, economic transformations encouraged the participation of women in the labor force. Their perspective of why female labor is important in the labor market is attributed to the impact of education, skills and experiences. P8B emphasized that the contribution of women to the labor market was a result of the needs of the economy but also a result of educational and skill levels:

Awareness of the role of Bahraini women increased, which has encouraged full participation of women in the labor market because of their abilities and skills. The changes within labor market and the nature of the economy encouraged women to enter the labor market. Although their entry was rejected by their families, as male members refused to let their females to seek a job outside the house, changed were inevitable and slow but acceptable at the end.

P1B, a 29-year-old working mother in the private accounting sector, was convinced that woman's education and experiences were the principal factors behind her labor market entry. She thought that women have proved themselves capable of fulfilling the work duties:

She has a main role in the labor market, she is prominent and has a role in every institution and her services are indispensable. The labor market demands her contributions due to her educational level and experiences, while previously she was marginalized, and the society perceived her employment as a shame, something prohibited by traditions and religious understanding.

P4B stated that paid work has contributed to the status of Bahraini woman, because of her productivity levels making her presence in the labor market essential:

Her active role has become evident and her productivity is prestigious at all levels, even for the high ranked jobs. She is a doctor, a teacher, an engineer, a nurse ... etc. You may find her everywhere and the work does not progress without her.

*Table 6. Coding Results*

|                       | Emerging codes  | Categories                                     | Themes   |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| Qatari Interviewees   | Development needs women<br>Role of social media<br>Role of tourism<br>Emergence of innovative women image                               | Impact of tourism, social media and innovation | Women as producers within a neoliberal framework |
| Bahraini Interviewees | Women's awareness of economic changes<br>Role of education in employment<br>Need for women's experiences/skills<br>Women's productivity | Productivity and entrepreneurship              |  |

The market needs  
women's  
participation  
Women as  
entrepreneurs

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## Empowerment and Economic Independence

### *Job is a Source of Social Empowerment*

As part of their answers to the role of economy – Table 7, Qatari participants perceived paid work as a tool of empowerment, self-realization, a way to spend free time, and most importantly a source of financial income to fulfill the needs of their family (parents and children). P4Q emphasized that work has helped woman to develop an entity:

At the beginning, I did not have an intention to study and preferred to work, but later, I decided to finish my university degree, because believe that my job has changed me. I have personally become stronger after work. The woman used to follow her husband and to take care of her home and children, but now she is an independent entity due to the impact of her job and education and depends on herself.

P9Q perceive the job as a source of self-building, ambition and most importantly, intuition:

It is not as if you are trying to take a decision whether to work or not; work is intuitive for everyone because human personality cannot be built without a job.

It means that I will not be able to build myself or seek my ambition or even to know who I am if I stay without a purpose in life, a job is a life's purpose.

P8Q perceived her job considered her job a representation of social status and a financial source. She clarified that a woman may challenge the life conditions to prove for her society that she is capable of taking care of herself and her children without the

help of a man:

There are many reasons, first, it is a representation of social status, and the salary as a source of income is important. The social status is very important for my society and maybe the conditions I encountered pushed me to be in this field. I used to be married but my ex-husband never spent on me and my daughter. We were married on paper but there was no actual relation between both of us. I wanted to prove for him and others that I can. I do care about my image in the eyes of my daughter. Every family is different, each depends on someone to support it financially, on their kids to spend on them, and if I am talking about myself, my income is for the fulfillment of my needs and my daughter's.

P5Q perceive the job as source to achieve three important elements, "I work to be independent, prove myself capable at the state's level, and help my mother and family."

P2Q mentioned a woman seeks a job because of expenses of life, "The lifestyle requirements are expensive, which pushes the woman to seek a job. If she does not work for a firm or governments, she will start her own home business to spend on herself or to help her family or husband." Two participants explained that their free time is the reason that encouraged them to seek a job. P3Q, 34-years-old university's administrator, clarified:

My first main purpose is my desire to be employed to have a new experience. I do not want only to focus on studying but I want to experience how the life is at workplace. I like to deal with people, and also, I have free time to spend.

P7Q shared the same perspective regarding the free time as a reason to seek a job, "Honestly, I work because I have free time. I work to occupy this time, in addition, I believe I can change something in my society." P13Q, a 41-year-old employee in the oil sector, stated that her job is a source of self-sufficiency:

Before my divorce, I used to spend my salary on non-necessities; nothing of what I used to buy was important as my husband used to take care of all expenses. After two divorces, I live alone in a rented flat and my salary is the only thing that protect me from urging family to support me financially. I may borrow from my mother when I am desperately in need but at least I can depend on myself.

*Income is a Source of Empowerment*

One of Bahraini interviewees, who used to work in the private sector could not determine the level of her economic independence because her experience was very short regardless of different positions she occupied. Two other participants replied negatively, arguing that their jobs do not make them independent. P6B, a 41-year-old teacher, said:

Honestly, I do not feel that my salary contributes to my independence. Our job and earnings are a need, otherwise we may not work and stay home. Regardless of everything, the husband's status remains the same and his respect stems from the existing hierarchy at the family's level.

The other participants, who replied negatively to the question mentioned above about the role of the economy in encouraging female labor, differentiated between economic independence and power related to decision-making. As a wife and a mother, the woman enjoy power and may influence family's decisions and affairs, because marriage is a partnership, but in terms of economic hierarchy, the man remains at the top. P1B elaborated:

I give my mother from my salary and buy things for my daughter, but it does not mean I am economically independent as my husband still pays my alimony. However, my job provides me with power in term of my contribution in fulfilling the needs of our home. I am a partner in the family despite the

differences in the percentage of contributions between him and me.

One participant only replied that she was strong before working and her job has contributed to her happiness, because it has changed her intellectually and psychologically. P2B emphasized:

I am strong even before having a job, but the job itself is a change. It means more openness and is a source of happiness because it is a self-realization in the desired field. I cannot neglect that the job influenced me intellectually and psychologically and has impacted me positively in relation to decision-making and responsibility. In the same time, the job means commitment and care.

The remaining interviewees defined their economic independence according to their financial participation in the family's affairs. P5B believed that power is a result of her financial contribution:

I enjoy economic independence as I do not need anyone to support me. I am free to spend my money and yes, it has provided me with power because I contribute to the provision of some of the needs that our time requires. My power is a result of my contribution.

P8B believed that her financial contribution is a source of respect and appreciation in the family:

Though my source of income I have succeeded in providing my needs and the family's. I think being a partner in providing the needs of my family is a source of respect and appreciation, which influences my role at the family's decision level.

Of those interviewees who believed in economic independence, one claimed that despite her economic independence and role in family's decision-making process, her job impacts her relations with her husband and children. P3B, a 32-year-old teacher,

stated:

My government's salary means economic independence. Because I carry most of the financial burdens, I have a vote and a decision in relation to what is going on, but in the same time, it affects my relations with my husband and children. I carry my work burden to my home, and unfortunately, this is the cost of my job regardless of this authority.

*Table 7. Coding Results*

|                       | Emerging codes   | Categories   | Themes  |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| Qatari Interviewees   | Source of strength<br>Work as an achievement<br>Work as a social status<br>Work is self-building   | Job is a source of social empowerment  | Empowerment and economic independence                   |
| Bahraini Interviewees | Source of strength<br>Power emerging from financial participation<br>Women's role in building the nation<br>Impact of work on household responsibilities<br>Preservation of family's hierarchy | Income is a source of empowerment<br><br>Factors limiting actual female independence | Empowerment and<br><br>Role of patriarchy/neopatriarchy |

#### Economic Inequality

Interviewees were asked, *does the economy treat the man and women equally? Do they enjoy equal employment opportunities and economic rights?* Unanimously, Qatari participants agreed regarding the presence of unequal opportunities and economic rights between men and women, except five participants who focused on the role of Qatar in ensuring that both sexes are equal. Participants, who argued for presence of inequality, highlighted the difference in salaries and allowances between working wives and husbands. Participants are divided regarding their perspectives

about the impact of the gendered social roles of men and women on employment opportunities and economic rights. For those who believed in equality, notions of masculinity and femininity were not perceived as a curse, while those who supported inequality believed it to be the main obstacle. P7Q believed that equality is achieved, and feminine and masculine components complement each other:

There is no difference between man or woman because all are equal in term of employment, not even a 1% difference exists. At the end, the man's attitudes and thoughts are based on a masculine perspective, and the woman's attitudes and thoughts are based on a feminine perspective, and we cannot build the country from one perspective. Equality is based on the fulfillment of the needs of each sex, and hence there will be balance in the society.

P10Q focused on the role of the country's human resources law in supporting equality, considering differences in allowances as normal:

In the state of Qatar, we have a system of human resources, stating that anyone who works in the ministry, earn the same salary, and the same is applicable for allowances, which are based on the agreement between the husband and the wife. Housing allowances, for example, is added to the husband's salary, because he is the man. For me this is equality. Nowadays, I feel that there is equality in employment opportunities. There are females is in the fields, like engineers. I do not see differences between the woman and the man in the Gulf, particularly since the last three years.

P7Q pointed that employment opportunities in her institution are equal but the salary is not, arguing that it is not a violation of women's rights from an Islamic perspective:

The job opportunities are equal for all in my working place, both can be managers but with different salaries, and it is fine because from an Islamic

perspective, the Qur'an emphasized that men are guardians over women.

Those who supported the presence of inequality, emphasized that inequality exists in some fields and in some cases non-national men are better than the Qatari woman. It is clear that there is a national sentiment that local women's labor is being pitted against foreign men's labor. Indeed, both national men and women are underrepresented in favor of expat-domination in professional and clerical jobs as discussed in chapter 3:

Of course, we know that the woman is rejected in the prestigious positions, they do not allow her because of a belief that men are guardians of women, and the man handles the position better; works better, while she may get bored, leave, resign or give birth. In addition, they prefer the foreigner over her, claiming that he is better and earn more, for instance my manager earns triple my earning; a Philippine earns 50,000 while I earn 30,000, although I have the same degree and experience.

P3Q highlighted the differences between men and women according to the field, men in military and women as teachers,

There is no equality in all fields, for instance, in military the man earns higher than the woman, but the woman earns really good in education, so I feel that men are better paid in military and women's salary in education, in school is better.

P8Q saw that there is no actual equality, but it is acceptable because Qataris are few in numbers and hence national women are required to focus on childbearing:

For the normal jobs, there is equality, like desk, administrative and checking jobs, but for the jobs that require the woman to travel for three or four months, we should be selective; I mean selective in choosing the female employee who is not responsible of a family. The social factors control the woman's job, and I

do not mention this as a negative point, as I believe it to be a positive aspect.

We are a small society; till now the Qatari society is no more 500,000 and if the woman travels, then who will get married, who will give birth, who will the raise kids?

An analysis of the impact of economic transformations requires establishing a distinction between Bahraini women working in the public sector and the private sector because the status of both groups is different in relation to the provided benefits such as flexibility of working hours, wages, paid leaves and generous retirement plans. Differences are also present among women within the public and the private sectors due to the influence of education. Women's status varies because of their job positions. Bahraini women are concentrated in the service sector as teachers, nurses and in the financial sector. The conditions of women working in the public sector are better than those of women working in the private sector. This is attributed to the differences in wages, working hours and maternity privileges that make the public sector a preferred work-option for women. Bahrain interviewees unanimously agreed that women are not equal, except three participants. Unequal treatment and opportunities, as claimed by the participants, to be the result of the nature of the job that does not suit women or the increasing demand of male labor. P3B explained why women occupy specific jobs referring to the impact of gendered roles combined with neoliberal reforms, "Female employment has become important in some jobs, which men socially are not the best candidates like education, nursing and medicine. Women dominate these jobs and outnumbered men." The socio-cultural and institutional environment which shape the opportunities available for women and men in the labor market results in various forms of gender discrimination. Segmentation of gender lines is socially constructed rather than based on objective criteria. In addition, institutional barriers to women

employment is caused by managerial strategies, cultural factors and policies imposed by the government that limit access and opportunities for women in the labor market. P8B stated that household's responsibilities limit female opportunities, "The personal and social conditions control women; she cannot work in any field she desires. In addition to the impact of household's responsibilities that hinders her from seeking a job." P6B explained the economic inequality in salary in accordance to productivity level, "There is a gap between men and women in term of salaries because some female jobs are low in productivity in comparison to male jobs."

For participants who supported equal treatment and opportunities, they supported their perspective by the fact that women compete with men, and women are empowered by conventions. P7B perceived the ratification of CEDAW as an evidence of women's equality to men, "There is no discrimination between man and woman in jobs as the woman participates in all sectors without sacrificing her dignity and this is supported by the ratification of CESAW." P2B clarified her position in favor of equal opportunities by presence of women in male-dominated sectors, "There are no job requirements for specific genders, and recently we see women mechanical engineers, acknowledging that the works itself and the environment are very masculine."

*Table 7. Coding Results*

|                       | Emerging codes  | Categories   | Themes              |
|-----------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| Qatari Interviewees   | Specific sectors for each sex<br>Impact of national laws<br>Different salaries and allowances<br>Equality may exist | Women and men are not equal in terms of salaries and opportunities | Economic inequality |
| Bahraini Interviewees | Specific sectors for each sex<br>Impact of conventions/laws   | Women and men are not equal in terms of salaries and opportunities |                     |

Mothering in age of neoliberalism

*Maneuver Between Motherhood and Work*

Two questions were asked – Table 8, *does motherhood remain the main woman duty? Would you sacrifice taking care of your kids in favor of your job?* All Qatari interviewees unanimously agreed that Qatari women would sacrifice being present with their children, if there is a necessity to fulfill their material needs. However, there is a division among participants regarding the former question. All participants emphasized that motherhood remains the main female duty, except five participants; two of them emphasized that notion of motherhood has changed, two of them highlighted the work/family balance, and one participant said that motherhood is no more the main duty of a woman. P5Q, who was one of those whose answers were in favor of motherhood, mentioned that the woman should not work until her kids get older, “Raising children is more important than the job. Only after the baby becomes independent and starts school teaching, she may practice a profession inside or outside the house to help covering the expenses and family’s needs.” P2Q shared the same perspective, “Motherhood is a priority, but she may find another job when her children get older and become independent.” P3Q mentioned that once a woman gives birth, she is responsible, “You want honesty, if I give birth to children, they are my responsibility, I will raise them, who otherwise will take care of them? They are babies and infant. If I am employed, my employer will give me a leave, many a month or two months, but my baby will still about three months old. Where I should leave my baby? who will raise my baby? This is why I believe that motherhood is the priority.” P9Q emphasized that raising children is a woman’s investment and she is accountable in front of Allah for her children:

If the woman is single, and not responsible of children, the profession is what builds her, but if she is married, her motherhood is at the top. Please do not say what about my social relations, do not say what about my business, do not say what about my job, because she is investing her energy and everything she learnt in her biggest investment; her children. Both woman and the man work, get married and have children to invest what they learnt in their children. But at specific stage, the mother and the father will be tired and cannot give more, and hence they want to see their investment is paying off. I mean their children are starting to take care of everything. Motherhood is a mission; Allah will question the woman for what she does for her children.

#### *New Mother-Worker Model*

Two Qatari participants differentiated between two types of mothers, a mother who can achieve a work/life balance and another who cannot. P1Q that each woman knows the limit of her capacity when she wants to work:

To some extent motherhood is the main duty, but each woman is different because there is no one example in the world. If the woman can achieve a work/life balance, she can continue her work, if she cannot, her children come first. Again, each woman is different.

P14Q emphasized that motherhood should not be perceived an impediment, because having a profession is a source of pride, “Motherhood is not been an impediment. There are mothers who are considered achievers and their children are proud of them.”

Bahraini interviewees pointed to the demanded work/life balance in a mother-worker’s life. Women as working mothers are encouraged to manage the contradictions of employment and child rearing through the rhetoric of work/life balance. For middle-

class women, the combination of employment and care is not only achievable, but also an achievement of modern mothers. The demands between paid employment, childcare and housework is reconcilable in a way that further reestablishes women as primary carers (Stevenson, 2015). The new sexual contract demands women to be labors/consumers and mothers/carers. While women are still the primary the care providers, yet the new sexual contract makes their achievement or failure in work/life balance a private affair (Orgad & De Benedicts, 2015). The model of mothers, who achieve work/life balance was expressed by the participants. P2B is aware of the pressure of being a mother-worker, as each role has specific requirements to be fulfilled. The following quote is a representation of the new mother model, whose job is a source of self-realization, and contributes to consumption that serves neoliberal economy and its future subjects, i.e. children who are prepared to be the future workers:

Working and motherhood have different specific requirements. Motherhood is a divine duty to prepare the future generations and the job is self-realization that helps in fulfilling this divine duty. I can adapt and find the balance between the two parts of my life.

P1B emphasized that time is not an obstacle, and a woman can fulfill the motherhood's duties and responsibilities of a paid work as long as she later fulfills the needs of her child, "During our time, both paid work and childcare are priorities and women can manage. There is enough time for us to fulfill all duties. Employment is a necessity and it helps fulfilling my child's needs." P8B explained the reason that encourages woman to seek a work/life balance because both became part of the routine of her daily life, "Both motherhood and work are part of my daily life and I can find the balance. They constitute the new woman's responsibilities." Regardless of their beliefs in the importance of a mother-worker model, the priority always goes to family and children.

One of the participants believed that the state’s economic policies should comply with motherhood’s responsibilities being a woman’s divine duty. “The laws of the labor market should adhere to the requirements of motherhood – pregnancy, giving birth and breastfeeding. The market should adapt to our needs. It should be more flexible because we have another role at home.” This participant believed that the market is not responsive to the woman’s needs and the government should intervene. However, a government’s intervention may contradict the basis of a free market.

*Table 8. Coding Results*

|                       | Emerging codes  | Categories   | Themes                            |
|-----------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Qatari Interviewees   | Work/life balance<br>Motherhood is not an impediment<br>There is a right time to have a profession                                | New mother-worker model<br><br>Maneuver of duties of motherhood and work | Mothering in age of neoliberalism |
| Bahraini Interviewees | Motherhood is first<br>Work/life balance<br>Responsibility of working-mothers to support family<br>A mother’s achievement is work | New mother-worker model  | Mothering in age of neoliberalism |

### Women as Organizers of Consumption

#### *Impact of Family’s Economic Conditions*

When asked – Table 9, *does man remain the main breadwinner? Who is the main financial contributor?*, all Qatari interviewees supported the notion that the man is the breadwinner, except three participants whose answers confirmed that man and woman are partners in the financial affairs, They justified their answers based on the common traditional way of thinking, which entails that the man is the financially responsible to take care of the family and the public sphere is his domain while the

woman is the mother whose duties focus on childcare in the private sphere, and on differences imposed by national law. P5Q believed that allowances determined by national law are legitimate evidence that supports men as the breadwinners, “As a man, he has more rights. If he gets married, he is given housing and social allowances, because putting food on the table is his main priority” P3Q asserted that men are the main financial contributors:

You may accuse me of having a traditional type of thinking believing that the man is the responsible. He must spend, even if the woman works, because she has the right not to spend, but it is possible to carry part of the burden, which means he does not depend on the woman.

P1Q claimed that her family changed how she used to perceive the man’s role:

I used to think the man is the main contributor, but with time, and since my sisters got married, I have started to believe that woman job is important, because it teaches her kids that she has a purpose, and her husband knows that there is balance in their relation.

P10Q asserted her position that supporting the dual role based on special cases, “Both are responsible, for example the woman is single, her husband dies, or she is divorced; and for single woman, whose fathers retired, the retirement salary is not as before, so she may contribute.” P12Q, a 66-year-old administrator in the health ministry, emphasized that she does want to retire and every year she would request an extension because she still wants to support her daughters:

I got divorced when I was really young with four kids to look after them. I was also newly naturalized, it was hard. I worked shifts to fulfill the needs of my kids because I had legal issues with their father. After forty years, I am still working because my children are busy with their lives and I do not want to burden them with my expenses.

I live alone but I look after them financially. Monthly, I give my two daughters money and buy things for their kids because their salaries are not enough.

#### *Dual Financial Contributors as Partners*

Bahraini participants were asked the same questions and those who work in the public sector were more confident that they are one of the primary income earners in the family because of their higher salaries. The quote by P3B explained how the woman's income contributes to the whole culture of consumption, and most importantly the costly necessities:

The wife and her husband share the burden of providing the needs of their children. For my generation, man's salary does not cover all the needs such as buying a house, he needs the salary of his wife to cover costs.

P7B shared the same perspective, "My husband knows that without my salary he would not be able to afford specific things, like our house. We have equal share legally. Anyway, life of a couple should be based on collaboration and partnership."

#### **Impact of sector on Women's Experience**

The experience of P4B, a 40-year-old mother who worked in several private companies, is different in term of her status as an organizer of the family's consumption. She believed that her low-pay job was not compared to the role of a woman working in the government sector:

I was poorly paid, but my salary was a kind of assistant. The working pressure, long working hours and low payment are characteristics of the private sector. I resigned but I succeeded in assisting my husband. I was happy to assist him supporting our family.

*Table 9. Coding Results*

| Emerging codes | Categories | Themes |
|----------------|------------|--------|
|----------------|------------|--------|

|                       |   |  |                                    |
|-----------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Qatari Interviewees   | Dual role in special cases<br>Men earn and spend<br>Balance in spending   | Impact of family's economic conditions | Women as organizers of consumption |
| Bahraini Interviewees | Dual income earners<br>Life expenses as a factor for work<br>Collaboration between couples<br>Partnership<br>Impact of what/where the job is on economic participation<br>Different salaries according to sectors | Two financial contributors as partners |                                    |

## Women as Social Organizers

### *Reproduction and Household Remain a Female's Duty*

When participants were asked about *are men and women equal in terms of childcare? What has changed in their social roles?* – Table 10, only four Qatari interviewees emphasized gender equality does not exist, but they noticed a change in man's social role. Other Qatari participants asserted that women are primary child bearers and some women already have started to take over the responsibilities of men in their families, P3Q focused on the role of the mother in raising and educating her children, with no role for men in these responsibilities:

You want honesty, right! Now everything is the responsibility of the women; raising, education and household. Our male youth are not responsible, even the older; they care about almajlis [an Arabic term meaning council, which describes a special social gathering], friends, how they look and other things, but their children are the responsibility of their mother; she cooks, looks after

them, dresses them, puts them on bed. I do not encourage that he dresses them or puts them on bed, but at least looks after them, such as helping them with homework assignments after school.

P8Q, a 35-year-old university academic employee, stated that is not healthy to have men taking care of children as it has a negative impact on the society because naturally it is not the men's responsibility:

There are cases, in which the wife works, and the husband babysits the kids. If becomes a phenomenon, it is not healthy, it has a negative impact on the society. Participation is important, when the husband for some medical reasons cannot work; he may say for his wife I cannot work so I will stay with kids.

P4Q compared the Gulf couples with Western couples, "We are still not equal, even when the Gulf man helps the woman, we do not have the European culture. Their men do everything." P10Q claimed that childcare is a shared responsibility regardless of different social roles, "There is no equality, but couple should agree and distribute the responsibilities of childcare. When partners support each other in terms of childcare, it becomes an easier process. I may say about 40% of couples do this in the Gulf." P1Q believed that some men are better than women when it comes to child raising, "They are not equal, but there are fathers who do better in child raising and caring."

All Bahraini interviewees emphasized that women's social roles have changed – a dual role of taking care of children and working outside the house, and where hesitant to support the notion that men babysit their children, except two participants who had a different perspective. A quote by P8B emphasized that female employment does not mean equal household's duties:

I think the perspective changed. In many families, the man and the woman work to provide the needs of the family. For example, my sisters and I work. Life

requires that a woman works and becomes a partner, but it does not mean she neglects her responsibilities at home.

P5B stated that the change is women's double shift, "The woman has a share in everything; she is a child bearer and an employee. This is literally what is called a double shift." P7B emphasized that women are an important pillar of any society (half of society) because of her responsibilities inside and outside the house, "The woman is the half of a society. She works with men, in addition to her financial contribution and responsibility to raise the children." In contrast, P2B claimed that the gendered roles of women and men are not affected by the paid work. The financial contribution of women does not mean she becomes the breadwinner:

I do not witness real changes within the family. The father remains the father, and the mother remains the mother even if the mother works and contributes to the livelihood of the family. I do not think working changes the roles of both.

However, P9B, a 57-year-old retired employee who worked in the Central Bank, believed that Bahraini men are childcarers and their social role has changed:

My son does not work because he is looking for a job, but his wife works. They have one child and my son is the one who is taking care of him while his mother is at work. Now his wife is the one who earns income and he is babysitting my grandson. I think this is the case can be applied to at least 50% of Bahraini families, roles are changing. Definitely my son wants to work and once he finds a job, I think I will be the one to babysit my grandson.

#### *Dependence on Other Female-Relatives of Domestic Workers*

P10Q emphasized that motherhood has been influenced by globalization, by which the mother can practice her role indirectly:

Motherhood is innate, I cannot say yes or no; meaning that motherhood can be

practiced in the workplace as an impact of globalization. When I put my son in a nursery, there are cameras to follow up; this is a new type of motherhood.

While P6Q, a 53-year-old teacher, assigned the role of motherhood to domestic workers because many Qatari women have abandoned this role, “Of course not, Qatari women are not taking care of their children as they are dependent on domestic works to take care of their children.” P11Q, a 35-year-old administrator in a private hospital, stated that her job is a necessity that she cannot afford losing and thus, she is dependent on nannies:

I cannot stay with no job, even though it is not a highly paid job. I come tired and I need someone to take care of my three young daughters, so I cannot live without least two maids; one to clean and another to be a nanny. It is not money-wise but it’s the lifestyle’s requirements. Anyway, everyone in Qatar depends on maids; they have become a necessity. I am not in favor of the spread of this phenomenon, but this is the reality of our lives and we have to accept it.

P14B, a 48-year-old retired teacher, mentioned that when she was working, her two sisters used to take care of her children,

During my days as a teacher, I chose to live close to my sisters’ houses; I bought a land in the same village. My two older sisters raised my four children; otherwise, I would have to put them in a nursery, and to pay for this service, until they were eligible to join the kindergarten.

*Table 10. Coding Results*

|                     | Emerging codes   | Categories  | Themes                     |
|---------------------|--|---|----------------------------|
| Qatari Interviewees | Men’s interests are different<br>Negative image of working women | Reproduction and household remain a female’s duty | Women as social organizers |

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|                       |  |   |
|-----------------------|--|---|
|                       | There is participation but not equality            |   |
|                       | Motherhood is a priority                           |   |
|                       | Role of domestic workers in childbearing           | Dependence on domestic workers                    |
|                       | Indirect motherhood                                |   |
| Bahraini Interviewees | Women having a double shift                        | Reproduction and household remain a female's duty |
|                       | Men remain breadwinners                            |   |
|                       | Motherhood is a priority                           |   |
|                       | Childbearing is a private concern                  | Dependence on other female-relatives              |
|                       | Female-relatives step-in to take over childbearing |   |

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### Working Conditions of Female Factory-Workers

The best way to get sense of the lives of garment female workers is to listen to their stories. I was able to enter a factory during my years at the secondary school for a project – Table 11. The aim was to describe the factory and the system of administration and management. Regardless of the huge numbers of women working there, I was not interested in analyzing their conditions and their nationalities. My sense of gender was absent. After fifteen years, the dissertation analyzes the conditions of national factory workers from a feminist perspective rather than only describing the factory structure and labor division in my secondary-level project. Three of the fourteen Bahraini participants are factory workers and I preferred to help them open up and talk about their experience. The three experiences were similar in terms of the description of the long working hours, low payment, working conditions. P12B, a 52-year-old retired factory worker, described the harsh conditions experienced by female workers in the factory, highlighting the low-pay, long working hours and rigid top-down treatment,

which explain the limited choices women have when joining the garment industry:

It was the harshest experiences ever! I think because our educational levels did not help us to find a better job opportunity, I ended up working and moving from one factory to another ... Honestly, I do not want to repeat this experience again and I do not think any of my colleagues I have known for 14 years would like to experience it again. You may wonder why you would continue to work if it was a source of earning to spend on ourselves. There was nothing else ... I mean no employer would accept us. We had to look for places that accept low educational levels and would accept us as females. I used to cut the extra threads in the jeans. The majority of females were assigned the job of checking to find the damage in the piece. Indian men used to work on the sewing machines, and we did the checking. I used to earn only 75 BD/month, with demands from the Ministry of Labor they increased it to 85 BD/month. Even the Bahraini women who were considered supervisors were paid low, about 100 BD. Do you know that I used to leave my home when it was still dark, before the sun rise and came back when it was dark again, very long working hours? They used to count the minutes for breaks, standing outside the door of the prayer room to ensure none would take more than the minutes assigned ... minutes not hours. I still remember when we used to refuse to work overtime, they locked the doors of the factory forcing us to work, we had no choice. Imagine my work required standing the whole day, no chairs and what was funny that nothing of our work was intended for Bahrain's market. All was exported to America.

P12B, a 44-year-old retired factory-worker, described an experience that reflects the neoliberal impact on the organization of women's lives in terms of space and time:

The long working hours that used to start at 7 till 5 meant being absent most of the time. It was even more if I count the time, we needed to reach the factory.

Factories were far from our homes and we used to rent buses with their drivers monthly, so part of our salary went for transportation as many other colleagues. Many of us used not to have cars or license for driving and by then we had to bear the fatigue of private buses whose first trip started before sun light, 5:30 if I remember. The biggest problem was in case a factory shut down; we would look for another one to work. I moved between three factories. At the end of the day, I used to go home, exhausted with no desire to do anything of my other responsibilities. Many of backache and other health problems I have, I am certain it was because of my work in these factories. Our situation was not better than immigrant women workers. The government did not provide us with better working conditions.

P10B, another 39-year-old mother who used to work in a garment factory, described a similar experience, in which the sense of need shaped her choice:

I wanted to study at university. My father is a poor man and I thought I could work during the summer to pay for university. What do you want me to say? It hurts my heart to remember. With a secondary school certificate, it was the only available option. My sister encouraged me to work with her in the same factory. The factory, insurance and ministry all violated my rights. They used to give me different tasks, from cleaning, to thinner, to stickers to cutting. I earned 75 BD/month and they deducted the amount of the insurance. However, after the six months, I discovered that I was not registered, and I did not get the deductions back.

*Table 11. Coding Results*

|                       | Emerging Codes   | Categories                    | Themes                                       |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Bahraini Interviewees | Low salary<br>Long working hours<br>Harsh working conditions<br>Exporting industry<br>Fulfilling personal/family's needs | Conditions of factory workers | Working conditions of female factory-workers |

### Summary

The coding process resulted in several categories under seven themes. Participants differentiated between their generation and their mothers'. Qatari participants mentioned freedom of choice as the main difference but highlighted the negative impact of Islamic traditions on women. Bahraini participants emphasized that their country and society have supported the change in women's role. Although the participants of both samples were not aware about the neoliberal manifestation, Qatari women participants discussed the positive impact of tourism and social media on women, and Bahraini participants asserted that role of productivity and entrepreneurship encouraging women to be producers in the neoliberal environment.

With more women joining the labor force, participants believed that paid employment has empowered women. Qatari participants believed that a job is a source of social empowerment and status, while Bahraini women perceived the income as a source of empowerment. Regardless of financial independence and social status associated with paid employment and specific occupations, some participants argued that women still face discrimination in relation to employment opportunities and salary. Others justified aspects of discrimination based on natural differences between men and women and their traditional social roles.

All participants agreed that motherhood remains main female's responsibility.

Bahraini participants promoted a new image of mothers who achieve work/life balance, while Qatari participants believed that women should abandon employment temporarily, at least when they have children. Furthermore, Bahraini women participants claimed that working women are co-financial contributor and it is no more solely a men's responsibility. In contrast, Qatari participants still believe that men are the main financial contributor. Regardless of different perspectives about financial roles of both genders, the participants did not challenge or oppose the notion "men are the breadwinners", emphasizing that social reproduction is primarily a woman's responsibility. A working mother works a double shift and she may fulfill the responsibility of childcare by paying cheap and lower status female migrants.

Neoliberalism may push women to the margins of the market in search for cheaper workforce. The experiences of Bahraini factory workers challenge the image of liberated and autonomous working woman that neoliberalism promotes. The harsh conditions, long working hours and low salary are the common aspects of their experiences, which are similar to worldwide women factory workers.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

Neoliberalism constitutes a new mode or a manner, or a mentality, in which people are governed (Thompson K. , 2017). Schwiter (2013) argues that neoliberalism acts as a governing logic that constructs individual's identity. It is not only embedded in policies and discourses but transforms human beings themselves. It is incorporated into subjectivities and shapes how people understand and perceive themselves. Neoliberalism does not only influence individuals from outside, i.e. pushing them to act and adapt specific strategies to deal with its forces, but it is internalized and normalized to become a taken-for-granted part of human's understanding of themselves. It is important to understand how the category of 'women' – the subject – is produced and restrained by the very structures of a market's power through which emancipation is sought. Through the appropriation of Foucault's thought (1997; 1982), women subjects are constructed through patriarchal practices as very different kinds of subjects than the autonomous beings, as the liberal model suggests. They are constructed as subjects who are dependent on others and must suppress their ambitions and interests and demonstrate caring and nurturing qualities – an image of a woman that is not necessarily perceived as negative by research participants.

The material conditions of Qatari and Bahraini societies in terms of economic transformations that have taken place have created multiple women's subjectivities. In addition, the economic conditions of each participant's experience result in diversity of perspectives. Although a collective identity may appear, this chapter emphasizes the diversity within the groups of women, resulting in several subjectivities and identities. The chapter is divided into five sections. Each section addresses different collective group's identities, but also discusses the multiple subjectivities within each collective identity. The first section discusses women as producers, highlighting the personal

choices that Gulf women make in terms of accepting specific working conditions. An emphasis on a woman as an employee, as a source of identity, is addressed. The second section addresses women's subjectivities in relation to economic independence. The images of a woman, who is strong, independent and autonomous, has been emphasized with a variety of empowerment levels according to the woman's occupation, income and family's conditions. The third section discussed mothering and the mother's role in consumption. New identities of mothers have been developed, in which mothers are achievers of balance or capable of determining the right time to seek a profession. Other aspects of emerging subjectivities focus on the role of mothers in maintaining material survival, promoting a good citizen image or encouraging intensive mothering. The fourth section focuses on women's subjectivity as social organizers, emphasizing that reproduction always remains a female duty, regardless of her autonomous status or financial contributions. The gendered discursive social role emphasizes the role of a woman in social reproduction and extends the duties to other female relatives. In addition, the woman's image as a busy female employee has extended the reproduction network to include nannies and domestic workers. The last section discusses the image of a Gulf female factory worker as another emerging subjectivity. It highlights the relation between neoliberalism and the existing garment industry in Bahrain, analyzing women's experiences to reveal the material conditions of their oppression. Two questions arise: What are the outcomes of the interactions between women, market and the state? How do women themselves utilize these transformations to improve their own status in society?

Neoliberalism is not mainly economic, but it is socio-economic and cultural institutions. Gulf women have gone dramatic transformations under economic structures in the Arabian Gulf. It is not legitimate to assume all Gulf women have one

unified respond to economic transformations in the region, nor economy has impacted all Gulf women in one unified way. The economies of the Arabian Gulf states are different, and it have impacted women of the region differently. It is far from just enabling women to join the labor force, as emphasized by oil discourse. Gulf women have incorporated and advanced their subjectivities in different ways.

### Women as Producers

Personal freedom and choice, which neoliberalism entails, are integral aspects of power. The idea of personal choice masks aspects of power by relegating to subjects the freedom to choose between different options, while denying them the real possibility to define or shape those options. The measures of women's liberation have become the individual choices to make – to become a worker or stay at home. Within this framework, the assumption that women's choice to work is understood as their own free choice and that women are free from responsibility for navigating the market realm, leads to a conclusion that those who fail can only blame themselves. However, they have to make their choices within a network of unequal power relations, not only restricting their options, but also constructing their subjectivities as income earners and producers. The actions are not a matter of free choice but are tied to market structures. Women internalize social division of power hierarchies through techniques of gender to the extent that they become part of their subjectivities (Schwiter, 2013). The neoliberal subject bears the full responsibility for their actions, just as neoliberalism requires individuals to narrate their life story as if it is the outcome of choices (Gill, 2008). Because of cuts in social policies, from entitlement to an earned approach of benefits, citizens are required to engage in paid work in order to qualify for their benefits (Duffy & Pupo, 2018). It has resulted in a shift from the model of traditional breadwinner that depends on the earning of the man only to a modified breadwinner

model. This model depends on dual earners. The man remains the main breadwinner, yet the woman works. Accordingly, this model does not represent an equal partnership as a woman has two duties – paid employment outside the house and unpaid inside the house (Almasri, 2017). Neoliberalism, through emphasis on paid employment, challenges the other means of being socially intelligible (Stevenson, 2015).

Based on the results of the interviews, women of the two countries confirmed that paid employment has become a principal characteristic of women of current generations. The emphasis on ‘choice’ as a determinant of work was highlighted by one Qatari woman, illustrating that women thought that they are enjoying a free choice but are not mindful of the impact of patriarchy and market structures in shaping this option, and the associated restriction to specific sectors or fields. A belief in a choice is an aspect that defines status for these women. In contrast, a belief in a choice was not highlighted by Bahraini participants, because they perceive paid work as a source of livelihood that sustains the family. Thus, some Qatari participants mentioned that they work because they have free time. Such free time could be understood within the framework of being able to afford paid domestic helpers or absence of children. However, their emphasis on paid employment as a feature that has made their status better than their ancestors is based, from their comments, on assumptions that their ancestors did not have various economic activities, which was discussed and analyzed in Chapter 3.

As mentioned by participants, the openness created by the market encouraged them to join the labor market, as their participation has become demanded and desirable. Their understanding of openness is based on the introduction of technology and economic development. Bahraini women’s understanding of openness is strongly linked to economic transformations, where investments and a burgeoning the private

sector are encouraged. In addition, they highlighted that women are entrepreneurs, an essential neoliberal economic transformation that has encouraged female employment. Qatari participants perceived this openness as a result of the state's new economic initiative in sport and events tourism, which are other aspects of neoliberal economic policies. Although a discourse of neoliberalism was absent from their narrated experiences, they are employed by neoliberal institutions such as banks and the sport federation.

Participants of both samples repeatedly mentioned education as a determinant of work. Participants elaborated that education has empowered them to join the labor market. Although Bahraini participants emphasized that education is a fundamental difference between generations, acknowledging a decline in illiteracy, and a facilitator to join the labor market, Qatari participants' focus was on the role of education in changing a woman's way of thinking and her perception about female employment. However, despite the impact of education on increasing and encouraging female employment in the region, this research argues against the role of education in empowering Gulf women to replace expatriates – as discussed in Chapter 3. Their belief that education has provided them with a choice to join the market and to compete with men is true, but they do enjoy the choice to shape this option, i.e. female academic degrees are limited to what suits the woman's nature and social roles (education, health and services), as separation between feminine and masculine specializations starts with schools.

Olmsted (2005) argued that women have benefited from the governmental commitment to improve health and education. They also have benefited from the large government sector as direct recipients of jobs and indirectly as members of families of government workers. However, the structural change of a safety net in response to

neoliberal pressures has implications for women. The large government sector is being phased out. The downsizing of the government sector may result in a larger drop in women earnings than men. The gender gap in labor earnings tends to be smaller in the government sector than out of it. The public sector usually offers benefits that are highly valued by women, such as maternity leave, daycare facilities and shorter working hours. In this regard, the drop-in earnings results in more women to withdraw from the labor force after downsizing. These impacts have been documented by several studies, for instance Appleton, Hoddinott, & Krishnan (1999) and Rama (1999). Women are generally being seen as providing a cheap form of labor in export-oriented activities such as textiles and the service sector. Cairoli (2007) illustrates that female employees of the public sector receive valued benefits. The sorts of privileges accorded to women in the public sector are not attained by women in the private sector, such as the shorter working hours, better payment and job security. While increased openness may mean more jobs for women, female concentration in government-related employment means they are more likely to be affected by public sector downsizing. A positive of working for the government was indicated by Bahraini participants as enabling them to gain some level of leverage in the household based on their financial contributions. Participants working in private companies believed that those who work for the government are lucky and have better status, enjoying job security, higher salary, work leave and shorter working hours. This preference for the government as an employer is embraced by Gulf men and women generally, and Qatari participants fared well in this respect. This can be noted from the demographic information provided in Table 3.

A key point is that flexibility of employment or part-time jobs permits women to participate in the labor market by their own choice. Believing in the importance of compatibility of working conditions with the characteristics and circumstances of

women, a part-time project was one initiative of the Government of Bahrain. The governmental narrative supports the notion that unemployment among women is due to the unsuitability of jobs for them in the private sector, and the impact of culture and traditions and long working hours that contradict women's primary duties at home. Currently there are about 2,000 women engaged in the part-time project (Abduljaleel, 2017). Bahrain is oriented towards the implementation of negotiated social policies in relation to the family to allow women to work without causing harm to their primary role as childcarers. Within a similar framework of protecting the traditional female gendered role, Qatar has supported part-time work initiatives through a provision in the Human Resources Law 2016. Although the mechanism of implementation is still underdeveloped, the part-time initiative is being promoted as supporting Qatarization while accommodating women's social and family responsibilities.

#### Empowerment and Economic Independence

With the slow decline of the single breadwinner wage earner model and rise of the adult worker model, all adults in Qatar and Bahrain are being increasingly expected to work regardless of their family situation. Thus, women have taken up waged labor as a desire for autonomy on the one hand and economic necessity on the other. Fraser clarified that the entry of women into the labor market serves today to intensify capitalism's valorization of wage labor. Taking up employment has allowed women social recognition, financial independence and an increase in freedom (Mulvaney, 2013). More than one income being needed to support the family has become an ideal of family income due to the impact of neoliberalism. Thus, women have moved away from the household as a career and into the workforce. However, patriarchy is a resilient form of social organization that has a new look. It has created a new rationality of subjection, making women feel free to choose. Their practices are really an expression

of illusory freedom. An axiom of neoliberal capitalism is that it adapts to the existing social structures, such as patriarchy. A crucial element to perpetuate patriarchy as a social system is the raising of children. For most families, children are reared by women. In addition, society maintains strict divisions of labor by sex, creating separate genders. At work, women are kept in positions of service to men, such as secretaries, thereby securing the superior position of men materially and psychologically. Even though women may be treated quite differently in experiencing greater freedom today, patriarchal institutions, like government, enterprises and religion, still enforce gendered roles and hierarchies (Bennett, 2016).

Bahraini interviewees were confident that their job has increased their economic independence, while Qatari interviewees were hesitant to use the term 'independence' and preferred to describe their situations in relation self-realization and status. Qatari participants perceived the job itself as a source of social status and self-building. In contrast, Bahraini participants believed the income itself as a source of empowerment. The manifestation of economic independence is measured by the financial contribution to the household. These differences shaped their respective perspectives about themselves as earners. While Bahraini participants were proud to be significant financial contributors, Qatari participants expressed concerns about this as dependence on a woman financially is perceived to have negative connotations because it is believed by Qatari participants to create unhealthy society. Hobson (1990) defined economic independence in terms of women's household bargaining power relative to her husband. She argued that when a woman contributes a lesser amount to her household's income, she becomes economically dependent, which affects her ability to make decisions. Shamshad (2007) emphasized that female work participation increases family income and brings economic independence for women, helping them to participate in

intra-household decision-making. Furthermore, children of a working mother are perceived as potential wage earners and receive a higher share of household resources. However, he argues that paid employment does not bring economic empowerment, because ownership of resources still lies in the hands of the male members. A woman needs to be fully autonomous to spend her income and to be an entrepreneur. A woman as an entrepreneur is economically powerful, because she owns and controls her assets, has freedom to make decisions and generates employment for other women. The enthusiasm of Bahraini interviewees for economic independence may seem progressive, but it actually means no more than earning an income. Power, as a result of earning an income, does not necessarily reflect a real change within the family's structure. In both countries, female participants have achieved socially superficial rather than deep structural and paradigmatic change. Their gains have done nothing to change the fundamentals of patriarchy. In reality, they may be further away from real autonomy today than their ancestors, as discussed in Chapter 3. They have been reabsorbed by neopatriarchy during economic transitions. Neopatriarchy, as discussed by LeBaron (2010, p. 83), "colonized the minds, hearts and social institutions of people everywhere, becoming a powerful pervasive, yet unrecognized and unacknowledged background control factor that has been assimilated into our modern consciousness to the point that it is for all intents and purposes invisible". It means that neopatriarchy has become a norm in the lives of these women, so they act, behave and take decisions based on the fundamentals of neopatriarchy without acknowledging its impact. The participants of both countries still believe in the male breadwinner, in patriarchy and in the male-dominant family structure, regardless of increasing percentages of females in paid employment and their claims of independence.

#### Women as Mothers and Organizers of Consumption

Neoliberalism re-stabilizes the model of mothers as primary carers through the re-privatization of responsibility within the family and facilitating the development of new subjectivities of the ideal mother-worker. Mothers are assigned the duty to reproduce the nation, but now they are called to reproduce a particular subject fit for the social order of neoliberalism (Stevenson, 2015). Reproduction of the 'self' means women ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of themselves. The neoliberal view of self-optimization must occur regardless of work exploitative conditions (Mulvaney, 2013). As an ideology of governance through markets, neoliberalism has functioned to break down several gendered dichotomies and in so doing has created new forms of subjectivity. Motherhood has become a source of self-actualization through consumption (Hewitson, 2014). One of the modes of a good mother appears in the phenomenon of intensive mothering. Intensive mothering requires a professional level of skills and perceives the needs of children through the lens of consumption and competition. This means that intensive mothering requires specific circumstances and material resources that are only available to particular subjects; i.e. mother-workers (Stevenson, 2015). Mothers, who are expected to do more, must ensure that their children accumulate enough of the appropriate social and cultural capital to serve the labor force (Mulvaney, 2013). These new subjectivities are tied up with norms of respectable middle-class life that sets new horizons for status. Thus, there is an overlap between the kinds of status attributed to different forms of employment and images of good mothers (Stevenson, 2015). The safety net is represented in price controls and public sector employment. Governmental housing and subsidies of food items were certainly viewed by the population as a basic right and an indispensable part of the social contract (Olmsted, 2005). Neoliberal transformations have shifted the focus from collective responsibility to the private sphere, especially the family. Women endeavor

to demonstrate a good model to their children and accumulate resources to allow their children's participation in consumer society (Lavee, 2015).

Bahraini participants were confident about their ability to achieve a work-life balance, because it has become the new image of a woman, i.e. to be a working mother. It does not mean abandoning motherhood duties, because it remains the principal divine female duty, but it has become a measurement of female success. However, Qatari participants did not share the same perspective, although two of them emphasized that mothers may achieve this balance. They suggested that women should choose to work when their children become capable of taking care of themselves. Adaptation of the new mother model is proudly expressed by Bahraini participants, which is another difference between the two samples. This is a result of different perspectives on the economic transformations in the two countries, which have created different demands for working women based on different perceptions of familial needs. Scholars have demonstrated that difficulties created by a combination of work and family encourage women to develop strategies of balancing between work and family (Lavee, 2015; Woodward, 2008; Stone, 2007; Dodson, 2007). Although the findings of this research confirm this result, participants emphasized that they may choose to continue working to maximize income as long as it will allow them to provide material resources to take care of their children, even if it exposes children to maternal neglect.

Supporting their families has shaped the participants' motivations when choosing to have a profession. Participants perceived the job as a source to fulfill the family's needs, especially their children's. Consumption and what can they provide for their children is repetitively emphasized by the participants. Participants are expected to support themselves and their families through labor market participation and, thus, they are perceived as moral and worthy citizens. Taking this responsibility goes beyond

material survival, as it has shifted the focus on collective responsibility for dependents to the private sphere, i.e. to the family. Participants have internalized the imperatives of neoliberalism and endeavored to demonstrate a good citizen role model for their children by accumulating resources to allow their children's participation in the consumer society. As mothers and responsible daughters or wives, they attempt to comply with the social demands that have stemmed from existing views on the relationship between their investment in children and their future social achievement. The data analysis reveals that, and as Lavee (2015) confirmed, beyond their commitment to their families' basic material survival, the women also viewed themselves as responsible for their children's social participation. The participants viewed their ability to bridge the gap between the limited economic resources and their children's or family's needs as a principal component of their responsibilities. A new moral woman is created, acting in ways that promote her family's social inclusion. The perception of a good woman, whether a mother, a wife or a daughter, does not revolve around providing care, but with the ability to provide the appropriate economic resources to meet social demand. They found themselves obligated to respond to the dictates of a neoliberal consumer society, wherein consumption is a superior value.

#### The Social Organizers

Unpaid work stands sometimes as non-obligatory, but it is embraced as a mechanism to help the family's relationships. Women's unpaid work is freely chosen as a labor of love and culturally romanticized and mandated. It is embraced as a mechanism to improve family relations, re-establishing trust and reciprocity. It exists because people articulate their needs that are not addressed within the formal state social system (Duffy & Pupo, 2018). Indeed, the intensification of mothering coincides with the interest of the state to reprivatize social reproduction (Stevenson, 2015). The

increase in female employment has not reduced the demands of household reproduction; it has been marketized and redistributed. Mostly, the female household members or paid domestic workers assume the burden. Reproduction has been commodified, but socially and economically is devalued with low-paying and low-status (Mulvaney, 2013). For Bahraini interviewees, the support of the female household members is essential, as they shoulder the burden of childcare. Care work is carried out in the context of gender relations in the household, but neoliberalism has redistributed care work in an international system where immigrant workers provide care. Neoliberal strategies have led to an international division of care work, placing the burden on female immigrants. Qatari interviewees solved their care needs through hiring immigrant care workers. As in Western Europe, immigrant women workers filling the demand for domestic services has emerged due to the increasing numbers into the labor force, combined by the effect of the absent supply of family and state-provided care (Misra, Woodring, & Merz, 2006). Dependence on domestic workers also means reworking the gendered nature of household. Family relations are being redefined as mothers are replaced by nannies resulting in new social attachments.

#### Bahraini Women in Garment Factories

The theory of economic neoliberalism incorporates the removal of barriers of trade and allowance of the free flow of people, capital, goods and services. It requires economic competition to maximize profits and reduce production costs. Factories have shifted production from in-house to networks of subcontractors. The manufacturing activities are the domain of developing and newly industrialized countries (Evans, 2016). The garment sector in Bahrain flourished in the 1980s. Female workers in garment factories constituted 60% of total Bahraini workers (Bo Haji, 2001). The garment sector had benefited from Tariff Partners International (TPI) for 10 years,

ending in July 2016 according to the USA-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (FTA). According to this agreement, Bahrain's exports of garments and textiles to the United States, which had the biggest market share, were exempted from tariffs (Alhamed, 2016). Benefiting from the quota system, the garment sector in Bahrain relied on agreements with factories in India, Pakistan and Dubai (Bo Haji, 2001). Following the cancellation of TPI, Bahrain's garment factories have been required to pay customs duties ranging from 18% to 24%, which means losing the competitive advantage that they previously enjoyed. Factories that remain are facing near-final closure and are laying off their employees (Almosawi, Garment Factoroes in Bahrain are Closing and its Return is Subject to Amendment of the Free Trade Agreement, 2017).

The garment industry, an export-oriented industry, is widespread globally (Dicken, 2003). Research into the garment industry focuses on women and gender, as most employees are women. The paramount reason women engage in factory work is to earn an income. They often have little choice but to work in garment factories. The decision to work takes place in the context of wider relationships. Women work because they have dependents or to satisfy their needs (Ansell, Tsoeu, & Hajdu, 2014). One of the many reasons that women enter the garment and clothing industry is because it is viewed as a culturally appropriate form of employment. It is perceived as an extension of women's natural abilities, i.e. sewing and mending are inherently feminine activities and thus women make ideal workers. The importance of incorporating cultures in the analysis of female labor is related to the intersectionality of gender and other systems such as neoliberalism. The wages perpetuate both gendered and neoliberal behavior. Women are seen as intrinsically performing less-skilled work or needing less money as opposed to men who are viewed as family supporters. Employers, who deal with a structurally violent economic system, manipulate women to work in such a system. In

addition, employers perceive workers as temporary employees. This is because factory management utilizes women's secondary status to justify layoffs and scarce maternity or medical leave and pensions (Tager, 2016). Factory work affects the organizations of women's lives. Women are required to be in particular places at particular times and for long durations. Many women factory workers have children whose well-being motivates their employment. However, daytime absence curtails women's capacity to provide care. Garment sector work redefines maternal responsibility as women adopt or share the financial provider role associated with fatherhood. It challenges women's relationships with their children and families. Factory work undermines women's culturally defined responsibilities towards children. Many confer them on others such as grandmothers, relatives or paid nannies. Rather than a reallocation of maternal roles to fathers, other women step in. The long working hours, long distances and rigid procedures for breaks strongly shape the lives of women factory workers and their families, affecting how they discharge culturally defined responsibilities of social reproduction. The significance of money in this neoliberal economy is attributed to the time-space structuring of women's lives. Women responsibilities of social reproduction have not vanished but discharged financially. The state or employers have not assumed the responsibilities of social reproduction, because the neoliberal economy discourages investment in such services (Ansell, Tsoeu, & Hajdu, 2014). The commodification of social reproduction has encouraged women to fulfill childcare by paying other, lower status women.

### Summary

The emergence of subjectivities has contributed to the critical assessment and redefinition of women's status in their societies. Women's subjectivities are not uniform based on each narrated experience. Indeed, the market dynamic infuses values

of self-sufficiency and individualism. Freedom of choice, autonomy, independence and self-realization are other important sources of gender identities. However, contradictions between the responsibilities of paid work and household duties influence women's gender expectations.

Paid employment has been linked to notions of individualism and choice, these being values that participants believed to constitute a determining factor contributing to their status. Thus, the job has become a source of self-identification as where and what to work at define the social status and economic independence that a woman enjoys. Education contributes to freedom of choice as it has empowered women, enabling them to compete in the labor market. Education as a requirement of labor market entry, which provides better employment opportunities and income, is a defining factor that female ancestors lacked.

Paid employment has generated new images of motherhood. The educated and working young mother is successful in maintaining a work-life balance. She represents an image of a good citizen for her children. The image of a good citizen is a mother who contributes to the development of the country and ensures availability of resources to be consumed by her children. A working mother is a consumer who fulfills her personal desires in accordance with the luxury lifestyle or a manager of consumption who fulfills the needs of her family. Regardless of the rhetoric of independence, motherhood remains a private concern. Thus, well-paid women may afford the services of nannies while others depend on their female relatives to take care of their children.

Women are a source of cheap labor. Neoliberalism through its logic of diminishing barriers and maximization of profit looks for cost reduction. It has benefited from discursive cultural perceptions about women's natural abilities. With few opportunities and being seen as workers fitted to the performance of low-skilled

activities, women find themselves at the margin of the market as factory workers and suffering from exploitation.

## CHAPTER 7: NEOLIBERALISM, TOURISM AND ENTERTAINMENT

Travel and tourism are one of the fastest growing industries and main contributors to the worldwide GDP. For some countries, the share of tourism market is the only way to keep the country alive (Corfu & Nistoreanu, 2006). It is an industry that reflects the mobility of people, capital and information across boundaries. It is a volatile industry with potential visitors to abandon formerly popular destinations. There is a large and rapidly growing literature on tourism. Twenty years ago, all studies tended to assume that the tourism industry in the Third World was a good thing, though it acknowledged that there were numbers of associated problems. In 1970s, more negative view of tourism appeared (Lea, 2006). The explosion of tourist travel is traced back to the end of the 1960s, coinciding with the development of neoliberalism in the world (Pavlović & Knežević, 2017). The decisive shift from inward toward outward-oriented neoliberal development strategies has focused on ignored sectors such as international tourism (Jones, 2008). Therefore, modern tourism is seen as the product of the neoliberal phase of development. As the rule of the market is an important rule, the market in tourism regulates not only production of goods but it fully regulates the lives of the people involved (Pavlović & Knežević, 2017). The tourism sector is a mean by which neoliberal capitalism obfuscates inherent contradictions by spatial and temporal fixes. In addition, neoliberalism produced a kind of bodily fix transforming the bodies into sites of limitless capital accumulation. On the other hand, tourism is being promoted as a source of economic diversification and a core component of the green economy.

Although Bahrain, as other GCC countries, is a newcomer to global tourism, it is a tourism pioneer in Arab world since 1990. The sector contributed approximately 10% to GDP, leading the country's economic growth. Despite the country's niche

initiatives attempted, entertainment has become the main tourism sector attractions. Although tourism constitutes a principal pillar within each country's development strategy, Bahrain has a thriving entertainment and hospitality industry in which sex tourism is embedded. Nightclubs, bars, hotels and resorts supported by an alcohol production activity provide the basis of growth for this industry. A question arises: how does neoliberalism contribute to the creation of sex-worker subjectivity?

This chapter depends on secondary sources, which are data and scholarly books and articles. Interviewing Bahraini women involved in the entertainment sector is greatly difficult due to the sensitivity of being identified with sex services, which might sacrifice the safety of these women and their social status. The participants were also hesitant to answer the questions regarding their perspectives in relation to the existence of a sex entertainment sector. On the other hand, looking for Bahraini women entertainment workers or information from official institutions could sacrifice the safety of the researcher as the office of the minister claimed that the researcher had crossed the red lines and it would be questioned if continued to look into the topic of sex workers. I requested statistical information through a letter sent to the deputy general of the court in Bahrain, but my request was denied. The deputy general replied with no availability of such information within the court. I tried also to contact the public prosecution office through several officers, but replies were focused on encouraging me to abandon the topic because I was threatening national security. From my perspective, their attitude towards this topic is an attempt to hide the reality of this sector as any scientific research might demystify this area of knowledge encouraging further investigations that would cause social unrest.

This chapter starts with discussing the role of capitalism in the development of a tourism sector. The development of spatial and bodily fixes encouraged the

emergence of the Third World destinations to serve the needs of exogeneous markets of the developed countries of the First World. Secondly, it explores the official narrative of adopting a tourism strategy by the government of Bahrain. As a policy of diversification based on green economy – defined as an economic system that is compatible with the natural environment – cultural, heritage and sport tourism has been a national development strategy that leads growth. Thirdly, it analyzes the relation between sex tourism and neoliberalism in Bahrain by addressing the changes within Bahraini sex worker's status. By historicizing the status of these women during British protection, differences in status and self-esteem due to the current impact of neoliberalism is explained. Additionally, it analyzes the impact of Bahrain's dependency on Saudi Arabia on the escalation of sex industry.

#### Tourism, Commodification of Bodies and Dependency Impact

Indeed, the study of tourism as a form of neoliberal capitalism can be seen to have begun with Britton, who proclaimed the industry to be a major internationalized component of Western capitalist economy and a product of metropolitan capitalist enterprise. In its origin, tourism of Grand Tour Variety reflected the early liberal entrepreneurial structure. However, the rise of mass tourism was due to the collective prepackaged holidays in post-war era. The 1970s saw the rise of new tourism offering a variety of flexible, individually tailored trips. This led to the development of markets designed to offer outlet for every tourist's taste, including products as war and sex. In particular, tourism embodies the characteristics of neoliberalism as privatization, marketization, commodification and deregulation (Fletcher, 2011). It is a mean by which neoliberal forms of capitalism sidestep and obfuscate the contradictions inherent in the tensions between economic growth and existing limits. Tourism, as a potential contributor to this notion, is an example of how individuals can be regarded as being at

the frontier of capital accumulation (Duffy R. , 2015).

Neoliberal capitalism's central contradiction is the tension between capitalists' desire to extract profit from the system and the necessity for sufficient capital to be transferred to the workforce so that it could be consumed. However, appropriating labor's surplus value necessitates that workers be paid less than the full sale value of their product. Therefore, they will be unable to purchase what they have produced leading to overproduction and over-accumulation. Neoliberal capitalism identifies a number of mechanisms by which it is able to alleviate the contradiction through economic growth requiring different spatial and/or temporal 'fixes'. Fletcher (2011) defined spatial fix as "exporting excess capital to a new geographical location where it can be reinvested in novel development" (p. 449), while temporal fix is accomplished by "selling of not a durable product but rather a transient [experience] that is instantaneously consumed" (p. 449). International tourism development can be viewed as an ideal mean by which this is accomplished. Hence, tourism provides a mean to find outlets for excess capital and assists the system to sustain itself over time. On the other hand, tourism contributes to neoliberal capitalism's self-maintenance through its status as a service economy. Some service workers are provided with fund to purchase the commodities that others have produced, while individual's desire to purchase luxury services coupled with diverse actors providing such services is sufficient to stimulate substantial growth (Fletcher, 2011).

Tourism produces a kind of 'bodily fix' for capitalism – using human body as a site of accumulation by selling experiences that evoke desired emotions. It sells excitement, satisfaction and peace. These experiences can be captured by being purchased anew. On the other hand, these experiences intensify and extend neoliberalism by conjuring up a new commodity sold repeatedly. Tourism transforms

bodies into site of limitless capital accumulation (Duffy R. , 2015). Mass tourism is identified with the middle class. This class group functions as an 'absorptive class'. The middle class consumes the services provided by the tourism industry forming the vanguard of tourism consumption, which serves the interest of global neoliberal capitalist expansion (Fletcher, 2011).

Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) focuses on the impacts of western-dominated tourism on developing countries, either as good or bad category or undecided. The third world countries are characterized by forms of dependent development, which has contributed to the process of historical conditioning altering the internal functioning of economic and social systems. As a result, the dependent forms of development caused the disintegration of an indigenous economy and its reorientation to serve the needs of exogenous markets. By defining the basis upon which a country is articulated with other economies, dependency in general means the subordination of national economic autonomy to meet the interest of local classes and foreign groups. Importantly, the link between the tourist source countries and tourist facilities in destination countries is not organic or occurring from evolution, but from demand from overseas tourists and foreign company investments or from extension of foreign interest in that country (Britton, 1982). This entails that development of the tourism sector in tourist destination countries is significantly influenced by the desires of the tourist source countries and their support/relations.

The socio-cultural impact of tourism is a product of interactions between hosts and guests. Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) noted that tourist behavior is based on the western notion of the 'Right to Travel'. Mowforth and Munt (2016) discussed the unbalanced relationship between the guest and host, which is more of master-servant one. This causes clashes due to conflicting interests. Tourism contributes to the change

in value systems, individual behavior, family relations, moral conduct, lifestyle, traditions and community organization. On the other hand, tourism has a positive impact by bringing people of different cultures together, which results in understanding and tolerance. The orientalist view of the Arab World by Westerners is presented in travel and tourism brochures. It is presented as exotic and oriental, which symbolize backwardness, oppression and inferiority (Odeh, 2010).

#### Tourism's Positive Narrative: A Source of Economic Diversification

Tourism is presented as a “clean” industry, which stands in contrast to heavy industries. It is perceived as environmentally sustainable form of economic development by UNEP. Recently, it has been identified as a core component of the ‘Green Economy’. The green economy is promoted by leading international organizations such as the World Bank and UNEP (Duffy R. , 2015). UNEP presents the green economy as a mean of producing sustainability, economic growth and poverty reduction by enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare and creating opportunities for employment (United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization, 2012).

Tourism is increasingly being promoted as a source of economic diversification away from an excessive dependency on a few traditional exports (Jones, 2008). Developing countries promote tourism to earn foreign exchange, increasing employment opportunities, attracting development capital and enhancing economic independence. Tourist destinations are founded one unique environmental or cultural features. However, the presence of such attraction is not sufficient. Transport linkages, fare costs, accommodation and the image of a destination are critical factors in directing tourist flows (Fletcher, 2011).

Bahrain is a tourism pioneer in the Arab World receiving a noteworthy number

of visitors in 1990 with a share of 15.4% of GDP. Since mid-1950s, policies of economic diversification were adopted from directives influenced by the country's ruling family. As a result, Bahrain encouraged the development of industries and other forms of manufacturing. Notwithstanding the 1970s and the 1980s Lebanese civil war gave impetus to Bahrain to emerge as a regional financial center stimulating further business travel investment (Bagaeen, 2017). The oil wealth enabled the Gulf countries to build sophisticated infrastructures, host international banks and extend their economic relations globally, while Lebanon due to the impact of war lost its strategic role in the Arab region. Alhwaish (2016) identified the GCC countries as newcomers to global tourism in terms of modern tourism such as leisure, exhibitions and sport. Massive tourism infrastructure projects have been undertaken in many GCC countries. They began expanding tourism through the adoption of positioning strategies for tourist destinations and niche tourism initiatives. Today, more than 12 sites in GCC countries are listed on the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage, including Qal'at Al-Bahrain. It was only until 2010 that a proposal was formed with an intention to regulate the tourism and hotel sectors. In 2014, the Supreme Committee for Tourism designed 'Bahrain Tourism Strategy 2015-2018' to boost visitor numbers. The strategy focused on an experience-led approach involving Bahrain's attractions and cultural heritage (Bagaeen, 2017).

Arab countries benefited from the oil boom of the 1970s, but in the past 20 years, the growth weakened. The economic decline put pressure on governments to promote economic efficiency, free trade, investments and liberalization (Alia, 2013). Tourism development provides great opportunities for GCC countries to diversify away from single resource economies. It offers a way to help solve socio-economic problems such as unemployment in Arab countries. Engagement in tourism development

promotes long-run sustainable economic growth (Bagaeen, 2017). In literature, there are many researchers, such as Dritsakis (2004) Durbarry (2004) and Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda (2002), who support the tourism-led growth hypothesis, as tourism produces foreign exchange, facilitates the use of resources, creates job opportunities, improves the country's infrastructure and creates positive linkages with other sectors of the economy.

For the GCC countries, market forces by themselves are incapable of resolving issues related to either sustainability or distribution of costs and benefits generated by tourism. State intervention is required, otherwise cohesion and direction necessary for sustaining tourism over the long term will be lacking. More active involvement by higher levels of the state is needed to coordinate tourism with the different economic actors and the national plan. The development of major infrastructure such as roads, airports and water-electricity supply are coordinated to meet both, demands of the industry and broader social and economic needs. In addition, tourism planning is integrated with the national cultural projects of traditional arts and culture promotion and preservation. State promotion of tourism is neither beneficial nor harmful. There is nothing wrong with state support for new outward-oriented growth sectors (Brohman, 1996). However, the involvement of the state, as an entrepreneur and a regulator, has raised significant questions regarding the role of the state in tourism development in respect to its compatibility with its responsibility for the wellbeing of all the population (Mosedale, 2016).

In case of Bahrain, The World Travel and Tourism Council (2018) reported that the direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was 4.2% of total GDP, while the total contribution is documented to be 9.7% in 2017. In addition, the total contribution to employment was 9.4% of total employment (58,000 jobs) in 2017. Alhawaish (2016)

used the Granger causality analysis approach to assess the contribution of tourism to economic growth in GCC countries over the period 1995-2012. Two hypotheses were tested: economy-driven tourism growth hypodissertation and tourism-led growth hypodissertation. While he found that studying the GCC countries as a whole showed one-way Granger causality from economic growth to tourism growth. Individually, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates follow the path of economy-driven tourism growth. However, it is only the Bahraini case that holds true for the reverse hypodissertation of tourism-led growth. An explanation for this may lie in the tourism attraction and entertainment policy adopted by Bahraini government. Since 1980s, Bahrain has become the regional hub for international banking and financial services and leisure facilities. In literature, such as in Tugcu (2014) and Payne & Mervar (2010), it is well documented that the existence of tourism attractions is likely to benefit from tourist flows in the long run that can foster economic growth.

Given the fact that the GCC countries have similar climate and natural resources, the existence of attractions may require some degree of specialization to offer unique services and activities (Alhowaish, 2016). Yet, similar niche initiatives have been attempted by all Gulf countries. In the field of sport, Bahrain has been a pioneer of Formula 1 racing since 2004. The race event has a positive effect on the hotel occupancy, which often reaches 100% of hotel rooms offered. However, Bahrain's monopoly was challenged due to the competition imposed by Turkey and Abu Dhabi. Moreover, Bahrain has been hosting the Cultural Spring Festival since 2006 and Bahrain Summer Festival since 2008 to gather Arab and international artists. However, it is difficult for it to keep the pace in the cultural development race as Qatar and UAE are stronger competitors. Notwithstanding, Bahrain has a very rich history, thus efforts were directed to promote heritage tourism. The intention encouraged the makeover of

Manama’s central commercial district. It has been revamped in a reminiscent of historical elements (Karolak, 2012). Nevertheless, and in the context of ever-growing competition, place marketing requires further initiatives that address country’s strengths and opportunities. Table 12 shows the contribution of tourism sector on GDP and employment in the Middle East and Bahrain in 2017. Tourism in Bahrain contributed 9.7% to GDP and employed about 9.4% of total employment. It was higher than the average GDP contribution of tourism in Middle East (8.9%), and employment contribution of 7.4% of total employment.

*Table 12. . Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism 2018, World Travel and Tourism Council*

|   | Middle East    |                       |                         | Bahrain          |                       |                         |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
|   | 2017           | 2017<br>% of<br>total | 2018<br>Real<br>Growth% | 2017             | 2017<br>% of<br>total | 2018<br>Real<br>Growth% |
| Total Contribution to GDP                   | 224.2<br>USDbn | 8.9                   | 4.3                     | 3,345.7<br>USDmn | 9.7                   | 3.0                     |
| Total Contribution to Employment (000 jobs) | 5,528          | 7.4                   | 3.1                     | 58               | 9.4                   | 3.9                     |

#### Tourism and Sex in Local/Global Gender Constructions

The tangible outcomes of neoliberalism are products of individual and collective practices in space and time (Jones, 2008). Tourism is crucial gendered site of flexible global production (Vandegrift, 2008). It may reconfirm existing gender constructions, but also offers opportunities and challenges local communities to question existing gender constructions and hierarchies. Local men and women who engage in entertainment tourism have various expectations, ranging from money received for a one-night stand to relationships that may last for some days or years.

Unequal economic power is constitutive of unequal relationships between tourists and prostitutes or romance partners. The power relations between male tourists and female prostitutes are the prototype of dominance relationships (Wilson & Ypeij, 2012). Women tend to dominate the low-ranking and lesser-remunerated positions of tourism, working as cleaners, receptionists, restaurants waitresses and housekeepers. However, women may miss out on formal tourism employment due to cultural or religious norms (Boonabaana, 2014).

Entertainment in terms of sex tourism is one of the field's attractions. It is not possible to understand tourism development in Bahrain without integrating its geographical and social relationship with Saudi Arabia. Since its establishment in 1986, King Fahd Causeway, a 26-kilometre bridge, physically connected the two neighbors. In fact, both tourism and retail sectors in Bahrain owe much to Bahrain's close ties with its big brother, Saudi Arabia. Economic dependence on Saudi has developed since the significant development assistance from the latter after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. This causeway affirms the political affiliation between two countries. It represents a vital lifeline where Saudi troops can roll over to Bahrain. Bahraini political vulnerability was a main reason behind the new approved plans for another bridge, named the King Hamad Causeway, linking Bahrain to Saudi Arabia (Bagaeen, 2017). Table 13 shows the numbers of vehicles and passengers passing through King Fahd Causeway. King Fahd Causeway Authority reported that more than 9 million vehicles and 20 million passengers crossed the causeway between the two countries in 2018. There is a relation between the neoliberal economic policies and growth of sex tourism, which inevitably has made Bahrain a sex-tourist destination for many Gulf men. Furthermore, the society's perception of prostitutes has changed effecting Bahraini women's status and societal esteem in terms of society's rejection of them.

*Table 13. No. of Vehicles and Passenger through King Fahd Causeway, King Fahd Causeway Authority*

| Year | Vehicles  | Passengers |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 2017 | 8,485,038 | 19,565,840 |
| 2018 | 9,422,987 | 20,334,966 |

*Prostitution before Independence: Legalization, Status and Societal Esteem*

Although sex work has increased since the last decades, ‘prostitution – as a job, existed during but is also older than British decree. Historically, different stories concerning prostitution practices had been documented throughout the period of protection. In 1941, the judge, Al-Sheikh Jassem Al-Mihza, spoke with the ruler of Bahrain during that period, Al-Sheikh Isa bin Ali, about a Jewish woman called Makia who had strong relations with famous people and tried to attract Bahraini girls to join the sex industry. Another law case because of a minor girl’s involvement was against a foreign club in Awali (Almurshid, 2009). In the British records of Bahrain, the word prostitutes/prostitution exists frequently. Alshahabi (1996) analyzed the British records during the period 1920-1971. He mentioned several stories of kidnapping conducted by members of the ruling families. One of these stories was about a female from Al-Hurra, who ended up working as a prostitute. Another Jew woman, called Masuda and who was the girlfriend of a shaikh, used to drawn and extort wealthy young men. Belgrave diary is another manifestation of prostitution in the country. In Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 1944, he wrote about a postponed court case of a local prostitute who was photographed naked by an American photographer and the pictures were hawked behind the bazaar. In Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 1944, he wrote about the court decision that shocked the prostitutes of two month “R.I.” and the town ladies’ reaction who jeered them (Dalrymple-Belgrave, 2010). The focus on the stories of Jewish women, not Muslim,

might be an attempt to protect the image of Muslim local women in Bahrain or to claim that prostitution in that period was dominated by non-Muslim women.

The British consultant, Belgrave, issued a decree to organize the practice of prostitution to prevent turmoil and control its houses (APPENDIX C). This practice properly existed before the British presence, but a researcher can consider the day in which this decree came into force as a starting point because it was a clear recognition of the existence of such practice in Bahraini society. Al-Qubla alley in Manama Grandol alley in Muharraq were the main places in which prostitutes lived (Almurshid, 2009; Alaraid, 2008). The aim behind such as law was to satisfy the British soldiers sexual needs in a healthy environment that free of transmitted sexual diseases, but benefactors included Bahrainis. However, prostitution was not limited within the boundaries of these two allies. Interviews conducted by Ali (2015) showed that prostitution existed in several allies in Manama and Muharraq neighborhoods. The decree only protected British soldiers in Bahrain. Belgrave ordered all the prostitutes to be registered within the governmental records. These registered prostitutes had a periodical medical screening to guarantee that they were not infected by one of the venereal diseases, particularly syphilis because HIV was not known yet. When the department of health found any prostitute infected by syphilis, they would be treated before they were able to resume work. The British claimed that they were controlling the whole sector, but indeed, they only supervised the regular medical screenings. This is important because it indicates that the network of sex work was large and old. Discussion of prostitutes was a major topic during the meetings of health committee, as he wrote about in his diaries. The majority of prostitutes were Bahrainis from poor families. There were no Asian women involved but some were from the Arabian Peninsula or Persians born in Bahrain (Ali, 2015).

There were no historical records of protest or objection by locals. Apparently, there was a modest level of acceptance. British direct involvement in ruling the country and legalization reinforced the practice but the country's geographical location played a significant role. After the declaration of independence in 1971, British decree was abolished, but not the practice. Plesa & Stoenescu (2005) argue that for many Arab countries, societies tolerated, regulated and repressed prostitution, but "colonialism brought to many Third World countries an orientalist and racist perspective of native women" (p. 14).

Mule and Barthel (1992) emphasize that in conservative patriarchal society "costs attached to autonomy and the benefits attached to traditional sources of esteem increase" (236) when they analyzed the choice of Egyptian women to return to veil, seeking societal esteem. A traditional source of esteem in this case for a woman is preserving her honor by not selling her body. A number of women were known to be prostitutes but they did not suffer societal rejection. Many locals perceived prostitution as shameful action against women's dignity, but many prostitutes, who lived during that period, did not lose societal esteem. Women who were involved publicly and female pimps could raise their illegitimate children as they enjoyed economic independence. Some of these prostitutes got married even if they had illegitimate kids, and sometimes to one of their regular customers. Given that prostitution is a hierarchy of power, dependency and exploitation, women enjoyed, at least, a minimum control over their bodies comparable to the current era. The main two factors behind this was the legalization of prostitution during that period and some were in control of the different processes attached to the practice, including alcohol production. This should not mislead us to generalize these findings on women status and esteem during that period. Many women worked in secret fearing family sanctions got rid of their

illegitimate children. Other even after marriage were forced by their husband to work as prostitutes. Killing or attempt to kill a prostitute because of love was normal. An incident recorded by Belgrave in Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August 1945 between an Iraqi man who tried to shoot a prostitute, but he failed so he cut a vein in his arm and died.

### *The Relationship Between Sex and Neoliberalism*

Since then, the newspapers and other press websites have focused on the issue of prostitution. Some of these articles discuss the history of prostitution, manifestations of prostitution in hotels and streets and court cases (Almosawi, 2017; Ali, 2015; Abdulla, 2010; Asaf, 2007), while other journalists denounced such information, arguing that such articles distort the history of Bahrain (Al-Zayani, 2015). But unfortunately, the government of Bahrain denies the existence of many networks of prostitution, which makes the study of this practice so hard. Locals usually witness negotiations over sex and its price taking place publicly in the capital allies. In fact, prostitution in Arab countries can be divided to three sections. The first type is explicit and practiced in hotels and apartments, particularly in the countries that tourism is a main factor of national income, like Bahrain, Egypt and Lebanon. The second is implicit and it is widespread in the countries that have taught regulations, like Saudi Arabia. The last type is organized by special agencies and pimps. Moreover, migration plays a crucial role. Kuwait is a destination for women from Asia who are put in forced labor, specifically run-away maids. Saudi Arabia is a major receiver of women trafficked for commercial sex. They are deceived, abused and married by their employer. There are centers of international prostitution in the Middle East such as Dubai, Istanbul and Marrakech (Alia, 2013).

Nevertheless, in the countries where prostitution is not legal, such as Bahrain, the development of this sector is unavoidable. It is difficult to find annual statistics about

sex workers and the size of the sector, Acknowledging the difficulty of providing full and comprehensive statistics, the only form of statistics found are those conducted by the Ministry of Interior in 2009, as part of the ministry's response to the request of the inquiry commission. According to the statistics by Ministry of Interior, the number of those caught in 2009 was 844 individuals. The Chinese women ranked 1st, followed by the Thai women, constituting 53.1% of the sector. The Bahraini women were 7 only, while Bahraini men were 67, ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> after Indians and Bengalis (Abdulla, 2010).

### *Commodifying the Body*

The main concern is to explain how the neoliberal economic policies materialize women's bodies as commodities. It is known that the market is the domain of goods and services exchange. Actually, transferring human activities to merchandise is one of the features of the neo-liberal economic system. Nothing in such a system can avoid the materialization effect. Indeed, the neoliberal economic policies deals with social relations as materials. To merchandize people, there is a need to use violence. Owning the people's bodies and perceiving them as commodities to be sold in the market are associated with violence. This means that coercion is a main factor in transferring the humans to goods. The materialization of women and children has two dimensions. It does not materialize bodies, but also materializes women and children themselves. These women and children are sold in the local markets only, but in the regional and international markets. Prostitution is not a process of trade, but an industry: transferring the bodies to goods. Women who are involved in this sector have no more control over their bodies. The neoliberal economic policies "encourage rapid urban development and the potential supply of women for sex work" (Penttinen, 2008, p. 33). It contributes to both illegal and legal forms of prostitution, thus resulting in sex-specific body politics on a global scale through its logic of marketization. On the other hand, neoliberal

economic policies links internal sex industry to a wider network of human trafficking causing further exploitation. Elina Penttinen (2008) explained how neo-liberal economy reinforces patriarchal hierarchy by undermining women, stating:

women's position in productive and reproductive labor does not count in macroeconomic policy making. Instead, their position is seen as irrelevant and whether the policies affect women's situation at all, or to what extent, are questions neither considered nor clarified. Rather negative effects are seen as unintended consequences. Gender-blind accounting methods of progress and growth leave out the relative impoverishment of certain groups, which are, in most cases, women. This show also that the conceptualization of growth and development are regarded as having nothing to do with sex or gender and, therefore, as not having gendered effects. (p. 32)

As one of the principal pillars of Bahraini neoliberal economy, it encourages and attracts foreign investment is tourism. It is significantly important as “most of the foreign currency earnings in the region are received through tourism and it is therefore crucial for its economic development to promote tourism and also safeguard the sex industry” (Penttinen, 2008, p. 34). It constitutes an “economic opportunity and a business vital to national development” (Pettman, 2000), and is sponsored by government and its backers. Many tourists visit Bahrain to enjoy the attractive and liberal lifestyle, “others come to do things they might not do at home, taking advantage of being unknown and irresponsible in the tourist place” (Pettman, 2000). Monzini (2005) described it as:

when the tourist-client is on holiday, away from his usual environment, he feels free to indulge desires to which he would otherwise never admit; the limitations of his usual identity go by the board, since now none of his close circle can see

and recognize him. He thinks of the destination as ‘heaven on earth’ where the normal moral constraints – which forbid him to pay for sex with a 14-year-old girl – no longer have any meaning. He trends to find suitable justification for such behavior: for example, he convinces himself that in this country prostitution is not as sin and sexual abuse is considered normal, or that young girls are by nature sharper and inclined to humor men from a tender age, or that they have no problems working as prostitutes and are actually quite lucky to be doing so, since they earn more than others of their age and are able to meet interesting people. (p. 32)

### *Saudi Impact*

Analysis of sex tourism should integrate the impact of Saudi tourists. The strong relations between the two countries and the magnitude of Saudi tourist movement contribute to some social and economic aspects of tourism. The Saudi Statistical Center for Studies and Research of the General Authority for Tourism and National Heritage (SSC), the percentage of Saudi tourists traveling to Bahrain in 2016 is about 23% of total number Saudi tourist traveling abroad. Saudis ranked first with 87% of the total tourist and visitors to Bahrain (Information Authority and e-Government, 2018). Alsamawi (2018) used the descriptive surveying method to test several hypotheses. About 52% of the sample size of 14993 individuals were Saudi males. His hypotheses concerning the statistical relationship between sex and number of nights spent, number of visits, means that encouraged Saudi to come to Bahrain, place of residence and main purpose of visiting are of importance. For the five hypotheses, the researcher used Chi square and results showed a significant statistical relationship at a level of significance (0.00). Regardless of the place of residence, hotels, hotel apartments, residence with relatives and friends, and owned houses, a statistical relationship existed. P13B, a 44-

year-old assistant nurse working in a governmental hospital, pointed to the presence of Saudi males who contributed to the continuity of sex tourism, saying:

It is not a hidden fact that you are trying to push me to talk about ... I do not think any of us does not notice or understand the Saudi men's purpose of visit. I am not here accusing the population, but we know that reality of their visit, some of them at least. Ask yourself, why some hotels still have night clubs if not they are still getting customers.

P9B was hesitant to answer the question about tourism in relation to socio-cultural impact but did not deny the Saudi impact, saying:

My understanding of tourism is incomplete ... I do not know really about this topic ... I see tourism around me, there are many foreigners who come to enjoy the country ... I mean I see the country holding activities and building resort here and there ... But if you mean Saudis, no need to talk about them ... It is obvious why they are coming to Bahrain ... I mean for unethical activities as we all know.

Understanding the impact of Saudi tourism on the sex work in Bahrain is important because Saudi tourists sustain it. It also contributes to the stereotypes of Bahraini women.

#### *Consumerism Effect*

In comparison to prostitution before independence, some Bahraini women were independent economically. Their wealth assisted them to buy lands and houses and take care of their children. Indeed, women are perceived as “expandable commodities”, as described by Parrot and Cummings (2006, p. 141). On the other hand, opening the market and encouraging the polarization of regional and international investments have contributed to the creation of a ‘culture of consumption’. The prosperity of middle class

has motivated more people to buy sex services in much wider range, while (Plesa & Stoenescu, 2005, p. 14) it encouraged many women to join the sector believing it is a source of easy money. Penttinen (2008) emphasized that:

buying sex is associated with a pleasurable and luxurious lifestyle. Therefore, buying commercial sex is connected with new consumerism, is an enactment of subjectivity within consumer culture and is a form of hedonistic individualism, which seeks pleasure through commercial sex. (p. 34)

Furthermore, due to low wages and striking unemployment rate, some young women sell their sex services temporarily and individually to afford buying brands or traveling. The promotion of extravaganza and luxurious life have attracted many women. An easy money may constitute the best way for some a Bahraini woman to afford this luxury lifestyle. P6B pointed to the change within the consumption culture that pushes women to do anything to live the luxury lifestyle, saying,

luxuries have become necessities and to afford getting them we need more and more money ... Some work longer hours or with more efforts regardless of the impact on health and phycological comfort to cover up the expenses of these luxuries.

Once the woman joins sex field, she loses independence, autonomous choice, and control over her body, despite it maybe her choice at the beginning. She will be exposed to societal and law sanctions if arrested. She is now an object and a source of sexuality and shame. This small group of women may feel somehow that they control their bodies, because they believe that the ability to select their customers is power.

#### *Globalization and Trafficking Global Networks*

Increase of sex tourism must be placed in the context of global change and most noticeably aspects of globalization that facilitate expanding international travel and

tourism (Pettman, 2000). The development of the air traveling contributes to both, the increase of the numbers of those who visit to Bahrain to enjoy sex tourism, and women of different nationalities who come Bahrain to join this sector, by choice or coercively. Although the government benefited from revenues generated from hotels and resorts, costs attached to sex tourism increased. Prostitutes do not lose societal esteem only but also respect at the level of the region. Stereotyping about Bahraini women is widely spread across the region. Although they are known to be an example of openness and liberation, these characteristics are attached to other bad features as cheap and 'easy to get'.

There are striking differences between the past and the globalized present due to the growth of the international economic systems characterized by privatization, deregulation and participation of national economic actors. The neoliberal diffused ideologies have produced gendered effects. Women are disadvantaged economically and this vulnerable to being trafficked and exploited as sex slaves for profit or revenues (Goh, 2009). It is important to emphasize that this sex tourism is linked to the trafficking trade (Parrot & Cummings, 2006). In fact, prostitution and all the activities associated with it are linked to the issue of trafficking of women. It is known that where the prostitution and sex industry are not legitimized, the need for foreign women to be involved in this practice increases. The growth of international trade and the liberalization of the market facilitate the legal and illegal bargains, including the trafficking of women and sex tourism. This is attributed to the role of globalization and its promotion for free movement for goods, capital and people across borders. Indeed, globalization has made the trafficking of human easier. Hence, it has offered a continuous and endless supply of women. Economic globalization created the structural conditions that make women vulnerable to trafficking. "Sex trafficking as a circuit is

emblematic of an enterprise where traffickers (and to a certain extent governments) rely on the sale of women as sexual commodities for survival” (Goh, 2009, p. 279). This explain the growth of sex tourism industry as shadow economies and transnational criminal networks through linkages of migration, privatization and liberalization of markets. The proliferation of transnational sex tourism industry is described as a ‘feminization of survival’ by Sassen (2002). The development of sex tourism as an industry feeds on the commodification of women as sexual objects, highly profitable, reusable and mobile. While millions of poor people around the world seek the enhancement of their economic situation by moving to rich regions either by legal or illegal immigration, they encounter different difficulties, especially that legal immigration requires enough money and financing. Falling in the hands of traffickers means being perceived as commodities sold in the market.

Sex tourism depends on and engages in a process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. It is part of shadow economies but exists by adapting to institutional infrastructures and regular economies. It exploits the existing infrastructures in the global city through deterritorialization and reterritorialization of virtual and physical spaces. “The global city is a specific place whose space, internal dynamics and spaces situate the key structures of the world economy and serves as the key locations for finance, specialized services firms and sites of production” (Goh, 2009, p. 287). “The global city is where resources for global economic activities are embedded in place to allow for the convergence of markets and information” (Goh, 2009, p. 288). In the global city, digital networks serve as informal virtual space to protect the identity/privacy and anonymity of buyers and sellers. Digital networks perpetuate the demand side of sex sector by reterritorializing the Internet as an online marketplace for women. Physical spaces in the global city are also deterritorialized and reterritorialized

to assume new meanings. It includes new private and public spaces such as “apartments, massage parlors, residential houses and night-clubs that operate as legal spaces are reterritorialized as brothels or markets for sexual services” (Goh, 2009, p. 290).

Manama, the capital city of Bahrain, has become a global icon of urbanism and development. It is the largest financial center in the GCC. Kamrava (2016) argued that Gulf port cities are far from becoming actual global cities as they are at best only consumers of infrastructural and knowledge products from elsewhere. For him, they remain mostly local gateways and overwhelmingly one-way flow of services and products, keeping them as aspiring port cities. Although Manama is not yet an actual global city, its relations with the West reflects an extension of colonial protection and dependency. Additionally, its relations with the big brother and neighboring Gulf countries has transferred it to a market for sexual services.

Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain reported that prostitution is a problem for many migrant workers who are trafficked to Bahrain. Women are often victims of recruitment agencies’ lies. Hotels use visas to entice Arab and Asian women to Bahrain promising them jobs as dancers, but later they realize that they are meant to work as prostitutes. Domestic workers often find themselves trafficked into the sex trade after fleeing their abusive employers. Even if these women manage to escape their traffickers, Bahraini authorities will treat them as criminals instead of victims. Police often deport these women to their home countries after serving time in jail (Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain, 2016). Table 14 shows a statistical information published by alwasatnews in 2010 about women arrested because for prostitution showed the existing of a globalized network of sex industry, in which Chinese and Thai women were at the list by 234 and 214 respectively. Acknowledging the difficulties of identifying Bahraini women

participating in the sector and image of shame accompanying the activity has contributed to failure to determine the actual numbers.

*Table 14. No. of Registered Cases of Arrest, alwasatnews, 2010*

| Nationality | No. of Cases |
|-------------|--------------|
| Bahraini    | 7            |
| Gulf        | 27           |
| Arab        | 31           |
| Thai        | 214          |
| Ethiopian   | 190          |
| Chinese     | 234          |
| Russian     | 27           |
| Philippine  | 31           |
| Ceylon      | 14           |
| Indian      | 26           |
| Turkish     | 4            |
| Bengali     | 15           |
| Indonesian  | 12           |
| Others      | 12           |

#### *Rejections and Reactions*

Although prostitution and drinking alcohol are haram (prohibited) according to Shari'a law, the openness of Bahrain and massive influx of expats, sex traffickers have supported the sex sector. After Manama was listed as one of the top 10 cities to pursue vice and debauchery in men's portal. Bahraini parliamentarians recognized the risk of corrupting Muslim values. As a result, a parliament commission of inquiry was formed to investigate the reasons behind the moral degradation, including the spread of prostitution and alcohol consumption, focusing on the tourism sector. The mechanism of information collection included interviews with individuals, officials and professionals, investigations and studies that consisted of written and visual evidence, news and media investigations, and an official e-mail. The report investigated the issue from a very Islamic perspective. The introduction emphasizes on the role of ethics and position of Islam using different verses. It also insists on the status of Bahrain as an

independent Arab and Islamic state, in which the main source of laws is the sharia. The report represents one of the typical outcomes of inquiry commissions. It lacks the analytical and critical framework, ending up with several recommendations. It may constitute the only official report, but its role does not exceed monitoring the manifestations of the moral degradation. As a parliament report, it illustrated the responsibility of several ministries, mainly Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism and Ministry of Labor and Social Development, which have failed to prevent the spread of public immorality. Thus in 2009 MPs proposed a number of laws that included banning the sale of alcohol in Bahrain International Airport and on flights of Gulf Air. They demanded the complete ban of alcohol in public places and guests could enjoy alcoholic beverages in their rooms or homes. Although selling alcoholic beverages is legal in many hotels, restaurants and nightclubs, a number of hotels used to operate nightclubs as cover for prostitution business. MPs were criticized by the public opinion for restraining freedom and causing damage to Bahraini economy. Thus, the Ministry of Culture and Information banned ultimately one-star and two-star hotels from distributing alcohol and hosting live entertainment. Later, they managed to reopen bars. MPs proposed turning Bahraini into a family destination. The Bahraini authorities later decided to promote Bahrain as luxury four-star and 5-star hotels for families to reduce the number of unwanted visitors (Karolak, 2012).

### Summary

Tourism is the fastest growing sector worldwide. Regardless of different perceptions about tourism in literature, many countries have adopted outward-oriented neoliberal development strategies. The study of tourism as a form of neoliberal capitalism has begun with Britton, claiming it to be an internationalized component of

Western capitalism. The latter found in tourism a potential mean to the inherent contradictions. Tourism is an outlet for excess capital assisting the system to sustain itself. Tourism provides neoliberal capitalism with fixes that transform human bodies into commodities of excitement and satisfaction. Tourism, inevitably, causes the reorientation of the indigenous economy to serve the needs of exogenous markets.

For Bahrain, tourism has been promoted as a source of economic diversification. Its direct contribution to GDP was 9.7% in 2017. It has a critical role in boosting economic growth; especially after economic decline during the last 20 years. The country has developed a tourism strategy that focused on niche initiatives to promote cultural heritage. However, the country's attractions are limited, and Bahrain has to address this issue in the context of neighboring competition.

The effect of neoliberal economic policies is undeniable. It has generated wealth but expanded an entertainment sector within tourism. During the British presence, prostitution was legalized and organized. Female prostitutes enjoyed control over their bodies and dominated the sector. They were able to get married, raised their children and buy lands because they were economically independent. A cost of a woman's choice to be a prostitute was not necessary to be loss of societal esteem. Others joined the sector in secret fearing family's sanctions. However, the neoliberal economy through its logic of marketization encourages gender-blind policies. Women particularly suffer from impoverishment. Poverty and unemployment push some Bahraini women to join the sex sector believing it is a source of easy money, while others are affected by the notion of consumerism promoted by neoliberalism. Gains prove to be little due to hierarchy of power perceiving women's bodies as a sexual tool. The promotion of luxurious lifestyle has tempted several women to look for possible high earnings methods. Although some women who work individually may preserve a

minimum level of body control, costs attached are high including loss of societal and self-esteem, family's sanction, and legal punishments. Neoliberal economic policies have pushed the country forward but more gender-sensitive policies should be developed. The first step is to acknowledge the size of this phenomenon. Any measure initiated by governments or parliament representatives would not pay off without availability of statistics and information. Entertainment will remain part of the tourism sector in Bahrain as long as neoliberalism exists.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Attending the concerns related to the impact of economic transformations on Gulf women by exploring their experiences is an important field that produces another facet of truth that has not been revealed. The impact of modernization on Gulf family's relations, values and structures was researched frequently, while impact of oil on Gulf societies and its peoples was exaggerated when focusing on women in the region with claims that oil brought women's liberation after decades of ignorance and negligence. By researching the economic roles of Gulf women in the pre-oil era, the dissertation is successful in challenging assumptions that have been adapted by different studies concerning Gulf women based on the bias of the writers or poor research. Addressing the variety of economic roles, which Gulf women had and practiced before oil discovery, assists in understanding the material developments of the society and their lives to facilitate the analysis of their current status. The direct involvement of Gulf women in the public sphere and the market has declined with oil discovery that restricted the appearance of women in the public sphere and encouraged dependence of men as the main breadwinners. While wives of pearl divers were breadwinners, upper-class women were merchants and investors, Bedouin women were involved in the commercial and political affairs, new generations of Gulf women are less fortunate. Although health and education have passed through drastic changes influencing the lives of young Gulf women, discrimination in terms of economic rights and employment opportunities persists.

On the other hand, no attention has been directed to the impact of neoliberalism on Gulf women. Existing body of researches focused on the negative impact of neoliberalism on the society's values and the region's economies based on findings of other scholars who were so critical of neoliberalism as an economic paradigm. The Gulf

societies lack the proper understanding of neoliberalism as a socio-economic paradigm that influences their lives and choices. To be described as liberal or neoliberal is an offense as the two terms have negative connotations. The Gulf societies' sole weapon to reject any idea has always been religion. Furthermore, claims that Gulf governments have paved the way towards neoliberalism have been rejected or criticized by several scholars. They lack the understanding that neoliberalism adapts to local contexts resulting in divergence between theory and practice. These scholars' conclusions completely denied the existing of neoliberalism in Arabian Gulf region, such as Gray (2011). This denial has prevented the development of a knowledge field that explores neoliberal manifestations in the region and how it influences people's lives. Although researching the impact of neoliberalism on women is still under-researching topic by feminists, a variety of resources can be located covering Western and Asian countries and investigated its impact on women's empowerment, reproduction responsibilities, gender inequality, and labor force participation in the formal and informal sectors. The absence of feminist movements in the Gulf region has widened the gap in such field of knowledge. The nationals of the Gulf region have accused feminists of violating Islamic traditions and principles based on misunderstanding of feminist historical development in the West. In addition, Gulf governments have banned the development of any independent feminist thinking the region. Although few Gulf female scholars name themselves feminists, they claim that they redefined and reshaped the Western feminist approach in accordance to Islamic teachings, to be named as Islamist feminists. Nevertheless, these Islamist feminists have been hesitant to address or research sensitive topics as neoliberalism and sexuality fearing the reaction of the governments or their societies.

The dissertation started with an attempt to differentiate between liberalism and

neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a revival of liberalism, but it is not identical. Mont Pelerin Society paved the way for a new era of economic history. It is based on three assumptions: the market is the arena of all commercial and social interactions, the state's role has been reshaped to be a forum protecting freedoms and social good is maximized by maximizing market's interactions, penetrating every aspects of every human's life. From a materialist feminism's perspective, the material conditions of the Qatari and Bahraini societies can be researched in terms of the economic transformations towards neoliberalization. The transition from a rentier state model to late-rentierism or post-rentierism has influenced the Gulf women's status, resulting in new gendered subjectivities. The neoliberal transition adapts to the local contexts of each society. A divergence from template is present. Each of the two countries has played a vital role in liberalizing their economies. To extend the reach of neoliberalism, they have focused on four fields: business, finance, tourism and private sector. A manifestation of this process is the development of national visions, which focus on the role of the market and the private sector. Qatar's late-rentier model is a shy paradigm towards neoliberalism. Its path is characterized by a reduction in tariffs to encourage investments and businesses and by a tourism sector based on the promotion of Qatar as a sport and events destination. However, the contribution of the hydrocarbon sector in its GDP is still high and privatization process is slow with cautious. Bahrain, on the other hand, has succeeded in reducing the contribution of hydrocarbon in its GDP. It has promoted itself as the regional financial hub and a leisure destination. Its private sector is one of the most active in the region, regardless of the restrictions.

By focusing on women's experiences, an understanding of the standpoint of a particular group of women destabilizes the dominant centric knowledge production. The economic transformations have influenced the private lives of Gulf women in

relation to motherhood, financial contributions, role in consumption, economic independence and low-paid jobs. The perspective of participants that their generation is better than their ancestors' is the same argument of some scholars' studies discussed earlier. They preferred to describe their generation as educated, working women. Although it is true that education provided Gulf women with required credentials to specialized according to the needs of the labor market, Gulf women were in the market selling, trading and consuming goods decades ago. Regardless of their acknowledgment of inequalities in terms of limited opportunities and payments, it has not prevented them from being in the labor market. The perspectives that participants had about their ancestors made the current conditions of working women an achievement embrace.

The image of a busy mother who is forced to sacrifice her mother-child time was discussed. A busy educated young woman who has to work as it is a source of social status and strength in case of Qatari participants, or to ensure the availability of all the family's needs in case of Bahraini participants, found alternatives such as depending on domestic workers to take over childcaring and household's responsibilities or another family-relatives to help her fulfill the duties of the double shift respectively. Differences in available means to overcome this dilemma is shaped by the material developments in every county. Decline in subsidy system and cuts in welfare policies pushed Bahraini women to believe that a job is a necessity, especially for those couples who have children, in comparison to Qatari participants who have the choice of when to join the labor market and are not overburdened by the life's expenses.

Furthermore, the material conditions of the society and the woman determine its role as a consumer and an organizer of consumption in her family. Expenses of a luxurious lifestyle and change in pattern of consumption are the factors that decide of the Qatari participants were willing to be financial contributors. The material conditions

of a woman being divorced, or a widow may push her to work and earn, otherwise, a man must always be the financial contributor. On the other hand, Bahraini participants believed that dual earners model is a must because of the expensive lifestyle that they should catch up with for the interest of their children. Participants of both samples believed that having a job and an income is a reflection of a good citizen model that their children look forward to.

Finally, women's employment does not subject women to the precarity of neoliberalism but also pushes them to the margin of gendered labor in the informal sector as sex work and domestic work. Garment factory-workers and sex entertainers are two identities founded within Bahraini women's experiences. The experiences of women interviewed revealed a knowledge that has not yet explored. Through its logic of marketization, some Bahraini women are suffering from impoverishment. With no educational attainments, they found themselves in factories, where working hours are long, and payment is low. Tourism, which has been promoted and supported by the two countries, is a neoliberal tool that reshape and redefine identities. A culture of consumption intertwining with traveling networks have made entertainment sector a choice for a group of Bahraini women, for which contradictions of societal esteem is experienced.

#### Research Limitations

I do not claim my research to be entirely generalizable to other Gulf women's experiences. The research assisted in understanding the experiences of a particular group of women in the context of Qatari and Bahraini economic transformations. Yet it provides some important insights for the study of women's experiences more broadly and illuminates some potential areas for further researches in a wider context. The particularity of the research cannot be ignored. The data is specific to groups of women

from particular countries. Women of the region experience these economic transformations differently. The research focused on neoliberalization in Qatar and Bahrain, yet neoliberalism has been present in all the other four countries. The impact on status is produced and constructed in distinctive ways because women have different experiences. Thus, a cross-regional study of neoliberal impact on the Gulf women expand the understanding of how its impact varies or is similar across different regional countries. Due to time limitation, the accelerated Gulf political crisis that has made traveling difficult and ethical issues with IRB approval affected the sample size, although saturation was a critical determinant during the process of conducting interviews. In addressing any of the research's questions, I do not seek to authoritatively or unequivocally answer them. The research contributes to a new field of knowledge about the ways in which neoliberalism influences Gulf women. I did not plan for follow-up interviews, which might allow me to extend analysis. In studying working women, there was a real limitation of capturing just few images of subjectivities, which might lead to static findings. The majority of female participants are employed in the government's sector, which created another representative issue. Thus, my research limitation calls for more research that consider a wider segment of working women in different sectors.

#### Future Research Recommendations

There were many possible avenues and trajectories the research could have developed. I acknowledge there could have been greater analysis of the perspectives of motherhood amongst youth women in relation to the social class. Many views expressed by participants illustrated their own background and job occupations. This area will be important to investigate in further research. Another important avenue of research would be to explore and compare the impact of part-time work in much greater

detail. How much of female employment experiences part-time work? What are the experiences of women choosing part-time in the Gulf? What does shape Gulf women's preference of part-time work? Comparative research will enhance the knowledge in this field of study. An avenue will be researching the impact of social networking on female employment and changing social roles. Addressing the experiences of three Gulf national factory-workers opens the door to further investigation and exploration. This topic may establish a new field of knowledge about the region. Although the topic of entertainment and tourism impact is under-researching, it will be interesting to address the issue of sex-work in the Gulf within a broader framework that requires intensive fieldwork visits and interviews, acknowledging its difficulty and sensitivity.

#### Practical Contributions

One of the practical contributions of this study is the detailed insight provided by the participants' experiences. The experiences of Arabian Gulf women should be linked to the planned policies and activities in the GCC countries. This implies that for effective implementation and evaluation of the economic policies, emphasis should be on the importance of understanding these experiences in relation to the socio-economic contexts of each Gulf country.

Another practical contribution is the framework of analysis: understanding the advanced Gulf women's identities. This study assists in understanding, based on a qualitative feminist methodology, how economic transformations contribute to the incorporation of Gulf women's subjectivities. With a focus on Qatar and Bahrain, the methodological framework can be used as a practical tool to explore the impact of economic transformations on other Gulf women, encouraging similar studies in other Arabian Gulf countries.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Questions for Individual Interviews

#### أسئلة للمقابلات الفردية

#### General Information Questions:

##### أسئلة تعريفية:

- ما هو الاسم؟  
- What is your name?
- ما هو عمرك؟  
- How old are you?
- هل أنت متزوجة/مطلقة/عازبة؟  
- Are you married/divorced/single?
- هل تعملين؟ متقاعدة؟ أو تفكرين بالعمل حالياً؟  
- Do you work/retired or looking for a job?
- هل لديك أطفال؟  
- Do you have children?

#### General Questions:

##### أسئلة عامة:

- كيف اختلف المنظور للمرأة الخليجية في سوق العمل؟  
- *What has changed in the perspective concerning women work?*

#### Follow-up question:

ما هي التغييرات التي طرأت على عمل المرأة الخليجية خلال السنين؟  
*What are the changes in woman employment throughout the years?*

- هل يختلف زمنك عن زمن والدتك؟ كيف؟ اشرحي الفروق.  
- *Is your generation different from you mother's? How? Mention differences?*

#### Follow-up question:

كيف أثر الاقتصاد على أسرتك؟ (السلبى والإيجابى)  
*How has the economy influenced your family (positives and negatives)?*

- كيف يشجع الاقتصاد عمل المرأة حالياً؟  
- *How does economy encourage female labor?*

#### Follow-up questions:

كيف يلعب الانفتاح الاقتصادي دوراً في التغيير الاجتماعي؟  
*How does economic openness contribute to social change?*  
كيف غير الاقتصاد مفاهيم الثقافة الاستهلاكية في المجتمع الخليجي والقطري؟  
*How has economy changed consumption in Gulf society?*

#### Questions about Economy and Woman:

##### أسئلة تتعلق بالاقتصاد والمرأة:

- هل يساوي الاقتصاد الحالي بين الرجل والمرأة؟  
- *does the economy treat the man and women equally?*

#### Follow-up question:

هل حققت المرأة الخليجية نصف ما حققة الرجل اقتصادياً؟ لماذا؟  
*Has the Gulf woman achieved half of what the man achieved?*

- ماذا عن المساواة في الفرص؟ التوظيف؟ الحقوق الاقتصادية بين المرأة والرجل الخليجي؟
- *Do they enjoy equal employment opportunities and economic rights?*
- هل عمل المرأة أم الرجل أهم كمورد رزق للأسرة؟
- *Who is the main financial contributor, man or woman?*
- هل تعتقد أن الأمومة ما زالت هي الوظيفة الأولى للمرأة في المجتمع الخليجي؟
- *does motherhood remain the main women duty?*
- هل يتساوى الرجل الخليجي والمرأة الخليجية في دور الحضانه ورعاية الأبناء؟
- *are men and women equal in terms of childcare?*
- هل باتت المرأة الخليجية تضحي برعاية أطفالها مقابل عملها؟
- *Would you sacrifice taking care of your kids in favor of your job?*

Follow-up question:

هل تفضل المرأة العمل لساعات طويلة؟

*Does the woman prefer to work long hours?*

## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN INTERVIEWS

### استمارة الموافقة: المقابلات (Interviews)

#### Purpose

You are invited to participate in an interview on ‘**The Impact of Economic Transformations on the Development of the Status of Gulf Women**’. This is a research project being conducted by Fatema Ali, a student at Gulf Studies Program, Qatar University and under the supervision of Dr. Mazhar Ahmad Al-Zoubi. It should take approximately (30 minutes) to be complete.

#### الهدف

تجري الباحثة فاطمة علي، طالبة الدكتوراة بقسم دراسات الخليج، دراسة بإشراف الدكتور مظهر أحمد الزعبي، وأنت مدعو للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة. إن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو التحقيق في أثر التحولات الاقتصادية على المرأة الخليجية وتحليل الدور الذي يلعبه في حياتهن الأسرية، والمجتمعية، والاقتصادية.

#### المشاركة

مشاركتك طوعية تماماً، ويمكنك الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة في أي وقت دون عقوبة.

#### **PARTICIPATION**

***Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may withdraw with no cost.***

| <i>Participants</i>                           | <i>المشاركون</i>                      |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Requirements:</i>                          | المتطلبات:                            |
| Sex: Gulf woman                               | الجنس: أنثى خليجية                    |
| Age: 18 years and above                       | العمر: 18 سنة فما فوق                 |
| Residence: Qatar/Bahrain                      | الإقامة: قطر/البحرين                  |
| Criteria: Working in public or private sector | الشروط: تعمل في القطاع العام أو الخاص |

## الإجراءات

إذا كنت تشارك في هذه الدراسة، فسوف يتم مقابلتك شخصياً وجهاً لوجه أو هاتفياً أو بالطريقة الأنسب لك. سيكون الباحث متواجداً ليسأل الأسئلة ويسهل المناقشة، وليكتب الأفكار المطروحة. يقدر الوقت بحوالي (نصف ساعة – 30 دقيقة) لكل فرد. إذا تطوعت للمشاركة في المقابلات، فسيتم طرح عدد من الأسئلة التي تتعلق بتحليل أثر التحولات الاقتصادية على المرأة الخليجية.

## PROCEDURES

If you are participating in the study, you will be interviewed face-to-face, by phone or by any way you prefer. The researcher will be available to ask questions, facilitate the discussion and write the ideas. The interview should take approximately 30 minutes. If you volunteer to participate in the interview, you will be asked questions about the impact of economic transformations on Gulf women.

## الفوائد

### فوائد المشاركين

لن تحصل على عائد مادي مباشر لمشاركتك في هذه الدراسة البحثية.

### فوائد المجتمع

إجاباتك ستساعدنا على التعرف وجمع المزيد من المعلومات حول أثر الاقتصاد الوطني على المرأة، والذي يتضمن طرح أفكار علمية جديدة وتحليل المعطيات.

## BENEFITS

### For Participants

You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study.

### For Society

Your answers will help us to know and collect more new information about the impact of national economy on Bahraini women.

## *المخاطر والمضايقات*

المقابلة ليست أكثر من محادثة عادية لا مخاطر لها. إذا كان هناك شيء يسبب عدم الراحة، يمكنك الانسحاب من المقابلة في أي وقت دون عقوبة.

سيطلب من الجميع عدم الكشف عن أي معلومات في سياق المقابلة، ومن المهم أن تتعاون لإبقاء جميع المعلومات خاصة وسريّة.

## **RISKS**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study. If you feel uncomfortable, you may withdraw any time with no penalty.

Everyone is required to reveal no information and it is important to keep all information private and confidential.

## *التعويض والتكاليف والسداد*

التعويض للمشاركين: لن يتم الدفع على مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة.

التكاليف: لا توجد أي تكلفة نتيجة المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

السداد: لن يتم تعويضك عن أي نفقات مثل أماكن وقوف السيارات ووسائل النقل.

## **COMPENSATIONS AND COSTS**

Participation Compensation: You will not receive any payment before/after participation.

Costs: There are no costs.

## *الانسحاب من الدراسة والنتائج المترتبة*

يمكنك الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت، وفي حال حدوث ذلك يترتب عليك إخبار الباحث على الفور. ويجوز للباحث إنهاء مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة إن كنت لا تتبع التعليمات أو لا تلتزم بالمواعيد المحددة مسبقاً.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY**

You may withdraw any time from the study. If it is the case, you should inform the researcher. The researcher can terminate your participation if you do not adheres to

guidelines or scheduled appointments.

### سرية المعلومات وهوية المشاركين

سيتم تحليل البيانات من قبل الباحث نفسه. لن يتم ربط هوية أي مشارك بأي معلومات. جميع المعلومات التي تم الحصول عليها سوف تبقى سرية وسيتم تخزينها في ملف إلكتروني برقم سري. وكما سيتم تقديم نتائج هذه الدراسة خلال عرض البحث النهائي أمام اللجنة المختصة أو في المنشورات العلمية. قد سيتم تسجيل النقاش على شريط خاص لسهولة جمع المعلومات وتحليلها لاحقاً.

### Confidentiality and Privacy

The data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. The interview does not collect identifying information such as your name. Therefore, your responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. The results of the study will be presented in front of the committee and/or used for publication in the future.

However, no names or identifying information would be included in any publications or presentations based on these data, and your responses to this interview will remain confidential.

ملاحظة: إذا كنت تشعر بأنه لم يتم معاملتك وفقاً للبنود السابقة، أو أن حقوقك كمشارك في الدراسة البحثية تم انتهاكها خلال إكمال هذه الدراسة، أو في حال كان لديك أي أسئلة أو مخاوف أو شكاوى، يرجى الاتصال بلجان المراجعة المؤسسية عبر البريد الإلكتروني [QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa](mailto:QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa)، هاتف: (+974) 4403-5307.

NOTE: If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or that your rights as a participant in research have not been honored during the course of this project, or you have any questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the supervisor, you may contact Qatar University's Institutional Review Board through [QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa](mailto:QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa), Tel: (+974) 4403-5307.

بتوقيع نموذج الموافقة، فإنك تؤكد قراءتك واستيعابك للمعلومات الواردة أعلاه، وتوافق على المشاركة الطوعية.

By signing the consent form, you hereby acknowledge reading and understanding the information and voluntarily agree to participate.

.....:Signature/التوقيع المشاركة

.....:Date/التاريخ

## APPENDIX C: BRITISH DEGREE

Translation:

Issue No. 50, 1355

Prostitutes

1. All immodest prostitutes are ordered to live in prostitution places, and they are not allowed to stay in honorable places in Manama and Muharraq.
2. The places assigned to the immodest prostitutes is Al-Qubla in Manama and Grandol in Muharraq.
3. Owners of honorable places are responsible in the court [of law] if they allow immodest prostitutes or gamblers.
4. Within one month, if any immodest prostitute is found staying in an honorable place and has not moved to the prostitution district, will be prosecuted in court.
5. Any foreign prostitute caught violating these orders will be deported from Bahrain.

27 Dhul Qa'da 1355

8 February 1937

Bahraini Government Advisor

