

**A Critical Discourse Analysis of Social Change in Women-
related Posts on Saudi English-Language Blogs Posted between
2009 and 2012**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has been submitted for the PhD degree from the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University, UK. I also declare that it has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the discourse on social change in women-related posts on Saudi English-Language blogs written between 2009 and 2012. These posts discuss a number of reformative measures that took place during that period in order to allow for greater women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia. The thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter One introduces briefly the thesis while Chapter Two offers a relevant literature review relating to critical discourse analysis, feminism, social change and online/digital discourse. This is conducted with special focus on the socio-cognitive approach as the main framework adopted in the analysis and its emphasis on cognitive context models and their role in the change/ status quo struggle. Chapter Three lays the theoretical foundation upon which this thesis is based as well as the methodology it adopts in data selection, collection and analysis. For data analysis, a sample of forty posts has been collected on five different topics: women in politics, women and the driving ban, women in non-traditional work environments, women and sports, and gender segregation. Using a three-levelled analysis, the posts at hand have been examined from textual, intertextual and socio-cognitive perspectives. The textual level consists of four linguistic parameters: social actor representation, process type analysis, evaluation and metaphor. The intertextual levels target intertextuality and interdiscursivity while the socio-cognitive level ties in all these descriptive findings to offer interpretations and insight into relevant mental representations. In light of this, Chapters Four to Eight examine the posts thematically and based on the five topics identified earlier. Finally, Chapter Nine offers conclusive cumulative evidence and a discussion of the overall findings. The findings show a clash between the use of grammar and lexis, with social actor representation and process types often suggesting different mental representations from those conveyed through evaluation and metaphor. Women are, to a large extent, represented as lacking in agency and power despite the fact that their relatively restrictive status quo is evaluated as negative and change is conceptualised as positively evaluated metaphorical movement and liberation. In fact, this detailed analysis reveals that representing the clash between

supporters of change and their opponents appears to be the central focus, even at the expense of women and their representation in discourse.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This is the first of nine chapters included in this thesis. Being brief and concise, this chapter serves to introduce the topic under examination by highlighting the research problem. First, the overarching research questions are identified as they guide the remainder of this thesis. Then, a discussion of the importance of the research at hand is offered in light of what makes it of academic interest. A brief examination of the social background of the Saudi context is also introduced. Last, this chapter concludes with an outline of all the chapters included and a brief explanation of what to expect in each one.

1.1. Research problem and research questions

The main focus of this research is exploring the gender-related representations expressed in some of the most famous Saudi English-language blogs written between 2009 and 2012. Posted by Saudi bloggers, the posts examined in the thesis discuss some of the major changes requested or implemented in Saudi Arabia during that period to allow for greater empowerment of women in the country. Proposing and introducing change has been resisted on a number of levels within the Saudi community. Due to the controversial nature of such changes, the discussion as represented in these posts exhibited social change and the diverse members involved in such controversy from different perspectives. As will be highlighted in Chapter Three (section 3.2.1), attempting to analyse such representations must take into consideration the multiplicity of levels involved in discourse. Hence, and in addition to the textual and linguistic level of discourse, it must also examine the intertextual, interpersonal and socio-cognitive ones. The following overarching research questions pin down such multiplicity, with each research question targeting a particular level.

1. What are the top topics requiring social change(s) in women-related posts in Saudi English-language blogs?
2. Who are the main social actors and how are they linguistically represented? How does this representation tie in with the social change(s) requested?

3. What links to other texts/discourses/persons are made in these posts and how do these links tie in with the social change(s) requested?
4. Which changing social factors and cognitive models underlie these representations and connections in the blogs under study?
5. What is the potential of the examined discourse to achieve the desired social change?

1.2. Importance of the research

This research has been motivated by a number of reasons, some of which stem from the topic itself while others are more related to the surrounding context under examination. The first motivation derives from the widespread stereotypes and misrepresentations of Saudi women and women's status in Saudi Arabia. Al Hejin (2012) examined the representations of Muslim women by both the BBC and Arab News, an English-language Saudi newspaper, and among such representations, he shed light specifically on the representation of Saudi women. The study shows that those portrayals are mainly negative representations, such as passivity and powerlessness. These misconstructions are present not only in Western but also in Saudi media. One reason for this may be the fact that news feeds for local media sometimes come from Western agencies and lack proper editing or careful attention to detail. Bearing in mind the fact that the posts under examination are produced originally by Saudi bloggers, it would be interesting to see if such misrepresentations still persist.

In addition to this, the target group under study is Saudi women. According to Al Hejin, this particular group seems to have attracted a lot of attention in the media, especially after 9/11, for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appears to be one of the most conservative regions in the world, even among Middle Eastern or Arab states. Since its early days, the Kingdom has been, and continues to be, strongly affiliated with the religious system of Islam (Pharaon, 2004). However, such affiliation, along with its understanding of Islam, has been affected by the rather

traditional and social values of the region. This is even more evident in the case of gender segregation in Saudi Arabia, which is perhaps one of the strictest forms practised in the world. Some Saudis travelling across the world encounter, and are occasionally challenged by, mixed-gender environments that defy the norms they are used to in their home country (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2013). All of this combines with the wealth of the country as the main international oil exporter to situate it on the economic and political map of the world. That this country is able to interact with the world and yet maintain its rather peculiar individuality makes it a target for negative stereotypes. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore relevant topics within the Saudi context and how women's empowerment is still embedded there. This need is also heightened by the fact that the object of study is almost completely absent in critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) literature, whether the analysis is focused on international or Saudi media. Lacroix (2011:1), for instance, states that such areas are 'terra incognita' and should be a subject of attention.

Another thing that sets this research apart from other relevant work is that it does not merely examine the discursive construction of Saudi women; rather it examines how social change is sought to improve their status. This involves examining the representations of women along with the representations of other members of society. Furthermore, this research does not examine calls for reform or change in traditional mainstream media. Instead, it examines a relatively small group of bloggers who are considered to belong to a more open and progressive part of Saudi society. As a result, this group tends to adopt a more empowering stance on women and women's issues in Saudi Arabia, thus differentiating themselves from more religious and traditional conservative sectors.

Due to such selection in the nature of the sample to be examined, this study examines a discourse claiming to be empowering of women and resistant to their status quo. This could be linked to the discussion to be made in section (2.4) of Chapter Two concerning positive discourse analysis (Martin, 2004). Combining a positive motive in this thesis within the critical drive motivating most CDAs, the content of this study offers an

examination of discourse claiming to resist unjust status quo and to defend the empowerment of women. This differs from other analyses of discourse that criticise injustice and discrimination. Such a perspective is to a large extent lacking in CDA, which often examines how certain groups are represented negatively in different discourses yet rarely targets what a more just and undiscriminating discourse might look like. As a whole, these diverse motivations intensify the importance of the research. With distinct features inherent in the discourse under investigation or in the approach to data analysis, this research is worthy of academic interest and investigation.

1.3. Background of Saudi Context

1.3.1. A brief history of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia was founded first in 1744, in particular through *itifiaq Addir'ya*, a pact between Mohammed bin Saud and Mohammed bin Abdul Wahhab. *Itifaq addir'ya* was an affiliation between a political leader attempting to control and conquer the troubled region and a preacher who was attempting to revive the Islamic concept of religious *da'wa*, (i.e. call) (Lacroix, 2011). Yet, this very strong affiliation between religious and political powers still managed to create a distinction between these political and religious authorities. When bin Saud established the first Saudi state, he is acknowledged in history books as *imam*, but later in modern day Saudi, King Abdul Aziz and his family resorted to royal titles like *malik* (i.e. king) and *amir* (i.e. prince), which clearly signifies political authority first and foremost. They have given up the title *sheikh*, which became a marker of religious authority (ibid:8). Because these two powers were acknowledged later as two separate fields working in collaboration, it is possible to see areas of struggle and disagreement even within this affiliation, which is the subject of investigation in the topics at hand.

A fundamental ideological force in shaping the history of the current Saudi state, is *sahwa* (Al Khedir, 2010), which flourished in the 1980s and the 1990s. Prior to *sahwa*, nationalism and pan-Arab unity were popular. Later, *sahwa* emerged as an instance of *mobilization* phenomena in which crowds are gathered and moved by leaders who are

symbolising these movements (Al Ghathami, 2015: 14). Sahwa can be defined as a religious *awakening* movement, which strongly dominated the ideological sphere at that time. It revealed a solid relationship with political power, and its supporters were at ‘a remarkable harmony’ with the political authority in the country (Al Samadani, 2013: 12). This legitimised sahwa as an official doctrine during that period. But it was also paralleled by the country’s attempt to modernise the young Saudi state as a progressive country. This resulted in the birth of ‘intelligentsia’ in Saudi Arabia; whose intellectuals were trained to be a cultural parallel to the religious clerics (Lacroix, 2011: 15).

The problem, however, is that sahwa was sometimes more preoccupied with attacking its opponents than spreading its cause, which is consistent with the suspicious and sceptical aspect of the sahwa supporter (Al Ghathami, 2015). Therefore, attempts to modernise other Muslim countries in the region were often viewed and translated within the Saudi context as attempts to secularise these nations (Alrebh & Ten Eyck, 2014). It must be kept in mind that secularism and westernization are loaded terms with many negative connotations in the Muslim world (Ramadan, 2012). On the other hand, the term *Islamic* in presenting sahwa is quite problematic too (Hamodi, 2015). Does presenting itself as Islamic negate the Islamic origin of different movements from the same context? The problem within sahwa discourse is that it restricted itself to one single interpretation of Islamic teachings and continued to exclude others. However, accepting diversity of interpretations to certain Islamic issues, in particular those concerning mundane matters like the topic under examination, has been always welcome by Islam. Sahwa presented itself at these days as immune to criticism or even negotiation. But such cultural immunity became under attack as its scholars were scrutinised and criticised openly on the digital sphere; and a number of sahwa symbols like Al Ouda and Al Hudaif started to revise its discourse (Al Ghathami, 2016).

Sahwa was employing the Islamic rule of *saad al thara’i* to an extreme level in accordance with its sceptical stance to the point that women, in particular, were deprived of most of their rights. *Saad al thara’i* refers to the process by which an action, not originally prohibited in Islam, is prohibited in fear that it may lead to sins. But prior to

highlighting the relevant implications of *sahwa* on women, it is worth pointing out that this thesis uses the term *women's empowerment* rather than *women's rights* in most of the chapters. The first reason for this is that Islam has established women as equal to men and granted them far more rights than approved by *sahwa*. Using *women's rights*, this thesis runs the risk of misunderstanding the essence of Islamic faith because these rights are already there. The problem however, lies in the cultural practice of the region, which often distorts this fact. The second reason stems from an understanding of the locality of the Saudi culture and the Middle Eastern one in general. Examining discursive context in social media, blogging and micro blogging, it seems that the term *women's rights* has some negative connotations. This is evident mostly in Twitter in which the terms *hoqoqi* and *hoqoqia* (i.e. terms used to refer to a male and a female advocate of women's rights respectively) are actually used in a degrading sense. These terms are adjectives derived from the word *hoqoq* in Arabic (i.e. rights) and are used commonly, especially in social media. In this way, *hoqoqi/hoqoqia* can be linked to other problematic terms such as secularism or westernization. As a result, *women's empowerment* is used instead since it is less socially challenging and in fact more consistent with what these calls for change are attempting to do. The following section will examine some of the calls in light of the previous discussion.

1.3.2. Recent attempts to increase women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia

In the years that followed the *sahwa*, its strong grip over the social and cultural scene started to loosen. This was not only at the level of ordinary people but even at governmental level. At the beginning of the new millennium and when the late King Abdullah ascended to the throne (2005-2015), some changes were introduced to promote more women's empowerment with regards to some of the controversial topics examined in this thesis.

Women and politics:

Prior to King Abdullah's reign, the presence of women on the political scene in Saudi Arabia was extremely rare. Saudi Arabia never had a female minister or a woman in any equivalent leading position. The *Shoura* council, a consultative assembly functioning as

the highest advisory body in Saudi Arabia, never had any female delegates in its 150 king-appointed members. In September 2011, King Abdullah declared that women could join the Shoura Council and he issued another royal decree stating that women would be given the right to vote and run for municipal elections. These decrees spurred a stormy controversy in Saudi Arabia as many, mainly on the conservative side, saw the decrees as violating many cultural and religious norms preventing women from being appointed in leading positions.

Women and driving:

Women and driving is definitely the most discussed and disputed topic nationally and internationally when it comes to women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia. The fact that women are not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia has gained a lot of attention, to the point that it has become symbolic of women's struggle in the country. The problem is that it took too much attention at the expense of other topics that might be more crucial. Almahmoud (2015) narrates the history of the driving ban. Up until the 1990s, the ban on women driving was unofficial and women in rural areas have always driven as they ran their errands, and they continue to do so. The problem escalated in 1990 as a group of women arranged a driving protest, rallying the streets of Riyadh. This was during the second Gulf War after Saddam Husain's invasion of Kuwait – a point that was taken by *sahwa* to represent these calls as anti-patriotic and as a conspiracy at one of the hardest times nationally. Consequently, the driving ban became official and the relevant regulations became stricter.

About two decades later, a woman activist posted a YouTube video of herself driving in Saudi Arabia, which escalated the issue again and motivated the blog posts under examination. In 2011, the *Women2drive* campaign was launched and promoted extensively in the social media in support of lifting the ban on women driving. These attempts have successfully gained international media attention, which intensified the symbolic nature of this topic. Another attempt followed two years later but also failed (ibid.). In fact, up to the time of submitting this thesis (June 2017), the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia still exists; thus, making it the only topic under examination that

is still unchanged. Compared to other topics in which the Saudi government has issued new policies to empower women despite the opposition on the part of most conservatives, the driving ban continues, affecting the lives of millions of Saudi women and their families.

Women in unconventional work environments:

In the past, the vast majority of working women were working in either education or in healthcare professions. Due to the limited number of available jobs in these domains and in accordance with its women's empowerment plans, the Saudi government decided to introduce new policies to encourage more women to start working in unconventional work environments such as sales and business administration. In order to implement these policies, the Saudi Ministry of Labor has issued a number of regulations since 2011 and ignored all the opposition on the part of conservatives. These regulations were at three stages to insure the gradualness of women's inclusion in unconventional work environments. They also addressed a number of issues to ensure their suitability to women's lives such as providing enough hassle-free breastfeeding hours and sufficient maternity leave. Opposition to these inclusions has been always based on an objection to gender mixing in these environments.

Women in sports:

This is another topic under examination in this thesis in relation to attempts to increase women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia. The only difference between it and other topics is that it involves more reaction on an international level. In other words, while the calls for change resulted initially with regards to the previously discussed topics from national forces within the country, one of the empowering changes in relation to women and sports in Saudi Arabia have been brought about as a result of pressure from the International Olympic Committee (henceforth IOC).

In 2012, the issue gained international attention as the IOC threatened to ban Saudi Arabia from participating in the 2012 London Olympic Games, in an attempt to promote gender equality in all the delegations. In the summer of 2012, the Saudi Embassy in London announced that it would be sending two female athletes in its Olympic delegation

for the first time. Despite being hailed and acknowledged internationally for their participation in the Olympics in spite of their poor and insufficient training, these two athletes were attacked severely by the opponents of their inclusion in the delegation. Accusations of moral decay and racist slurs were thrown at these two young women since their opponents viewed them as violating Islamic and local traditions.

Gender segregation:

This topic is introduced and examined in this thesis as an inclusive topic including all the four aforementioned topics. Gender segregation was the practice of many public life aspects in Saudi Arabia when these posts were written. This is applied in education in which there are all female schools and all male schools. It is also applied in governmental offices and ministries in which men and women often work in separate buildings or even within the same buildings but with separated offices or floors. However, other public places such as hospitals and shopping malls are more complicated. In the case of hospitals, the existence of all female hospitals or dispensaries is extremely rare. Due to the lack of sufficient female medical staff, gender mixing has been always the case; and it inevitably continues to be so even with the increase in the numbers of female physicians and healthcare staff. Women involved in gender-mixed situations have been consistently subject to criticism on the part of conservatives, who view them as lacking in morality and honour. Nowadays, this has improved to a large degree but it still exists.

1.4. Outline of the thesis

The last section of Chapter One summarises the outline of the thesis and offers a brief representation of the content of each chapter. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, Chapter One serves to introduce the topic of this thesis. It offers an examination of the research problem along with the overarching research question. It also establishes the gap in the existing research while highlighting its academic significance as well as contextualisation of relevant social background. Chapter Two presents a detailed literature review of relevant research. This review is conducted in relation to understanding the terms ‘discourse’, ‘cognition’ and ‘culture’ within socio-cognitive approaches. It also examines the critical and positive aspects of CDA. The remainder of

Chapter Two pays attention to the placement of the analysis at hand within feminism, social change and digital/online discourses. Chapter Three consists of two major sections examining the theoretical basis for this thesis along with the methodology that underlies it. These are combined in one chapter to allow for a dual and simultaneous examination of theory and methodology to take place. By understanding the ideological foundation motivating the research, the reader is able to foresee the justifications behind the adopted methodology. The methods of data selection, collection and analysis are introduced and the multi-level nature of the analysis is explained in detail.

Chapters Four to Eight present data analysis in reference to the five major topics identified in Chapter Three. The decision has been made to divide the analysis chapters thematically as it helps to understand the varying social factors relating to each topic. Chapter Nine links the findings of all the analysis chapters as it looks for cumulative evidence building up across different topics. This is presented in light of the aforementioned overarching research questions. An overall conclusion is offered while identifying recurring patterns and inconsistencies. In light of this identification, a discussion is offered while linking the evidence to ideological and cultural contexts. The chapter concludes by highlighting the limitations of the current study as well as providing suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews some relevant literature in relation to the current study. Due to the complexity of the phenomenon involved here, the following review will be divided into seven major sections, each of which reviews a particular aspect relevant to the topic of discourses and blogs in relation to Saudi women and social change. The first section investigates the term *discourse* along with its various properties. Then, a key examination of the critical aspect of this analysis is introduced, as suggested by different approaches. Special attention is given to the socio-cognitive approach since it is the basis of the theoretical framework for the current research. This is also assisted by defining the relevant terms, *cognition* and *culture*, and placing them within the socio-cognitive approach. In addition to this, a special section is devoted to examining the positive stance taken by this study while simultaneously maintaining its critical impetus. Later, this take on critical discourse analysis (CDA) is linked to feminism, given the focus on gender-related topics in the blogs under examination. By the same token, this stance is also linked to social change and how it can be reflected in, or brought about by, discourse. The chapter concludes with a brief examination of some relevant literature on online/internet discourses.

2.1. What is *discourse*?

2.1.1. Diverse views of discourse

The starting point for this chapter is an examination of the term *discourse* and how it is used in most critical discourse analysis studies. As early as the 1970s, the work of Foucault (1972), who was primarily occupied with a transition from traditional forms of social organisation to modern ones, marked a change in focus at that time (Jones, Bradbury, & LeBoutillier, 2011). Being both influential and controversial, Foucault's work examined a number of key terms that are relevant to the study at hand, including discourse, power, knowledge and culture. A *discourse* is a set of statements that are systematically organised (Foucault, 1972). In that sense, these statements have the potential to express both the meanings and values of a certain institution (O'Halloran, 2003). He further states that such a view of discourses dictates what can or cannot be said

or done with regard to that particular institution. For instance, in this view of discourse, the conservative discourse that is referenced in the blogs in this study may state that women do not have the right to run for political office or to play sports competitively. Such a Foucauldian perspective of discourse establishes language as a system that can exist independently of the users or learners of it; hence, it links to structuralism and structural influences taking place beyond the actor (Jones et al., 2011).

However, Foucault's work was only the beginning as several definitions of discourse have been proposed across various disciplines. A recurring problem facing any discourse analyst is the fact that the term discourse is actually used in different senses at the same time; this is mainly due to the lack of other terms, thus making such duality in usage unavoidable (Bloor & Bloor, 2013). For instance, O'Halloran (2003) states that the term discourse is used to refer to at least two different phenomena simultaneously. The first of these refers to the coherent understanding the reader has of a given text and the way in which there is interplay between the values of this reader on the one hand and the coherence produced from such a reading on the other. Being linked to a particular reading context, this interpretation is insufficient to understand the term discourse properly. Instead, a more general interpretation of discourse is found in the second phenomenon examined by O'Halloran (2003), which draws on the Foucauldian notion of discourse. In this view, discourse is used to refer to how knowledge is organised in a given institution. This view goes further to examine the socio-cultural practices involved by incorporating into the same phenomenon how different actors talk about and act upon such knowledge in these institutions. The second view actually incorporates the first one, as it subsumes but goes beyond the limits of a particular reading practice. In addition, the second view of discourse can be better linked to CDA, including the research at hand. As will be examined later in Chapter Three, O'Halloran's second view of discourse corresponds to the three levels of analysis needed in most CDA studies, as it includes, in addition to textual context, discursive and socio-cognitive contexts.

Does this mean that if the latter view is adopted, one might be able to arrive at a comprehensive definition of discourse that can be used across disciplines? Clearly, the

answer to this question cannot be yes, given that discourse is, by default, ‘a multidimensional social phenomenon’ (van Dijk, 2009: 67), which means that it involves a wide range of notions that need to be defined differently across disciplines. Another outcome of this multidimensionality, and reciprocally another reason for it, is the various properties of discourse that are often highlighted in the literature, e.g. in Bloor & Bloor (2013), O’Halloran (2003), Wodak & Meyer (2009) and van Dijk (2011). The latter, for instance, highlights ten major properties of discourse that have been pointed out repeatedly over decades of relevant interdisciplinary research. While such properties may be interrelated, only some of them will be examined and commented on here as they have direct or indirect relevance to the research to hand.

2.1.2. Properties of discourse

The first major property of discourse is that it is, fundamentally, a form of social interaction between humans, and this property is mainly examined through pragmatic and conversation analysis (van Dijk, 2011). While that is not the case here, this property establishes the reciprocal and interactive aspects of discourse, meaning that a certain degree of negotiation is needed in discourse. This relates to the discursive and interpersonal context of discourse, in which a number of humans interact to create discourse. What is missing in this property though is an examination of the cognitive order that it underpins and is influenced by, such as social order. As a result, this property is not enough to pinpoint what is meant by discourse in relation to the current study. But there is another property of discourse that bridges those gaps. Therefore, van Dijk (2011) presents another feature of discourse and explains it as the communication of beliefs among humans. By looking at discourse from this perspective, the cognitive nature of discourse is highlighted, since it enables us to explore further the knowledge expressed by others, thus linking this property to the Foucauldian notion of discourse. Another relevant aspect of this property is that it highlights how these sets of knowledge are passed from one generation to another and how they are acquired and updated accordingly (van Dijk, 2011).

The last property is quite relevant to the current study for two reasons. The first is that the transmission of such knowledge and practices usually produces what is generally referred to as culture, which often comprises shared and learned patterns of behaviour that characterise a particular group (Keating & Duranti, 2011). These patterns, in turn, are directly linked to the notion of socially shared mental representations, as will be examined in more detail in Chapter Three. The second reason relates to the dynamic aspect of knowledge transmission, thus exposing it to change and resistance, which also links to the negotiation of certain individual mental representations that contrast with socially shared ones. Here, this property establishes discourse as communication that could be helpful in promoting social change since the blog posts being examined can be characterised as the embodiment of the discursive communication taking place within this particular group. Also, by establishing the crucial interrelation between discourse and culture, discourse needs to be culturally situated. As such, it means that discourse varies across different cultures, even contexts.

As a result, a third feature of discourse is highlighted by van Dijk (2011), who explicitly presents discourse as a contextually situated phenomenon. By highlighting this property, the previous properties of communication and interaction are brought to the table, since one cannot envisage or expect these phenomena to occur independently and without context. Instead, context is crucial in order to enable discourse to be produced, comprehended and reproduced. Gee (2005: 1) emphasises this property of discourse, as he views it as ‘a language recruited “on site”’ to enable certain social activities, as well as identities, to form and take place. This contextual situatedness is of key relevance to the study to hand; for instance, many of the textual parameters used in the methodology and data analysis chapters, such as metaphor and evaluation, are deeply rooted in the discursive and socio-cognitive contexts surrounding discourse. Hence, by establishing contextual situatedness as a major property of discourse, variation across cultures is better understood. Contextual situatedness is also essential for understanding sub-groups’ variation within the same culture and how these variations are likely to motivate ideological struggle, as will be examined in more detail in Chapter Three.

The last property of discourse to be examined here is what van Dijk (2011) describes as power and domination. As will be investigated later in this chapter, this property is one of the most fundamental, and perhaps comprehensive, notions in CDA research. This is mainly because this property intensifies various aspects of the social order within a given group. Within any social order, certain groups or sub-groups have relatively more access to power than others, especially if power is distributed differently through that social order in relation to class, gender, race or the like. Due to this unbalanced and unequal power distribution, domination is very likely to occur; and as will be examined later, this is expected to result in a power struggle. However, it should be noted that viewing discourse as power, for instance, does not isolate it from, or make it incompatible with, other properties. On the contrary, the focus on power and domination within the social order is strongly linked to the previous features. Power, for example, does not occur in a vacuum; rather, it too needs to be contextually situated. In other words, these properties work in combination, but what discourse analysts generally do is focus on one or more properties simultaneously, depending on which aspects of discourse they wish to examine. As stated above, more properties are pointed out in the relevant literature but these four are selected as they suit this study.

2.1.3. Definition(s) of discourse

It is clear that, after this examination, it is challenging to arrive at a comprehensive definition of discourse that can be used across disciplines. Nevertheless, some definitions will be presented and examined here as they have gained some popularity and acceptance among analysts; Wodak & Meyer (2009: 5), for instance, cite the following definition as being ‘very popular’ among researchers in CDA:

CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s), which frame it:

The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in

the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social class, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position things. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258)

On examining this definition closely, its popularity among CDA researchers can be justified. To elaborate, all the major properties of discourse examined earlier are addressed in this excerpt. Clearly, discourse in Fairclough and Wodak's definition is established as both social interaction and communication. It is also presented as necessarily being in a direct dialectical relationship with the surrounding situations and institutions, thus highlighting the contextual situatedness of discourse. In addition, this definition grasps the involvement of power and power distribution often targeted by many analysts in CDA. The reciprocal relationship between discourse and social context is also highlighted, thus positing negotiation as a major property of discourse and its role in sustaining, reproducing or even transforming the social status quo. The only problem, however, is that this definition, as it stands, does not highlight the cognitive aspect of discourse and its role in relation to the social status quo. Instead, it just presents discourse as constituting and being constituted by objects of knowledge, which are first and foremost cognitive constructs. Therefore, the following definition, from van Leeuwen & Kress (2011: 113), is proposed as an alternative to the previous one because it also establishes discourses as cognitive constructs:

We would define 'discourses' (note the plural) as 'socially constructed knowledges about some aspect of reality'. Discourses are therefore recourses for constructing and interpreting the *content* of texts and communicative events. As such they have no physical existence: they are knowledges, mental resources, although we of course get to know about them through texts and communicative events. But while they are mental phenomena, they are also 'socially constructed' – developed in the context of specific social institutions, be they large (e.g. multi-national corporations) or small (e.g. a specific family), in ways that are appropriate to the interests that dominate in these contexts. In van Dijk's terminology, they are 'social cognitions'.

With this definition, this examination of the notion of discourse and how it is linked to other social and cognitive constructs such as context, power and knowledge is concluded. In light of that, discourses are established as being contextually constituted as well as constitutive. Some of the main properties of discourse have been identified too, since such identification is essential in order to determine which of the definitions offered in the literature is best suited to the current study. The next section will examine how analysts can approach discourse analytically and critically in order to infer insightful evidence from it. It will investigate how critical discourse analysis is presented in the relevant literature, and how it relates to the current study.

2.2. Critical discourse analysis: An overview

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of discourse, as examined in the previous section, analysing discourse can help to unveil which social and cognitive, and most notably ideological, constructs fuel and are fuelled by it. Gee (2014) comments on this, stating that when we study language as it is used in a particular context, it enables us to reveal more about how things can be said or done or how they can exist differently in the world. This again supports the strong relationship between discourse and context established in the previous paragraphs. Nevertheless, one needs to be clear about what kind of analysis is involved in order to understand what the final outcomes of the analysis are.

2.2.1. The critical impetus in CDA

What sets CDA studies apart from other discourse studies is that questions are asked differently (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Wodak and Meyer further argue that this means that scholars in CDA present themselves as advocates for social groups facing discrimination. As a result, unlike other social sciences, CDA cannot be viewed as ‘dispassionate’ and ‘objective’, rather it is a ‘committed’ science that interferes in social practice (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011: 358). This holds true regardless of what social classification system gives rise to discrimination, whether it be race, class, religion or gender, as in the current study.

In this regard, Gee (2014) distinguishes between descriptive and critical discourse studies. In the case of the first, the analysis aims to describe language for the sake of understanding it without attempting to act upon it. A clear example of this is when a given analyst analyses the linguistic patterns produced by second language learners in order to understand which stage of interlanguage they are currently at and what characterises that stage. On the other hand, critical discourse studies, as explained earlier, go beyond the description and even the explanation stage in order to intervene in what the analyst perceives as unjust or discriminatory. By assuming this role, CDA has the potential to change realities by transforming social and cognitive factors in accordance with the constitutive and reciprocal relationship between discourse, context and, as will be examined in more detail later, cognition. Political discourse, for example, is fertile ground for analysts in CDA who have such a goal in mind; see for instance Bayram's (2010) research on the political speeches of the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Erdogan.

The critical impetus that sets CDA research apart from other discourse studies can be traced back to the Frankfurt School and the work of Jürgen Habermas on critical theory (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). According to the Frankfurt School, social theory should not only be concerned with offering explanations and understandings; instead, it should reject the limitations of traditional theory and state that the social order must aim to critique society and change it accordingly (Geuss, 1981; Jay, 1996). This means that CDA cannot be conducted independently from the ideology of the culture to hand. Therefore, it is essential to point out beforehand what type of ideology is concerned. Critical discourse analysts do not only target explicit realisations of ideologies, they are also preoccupied with uncovering the hidden beliefs encoded using various linguistic tools such as analogies and conceptual metaphors (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This can be briefly exemplified using data from the current study. For example, in the conservative/opposing discourse that often attacks any reforms aiming to empower women, there is always a claim that women are highly valued, like jewels, and thus should be kept safe and away from risk. The common use of this metaphor indicates that women are cognitively objectified and dehumanised. It also entails a fragile and vulnerable representation of women as being in constant need of protection and being locked away from danger. This

shows that not only explicit ideologies can be analysed, but also the latent, deep or hidden ideological constructs.

2.2.2. Definition of CDA

With all this in mind, how can we best define CDA? Given the aspects examined above it is clear that CDA is not presented as just a special method for carrying out discourse analysis (van Dijk, 2015); and one should not be misled by the pre-modifier ‘critical’ and assume that by adding it to the equation we are introducing it as merely a method with a critical focus. CDA is a field of research that comprises methods from across disciplines and methods, it is an ‘analytical practice’ with ‘an attitude’ (van Dijk, 2015: 466). Van Dijk defines it as follows:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such *dissident research*, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality. This is also why CDA may be characterised as a *social movement* of politically committed discourse analysts. (2015: 466).

This definition consists of two major parts. The first one supports the notion of discourse defined earlier in this chapter, i.e. as playing a central role in relation to power and dominance within the social order. The second part highlights the critical aspect, discussed above, on the part of analysts to the point that they are characterised as activists in a social movement. In this sense, CDA has the responsibility not just to react to discriminatory ideologies but also to be proactive and to take action to stop such discrimination. As a result, CDA is expected to encourage resistance to discriminatory ideologies in a quest for social change (Strauss & Feiz, 2013). Given such tenets, how can we approach CDA in order to achieve this goal? A number of approaches have been proposed and developed since the early days of CDA and some of them will be examined briefly in the following section.

2.3. Approaches to CDA

Since CDA is multidisciplinary by nature and can be linked to various disciplines, including sociology, psychology, linguistics and politics, its development over time has been associated with various theoretical approaches. Some of these approaches are inductively oriented, i.e. they investigate specific data or case studies in depth and then offer new insights, as is the case in the discourse historical approach (section 2.3.1.) or the social actor approach (section 2.3.2.) (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). On the other hand, some other approaches utilise a deductive orientation, starting from a general theoretical framework, which is later illustrated with some appropriate examples. One such deductive orientation is the socio-cognitive approach mainly proposed by van Dijk, as will be explained later in this section (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). However, this simple division between deductive and inductive orientation does not mean that these approaches are fixed or that they can move steadily and incompatibly in either direction, inductive or deductive. On the contrary, a central feature of CDA is its dynamicity and flexibility; thus, it requires the analyst to alternate constantly between these two. What it simply means is that this division is better understood as a continuum and these approaches are distinguished based on their general themes and starting points (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). On this continuum, however, far more approaches exist, but only those mentioned earlier will be commented on, with special attention being paid to the socio-cognitive approach as the main theoretical framework adopted for this study.

2.3.1. Discourse historical approach

Starting briefly with the discourse historical approach (DHA), it emphasises the cornerstones of CDA, such as critique, power and ideology, and their intricate and multidimensional relationship with discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). As indicated by its name, the DHA understands context as being ‘mainly historical’ (Wodak & Meyer, 2009: 26), thus it is necessary to examine the historical context in order to offer interpretations and, further, critiques. Being mainly focused on the field of politics, the DHA makes extensive use of argumentation theory (for further details, see van Eemeren, Jackson, & Jacobs, 2011). However, due to its more or less inductive orientation, the

DHA requires a very systematic procedure to achieve its goal. Nevertheless, this procedure is often not fully developed and this is presented as one of DHA's weaknesses (Tenorio, 2011). Also, given the nature of the current study, the DHA cannot point out the cognitive constructs involved in the negotiation of clashing ideologies within a given society. It is true that the DHA highlights the mediation between language and society (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), but such mediation is neither comprehensive nor holistic due to its inductive underdeveloped procedure. It is possible, then, to view the DHA as a more specific and problem-oriented approach that is best employed within larger schematic approaches, such as the socio-cognitive approach.

2.3.2. Social actor approach

A similar situation is found with the social actor approach (SAA) devised by van Leeuwen (1996), another inductively oriented approach to CDA. In this approach, as will be examined in more detail in Chapter Three, the main focus is on the textual level of discourse, i.e. the linguistic parameters. As a result, on its own, the social actor approach cannot be used to offer in-depth explanations of the aforementioned negotiations of cognitive constructions. Nevertheless, due to the core role it assigns to practice as a basis for social representation, some of its methodological insights will be adopted in this study. Van Leeuwen (2009: 148) views discourse as a 'recontextualization of social practice' and thus presents the various actors within such discourse as social actors engaging in varying levels of action and having varying levels of access to power. This is of key relevance to the current study. However, the social actor approach is not as dialectical as it claims to be, since it does not investigate sufficiently how these representations are further related to social practices.

2.3.3. Socio-cognitive approach

What is the case, then, is that inductively oriented approaches do not sufficiently imbue the analysis with a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the dialectical relationship between discourse and social practice. This, however, does not mean that they cannot be used; on the contrary, these approaches offer useful tools, especially at the

textual level of analysis. What it does mean is that they are better incorporated into other deductively oriented approaches, as is the case in the current study and its focus on the socio-cognitive level (SCA). As aforementioned, the SCA can offer more insights into the wider context beyond the textual level. The leading name behind this approach is van Dijk (2009), who draws on the theory of social representation (Moscovici, 2000) and proposes a theory of context. According to Moscovici, social representations can be defined as a set of ‘propositions’ allowing the classification of things or persons, the description of their features, an explanation of their actions and attitudes, and the like (ibid:152). Such propositions are dynamic and fuzzy by nature, which means that they are subject to change. With SCA drawing upon such a perspective, it is possible to see the link between SCA and CDA research examining social change.

2.3.3.1. Mental models and context models in SCA

As the name suggests, the SCA centres on the discourse-cognition-society triangle (van Dijk, 2009: 64). Central to this triangle is the notion of mental models, which derives from Moscovici’s work on social psychology. Mental models are stored in ‘episodic’, i.e. personal or autobiographic, memory and defined as ‘subjective representations of the events and situations observed, participated in or referred to by discourse’ (van Dijk, 2009: 65). In this sense, mental models in general are ‘semantic’ as they do not interfere with the communicative phenomenon; and hence, general though they may be, they cannot all be described as being directly involved in the aforementioned mediation between discourse and society. What controls this mediation is what van Dijk refers to as ‘context models’ (1998: 82), which are a specific kind of mental models that, in addition to being subjective representations, have the responsibility of ‘controlling discourse processing and adapting discourse to the social environment so that it is situationally appropriate’ (van Dijk, 2009: 65). In context models, then, semantics is replaced by ‘pragmatics’, as it incorporates how language use is implemented and adapted in accordance with the social environment.

An example of this is the second person plural in Saudi Arabic, *antom*, which semantically means that the number of addressees is more than two and hence it is

expected that this reference will be invoked in the semantic event model. However, in the context model, this changes according to the authority and status attributed to the addressee. He or she may be only one person but should be addressed with the plural pronoun in accordance with his or her social position. That said, the current study is more concerned with context models, as they are better suited to CDA than event models. In fact, it is context models that signify power distribution in a given discourse as they go beyond the linguistic level to the larger social and contextual one. In addition to this, keeping in mind the properties of discourse highlighted earlier in the previous section, context models can be utilised as a suitable tool to examine discourse. This is especially accurate if one links the view of discourse as contextually situated and how context models at the same time signify the necessity of context. Hence, it should be pointed out that any reference to mental models later in this thesis is linked to pragmatic context models and not semantic ones.

2.3.3.2. Cognition in SCA

It is essential to incorporate here a definition of cognition as it forms the cornerstone of the SCA via the existence of context models as cognitive constructs. Cognition is justified in this triangulation since social power, which has been established as a main concern of CDA, is controlled through cognition, not merely actions (Strauss & Feiz, 2013). Broadly speaking, cognition can be defined as a ‘set of functions of the mind, such as thought, perception and representation’ (van Dijk, 2009: 64). While this perception of cognition is consistent with the more general notion of mental models, context models are deeply rooted in the notion of social cognition, which clearly signifies a narrower scope for cognitive functions. Van Dijk defines these as social representations too since members of a certain group share them with other members of the same group, whether these representations are norms, values or even ideologies (van Dijk, 2009).

This definition can be linked to the notion of mental models, discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. However, in brief, the two sets of models in the current study consist of a broader, socially shared category within Saudi society, which is in charge of maintaining the discriminating status quo. The other category reveals a narrower set, which is

particular to a sub-group within the same society. In this sense, the second set is shared too but to a lesser extent as it is not as dominant as the other one and, to a large extent, it is presented as resisting such dominance. Due to this duality within the cognitive aspect, the current study is critical in its examination of power struggle as embodied within the first set of models, while at the same time adopting what Martin (2004) classifies as a positive stance within CDA. The following section will examine how this duality is possible within CDA studies and how the analysis can be both critical and positive in a complementary and not necessarily contradictory manner.

2.4. Does ‘critical’ necessarily mean negative?

The critical impetus of CDA research was examined earlier in this chapter, and truly it is the distinguishing feature of any CDA research attempting to reveal power relations within any context. The problem, however, is that examining power relations, or even power struggles, is a two-way street. This means that a critical discourse analyst not only adopts a critical stance to critiquing power abuse and how it is used to discriminate against a certain class, race, religion, gender and so on; it also suggests that he or she needs to be more proactive in yielding power within the community to create a proper road map for change. In this regard, Martin (2004: 180) distinguishes between what he refers to as the two faces of CDA: ‘CDA realis’ and ‘CDA irrealis’. For the first, he argues that this face is the better established one since it has been the main focus of CDA studies so far. Examples include studies that examine how discourse and semiosis are exploited to serve dominant ideologies. For instance, Al-Hejin (2015) and AlRasheed (2013) are both examples of CDA realis investigations. Martin characterises this face as being ‘deconstructive’ (Martin, 2004: 180), and in doing so, it can be inferred that limiting ourselves, as analysts, to this face implies that CDA has not achieved its full potential. When solely depending on CDA realis, we are left with accounts of unjust realities but we are not guided towards how discourse, with all the power assigned to it, can actually advance in the direction of changing these unjust realities.

As a result, CDA must be concerned as well with its other face, CDA irrealis, which Martin (2004: 182) directs towards ‘constructive social action’. He further adds that

research in this area is falling behind and not achieving its full potential since most of the literature is about the first kind. From this perspective, then, the current study is able to incorporate both faces. While it examines the positive stance adopted by these bloggers and their supporters in their posts on social change, it also offers a critical view on the position held by opponents of such changes and how they are represented by these bloggers. In doing so, the research is advocating what Kress (2000) refers to as ‘design’: a critique of a critique, in which the analyst takes part in designing the required change. Martin views this process of positively valuing aspects of social change as differing from being critical, not in the sense that they are contradictory but in that they target two different processes (Martin, 2004).

However, the proposals in this thesis advocate a different perspective in the sense that being critical in CDA necessarily entails taking a stance and being partial. When the analyst, thus, positions himself or herself in accordance with this, taking a stance can possibly go either way, i.e. positively or negatively. Therefore, positive discourse analysis is actually another way of conducting CDA research, which has been long neglected in the literature; and because of this double stance on the central notion of critique, it is still possible to refer to the current study as critical in spite of its positive vein. The same stance on the consistency between CDA and positive discourse analysis is also found in Chojnicka's (2015) analysis of Latvian and Polish discourses of ‘gender dissidents’ as mediated in blog posts. The latter views positive discourse analysis as a ‘variant of CDA, not its opposite’ (Chojnicka, 2015: 225). What differentiates these two, she continues, is the level of power represented and reproduced in the discourse under examination. So, instead of focusing exclusively on hegemonic and mainstream discourses, positive discourse analysis targets what she refers to as ‘marginal, non-hegemonic’ ones. This difference is another reason for classifying the current research as simultaneously both critical and positive, since it includes discourses expressing and reproducing both hegemonic and non-hegemonic ideologies. For example, due to the intertextuality practised through hyperlinks in the blog posts under study, a blogger can include in his or her pro-change post instances of anti-change discourse. This requires the analyst to attempt the critical analysis with such dual perspective.

So, it is now established that being positive and critical at the same time is not incompatible; instead 'critical' is an umbrella term incorporating positive approaches. This is very significant because deconstructive analysis does not suffice on its own, but needs to be assisted by constructive analysis of social action (Martin, 2004). It is always possible to point out what needs to be changed in discourse; however, it is equally important to construct discourse in a way that reflects such change. This means that constructive social action can, for instance, be translated into the discourse of how people rally together to redistribute power in order to create a community around similar values (Martin, 2004). This is the case in the present study, as the bloggers in these posts are attempting to design, to some extent, the changes desired by rallying people with similar context models together.

Martin (2004) exemplifies this positive stance on CDA in his analysis of the discourse on reconciliation with indigenous people in Australia, where he highlights narratives by a noted indigenous writer on her stolen mother and grandmother. These narratives were among the first on the agony experienced by this particular group and she used evaluation to publicly construct them in an inviting way that required the reader to empathise with her on a matter that had previously been overlooked. A few years later, a collection of stories from a number of indigenous people on the same topic was documented and published. This collection has also invited more empathy, sympathy and appreciation for change. Another example is from Martin and Rose (2003), who investigate the discourses leading to change in South Africa. Their analysis focuses on the speeches of Desmond Tutu before and after apartheid was abolished. In addition to these examples from discourse on race, another area that may be promising for positive discourse analysis is the examination of gender relations as represented and constructed in discourse. Feminist discourse analysis can benefit from such a positive stance since it might construct how gender equality can be attempted in discourse. In light of this, the thesis at hand and its focus on women-related topics require, by default, a brief examination of feminist discourse analysis that pinpoints potential areas of relevance.

2.5. CDA and feminism

As stated in the last section, positive discourse analysis, as a variant of CDA, can be quite fruitful in gender studies, including analyses of discourses reproducing or challenging gender inequality. This is due to the very strong relations between CDA as presented in this study and feminist discourse, based on the assumption that discourse is socially constitutive of, as well as constituted by, society. This is quite effective when viewing gender as socially constituted. Many, although not all, feminists differentiate between sex, as a biological category ascribed to people based on physiological criteria, on the one hand, and gender, as a socially constructed category achieved through cultural, psychological, ideological and social processes (Lazar & Kramarae, 2011) on the other. Therefore, because of the social constitutiveness of discourses, they are expected to play a significant role in the distribution and reproduction of gendered ideologies that affect the gendered socialisation process in any given society.

2.5.1. Contextualising sex and gender

Another reason for the strong ties between CDA and feminism emerges from the fact that CDA's central preoccupation with power inequalities and social injustices is very consistent with the main driving forces behind feminism. As a result, work on gender inequality in discourse studies can be described as 'paradigmatic for much CDA', as they are both explicitly concerned with issues of domination and power abuse (van Dijk, 2015: 467). Lazar (2005) proposes a gender-based branch within CDA entitled feminist CDA. In her edited volume, Lazar presents feminist CDA as an expected outcome of the marriage between feminism and CDA, with the final goal being a 'just social order' in relation to gender relations (Lazar, 2005: 5). She emphasises that this should not be oversimplified by mapping the ideational and social notion of gender over the biological notion of sex.

This, however, does take place in the posts to hand, since the construction of gender in these posts is initially consistent with the biological classification of humans into male or female in the Saudi context. Due to this, then, such a mapping cannot be explained as an

oversimplification but rather as a contextualisation of the discourse to hand. To elaborate further, the feminist differentiation between the notions of gender and sex is needed here since these two notions are combined – women in the posts under examination are initially classified based on biological criteria. Nevertheless, due to the discursive factors within the Saudi context – and indeed any social order – the biological notion of sex is further loaded with social, ideational and cultural constructs that affect and are affected by gender-related context models. This, inevitably, genders the notion of sex and leaves the analysts with a double-faced gender conception incorporating both psychological and socially constructed categories. As a result, for the remainder of this study, gender will be used in the sense that it incorporates the physiological perception of sex. For this reason, the current research reviews and occasionally draws on research on feminism, as it is in a number of ways relevant here, yet does not claim to be feminist in its essence.

2.5.2. Feminist CDA

By collecting and publishing the first volume on feminist CDA and establishing it as a branch with a special focus, Lazar (2005: 4) was hoping to create a ‘shared forum’ for feminist critical discourse analysts across the globe so that they could come together and organise their efforts in support of gender equality. Interestingly, the very act of establishing this collective can be linked to the discussion conducted earlier on positive discourse analysis. Thus, Lazar’s work, along with that of her colleagues, represents an attempt to create a community whose discourses are in favour of empowering women and allowing them to change an unjust social reality. Thus, using Martin’s description, establishing such a collective can be viewed as ‘constructive social action’ (Martin, 2004). The last point is, in fact, further evidence of the complexity involved in analysing social phenomena along with the multidisciplinary perspective needed in discourse studies. Lazar also points out another feature of feminist CDA: according to her, unlike early CDA, most of the feminist literature on discourse studies was written by a diverse range of analysts, based on a wide range of geographical locations and coming from different ethnic backgrounds. This diversity, right from the start, allowed feminist CDA

to provide analysts with tools that were created in response to these different social and ideological contexts.

It should not be inferred from this feature of feminist CDA, however, that current CDA lacks diversity; on the contrary, CDA stands now as a prominent and diverse discipline in the humanities and social sciences. Lazar's remark simply implies that feminist CDA soon became established as a multicultural, multidisciplinary and diverse branch. Put another way, when CDA first emerged, it started with outsider analysts sympathising with the social groups discriminated against, whereas feminist CDA emerged because of the voices and actions of the same group discriminated against, i.e. women. In that sense, it could be argued that the analyst can be partially described, using a term from anthropology, as *an informant*, in addition to his or her role in the analysis. This indicates that within the realm of CDA – which should be neither neutral nor impartial – an analyst with an insider's view should be capable of producing more contextualised evidence. Again, this particular feature lends itself, by default, to the current research, given that the analyst, a Saudi woman born and raised in Saudi Arabia, is equipped with such an insider's view.

It is time to examine how some of the literature on feminist discourse reports resistance to, and change in, gender inequality. Much of the recent work has been critical in documenting the changes that have occurred in gender power relations, especially those taking place in recent decades (Lazar & Kramarae, 2011). For instance, in his investigation of gender representations in the media in the second half of the last century, Gauntlett (2002) reports that such representations used to be very stereotypical and simplistic. In comparison with women, men in the past were portrayed as being more active, intelligent, resourceful and able to take decisions faster than women. Quantitatively, Gauntlett also reports that men were included much more often than women. However, more recent representations, which started to emerge in the early nineties, reveal less stereotypical findings. Recent representations show women as working with men side by side and *assume* more equality in gender relations in accordance with changes that actually took place in society. *Assume* is used since equality

is still not achieved in these representations. Instead, they are more complex, but still loaded with some stereotypical perceptions, with male characters still to the fore.

Lazar and Kramarae (2011: 224) report that most women around the globe are ‘still bunched together in the same types of jobs, earn less than men, have more difficulty obtaining leadership positions, and do most of the household work and care for children and the elderly’. This does not portray all women as having the same issues, and Lazar and Kramarae highlight the self-evident fact that such injustice will vary from one woman to another, depending on a number of factors corresponding to the complexity of gender and its intricate connections with other social constructs. In other words, whether in more developed countries, with better legislation against sexism, or in developing or underdeveloped ones, total and complete gender equality is still not achieved and perhaps will never be. What is proposed, then, via relevant CDA research, is improving the realities of these women since it has been proved in recent years that power imbalances in gender relations and representations can be changed in favour of women, thus establishing these social changes as promising and fruitful.

The shift away from a patriarchal ideology in some societies in the world is evidence of the feasibility of such efforts, especially those carried out by feminists. It has been reported, however, that, for some, feminism is old-fashioned and ‘passé’ (Lazar & Kramarae, 2011: 226). Therefore, it has been assumed that women’s emancipation is now taken for granted and this has led to the formation of a ‘postfeminist ethos’. However, keeping in mind the discussion earlier on the inaccuracy of assuming that gender inequality is over, the focus on critical research into gender discourse in patriarchal societies – in the hope that such diagnostic analyses can bring about social change – is more crucial. Chapter Three will include some specific linguistic studies in relation to gender representations as they bear relevance to the adopted methodology, while Chapter Two presents more general discourse studies from diverse contexts. Below are three case studies, two of which are from discourses on Muslim women while the third is from a Kenyan context.

The first case is a CDA paper by AlRasheed (2013) in which she examines the face veil as represented in three Canadian newspapers. The face veil, which is a religious signifier of the identity of these women, is encoded through gaze in the discourses under examination. Al Rasheed's work decodes such encoding, revealing two kinds of gaze at the textual level. The first one is the colonial gaze, which represents the face veil as a barrier impeding access to the identity of these women and, accordingly, defeating them. The second one represents the veil as an anti-nationality symbol standing in the way of assimilating these women into the Canadian context. What is interesting about this study is that it intensifies the need for a feminist focus, even in contexts in which everything is claimed to be accepted. It is true, however, that the face veil is a complex notion that relates to racial, religious and gender factors simultaneously; nevertheless, some stereotypical representations of women, assumed to be outdated by postfeminists, can still be traced, even in recent years. This work also highlights the need to call for a conversation between different cultures since 'zones of epistemological correctness' vary considerably, depending on the context (Carey, 1989: 50), thus supporting the claim made earlier in this study about the usefulness of an insider's view in CDA.

The second case by Al-Hejin (2015) also supports this claim. In his paper, Al-Hejin conducts a CDA examination of the semantic macrostructures in the BBC news associated with Muslim women and the strategies used in representations of the *hijab*, i.e. head veil/scarf. In addition to the lack of proper contextualisation in terms of the context models used in the news, the findings also reveal the prevalence of semantic macrostructures associated with conflict and crime and limited in terms of regional coverage. Even findings on hijab representations suggest that the hijab is 'imposed' which, in turn, is consistent with the assumption that Muslim women 'are passive, submissive and unwilling or unable to improve their own wellbeing' (ibid: 40).

While these two cases investigate Muslim women within Western discourses, casting them as the other, the third case, taken from a local Kenyan discourse on the representations of Kenyan women, operates locally, which is similar to the current thesis. Ndambuki and Janks (2010: 73) present a comparative study contrasting the

representations of women's agency as constructed by these women themselves with those constructed by politicians and other community leaders. The analysis reveals contradictory findings, since both groups, i.e. women and leaders, construct women's agency 'within deficit discourses' as they are not consistent with what these women actually do in enacted practices or with what these leaders say they expect from these women. In other words, there is a mismatch between the realities of these women who are actively involved as agents in their socio-cultural contexts and how they are represented in discourse textually. The texts on both groups construct them as lacking in terms of agency. Interestingly, such results can be an indicator of a clash between text and context, which is presented as inherent in Ndambuki and Janks' paper .

In short, then, these three recent cases reveal limited and even contradictory representations of women in diverse contexts. In such discourses, these representations are unjust to women, whether they are cast as the other discussed in discourse (which is the case in the first and second case studies) or as the self (as in the third). These cases, along with others to be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, intensify the role of CDA in bringing about the required social change in any given society. The following section examines the intricate role of discourses in relation to social change, and how this can be better understood with regard to Gramsci's theory of power, as well as other scholars' frameworks for introducing social change.

2.6. CDA and social change

2.6.1. Power struggle: domination and hegemony

As aforementioned, this section examines a central notion in this study, which is social change and how this can be advocated or resisted through discourses. In order to understand this in depth, it is better to review some of the central propositions in the motivation for social change, such as power struggle. Fairclough (2013) draws on Gramsci's work on the structure of power operating after the First World War in Western capitalist societies and his theory of power. Gramsci differentiates between two components of political power, which together give rise to the dominant class in such

societies (Fairclough, 2013). To elaborate, the first component is ‘domination’, which is an understanding of power as practised publicly and candidly by states in order to have control over social groups, even if this requires oppression and coercion. The other component is ‘hegemony’, which aims at ‘intellectual and moral leadership’ (Forgacs, 1988: 235-249). What follows, then, is that while domination is more public and explicit, hegemony operates in more private domains such as education, family, work, leisure and so on (Fairclough, 2013). Consistent with this, it is possible to view the state in Gramsci’s theory as consisting of two societies simultaneously: a ‘political society’ as the public domain of domination and a ‘civil society’ as the private domain of hegemony.

While Gramsci’s theory of power is originally based on his examination of Western capitalist societies, this conception can also be applied to Saudi society, a Middle Eastern Muslim society. Both of these societies, the political and the civil, can be traced in the context at hand. Clearly, political society is exhibited in the authority and officials of the Saudi government, who are labelled as decision makers later in the data analysis chapters. Civil society, which attempts to maintain that certain cultural and moral norms are promoted by members of that society, can be described as conservative, as exemplified in the body of CPVPV (Commission for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice) and its defenders, all of whom are mostly labelled in the analysis as opponents. Despite the fact that the CPVPV is a governmental body, it is still possible to present it in such a way since there have been a number of cases where disagreements were found between this body and other higher institutions of government. This way of categorising the CPVPV is also possible because in the absence of other formal ideological parties within Saudi society, the CPVPV and its defenders can be presented as one homogenous ideological group whose members can be perceived as the ones in charge of civil society. This example from the data at hand reveals that Gramsci’s original distinction is neither incompatible with Saudi society nor inherently polarised. Instead, it is possible to view the relationship between political and ethical states as inclusive, with the first incorporating the second as they work in combination to maintain power in the interests of the dominant group.

2.6.2. The inevitability of change, small or big

Does the previous discussion signify that such a power distribution cannot be changed or resisted? The answer to this question is no, since it is never the case that a certain ideology can have supremacy forever, nor can it be accepted by all. Moscovici (1981: 183) uses the term ‘thinking society’ to account for the fact that some groups, and individuals within these groups, cannot be completely and submissively controlled by one single dominant ideology. Drawing on the ‘thinking society’ notion, Castro & Batel (2008: 478) highlight ‘the agency of social beings’, as they are capable of being constantly involved not just in the reproduction of social representations but also in transforming them accordingly. Keeping in mind the dynamicity of discourses discussed earlier in this chapter, interfering with the social order to induce social change is possible. Such intervention does not negate stability; on the contrary, societies are dynamic enough to comprise what Castro and Batel refer to as the ‘paradox of change’. In this paradox, societies can be characterised with stability to a notable degree, yet still have the capacity to accommodate innovation. Such a paradox can be an indicator that change does not have to be drastic or revolutionary; instead, social change sometimes takes subtle forms. This can be exemplified by the discussion conducted earlier about positive discourse analysis and its proactive role in bringing about desired change subtly.

2.6.3. Discourse as a vehicle for maintaining status quo or inducing change

The discussion about subtle or revolutionary social change directs attention to the various factors involved in bringing about such change, which directly affect its severity or subtlety. Moscovici (2000), especially in his earlier works, originally views the scientific system as being in charge of proposing innovations within society. This is, definitely, only one of the variable systems in this regard. For example, another alternative is the religious system and a clear case for this goes back to around fourteen centuries ago when Islam was first introduced to the Arabian Peninsula, thus changing the social and ethical norms of the region. Similarly, other studies examine how the legal system can be used to aid social change (see for example Castro and Batel, 2008). However, it is important to

point out that regardless of the system in charge of inducing change, discourse (as will be highlighted in the next section) plays a major role in producing change.

Drawing on the work of Lacan on the main structures of discourse and how these structures have enough psychological effect on people to eventually produce social change, Bracher (1993: 53) refers to four essential social effects of discourses: '(1) educating/ indoctrinating; (2) governing/ commanding; (3) desiring/ protesting; (4) analysing/ transforming/ revolutionizing'. Taking into consideration the aforementioned discussion on political and ethical states, it is likely that the first and second effects often fall under the control of the dominant group. It is the case that civil and ethical states often utilise discourses relevant to domains like education and law enforcement to legitimise their practices. The third and fourth effects can be associated more with the dominated group, and the discourse under examination in this thesis can be seen as exhibiting both effects.

This should not mean that each group might not occasionally use effects associated with the other group; it just means that there is a general pattern of falling this way. For example, some dominated groups might not have access to education or indoctrination and appear to use protest or revolution more often. Nevertheless, in order to problematise their case, they might need to use a certain amount of education, which could be another area of struggle as they attempt to take over a domain controlled by the dominant group. Keeping this in mind, it is possible to highlight two features of such effects/changes. First, they are complex and interrelated at a number of levels, potentially blurring the distinctions presented in the previous paragraph. Second, in all of these effects, both maintaining stability and creating innovation are induced by the ability to initiate action, i.e. agency. That said, the following section will examine cases of agency on each side and how they are interrelated with discourse.

On the part of the dominant class, for instance, Fairclough (1992: 201) discusses the 'technologisation' of discourse in which there is intervention in the discursive and social order to ensure that a given hegemony is introduced and constructed efficiently in favour

of the dominant group. Such a process of intervention might take the form of interviewing, teaching, counselling and so on. In addition – and in contrast – to the technologisation process, Fairclough also introduced the notion of the ‘democratization’ of discourse, which refers to the process of ‘the removal of inequalities and asymmetries in the discursive and linguistic rights, obligations and prestige of groups of people’ (1992: 201). As such, the democratisation of discourse requires agency on the part of the dominated group, or at least those sympathising with the injustice experienced by them. In that sense, the democratisation of discourse is consistent with CDA as it attempts to rectify any inequalities. A well-known example of the success of discourse democratisation in promoting change is the change in patient-doctor medical interviews (Fairclough, 1992).

In recent years, however, some areas of gender inequality in discourse have remained among the most salient and public cases calling for democratisation, and the discussion in the previous paragraphs can be used to exemplify this. Gender asymmetries in discursive and social practice, although still in need of being denaturalised through social change, continue to be disregarded. This intensifies the need for agency on the part of women and whoever is willing to defend their causes. Such agency can take the form of resistance, which as established earlier is not necessarily associated with revolution or radical change. Agency also means that whoever is involved in it should be patient and not be discouraged by any gaps between what they hope for in their particular context and what is actually taking place. In their examination of the difficulties of generalising new norms in a given society, Castro and Batel (2008) employ discursive strategies to pin these difficulties down. They highlight the fact that even when change is aided by the legal introduction of new policies, this alteration in law does not immediately transform ideas and practice (Lima, 2004). This reasserts the existence of a gap between norms and practice and the difficulties involved in transforming ‘prescriptive norms’, stating what the case should be, into ‘descriptive norms’ describing how these cases are really happening (Castro and Batel, 2008: 476). In sum, then, social change cannot happen overnight nor can it be expected to take place smoothly, whether or not it is aided by a normative system. Nevertheless, persistent resistance and the gradual negotiation of

ideological constructions supporting change within discourse serve to bridge such gaps or alter the realities of the status quo one step at a time. While this applies to diverse discourses, online/digital discourse in particular can be quite influential in this regard. The next section will explore some basic concepts relevant to online/digital discourse while presenting a few relevant studies.

2.7. Online/digital discourse

The last section of this literature review examines briefly online/digital discourses since the discourse under examination consists of online blog posts. Online/digital discourse is a clear manifestation of computer-mediated communication (CMC). CMC represents a transformation from one-to-many communication in traditional mass media to many-to-many communication, which has been of great interest to discourse analysts (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006). In that sense, CMC can be described, using Ball-Rokeach and Reardon's term (1988), as *telelogic*. In telelogic interaction, many users have access to a large and expanding audience but at the same time this audience has relatively similar access to responding easily (Brake, 2012). The next paragraph will highlight some inherent features of such discourse, which are heavily influenced by this many-to-many interaction. However, it is of key relevance here to highlight a term strongly affiliated with communication, i.e. media. Myers (2012: A2), defines media as 'any means that extend possibilities of communication, from phones and broad-casting to Internet media, street signs, computer games, or graffiti'. With this perspective, it is possible to reassert the aforementioned multidisciplinary nature of CDA since it can be also linked to communication and media studies.

2.7.1. Some features of CMC

That said, it must be pointed out that this shift to many-to-many interaction offered by the advancement of the World Wide Web highlights two inherent features of online and digital discourse. These two features are presented here separately, despite being closely related. The first feature of CMC is that it is introduced as multimodal by default (Bolander & Locher, 2014). While it might be argued that other discourses are

multimodal too, nevertheless the inherent nature of CMC exploits such multimodality to the maximum. Approaching such multimodality is better achieved with what Page (2010:4) identifies as ‘the democratic stance that all modes are equal’. However, due to the primarily linguistic focus of this research, as will be highlighted in Chapter Three, only the linguistic mode will be under investigation in the analysis. The dominance of this mode should not, however, cast other modes as being redundant or less significant.

The second feature is intertextuality, which is inherent in the hyperlinked nature of online/digital discourses. This intertextuality, which will be examined in more detail in Chapter Three, can be linked to the Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia (1981). With numerous voices/varieties existing simultaneously in the same text, the analyst is even more challenged when approaching such heteroglossia (Bolander & Locher, 2014). While these features are common in many CMC manifestations, blogs and blogging, as will be explained in the next section, represent one of the most salient realisations of multimodality and intertextuality.

2.7.2. Blogs as genre within CMC

Since blogs are the source of data to be analysed in this thesis, it is important to include in this section a brief examination of blogs along with some discourse studies targeting them. Myers (2010a:15) presents blogs as a genre consisting ‘of texts defined not so much by their form or content as by the kinds of uses to which they are put, and the ways these uses construct social identities and communities’. It is evident in such a view that blogs create social communities, which makes it worthy of interest to see whether such a creation can come into play in the status quo/change struggle. He further adds that blogs are chronologically organised and to a large extent are constructed around links. What is more important, however, is the fact that these blogs offer uncontrolled expressions of opinions, which did not exist prior to the birth of blogging (ibid.). With this in mind, blogs, and examining blogs, can be promising for the aforementioned struggle. The next paragraph will highlight briefly three cases examining blogs as naturalistic linguistic realisations.

The first study showcases data from political blogs, among other sources, to exemplify what Sobieraj and Berry (2011) refer to as outrage political discourse. Data analysis in this study demonstrates how incivility is practised in these blogs by liberals on the one hand and conservatives on the other within the American political scene. The analysed data proves that the struggle between these two parties is manifested in the political discourses in question. Examining a different kind of blog, Brake (2012) conducted interviews with 23 personal bloggers to understand their relationship with their audience. Using an interactionist analysis, the study reveals that despite the fact that these blogs are all public, some of these blog posts appeared to be framed as primarily self-directed, while the audience are marginalised. A third study examining blog posts is by Myers (2010b), who reports findings that might be linked to the same self-directed perspective. Using concordances tools to examine vocabulary and stance taking, the study reports that in the blogs under examination, individual positioning is more prominent than engaging in collective and deliberative discussions.

These three cases demonstrate that this genre, blogs, is definitely not motivated by the same needs as those that existed when blogs were first introduced in the late 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium. But given the fact that genres are subject to change as they rise and fall (Myers, 2010a), blogging has been gradually replaced by microblogging. As the name suggested, microblogging 'is a form of length-delimited (hence 'micro') communication using a social networking service' (Zappavigna, 2012: 27). Similar to blogging, microblogging allows the audience to subscribe to feeds; however, the difference is that the latter are very often associated with short posts on social networks. With the advent and popularity of smart mobile devices, many of these social networks are accessed through their apps and users are tempted to interact actively with such content (Bruns, 2008). This recent shift towards social media is also consistent with the shift in CMC 'from open Web to platforms' (Puschmann, 2015: 29). The next section contextualises blogging in reference to Saudi Arabia in particular.

2.7.3. Blogging in Saudi Arabia

When blogging first appeared in Saudi Arabia, it became very popular just as in the rest of the Arab world. For many bloggers, blogging offered an easily accessible platform for posting and sharing their opinions without the restrictions of traditional means like newspapers, TV or radio stations (Hamdy, 2009). Late 2003 marked the beginning of Saudi blogs, which became popular by 2006 (Almaghlooth, 2014). The vast majority of these were written in Arabic; which is not surprising considering that it is the country's mother tongue. Initially, Almaghlooth reports, bloggers decided to use nicknames and aliases to ensure the anonymity of their identities. Still, a few posted using their full real names such as Fouad Al Farhan (in Arabic), Eman Al Nafjan, Ahmed Al Omran and Qusay Fayoumy (in English). However, as other platforms of social media appeared on the web and smartphones became epidemic; the popularity of blogs has started to decrease in the last three or four years, leading many to ask the question: is blogging dying?

With this section, this literature review is concluded. As explained earlier, being a CDA study with a focus on gender, this thesis entails a multidisciplinary review, examining elements from various disciplines. A detailed examination has been conducted of the complex concept of discourse and how it can be viewed from different perspectives. Certain properties of discourse have been highlighted as they bear relevance to the research at hand. With discourse being established as a vehicle for interaction, communication, contextualisation and power, a relevant definition of discourse has been offered. In light of such examination, CDA has been defined and discussed in detail. Various approaches to CDA have also been identified in light of the insight they can offer the adopted methodology. This chapter also presented the rationale for placing SCA as central to the approach to CDA in the research at hand. In doing so, key cognitive concepts like mental and context models have been explained in detail. Following this, this review examined CDA with reference to feminism and introduced some case studies for feminist CDA. In the same way, CDA has been linked to social change and its potential role in shaping context. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief examination of online/digital discourse since the blogs under examination are an example of such.

Some features of CMC have been discussed along with a brief examination of blogs as a genre and blogging in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter Three will highlights two major aspects of this thesis. This first section will examine in detail the theoretical foundation upon which this research stands. This will be conducted with some reference to the socio-cultural aspects discussed in Chapter Three. The second section will present a thorough examination of the adopted methodology in light of its theoretical foundations. Details concerning data selection, collection and analysis will also be provided.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL BASIS AND METHODOLOGY FOR DATA SELECTION, COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

After examining the relevant literature, Chapter Three is devoted to examining the theoretical and methodological approaches of the research at hand. These two aspects have been combined in one chapter to enable the reader to link between the theoretical framework underlying the current research and the methodological rationale for data selection, collection and analysis. In accordance with that, it is divided into two major sections. In the first section, the theoretical basis underlying this thesis will be reviewed and introduced from an ideological perspective and in relation to relevant literature on social cognition theories. The second section, on the other hand, will highlight the methodology adopted in accordance with previous discussions.

3.1. Theoretical and ideological basis for the current research

3.1.1. Shift in locating ideology

It was established in Chapter Two that CDA cannot be carried out without a careful examination of ideology, especially in studies that adopt a socio-cognitive approach to the relationship between discourse, cognition and context. Therefore, it seems convenient to start this section with a brief discussion of ideology and some its definitions. This keen interest stems from the shift that has taken place within the study of ideology in the last thirty years or so. The traditional location of ideology in consciousness fell out of favour and was replaced by language and discourse (Augustinos, Walker & Donaghue, 2014). Such enthusiasm for discourse, as well as its reproduction and circulation, can be better exemplified via the following excerpt from Thompson, from the early eighties:

Increasingly it has been realised that ‘ideas’ do not drift through the social world like clouds in a summer sky, occasionally divulging their contents with a clap of thunder and a flash of light. Rather, ideas circulate in the social world as utterances, as expressions, as words that are spoken or inscribed. Hence to study ideology is, in some part and in some way, to study language in the social world. (Thompson, 1984: 2)

In the same way, van Dijk, (1995:17) sees the theoretical examination of ideology as typically directed towards the expression and reproduction of discourse and communication:

However, among the many forms of reproduction and interaction, discourse plays a prominent role as the preferential site for the explicit, verbal formulation and the persuasive communication of ideological propositions.

That said, does targeting ideological constructs through discourse mean the viewing of those constructs as necessarily universal and systematic? If the answer to this question is yes, then it entails the analyst arriving at a limited and exclusive understanding of ideologies, which could be partially true and accurate but neither coherent nor comprehensive. Traditional and early formations of ideology tended to highlight systematicity and consistency as a must. For instance, Kress and Hodge (1979: 6) define ideology as “a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view”. However, about a decade later, Hodge and Kress (1988: 3) reject such consistency and unity of formation since they define ideological complexes as:

... functionally related sets of contradictory versions of the world, coercively imposed by one social group on another on behalf of its own distinctive interests or subversively offered by another social group in attempts at resistance in its own interests.

It is clear in the second definition that contradictions are no longer ‘dysfunctional’ or ‘accidental’ but are instead ‘ubiquitous’ (Hodge, 2012: 5). It is also evident that ideology cannot be exclusive to one group at the expense of another. Accordingly, each group or sub-group expresses certain ideologies with varying degrees of power and domination. Adopting this perspective evidently highlights the multiplicity of ideologies, which necessarily denotes that this contradiction is a very likely motive to prompt social intergroup struggle.

3.1.2. Competing ideologies

Van Dijk’s (1998) notion of competing ideologies is based on understanding them as operating simultaneously within society and as impacting on and being impacted upon by

discursive practices. According to Wetherell (1998, 2001a), these discursive practices are constituted by forces that lie outside the immediate context of discourse, and can be historical, social, cultural or political. Some of these are more pervasive and dominant than others during certain points of history, thus making them more culturally available. As a result, this availability and dominance have given these discursive practices and their underlying ideologies more power to construct social reality (Augoustinous, Walker & Donaghue, 2006).

This leads us to examine what makes certain ideologies more stable and fixed in society than others. Van Dijk (1998: 8) views ideology as ‘the interface between social structure and social cognition ... ideologies may be very succinctly defined as the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group’. Such a view highlights, first and foremost, the relationship between cognition and society on the basis of what is socially shared, as explained in more detail below. However, it is important to emphasise that no ideology can be said to achieve final supremacy within any society (Augoustinous, Walker & Donaghue, 2006). This means that it can be dominant and pervasive but can never be adopted by each and every member of society. There will always be members, no matter how few, who reject the dominant ideology and develop their own, which may be shared among their own groups or sub-groups. This is the case in this study, in which bloggers and the sub-group they belong to object to a more dominant ideology in their stance on women’s empowerment. Van Dijk (1998: 138) refers to this as *competing ideologies*, where there is a struggle between ideologies of *dominance* on the one hand and ideologies of *resistance* on the other. In such a view, ideologies are not presented as properties of a society but instead as properties of groups serving to organise intergroup relations as well as power struggles within society.

One major feature of dominant ideologies that has been discussed widely in the literature is legitimacy, which serves to justify and maintain the status quo through its cognitive structures, such as values, beliefs and, consequently, representations (Augoustinous, Walker & Donaghue, 2006). However, for legitimacy to exist, these system-serving/justifying beliefs and representations need to be socially shared and accepted

within society. These are not necessarily forced on people but sometimes they actually consent to through their acceptance of what is regarded as common-sense knowledge that does not need change.

3.1.3. Group formation in light of competing ideologies

A preliminary question here is what sets groups apart? Also, what holds a particular group together? The multiple takes on ideology discussed above establish social hierarchy as a 'natural' social phenomenon, thus requiring a basis for such a stratification in order to understand why any struggle is taking place. As part of their work on social dominance theory and intergroup conflict, which is explained in more detail in section 3.1.2., Sidanius and Pratto (1999) link this hierarchy to diverse factors, making one group at the top while the other is at the bottom. The group at the top has more access to social value, whether it is expressed in the form of power, economic resources or status. In the current study, for instance, the struggle between supporters of change and its opponents does not stem from economic reasons but rather from access to power and social acceptance.

Sidanius and Pratto present three dimensions of this social stratification, the first two of which are inevitable in any human society: age and gender. The third dimension, however, is one that can result in the most violent forms of struggle; these are what Sidanius and Pratto (1999) classify as an arbitrary set, meaning that they are context-dependent and vary across societies. With regard to the previous discussion on the Saudi context in Chapter One, it is possible to distinguish between two interrelated struggles taking place at the same time. The first of these is a gender-based struggle that is presented in these blogs as resulting from the gender hierarchy and leading to injustice for women within social practice. The second struggle, which actually appears to be more evident than the first, stems from disputes over the gender-based hierarchy and results in another struggle based on an arbitrary hierarchy set.

While it is easy to identify members of the in-group and the out-group in the case of a gender-based hierarchy (see the discussion on gender and sex in section 2.5.1 of Chapter Two), carrying out the same task of identification based on the second struggle requires

further examination based on ideological constructs within the discursive phenomenon. Consequently, it is quite likely to classify some women within the Saudi society as opposing women's empowerment and as aligning with opponents of change. Conversely, three of the four blogs under examination are written by male bloggers who are clearly promoting women's empowerment and change. Either way, struggles originating in either case seem to be neither violent nor extreme, but rather take on relatively subtle and indirect forms of expression and are often mediated through verbal communication. As a result, this assigns special importance to the vital role of interaction in the production and circulation of ideological clashes. The following section examines this role and highlights it in relation to the formation of group norms.

3.1.4. Socially shared mental models versus idiosyncratic models

It goes without saying that interaction and communication among either in-group members or intergroup relations are a fundamental vehicle for ideological struggle. In order to understand this role, it is of key relevance to highlight a number of points. First, members of the same group usually share similar evaluative beliefs with regard to various elements within the discursive phenomenon as part of their shared 'socio-cultural knowledge', and these are transmitted from one generation to the next through the process of *socialisation* (van Dijk, 1995: 18). In that sense, these shared beliefs are different from what Hogg and Reid (2006: 11) refer to as 'idiosyncratic' group prototypes. These prototypes originally stem from varying individual experiences and cannot persist and survive unless they are supported by other members of the same group. A person calling for change, for instance, needs to be surrounded by people with similar idiosyncratic prototypes if such prototypes are to be reinforced as group norms, initially for their subgroup and gradually later for the larger group.

Therefore, these bloggers have previously needed, and continue to need, support if they want their idiosyncratic prototypes supporting women's empowerment to prevail within their progressive group and, later, on a larger scope. Groups opposing these bloggers on the topics under examination are expressing cognitive representations that used to be shared group norms. Up until about twenty years ago, these norms were fixed and any

calls for even slight change were faced with fierce resistance and prompt rejection. However, idiosyncratic prototypes have become group norms for the progressive group at the time of writing the posts (2009-2012). Through the efforts they make to spread their message, these progressive bloggers aim to install their individual prototypes in place of the shared larger group norms.

As stated above, this aim can be achieved through social interaction and communication, both of which play a vital role in normative phenomena (Hogg and Reid, 2006). Communication and interaction can bridge the gap between what Moscovici (2000:141) refers to as 'strange' on the one hand and 'familiar' on the other. Evidently, 'strange' denotes new models, which are idiosyncratic and individual, while 'familiar' refers to common sense and socially shared models. In that sense, 'strange' is strange due to the insufficiency of communication within this particular group. A number of studies, such as those of Kincaid (2004) and Lapinski and Rimal (2005), highlight this critical role of communication in the consensual grounding of such norms and social influence in general. According to Hogg and Reid (2006: 13), 'we construct and modify our normative beliefs through information from other people – people we interact with or who influence us more indirectly through mass media'.

While blogs differ from traditional mass media, they still offer an interactive space for communication between these bloggers and their readers, and potentially even for those who oppose them. A study by Bochner, Ellis and Tillman-Healy, (2000), for example, examined the influential role of stories embedded in discourse in managing in-group members' bonds. However, evidence from previous studies, e.g. Larson, Foster-Fishman, and Keys, (1994), show that groups tend to discuss what is shared among their members rather than what is novel or peculiar to individual in-group members. Therefore, the fact that these bloggers have a tendency to discuss the topic of women's empowerment in their blog posts demonstrates that these mental/socio-cognitive representations are no longer idiosyncratic. This is another piece of evidence that such prototypes have already transformed into group norms for this particular group. Now in 2017, this has changed a

lot as many of these idiosyncratic norms are beginning to transform to group norms for the larger Saudi context.

Keeping the contradictory and comprehensive view of ideology in mind, discourse offers a useful vehicle for both the expression and examination of mental representations discussed earlier in Chapter Two. This takes place regardless of which of the ideologically clashing groups within Saudi society these mental models belong to. Emerging from actual practice in context, mental models are strongly shaped by both individual and socially shared experience. They are also expected to influence the production of new discourse or the recontextualisation of a previous one. Consequently, it is of key importance to examine how varying individual experiences, as well as socially shared ones, feed into these mental representations, and vice versa. This will be examined on the assumption that socially shared discourses have a tendency to maintain the status quo while individual ones play a more crucial role in changing biased discourse. What follows is an excerpt from van Dijk (1995: 21) in which he comments on how this take on ideology leads to a multiplicity of mental models:

Ideologies define and explain the similarities of the social practices of social members, but our theoretical framework at the same time accounts for individual variation. Each social actor is a member of many social groups, each with their own, sometimes conflicting ideologies. At the same time each social actor has her/his own, sometimes unique, biographical experiences ('old models'), attitudes, ideologies and values, and these will also interfere in the construction of models, which, in turn, will influence the production and the [comprehension of discourse].

This extract highlights the dynamic and dialectic nature of socio-cognitive models, as they result from varying experiences. Chapter Two explored these in detail, but it can be argued here that such dynamicity could be the driving force behind the social calls for change. Moscovici highlights the dynamic nature of such representations as they are being continuously negated through social interaction and communication (Moscovici, 2000). Within such a view, these representations are context-dependent, which means that they are subject to change over time depending on their surrounding contextual

influences. However, this dynamic nature does not mean that they cannot become fossilised at certain times.

So, when these representations are embedded within the dominant ideology for a while – as in the case of the representations held by those opposing the empowerment of women in Saudi Arabia – they become pervasive and socially shared. Consequently, they transform into what Augoustinos, Walker and Donaghue (2006: 101) refer to as ‘material and objective entities’ that emerge when ‘their origins (are) forgotten’ and they are ‘coming to be regarded as common sense’. They actually lose their flexibility, at least temporarily, and they become static and resistant to change. Of course, and as mentioned before, not all members of different groups within society will be accepting of these static cognitive structures and so will resist them in one way or another. As a result, their individual and dynamic mental representations will question them and request change. This is supported by the fact that Moscovici’s work and the social-representation literature in general emphasise that, ‘after a period of unquestioning acceptance or fossilisation, subsequent sociological or historical forces may act to renegotiate and/or totally transform these structures’.

It is established that these transformations are to be expected, and in some cases, they are inevitable and necessary. Chapter Two (section 2.6.) included a discussion on the social forces leading to social and ideological change. For instance, Moscovici (2000: 141) highlights a common arena for struggle between common sense and science, thus allowing for the ‘upgrading’ and ‘downgrading’ of thought to take place accordingly. Keeping in mind the aforementioned discussion on socially shared and individual experiences and how these can lead to the construction of varying, and perhaps conflicting, mental models, education can be introduced as an individual experience strongly linked to these bloggers’ models as well as those of their supporters. Other means of inducing change include the implementation of certain higher-level policies such as some of the reforms that are imposed by governments with regard to certain discriminatory practices.

The above paragraphs have examined the thorny relationship between ideology and discourse and the mediating role played by cognition in developing this relationship in either direction. The following paragraphs examine some of the main theories with regard to this relationship within the realm of social cognition. These will be examined in light of the theoretical basis established above and its perceived relevance.

3.1.5. Theories on intergroup conflict and behaviour

3.1.5.1. Social identity theory

Formulated in the 1970s and 1980s by Tajfel and Turner, one of the earliest theories is the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). According to this theory, members of social groups are viewed first and foremost as social beings, who rely on their groups for creating their identities, norms, beliefs and attitudes. This establishes social identity theory as being more inclined towards maintaining the status quo, since members of groups within this theoretical perception are more concerned with their socially shared models, which were established earlier as more stable and to a certain degree fossilised. Because of this, it is important that socially shared models are viewed and constructed positively. The focus on a member's belonging to the in-group also entails the acknowledgement of out-groups as comparison groups. Consequently, the out-group is quite likely to be viewed negatively by the in-group, keeping in mind the ideological intergroup clash.

This distinction between in-group and out-group can be linked to a theme that appears very often in social psychology, i.e. the construction of *us* versus *them*. In such cases, 'we' are very often viewed positively while the other is assigned negative values. This does not mean, however, that the interrelation between positive and negative is symmetrical. Within social identity theory, the focus is directed more towards a positive representation as a means for the enhancement of self-esteem than towards any negative bias towards the out-group. Thus, the focus on self-esteem might not solely be suitable for CDA, keeping in mind the discussion in Chapter Two on the dual nature of critical imputes in CDA as comprising both critical and positive perspectives on analysis.

3.1.5.2. Self-categorisation theory

Excluding the self-esteem component, social identity theory was later extended to form self-categorisation theory (Turner, 1985). Self-categorisation theory originally emerged within the framework of social identity research. However, it later focused on the categorisation process rather than on the self-esteem motivation discussed above (Hogg and Abrams, 1999). Hence, what self-categorisation theory attempts to undertake is to identify which prototypes represent in-group members as different from the out-group. This identification process does not aim to perceive these differences for the sake of inflating the self-esteem of the in-group, but rather for the prediction of intergroup behaviour (Fiske & Taylor, 2013).

In accordance with that, a central premise of this theory is that social identities are neither fixed nor static; social identities are dynamic and can be multiple, depending on the intergroup context. As a result, the self-categorisation theory is more consistent with the comprehensive view of ideology established earlier in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 because it allows for multiple perceptions of identity to occur. Due to this, the self-categorisation theory can also be linked to the previous discussion of individual, vis-à-vis socially shared models. With this dynamicity in mind, identity, including self-identity, will be subject to change and variation in accordance with changes taking place within the discursive context, whether at individual or socially shared levels.

In that sense, the self-categorisation theory offers an explanation of in-group relations and how members of the same group are viewed as embodiments of these group prototypes at varying levels (Hogg and Abrams, 1999). Group prototypes, from such a perspective, offer descriptive accounts of individual cognitive representations of higher-level group norms (Hogg and Reid, 2006). Put another way, what starts as individual cognitive representation, when shared within and supported by members of the same group, transforms into a group norm. These group norms can be defined as ‘regularities in attitudes and behaviour that characterise a social group and differentiate it from other social groups’ (Hogg and Reid, 2006: 7). According to the self-categorisation theory, such categorisation results in more in-group conformity, and cohesion and solidarity

while, similarly, it might in extreme cases lead to depersonalisation (Sherman, Hamilton & Lewis, 1999).

3.1.5.3. Depersonalisation

Depersonalisation happens when the members of a group do not perceive themselves as unique individuals with distinct personal variations but rather as interchangeable examples of the social group they identify with (Turner, 1987). In such extreme cases, depersonalised members are usually the most salient supporters of group norms, where constructed and reproduced mental constructions are fossilised to maintain the status quo. Consequently, attempts at change are resisted on the ground that they defy these norms. It does not follow from this, however, that categorisation is always bad. On the contrary, a certain degree of categorisation is needed to ensure the solidarity of the group. What needs to be challenged, however, is categorisation that is transformed into prejudiced personalities. A familiar example of such case is the *bigot*:

We are all familiar with the bigot – the person who rejects any and all out-groups, who believes in the prime importance of his or her own group, who is intolerant, who is hostile to members of other groups, who is often servile to his or her superiors, and who, depending on our own stereotype, is male, blue-collar or unemployed, poorly educated and has not travelled. (Augoustinous, Walker & Donaghue, 2014: 220)

Among the things highlighted in this definition of the bigot is the stereotypical perception of the bigot as lacking access to proper education and being geographically confined to his or her own location. Bearing in mind the above discussion on the interplay between personal and socially shared experiences, the bigot is introduced as categorising themselves, first and foremost, as part of his or her social group in order to maintain the status quo at the expense of their possibly different personal experience. Insufficient education and a lack of travel are, hence, established as lacking in the personal experience, presented in this study as promoting change and resistance.

3.1.5.4. Stereotyping and prejudice: the dissociation model

Since the previous paragraphs examined self-categorisation as a multi-dimensional socio-cognitive process, it is worth highlighting two of the by-products of such a process: stereotyping and prejudice. It is possible to think of these three in a linear fashion. First, members of a certain group categorise themselves at individual, interpersonal and social levels, thus leading them to create a stereotypical socio-cognitive image of other members of the in-group and the out-group, as well as themselves (as in the case of depersonalisation). Stereotyping in that sense is presented as a cognitive motivation, which in turn fuels prejudiced behaviour. In such a perception, stereotyping is introduced as a schema (Augoustinous, Walker & Donaghue, 2014) mediating in the process of information processing.

Devine's (1989a & 1989b) dissociation model draws on the interrelation between stereotypes and prejudice and can offer useful insights into this study, since these two are established as cognitive structures that are internalised through social interaction. According to this model, stereotypes are known by all group members and can actually be automated in some of them. This is mainly because they differ in their prejudice levels in accordance with their individual belief systems and their personal stances on stereotyping. Some people are classified as having high prejudice, and in this case, there is no conflict between their personal beliefs on the one hand and their access to this shared knowledge of stereotypes on the other. Therefore, such knowledge will be easily internalised and activated automatically in relevant contexts.

On the contrary, low-prejudice people do not accept these stereotypes due to their different value systems as well as varying individual experience. As a result, they experience more conflict with the shared knowledge of stereotypes and, consequently, inhibit stereotype activation. Keeping this in mind, the bloggers being studied in this research and the group they belong to can be classified as low-prejudice people who reject stereotypical mental representations of women. The conflicts they experience with shared stereotypes and high prejudice people fuel their desire to change the status quo and communicate their cause to the world.

However, despite the fact that the model has been quite influential, especially when it was first conceived, supporting this classification in light of Devine's model could be problematic. The model can be cast as being too simplistic. Combining the various components of personal and socio-cognitive models and linking them automatically and directly in such a conditioned manner negates any possibilities for change.

3.1.5.5. Social dominance theory

Traces of the social identity theory were later extended to one of the major theories for understanding intergroup ideologies, i.e. the social dominance theory. Originally developed by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), this theory states that dominance is the norm in any human society, since group hierarchies are inevitable. Consequently, some groups will dominate others on the basis of such hierarchies. Section 3.1.3 highlights that these hierarchies might be based on gender or age or be arbitrarily set. Due to such inevitability, groups have their own means to maintain these hierarchies. Sidanius and Pratto (1999: 45) refer to these means as 'legitimizing myths', sets of socio-cognitive constructs such as beliefs, stereotypes and overall ideologies. In that sense, these legitimising myths offer accounts for the existing social hierarchies within society. One kind of these is 'hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths' which often preserve and maintain the existing power relations, and thus can be linked to the dominant ideologies discussed earlier. These myths will reinforce the status quo as they dominate and prevail within society. On the other hand, there are 'hierarchy-attenuating legitimising myths', which – as the name suggests – serve to actually weaken the current dominant ideology. Instead, these myths promote egalitarian relations between and within groups, and hence can be linked to the aforementioned ideology of resistance.

Within the social dominance theory, what determines which set of myths a member promotes depends on their level of social-dominance orientation (Sidanius and Pratto, 2003). People who are high on this orientation scale are very likely to adopt enhancing myths and consequently engage in careers promoting these hierarchies, such as police officers or government officials. Going along these lines, those who are low on this scale are more likely to reject these power relations by attenuating these myths and even

engaging in careers promoting more equality, such as social work (Fiske and Taylor, 2013).

The previous paragraphs have examined the basis for the theory adopted in this study. Taking into consideration the differences established earlier between socially shared mental models on the one hand and individual ones on the other, and how these feed respectively into maintaining an unjust status quo or resisting it and promoting change, the offering of a relevant ideological discussion is needed. This is not only because CDA is deeply rooted in ideology, but also because these socio-cognitive representations are often articulated along the lines of the us-them dimension (van Dijk, 1995). The blogs under investigation are a clear example of this dimension, and the analysis chapters will highlight which kinds of representations are assigned to each of these groups.

The discussion has also highlighted the crucial role of interaction in distributing these representations within the discursive context. In fact, interaction is interrelated with CDA to the point that it has been proven to correlate with other terms such as ideology and identity. To illustrate, in forming the terms for the CADAAD (Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines) Conference, interaction came third in a Google search on CDA reflections, after ideology and identity, respectively (Hodge, 2012). Because of these strong affiliations, these blogs, which are presented as a means for communication with their readers, are further evidence for the necessity of communicating social change on ideological grounds, thus lending themselves to examination.

In short, section 3.1 has examined a number of influential theories and models of social cognition, including the social identity theory, the self-categorisation theory, the dissociation model and the social dominance theory. Despite their limitations, these frameworks can, potentially, offer some useful insights for understanding some of the socio-cognitive basis for intergroup behaviour and conflict. In addition to the 'us-them' dimension represented above, traits within the framework of the authoritarian personality can be of some relevance in understanding the behaviour of the group opposing the recent

reforms with regard to women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia. Besides this, the theoretical framework offered above for legitimising myths, whether enhancing or attenuating, has been examined in light of its relevance to the current struggle. With all of this established, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to examining the methodology adopted in this thesis along the lines of the aforementioned theoretical discussion. Being strongly affiliated with ideology, a CDA study with a socio-cognitive perspective needs to examine discourse at varying levels, each of which addresses a particular manifestation of such ideology. Some of these operate at the surface level and can be clearly identified in a text, while others, as will be shown in the remainder of this thesis, need further investigation. All of these will be examined in detail below.

3.2. Methodology for data selection, collection and analysis

It has been established in Chapter Two, that discourse denotes, first and foremost, language in use, highlighting the intricate and interwoven relationship between discourse on the one hand and social practice on the other. Accordingly, it is necessary at the outset of this section to reiterate the aforementioned conception of discourse as being simultaneously constitutive of and constituted by society. It is also of key importance to highlight that these interrelations are not shaped in 'monolithic or mechanical ways' (Fairclough, 1993: 134). Societies are known to sustain 'a variety of coexisting, contrasting and often competing discursive practices'. Such complexity is manifested at the surface with actual and specific instances of language use. Previous discussions in Chapter Two demonstrate such coexisting practices at multiple levels. As a result, the multi-tiered nature of discourse requires a multi-tiered take on analysis, which will be the focus of the next section.

3.2.1. Multi-level analysis as a cornerstone in CDA

Irrespective of which stance on CDA a given analytical study adopts, multiplicity of analysis has been always the norm. Fairclough (1993: 134-5), for instance, views language use as communicating '(i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and belief.' Such a view corresponds to Halliday's theory of language (1978) where he highlights the multifunctionality of language. In this perspective,

language serves three metafunctions: *ideational* metafunction, referring to a text representing ideas, events, entities and people; *interpersonal* metafunction, referring to relationships between interlocutors; and *textual* metafunction, referring to cohesion and coherence at and above the sentence level. Fairclough (1995: 97) stresses that embarking on CDA research needs to address three dimensions simultaneously: text; discursive practice; and socio-cultural practice. At the first dimension, the analyst targets linguistic description on a variety of tools depending on what he or she is examining. At the second, the analysis examines the relationships involved in the production, distribution and interpretation of discursive processes. At the third and last dimension, these textual and discursive practices are explained in light of their relationship with the wider social context.

However, it has been explained that the research at hand adopts a socio-cognitive approach in tackling its data (section 2.3.3.1). Hence, while it partly draws on the aforementioned categorisation on which it bases its methodological stance, it follows another framework where cognition is added to the equation through mental models. Cognition serves to mediate and facilitate the dynamic relations between discourse on the one hand and society on the other (van Dijk, 2009). It accounts for the description of discourse at the surface and most explicit level (i.e. textual one), to be linked to wider discursive and socio-cognitive contexts. This duality or multiplicity of conception with regards to how one can approach CDA is at the very heart of it. This means that CDA is not ‘a specific direction of research’ and has no ‘unitary theoretical framework’ (van Dijk, 2015: 468). The plurality of approaches investigated earlier proves this to be accurate.

In accordance with that, devising a methodological framework with an eclectic take on this plurality seems to be the norm that most CDA studies agree on. Taking the work of Al-Hejin (2007, 2012 & 2015) on the wearing of the veil, *hijab* or other Islamic covering by women, as covered in the BBC for example, analysis reveals a triangulation of theoretical frameworks combining aspects of Fairclough’s social model, van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach and Wodak’s discourse historical approach. Consequently,

implementing an eclectic methodology was appropriate. In addition to this eclectic take on analysis as an example of consensus in CDA literature, multiplicity of levels within each of these analyses is another common practice. Fairclough's aforementioned analytical framework is a clear case of multi-tiered analysis in CDA research. Van Dijk's work on the socio-cognitive approach also entails this multiplicity on both theoretical and analytical levels. He differentiates between what he refers to as the 'micro level' of analysis, incorporating aspects such as verbal interaction and communication on one hand and the 'macro level', targeting power and inequality struggles between social groups (van Dijk, 2015: 468). However, an intermediate level of analysis, the meso level, is necessary to ensure the influential transmission of discursive practices in either way.

Keeping in mind the intricate relationship between the micro and the macro levels of analysis and the parallel perception of discourse as being both socially constitutive and constituting at the same time, it is possible to design the analysis in either direction. For instance, in her work on the discourse of political speeches, Bayram (2010) argues that the analyst might start at the micro level by examining features at the linguistic level such as lexical choice or syntactic structure and then examine what strategic functions these choices and structures serve. The alternative for devising a methodological framework starts at the other end, at the macro level, by analysing the communicative and ideological functions at hand. Then, it works its way down to see how these are manifested at the linguistic or surface level. While both perspectives are possible and can be linked to a number of cases in the reviewed literature, they assume a linear fashion in approaching discourse and its various levels. Instead, it is of key importance to view these relations in a nonlinear fashion, which is more suited to social phenomena. Understanding the socially constitutive and constituting nature of discourse requires dynamicity of analysis in which each level is linked to the other, both influencing and being influenced by its manifestations.

This, however, does not avoid some classical problems, such as whether the analysis should be viewed in this nonlinear perspective, and if so, where can the analyst start? The research at hand utilises a general examination of the wider socio-cultural and ideological

context (section 1.3), then divides the analysis into interrelated levels for the sake of analysis. However, before going into detail about the adopted levels of analysis in this study, it is worth pointing out that while most of the relevant literature locates where a given feature under examination occurs within the micro/macro binary, some aspects of what is referred to in the current thesis as the meso level (discursive context) are sometimes included under the micro or textual level. This is more likely in the case of written online discourses, which can sometimes affect the clarity of analysis presentation.

Due to this, the current research allows for a separate analytical entry in its adopted methodology at the meso level. In addition to clarity of presentation, assigning a separate entry for the meso level helps in addressing the occasionally highlighted gap between the micro and the macro levels in CDA. To elaborate on this, van Dijk (2015: 268-9) stresses that CDA research must attempt to ‘bridge’ this ‘well-known’ gap to arrive at a unified analysis, in correspondence to the unity of discourse it targets. It must also be kept in mind when devising the methodological framework, that the proposed analytical perspective corresponds to these levels interactively, and in a nonlinear fashion. This is devised along the lines of the overarching research questions introduced in Chapter One. To illustrate, the first question entails embarking on the analysis at a macro level, while the second and third questions, respectively narrow it down to the micro and the meso levels. In the fourth and fifth questions, the analysis is brought back to the macro level, but this time, using cumulative evidence from the micro and meso analyses. Below is a reiteration of these research questions with a parallel positioning of them at analytical levels:

1. What are the main topics requiring social change(s) in women-related posts in Saudi English-language blogs? MACRO LEVEL
2. Who are the main social actors and how are they linguistically represented? How does this representation tie in with the social change(s) required? MICRO LEVEL
3. What links to other texts/ discourses/ persons are made in these posts and how do these links tie in with the social change(s) requested? MESO LEVEL

4. Which changing social factors and cognitive models underlie these representations and connections in the blogs under study? MACRO LEVEL
5. What is the potential of the examined discourse to achieve the desired social change? MACRO LEVEL

3.2.2. Data selection and collection

In order to answer these questions, data will be collected from four Saudi blogs written in English by three Saudi bloggers (two of the blogs are by the same blogger, an older blog similar in style to the remaining ones and a more recent blog with a news-like style). Below is a list of these blogs and their bloggers (currently, some blogs have stopped and been moved to other addresses as part of the blogger's personal archives). A fifth blog was originally included in the blog lists, <http://www.aneyeonsaudi.org>, by Saad Al Dosary, but it was excluded later as it turned out, during initial sampling and piloting, that the vast majority of its posts are business oriented and do not bear relevance to the topics discussed in this thesis.

- <http://saudijeans.org/>(by Ahmed Al Omran)
- <http://riyadhbureau.com/>(by Ahmed Al Omran)
- <http://qusaytoday.com/en/> (by Qusay Fayoumi)
- <http://saudiwoman.me/> (by Eman Al Nafjan)

3.2.2.1. Choosing English as the language of posting

All these bloggers are Saudis and they blog from Saudi Arabia, where they live and write. However, they write in English, which is not their mother tongue or Saudi Arabia's native language. Inevitably, their choice to write in English has an impact on their posts and readership, which will be explained in more detail in the analysis chapters. However, to sum it up briefly, this impact can be looked at from two perspectives: production and reception. First, from the production perspective, the fact that these bloggers have what

Kachru (1985: 20) refers to as 'bilingual creativity', enables them to make adjustments to appropriate their posts socially and psychologically. Jones (2010: 473), reports that this instance of creativity within the discourse has the potential to induce social change. This takes place either on the immediate level of interaction by 'shifting' power relations among participants or on a society level by 'contesting conventional orders of discourse' and creating new social identities. When these bloggers choose, for instance, to transliterate an Arabic word, rather than merely writing its English translation, this is likely to have an impact on the representations they construct in the posts.

From the reception perspective, on a national level, these bloggers address Saudis who are highly educated and capable of reading in English professionally. On an international level, however, the non-Saudi audience who are interested in finding out more about Saudi Arabia and what is going on in the region can have direct access to the content of such blogs without having to struggle with the language barrier. Put another way, using English as a language for publishing their posts highlights the connections they attempt to make with the more educated section of Saudis, whom they assume to be more supportive of them in their calls for change. They are also creating connections with the world outside Saudi Arabia that might be interested in supporting them achieve their desired change.

3.2.2.2. Brief preliminary description of the bloggers and their blogs

In addition to being proficiently bilingual, another thing that these bloggers have in common is that they all did some higher education degrees outside Saudi Arabia and in English-speaking countries before settling back in Saudi. This exposure to foreign cultures could be linked to the connections between these bloggers on the one hand and the English-speaking world on the other. The bloggers under examination are all male writers, with the exception of the last blog by Al Nafjan. Each blog tends to have its own preferences: Al Omran's are mainly news-like; Qusay's is the most personal, diary-like; and Al Nafjan's is the richest and most active one in terms of gender issues and women's rights in the country.

3.2.2.3. Criteria for data selection and collection

Since the current research examines gender-related topics, it is important to explain what can be classified as gender-relevant and what cannot. Saudi Arabia maintains one of the most pronounced systems of gender segregation in the world. Therefore, and as will be elaborated below, whenever the term *woman*, or any other term denoting female identity, appears in a text, chances are high that the text will be gendered. This is specifically accurate in case of the blogs at hand, as they explicitly exhibit their interest in women's empowerment topics. However, not every post in these blogs is relevant to the purpose of this study. Therefore, certain criteria are set prior to data selection and collection.

- Only posts published between 2009 -2012 will be included in the data. These dates were selected for a number of reasons. First, the vast majority of the reformative policies or calls for change discussed in Chapter Three occurred during that period, or at least received viral attention due to the advancement in digital blogging in Saudi Arabia. Prior to 2009, most of the blogs written in Saudi Arabia were in Arabic, which is expected considering that it is the country's native tongue. In addition to this, blogs written in English on the Saudi scene were either written by expats living in Saudi Arabia and were commenting on these topics from a westerner's perspective. Alternatively, they were written by Saudi bloggers who were blogging irregularly and infrequently or who neglected gender-related topics, as will be examined in the second criterion. After 2012, it is evident that the blogging scene in Saudi Arabia, and the whole world in general, started to lose its audience to social media platforms (section 2.7). Some bloggers stopped blogging regularly after that year as they started pursuing their writings through the traditional news agency like Al Omarn. Others continue to blog but not as often as they used to, preferring to take the discussion to different platforms such as their Twitter accounts.
- The posts must be directly women-related. By women-related, it is meant that the post is discussing a topic in relation to what women in Saudi Arabia can do or have and how this is changing or in need of change. In this sense, these posts will

be explicitly gendered. However, in order to determine the *aboutness* of these texts, a term borrowed from corpus linguistics (Baker et al, 2008), the selected posts will be judged while taking into consideration the thematic categorising, i.e. archives used by these bloggers in order to organise their blog posts.

3.2.2.4. Pilot study leading to main study

Keeping these two criteria at mind, a sample of nine posts were selected and collected initially as part of a pilot study. During initial stages of data selection and collection, a key word search was implemented using the inbuilt search engine in each of these blogs to elicit as many posts as possible. The key word list included words such as *woman, women, girl, girls, lady, ladies, female, her, hers, wife, mother, daughter, sister* and *aunt*. These words were selected due to their gendered meanings. However, this did not yield as many relevant posts as expected. Hence, for the main study, the analyst opted for manual scanning of the all blog posts published between 2009 and 2012 in all four of the blogs under examination. A total of 172 posts were collected, comprising the population for the study at hand. These were later divided into 11 categories depending on the topics discussed in them. The categories included the following topics:

- Women driving
- Gender segregation
- Male guardianship
- Women education
- Women in politics
- Hijab and Islamic clothing
- Minor marriages
- Women in unconventional work environments
- Women in sports
- Female pioneers and activists
- A general category with more inclusive content on women empowerment in Saudi Arabia.

Of course, not all of these topics received equal attention and some were relatively neglected in these blogs as they were not discussed or provoked as often in the offline world. Therefore, only the top five topics are included since they received more attention by comparison, which is also consistent with the fundamental issues with regard to women empowerment in Saudi Arabia. The topic of women driving and calls for lifting this ban is in first place, followed by women in unconventional work environments. Women in politics, women in sports and gender segregation came in third, fourth and fifth places respectively. A sample of 40 posts was selected from these topics, in proportional topic percentages to their original inclusion in the 172-post population. In order to ensure that the sample was selected randomly, lists of posts under each topic were inserted into an EXCEL spreadsheet and the RANDOM function was used in each case.

After that, each blog post was assigned a number and then transcribed using a clause based transcription system (Appendix A). Drawing on systemic functional grammar (Halliday and Mattiessen, 2014), each post was divided into its main clauses, with the main verb being the centre of each clause. These clauses were then numbered cardinally. In the case of embedded clauses, these were numbered and included under the same cardinal number of the main clause and assigned alphabetical numbering. After that, the adopted analytical procedure was carried out on posts of each topic separately. The following section explains in detail the methodological framework behind the adopted analytical levels and related tools, with regard to the data at hand. It is mainly based on an analytical framework proposed by Koller (2012, 2014).

3.2.3. Analytical framework for data analysis: rationale and case studies

Since the research at hand attempts to examine and analyse discourse from a socio-cognitive perspective, it is important to clarify at the outset that investigating cognitive constructs cannot be carried out directly, since they do not exist as such in language. Koller stresses that mental models, including the socio-cognitive representations (SCRs) she is mainly concerned with, ‘cannot simply be read off texts’. Instead, the analyst might only infer about such representations using cumulative evidence at the linguistic level and

consequently linking these findings to the wider discursive and socio-cognitive contexts (Koller, 2014: 153). Since the current thesis is concerned with how the ideological clash discussed in Chapter One is exhibited in discourse and how discourse in return is interacting with such ideologies, Koller's analytical framework bears significant relevance to the data at hand.

It is true that the original model has been devised to investigate collective identity in discourse. Nevertheless, it can also be adopted in other CDA studies. As she draws on Moscovisi's (2000) social representations, Koller highlights the socially shared aspect of SCRs and how these come into play in discursive processes. Keeping in mind the previous theoretical discussion in section 3.1, two sets of mental representations are introduced and said to clash within the Saudi context. One of these sets is stated as being more socially shared and, hence, more dominant than the second, which tends to operate at smaller scales, at least at the time of writing the posts. In the case of the 'not socially shared' models, at least not in the wider sector of the Saudi society during that period, the goal is to gradually transform them as such. The wider communicative function of the posts attempts to negotiate these models until they reach a sufficient level of social 'sharedness'. This should facilitate their feasibility in bringing about the desired change into women's status quo. In the following sections, each of these levels will be described while highlighting suitable methods to collect data, which will be used cumulatively to answer the research questions in the last chapter.

3.2.3.1. Micro level: textual analysis

This level operates at the linguistic analysis of text as the most tangible and salient manifestation of discourse. Hence, it can be attributed to being mainly 'descriptive' of the data at hand (Koller, 2014: 154-5). Koller proposes a number of linguistic parameters to elicit findings at the textual level, based on what overarching questions the research aims to answer. In the original framework, she enlists parameters such as social actor representation, process type analysis, evaluation, modality, intertextuality and interdiscursivity, metaphoric expressions and multimodal analysis. However, it goes without saying that there is 'no definitive list' of these parameters. This requires the

analyst to approach them with flexibility, adding and omitting in accordance with the specifics of his or her own research. Feiz and Strauss (2013), for instance, link the micro level of analysis to other linguistic features, such as pronoun use. This means that what is included at the micro level depends on what the analysis attempts to investigate.

What is advised is maintaining relative consistency throughout the analysis to ensure the cumulative attribute to the findings. In the current thesis, a number of different blogs are examined and, despite their variation in length and personal style, the described analytical levels and parameters have been applied consistently. In order to ensure consistency through a variety of topics, as has been explained, various social actors were grouped into main social actors with relatively similar categories across different topics. Most of the parameters in Koller's framework have been used in data analysis, with the omission of two. The first of these is modality, which was excluded at the earlier stages of analysis. Initial piloting and sampling revealed that while modality can be linked to investigating social change, the examined posts did not yield sufficient findings to support its inclusion as an analytical parameter. Another parameter that has been omitted is multimodal analysis. Despite its relative significance in creating the desired cumulative evidence, especially taking into consideration the multimodality of digital discourse, time and word count limitations with regards to data collection and analysis forced the researcher to opt for excluding this parameter. Apart from that, the following section will explain each of these parameters while providing an overview of relevant CDA works.

3.2.3.1.1. Linguistic parameters: social actor representation

This parameter is mainly based on the work of van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), who was motivated by the lack of bi-uniqueness in language, i.e. the mismatch between linguistic and sociological categories, such as in the role of agency. Hence, it was necessary to come up with a system of representation that pays attention to such mismatches. Van Leeuwen was also motivated by the assumption that meaning cannot be tied to language, or indeed any other form of semiotics. Instead, for him, meaning is rooted in culture. With this in mind, the social actor approach is fit for purpose here. For instance, due to the current gender separation practised in the country, the term *woman* has a relatively

more gendered meaning when examined in Saudi versus Western culture. This proves that a proper examination stems first and foremost from an understanding of a particular culture.

Within the social actor approach, van Leeuwen (1996) creates a comprehensive network system to explore the various roles allocated to social actors in discourse. This system originates from a socio-semantic perspective of discourse, rather than a merely linguistic one, and hence it brings together different components from both content and linguistic analyses (Koller, 2012: 23). Perhaps the starting point for this system should be the dichotomy of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, which, naturally, is of key relevance to CDA. Exclusion of social actors in discourse is further divided up into total exclusion, which is tentatively labelled as *radical*, and partial exclusion, labelled as *less radical*. Total exclusion cases ‘leave no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities’ (van Leeuwen, 1996: 39) while in partial exclusion, van Leeuwen further divides this dichotomy into *suppression* and *backgrounding*. In suppression, ‘there is no reference of the social actor in question anywhere in the text’ while in backgrounding the excluded social actors are ‘mentioned elsewhere in the text, and we can infer with reasonable (though never total) certainty who they are. They are not so much excluded as de-emphasised, pushed into the background’. Example 8.a. below demonstrates a case of exclusion, and suppression in particular, in which there is no mention of the social actor in charge of lifting the ban (decision makers) anywhere in post 8:

8.a. *Since 2002 everyone keeps telling me that the ban will be lifted by the end of this year*
(post 8)

Inclusion, on the other hand, can be realised in plenty of ways, and van Leeuwen’s inventory diverges extensively at this stage. To illustrate, when actors are included, van Leeuwen creates sub-systems of role allocation starting from the binary set of *activation* or *passivation*. Role allocation is a process drawing on systemic functional linguistics in which semantic roles are assigned to a variety of participants at the sentence level (Rashidi & Rasti, 2012: 3). In activation, “social actors are represented as the active,

dynamic forces in an activity” (van Leeuwen, 1996: 43) whereas in passivation, these social actors are presented as undergoing an activity by someone else. In examples 2 and 5.a below, there are cases of *activation* and *passivation* respectively of the same social actor, women.

2. *Some Saudi Women want to vote in the municipal elections.* (post 3)

5.a. *And the biggest bombshell of all was that a woman was appointed as head of girl’s education.* (post 1)

In addition to these two sets, a third set of van Leeuwen’s role allocation system will be examined in the analysis, i.e. *categorisation* and *nomination*. The difference, however, in the third set is that it is not binary or incompatible like the first two. Categorisation can be used along with nomination to refer to the same social actor simultaneously. *Nomination* is constituted by social actors being represented ‘in terms of their unique identity’, as is the case in proper names (van Leeuwen, 1996: 52-54). Categorisation happens when they are represented ‘in terms of identities and functions they share with others’. It takes the form of *functionalisation*, when social actors are represented by their occupation, *identification*, when represented by ‘what they, more or less permanently, or unavoidable are’, such as gender classification, or *appraisement*, which can be linked to the third parameter in section 3.2.3.1.3. The following example demonstrates a case of categorisation through identification and functionalisation respectively:

3.a. *In 2007, a group of women working with Saudi Arabia’s National Society for Human Rights published the first legal study arguing that female lawyers should have equal rights to practice law.* (post 26)

As stated above, this inventory extends deeply with regards to role allocation. However, these three sets, i.e. inclusion versus exclusion, activation versus passivation, and categorisation and nomination are the only ones to be applied here. Figure 3.1 below demonstrates which parts of van Leeuwen’s system are included in the analysis (in *italics*). It is possible to view the whole inventory as consisting of consecutive,

prerequisite sets of investigation, with each set being a must prior to investigating the following one. Thus, since this study is mainly concerned with the agency of social actors with regards to the designated topics and social change in general, these three are the most relevant. Besides, and keeping in mind the multi-level nature of this analysis and the need for creating consistency in the overall analysis, highlighting these three sets allows the analysis to align with the following parameter, i.e. process type analysis.

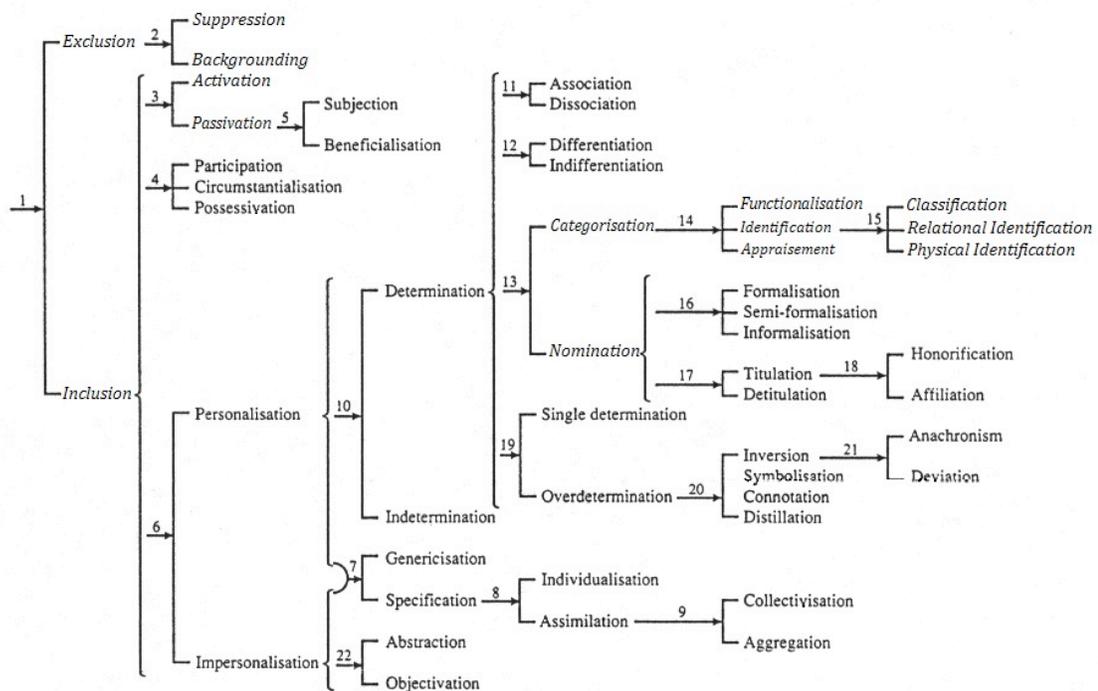


Figure 3.1: Van Leeuwen's social actor representation framework (1996: 66)

Prior to moving to the second parameter, it is appropriate to examine a number of methodological examples demonstrating how to approach social actor representation with a CDA objective in mind. The first example is from a CDA study by Rashidi and Rasti (2012) on news reports regarding Iranian nuclear activities from four Western, high quality newspapers: *The Economist*; *The Express*; *The Washington Post*; and *The New York Times*. Adopting and adapting van Leeuwen's social actor representation, the

researchers examined the morpho-syntactic modes in Iranian nuclear discourse in search of asymmetrical patterns of representations with regard to both the Western and Iranian governments. Since the study relied solely on social actor representation, five sets of binary categories were used, including the inclusion/exclusion and activation/passivation categories also adopted in the current thesis. The overall findings revealed that there is a systematic ideological bias in the representations assigned to the Iranian side allowing for a differential treatment to take place. The study concluded by advocating the implementation of the same methodology to understand more about how the Western newspapers report on challenging political stances.

In another study, Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010), applied this linguistic parameter to their work, but this time in conjunction with Halliday's transitivity system - to be explained in more detail in section 3.2.3.1.4. The aim of their study was to offer an analytical understanding of the representation of male and female social actors and how gender identities are constructed in the *Interchange Third Edition*, an internationally known textbook for teaching English as a second language. Interestingly, and unlike the first study mentioned above, this study was motivated by positive perspectives of its analysis (see discussion on critical and positive veins in the analysis in section 2.4). Since this textbook has been revised and edited as it is being promoted and used globally, the findings of Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh's analysis revealed that there is indeed an asymmetrical gender representation in the text, but in favour of female actors. Women in the textbook have been portrayed as more active, prominent, independent, successful and assertive than men. This, they suggest, reveals the intentions of the textbook's writers in challenging traditional values that degrade or exclude women. Since the current thesis examines blog posts, which have been written with the intention to promote women empowerment in Saudi Arabia, it will be interesting to see whether the posts under question exhibit similar findings. However, the question that can be provoked here is to what extent should the ideological context translate into the textual one? The second study presented above demonstrates that while producing the textbook in question, a sufficient degree of intention was paid to ensure that social actor representation and

process types have been adjusted to suit its pro-women ideology. But, in the case of blog posts that are not as artificially constructed as textbooks, can this be the case?

Finally, in conclusion to this parameter, it is important to point out that findings at this level are examined and analysed quantitatively. As a result, a statistical test is needed to examine whether the differences between these descriptive figures, if any, are of statistical significance. The Lancaster University Statistical Advisory Centre was consulted to ensure the accuracy of the tests used. The centre advised that the exact binominal test (one-tailed) be used to compare cases of activation and passivation for each main social actor, since the number of cases compared in each social actor can only be one of two potential cases (i.e. either activation or passivation). Keeping this in mind, the suggested test was used to validate quantitative results accordingly. This parameter is not the only one in this analytical framework in which data are analysed mainly in quantitative terms. The following parameter requires a similar approach in the analysis.

3.2.3.1.2. Linguistic parameters: process type analysis

This parameter is based on the work of Halliday and Mattiessen (2004, 2014) on systemic functional grammar in general and on Halliday's concept of transitivity in particular (1985). In order to understand how transitivity works, it is possible to conceive experience as comprising two forms i.e. inner experience and outer experience (Halliday and Mattiessen, 2004: 174). Outer experience is represented as events or actions while inner experience is represented as reflection on and reactions to the outer experience. At the clause level, a transitivity process often consists of three main components within the clause system, which are the *process* itself, the *participants* involved in the process and the *circumstances* associated with this process. Halliday further divides process types into six; three major ones (material, mental, relational) and three minor ones (behavioural, verbal or existential) (Halliday and Mattiessen, 2004: 26). Each of these processes has a different meaning and represents participants as having varying degrees of agency/power. These differences in meaning are, however, not always clear-cut, as some of these processes fall at the borderline between two process types and have features of both of

them simultaneously (e.g. behavioural processes). Below is an explanation of each process type, followed by an example from the data at hand.

1. Material processes are processes of ‘doing’ in which one entity does something that causes a change in another entity, or in the same entity where processes are reflexive. In this case, the two participants involved are the *actor* doing the action and the *goal* to which/whom it might be done.

27-28. Halfway through the match the muttawa came in, and ordered the TV off.
(post 35)

2. Mental processes are processes of ‘sensing’ and these can take the form of perception (e.g. seeing or hearing), affection (e.g. fearing or liking), volition (e.g. wanting or desiring) or cognition (e.g. knowing or thinking). The participants involved here are the *sensor*, the conscious being in charge of sensing, and the *phenomenon* that is being sensed.

32.a. I think a woman never spoke to him that way before. (post 37)

3. Relational processes are processes of ‘being’ and can be one of the following types (Bustam, 2011: 26):

- Intensive, which establishes a sameness relationship between two entities (e.g. x is a)
- Circumstantial, which defines the entity in terms of time, place or manner (e.g. x is at a)
- Possessive, which indicates that one entity owns another (e.g. x has a)

Of these, three types can come in two modes: either attributive, in which there is a *carrier* and an *attribute* (e.g. ‘a’ is an attribute of ‘x’); or identifying, where

one participant is *identified* and the other is the *identifier* (e.g. ‘a’ is the identity of ‘x’).

22-23. *He’s actually a PhD holder and is far from your typical camera chasing sheikh.* (post 8)

4. Behavioural processes are on the borderline between ‘material’ and ‘mental’ processes. They refer to physiological and psychological behaviours such as smiling, laughing or crying. These behaviours do not create change in the outer experience like material ones. In such cases there is only one participant, the *behave*.

16. “:’D Crying!!!” (post 5)

5. Verbal processes are simply processes of ‘saying’. Consequently, they have one participant as the *sayer* (the one who speaks), one participant as the *receiver* (the one to whom the speech is addressed) and optionally *verbiage* (what is said). In other cases of verbal processes, the *sayer* is acting verbally on another participant, such as an *insult* or *praise*. In such cases, the participant acted on is the *target*.

26.a. *Some say the head of Hay’a was replaced due to this issue being a problem.* (post 22)

6. Existential processes are processes that signify that something exists or happens. Such processes are usually expressed by the verb *to be* or other verbs denoting existence such as *to exist* or *to arise*.

29. *There were two muttawas and one police officer escorting them.* (post 35)

Halliday’s transitivity system and process type analysis can bring a lot to this study as they offer the reader a closer look at who is taking action and who is the object of action. It is well known that material processes represent the strongest agency in comparison to

other processes. Along these lines, a participant who is a sayer, for instance, appears stronger than a participant who merely exists. Therefore, the potential of process type analysis can possibly enrich CDA at the textual level. Therefore, it is no wonder that the transitivity system is used widely in the relevant literature. Similar to the first parameter, process type analysis can bridge the gap between the social and the textual as it bases its taxonomy on understanding the functions expressed in a process, thus linking it to its social context.

In the aforementioned study by Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010), process type analysis revealed similar findings to the ones discussed above, with women being more active than men. It has been found that in most cases females are more activated than males and at a statistically significant level with regards to material, relational and mental processes. Again, the same question arises here over expecting similar findings in case of more natural language uses, even those taking a supportive stance to women empowerment. Koller (2012: 30), for instance, uses transitivity system along with other parameters to examine at the textual level how collective gender identities are constructed in advertising discourse. Quantitative analysis reveals that women are actors in 82% of occurrences, while the same percentage for male social actors is 58% only, thus defying the traditional gender-stereotypical collective identities. However, qualitative analysis of the concordances of the most common type of process associated with advertising discourse reveals more stereotypical findings. While women, for instance, love gifts and celebrity magazines to 'look their very best' or they 'like their pampering products', men love 'to be original and a bit daring' and want 'to push the boundaries'.

These examples demonstrate practically how the transitivity system can be used to aid in yielding sufficient findings to arrive at conclusive cumulative findings in CDA. The difference, however, between the first and second parameters is that, in the first, the analyst is mainly concerned with the representation of a given social actor, while in the second the whole process of action is under examination, thus revealing a more dynamic form of representation. It is worth pointing out that findings at this level were examined quantitatively just as with the first parameter. While the categories of process types are

more than just two, as is the case with activation and passivation with regards to social actor representation, the exact binominal test was also used. During piloting and initial sampling, a Chi-square test was used since we have nine potential participant roles for each main social actor as follows:

- Actor in material process MA/AC
- Goal/receiver in material process MA/GO-RE
- Sensor in mental process ME/SE
- Phenomenon/receiver in mental process ME/PH-RE
- Sayer in verbal process V/SA
- Target/ receiver in verbal process V/ TA-RE
- Any participant in relational process R
- Behavior in behavioural process B
- Existent in existential process E

However, these were later included under two major process type categories to maintain more consistency in the analysis. These categories were initiating and receiving roles. As a result, the Chi-square test was replaced with the exact binominal test. This examination was both grammatical and semantic. From a grammatical perspective, the initiating category comprised the following roles:

- Actor in material processes
- Sayer in verbal processes
- Sensor in mental processes
- Behavior in behavioural processes

On the other hand, the receiving category included the following roles:

- Goal/receiver in material processes
- Phenomenon in mental processes
- Target/receiver in verbal processes

- Existent in existential processes
- Any participant in relational processes

However, because some processes might be negated, and might therefore negate the initiating roles these participants take, a semantic-based analysis was also conducted to ensure the accuracy of the categorisation. This was carried out by offering brief qualitative descriptions of different participant roles with regard to the main social actors. By adding a qualitative aspect to a predominantly quantitative parameter, as is the case with the first and second parameters, the analysis should be able to combine these aspects in search of any patterns or even inconsistencies. The remaining parameters, however, were solely based on a qualitative examination of the data. Investigating lexis will be the main focus of evaluation and metaphor as will be demonstrated next.

3.2.3.1.3. Linguistic parameters: evaluation

The third parameter examines how different groups and individuals are evaluated and what kinds of qualities are mainly associated with them (Koller, 2012). This can be quite informative and helpful in examining the linguistic context. It seems from initial sampling and the pilot study that bloggers often divide social actors into two main types corresponding to the two major positions opposing each other on many contemporary issues on the Saudi scene as explained in Chapter One. The first of these is a rather conservative and probably more socially accepted group during the time of writing the posts. It seems to reject many of the reforms in the country unless dictated by them. On the other hand, there is a more progressive group that supports reforms in relation to women's empowerment and calls for adopting a deeper understanding of religion and tradition. Of course, each side has its own continuum that ranges from passionate care for the country and sincere hope for reform to extremism. Similarly, each side accuses the other of radicalism and narrow-mindedness on the one hand, or Westernisation and secularism on the other.

However, a person on the street would probably find it hard to identify with either side without falling victim to inexplicable contradictions. Here lies the importance of discourse, as it clarifies to such persons, as well as to the outside world, what each side

might bring to the table. Evaluation stands out as one of the first tools to enable the text producer, the blogger in this case, to frame the representation of each group. Martin and White (2005) offer a comprehensive model to analyse appraisal, which is another term often used interchangeably with evaluation. However, before exploring their model in more detail, it is essential to highlight from the beginning that appraisal/evaluation forms can often have positive or negative values. Nevertheless, it is possible sometimes to detect forms which can be classified as ‘ambivalent’, as in the case of Bullo’s work (2014: 63), which will be discussed in more detail at the end of this section. So, while it might not always be obvious how to place an evaluative form on the negative/positive continuum, one might still detect a recurring theme of positive self-positioning versus negative other-positioning in the blog posts at hand. Therefore, examining how evaluative language is used adds another dimension that cannot be overlooked in the overall analysis as it bridges another gap between the textual and the socio-cognitive level.

According to Martin and White (2005), evaluative language can take the form of *affect*, which provides resources to account for emotional reactions. It can also take the form of *judgement*, which usually assesses the behaviours expressed in text as part of the attitudes adopted by the producers of such texts, or *appreciation*, which provides resources to account for admiration, for instance. Starting with the first category of evaluation affect, Martin (2000) offers a taxonomy of how affect can be analysed at the textual level in order to understand the emotional responses experienced by the ‘emoter’. These are further divided into two sub-categories; *authorial* and *non-authorial* affects. As the name suggests, in authorial affect, the emoter and the speaker are the same and it is often translated into first person, thus establishing an interpersonal bond with the reader as the speaker foregrounds his or her subjective emotions (Bullo, 2014). In the non-authorial affect, the emoter is not the speaker and the later uses this sub-category to account for the feelings or responses attributed to other people. Below is an example of non-authorial affect:

13.a. *Ahlam al-Amer, headmistress of the school, told al-Watan that both parents and senior officials were unhappy when the school began allowing students to play basketball last year.* (post 33)

The second category, judgement, is concerned with evaluative terms towards human behaviour. In order to evaluate these behaviours, they must be judged against a set of social norms which are further distinguished as either *social sanctions* or *social esteem*. In judgement cases associated with social sanction, the evaluated human behaviour is judged in reference to the social norms accepted and codified in a given culture, including systems of legality, morality or politeness. In cases of social esteem, however, they are not as officially powerful as social sanction, but nevertheless they can affect how individuals are positioned or labelled in their given culture (Bullo, 2014). Below is an example of judgement:

15.a. *The contradiction is in the fact that we are supposedly the most conservative nation in the world* (post 20)

The last category is appreciation, which concerns the evaluative terms used positively or negatively to express aesthetically provoked attitudes towards objects, affairs, processes or natural phenomena. Due to this, it is sometimes the case that appreciation interferes with affect or judgement. However, a rule of thumb here is to carefully examine the subject of evaluation. If what is evaluated is a given phenomenon or entity, then it is classified as appreciation. However, if it is the emotions attached to the person doing the evaluation, then it is classified as affect. Finally, if it is the behaviour of that person, then it is judgement. Similar to the previous two categories, Martin and White (2005: 56) further divide appreciation into four sub-categories as follows. First there is *composition*, which is concerned with how a given entity is structured or formed. Second, there is *valuation*, which examines the worthiness of a given entity and its legacy. Third comes *reaction* to the quality of the entity under examination in terms of its *presentation*. Last there is *reaction* to the impact of that entity in terms of it being *captivating* to its onlooker

or not. Below is an example of appreciation, with a negative value attached to what is evaluated:

1. Another day, another misogynist fatwa. (post 19)

Bullo relies primarily on Martin and White's model at the textual level to analyse her data with reference to the discourse of advertising reception, using spoken data from two focus groups presented with three printed advertisements recontextualising well-known paintings. The findings of the appraisal taxonomy proved helpful as they are later linked to the wider socio-cognitive context, drawing on van Dijk's socio-cognitive model and Koller's SCRs (2008). In so doing, the study started with a bottom-up examination at the textual level and concluded with a top-down examination of interactive social and cognitive factors leading to these perceptions. This dynamicity of approach resembles the nonlinear fashion adopted at the current study and explained at the beginning of the methodology section. This assures the fact that while maintaining consistency and addressing the minute details of the textual level, the analyst should never overlook the bigger picture by being fixated on these details.

Before concluding this parameter, it should be noted that in this analysis, the representation of the main findings is done thematically. This means that evaluation cases are grouped based on the object of evaluation. While some general objects are presented across different topics, others are peculiar and dependent on the nature of topic. That being said, it is time to move to the next and last parameter targeting the textual level of analysis.

3.2.3.1.4. Linguistic parameters: metaphor

Metaphor analysis is deeply rooted in cognition, making it inherently suited for the socio-cognitive approach adopted in the current thesis. Due to such strong cognitive ties, it is essential to examine first what metaphors are and how they have been used and developed as cognitive and textual tools. For the inexperienced eye, metaphors might be classified as falling within the realm of poetry and literature. However, it has been acknowledged that

metaphors, even though they are imaginative stretches of language, are recently acknowledged as a property of everyday language (Cameron, 2003). It is evident that increasing research is being directed now towards examining metaphors in a variety of discourses, be it political, social or economic. For instance, there is the work of Stibbe (2013) on examining the corporation as a person metaphor and Musolff's (2007) work on body metaphors within political discourse and the state/society relationships. But before examining in some detail how metaphors are approached within discourse studies, it is essential to examine a number of metaphor schools and how they are interrelated.

Metaphors are cognitive constructs prior to being social and textual. Hence, it is convenient for socio-cognitive based CDA research to examine them with reference to their potential in shaping social context and not just being shaped by it. In that sense, analysing the discursive processes of metaphor can be linked to van Dijk's discourse-cognition-society triangle (Ezeifeke, 2013). From such a perspective, cognition mediates between discourse and context. Keeping the adopted theoretical and analytical framework in mind, examining how metaphors -as cognitive constructs- are used in the posts emerges as relevant to this study. The problem, however, is that relying exclusively on one school of metaphor analysis did not provide sufficient data at initial piloting and sampling. As a result, an eclectic approach combining conceptual metaphor theory and critical metaphor analysis has been devised. This has been made while taking into consideration that these are not viewed as two separate frameworks, but rather as development over metaphor study, especially in relation to CDA.

Starting with conceptual metaphor theory, due to the acknowledgement of metaphor as an underpinning construct within cognitive linguistics, the shift from metaphor in language to metaphor in mind has been inevitable (Cameron, 2003). Conceptual metaphor theory, also sometimes referred to as cognitive metaphor theory, was first established by Lakoff and Johnson's work (1980): *Metaphor We Live By*, in which they formulated the aforementioned cognitive discursive interrelation. From such perspective, one should expect metaphors to structure our thinking as social and cognitive beings. Drawing on Lakoff and Johnson's work, Semino (2008: 5) constructs conceptual metaphors as

‘systematic sets of correspondences, or ‘mappings’, across conceptual domains, whereby a ‘target’ domain (e.g. our knowledge about arguments) is partly structured in terms of a different ‘source’ domain (e.g. our knowledge about war)’. Taking the example mentioned in this definition, it is possible to link it to the conceptual metaphor of ARGUMENT IS WAR. Another definition of conceptual metaphor is by Charteris-Black (2004:15) in which it is a ‘formal statement of any idea that is hidden in a figure of speech... that can be inferred from a number of metaphorical expressions and help to resolve their semantic tension’.

Based on such a view, it is possible to distinguish between conceptual metaphors and linguistic metaphors, i.e. metaphorical expressions, whether words or phrases, through which conceptual metaphors are lexicalised. Despite its useful framework towards understanding this cognitive and textual mapping, conceptual metaphor theory has been criticised for overlooking how such mapping translates pragmatically. It is often argued that the potential of metaphor is more than just a cognitive construct; and it needs to be extended to examine when metaphors are used pragmatically (Ezeifeke, 2013). This is especially accurate within ideological discourses aiming at winning crowds or projecting beliefs. Since the discourse at hand falls under this category, conceptual metaphor analysis cannot be solely relied on. In reference to this, it is important to highlight that metaphors, as linguistic realisations, are inherently political and influential in terms of categorisation potential. This was explained in more detail at the beginning of this chapter, but with reference to language as a whole and not just metaphors.

It was therefore necessary to come up with another framework embracing this wider potential of metaphor in discourse. Musolff (2004) and Koller (2004), for instance, propose corpus-based approaches to critically analyse metaphors. Going along the same lines, Charteris-Black (2004) also devised critical metaphor analysis by adding a more critical strand to conceptual metaphor theory. Using corpus-based approaches to analyse natural language, he specifies that the size of the corpus should be based on the purposes motivating the analyst. Charteris-Black (2004:21) also suggests a method for the identification, interpretation and explanation of metaphor in discourse at three levels:

linguistic; cognitive; and pragmatic. However, since the current research incorporates three levels, with the textual one incorporating four parameters, only the first level of Charteris-Black's metaphor identification will be adopted at this textual level, while the remaining two are examined at the meso and micro levels.

In order to identify a particular metaphor, the analyst must be concerned with expressions causing semantic tension, as they are used outside their original domain to another unexpected one. This shift takes three forms: 'reification', meaning shifts from abstract to concrete; 'personification', shifts from inanimate to animate; and finally 'depersonalization', shifts from animate to inanimate. Relevant metaphorical expressions, which do not fit into any of these forms, will be commented on separately. After the identification process of all metaphoric expressions in posts, they were grouped into clusters thematically. Based on common threads running in each cluster, links to conceptual metaphor theory can be made by identifying source and target domains. Although occasional pragmatic explanation might be offered at this stage whenever necessary, metaphor analysis at this stage is primarily descriptive since further interpretation was carried out at later levels.

It is useful to conclude this parameter with two relevant studies in CDA literature. In the first case, Meadows (2007: 1), relies on metaphor and metonymy in order to examine how distancing and showing solidarity are realised in political discourse. In particular, the study examined the public statements made by the Bush administration in the years 2004-2005. Among a number of findings, Meadows' metaphor and metonymy analysis identified that the American audience are presented with 'the Iraqi version of themselves,' which is then established as having the positive characteristics associated with American people. The study also revealed that metaphors pervade political discourse, thus reassuring the aforementioned fact that metaphor analysis lends itself readily to CDA. The other case comes from a Nigerian context with a study by Ezeifeka, (2013). Using insights from the discussed frameworks, she examines the strategic use of metaphor in news reports in a Nigerian newspaper, *the Guardian*, on a teacher's strike. The study reveals that this privately-owned newspaper had in fact been siding with the

power elite, as was apparent in its metaphorical expressions, while it was pretending to act as a watchdog in the teachers' strike. All in all, in both cases, what is of key relevance is the insistence on an eclectic method in analysing metaphors.

As aforementioned, this eclectic vein extends through this study and not just metaphor or the textual level. In search of cumulative evidence, findings of the four linguistic parameters at the textual level were combined and summarised prior to moving to the next level. In doing so, findings were primarily presented where quantitative findings were summarised alongside qualitative ones. They are reported mainly descriptively since the analysis at the textual level does not aim at explanation or interpretation. The next level of meso analysis will extend its context to examine interpersonal and interdiscursive connections created in the posts.

3.2.3.2. Meso level: intertextuality and interdiscursivity

The second level of analysis in Koller's original framework is designed to answer questions regarding text production, distribution, reception and appropriation (Koller, 2012). Hence, she suggests that analysing the roles and the relationships involved in the discursive practice should be done at this level of analysis, while keeping in mind creating links between findings of this level and the previous one. Among other things, the analysis at this level examines the medium or platform through which these blog posts are produced, as well as their audience. It also examines the rationale behind them being written on such platforms and what they might assume to establish. A fundamental difference between the current framework underlying this research methodology and Koller's framework is that, while she places intertextuality and interdiscursivity as linguistic parameters belonging at the first level, these two features are introduced at the meso level instead. This has been undertaken due to the hyperlinked nature of the digital blog posts under question, which lends itself readily to intertextuality and interdiscursivity analysis while at the same time providing useful insight on the interpersonal relations established in these posts. In addition to this, assigning these features at the meso level can be linked to the discourse's historical approach, explained in more detail in section 2.3.1. After examining the text-internal representations at the

first level, the DHA assigns these features to a level a bit higher than the textual one, thus justifying the aforementioned argument. This can also be justified on the grounds of the eclectic nature of the adopted methodology in particular and CDA research in general.

That being said, it is time to identify what is meant by intertextuality and interdiscursivity and how they can be analysed at this level. Starting with intertextuality, Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 90) defines it as follows:

Intertextuality means that texts are linked to other texts, both in the past and in the present. Such connections are established in different ways: through explicit reference to a topic or main actor; through reference to the same events; by allusions or evocations; by the transfer of main arguments from one text to the next; and so on. The process of transferring given elements to new contexts is labelled *recontextualization*; if an element is taken out of a specific context, we observe the process of de-contextualisation; if the respective element is then inserted into a new context, we witness the process of recontextualization. The element (partly) acquires a new meaning, since meanings are formed in use.

It is evident in this excerpt how intertextuality can be linked to discursive practices, given the fact that the text producer often chooses to recontextualise certain texts, events or actors within his or her original text. This takes place to realise the role he or she acts on as the text producer, as well as the nature of the audience who will be receiving it. Interdiscursivity can be linked to intertextuality in the sense that it signifies the same inherent multiplicity of voices within discourse:

Interdiscursivity signifies that discourses are linked to each other in various ways. If we conceive of ‘discourse’ as primarily topic-related (as ‘discourse on x’), we will observe that a discourse on climate change frequently refers to topics or sub-topics of other discourses, such as finance or health. Discourses are open and often hybrid: new sub-topics can be created at many points. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009: 90)

Due to such closeness between these two features, they are sometimes included under one more comprehensive understanding of the term intertextuality. Fairclough (1992: 117-118) differentiates between two forms of intertextuality: ‘manifest intertextuality’ which can be equated with Reisigl and Wodak’s intertextuality; and ‘constitutive

intertextuality', which is equivalent to their interdiscursivity. For the sake of clarity of presentation, the current analysis adheres to the terminology explained in the above excerpts by Reisigl and Wodak.

How will these features be identified in the blog posts? Since hyperlinks in these posts are one of the salient features of the blogging genre (Myers, 2010a), the most explicit way to examine the plurality of texts and discourses with these posts will be a careful examination of their links. However, in addition to this, there are less explicit ways signalling such hybrid features. In these cases, relevant cases of the overall footing and voice as they are presented in the posts were examined. Therefore, the analysis examined dialogism as it is taking place within the plurality of voices (i.e. via intertextuality and interdiscursivity). Salama (2012) establishes a link between intertextuality and Bakhtin's (2006: 106) 'dialogic overtones' within a given utterance by emphasising the various voices existing simultaneously in text. Given that fact, Bakhtin (1981) draws the line between what can be classified as 'authoritative discourse', with fixed, univocal and monologue-based features on the one hand and 'internally persuasive' discourse with rhetorical features on the other (Wertsch, 2001: 226-227). Hence, it could be insightful to examine whether there is indeed a dialogue produced at these posts.

In the same way, Salama (2012) also links the analysis at this level to Goffman's notion of 'footing' (1981: 128). Footing is a response to the 'change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance' (Salama, 2012: 215). From this perspective, Salama sees footing as contradicting 'strict speakerhood' which assumes that the producers of a given text are necessarily the speakers of its speech utterances. Instead, appreciating footing in such way 'allows for the multivoicedness of discourse'. According to Wetherell, (2001b: 19) such multivoicedness can be linked to the fact that when people produce a text, they can assume either of the following three roles: 'either the *author* of what they say, as the *principal* (the one the words are about) or as the *animator* of someone else's words'. So, in addition to the actual hyperlinks embedded or included in the blog posts, examining voice and footing in the posts can provide insight on the discursive context within which

the text producer and writer are assuming their roles. Additionally, keeping in mind the interactive nature of blogs, this level examined the comments section of each post whenever available. Not only does this provide insight into the readership of the blogs, but it also should investigate what virtual communities are created online (see section 2.7. for more detail).

In a CDA study by El Naggar (2012: 76), she examines how intertextuality and interdiscursivity are realised in the discourse of what she calls ‘Muslim televangelists’, exemplified with a speech by Hamza Yusuf. Using insights from the DHA, El Naggar has been able to reveal findings documenting that recontextualisation of certain texts and discourses were used to serve the persuasive intentions of the speaker. For instance, certain religious terms have been reproduced in contemporary contexts in order to construct religion as a changing force in both social and personal life. In another case from discourse studies, Jones (2015) examined the fundamental role of generic intertextuality in support of the *It Gets Better* project. This project is an example of online social activism, which was mediated across different genres. Due to such generic intertextuality, many participants were able to contribute to, distribute and receive the message behind this project, which is presented in the study as significant factor of the project’s success.

These examples, along with the above detailed discussion, demonstrate how the analysis can benefit from such features at this level. Nevertheless, even at the second level, the analyst cannot draw conclusions without extending his/her analysis to the wider socio-cognitive level. Drawing on the theoretical framework presented in section 3.1, as well as basing its findings on the cumulative evidence marked at the first and second levels, the macro level of this framework will be examined next.

3.2.3.3. Macro level: socio-cognitive context

Both the textual and discursive level analyses feed into, and at the same time originate from, the larger picture, the socio-cognitive level. At this level, the analysis will utilise the same linguistic and discursive tools identified earlier, but by linking them as cumulative evidence to wider social and cognitive factors. In that sense, the analysis here

targets ideologies and intergroup ideological clashes introduced at the beginning of this chapter as well as the socio-cognitive context explained in the background chapter. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to make inferences using such cumulative evidence about the mental models targeted in this research, either in case of socially shared models or the more individual ones. Koller (2012: 27), states that ‘a socio-cognitive analysis will infer SCRs of social groups and institutions as well as dominant or counter-ideologies, where ideologies can be provisionally defined as networks of SCRs’.

The extent to which the analysis examines the surrounding context varies depending on what sort of questions the analysis attempts to answer. Since a number of relevant topics are under examination here, the starting point for the macro level of any topic will be examining the *status quo* with regard to the topic at hand and the *change* these blog posts are supporting. Of course, the status quo and the change requested differ from one topic to another. Nevertheless, a common thread in all of them is that women need more empowerment since status quo is seen as too limiting or restricting for them, in one way or another. Consequently, the change requested would allow women more access to what their male counterparts already have and raise more awareness of what gender equality and women’s empowerment really mean.

After identifying status quo and change, it is possible to link findings of the micro and meso levels with the macro ones to make inferences about their underlying mental models. This must be carried out while keeping in mind that socially shared mental models are the ones in charge of maintaining the status quo while the individual ones are in charge of pursuing the desired change. As the change desired becomes more popular, it starts to transform into a socially shared mental model, and consequently becomes the new status quo. The process draws on the discourse-cognition-context by using evidence from linguistic and social levels to make inferences regarding mediating cognitive constructions. However, unlike linguistic manifestation and social factors - which are much easier to pin down - cognitive factors cannot be examined directly. Therefore, findings of micro and meso levels are approached with a bottom-up perspective. The

existence of consistent patterns within each topic, as well as across different topics, should be seen as cumulative cognitive evidence.

Such evidence is examined along the lines of three central perspectives. The first perspective targets the *Us* versus *Them* representation with reference to different social actors and their placement on the change/status quo continuum. The second perspective creates comparisons between quantitative findings (grammar) on the one hand and qualitative ones (lexis) on the other. The third perspective links these two perspectives to any evidence supporting the creation of any closed communities on these blogs. Each analysis chapter (Chapters Four to Eight) will examine one of the top five topics identified in section 3.2.2.4 and will offer conclusions with regards to that particular topic. Chapter Nine will offer an overall examination of the cumulative evidence across all of these topics and with reference to the ideological discussion made in section 3.1. It should be pointed out that, due to the generalised nature of this level, vis-à-vis the specific details offered at the linguistic and the discursive levels, discussions offered at the macro level are inherently shorter and briefer than previous ones.

With this remark, Chapter Three is concluded. Two significant aspects of the current thesis have been combined in this chapter i.e. theory and methodology. These two have been represented in the same chapter to allow for an understanding of the links between the theoretical discussion established in section 3.1 and the methodological framework it motivates in section 3.2. In the first section, an ideological discussion was offered with a special focus on ideological struggle within discourse. In light of this, examination of group formation with reference to the Saudi context was also offered. Special attention was paid to a basic theoretical premise in this thesis with regard to social shared mental models versus idiosyncratic ones and how they are seen with reference to theories of intergroup behaviour. The second section of Chapter Three offered detailed examination of the rationale of the adopted methodology. Multiplicity of levels has been established as a cornerstone in doing CDA and the analytical framework has been devised accordingly. An introduction of the blogs under examination was presented with detailed information on sampling and the pilot study. The remainder of the chapter examined in detail the three

levels of analysis devised to approach the data at hand. Justifications and adaptation made at each level have been explained with case studies from relevant literature. The next chapter, Chapter Four, will be the first to address data analysis. Examining posts on the inclusion of Saudi women in politics, it will offer the first application of the analytical framework explained in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS (POSTS ON WOMEN AND POLITICS)

This is the first analysis chapter in the data analysis section of this thesis. Each of the five topics highlighted in section 1.3 and 3.2.2.4 will have a chapter devoted to them. Each chapter will be divided into three overlapping levels on analysis as consistent with the methodology highlighted in section 3.2.3. Chapter Four examines the topic of women and politics in Saudi Arabia. Six posts have been chosen randomly from the four blogs (appendix A) under study on two relevant sub-topics: the appointment of the first woman minister in Saudi Arabia and the royal decree to grant Saudi women the right to run and vote in municipal elections. These decisions were two of the most prominent areas of social controversy during the period of 2009–2012. Table 4.1 shows the number of posts from each blog and their word count:

Table 4.1: Number of posts and word count for topic 1

	Eman	Ahmed RB	Ahmed SJ	Qusay	Total
Number of posts	2	1	1	2	6
Word count	760	249	810	289	2108

4.1. Textual Level

4.1.1. Social actor representation

As discussed in the section 3.2.3.1.1, this part will be analysed using van Leeuwen’s work on role allocation for social actors (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008, p. 138). The social actors involved in this level of analysis (Table 4.2) will be divided into ten main social actors, thus excluding any social actors who do not have any direct relation with the topic examined in this section (women and politics in Saudi Arabia). Examples of these include

President Obama in 12 of post 4, *It's OK Mr. President*, where the inclusion of this social actor is for the sake of comparison only. The main social actors will be as follows, but it should be noted that they are expected to overlap:

- Decision makers and authorities,
- The appointed women,
- Women in general in Saudi Arabia,
- Men in general in Saudi Arabia (including council and non-council members),
- Supporters for the inclusion of women in politics (both nationally and internationally),
- Opponents to this inclusion,
- Saudis in general,
- Media,
- The blogger himself/herself and his/her readers.

These will be grouped and analysed through three main cornerstones in van Leeuwen's work: inclusion versus exclusion, activation versus passivation and nomination and categorisation. Other aspects of van Leeuwen's framework will not be included as it is very extensive and as such cannot be covered within the scope of this study. The first two of these cornerstones were analysed in detail in Table 4.2. The findings of this level of analysis translate into the following figures:

Table 4.2: Inclusion, activation and passivation for main social actors in topic 1

Social actor	Inclusion		Activation		Passivation	
Decision makers/ authorities	19	10.33%	17	89.47%	2	10.53%
Appointed women	32	17.39%	14	43.75%	18	56.25%
Women in general	48	26.09%	19	39.58%	29	60.42%
Men in general	8	4.35%	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
Supporters	21	11.41%	20	95.24%	1	4.76%
Opponents	14	7.61%	12	85.71%	2	4.29%
Saudis in general	11	5.98%	6	54.55%	5	45.45%
Media	4	2.17%	2	50.00%	2	50.00%
Blogger	20	10.87%	17	85.00%	3	15.00%
Readers	7	3.80%	7	100.00 %	0	0.00%
Total	184	100.00 %	117	63.59 %	67	36.41 %

However, it is of key relevance to point out a number of issues that have arisen while grouping and categorising. First, some social actors can be included under more than one

category if looked at generally. Therefore, in each case, where this occurs, the clause and its surrounding context are examined carefully and the social actor is assigned to the most relevant category in accordance with the clause under examination. An example of this is Eman Al Nafjan, who is one of the bloggers included in the sample – at the same time she is a prominent woman activist in the cause for allowing women to drive. Similarly, the remaining bloggers sometimes present themselves clearly and explicitly as supporters while in other cases they represent themselves as bloggers interacting with their readers and commenting on different relevant incidents regardless of their stance on this issue. Even Saudi Arabia as a social actor is subject to such duality. When Saudi Arabia is represented as a decision-making actor, it is included under this category; however, when it is included to refer to the Saudi nation (or location), it falls under the category of Saudis. Second, throughout the topic and the following ones, there are instances of inclusion of verses from *the Quran*, the holy book of Muslims, and these include references to *Allah*, the name of God in Islam, and to humankind. All of these are excluded from the analysis due to lack of direct relevance to the purpose of the study.

4.1.1.1. Inclusion and exclusion

To begin with, a Chi-square test was applied to the various inclusion cases for the social actors, to check whether these figures showed any statistically significant differences. The p value is 8.43044E-15 (<0.05), which entails rejecting the null hypothesis stating that there is no statistically significant difference between the inclusion cases. Moving on to examine these social actors individually, women, whether appointed in the Shoura council or talked about in general, are the most included social actor, reaching a total of 43.48% of all the included social actors, which is slightly less than half the total number. This is to be expected, bearing in mind that the nature of these posts is directed towards discussing their inclusion in the council for the first time and their rights to run for and vote in elections. Interestingly, though, men as a social actor are included in only 4.35% of the inclusion cases, and therefore seem to be excluded or suppressed in these topics to a large extent. Other social actors such as supporters are included in 11.41% of cases, in third place, while opponents are in sixth place with only 7.61%.

Unlike inclusion, which can be pinned down straightforwardly, the exclusion of different social actors can occur in any post without being noticed. This section will comment only on exclusion cases that are informative to the overall analysis in light of the research questions. Since these posts examine a gender-related topic, it is fair enough to examine men, in addition to women. Men are included in only 4.35% of the overall inclusion cases, so it goes without saying that complete exclusion is definitely not the case. Also it is evident in the text that they, along with their actions, are also included, thus refuting the assumption that they are excluded in terms of social actor representation. What is the case, then, is that their presence in the text is relatively reduced. While this might be explained proportionally, it might also be a signifier for deeper socio-cognitive factors, as will be explained at the third level.

4.1.1.2. Activation and passivation

The one-tailed binominal exact test was applied to check whether the activation cases in each social actor were more than the passivation cases. The one-tailed feature can be justified on the grounds that the alternative hypothesis is directed in one direction (i.e. directed towards activation). The null hypothesis states that there is no statistical significance difference between activation cases and passivation cases with regard to each social actor. Calculating the p value for each social actor, it is proved that the null hypothesis can only be rejected in the case of decision makers, supporters, opponents, blogger, and readers. With all of these social actors, activation cases are more dominant with a statistically significant difference. However, in case of the appointed women, women, men, Saudis in general and media, the p value for each is more than 0.05, and thus the null hypothesis has to be retained.

These findings could be examined in more detail by dividing them into three main pairs: appointed women versus women, women versus men and supporters versus opponents. The exact binominal test was applied vertically and horizontally to each pair. Vertical testing means that figures in Table 4.2 of the relevant social actors in each pair to be examined will be belonging to the same column; horizontal testing means that they will be belonging to the same row. In the case of the appointed women versus women, the

difference between activation on the one hand and passivation on the other (horizontal testing) for each member of this pair separately has a p value more than 0.05, (0.81 and 0.94, respectively). The same results are found when comparing the activation cases for both appointed women and women in one test (vertical) (p value is $0.24 > 0.05$) or when comparing the passivation cases for appointed women and women in another vertical test (p value is $0.07 > 0.05$). When running these four exact binominal tests on the second pair of men versus women, there are different findings. There are no statistically significant differences between the activation and passivation of each of social actor on its own (horizontal) (p values are 0.14 and 0.055 respectively). However, examining the activation cases on their own (vertical) in both men and women, the p value is $0.0004 < 0.05$. It can therefore be proven that women are more active than men. In the case of passivation, women have more passivation cases than men since the p value is $1.92791E-05 < 0.05$. With regards to the third pair, supporters versus opponents, it is the other way around. So, the first two exact binominal tests (horizontal) proved that activation cases for supporters are more than their passivation cases, at a statistically significant level with a p value of $1.04904E-05$, and that activation cases for opponents are more than their passivation cases, with the p value reaching 0.006. However, when applying the third test (vertical test focusing only on activation cases on their own in the two social actors of this pair) and the fourth test (another vertical test focusing on passivation only in both social actors), both p values, 0.11 and 0.5, respectively, are more than 0.05. This leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, with no statistical significance being found.

4.1.1.3. Categorisation and nomination

Last but not least are the categorisation and nomination of these actors, which can provide a helpful insight. Beginning with the main social actor in these posts, women, it seems that they are expressed through classification of gender identity in most cases and occasionally in terms of relational identification. This holds true for both women who are appointed in the Shoura Council and Saudi women in general. Example 2 below demonstrates this:

2. Some Saudi women want to vote in the municipal elections (post 3)

Nomination is rarely used with reference to the appointed women, with the only exception of Nora Al Fayeze in 14 of post 1 and 1 of post 4. In these two cases and the following use of the pronoun *she* in the proceeding clauses, the reader is introduced to the only named appointed woman in politics. She is also referred to as *Um Abdullah*, in 2 of post 4, which is a traditional way in the region of addressing a person who is often older and worthy of respect – they are referred to with the name of their eldest son. This translates into Mother of Abdullah, which is not necessarily true, since the blogger acknowledges that he does not know about her personal life.

Finally, it is of key relevance here to examine how the opposing two groups in this topic (opponents and supporters) are represented in relation to nomination. Opponents on the one hand are not named at all in these posts and they are referred to mostly in terms of classification or physical identification as in example 6.a. below. *Muttawa* is a term often used to refer to people with distinct physical features and dress code such as long beards, short *thoubas* (men's long dress) and no *iqal* (a stiff robe around their head cloth). It is interesting that the term *muttawaa* is not often used by conservatives to describe themselves; but it is widely used by their rivals. In that sense, it might be assumed that this form of identification has derogatory connotations. On the contrary, nomination is present in a number of cases with the supporters, Saudis or not, men or women, as in *Eman Al Asfour*, *Iman Fallatah* and *Khulood Al Fahad* in 34 of post 2, *Badriya al-Bisher* in 13 of post 6 or the Twitter users in post 5.

6.a. *This is a position that has always belonged to the longest bearded most conservative muttawaa possible.* (post 1)

15. *and not only by muttawaas but also by people who seem quite pro-women in most other aspects.* (post 2)

In brief, while women – both appointed and not – are included extensively in these posts, detailed analysis reveals that they are not activated enough to reject the null hypothesis. Men, on the other hand, do not have as many inclusion cases as women in this sample, which is expected given the nature of the topic. Nora Al Fayz is the only named

appointed woman, whereas a number of women activists are named fully. Contrary to this, no names are assigned to opponents and they are rather identified by a classification and physical identification. Nevertheless, despite such representation, opponents are proven to be actively included just as much as supporters.

4.1.2. Process type analysis

The main principle of grouping social actors into main groups is used here too. Similarly, not all processes will be included in the analysis; instead, the focus is only on processes that involve the main social actors. To avoid any confusion, the term ‘involvement’ will be used to account for the engagement of the main social actors in various process types, as opposed to the term ‘inclusion’, which is associated primarily with the first parameter, social actor representation.

4.1.2.1. Overview of involvement

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 demonstrate the number of involvement cases for each of the main social actors specified in section 4.1.1.1. Table 4.3 shows the number of involvement cases for each social actor in the potential roles explained in section 3.2.3.1.2. It also shows the percentages of each potential role of a particular social actor in relation to the total number of all the involvement cases of the same social actor. Table 4.4, on the other hand, shows the percentage of the involvement cases of a particular actor (i.e. actor role for appointed women) in comparison to all of the involvement cases of that particular role (i.e. all actor role cases for all the social actors).

Table 4.3: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each social actor's involvement cases in topic 1

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	8	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	14
	57.14%	0%	7.14%	7.14%	14.29%	0%	14.29%	0%	0%	100%
appointed women	3	7	0	0	1	2	9	0	0	22
	13.64%	31.82%	0%	0%	4.55%	9.09%	40.91%	0%	0%	100%
women	7	8	4	1	0	1	7	0	0	28
	25%	28.57%	14.29%	3.57%	0%	3.57%	25%	0%	0%	100%
men	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	7
	42.86%	0%	0%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	0%	0%	100%
supporters	5	0	7	2	8	0	3	1	0	26
	19.23%	0%	16.92%	7.69%	30.77%	0%	11.54%	3.85%	0%	100%

opponents	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	1	9
	22.22%	0%	22.22%	0%	0%	0%	33.33%	11.11%	11.11%	100%
Saudis	5	3	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	16
	31.25%	18.75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	100%
media	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4
	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	100%
blogger	3	0	7	1	3	0	6	0	0	20
	15%	0%	35%	5%	15%	0%	30%	0%	0%	100%
readers	2	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
	22.22%	0%	77.78%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
total	38	18	32	6	17	4	37	2	1	155
	24.52%	11.61%	20.65%	3.87%	10.97%	2.58%	23.87%	1.29%	0.65%	100%

It is evident from Table 4.3 that women are the top actors in terms of involvement cases, with 18.06% of cases. Following the same gender-based grouping applied in the first parameter, when combining the women with appointed women, this percentage goes up to 32.25%. This is consistent with the findings of the first parameter and should be expected due to the focus of the topics. However, the findings of Table 4.3 reveal that most of these involvement cases are assigned to weaker roles. For instance, in the case of appointed women, one-third of their cases are assigned to the role of goal or receiver in a material process. Example 20 below demonstrates this, as Nora Al Fayz, the first female Saudi minister, is introduced and described through an identifying relational process. In second place come supporters, with 16.77% of cases. However, unlike the first actor, most of these roles were as actors (19.23%), sensors (26.92%) and sayers (30.77%). Bloggers come in third place with 12.90% of cases.

20. and she is from Al Washim here in Najd (post 1)

Decision makers or authorities are understandably actors in most of the processes they are involved in. And by the same token, media are involved in two verbal processes and in both cases it is as a sayer. Interestingly, men, who are excluded a lot in this sample, (check previous parameter, section 4.1.1.1) are expectedly included in 5.88% of the processes. However, they are actors, sensors and behavers in half of these cases such as 3.a:

3.a. *which by the way, most men say they will boycott.* (post 3)

Table 4.4: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each role overall involvement cases in topic 1

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	21.05%	0%	31.12%	16.67%	11.76%	0%	5.41%	0%	0%	9.03%
appointed women	7.89%	38.89%	0%	0%	5.88%	50%	24.32%	0%	0%	14.19%
women	18.42%	44.44%	12.5%	16.67%	0%	25%	18.92%	0%	0%	18.06%
men	7.89%	0%	0%	16.67%	5.88%	25%	2.7%	0%	0%	4.51%
supporters	13.16%	0%	21.88%	33.33%	47.06%	0%	8.11%	50%	0%	16.77%

opponents	5.26%	0%	6.25%	0%	0%	0%	8.11%	50%	100%	5.806%
saudis	13.16%	16.67%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%	10.81%	0%	0%	10.32%
media	0%	0%	0%	0%	11.76%	0%	5.41%	0%	0%	2.58%
blogger	7.89%	0%	21.88%	16.67%	17.65%	0%	16.22%	0%	0%	12.90%
Readers	5.26%	0%	21.88%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5.81%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

4.1.2.2. Initiating and receiving roles

Keeping in mind the distinction made in section 3.2.3.1.2 between power initiating roles and power receiving roles, the three pairs examined in the first parameter are compared in light of these roles. The one-tailed exact binominal test is used to check whether the differences between initiating and receiving roles are of any statistical significance. Table 4.5 demonstrates the difference between these figures in terms of action.

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the initiating and receiving cases of the first member of the pair
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the initiating and receiving cases of the second member of the pair
3. There is no statistically significant difference between the initiating cases of the first member of the pair and those of the second
4. There is no statistically significant difference between the receiving cases of the first member of the pair and those of the second

Table 4.5 Initiating and receiving roles for main pairs in topic 1

Social actor	Grammatical categorisation (action)		
	Initiating	Receiving	Total
Appointed women	4	18	22
Women	12	16	28
Men	4	3	7
Supporters	21	5	26
Opponents	5	4	9

Concerning the first pair, appointed women versus women in general, the p value in case of the first null hypothesis is 0.002 (<0.05) so it has to be rejected. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis stating that appointed women are involved in more receiving roles than initiating ones and at a statistically significant difference has to be accepted. In case of the third hypothesis, women are proven to be involved in more initiating roles than appointed women, with a p value of 0.03. In each of the remaining two null hypotheses, the p value is more than 0.05 as it is 0.2, and 0.4 respectively. This entails accepting null hypotheses two and four. So, in addition to involvement in more receiving roles which has been established in the case of appointed women, women who are not proven to be more initiating still have more action than appointed women. This entails a weaker action for both appointed women and women.

In the case of the second pair, women versus men, the p values for the first and second hypotheses are both more than 0.05 with values as 0.28 and 0.7 respectively. This entails accepting the null hypothesis in each case. However, with regard to the third null

hypothesis, the p value is 0.04 (<0.05). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, establishing that women are actually involved in more initiating roles than men. Nevertheless, this should be examined in light of the fact that the total number of involvement cases of women is 28, which is 4 times the involvement cases of men, which are only 7. Taking this into consideration certainly transforms this power into a proportional one. This is also supported by the fact that the fourth null hypothesis concerning the receiving roles for both women and men has to be rejected, with a p value of 0.002. Women are in more receiving roles than men as they are involved in far more processes.

The third pair, supporters versus opponents, reveals different findings. The p value for the first hypothesis is less than 0.05, (0.001). This signifies the action attributed to supporters in the posts. In case of the second hypothesis, no statistically significant difference is established for opponents with a p value of 0.5. More initiating action is assigned to supporters with the third hypothesis revealing a p value of 0.001 in support of supporters' initiating roles over those for opponents. However, the last point must also be looked at from a proportional perspective, with 26 involvement cases for supporters and only 9 for opponents. With regards to the fourth null hypothesis, the p value is 0.5, which means that it has to be accepted as no statistically significant difference is found.

This detailed analysis of process type in these posts can be summarised into a number of points. First, it is evident that the involvement of women in process types is common in this topic. However, the analysis reveals that their profound involvement is not a sign of strong action in these posts. This is mainly due to a lack of sufficient evidence of their power initiating roles, which holds true for both appointed women and women in general. With regard to men, similar to the previous linguistic parameter, their involvement is reduced to a large extent. This is also the case with opponents; though to a lesser extent. Supporters, on the other hand, are assigned more involvement as they are powerful in terms of presence and initiation.

4.1.3. Evaluation

As with the guidelines established earlier in section 3.2.3.1.3, it is important to differentiate between two objects of evaluative language in these posts. The first of these is the decision to include women in politics in Saudi Arabia for the first time while the second is the two opposing positions on that subject. On the one hand, there are the supporters, including the bloggers themselves and their supportive readers, who are called upon to join them in their support; and on the other, there are the opponents who reject women's political inclusion.

4.1.3.1. First object of evaluation: The inclusion of women into politics:

6.a. *this is big news for women in Saudi Arabia any way you look at it*, (post 5)

61. *Today was a great day to be a #Saudi woman, the possibilities by #Kingshora's speech are exciting*, (post 5)

7. *and now to have a woman in it is FANTASTIC*. (post 1)

17. *Heart is so overwhelmed and full of joy after hearing about King Abdullah's #Shura decisions*, (post 5)

Starting with how the decision itself is evaluated, it is clear that when the news came out about the inclusion of women in these political changes, it was received with joy and excitement. This can be exemplified in the appreciation (using valuation in 'big' and 'great' and reaction to captivating impact in 'exciting') in 6.a., and 61 of post 5. Appreciation (valuation) also manifests itself in 7 of post 1. Effect is also largely present in these posts to convey the excitement felt towards this change. A number of the tweets in post 5 reveal a non-authorial positive effect such as 17 above. However, it should also be pointed out that while positive evaluation is present with regards to the inclusion of women politically, some negative evaluative expressions can also be traced back on the part of bloggers and supporters. The following examples demonstrate this:

27. *Bottom-line it's an empty excuse*. (post 2)

33. *And I'm not the only one frustrated with the situation, (post 2)*

13. *Women activists like Badriya al-Bisher are understandably unamused (post 6)*

48, *Appointing #SaudiWomen to the #Saudi consultative & municipal councils is too little too late (post 5)*

52, *I would not call this drastic change. (post 5)*

For instance, when the news came out about postponing women's participation to the following term (which took place in 2015 and included women) due to logistical factors and a lack of preparation to tailor for gender-separated polling centres, negative appreciation and effect can be explicitly found in the posts. In 27, 'empty' reveals a lack of value given to such claims, while 33 and 13 demonstrate negative authorial effect in 'frustrated' and non-authorial effect in 'unamused'. Interestingly, and despite the fact that this inclusion has been hailed positively in these posts, some clauses reveal negative evaluation. This is due to a frustration that extends beyond the logistical barriers identified earlier to question the feasibility of the decision per se. This is evident in negative appreciation through the negation of valuation in both 48 and 52. The presence of both negative and positive values towards the same object and by the same social actor should not be viewed as contradictory. The third level of analysis by the end of this chapter should establish the basis for understanding the social factors for such duality.

4.1.3.2. Second object of evaluation: the appointed women versus the opponents:

In this section, evaluative language can be seen as a mirror, reflecting the ideological clash between supporters of change in general, and the inclusion decision in particular on the one hand and those opposing it on the other. It is evident from 16.a. that positive authorial effect is expressed towards Nora Al Fayz. Positive appreciation (valuation) can be traced with reference to what she is capable of, as in 17.a. It can also be linked to the positive valuation in 9, which adds up to the judgement in 8.a (post 1), as Al Fayz is judged positively on a social esteem scale. While this directly evaluates the female

minister, it also serves to evaluate the bloggers indirectly in a positive way. They are introduced as open minded, respectful of women and accepting of change, as opposed to the negative perception presented of opponents in 8.a of post 2. It should be pointed out that this last example is at the borderline between the third and fourth parameters as it combines simultaneously instances of both. There is a negative judgement directed towards opponents for holding a negative appreciation and judgement of women. In this degrading perspective, women are reduced and depersonified to mere objects or sinful creatures.

16.a. *Joking aside, I am proud of her, and happy that King Abdullah appointed her in that position* (post 4)

17.a. *as I am sure her hard work will no doubt pave the way for the future generation of women in our nation.* (post 4)

8.a - 9, *notwithstanding the fact that the woman who was chosen is a moderate Muslim, educated and a highly qualified woman. She has extensive experience in girl's education.* (post 1)

8.a *The real excuse was that a large faction of our society still thinks of women as property, sheep, and/or seductive sinful creatures out to seduce them into damnation.* (post 2)

Evaluation has been established in this section as one of the most explicit features of textual analysis with regards to understanding the variety of positions taken in these posts. It is clear that these inclusions are highly evaluated and long awaited, to the point that some actually view them as too late. Nevertheless, this does not prevent the bloggers or the supporters from portraying a positive image of the appointed minister, and consequently themselves. This is created in parallel to creating a negative image of those who are against women's inclusion on the political scene. The same direct imaging is also found in the fourth parameter, which is the focus of the next section.

4.1.4. Metaphor

Within this parameter, metaphorical expressions in these posts are examined and analysed in relation to what they can contribute to the overall textual analysis of the posts and how this level feeds into the meso and the macro analyses. As discussed previously in the Chapter Three, this parameter will examine metaphorical expressions using an eclectic approach combining conceptual metaphor theory and critical metaphor analysis. Therefore, not all metaphoric expressions will be identified here, but only those that have been found to be linked together in clusters cognitively. This parameter is concerned mainly with linguistic and to a certain degree cognitive identification. Then at the third level (section 4.3) such identification will be linked to the wider cognitive context as well as to their identification of pragmatic function.

4.1.4.1. First metaphoric cluster

The first step in linguistic identification was examining the metaphorical expressions.

3. *Saudi Arabia has made a leap of progress, (post 1)*

58.a. *But many hoped that this would be an important first step and that more steps will follow soon (post 5)*

17.a. *as I am sure her hard work will no doubt pave the way for the future generation of women in our nation, (post 4)*

4.a. *People voted according to tribal affiliation and who their sheikhs directed them to vote for (post 2)*

5.a. *And the biggest bombshell of all was that a woman was appointed as head of girl's education (post 1)*

2.a. *The municipal elections that were conducted in 2005 were the first taste of democracy and governmental participation that Saudis have ever had, (post 2)*

59. “#KingShora #shoraking the burden of reform 4 women will be top-down rather than bottom-up rendering most of the public rhetoric irrelevant”. (post 5)

34. Eman Al Asfour, Iman Fallatah and Khulood Al Fahad have decided to take things into their own hands. (post 2)

36.a. Besides joining the campaign on its Facebook page, Saudis can actually take part by sending in their contact information, suggestions and how they can help (post 2).

All of the above examples were identified at the earlier stages of analysis as containing metaphoric expressions (linguistic metaphors) revealing semantic tension. In order to identify such tension, the first linguistic stage of critical metaphor analysis is used. It has been established in section 3.2.3.1.4 that semantic tension can either take the form of reification, personification or depersonification. In examples 3 and 58.a reification is used as the abstract meaning of progress towards change (including women into politics) is coded in a metaphoric expression denoting concrete movement towards a desired destination. Relevant to this is example 17.a which uses reification as well, but to add an additional meaning by emphasising that such movement is not easy and in need of greater facilitation. In this directed movement, the road might not be accessible for women, so Al Fayed's work will help to ease that. In other words, Al Fayed is a facilitator in the right direction. Naturally, then, other social actors can have a role in directing other actors, but not necessarily towards the desired change. Due to this, example 4.a is included in this demonstrative list as it exhibits the potential for a variety of directions towards different desires. This clash between the different directions within the change/reform journey makes this journey even harder.

In 5.a, there is also reification in ‘bombshell’; the appointment of the first female minister is viewed as impactful and as unexpected as a bomb. Interestingly, this example can be linked to a destruction background which is reused in positive and non-constructive construction. In 2.a, the reaction to these political inclusions – whether for males or females – is reified as food to be tasted and consumed. What is common between 5.a and 2.a is the representation of these changes as unexperienced before. Example 59 also

reveals another metaphoric expression that does not fall directly under this cluster of metaphors but which is worth pointing out as it indicates the hardship of implementing change. ‘Burden’ is another reification example where such difficulty is associated with lifting a heavy object and enduring it. Due to this difficulty, taking action is essential to support these changes. Hence in both examples (34 and 36.a), reification is used to highlight the efforts made by women activists in the first clause and the prospective efforts expected from Saudis who are willing to support this cause.

The next step in the analysis will examine these identified metaphorical expressions in light of conceptual metaphor theory in order to identify the cognitive ties associated between these expressions. For example, in 3, 58.a and 4.a, the source domain is directed movement while the target domain is change/reform. Consequently, it is evident that CHANGE IS MOVEMENT. In 5.a. and 2.a, there is the same target domain of change/reform but represented using the source domains of bomb and food respectively. This adds the conceptual metaphors of CHANGE IS BOMB and CHANGE IS FOOD to the previous one. In 17.a and burden in 59, there is an addition to this metaphor by describing the same target domain of change using the source domain of hardship. So, CHANGE IS HARDSHIP. Finally, in 34 and 36.a, the target domain of needed support is expressed using the source domain of making physical action; hence, SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION.

4.1.4.2. Second metaphoric cluster

The second cluster of metaphoric expressions is identified in this section. While the first cluster is mainly concerned with presenting change, the second cluster – exemplified below – presents the perception that bloggers have of women’s status quo. In particular, this is often linked to the controversial issue of the male guardianship concept in Islam and how it is applied in Saudi Arabia.

35. *and they are still under male guardianship rules* (post 5)

42. *but are still under male guardianship? #21stcentury*, (post 5)

40. *Congratulations on adding female pawns to the list, though.. Really.. #KingShora*”, (post 5)

6, *Yes, Saudi women will be kept in Shoura Ghetto*. (post 6)

In 35 and 42, there is reification in ‘under’, where the presumed inferior state of women in these posts is represented concretely using a spatial metaphor. This also serves to present women as lacking control and being helpless, which links in with the line of the depersonification in ‘pawns’ in example 40 above. The women appointed to the Saudi Shoura Council are transformed into inanimate objects. In a game of chess, a pawn is usually the weakest piece, an ‘armed peasant’ inferior to other pieces. Consequently, it is used metaphorically to refer to a person used by others for their own purposes. Another degrading depiction is in 6 of post 6 where the separated female section is represented as a ghetto. A ghetto is usually a place or a neighbourhood where lower social and economic classes are located. It is worth pointing out that following the linguistic identification classification explained earlier in critical metaphor theory, the last metaphor in this cluster cannot fall under reification, personification or depersonification as it represents a concrete location with another one. Moving on to conceptual metaphor theory, it is possible to identify in all these metaphors the target domain of women being represented using images from inferior source domains. So, it can be linked to WOMEN ARE PAWNS IN CHESS.

This detailed metaphorical analysis can be summarised in a number of findings. It is possible to say that the posts depict these political inclusions of women positively, while at the same time acknowledging the difficulty of implementing these changes within Saudi society. This therefore requires identifying the gender-related problems within such a society in order to solve them. It also requires more effort and action on the part of change supporters. The next section will highlight, among other things, how such support might be sought.

Section 4.1. has examined in detail the linguistic data at hand and offered both quantitative and qualitative findings on which to base the second and third levels of

analysis. Social actor representation and process type analysis reveal evidence along the same lines, in which consistency between these parameters has been established. On the other hand, evaluation and metaphor reveal findings that are consistent and parallel but it can clash at times with the first two parameters. This should be explained at the third level. For sake of clarity of presentation, the first level features mainly descriptive text analysis and findings.

4.2. Discursive Level

Since this is the first analysis chapter, it is important to signify at the onset that a crucial factor in shaping analysis at this level is the language choice made by the bloggers. Taking into consideration that this applies to the remaining chapters as well, choosing English as a medium for communication – which is neither the native language of the country nor a second language – clearly impacts the readership of the posts. These posts can therefore only be read by either Saudis who are proficient in reading in English or by an international audience interested in finding out about Saudi society. This directly affects the reception of such posts and could be intended to exclude readers who are not highly educated or not exposed to Western Anglophone culture. On the other hand, this restriction is opposed by unlimited accessibility by the inherent nature of public blog posts. Basically, anybody from anywhere in the world can access these posts at any time as long as he or she has internet access and can read English. In addition to this overview of reception and distribution, the following sections highlight the main findings with regards to intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

4.2.1. Non-hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

It has been established in section 3.2 that a multiplicity of texts and discourses within a given text signifies their recontextualisation along the lines of the discursive practices around that text. It has also been established that the identification at this level highlights both the voice and the footing achieved in these posts through this multiplicity. To begin with, almost all the posts have instances of internally persuasive language signifying the dialogue assumed to take place between the bloggers and their readers. The example

below demonstrates this dialogue, which should be expected given the inherent dialogic-relations between bloggers posts and their readers. However, in certain posts, 6 for instance, the authoritative tone in the text is more prominent than the persuasive tone. This is mainly due to the news genre often reflected in Ahmed Al Omran's posts.

13-14. *If you take a closer look at the left hand corner, you'll see a photo of Mrs. Nora Al Fayez right underneath a photo of the new head of the muttawa vice police.* (post 1)

With regard to footing and multivoicedness in posts, it is not surprising that the bloggers are predominately assuming the author role, with women, whether appointed, supporters or in general as in 34 below being the topic. Less often, the bloggers assume the animator role when presenting the claims of the opponents through indirect speech. Interestingly, supporters are allowed direct speech in both post 5 and 6, either in form of the pasted tweets or the direct quote from the Saudi woman activist Badriyah al-Bisher. Aside from these examples, interdiscursivity is also present in these posts. Being originally based on discourse in gender, it is not surprising that a multiplicity of discourses is traced in this topic as well. Clearly, instances of political discourse are present across all of these posts, given the focus of this topic. In addition, this religious discourse is introduced for example in post 2, when controversial fatwas on women empowerment are being refuted and attacked (see example 12 in section 5.2.2).

34. *Eman Al Asfour, Iman Fallatah and Khulood Al Fahad have decided to take things into their own hands* (post 2)

4.2.2. Hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

As discussed earlier in section 3.2.3.2, this level is mainly concerned with the different links created in these posts to other semiotic expressions outside the original post. Generally speaking, these links can be classified into four main kinds:

1. Hyperlinks linking to other writings by the same blogger, whether linking to pages on the same blog, tweets on Twitter, or to pieces in online newspapers and news sources.

2. Hyperlinks linking to international webpages outside the region. These might range from news pieces and reports to personal posts.
3. Hyperlinks linking to national and local webpages, whether in Arabic or English.
4. Hyperlinks to posts by the other bloggers included in this study, or any supporters and pro-woman activists posting on their personal spaces, whether blogs, Twitter or Facebook.

That being said, it is time to examine how intertextuality works in this particular section. However, due to the dynamic and changing nature of the worldwide web and the fact that these posts were put online between 2009-2012, some links are no longer working. Nevertheless, these will still be included since it still can be inferred from the web address what kind of pages they link to. Starting with the first kind, there are six cases in which the bloggers refer to their own posts. Most of these, five links, are present in post 5 and the remaining one is in 12 below:

12. *Since a lot of younger Saudis have started to question the fatwas about women being incapable.* (post 2)

There are four international links. Among the linked pages are *Globalpost.com*, which is an American world news site, *National Geographic* and finally *Time Magazine*, an American weekly news magazine published in New York City. Third, eight links fall under the third category, two of which link to English pages in *Arabnews*, an English-language daily newspaper published in Saudi Arabia, and both of them are in posts 3 and 4 by Qusay. The remaining links link to Arabic webpages including *Alarabiya.net*, the online version of the pan-Arab news channel, *Al Arabiya*, *Al Sharq Al Awsat*, the world's premier pan-Arab daily newspaper, *Al Hayat*, a daily pan-Arab newspaper, and finally, *Al Watan*, a daily newspaper in Saudi Arabia. Finally, there are the links of the fourth kind, linking to other bloggers and supporters of the same cause in their own personal spaces. These take the lead compared to other links, reaching a total of 25. 36.a below exemplifies this kind:

36.a. Besides joining the campaign on its Facebook page, Saudis can actually take part by sending in their contact information, suggestions and how they can help (post 2).

This is actually a Facebook page for *Balady*, i.e. ‘my country’ in Arabic, a national pro-woman and independent campaign aiming to spread its cause and have representatives in all 14 districts of Saudi Arabia. The remaining links are all in post 5 and they link to tweets by supporters of women and their reactions to the inclusion decision. Such reactions, as discussed in the textual level above, range from sheer happiness and optimism to frustration as they ask for more rights. These supporters include both males and females, as well as Saudis and non-Saudis. Most of these are posting using their full names but quite a few use nicknames. Also, in these tweets in particular, one might detect how the different genre of tweets is embedded within these blog posts. Abbreviated structures as well as hashtags and emotion symbols are commonly used. Table 4.6 summarises these findings:

Table 4.6: Distribution of hyperlinks in topic 1

Link to:	Number of links	%
same blogger/poster	6	13.96
International pages	4	9.30
local pages	8	18.60
other bloggers/supporters	25	58.14
Total	43	100

A last word is required here on the comments posted by the readers of these blogs in response to the posts under study. While posts 4 and 6 have no comments, the remaining

blog posts included a total of 35 responses. All of these are by supporters and pro-woman readers, which, in turn, give a clear idea of who is reading these posts. Perhaps the only exception to this is in post 1, where there is a comment by someone named *Abu Mohammed*, who is applauding Nora Al Fayz as an accomplished woman but at the same time does not mind casting sexist ideas about women. From such a perspective, he links women who demand their rights, including freedom of movement, to immorality. A very detailed response by another woman follows and counterclaims his post. This means that the comment section can be described as being almost exclusively dominated by supporters, a fact that is consistent with the above table.

The findings presented in table 4.6 are consistent with the discussion of voice and footing in the previous section. This is evident for example in the dialogue highlighted between these bloggers and their supporters and how this is reflected in the high percentage of links of the third kind. Clearly, supporters are allowed more existence in these posts, which is also consistent with the findings of the textual level. Opponents on the other hand are almost non-existent in these links, which adds to the negative image created of them in metaphoric expressions or evaluative language for instance. This clearly serves to present these opponents as being degrading of women, while at the same denying these opponents access to these blogs, given the choice to write in English. The following section will examine the third level of analysis, comprising the social and cognitive factors underlying these textual and discursive choices.

4.3. Socio-cognitive Level

The findings of the micro and meso levels can be examined at this level in order to examine which social and cognitive factors underlie these representations and why. It was discussed in the section 3.1 that mental representations manifest themselves at both textual and discursive levels while at the same time being influenced by them. It was also mentioned that these mental representations are of two kinds. There are mental representations in charge of maintaining the *status quo*, and these are often socially shared. On the other hand, there are mental representations that are more individual – or

particular to certain groups of people, as in the case of the bloggers in the current study – and they are often in charge of making *change*.

So, the first step to understanding this level is clarifying what is meant by status quo and change with regard to this topic. The status quo, which used to be the case prior to issuing the aforementioned royal decrees, represents the political scene in Saudi Arabia as completely lacking any female participation of any kind. However, after the historical appointment of Nora Al Fayed as a minister and the 30 female Shoura members, also granting them the right to run and vote in municipal elections, this has drastically changed. This is a case of change that has been forced by policy as discussed in sections 1.3 and 2.6. Nevertheless, understanding the mental representations associated with both status quo and change can facilitate the implementation of such policies and reduce any resistance. This is achieved by attempting to spread the mental representations that are less dominant. It can be inferred from the previous textual analysis that the mental representations held by these bloggers are pro-change and resist the status quo. This is detected for instance in the evaluative language hailing the royal decisions, while at the same time expressing frustration with things prior to such inclusions. These pro-change mental representations value women as being equal to men, which can be judged against the degrading metaphoric images presented by these bloggers as describing how opponents perceive women.

This parallelism in presentation serves to highlight the positive representation of self (i.e. bloggers and their supporters) and the negative representation of other (i.e. opponents). This is evidently linked to the ideological discussion made Chapter Three about competing ideologies within the same social setting (section 3.1). While examining this ideological link in detail will be postponed to the overall discussion in Chapter Nine, a few points can be highlighted here. For instance, it is possible to detect legitimacy within the mental constructions underlying the delay of the inclusion of women in the aforementioned elections. Another example is the ideological clash between supporters and opponents and how it translates into discourse. This is evidenced by the fact the supporters and opponents are the only social actors in the examined three pairs who have

been proven to have more activation and involvement in initiating roles and at a statistically significant difference. This indicates that both of these are more powerful than other actors and presents this struggle as more dominant than other issues within this discourse.

Can the same power be assigned to women, whether appointed or not? Evidence from qualitative analysis demonstrates that women feature as equivalent and empowered in the mental representations expressed in these posts. However, evidence from quantitative analysis fails to validate such power. In both social actor representation and process type analysis, women are not activated or involved in initiating processes enough to establish statistical significance. This clearly signifies that there is a clash between qualitative and quantitative findings. Again, this is a point that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine. Can this signify the presence of certain fossilised forms at the textual level? The answer to this question can be obtained after examining further evidence in the following analysis chapters. Another finding that needs further evidence from other topics is the exclusion of men in these posts. Can this be a linguistic manifestation of the gender segregation practised socially? This will again be discussed in Chapter Nine.

The supporters-opponents struggle translates also at the meso level. Evidence from the intertextuality and interdiscursivity analysis demonstrate that these bloggers communicate these pro-change mental representations in order to resist the more dominant ones. Keeping in mind that holders of certain mental representations in discourse seeking to maintain the status quo claim that their opposition is based on religious grounds to ensure its acceptance, these posts refute this by deconstructing such claims. This reconstruction represents the variety of religious interpretation as a key in understanding and accepting change. The negative representation of opponents established earlier serves also to refute the sacredness of mental representations restricting women, in spite of their socially shared nature. Negotiation and communication in these blogs present a linguistic platform for such a struggle. Interestingly though, it is possible to see that such a platform is almost exclusively created and negotiated between supporters, thus entailing the presence of a closed community within this particular change-supporting group.

All in all, this chapter has presented detailed data analysis for the first topic on women and politics in the sample under examination. The analysis is conducted on three levels with supporting evidence in both qualitative and quantitative forms. When the blog posts in this topic were first posted, the royal decrees in question were very controversial and attracted a great deal of attention. However, a few years later and by the time of writing this thesis, the mental representations in support of change and women empowerment have gained much more acceptance. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine. However, it indicates the points established in Chapter Three that no ideology, no matter how dominating, is immune to change and resistance. The next chapter presents a very controversial topic, women and driving, which by far has gained more national and international attention than any other topic. It has been discussed extensively to the point that it has become symbolic of gender issues in Saudi Arabia. Yet, it still remains unchanged.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS (POSTS ON WOMEN AND DRIVING)

This chapter presents my data analysis for the second topic in the sample of blog posts at hand. This topic consists of twelve posts on the topic of women driving in Saudi Arabia. All of the posts discuss either petitions or statements from activists supporting this cause, or the ban on women driving in general. This topic is the largest in the examined sample, which is consistent with the fact that in the original corpus of posts under study, the ban on women driving takes the lead as the most mentioned. As with the previous topic, this analysis will be three-levelled in which the first and second levels are mainly descriptive while the third is more conclusive and interpretive. Table 5.1 shows the number of posts from each blog and word count:

Table 5.1: Number of posts and word count for topic 2

	Eman	Qusay	Ahmed SJ	Ahmed RB	Total
Number of posts	4	4	2	2	12
Word count	2358	1178	599	255	4390

5.1. Textual Analysis

5.1.1. Social actor representation

As explained, the main social actors will be grouped and categorised into eleven main categories:

- Decision makers/authorities with varying levels of authority
- Women activists including the women who actually took part in the driving campaigns and issued the petitions

- Women in general, which means women in Saudi Arabia in general without reference to their stance on the issue
- Men, which refers to any male actor included in the posts without reference to his stance on the issue
- Supporters who are advocating women's right to drive
- Opponents who oppose such a right
- Media, which refers to any media item such as newspapers, TV channels and even individual media projects
- Saudis in general, whether as a nation or unidentified individuals
- The blogger
- Readers of the blog
- Any international bodies whenever their inclusion is relevant

After finishing the grouping and categorising process, the inclusion cases were calculated and marked for activation and passivation. Table 5.2 demonstrates this:

Table 5.2: Inclusion, activation and passivation for main social actors in topic 2

Social actor	Inclusion		Activation		Passivation	
Decision makers	44	11.8%	28	63.64%	16	36.36%
Woman activists	76	20.38%	61	80.26%	15	19.74%
Women	49	13.14%	10	20.41%	39	79.59%
Men	26	6.97%	9	34.62%	17	65.38%
Supporters	56	15.01%	48	85.71%	8	14.29%
Opponents	35	9.38%	27	77.14%	8	22.86%
Media	16	4.29%	15	93.75%	1	6.25%
Saudis	33	8.85%	10	30.30%	23	69.70%
Bloggers	21	5.63%	18	85.71%	3	14.29%
Readers	11	2.95%	10	90.91%	1	9.09%
International bodies	6	1.61%	4	66.67%	2	33.33%
Total	373	100%	240	64.34%	133	35.66%

5.1.1.1. Inclusion and exclusion

All the inclusion findings have been checked for statistical significance using a Chi-square test and the p value is considerably less than 0.05 (2.80818E-23). The null hypothesis in the case of the one-tailed test must be rejected as these differences (second column of the above table) have statistical significance. The next step is to determine the extent to which the main social actors are included. The most included actor, based on

these figures, is women activists with about one-fifth of the inclusion cases, at 20%. When combined with women in general, who come in third place with 13.14%, they reach a total of 33.52%. In second place are supporters with 15.01% of cases, which is 50% more than the opponents, who stand at 9.38%. In fourth place are decision makers, reaching more than one-tenth of the cases with 11.8%. Similar to the findings of the first topic (section 4.1.1.1), men are included in only 6.97% of inclusion cases. Again, this technically cannot be stated as exclusion, whether radical or less radical. What can be assumed here is that their presence is minimalised or reduced. Therefore, with each topic, this point must be checked out in the search or in patterns, and then added to the overall cumulative evidence.

5.1.1.2. Activation and passivation

This section examines the details of each social actor and compares them in pairs. Consistent with the first topic, three pairs are under examination here. First, there are women activists versus women in general. It has been established in the last section that woman activists and women in general are included profoundly in the posts; however, findings at this level reveal that their inclusion is represented differently. Woman activists are activated in more than 80% of their inclusion cases. Therefore, the null hypothesis has to be rejected and activation is proven with a p value of 4.92142E-08 (<0.05). However, in the case of women, the p value is 0.99 and the alternative hypothesis directed towards activation has to be rejected with almost 80% of inclusion cases marked as passivation. In terms of calculating the p value for the activation cases for the two members of the pair (i.e. vertically), the p value in case of activation is 2.3223E-10 in favour of woman activists as opposed to women in general. Conversely, in the passivation cases, the p value is 0.0007 in favour of women. The second pair examines women versus men and it is also checked for statistical significance horizontally and vertically. It has been established that in the first pair, activation could not be proven in the case of women. Similarly, in the case of men, the p value is 0.96 and thus we must accept the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference between their activation and passivation cases. However, this must be looked at while keeping in mind that the inclusion cases for women are nearly double those for men. Hence, when applying the

one-tailed exact binominal test vertically, women are proven to have more activation cases and more passivation cases than men, with p values less than 0.05 (6.42193E-11 and 0.002 respectively). The third pair is supporters versus opponents and similar to the first topic, the findings of this pair are very indicative of the struggle for social change in the posts. Both supporters and opponents are involved in much more activation cases than passivation ones. The p values in favour of activation for these two are considerably lower than 0.05, at 1.9713E-08 and 0.0006 respectively. With regard to the vertical comparisons between the two members of the pair in terms of activation, supporters are involved in nearly double the activation cases of opponents and at a statistically significant difference (p value = 0.01).

5.1.1.3. Categorisation and nomination

In the examination of categorisation in general and nomination in particular, it is possible to identify a number of points concerning the main social actor under examination. Beginning with women in general, they are almost exclusively expressed through their physical identification as women. This echoes the finding of the first chapter, and to a large extent, it should not be surprising, considering that both woman activists and supporters are assigned to different categories as social actors. In light of this, are woman activists named in these posts? Of all the 12 posts, post 15 is the only one where a woman activist is named. *Manal Al-Sharif* is one of the women who publicly and explicitly drove her car in Saudi Arabia, but she is the only one named, as in the example below.

8. *The arrest and imprisonment of Manal Al-Sherif, 32, after driving a car in Khobar, has changed all that.*” (post 15)

Interestingly, nomination occurs much more frequently in the case of supporters, whether they are males or females. In some other cases, there is a categorisation through functionalisation as in 3.a, which is coupled with positive evaluation. Nomination and functionalisation also occur even when talking about a conservative man, since he is established positively in the posts as a supporter – see 19 below. The same functionalisation in *sheikh* can be contrasted with the negatively evaluated functionalisation in 23 of the same post, which signifies a stereotyped representation

associated with opponents. Muttawas, which was explained in section 4.1.1.3, is also present in this topic.

5.a-6.a *Sabria Jawhar* says “*There was a time when I firmly believed the endless debate about Saudi women banned from driving cars was trivial*”. (post 15)

4. *Sabaq* quoted on Tuesday *Abdullah al-Alami*, (post 17)

3.a. *A Saudi online newspaper* says *more than 3,000 nationals of the kingdom, including prominent writers and academics, have endorsed a study that recommends lifting a ban on women driving* (post 17)

19. *But the real deal was sheikh Al Ghaith*, (post 8)

In brief, the findings of this parameter can be summarised in a number of points. Women, whether activists or not, are extensively included in this topic. However, activation could only be proven in the case of woman activists, which contracted the case of the appointed women in the first topic on women and politics. Nomination of these activists occurred in only one post out of the 12. Supporters are included twice as much as opponents, but both of them are strongly activated in the majority of their inclusions. Nomination and categorisation are also utilised in the service of supporters, just like inclusion. This is evident when examining the details of their nomination and functionalisation cases.

5.1.2. Process type analysis

5.1.2.1. Overview of involvement

Using the same grouping principle discussed in section 5.1.1 will be used here and in accordance with the methodological discussion in Chapter Four. The following tables, 5.3 and 5.4, demonstrate a summary of quantitative findings of this parameter. The last column of table 5.4 shows that woman activists are the top social actor in terms of involvement, with nearly one-quarter of the cases. Table 5.3 demonstrates that more than half of these involvement cases are in the role of actor (33.33%), comprising 21.73% of

all the actor cases in this topic, and sensor (25.33%) comprising 30.65% of all sensor cases.

Table 5.3: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each social actor's involvement cases in topic 2

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	18	4	5	0	3	0	3	0	0	33
	54.55%	12.12%	15.15%	0%	9.09%	0	9.09%	0%	0%	100%
woman activists	25	10	19	0	3	3	14	1	0	75
	33.33%	13.33%	25.33%	0%	4%	4%	18.67%	1.33%	0%	100%
women	3	8	3	1	0	0	4	0	0	19
	15.79%	42.11%	15.79%	5.26%	0%	0%	21.05%	0%	0%	100%
men	6	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	12
	50%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8.33%	8.33%	0%	100%
supplier	19	1	11	3	7	3	13	0	0	57

	33.33%	1.75%	19.30%	5.26%	12.28%	5.26%	22.80%	0%	0%	100%
opponents	13	1	6	0	11	1	1	0	0	33
	39.39%	3.03%	18.18%	0	33.33%	3.03%	3.03%	0%	0%	100%
media	8	0	3	1	4	0	1	0	0	17
	47.06%	0%	17.65%	5.88%	23.53%	0%	5.88%	0%	0%	100%
Saudis	7	7	1	1	0	1	3	0	0	20
	35%	35%	5%	5%	0%	5%	15%	0%	0%	100%
Bloggers	9	3	7	1	2	0	2	0	0	24
	37.5%	12.5%	29.17%	4.17%	8.33%	0%	8.33%	0%	0%	100%
Readers	4	1	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	13
	30.77%	7.69%	46.15%	0%	15.38%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

int. bodies	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
total	115	39	62	7	32	8	42	2	0	307
	37.45%	12.70%	20.2%	2.28%	10.42%	2.61%	13.68%	0.65%	0%	100%

Supporters come in second place with 18.57% of cases; nearly double the involvement cases for opponents, who come in third place. Nevertheless, the figures of Table 5.3 demonstrate that both supporters and opponents are involved in actor sensor and sayers roles. Decision makers share the third place with opponents with also 10.75% of cases. Expectedly, more than 54.55% of them are in the actor role. Women in general are in sixth place, with only 6.19% of involvement cases, and with the majority of their cases in the goal or receiver role in the material process. Finally, men are the least involved actors with only 3.91% of total processes.

Table 5.4: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each role overall involvement cases in topic 2

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	15.65%	10.25%	8.06%	0%	9.38%	0%	7.14%	0%	0%	10.75%
woman activists	21.73%	25.64%	30.65%	0%	9.38%	37.5%	33.33%	50%	0%	24.42%
women	2.60%	20.51%	4.84%	14.29%	0%	0%	9.52%	0%	0%	6.19%
men	5.22%	10.26%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.38%	50%	0%	3.91%
supporters	16.52%	2.56%	17.74%	42.86%	21.88%	37.57%	30.95%	0%	0%	18.57%

opponents	11.30%	2.56%	9.68%	0%	34.38%	12.5%	2.38%	0%	0%	10.75%
media	6.96%	0%	4.84%	14.29%	12.5%	0%	2.38%	0%	0%	5.54%
Saudis	6.09%	17.95%	1.61%	14.29%	0%	12.5%	7.14%	0%	0%	6.51%
bloggers	7.83%	7.69%	11.29%	14.29%	6.25%	0%	4.76%	0%	0%	7.82%
readers	3.48%	2.56%	9.68%	0%	6.25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4.23%
int. bodies	2.61%	0%	1.61%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.30%
total	100%	0%	100%							

5.1.2.2. Initiating and receiving roles

As discussed previously, the findings of these tables are summarised into two main categories; initiating and receiving roles. These are tested using the exact binominal test to search for any statistically significant differences. The same four null hypotheses, highlighted in section 4.1.2.2 of the first topic are applied here. Table 5.5 demonstrates this summary.

Table 5.5: Initiating and receiving roles for main pairs in topic 2

Social actor	Grammatical categorisation (action)		
	Initiating	Receiving	Total
Woman activists	48	27	75
Women	6	13	19
Men	7	5	12
Supporters	37	20	57
Opponents	30	3	33

Following the same pairing principle, the first pair in this section examines woman activists versus women in general. Looking at woman activists, it is evident from the data that they are involved in more powerful processes compared to women in general, and this was at a statistically significant difference. The p value is 1.69441E-06 which is considerably less than 0.05, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. However, these finding must be looked at while keeping in mind that the percentages of involvement in process types in the entire sample differ between these two. Woman

activists are involved in 24.43% of all the processes examined whereas women are in only 6.19%. Because of the difference in total involvement cases for the members of this pair, woman activists are also proven to be involved in more than three times the passivation cases than women in general, with a p value of 0.0003. Looking at the above tables, woman activists appear more powerful with 48 initiating roles compared to their 27 receiving roles. This difference is statistically significant with a p value of 0.01. The difference between initiating and receiving roles for women is not statistically significant with a p value of 0.08.

The second pair under examination is women versus men and both of these are involved much less commonly in all of the processes in general, 6.19% and 3.91% respectively. Interestingly, all of the four null hypotheses have to be accepted since all the p values under this pair are more than 0.05. No statistically significant difference has been found between the two social actors in this pair or even between the initiating and receiving roles for each social actor. However, the third pair, supporters versus opponents, reveals different findings. Both supporters and opponents are involved in more powerful roles in this topic. The p value in the case of supporters is 0.008; thus establishing them in more initiating roles than receiving ones. In the same way, opponents are mainly in initiating roles with a p value of 3.30938E-05. But when carrying the same test vertically between the initiating cases for supporters and opponents, no statistically significant difference is found, with a p value of 0.13. This, coupled with the fact that supporters are in fact involved in a little bit less than double the involvement cases than opponents, might be evidence of more power on the part of the opponents. On the other hand, the fact that opponents are involved in slightly more than half the involvement cases compared to supporters, is mirrored by the fact that supporters are also in more receiving roles than opponents, with a p value of 0.003.

All in all, it is possible to pinpoint the main findings of this parameter, while bearing in mind the consistency often exhibited between the first and second linguistic parameters. Similar to social actor presentation, woman activists are involved profoundly in process type analysis; however, women in general are not involved as such. Unlike woman

activists, women are not assigned to predominantly powerful roles since a statistically significance difference could not be proven. Men are also minimalised in terms of their involvement cases. Supporters and opponents are proven to be involved in more powerful roles but with more involvement cases for supporters.

5.1.3. Evaluation

As with the other parameters/levels of analysis, the findings related to this parameter will be classified into four major categories depending on the subject of evaluation. This is useful in understanding the general evaluative patterns in this particular sample. The first of these major categories examines the evaluative language expressed by these bloggers towards the issue of allowing women to drive in Saudi Arabia, and the different stages that the struggle to obtain that right has passed through. Second, this analysis examines the evaluative language targeted towards the authorities/decision makers who have – more or less – the upper hand in maintaining the current restriction on women driving or granting women this long-awaited right. The third category examines the evaluative language used towards the supporters of allowing women to drive, including the bloggers themselves, along with their actions. This category also targets the opponents of that right and whatever they do or say to express their objection.

5.1.3.1. First object of evaluation: demands for lifting the ban

Starting with the first category, it is evident that all of the bloggers under examination regard lifting the ban as something basic and essential, as in the positive appreciation (valuation) expressed in the examples 57.a, 16, 13.a and 14.a. Hence, this issue should be straightforward and is surely not worth all this controversy. Due to such a perception, these bloggers are presenting this right, or more accurately, the granting of this right, as something extremely overdue to the point that it is becoming exhausting and boring. In examples 4, 5.a, 2.a and 6.a, the same evaluative tool of valuation is used, but with a negative tone, to express this attitude:

57.a. Your majesty is well aware that the simple yet essentially important request to allow women to drive is practiced easily by all women in the world. (post 7)

16. *freedom of movement is a basic human right.* (post 16)

13.a, 14.a. *I understand that women's driving is a controversial issue. But I believe it shouldn't be.* (post 16)

4.5.a. *and thus lift the financial and social burden on some families that has lasted far too long* (post 7)

2.a. *The ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia is a topic that has become tedious due to the uncountable times it has been written about since the 1980s* (post 9)

6.a. *What is ironic is that on both sides, Saudis who oppose and those who are calling for lifting the ban is [SIC] that they are in agreement that the whole issue is petty* (post 9)

These representations are clear indicators of the negative perception of the status quo on women driving in Saudi Arabia. Due to this, it is no wonder that the consequences of denying women in Saudi Arabia that right are expressed with words like damage in 35.a, or as an injustice in 49.a below. In addition to negative appreciation, affect is also used to express negative emotions towards the driving ban. Example 4 below reveals an instance of non-authorial affect which evidently demonstrates the expression of negative emotion through resentment.

35.a. *Thus the ban and the religious misinterpretation on which it is based causes damage to millions of women based on assumptions and scenarios of a few that have no basis in reality.* (post 10)

49.a. *We want the state to begin to lift this injustice by issuing a decree to allow women who want to drive, to do so.* (post 10)

50. *from those who have been gravely affected by the women-driving ban* (post 7)

4. *and resentment has again boiled to the surface.* (post 10)

It is worth pointing out that in a number of cases throughout this sample, these bloggers assert the fact that the requests for change are driven by national and local voices. Put another way, and as will be examined in more detail on the third level of this analysis, no foreign bodies are involved in these calls or are expected to fuel them. This is evident in the portrayals of this topic in the western media, for whom it is a mere source of money and rate-increasing. Here, the motives behind western media calls are insincere and dishonest, and the appreciation in the following examples demonstrates this. Such presentation places an exclusively national drive behind these calls for change.

11. *because it is “exotic”*. (post 13)

12. *It is big money* (post 13)

38.a. *that’s how much they want to fill the airwaves with money-making rate-increasing programming*, (post 13)

5.1.3.2. Second object of evaluation: Decision makers/authorities

Since this particular topic represents a request for change that is still unsupported by the government, it is worth pointing out how authorities are evaluated. Examining the current data, instances of evaluative language here take on a negative tone when commenting on the current situation and bloggers express dissatisfaction with their current practice of the driving ban in the form of negative judgement. Duality of evaluation, i.e. using negative and positive values simultaneously, is present and used accordingly. When the discussion is about gender segregation policies in Saudi Arabia and the post is addressing readers in general, negative judgement is used. The use of ‘infamous’, for instance, judges authorities from an international perspective against social sanctions, while in 48.a, it is being judged nationally against social esteem. On the contrary, however, this tone changes and a positive evaluative language is adopted instead, especially when appealing to the King as in appreciation (valuation) in 8.a, 9 and 20. In these particular three cases, the King is positively evaluated for promoting change and these callers of change present themselves in unity with this.

3. *Saudi Arabia is infamous for its gender discrimination* (post 9)

48.a. *All we want from the state is to stop issuing unfulfilled promises and conflicting internal and international statements about the ban on women driving.* (post 10)

8.a. *We address your majesty with thankfulness and gratitude for the utmost care that you have granted to Saudi women issues* (post 7)

9. *and the progressive steps that you have taken to involve women in the national development projects.* (post 7)

60.a. *We pray that your majesty will remain our pride, strength, and empowerment* (post 7)

5.1.3.3. Third object of evaluation: supporters and opponents

The third category of evaluative language in this sample represents the two clashing ends on this status quo/change continuum. Evidently, a positive representation of the supporters of granting Saudi women this right is present either in the form of appreciation (composition and valuation) as in 3.a or positive judgement (against social sanctions) in 30. In the latter example, the defying of the driving ban (i.e. defying the status quo) is presented positively even though it reveals a violation of rules. This resistance is, however, evaluated negatively when representing opponents' take on woman activists. In 40, an activist is accused of immorality by opponents, which is a common accusation made against attempts to change across various topics.

30. *On a lighter note, my shewolf friend had gone out for a few more joyrides since that night* (post 8)

3.a. *A Saudi online newspaper says more than 3,000 nationals of the kingdom, including prominent writers and academics, have endorsed a study that recommends lifting a ban on women driving.* (post 17)

40. *and she is publicly accused of being corrupt and thereby corrupting society.* (post 10)

The inclusion of this negative judgement from an opposing perspective serves to place the opponents themselves in a negative position. In different sections of the sample, this negative representation is more explicit. For instance, in 18.a, negative judgement against social sanctions represents opponents who are abusing women as immoral. Even when the abuse does not take a physical form, and instead manifests itself in implicit means like questioning integrity and intentions, negative judgement is used on the part of these bloggers as in 17.a. below.

18.a. *of course that is not what a real man does*. (post 12)

17.a. *Tariq Alhomayed, the man who turned Asharq al-Awsat from a respected newspaper into a joke, weighs in on the women driving issue*. (post 15)

This examination of the evaluative language used towards different social actors involved in this topic highlights findings parallel to the first topic. Granting women in Saudi Arabia the right to drive is positively evaluated as a right and as an attempt to change; a right so basic and simple that it has been blown out of proportion. Depriving women of such a right also affects how Saudi Arabia is perceived nationally. The positive evaluation of supporters and activists is paralleled by a negative representation of opponents. All of these attitudes have been identified in the text, but evaluation is not the only parameter to explore the underlying attitudes fuelling this discourse. Metaphor, the fourth parameter below, can support such findings but from a slightly different perspective.

5.1.4. Metaphor

After examining all the metaphoric expressions at hand following the guidelines highlighted in section 3.2.3.1.4, they have been sifted and checked for any recurring patterns. Four major clusters can be found here, with varying degrees of relevance to the data at hand. Below is a detailed examination of them:

5.1.4.1. First metaphoric cluster

The first of these clusters echoes the first cluster in topic one, section 4.1.4.1, which signifies how the change is perceived. Using reification in all the following examples, the

abstract concept of imposing/promoting change is represented using the concrete meaning of movement. This is clarified in the following example:

9, 10. *and the progressive steps that you have taken to involve women in the national development projects. These steps that you summarized in your historical speech on September 25th 2011.* (post 7)

Within this cluster, the progressive or reformative measures the late King was taking are perceived as movements towards the desired destination of change. Such movement, however, does not only include decision makers. Supporters of and callers for such change are also creating movements in the right direction:

1. *Local Student Artist Helps Drive Change In Saudi* (post 11)

21. *you go girl,* (post 11)

6. *In the past few weeks the campaign has received several messages and videos of support from both Saudi men and women and enquiries about the next step planned.* (post 10)

14. *then we can cruise into our other challenges with more confidence and determination.* (post 15)

In the last example, such movement is specified in the form of cruising, rather than any movement towards a certain destination. What is special about this particular instance of metaphoric expression is that the challenges and opposition facing such progressive measures are portrayed as crashing waves of sea. A similar case is found in the following example, where cruising is used in the form of reification.

3.a. *what I would like to make clear is to say that Western media does not really care which way the boat sails,* (post 13)

However, in such a case, it is clarified that the movements can go either way. That is to say that, while sailing, cruising or travelling in general, one can be guided towards the desired destination and also away from that destination. So, when changing the status quo and allowing women to drive in Saudi Arabia, oppositions and challenges can hinder such a movement and take it back to maintain the status quo. The following example clarifies this perception, in which such movement has various spatial points where the direction of this movement can be switched:

1. *The turning point* (post 8)

Therefore, the success of movement has its own ups and downs and the path to change is never smooth or easy. Hence, it is perceived as a roller coaster in the following example:

8. *It is a roller coaster to say the least.* (post 14)

Within this cluster, it is not only movement that is examined; also the lack of movement could be relevant. This applies to lack of movement on the part of the government, by not taking enough supporting action, as in the reification in the following example:

41. *All this while the government stands by* (post 10)

Linking this to conceptual metaphor theory, it is clear from these examples that CHANGE IS MOVEMENT. This resembles the findings of topic one with the same source and target domains. In 8, this metaphoric expression represents change using the source domain of a bumpy ride. Thus, CHANGE IS A BUMPY RIDE can be identified here as a cognitive metaphor. Finally, example 41 demonstrates a case where the target domain of lack of support is represented using the source domain of standing still. This could be linked to SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION identified earlier.

5.1.4.2. Second metaphoric cluster

The second metaphor cluster, exemplified below, revolves around the concept of stance. This is considered reification since the original meaning of stance creates semantic tension. According to the Oxford Dictionary, it literally means the “*The way in which*

someone stands, especially when deliberately adopted (as in cricket, golf, and other sports); a person's posture:" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). From this perspective, the various reactions/attitudes towards change are portrayed in concrete physical images, possibly as players taking parts in a game or a sport, where the game is the current debate over granting women the right to drive cars in Saudi Arabia. With this in mind, it is possible to identify the target domain as attitude towards change and the source domain as stance in sport. This adds an additional conceptual metaphor to this sample – ATTITUDE IS STANCE.

2. *I have made my stance clear on women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia,* (post 13)

7.a. *One of the founding members of the Society was recently asked why they don't have a stance on the issue* (post 16)

17.a. *Therefore, you would think it's obvious what kind of stance NSHR should be taking.* (post 16)

5.1.4.3. Third metaphoric cluster

The third cluster under examination here concerns the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia. Throughout the entire sample, this ban, along with its inevitable consequences, is represented using reification and metaphoric expressions from the source domain of heavy load, in which these banned women and their families are represented as the carriers of this heavy load. This load is forced upon/thrown upon these carriers by actors with more physical strength; and in this case, these stronger actors are used to represent the target domain of authorities and decision makers. The following examples demonstrate these:

44.a. *and thus lift the financial and social burden on some families that has lasted far too long.* (post 7)

8.a. *Since 2002 everyone keeps telling me that the ban will be lifted by the end of this year* (post 8)

1. *Right to Dignity's statement on lifting the ban on women driving* (post 10)
2. *As much as I would like the restriction on women's driving in Saudi to be lifted* (post 14)
- 3.a. *A Saudi online newspaper says more than 3,000 nationals of the kingdom, including prominent writers and academics, have endorsed a study that recommends lifting a ban on women driving.* (post 17)

As will be examined in more detail in the next two levels of analysis, this particular case serves to invite supporters of this right to join forces; hence the profound presence of *lift*, *lifting* and *to be lifted* in their language. To illustrate, it indicates that, even though women are involved in this image, they are powerless as they do not have the final say to impose change – all they can do is to demand that right from decision makers. From this perspective, it is possible to summarise this as DRIVING BAN IS PHYSICAL BURDEN. In 12 below, the ban is also represented using reification in parallel lines with this cluster:

12. *It has become like a psychological barrier.* (post 15)

This particular example can be linked to both the current cluster and the first one. A barrier can be defined literally as “a fence or other obstacle that prevents movement or access”, whereas a burden is “a load, typically a heavy one” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015) Both of these source domains can be linked together as they function to demonstrate how the ban is negatively influencing these women's lives and families. So, this can be expressed in another conceptual metaphor, DRIVING BAN IS BARRIER. Using images from the source domain of burden and barrier, one might infer a more general cognitive structure in which STATUS QUO IS HARDSHIP.

5.1.4.4. Fourth metaphoric cluster

This cluster might not be as common in these posts as the previous clusters. Nevertheless, it has been included as it signifies a representation of Saudi society. Examples 14 and

58.a below demonstrate a case of semantic tension that cannot be classified under any of the categories of reification, personification or depersonification explained earlier. To illustrate, the target domain of the Saudi society is portrayed using the source domain of the family as a one unified unit. Various members of the society are represented as members of the same family with consequent rights and duties. This is linked to the conceptual metaphor of SOCIETY IS FAMILY. However, when examining 14, in particular, one might argue that there is a case of reification since the blood relation between siblings is used to express mixed-gender relations in society. In 58.a, it is also possible to argue that the underlined phrase is used both literally and metaphorically.

14. *With the rise in the number of Saudi women granted the King Abdullah international scholarship to 27,500 recipients, many of them have returned hopeful to take part in building this nation side-by-side with their brothers.* (post 7)

58.a *With sincere efforts we are confident that our wise leadership will realize the ban lift in our compassionate and gracious nation for the benefit of our sons and daughters* (post 7)

Due to such representation of the relationships between members of the same society, these members are expected to demonstrate moral and value systems in accordance with the value system of this big family. Going along the same line of thought, just like maintaining these relationships and value systems leads to the prosperity of culture, attempts to break down from such ties lead to the termination of this culture. These two cases are expressed in the following two examples. It should be pointed out that examples 17 and 19.a are used to represent the opposing team's accusations against supporters of change.

17. *one that does not hold the true values of Saudi Arabia* (post 11)

19.a. *and it's people like her (us) that will cause the demise of the culture* (post 11)

In short, this parameter reveals four metaphorical clusters echoing many meanings expressed in the evaluation metaphor. First, change is viewed positively as desired movement while status quo (i.e. the driving ban) is presented negatively as a burden. This parallelism in presentation between the third and fourth parameter is also present in the cases of the first and second ones. Aided with the findings of these four parameters combined, analyses at the meso and macro levels should offer more insight into understanding the different discursive processes taking place.

5.2. Discursive Level:

5.2.1. Non-hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Multiplicity of texts and discourses is profoundly present in this particular sample. Posts 7 and 10 are basically a translation of two Arabic petitions by My Right to Dignity campaign. The recontextualisation of the Arabic content of the petitions into English reveals the intention of the supporters and callers of change to reveal the details of their campaign to a wider and more international audience. It is interesting that in these petitions, the emphasis is on the originality and nationality of the intentions behind these demands. In different parts of this sample, for example in the inclusion of western media in 3.a below, foreign interest in the demands for change is represented as lacking honesty and originality. This is worth pointing out since it highlights that despite being open to international actors, such campaigns are inclusive only for Saudis. Another point worth highlighting here is that the dialogic tone established in the first topic is not as strong in the topic of women and driving. Probably the only exception to this is evident in post 10 in which the activists are addressing and appealing to the late Saudi King as in 10-12 below:

3.a. *what I would like to make clear is to say that Western media does not really care which way the boat sails, (post 13)*

10-12. *These steps that you summarized in your historical speech on September 25th 2011 when you said, “We will not approve the marginalization of women.” (post 7)*

The address takes a more assertive and critical tone in the second petition in post 10; which is not addressed to the King but rather takes the form of a general statement. Despite the rather monologue-inspired tone, these posts cannot be described as authoritative as they exhibit features of internally persuasive discourse. These are evident in the insertion of instances of economic discourse as in 46.a, and of Quranic or religious discourse as in 28-29a. Both of these examples serve to invalidate the driving ban and refute any claims that it is based on religion. It is also evident that these posts are not univocal, as in many cases throughout the posts multivoicedness is profoundly present. So, in addition to being authors in terms of footing, these bloggers are animators of the many direct and indirect quotes from both supporters and opponents. Multidiscursivity is also evident in the posts. So, in addition to the religious and economic discourses included, narratives from historical, political and institutional discourses are used to support the calls for change.

46.a. *The presence of two million legal and illegal migrant male drivers that exploit the needs of women to bleed them financially of money that is better spent on these women themselves and their families is unexplainable and religiously, socially and humanely unacceptable.* (post 10)

28-29. *when he said in the Holy Quran: “And (He has created) horses, mules and donkeys, for you to ride and as an adornment”* (post 10)

5.2.2. Hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Despite the fact that all of these posts were written between 2009 and 2012, most of the linked pages are still available online as they were originally posted, and even in cases where the page is not found, it is often still possible to deduce the type of linked page from the address bar. However, in three cases the linked page had been removed and the domain had changed into something else or remained blank. In addition to this, there are a few other links that still have a valid web address, but they occurred in clauses that were not included in the analysis due to irrelevant content to the topic under examination.

Example 6.a demonstrates this, in which the first link refers to a song by rapper Ice Cube attacking Hillary Clinton.

6.a “*cuz I can tell you now it will turn out rotten*” Ice Cube (post 13)

With the exclusion of these, a total of 28 links were found in this sample, and these are distributed as follows in table 5.6:

Table 5.6: Distribution of hyperlinks in topic 2

Link to:	Number of links	Percentage
Same blogger/poster	11	39.28%
International pages	5	17.86%
Local pages	5	17.86%
Other bloggers/supporters	7	25%
Total	28	100%

Starting with the first category, it is evident that it occurs most in the sample (39.28%) and in each of these cases, the linked page is always a post on the same blog and not on other posting platforms used by these bloggers like Twitter or Facebook. The following example from post 8 demonstrates this intertextuality. In this case, Eman Al Nafjan is commenting on another courageous action by her anonymous friend while also linking to a previous post in her blog where she narrates her friend’s attempts to drive a car in Saudi Arabia.

30. *On a lighter note, my shewolf friend had gone out for a few more joyrides since that night.* (post 8)

The second category in ranking according to this table, with 25%, is links to pages of other bloggers or supporters. One of these is a link posted by Ahmed Al Omran on his blog, which refers to another post by Eman Alnafjan in her blog. Another three links connect to personal blogs commenting on relevant matters but which are not included in the sample such as *Abdullah Alami's blog*, *the Eternal Insomniac* and *Crossroad Arabia*, as in the example below.

8. who has recently published a book about the debate over women driving. (post 17)

International and local webpages occur at similar percentages, 17.86% each. The international ones refer to posts by the *Daily Beast*, *the Huffington Post* and *the Guardian*. The remaining two link to two Youtube videos depicting two CNN interviews; the first is with a number of Saudi and non-Saudi supporters of women driving in Saudi, including Eman Al Nafjen, while the second is with an American Muslim woman on the same topic where she calls for a rejection of any foreign interventions in that matter. Local pages, on the other hand, include links to English posts by Al Sharq Al-Awsat, Arab News and an Arabic post by Al Riyadh. They also include a video made by a Saudi student, Saja Kamal, which offers various views on the issue. In this category there is also a link to a Facebook page showing some posts by Saudi Facebook users opposing women driving. Unfortunately, and as discussed earlier, the content of that page is no longer available, yet it is still evident that it is on Facebook. This link, along with the aforementioned Al Sharq Al-Awsat, whose writer attacks Manal Al Sharief for driving her car, are the only links that can be considered linking to opponents. This represents only 7.14 % of the links included.

An essential part of analysing the discursive level targets the comments mentioned under each post. While posts 11, 12, 15, 17 and 18 do not have any comments, the remaining posts have a total of 119 comments, 90 of them, i.e. 75.63%, being on the *Saudiwoman* blog. Careful examination of these demonstrates that the vast majority of commentators support women driving in Saudi Arabia, along with negotiating the ban and its consequences on all levels. Only two comments on post 7, from male users with Arabic

names, attack these calls for change, saying that they corrupt women and society. This is often brought to the table by opponents whenever the topic is discussed. Another two negative comments are on post 10 and they are by male users with western names, accusing Saudi women of being cowards for not taking a stronger stand, and they use foul language to express these accusations. Many commentators are responding to these and defending the cause accordingly.

So, it is fair to say that some findings at the textual level are in fact supported by the analysis at the meso level. For instance, there is a strong emphasis in the evaluative language on the exclusively national nature of these calls for change, which is also detected at this level. Following this idea, this could be linked to the metaphoric representation of society as a family, often working on solving its problems without any interference. The prominent inclusion of supporters over opponents is also echoed by the room of voices they are allowed in these posts. Last but not least, the use of English as a means for communication, which was discussed in earlier chapters, works in accordance with the findings on this level to create a sub-group promoting this cause. This will be examined in more detail at the last level.

5.3. Socio-cognitive level

Despite the fact that the current sample differs in its topic from the first one, some results at the micro and meso levels bear some resemblance to the corresponding results in the previous topic. As a result, it is no wonder that the findings at the third level reveal some recurring patterns, keeping in mind the reciprocal and overlapping relationship between these three levels. That being said, it is time to examine the underlying mental representations that feed into these. In order to do this, it is essential to determine the social change called for in these posts, and the current status quo. Evidently, the status quo is the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia and all the restrictions resulting from this, while the change is the lift of that ban, and giving permission to women in Saudi Arabia to practise this right, a right practised by women all over the world.

As evident at the textual level, there is a clear positive self-representation, which applies to the representation of the supporters of this change, including the bloggers themselves;

hence the use of *self* here. On the contrary, there is a negative other representation in which *other* includes all the opponents to this change who are also advocates of maintaining the status quo. This is clearly exhibited in the evaluative language examined in the previous section, in which this right is depicted as essential and basic, while depriving women of it is limiting and discriminatory on a number of levels. Accordingly, this reveals some insight into the mental representations held by these bloggers and supporters in general towards women and in particular towards their right to drive just like men. Such representations clash with those held by the opponents, who see driving as corrupting to both women and society, as well as a foreign attack on what they perceive as the moral values and identity of the Saudi nation. This cognitive clash is also mirrored in the metaphoric language adopted. The current ban is portrayed as a heavy load that Saudi women have to endure, or a barrier in their movement towards progress and advancement. The repeated use of the journey metaphor also depicts this change as something desired by these bloggers, and something that needs to be achieved.

This positive self-representation, as opposed to the negative other representation, is a tool that has been adopted in the first and second topics to translate to the online environment the clash taking place in reality between these progressive supporters and opponents. It is a clash that often involves accusations on each part, and one in which supporters are accused of lacking commitment to what their opponents assume to be the true values of Saudi Arabia, as well as working in cooperation with foreign bodies to westernise the country. This last accusation is often associated with most attempts at reformative change, and this can be linked to the ideology of dominance/resistance discussed earlier. Therefore, in this topic in particular, the integrity and locality of this campaign and its supporters have been defended and emphasised in order to cast away any suspicious doubts; this was achieved through a number of textual devices. On the other hand, these supporters are accusing the opponents of holding a rather strict and inaccurate understanding of Islam that has been mixed up with local and ancient traditions that are not originally Islamic. This is also demonstrated in the activists' use of Quranic verses in their petitions to establish the Islamic equality between sexes in such matters. Interestingly, though, the textual analysis also reveals that while both supporters and

opponents are actors in a little over one-third of their involvement cases, opponents are also sayers in another third, which is more than double the sayer cases for the supporters. These percentages are more relevant if one considers the fact that in both their general inclusion cases as social actors, as well as their involvement as participants in processes, supporters are more present than opponents. This can be regarded as an indication that these accusations are more commonly made by the opponents, which highlights the fact that the ideology of resistance and calls for change are often attacked to maintain the status quo.

This clash is also manifested at the meso level, which to a large extent excludes these opponents. It is evident that the vast majority of the texts included in the original blog posts either support lifting the ban and changing this injustice, or, to a lesser degree, report neutrally on the issue. Even the examined comments portray a similar attitude towards these calls as they are vastly supporting them. This is a clear example of confirmation bias in social/digital media, which is an inherent feature of blogging and micro blogging. In such forums, users often choose who and what to follow so that they are inherently excluding those who oppose them. This therefore creates a more or less closed community whose members are often sharing similar ideologies on whatever issues are at hand. This is exactly the case here, as these bloggers and all of the supporters of this cause are the sub-group whose individual mental representations on the matter are in charge of change. On the contrary, the opposing group adopts more dominant mental representations that have been gaining power and religious authority through time; such representations are the ones attempting to maintain the status quo.

On a different note, social actor representation also reveals a clear distinction between Saudi women in general and the woman activists who actually took part in these campaigns, such as Manal Al Sharief and Eman Al Nafjan. To elaborate more on this, these women, who drove their cars, organised campaigns and wrote petitions, are activated in the vast majority of their inclusion cases. On the other hand, this is drastically the other way round with women in general who are talked about regardless of their stance on the issue. This point can be problematic since these pro-woman mental

representations are consistent only with the textual representations of woman activists and not with the representations assigned to women in general - irrelevant of their stance on women driving. However, this can be linked to the previous topic and the discussion about the presence of fossilised passive representations of women even within the pro-woman discourse. This could be understood in light of the more dominant social practices in Saudi Arabia. Here, traces of such dominant practice are creating this fossilisation even within the resisting discourse, which obviously highlights the impact of the surrounding social and cognitive factors on such discourse. Another example of this impact is clear when examining men in these posts. Evidently, this social actor is one of the least included, having nearly half the inclusion cases of women and almost one-fourth the inclusion cases of woman activists. Similar findings were arrived at when examining the first topic, which highlights that the current practice of gender segregation in Saudi Arabia might be mirrored in these posts as well.

Finally, this level attempts to tie in the findings of these various linguistic parameters together with the overlapping levels of analysis while looking at the wider socio-cognitive context. However, it is still too early to arrive at more generalised results in order to answer the overarching research questions properly. Nevertheless, the findings of the two topics examined so far reveal some recurring patterns and further examination of other topics will determine to what extent these patterns are common. The next chapter will examine the second more common topic in these blogs, which is the inclusion of women in unconventional work environments. Unlike the case with driving, Chapter Six will examine a topic in which the government has actually pushed for change.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS (POSTS ON WOMEN IN UNCONVENTIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENTS)

This analysis chapter presents the third topic in my sample of blog posts. This topic consists of ten posts (Appendix A) on allowing women in Saudi Arabia to apply for unconventional jobs in areas such as retail and law, which are outside the realm of where they usually work, i.e. in education and healthcare. This widening of job types that women can apply for is a way of reducing the high number of unemployed women in the kingdom and the economy's reliance on non-Saudi workers. These changes have, however, faced some social opposition, especially on the part of conservatives, who feel that such jobs are not consistent with what they perceive as appropriate, both socially and religiously. Until the introduction of these changes, all Saudi retail shops employed only male salespersons, so when these changes were approved, they were hailed by other members within society. This topic is the second largest in the sample under study, and as aforementioned, the analysis will be on three levels. The first and second levels are mainly descriptive, while the third is more conclusive and interpretive. Table 6.1 shows the numbers of posts from each blog and the word counts:

Table 6.1: Number of posts and word count for topic 3

	Eman	Qusay	Ahmed SJ	Ahmed RB	Total
Number of posts	3	3	1	3	10
Word count	1,505	658	130	1,031	3,324

6.1. Textual level

6.1.1. Social actor representation

Only the main social actors involved in this particular topic will be included within this parameter. This means that any social actor who is not directly related to the main social actors under examination will be excluded. The main social actors in this topic will be categorised and classified into eleven main categories, which bear some resemblance to the categories in sections 4.1.1 and 5.1.1:

1. Decision makers or authorities with varying degrees of power.
2. Working women, which includes women who are working in unconventional jobs as explained in the introduction to this section. It also includes women who are interested in applying for these jobs.
3. Women in general – this category includes Saudi women in general whenever there are no references to their attitudes towards these unconventional jobs.
4. Men – this category includes any references to male social actors.
5. Supporters – this includes those who advocate women’s right to do these unconventional jobs.
6. Opponents of this right.
7. Media – refers to any media channel/item, including newspapers, TV channels and even individual media projects, without being explicitly in support or against these changes.
8. Saudis in general, whether as a nation or as unidentified individuals.
9. Bloggers/authors of these posts.
10. Readers of the blog
11. Companies employing women and business owners. Excluded from this category, however, are cases when the name of the business is operationalised and functioning as a circumstance and not a social actor:
 - 3.a. *what I find funny is that I have seen them working in hardware stores like Extra many months ago advising women on electrical appliances like toasters, microwave ovens, even air conditioners and washing machines (post 22).*

Table 6.2: Inclusion, activation and passivation for main social actors in topic 3

Social actor	Inclusion		Activation		Passivation	
Decision makers	45	13.60%	31	68.89%	14	31.11%
Working women	76	22.96%	43	56.58%	33	43.42%
Women	41	12.39%	19	46.34%	22	53.66%
Men	36	10.88%	18	50%	18	50%
Supporters	17	5.14%	14	82.35%	3	17.65%
Opponents	46	13.90%	39	84.78%	7	15.22%
Media	13	3.93%	7	53.85%	6	46.15%
Saudis	15	4.53%	9	60%	6	40%
Bloggers	20	6.04%	18	90%	2	10%
Readers	2	0.60%	2	100%	0	0%
Business owners	20	6.04%	17	85%	3	15%
Total	331	100%	217	65.56%	114	34.44%

6.1.1.1. Inclusion and exclusion

Examining the inclusion cases for these main social actors, a Chi-square test was applied to the finding of Table 6.1 to check whether there was any statistical significance in the difference between them. The p value turned out to be 1.60328E-26 (<0.05). Evidently, the category of working women takes the lead in the number of inclusions in these posts,

almost 23%. This is hardly surprising, given that this category is the main social actor discussed under this topic. Opponents come second with a percentage of 13.90%, and in third place come decision makers with a slightly lower percentage, 13.60%. Women are fourth with 12.39% and men fifth, reaching 10.88% of inclusion cases. What is interesting about this particular sample, in comparison with the previous two, is that the inclusion of men is slightly higher than before. Careful examination of these inclusion cases reveals, however, that the majority of them express their function as salespersons or their anticipated interaction with women if the latter are to be hired as salespersons, as in 15 below. This should be linked to the discussions in sections 4.1.1.1. and 5.1.1.1. on the exclusion of men. Table 6.2 reveals that there are more than twice as many inclusions of opponents there are of supporters, at 13.90% and 5.14%, respectively. This offers more insights into the severity of the struggle over this issue, since more opponents are included in this topic. But these inclusion cases cannot be examined efficiently without examining the activation and passivation cases, which is the focus of the following section.

15. *In addition these women cashiers are required to undergo training, attend meetings and interact with their colleagues and supervisor at work. (post 19)*

6.1.1.2. Activation and passivation

Using a one-tailed binominal exact test, the following main social actors all prove to have a statistically significant difference in favour of activation: decision makers, supporters, opponents, bloggers and business owners. On the other hand, for the remaining actors, the differences do not prove to have any statistical significance, so the null hypothesis is retained. These actors include: working women, women, men, media, Saudis and readers. As with the previous topics, these social actors are looked at in pairs. These are working women versus women in general, men versus women in general, and supporters versus opponents. The remaining social actors are commented on only if they offer any interesting insights for the analysis. For example, both decision makers and business owners are active in the majority of cases, 68.89% and 85%, respectively. These

percentages are expected in light of the fact that these two main social actors have relatively more power compared to others.

The first pair to be examined here is working women versus women. While working women have slightly more activation cases, at 56.58%, women in general have more passivation cases, at 53.66%. But as pointed out previously, these differences do not have any statistical significance since the p value for the category of working women is 0.39 and for women it is 0.71, both of which are more than 0.05. As a result, while example 6.a. might suggest that at least working women are being sufficiently activated in these posts, and in accordance with what would be expected in a pro-woman discourse, statistical analysis at this level does not support this claim. When comparing activation cases for working women with those for women in general, statistical significance in favour of the first is proven with a p value of 0.001; however, this must be examined while taking into consideration that working women have nearly double the inclusion cases of women. When applying the same test for passivation, no statistically significant difference is found with a p value of 0.08. Based on this, one cannot establish more activation than passivation in either social actor.

6.a. *"We were trying to send our voice through the media,"* recalls Hanouf Alhazzaa, (post 26)

The second pair is men versus women, and again the difference between activation and passivation is not proven to have any statistical significance. While the percentages for women were commented on in the previous paragraph, a few words are needed about men. The null hypothesis is accepted – exactly half of men's inclusion cases are active while the other half are passive (p value 0.57). Even when examining inclusion cases only, both men and women are in general included with approximately similar percentages, at 10.88% and 12.39%, respectively and with a p value of 0.5.

The third pair examines supporters and opponents; unlike the first two pairs, statistical significance is established since the activation cases for each main social actor are far more numerous than for passivation. The p value in each case is less than 0.05, 0.006 and

9.15772E-07 respectively. The alternative hypothesis, in favour of activation, has to be accepted as the activation percentages are very high, at 82.35% and 84.78%, respectively. In terms of vertical testing, a statistically significant difference in terms of activation cases only is established in favour of opponents over supporters and with a p value of 0.000. But this must be looked at while keeping in mind, as aforementioned, the fact that the inclusion cases of opponents are more than double the cases of supporters.

6.1.1.3. Categorisation and Nomination

As with the previous topics, women – whether working or in general – are mainly represented using the classification of gender identity. This should not be surprising since the main focus in these posts is gender-related. Example 3 below demonstrates this. Men are also represented using classification of their gender identity. Aggregation with big numbers is also used with classification, especially when representing the number of unemployed women in the country. However, since this particular topic revolves around the various works people do for a living, functionalisation is also prominently used as well. Looking at the same example, *pharmacists* and *opt technicians* express functionalisation used in conjunction with classification.

3. Currently, female pharmacists and optics technicians are only allowed to practice their jobs inside hospitals. (post 28)

Functionalisation is also extensively present in this particular topic with reference to other social actors. For instance, conservatives and opponents are repeatedly referred to as clerics as in 1.a below. Clerics is often used to refer to people who see their job as making sure that no moral or religious codes are violated, and the majority work with the PVPV committee. This is in addition to the term *muttawas* described in previous topics. Collectivisation is another way of presentation here, whether in terms of decision makers as in 2.a or religious council as in 4.

1.a. Saudi Clerics To Labor Minister: Stop Women Employment Or You Will Get Cancer (post 27)

21. *This very simple fact somehow flew over our muttawas' heads* (post 20)

2.a. *When the Saudi Ministry of Labor (MOL) announced it would limit the retail jobs at lingerie stores to women,* (post 25)

4. *and in it is a fatwa and not just any fatwa, an official fatwa from the governmentally appointed committee for fatwas i.e. the highest council of our ultra conservative version of Sunni Islam.* (post19)

How about nomination? It is possible to view this by examining supporters and opponents comparatively. Supporters of this right are represented with nomination, and some of them are actually included repeatedly. These include *Ghazi Al Qusaibi*, a previous minister and supporter of women empowerment, *Adel Fakhri*, the Minister of Labour at the time of writing the posts, *Reem Asad*, a Saudi female lecturer, and *Aysha Natto*, a female member of Jeddah Chamber of Commerce. With regards to opponents, there is nomination in case of *Kareem Al Enzy* and *Abdulmouhsin al-Nemer*, two male gold merchants, and *Abdulrahman Abanimy*, the cleric who attacked Fakhri verbally. Interestingly, examples 25 and 26.b below demonstrate two inclusion cases of opponents but without any nomination. In the first example, these nameless opponents are represented as powerful. Similarly, in 26.b only functionalisation is used when representing the story of the PVPV head who was replaced by the government for his opposing stance on allowing women to work in unconventional jobs:

25. *However powerful people behind the scenes have been able to delay its implementation.* (post 20)

26.b. *the head of Hay'a was replaced due to this issue being a problem,* (post 22)

The descriptive findings at this level can be summarised in the following points. First, working women are the top included actor in these posts, but their activation does not prove to have statistical significance over passivation. Second, while both supporters and opponents are activated in the majority of cases, opponents are included in twice as many

cases and are actually the second most included main social actor in this sample. Third, men are included in more cases compared to the previous two topics. Fourth, classification in terms of gender identity and functionalisation are commonly used in this topic. Finally, nomination is also present in terms of supporters and opponents, although it is more evident in the case of supporters.

6.1.2. Process type analysis

6.1.2.1. Overview of involvement

The same grouping and categorisation principle applied earlier is used to carry out analysis at this parameter. Table 6.3 shows the distribution of the various participant roles for each main social actor in comparison with the actor-involvement cases. Table 7.4 shows the distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each role's overall involvement cases.

Table 6.3: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each social actor's involvement cases in topic 3

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	21	5	0	1	11	4	3	0	0	45
	46.67%	11.11%	0%	2.22%	24.44%	8.89%	6.67%	0%	0%	100%
Working women	28	17	1	2	2	0	9	0	0	59
	47.46%	28.81%	1.69%	3.39%	3.39%	0%	15.25%	0%	0%	100%
Women	12	10	0	1	2	0	5	0	0	30
	40%	33.33%	0%	33.33%	6.67%	0%	16.67%	0%	0%	100%
Men	10	8	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	24

	41.67%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	8.33%	16.67%	0%	0%	100%
Supporters	9	1	2	0	5	1	3	0	0	21
	42.86%	4.76%	9.52%	0%	23.81%	4.76%	14.29%	0%	0%	100%
Opponents	15	4	8	0	9	1	5	0	0	42
	35.71%	9.52%	19.05%	0%	21.43%	2.39%	11.90%	0%	0%	100%
Media	0	1	0	0	6	2	0	0	0	9
	0%	11.11%	0%	0%	66.67%	22.22%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saudis	2	1	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	8
	25%	12.5%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	100%
Bloggers	4	0	11	0	0	1	3	0	0	19
	21.05%	0%	57.89%	0%	0%	5.26%	15.79%	0%	0%	100%

Readers	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
	0%	0%	66.67%	0%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Business owners	9	1	1	0	7	1	1	0	1	21
	42.86%	4.76%	4.76%	0%	33.33%	4.76%	4.76%	0%	4.76%	100%
Total	110	48	26	4	43	12	37	0	1	281
	39.14%	17.08%	9.25%	1.42%	15.30%	4.27%	13.17%	0%	0.36%	100%

The findings of the last column in Table 6.3 were tested for statistical significance using a Chi-square test and the null hypothesis has been judged accordingly. The p value is less than 0.05, and consequently the null hypothesis has to be rejected. It is clear that working women are the top social actor with their involvement in process types in more than a fifth of cases, i.e. 21%. Example 5 below demonstrates their top process type, actor, which is used in nearly half of their cases, i.e. 47.46%. In second place come decision makers, reaching 16.01%, with actor and sayer participant roles (both initiating roles) having a total of over 70% for their involvement cases, 46.67% and 24.44%, respectively. Example 2 below demonstrates decision makers in an initiating role. In third position come opponents, at 14.95%, while supporters are at 7.47%. Looking at these findings, it seems that process type analysis and social actor representation analyses are consistent with each other. This occurs repeatedly throughout this study and it shows that these two parameters are closely interrelated. There are also similar findings for supporters and opponents; the involvement cases for the former are nearly half the cases of the latter.

5. *but they also took their campaign directly to the people.* (post 26)

2. *The ministry [SIC] of health is studying a proposal to allow women to work in community pharmacies and optics shops.* (post 28)

Table 6.4: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each role overall involvement cases in topic 3

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	19.09%	10.42%	0%	25%	25.58%	33.33%	8.11%	0%	0%	16.01%
Working women	25.45%	35.42%	3.85%	50%	4.65%	0%	24.32%	0%	0%	21%
Women	10.91%	20.83%	0%	25%	4.65%	0%	13.51%	0%	0%	10.68%
Men	9.09%	16.67%	0%	0%	0%	16.67%	10.81%	0%	0%	8.54%
Supporters	8.18%	2.08%	7.69%	0%	11.63%	8.33%	8.11%	0%	0%	7.47%

Opponents	13.64%	8.33%	30.77%	0%	20.93%	8.33%	13.51%	0%	0%	14.95%
Media	0%	2.08%	0%	0%	13.95%	16.67%	0%	0%	0%	3.20%
Saudis	1.82%	2.08%	3.85%	0%	0%	0%	10.81%	0%	0%	2.85%
Bloggers	3.64%	0%	42.31%	0%	0%	8.33%	8.11%	0%	0%	6.76%
Readers	0%	0%	7.69%	0%	2.33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.07%
Business owners	8.18%	2.08%	3.85%	0%	16.28%	8.33%	2.70%	0%	100%	7.47%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	100%

6.1.2.2. Initiating and receiving roles

Table 6.5 highlights the findings of the social actors comprising the three major pairs discussed earlier. Starting with working women versus women in general, the general involvement cases of the first are nearly double those for the second. For both of these social actors, the role of actor in a material process is in first place, at 47.46% and 40%, respectively. However, when dividing these into initiating and receiving roles, the differences do not have any statistical significance. To elaborate, in case of working women, the difference between their initiating and receiving roles has a p value of 0.4 and for women in general the same test reveals a p value of 0.7. But when comparing between these two social actors in terms of initiating roles only, a statistically significant difference is established in favour of working women with a p value of 0.008. Also, when carrying out the same test in terms of receiving roles between the two members of pairs, the null hypothesis is rejected as the p value is 0.048.

Table 6.5: Initiating and receiving roles for main pairs in topic 3

Social actor	Grammatical categorisation (action)		
	Initiating	Receiving	Total
Working women	31	28	59
Women	14	16	30
Men	10	14	24
Supporters	16	5	21
Opponents	32	10	42

The second pair is men versus women and the starting point is examining the total number of their involvement cases. These two social actors are involved in roughly similar percentages, at 10.68% and 8.54%, respectively. In terms of horizontal testing, the findings of women have been introduced in the previous paragraph. With regards to men horizontal testing, no statistical significance has been established with a p value of 0.27. This is despite the fact that men and women are involved as actors in most of their initiating roles, at 41.66% and 40%, respectively. With regards to vertical testing, whether in initiating or receiving roles, no statistically significant difference is established with either women or men. The p values resulting from the vertical tests are 0.27 and 0.42 respectively.

Last, the third pair is supporters versus opponents and, as stated above, opponents are involved in twice as many cases as supporters. This does not only apply to involvement cases, it also applies to the numbers of initiating and receiving roles. Supporters are in initiating roles in 16 cases, whereas opponents are in 32. Even in receiving roles, supporters are involved in only five cases compared to 10 for opponents. Horizontal testing for each social actor reveals that both of them are involved in far more initiating roles than receiving ones and at a statistically significant level. The p value for supporters is 0.01 and for opponents is 0.000 respectively; both of which are less than 0.05. With regards to vertical testing, no statistical significance is found in cases of receiving roles with a p value of 0.15. However, with regards to initiating ones, it is established in favour of opponents with a p value of 0.01.

In conclusion, working women are the top involved social actor in these posts, with nearly half of the cases as actors and a little over a quarter as receivers in material processes. But this has not been supported by statistical testing. Compared to women in general, working women are involved in more initiating roles and at a statistically significant level. Women's involvement in initiating cases is not statistically different from their receiving ones. Opponents' involvement is double that of supporters on a number of levels, despite the fact that, for both social actors, initiating roles are more than three times receiving ones.

6.1.3. Evaluation

The third parameter concerns the evaluative language used in these posts. Using Martin and White's framework, evaluative language as used here can be divided into three main categories, depending on what is being evaluated: the status quo of women; the opposition for such inclusions; and women's abilities in these unconventional environments.

6.1.3.1. First object of evaluation: The status quo of women

Evaluative language is used repeatedly by these bloggers to express their support for such reforms and to support the government in pursuing what it is doing to enable more women to work in unconventional jobs. An essential tool to enable them to do this is their negative evaluations, to account for the status quo that would continue were these changes not fully implemented. This is apparent in the recurrent negative appreciation associated with the status quo as in the negative composition in *contradictions* and *contradictory* in 8 and 14 or negative valuation in *shame* in 42-43.a. It is also expressed in the negative affect (non-authorial) in 4.a. used to account for these women's reality and what they could lose from missing out on these changes.

8. *You'll break one of our main contradictions regarding interaction between men and women.* (post 20)

14. *Its aim is to address a real contradictory issue here in Saudi Arabia concerning men selling women lingerie.* (post 20)

4.a. *And the report quietly disappeared without much fuss about its implications and the hopelessness that Saudi women are going through.* (post 21)

42-43.a. *It would be a shame, if another door closes in the faces of women who are in desperate need of jobs.* (post 19)

Another way how bloggers evaluate this status quo negatively is using common sense and logic in support of their case. This is evident in the negative appreciation (reaction to

quality of presentation) in 7.a, which is consistent with the above example of contradictory and contradiction. In other cases, as in 14-15, negative judgement (against social sanctions) is expressed in support of common sense. In this particular example, it is important to highlight the fact that *jealousy* is used here as a source of positive judgement due to the cultural norms of society. According to such norms, this jealousy is associated with masculine pride, decency and honour, and negating it, as in this particular example, is degrading. Consequently, *Fakieh*, the Saudi minister who is pushing forward these changes, is basing his defence on cultural motives.

7.a. *"It doesn't make sense to continue viewing men in our society as wolves that look for women in every place," she added.* (post 28)

14-15. *"But now, foreign men are selling lingerie to our women. No jealous man would accept this."* (post 27)

Relevant to this, and in addition to evaluating the status quo which excludes women from unconventional work environments, the posts in this chapter present views that are extended to evaluate the Saudi society in general. For instance, in 15.a. society in general is judged as being very conservative from an international perspective. Such judgement could indicate that mental representations opposing change are more dominant than those supporting it. In light of this, women who dare to work in a profession outside the realm approved by the dominant group in society are judged negatively against social sanctions since their work domains are not appreciated and valued positively, such as 21-22 below.

15.a. *The contradiction is in the fact that we are supposedly the most conservative nation in the world* (post 20)

21-22. *Because if they don't take up something proper, they are very likely to have our society drag their reputation and that of their families in the mud.* (post 21)

6.1.3.2. Second object of evaluation: opponents and how they perceive change

The second kind of evaluative language represents people opposing the inclusion of woman into unconventional workplaces. Of the various means used to express evaluation, negative appreciation is evident in evaluating any outcomes from opponents. For instance, negative valuation towards *fatwas* can be found in 1 of post 19. *Misogynist* is used here by the blogger to frame the negative and degrading perspective these opponents hold towards women and their rights.

1. Another day, another misogynist fatwa (post 19)

Relevant to this is examining the evaluative language used to express how opponents view change. This must be examined while keeping in mind that such views are represented by the bloggers in a non-authorial fashion. In this regard, some of the evaluative language emerges from religious discourse. Most of these cases occur in the translated fatwa in post 19, in which allowing women into these unconventional jobs is judged as violating these conservatives' understanding of the teachings of Islam:

25. hence it is Islamically prohibited. (post 19)

26.a. And the companies that employ women are collaborating with them in what is Islamically prohibited. (post 19)

27. and thus they too are committing a prohibition. (post 19)

Such negative judgements (against social sanctions) can be linked to the negative view they have of women; a perception that could be rooted in culture or tradition but not Islam as it should be perceived. This negative view is better understood through examples 22.a. and 29 below. In the first, it is linked to the judgements they make about these environments where men and women usually intermingle. Negative judgement of women (against social sanctions) as a source of temptation clearly portrays a degrading perception of women. Similarly, in 29 of post 20, the devil is associated with such places where men and women mix even publicly. Another way used by opponents to alienate

people from such environments is by associating them with temptation. This particular example combines aspects of evaluation and metaphor simultaneously; it is introduced here as it reinforces the judgement in 22.a while adding negative valuation too.

22.a. *She should search for employment that does not expose her to temptation nor make her a source of temptation.* (post 19)

29. *and strongly believe that malls and shopping areas are tools of the devil.* (post 20)

These posts also reveal a different perspective often expressed by opponents to represent any attempts for change negatively. So, in addition to using evaluative language within religious discourse, opponents often resort to accusing such reforms as contributing to dishonest agendas. This means that these reforms are also judged by these opponents as attacks on what they see as society's cultural identity and originality. Consequently, they perceive the entry of women into these jobs as a means to *westernize* the society, as in 16.a below. They also resort to making the *liberal* accusation, as in 38. Liberal is another term that is heavily loaded within the Saudi context. It often denotes a negative judgement lacking adherence to the true values of the Saudi norms and values. It is worth pointing out that both accusations are often combined to cast doubts over the honesty of calls for change.

16.a. *Fakieh also rejected the accusation that his ministry is pushing an agenda to "westernize" society through the employment of women and refused to discuss the motives behind his policy.* (post 27)

38. *They just hate Dr. Al Qusaibi and his "liberal" ways* (post 20)

Interestingly, most of the evaluative language expressed in these posts is either about or by opponents. This means that they are powerful not only in terms of inclusion and involvement as established earlier but also in terms of evaluation. This is directly expressed in posts as in 25 below. So, despite the attacks that bloggers direct towards opponents, they do acknowledge the power opponents possess. Even in the words of

these bloggers, these opponents, despite their negative take on these issues, are still powerful and in a position to attack whoever dares to stand in their way. So, amid the negativity often assigned to opponents, positive appreciation (valuation) is also assigned to them in these posts.

25. *However powerful people behind the scenes have been able to delay its implementation.* (post 20)

6.1.3.3. Third object of evaluation: Women as workers in unconventional work environments

While this section is not as extensive as the previous ones, it reveals a different kind of opposition to such inclusions. The previous section reveals a perspective linked to morality and tradition, whereas this section examines objection on the part of some business owners. In different parts of the posts, some business owners occasionally cast doubts over the success potential of such reformative measures. These business owners are more concerned about the direct impact of such inclusion on their businesses. So, from a practical point of view, these owners are judging the abilities of these women negatively and clearly labelling them as less qualified than men. Examples 5.a and 17.a below reveal such negative evaluation, which can be placed on the borderline of judgement and appreciation as both the both the potential of these women as well as their behaviour are evaluated. Interestingly, these limited and degrading perspectives of women and their work abilities can be contrasted with the perspectives held by the same women daring to work in these unconventional environments. For instance, woman lawyers are clearly stating their equality with men in 12.a below. This is a case of positive appreciation (valuation) explicitly stated against all the previously discussed accusations.

5.a. *Kareem al-Enizy, head of the the National Committee for Precious Metals and Gemstones at the Saudi Chambers Council told al-Eqtisadiah daily Friday that working at jewelry outlets is not appropriate for Saudi women.* (post 25)

17.a. *I don't support the proposal to limit jobs at gold shops to females, not in objection to Saudization but because women are not qualified to work there," said Abdulmouhsin al-Nemer, a prominent gold merchant in the Eastern Province. (post 25)*

12.a. *Women posted YouTube videos arguing that they were just as qualified as men to be lawyers. (post 26)*

In sum, this is a detailed examination of the evaluative language used in these posts, based on Martin and White's framework, and categorised according to the object of evaluation. Negative judgements of opponents and the status quo are used repeatedly. Evaluative language is also used to shape the perspective these conservatives hold towards both women and these social changes. Similarly, analysis at this level reveals that this opposing perspective extends to other social actors, like business owners, and even to the society as whole, even if this is for different reasons. A few positive evaluative examples by these supporters of women and their qualifications are used to support these changes. However, from a more general perspective, the negative values in terms of evaluation are more dominant.

6.1.4. Metaphor

6.1.4.1. First metaphoric cluster

The first metaphor cluster here is one seen previously in other topics, which revolves around directed movement or a journey in a given direction. On such a journey, movement forwards is often appreciated and sought, while any obstacle impeding progress is *a shame*, as in 42-43.a below. There is a reification in such conception, as the abstract obstacle preventing women from moving is represented using the concrete image of the door. Relevant to this is another reification in 31, in which the cultural barriers preventing families from allowing their daughters to work are portrayed as mountains. This conception applies to lack of movement too, in which *nowhere* is against the desired goal, as in 16. Interestingly, 4.a below depicts another kind of movement, which is not in the desired direction. Rather, women are represented as being contained in a limited space. This particular case of reification is included here as it highlights that movement

can be in any direction and in any manner, but only the ones marked as desired are used to represent change. A career is also portrayed in these posts as movement towards a destination. This is evident in 6 with another reification example representing hopeless and unaspiring jobs as a deadend road.

42-43.a. *It would be a shame if another door closes in the faces of women who are in desperate need of jobs.* (post 19)

31. *Financial gain in the form of student stipends and later employment salaries has gotten women over the mountain of family consent to study and then teach.* (post 21)

16. *the rest of these women have nowhere to go and little money to spend.* (post 21)

4.a. *And the report quietly disappeared without much fuss about its implications and the hopelessness that Saudi women are going through.* (post 21)

6. *then there is little use to make our precious jewels/diamonds work in dead end jobs all while being driven around like queens* (post 24)

What is proposed then, to change this status quo, is the introduction of more physical power to support this directed movement, in the form of pushing forwards. The following example, 4.a, demonstrates this, in which the physical introduction of power is made by the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce who are supporters of the change. Even in accusations directed at those calling for and supporting change by their opponents, the reification in *pushing* is present to highlight the fact that achieving this desired goal comes from direct forward movement: movement which can only be stopped by pushing it backwards, as in 3 below:

4.a. *The proposal was made by Jeddah Chamber of Commerce, who said they will keep pushing this proposal over the next three years* (post 28)

16.a. *Fakieh also rejected the accusation that his ministry is pushing an agenda to “westernize” society through the employment of women and refused to discuss the motives behind his policy.* (post 27)

3. *he has one month to roll back on the policy allowing women to work in retail* (post 27)

Another form of change proposed in these posts, and one that seems consistent with this view, is expressed through the metaphor of equal footing. This particular reification is used in reference to assigning women equal rights to men. Equal footing denotes that both men and women are placed in the same position to move ahead on this desired journey/race. In other words, women should not lag behind on the way, or this change will be unattainable or at least incomplete. The following examples from post 26 demonstrate this:

1. *Saudi Women Lawyers: Equal Footing?* (post 26)

15.a. *As the story later notes, “the new rules seem to place women on equal footing with men across all segments of legal practice.”* (post 26)

After identifying these metaphoric expressions and linking them to one cluster, it is time to examine how these can be linked to conceptual metaphors. Evidently, CHANGE IS MOVEMENT, which has been identified in previous topics, is also present here. Sub-conceptual metaphors can be identified as well under the change target domain umbrella. For instance, as seen in 6 above, the target domain of leading a successful career is represented as a road; CAREER IS ROAD. Closely relevant to this are metaphors discussing equal footing, where the same target domain is represented with a slightly different source domain: CAREER IS RACE/JOURNEY. Another conceptual metaphor, which is repeatedly present across the topic, is SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION. This is evident in examples 4.a and 16.a above.

6.1.4.2. Second metaphoric cluster

The second cluster is borrowed from the source domain of physical encounter in which we have two clashing participants. Such an encounter is used to convey the target domain of the struggle over these reforms between callers and supporters of change on the one hand, and their opponents on the other. Following the identification guidelines, this struggle is repeatedly expressed using reification. It also takes place on a number of levels. For instance, struggle might be specified as being merely verbal, as in 24.a, or it can be generalised as opposition to those calling for change as in 8.a. It is worth pointing out that the last example can also be linked to the first cluster, since such an encounter can be thought of as another kind of obstacle impeding movement towards change. Reification of struggle as physical encounter is also seen in the use of *gain*, in 33 of post 27, shown in the first cluster (section 6.1.4.1). This means that gain is directly linked to the source domains of winning or losing a battle, since they denote a struggle to win something at another participant's expense. In examples 27-28, this notion of struggle of power to create or dismiss this change is represented explicitly using reification. The last example in this section portrays the same target domain of struggle but using concrete images from acting a play. It is still included under this section since playing a role in a play can have some resemblance to physical encounters. When actors appear on stage, or behind the scene as in this particular example, they are physically interacting with each other.

24.a. *Describing yesterday's meeting, al-Hayat said Fakieh had to face a "heated verbal pelting" by the clerics. (post 27)*

8.a. *and had to face similar opposition from conservatives over women employment. (post 27)*

27-28. *And I'm glad to say that these women are fighting back with a lawsuit against the website. A lawsuit that the ladies are highly likely to win (post 21)*

25. *However powerful people behind the scenes have been able to delay its implementation (post 20)*

What can be inferred from these metaphoric cases of reification? It is clear that DISAGREEMENT IS PHYSICAN ENCOUNTER. This physical encounter might take the form of battles; thus; DISAGREEMENT IS BATTLE. Or it might take the form of acting in a play, leading to DISAGREEMENT IS ACTING. With these conceptions, it is possible to understand the power struggle in this particular topic. Interestingly, with regards to this particular parameter and the previous three, findings at the textual level demonstrate that power in this particular topic is more present in the case of opponents than supporters.

6.1.4.3. Third metaphoric cluster

The third metaphor cluster is an objectifying one, which means that various social actors in these posts are represented using the source domain of nature, with common terminology adopted from conservative discourse. So, both men and women are represented using depersonification in non-human terms to account for how their relationship is perceived in the target domain. In 6 below, women are depersonified, as *diamonds* or *jewels*, which are often used to refer to women in the sense that they are extremely valuable, vulnerable and should be kept safe from any danger. This metaphor is commonly used in conservative discourse, which often attacks women's empowerment as if it is exposing valuable belongings to great risk. In this particular example, the blogger is adopting this usage sarcastically, as he combines it with another relevant simile from the same conservative discourse, *women are queens* who should not get behind the wheel. In 7.a, there is another metaphoric usage consistent with this cluster and also represented using terminology often found in conservative discourse. In this example, this supporter of change attacks the view of men held by these conservatives who often see men as *wolves*, predators following their instincts. It would seem, then, that women in such a case are objectified/ dehumanised as powerless victims chased by these predators. Another way of depersonifying women occurs in 20.a, where women are represented using an image from the nature source domain, i.e. they are viewed as plants, perhaps flowers. If deprived of their chance to blossom, they will wilt, just like these women who are wasting their lives waiting for vacancies in conventional jobs.

6. *then there is little use to make our precious jewels/diamonds work in dead end jobs all while being driven around like queens.* (post 24)

7.a. *“It doesn’t make sense to continue viewing men in our society as wolves that look for women in every place,” she added.* (post 28)

20.a. *All the while, Saudi women wilt at home waiting for the government to employ them in jobs that are proper for them to take.* (post 21)

Linking these cases to conceptual metaphor theory, it is possible to highlight two common conceptual metaphors in opposing discourse. WOMEN ARE JEWELS and MEN ARE WOLVES are two cases where images borrowed from nature source domains are used to represent the target domain of women and men. This depersonification does not only occur in opposing discourse. In 20.a, there is another depersonification of women related to the conceptual metaphor of WOMEN ARE ROSES. Occurring within change-supporting discourse, this last example demonstrates that depersonification is not limited to opponents.

6.1.4.4. Fourth metaphoric cluster

The fourth cluster concerns these women’s attempts to impose change. In 13-14 and 8 below, reification is used to represent change. In both cases, status quo is portrayed as a solid object and these attempts for change are breaks and cracks in these objects. It is possible to link this reification to the conceptual metaphor of CHANGE IS CRACK. Interestingly, a certain force must be present to cause these cracks. Force takes the form of support from supporters of change. Taking this into consideration, it is possible to link this particular cluster to the previous conceptual metaphor of SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION.

13-14. *Small cracks began to open in the system as the word spread.* (post 26)

8. *You’ll break one of our main contradictions regarding interaction between men and women.* (post 20)

6.1.4.5. Fifth metaphoric cluster

The last metaphor cluster in these posts, which could be of key relevance to the analysis, uses reification as well. In this cluster, honour is presented concretely as a piece of clean cloth. Keeping this in mind, this clean cloth must be kept clean and fresh, otherwise it is useless. Consequently, the target domain of honour and reputation must be kept safe from any attempts to despoil it. A number of social actors, in that sense, can be involved in the tarnishing process, by making degrading claims about these women in response to their willingness to be part of this change. These could potentially be representing society in general, which is resisting this change, or any individual opponents following the same technique. Hence, it is possible to link this to a wider conceptual metaphor; HONOUR IS A CLEAN CLOTH. This serves to highlight the fragile and vulnerable nature of reputation, which can be tarnished quite easily. Taking into consideration the cultural value of honour in Middle Eastern societies, the attack on honour is another central tool in alienating people from change. This will be discussed in more detail at the next levels of analysis.

22. they are very likely to have our society drag their reputation and that of their families in the mud. (post 21)

29-30.a. because our courts tend to bring the hammer down hard when it comes to making outright false allegations that tarnish family honor (post 21)

This is a detailed examination of the metaphorical expressions used in these posts. Several metaphor clusters are identified, and while they are separated for the sake of analysis, they are still interrelated. Metaphoric analysis at this parameter also provides useful insights into the social and religious motives fuelling the two opposing teams – a point that will be examined in more detail at the third level of analysis. Even on a broader level, these four parameters seem to depend on each other. In particular, descriptive findings from social actor analysis along with process type analysis produce similar quantitative results. For instance, both reveal that opponents are included and involved in twice as many cases as supporters. They also reveal that while working women are included and involved in twice the number of cases as women in general, neither social

actor is empowered enough, since statistical significance is not established for either of them. The qualitative findings for evaluation and metaphor reveal more powerful representation of women while undermining the claims of their opponents.

6.2. DISCURSIVE LEVEL

6.2.1. Non-hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

As with the previous topics, multiplicity of texts and discourses within the selection of posts under examination is evident. Post 19 exhibits a detailed translation of a *fatwa*, a religious question addressed to a scholar, along with its answer. This fatwa reveals a dialogue between the person who addressed the question and the committee that answered in return. In such case, the blogger is an animator of this fatwa with the opposing committee being an author of the fatwa through direct speech. A similar dialogue-based post is 27, which recounts the verbal debate between the Saudi Minister of Labour and the clerics who oppose the inclusion of women in unconventional work environments. In both cases, the insertion of these dialogues reveals opponents' constant utilisation of religious discourse to highlight that religion is on their side. Examples 22.b and 6.a below demonstrate this. However, the problem – as discussed in section 1.3 – is that this link to religious discourse is based on a single interpretation of Islamic teachings combining aspects of the region's culture. In 22.a below, there is a reference to a conception of women as being a source of temptation and corruption, leading to them being limited in fear of sin. In 6.a, *Aba-Nemai*, an opposing cleric, is using prayer as a way to threaten the minister. Interestingly, reference to the late minister, *Al Qusaibi*, is used to validate the use of prayer on the part of opponents. Al Qusaibi died of cancer prior to this and was well known for his progressive measures. Recontextualizing the story in this way by the blogger serves to present opponents very negatively, as a merciless and ignorant group, which is consistent with the findings at textual level in the evaluation and metaphor parameters.

22.a. *She should search for employment that does not expose her to temptation nor make her a source of temptation.* (post 19)

6.a. *“Stop women employment or we will pray against you like we have done with the previous Labor Minister,” a cleric named Abdulrahman Aba-Nemai reportedly told Fakieh.* (post 27)

Not only religious discourse is present in these posts. Expectedly, instances of economic and historical discourses are used repeatedly to support the arguments made in these posts. Instances of persuasive tone are also used, especially when requesting support for pro-change campaigns. A multiplicity of voices is also present in these posts and both direct and indirect speeches are used to express these voices. This holds true for both supporters and opponents of change, as seen below in 6.a and 6.a respectively. This again transforms the bloggers from authors of their own posts to animators of others’ speeches. All this multivoicedness takes place while women remain the topic talked about, which is hardly surprising considering the gendered nature of the topics.

6.a. *“We were trying to send our voice through the media,” recalls Hanouf Alhazzaa* (post 26)

6.a. *“The work hours, dealing with security authorities, merchants, banks and the huge amounts of cash are things that we don’t believe Saudi women are capable of doing,” he said.* (post 25)

6.2.2. Hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Following the same categorisation criterion discussed in section 4.2, Table 6.6 summarises these findings:

Table 6.6: Distribution of hyperlinks in topic 3

Link to:	Number of links	Percentage
Same blogger/poster	8	33.33%
International pages	3	12.5%
Local pages	11	45.83%
Other bloggers/supporters	2	8.33%
Total	24	100%

It is evident from Table 6.6 that the top linked category is of the third kind, reaching a total of 45.83%. These cases included seven links to Arabic webpages of local newspapers, including *Al Watan*, *Al Eqtisadiyah*, *Al Riyadh*, *Okaz*, *Al Sharq* and *Al Hayat*. 5.a below is listed as an example of this kind where a report about the gold merchants' opposition to the inclusion of women in their business is highlighted. Another three links are to English, yet local, webpages, including *Al Arabia news* as well as *Arabnews* and the *Saudi Gazette* newspapers. This is exemplified in 7, in which a report examines the negative economic impact of having large numbers of non-Saudi male workers, which is brought to the table as jeopardising the Saudi economy as well as these women's chance of employment. The last instance of this kind links to *Extra's* homepage, a big Saudi retailer for electronics and one of the major companies employing women in unconventional jobs.

5.a. *Kareem al-Enizy, head of the the National Committee for Precious Metals and Gemstones at the Saudi Chambers Council told al-Eqtisadiyah daily Friday that working at jewelry outlets is not appropriate for Saudi women. (post 25)*

7. *7 billion dollars being pumped out of the country in the second quarter of 2011 alone by foreign workers*, (post 22)

Coming in second place are links to the same blogger, which account for one-third of the linked cases. In each of these cases, hyperlinked posts on the same blog are used either to explain more about what is in the original clause or to link to relevant posts on the same topic. What follows is an example of this where *Qusay* links to another post in his blog in which he confirms his support for the campaign calling for a boycott of companies that insist on hiring men to work in lingerie departments. Interestingly though, in this case of linking to the same blog, the content of the linked posts actually examines *Eman al Naffjan's* post, included in this study as post 20 with the same title. International webpages as well as direct links to other bloggers and supporters come in third and fourth places, at 12.5% and 8.33%, respectively. This differs from the previous topic, which indicates that creating links within this community is not as strong as with previous topics. In fact, of the two examples of the fourth kind, only one actually links to the aforementioned boycott campaign.

8. *where they are sized up for bras and panties by strange men* (post 24)

Examining the comments, however, shows a higher rate of support. In the sample examined, a total of 130 comments are found. 128 occur on the *Saudiwoman* blog, and are very supportive, with detailed justification and serious reasoning on the part of supportive commentators. The remaining two are on *Qusay's*, and they are just sarcastic comments about a joke made by *Qusay* in his post. To summarise, while this topic is represented repeatedly in these posts, as it occurs in the local media, links to supporters and others bloggers do not prove to be as strong. Nevertheless, comments on the part of readers reveal much support for this cause. This reaffirms the fact established in the textual analysis that supporters in this particular topic are not as strong as in the previous two, especially when compared with opponents.

6.3. Socio-cognitive level

The descriptive data examined throughout this analysis are analysed from a more inclusive perspective at this level, taking into consideration the larger social and cognitive factors shaping and being shaped by these posts. Such factors are required to infer more about how mental representations function within Saudi society, whether they are socially shared or peculiar to certain sub-groups within society. This is while bearing in mind that the latter's mental representations can clash with socially shared ones seeking to maintain the status quo, since alternative representations resist the status quo and call for change. So, what does this detailed examination tell us about the mental representations about women in Saudi Arabia as well as the proposed social changes?

The parameters of evaluation and metaphor seem to work together, as the respective findings show some similarities. For instance, the status quo is evaluated negatively, as hopeless, contradictory and a shame, which highlights that these bloggers have informed pro-change and status-quo-resisting mental representations. Such mental representations also reject the degrading attitude towards women. Metaphorical expressions are even used to represent this status quo as static and depriving women of their right to advance in life, as men do. However, despite the Westernization accusations clearly made by their opponents, such mental representations are linked to national and religious social factors, as is evident in the Ministry of Labour's words. Put another way, while opponents often use religion – and sometimes, family honour, which is key in this culture – to support their opposition, these supporters of change rely on the same social factors to justify their cause. This, in a way, helps to undermine the opponents' strict understanding of Islam and its teachings, since these supporters are establishing that they have the same origin, but without the same strict and limited understanding.

However, the quantitative findings for the first and second parameters do not seem to support these inferred mental representations. While working women are the top included social actor and have nearly double the cases of inclusion as women in general, neither of these has a statistically significant difference in favour of activation. It is true that statistical significance is established when comparing the difference between the number

of initiating roles for working women on the one hand, and women in general on the other, in favour of the former. But when it comes to comparing initiating roles with receiving ones for the same social actor this is not the case, neither for working women nor for women in general. This is an example of a case of contradiction between content and form, which has been seen before in this study. As with the first topic, this can again be linked to the persistence of certain fossilised forms that continue to exist even within pro-change and resisting discourse. Chapter Nine, which concludes this thesis, will be examining all these topics using cumulative evidence from across chapters.

Positive self-representation versus negative other representation is also present in this particular topic. The evaluative language used towards opponents clearly casts them negatively as misogynists while attacking the metaphorical perceptions opponents often hold of both men and women. In such metaphors, men and women as social actors are reduced merely to their physical and instinctual existence, which could be informative regarding the negative and change-resisting mental representations they have. However, despite this negative evaluation, these opponents are described in the posts as being powerful and even helped by society in their rejections of these unconventional and so-called improper jobs. This could be further evidence of the power and dominance of these mental representations as they are more socially shared than the pro-change ones. This power is also present in the quantitative analysis in which opponents have double the inclusion and involvement cases of supporters. This is despite the fact that both of these clashing social actors prove to be included in more activation cases and involved in more initiating roles at a statistically significant level.

The detailed analysis above also reveals that, in this particular topic, supporters do not seem to possess the same power as opponents. In fact, the main reason for the success and implementation of these reforms is government support, which is forcing these changes on business owners and rejecting opponents' attempts to undermine them. This explains why, in this particular topic, very few links are made to other bloggers or supporters who express themselves in their virtual personal spaces. This topic is examined and posted repeatedly on these blogs, but with the exception of one Facebook

campaign, closed links and the insistence on creating a closed supportive community, as with the topic of driving for instance, it is not found to be strong. On the contrary, links to local media, which are often directed more towards supporting the government, are actually more common. This is a clear example that these changes, without governmental support, are very difficult to implement; and hence the real struggle for these bloggers and supporters is not with their opponents, but lies rather in persuading decision makers and ordinary members of society about their proposed calls for change. That may explain why links to opponents are excluded, since negotiating these pro-change mental representations with them seems useless. Instead, this negotiation takes place strongly and actively in the comments section, mainly on Al Nafjan's blog, with the vast majority supporting the changes.

In the end, this level attempts to tie together the findings of these various linguistic parameters as well as the overlapping levels of analysis, while looking at the broader socio-cognitive context. However, it is still too early at this stage to arrive at more generalised results to answer the overarching research questions properly. Nevertheless, the findings of the three topics examined so far reveal some recurring patterns and further examination of other topics will determine to what extent these patterns are common. Similar to this topic, the next one will highlight another change proposed and implemented by the government. Chapter Seven will examine the inclusion of women in professional sports in Saudi Arabia, which has created massive controversy all over the country.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DATA ANALYSIS (POSTS ON WOMEN AND SPORTS)

This chapter analyses the fourth topic in the sample of blog posts under examination (Appendix A), which focuses on women and sports in Saudi Arabia. The posts comment on the changes made for the first time by the Saudi Government to include women in the Saudi Olympic delegation to the London 2012 Olympic Games and to allow physical education classes to be included in the curriculum of Saudi girls' public schools. Prior to these changes, Saudi women and girls were not allowed to practise sports professionally, be it nationally or internationally. The sample comprises six posts from the four blogs identified earlier. Table 7.1 shows the number of posts from each blog and the word count. As with all the data analysis chapters, this chapter is divided into three main levels of analysis. The textual level examines four relevant linguistic parameters and offers a quantitative and qualitative description of the data. The second interdiscursive and, eventually, the third socio-cognitive levels build up on these for the sake of explanation and interpretation.

Table 7.1: Number of posts and word count for topic 4

	SW	QT	SJ	RB	Total
Number of posts	2	2	1	1	6
Word count	393	469	733	603	2,198

7.1. TEXTUAL LEVEL

7.1.1. Social-actor representation

The main social actors are classified and categorised into twelve main groups, the majority of which are similar to those examined earlier in previous topics. They are as follows:

- Decision makers or authorities with varying degrees of power.
- Women athletes – women involved in practising competitive sports professionally and publicly.
- Women in general – this category includes Saudi women in general who are not involved in professional/competitive sports.
- Men – this category includes any references to male social actors who cannot be classified under other categories.
- Supporters – this includes those who support women’s right to play sports professionally.
- Opponents of this right.
- Media – this refers to any media channel/item, including newspapers, TV channels and even individual media items, without being explicitly in support of or against these changes.
- Saudis in general, whether as a nation or as unidentified individuals.
- Bloggers/writers of these posts. It is important to point out here that this category includes cases where a blogger is describing a more personal experience in relation to the topic or his/her stand on unrelated issues, rather than a clear position supporting women’s right to play sports professionally. In the latter case, these bloggers are classified as supporters.
- The International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- Readers of the blog.
- Human rights organisations working with the IOC in support of granting women this right.

The same note as in previous chapters, about social actors being potentially and simultaneously classified in different categories, applies here as well. Table 7.2 shows the number for each group of included social actors, as well as their proportions of activation and passivation.

Table 7.2: Inclusion, activation and passivation for main social actors in topic 4

Social actors	Inclusion		Activation		Passivation	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Decision makers	49	21.59%	38	77.55%	11	22.45%
Women athletes	61	26.87%	32	52.46%	29	47.54%
Women	15	6.61%	4	26.67%	11	73.33%
Men	9	3.96%	5	55.56%	4	44.44%
Supporters	24	10.57%	22	91.67%	2	8.33%
Opponents	16	7.05%	13	81.25%	3	18.75%
Media	21	9.25%	11	52.38%	10	47.62%
Saudis	9	3.96%	5	55.56%	4	44.44%
Bloggers	1	0.44%	1	100%	0	0%
IOC	16	7.05%	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
Readers	1	0.44%	0	0%	1	100%
HRO	5	2.20%	5	100%	0	0%

Total	227	100%	150	66.08%	77	33.92%
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7.1.1.1. Inclusion and exclusion

A Chi-square test was applied to check whether these differences in terms of inclusion between various social actors were statistically significant; that proved to be the case (p value 1.01779E-36). Evidently, the category of women athletes comes first when it comes to inclusion cases, accounting for more than a quarter, at 26.87%, of all inclusion cases. In second place come decision makers at 10.57%, and in third place supporters at 10.57%. Slightly lower percentages cover media at 9.25% and opponents at 7.05%. Unlike the previous topic (women in unconventional work environments) and similar to the first two topics, men, are included at only 3.96%. Even when examining these numbers carefully, these inclusion cases are used to refer to male members of the Saudi Olympic delegation who are included in association with these women athletes. In other cases, they are included only as a circumstance, to ensure the essential nature of gender segregation at the Olympic Games. While it has been established in previous chapters that the suppression and backgrounding of social actors cannot be directly read off quantitative data, this very low percentage can be thought of as an indicator of how men are represented qualitatively. The above examination of included social actors reveals that linguistic gender segregation can be detected within this topic as well. Example 20.a below demonstrates most men's inclusion cases:

20.a. *“There must also be no mixing with men during the Games,” he added.* (post 34)

Also, as depicted in Table 7.2, included decision makers are active in more than three quarters of all cases. This is hardly surprising, given the nature of these actors. However, the remaining passivation cases mainly relate to another group of social actors, who have more power than the Saudi decision makers in this regard, i.e. the International Olympic Committee. The IOC is included in 16 cases, and they are active in 87.5% of them. The following example from post 29 demonstrates these power relations.

8. *shouldn't it bar Saudi Arabia from the 2012 London Olympics in protest of gender-based apartheid in the kingdom?* (post 29)

7.1.1.2. Activation and passivation

We can now examine these findings in pairs in order to focus on the main social actors who are common to all these topics. As before, we begin with the pair of women athletes versus women in general, and clearly the former are much more often included than the latter— to be precise, four times more often, at 26.87% and 6.61% respectively. A one-tailed binominal test was applied to check the alternative hypothesis that activation cases outnumber passivation cases for these two social actors. In both cases, the p value proved to be more than 0.05 and, consequently, the null hypothesis has to be accepted while the alternative one is rejected. So, while women athletes are activated as in example 3.a below, in slightly more than half their inclusion cases, i.e. 52.46%, this difference could statistically be due to chance. In the case of women in general, however, statistically significant difference in favour of activation can never be attained since the activation cases, as in example 3.a and 13.a below, are nearly one third of the passivation ones. Vertical testing compares the activation cases for both social actors in one exact binominal test; however, activation in favour of women athletes has been established over women in general with a p value of 9.7079E-07. This must be looked at while bearing in mind the fact that women athletes are included four times as often as women in general. Vertical testing with regard to the passivation cases proves that there is a statistically significant difference in favour of women athletes with a p value of 0.003.

3.a. *Though this is the first time a Saudi woman athlete officially represented the Kingdom at an international competition.* (post 32)

13.a. *Ahlam al-Amer, headmistress of the school, told al-Watan that both parents and senior officials were unhappy when the school began allowing students to play basketball last year.* (post 33)

The second pair is men versus women in general. As aforementioned, men are hardly included in these posts, at only 3.96% overall. Similar to women athletes as social actors, the slightly higher activation percentage for men, 55.56%, was not statistically

significantly more than their passivation cases, at 44.44%. As a result, the alternative hypothesis in favour of activation has to be rejected with a p value of 0.5. Nevertheless, compared to women, men are activated more often: 26.67% for the former and 55.56% for the latter. The following example demonstrates one of these activation cases for men in reference to previous Saudi Olympic delegations, which consisted of male athletes only. Even with vertical testing, no statistically significant difference is found in either activation or passivation, with p values of 0.5 and 0.059 respectively.

16a–17a. *and I hope they do not sleep like they did during the time their competition was going on,* (post 34, SJ)

The last pair is supporters versus opponents of women's right to practise sports professionally. Starting with inclusion, supporters are involved in more cases than opponents, at 10.57% and 7.05%, respectively. However, unlike the first and second pairs, a one-tailed exact binominal test found that the p value for each of these actors was less than 0.05, i.e. at a statistically significant level (1.7941E-05 for supporters and 0.01 for opponents). As a result, the alternative hypothesis in favour of activation has to be accepted. Put another way, both supporters and opponents are activated in the majority of their cases, at 91.67% and 81.25%, respectively, and as in examples 32.a and 14.a, below. However, with 24 inclusion cases, compared to 16 for opponents, supporters seem to have more inclusion in this topic compared to the last topic about women in unconventional workplaces. This is despite the fact that comparing activation cases for both social actors in one exact binominal test and doing the same with passivation cases does not yield any statistically significant difference.

32a. *This is not a step forward for women's rights," activist Aziza al-Yousef told the New York Times last summer.* (post 33)

14a. *Al-Shathri (the author) argues that physical education will require that the girls change in front of each other.* (post 29)

7.1.1.3. Categorisation and nomination

As with the previous topic, this section will give a qualitative account of the categorisation and nomination of major social actors. Consistent with the previous findings from Chapters Four, Five and Six, women are referred to through classification of their gender identity. This should not be surprising considering the gender-related nature of the topic. This particular nature is also evident in the functionalisation often associated with these gender-based classifications. Example 2 below demonstrates this. What is slightly unexpected is the fact that throughout the six posts under examination, the two athletes who took part in the 2012 Olympic Games are only named in post 34. It is true that some other female athletes are named occasionally, but with *Sara Attar* and *Wejdan Shahrkhani*, classification through gender identity and functionalisation is more predominant than nomination.

2. *Do Saudi Arabia's two Olympic female athletes — the kingdom's first ever — represent changing times in the Land of the Two Holy Mosques?* (post 29)

32. *Thursday, the IOC announced the names of the two Saudi female athletes to compete in London Olympics this summer: Wejdan Shahrkhani in judo above 78kg, and Sarah Attar at the 800m race.* (post 34)

However, this is clearly not the case with supporters, who are repeatedly referred to through nomination. Whether they are Saudis or not, almost every time a supporter is introduced, he/she is named. *Princess Adela* in 23.a below is a clear example of this nomination, which is used in conjunction with positive evaluation in the following clauses. Opponents are also represented using nomination but less often than supporters. This is consistent with the fact that supporters are included twice as often as opponents and that the latter are not allowed the same presence as the first. *Muttawas*, which is mentioned repeatedly in the previous topics, is not present in this topic. However, in example 3, there is a classification of opponents in 'backlash', which assigns a negative value to such representation.

23.a. *“It’s high time to look into the matter of introducing sports at girls schools seriously.” Princess Adela bint Abdullah, the King’s daughter, told al-Riyadh in 2009.* (post 33)

3. *or will the conservative religious backlash win out?* (post 29)

In short, social actor analysis reveals that women athletes are the most included social actors in these posts, but statistical significance in favour of activation could not be shown, neither for these athletes nor for women in general. This is also the case with men, who are rarely included in these posts, and with almost similar percentages of activation and passivation. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis that these social actors are included in more activation cases has to be accepted for the actors who are decision makers, the IOC and HROs, both supporters and opponents. For the first three social-actor groups it is hardly surprising, as they are the authorities on this particular topic. As for supporters and opponents, their very high activation percentages can be thought of as an indicator of the clashes taking place in these posts, which will be explained in more detail later. The findings of categorisation analysis are also consistent with this, with supporters being named more often than opponents.

7.1.2. Process type analysis

7.1.2.1. Overview of involvement

Keeping in mind the same categorisation and classification principles discussed earlier, Table 7.3 shows the distribution of the various participant roles for each main social actor group in comparison with actor-involvement cases. This table should be looked at horizontally with each row assigned to a given social actor showing how the various roles they are involved in are distributed. Table 7.4 on the other hand should be looked at in columns, with each column demonstrating how a given role (e.g. sayer) is distributed across various social actors.

Table 7.3: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each social actor's involvement cases in topic 4

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	19/	1	2	0	10	1	6	0	0	39
	48.72%	2.56%	5.13%	0%	25.64%	2.56%	15.38%	0%	0%	100%
Women athletes	13	12	1	2	4	1	16	0	0	49
	26.53%	24.49%	2.04%	4.08%	8.16%	2.04%	32.65%	0%	0%	100%
Women	3	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	10
	30%	20%	10%	10%	0%	10%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Men	4	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	10
	40%	0%	10%	10%	10%	0%	20%	10%	0%	100%
Sup port	4	0	10	0	7	0	2	0	0	23

	17.39%	0%	43.48%	0%	30.43%	0%	8.70%	0%	0%	100%
Opponents	8	1	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	14
	57.14%	7.14%	0%	0%	21.43%	0%	14.29%	0%	0%	100%
Media	3	0	0	0	7	5	0	0	0	15
	20%	0%	0%	0%	46.67%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saudis	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	7
	28.57%	14.29%	14.29%	0%	0%	0%	42.86%	0%	0%	100%
Bloggers	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%
IOC	3	2	1	0	5	0	3	0	0	14
	21.43%	14.29%	7.14%	0%	35.71%	0%	21.43%	0%	0%	100%

Readers	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	66.67%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
HRO	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
	60%	0%	20%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Total	64	20	18	4	38	8	37	1	0	190
	33.68%	10.53%	9.47%	2.11%	20%	4.21%	19.47%	0.53%	0%	100%

As was the case for several of the previous topics, the findings for this parameter seem to work in harmony with the first parameter of social actor representation. Table 7.4 shows that the top involved main social actor is women athletes, as was the case when examining the first parameter. With more than a quarter of involvement cases, at 25.79%, women athletes take the lead. Of these cases, the role of participant in relational processes is the most common, at 32.67%, followed by the role of actor in material processes at 26.53%. Below are examples of each of these roles, respectively.

43-44. She is a college student at Pepperdine University, where she is a a [sic] sophomore majoring in Art. (post 33)

4. several women riders had been competing overseas since 2004 under the sponsorship of Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, chairman of Kingdom Holding Company. (post 32)

In second place in terms of involvement cases are decision makers at 20.53%, slightly more than one fifth of overall involvement cases. The majority of these are in initiating roles, like actors at 29.69% and sayers at 27.32%; which is to be expected, given the nature of these actors. Supporters come in third place, at 12.10%, while media are in fourth, at 7.89%. Two social actor groups, opponents and the IOC, come in joint fifth place, with 7.37% for each.

Table 7.4: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each role overall involvement cases in topic 4

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	29.69%	5%	11.11%	0%	26.32%	12.5%	16.22%	0%	0%	20.53%
Women athletes	20.31%	60%	5.56%	50%	10.53%	12.5%	43.24%	0%	0%	25.79%
Women	4.69%	10%	5.56%	25%	0%	12.5%	5.41%	0%	0%	5.26%
Men	6.25%	0%	5.56%	25%	2.63%	0%	5.41%	100%	0%	5.26%
Supporters	6.25%	0%	55.56%	0%	18.42%	0%	5.41%	0%	0%	12.10%

Opponent s	12.5%	5%	0%	0%	7.89%	0%	5.41%	0%	0%	7.37%
Media	4.69%	0%	0%	0%	18.42%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%	7.89%
Saudis	3.13%	5%	5.56%	0%	0%	0%	8.11%	0%	0%	3.68%
Bloggers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.71%	0%	0%	0.53%
IOC	4.69%	10%	5.56%	0%	13.16%	0%	8.11%	0%	0%	7.37%
Readers	3.13%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.58%
HGO	4.68%	0%	5.56%	0%	2.53%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.63%

Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%
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7.1.2.2. *Initiating and receiving roles*

Now, it is time to examine the three main pairs highlighted in the first parameter, while keeping in mind the categorisation principle of initiating and receiving roles discussed earlier. Table 7.5 summarises the findings of these pairs.

Table 7.5: Initiating and receiving roles for main pairs in topic 4

Social actor	Grammatical categorisation (action)		
	Initiating	Receiving	Total
Women athletes	18	31	49
Women	4	6	10
Men	7	3	10
Supporters	21	2	32
Opponents	11	3	14

Starting with the first pair, women athletes versus women, Table 7.4 clearly shows that the involvement cases for women athletes, at 25.79%, are approximately five times those for women, at only 5.26%. These involvement cases are mainly divided between actor, goal and relational processes for women athletes. But for women, with the exception of the role of sayer, which is not found for this particular actor, these cases are distributed in roughly similar numbers, and there was no statistically significant difference among them, within the various roles. As for the difference between initiating roles for women athletes and women, a one-tailed exact binominal test was applied and revealed that the p

value was 0.002. This p value rejects the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative one in favour of women athletes. This was also the case with receiving roles, which proved to be much more in favour of women athletes, and at a statistically significant level with a p value of 2.06288E-05. However, when applying the same one-tailed test to each of these actors, (i.e. horizontal testing) women athletes are proved to be involved in more receiving roles than initiating ones, with a p value of 0.04. In the case of women in general, a statistically significant difference between the initiating and receiving roles cannot be established with a p value of 0.37. In short, while women athletes are involved in more initiating roles than women in general, as in example 46.a below, they are still involved in more receiving roles than initiating ones, as in the example 34 below.

46.a. *To any woman who wants to participate, I say 'go for it and don't let anyone hold you back', she said.* (post 34)

34. *here they give Saudi women a spot in the Olympics, but not the right to earn a place on the team.* (post 33)

In the case of the second pair, men versus women, both of these are involved in processes at 5.26% each. Looking at these numbers, it might appear that men are involved in more initiating roles than women, as in example 19.a below, However, a one-tailed exact binominal test revealed that this was not the case, since the p value was 0.27. Consequently, when looking at the opposite alternative hypothesis, that women, as in 13.c below, are in more receiving roles than men, the p value also proved to be more than 0.05, as it stood at 0.25, thus making us reject this alternative hypothesis as well. This was also the case when examining the difference between initiating roles on the one hand and receiving ones on the other, for each of these actors. For both men and women, we have to accept the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference between initiating roles and receiving ones, since the p values in case of each social actor was more than 0.05 – 0.17 and 0.38 respectively.

19.e. *and the athlete's guardian agrees and attends with her,* (post 34)

13.c. *when the school began allowing students to play basketball last year.* (post 33)

The last pair is supporters versus opponents, with the first being involved in 12.10% of overall involvement cases, and the second in only 7.37%. However, while the top role for supporters was sensors at 43.48%, followed by sayers at 30.43%, the top role for opponents was actors at 57.14%, and then sayers at 21.43%. This might be an indication of the varying levels of power expressed by each of these actor groups, which will be explained in more detail at the third level of analysis (section 7.3). As with the previous pairs, a one-tailed exact binominal test was applied four times to check whether the differences between initiating and receiving roles had any statistical significance. As a result, the alternative hypothesis, namely that supporters are involved in more initiating roles than opponents, had to be rejected since the p value was 0.055. Similarly, the alternative hypothesis was rejected and the null one accepted instead, when examining the difference between supporters and opponents in receiving roles, with a p value of 0.5. In contrast, when applying the same test to each actor on its own (horizontal testing), the p values were less than 0.05. In case of supporters, the p value is 3.3021E-05 while for opponents it is 0.02. Accordingly, the alternative hypotheses must be accepted, confirming that both supporters and opponents are involved in significantly more initiating roles than receiving ones. Examples 10 and 16.a below demonstrate a case of each.

10. *NOTE: Writing this article, I researched some of the books and fatwas against women sports.* (post 29)

16.a. *and as our sheikh. Abdulrahmin Al Barrack, bless him, has stated, “This is currently common among our students before the incorporation of physical education,”* (post 29)

In short, it is clear from these posts that process type analysis reveals similar findings to social-actor analysis. Women athletes are the most involved top social actors, followed by decision makers. However, women athletes were proven to be involved in more receiving roles than initiating ones. This was also the case with men, who recorded higher numbers for initiating roles, but statistical testing revealed that this difference in favour of initiating was not statistically significant and was likely to be due to chance. Supporters

and opponents, on the other hand, proved to have a statistically significant difference in favour of initiating roles. Also, careful examination of the various roles revealed that while both supporters and opponents were mainly involved in initiating roles, the varying levels of power expressed by each actor could be of key relevance. The next parameter will focus on the textual level too, however the data will be analysed qualitatively.

7.1.3. Evaluation

Following Martin's and White's framework, explained in section 3.2.3.1.3, the evaluative language used in these posts will be categorised depending on the nature of the object of evaluation. Generally speaking, the evaluative language can be classified into three major kinds: evaluation of change, of the status quo and of the opponents of change.

7.1.3.1. First object of evaluation: The inclusion of women into the Saudi Olympic delegation and the introduction of PE in girls' governmental schools:

The first section takes up most of the cases of evaluation in this sample. This is hardly surprising, given that it examines the changes that have taken place, i.e. the inclusion of women in the Saudi Olympic delegation and the introduction of PE to Saudi state girls' schools for the first time. To begin with, for the bloggers themselves, positive appreciation (valuation) is repeated throughout the posts as they highlight the pioneer status of these changes, as seen in 3.a. below. This is also used by the Olympic athlete herself, as in 35.a, and the positive affect (non-authorial) as in 33.a. Positive evaluation is also present in 3.b; however, it is worth mentioning that the use of *finally* here, and in 2 as well, entails a positive value, which seems to be on the borderline between affect and judgement. The use of *finally* in this case accounts for both the emotional reaction of receivers to something that has long been awaited, as well as a positive judgement of the awaited behaviour.

3.a. *Though this is the first time a Saudi woman athlete officially represented the Kingdom at an international competition.* (post 32)

35.a. *"A big inspiration for participating in the Olympic Games is being one of the first women for Saudi Arabia to be going," she told the official Olympic website.* (post 34)

- 33.a. *Attar said she is honored to represent her country at London 2012* (post 34)
- 3.b. *that they have finally managed to make some progress* (post 33)
2. *After much back and forth, Saudi Arabia will finally send two female athletes to the Olympics for the first time.* (post 34)

Positive appreciation (valuation) and affect (non-authorial) are expressed by other social actors as well. 4.a below demonstrates these two respectively, as expressed in the IOC President's speech to describe this inclusion. Positive appreciation is also expressed in the language of Princess Adela to account for the urgency and necessity of such change as in 23.a below. This particular instance of appreciation falls at the borderline between valuation and reaction to the impact of this entity. However, it is important to point out that different social actors hold diverse and perhaps conflicting attitudes towards these changes. Example 19, for instance, reveals the opposite stance to Princess Adela's. Expressed by an opponent, negative valuation is used to evaluate these changes. In 20.a and 15, negative valuation is associated with the introduction of sports to the girls' school curriculum. But this time religion is used by opponents to frame such representations, which is a point that has been pinned in previous topics as well.

4.a. *"This is very positive news and we will be delighted to welcome these two athletes in London in a few weeks' time," said IOC President Jacques Rogge.* (post 34)

23.a. *"It's high time to look into the matter of introducing sports at girls schools seriously." Princess Adela bint Abdullah, the King's daughter, told al-Riyadh in 2009.* (post 33)

19. *and "there is no need for them to engage in sports."* (post 33)

20.a. *A preacher named Mohammed al-Habdan published a list of fourteen "evils" that would result from introducing sports to girls schools, including taking the veil off and the "masculinization" of women.* (post 33)

15. *and that this "will open the evil door of lesbianism, admiration and their hearts getting attached to each other* (post 29)

7.1.3.2. Second object of evaluation: The Saudi status quo prior to these changes

The second kind examines the evaluative language used to describe the Saudi status quo prior to these changes. Unlike the first one, in which mainly positive evaluation is used, negative evaluation seems to dominate in most of the following examples. To begin with, in all of these, negative appreciation and judgement are adopted to represent the status quo as something discriminatory and restrictive, as in 4 and 27.a below. In other examples, it is even characterised as a gender-based apartheid, which brings to mind the racial apartheid seen in South Africa in the last century. This is present in the language of Eman Al Nafjan, in example 4 and 8 below, as well as in the language of the director of Human Rights Watch in the last example.

4. For years, human rights organizations hoping to use the Olympics as leverage to challenge Saudi Arabia's restrictive gender policies have looked to the case of apartheid South Africa. (post 29)

8. shouldn't it bar Saudi Arabia from the 2012 London Olympics in protest of gender-based apartheid in the kingdom (post 29)

27.a. "It's not that the Saudis couldn't find a woman athlete– it's that their discriminatory policies have so far prevented one from emerging," said Minky Worden, director of global initiatives at Human Rights Watch. (post 34)

7.1.3.3. Third object of evaluation: Opponents to these changes

The third kind examines the evaluative language used to represent these opponents as portrayed by the bloggers. Interestingly, these opponents are characterised by positive valuation in 17.a, which is also another point noted in other topics. Such power is also manifested in the *metaphtonymy* (Goossens, 1990) – a term denoting interaction of metaphor and metonymy - of backlash in 3 below, which will be examined in more detail in the next section analysing the parameter of metaphor. Nevertheless, using it to characterise opponents surely entails a positive valuation of their power. However, this positivity relates only to the level of power they possess, but does not support their actions or stance on the issue. On the contrary, the only supporter associated with power is Princess Adela, in 26, below. Here, she is viewed positively using valuation in

influential, while bearing in mind that the main source of her power is the fact that she is from the royal family and was married to the Minister of Education at that time.

17. *a while at the same time avoid the rage of powerful clerics in the country who oppose competitive sports for women.* (post 34)

3. *or will the conservative religious backlash win out?* (post 29)

26. *A champion of women's rights, she is said to play an influential role on education policy in the country.* (post 33)

Due to the power possessed by these opponents, the Saudi Government is represented as working diplomatically to resolve this controversy nationally. This object of evaluation is included in section 7.1.3.3 because, to a certain extent, it reinforces the power possessed by these opponents. In 21 for example, appreciation (composition) is used to describe how the government is embarking on these changes without drawing much attention to them. Another example is 2, where negative judgement (against social esteem) is used to account for the delicate position of the government and its intricate relationship with opponents.

21. *However, the government has been quietly building gyms into new schools* (post 33)

2. *Introducing physical education to public girls schools has been a challenge for the government.* (post 33)

In short, this parameter has examined the evaluative language used to address the proposed changes, as well as the various social actors involved in or affecting these changes. The descriptive findings reveal that both positive appreciation and affect are used to describe these changes, while the same evaluative tools are used to assign a negative value to the status quo. They also reveal how opponents are represented using both positive and negative values, and how this can be used to explain their intricate relationship with decision makers. Similar to the parameter of evaluation, the next parameter will offer a qualitative analysis, but this time of metaphor.

7.1.4. Metaphor

7.1.4.1. First metaphoric cluster

As with previous topics, the first metaphoric cluster conceptualises change as embarking on movements towards a desired destination. Clauses 1 (post 33) and 10.a are examples of reification in which the introduction of these changes in the athletic domain in Saudi Arabia is represented concretely as steps towards a desired destination. In 1 (post 29), this desired movement is specified as forward, which clearly demonstrates the perspective held by the bloggers regarding the direction of such movement. Included in this discussion is example 8, which could be linked to this directed movement in the sense that it is expressing reaching a given destination. In this particular case, the destination is the consensus to implement change.

1. *Small Steps: Girls Schools in EP Begin Offering Sports Classes.* (post 33)

10.a. *Citing unnamed sources, the newspaper said the only reason behind the refusal is the fear that parents would object to the step.* (post 33)

1. *Two Steps Forward* (post 29)

8. *where “a consensus was reached in mid-June between the king, the crown prince, the foreign minister, the leading religious cleric, the grand mufti and others, to overturn the ban” on women participation.* (post 34)

Consistent with this cluster is the message from Attar, one of the first Saudi women athletes at the Olympics. As is evident in examples 46.a and 47 below, she asks other Saudi women to get going, which is another variation on directed movement. In 46.a, however, she is specifying this movement as forwards too, which is consistent with the discussion above. This insistence on forward movement is inferred from the rejection of any social actor’s interference to make it a backwards one.

46.a. *“To any woman who wants to participate, I say ‘go for it and don’t let anyone hold you back’,” she said.* (post 34)

47. *“We all have the potential to get out there and get going.”* (post 34)

As with previous topics, this particular movement is open to interference from other social actors. Hence, examples 4 and 29 below are included here to demonstrate how pressure from other social actors can initiate movements. It is true that in such particular cases, the direction of movement might not necessarily be specified as forward. Nevertheless, it is still a source of movement to implement change. This is exemplified in the metaphoric expressions *leverage* and *high pressure* seen below; it accounts for human rights organisations' interference to force these changes on Saudi Arabia. Clearly, and as it turned out eventually, such force had its impact on Saudi negotiations, allowing women to join the Olympic delegation.

4. *For years, human rights organizations hoping to use the Olympics as leverage to challenge Saudi Arabia's restrictive gender policies have looked to the case of apartheid South Africa.* (post 29)

29. *and under high pressure from human rights groups who urged the IOC to ban Saudi Arabia from the Games* (post 33)

So, it is possible to highlight here two conceptual metaphors, which have been pinned down in previous topics. The first is CHANGE IS MOVEMENT, with the target domain of the new decisions being represented using images from the source domain of movement. Relevant to this is another conceptual metaphor inferred from examples 4 and 29, namely SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION. In this sense, creating pressure on a given entity to force it to move or react in a particular way is used to represent the target domain of support to impose these changes. The majority of metaphoric expressions in this particular topic are included under this cluster. However, the next clusters will analyse different representations that are relevant to the research questions at hand.

7.1.4.2. Second metaphoric cluster

The second metaphoric cluster concerns the status quo of women before the implementation of these decisions. This is evident in Attar's message in 47, below, and in the speech by the director of Human Rights Watch, 27.a. In both cases, women are

represented as being contained/submerged in an enclosed space. To illustrate, in 27.a they are deprived of emerging from such a container because of the unjust status quo. Similarly, in 47 they are asked by Attar to act upon and overcome these limitations after change starts to take place. Along the same lines, these spatial metaphors can be linked to another metaphor depicting women in an enclosed area, as in example 15. However, in this particular reification, this enclosed area is represented as desired and appreciated by opponents. As a result, the status quo is here represented as a closed room/container, but this time change – which is viewed negatively by opponents – is represented as a door to evil. Combining aspects of evaluative and metaphoric language, this door-opening notion reinforces how change can be perceived in opposite ways by different social actors.

27.a. *“It’s not that the Saudis couldn’t find a woman athlete– it’s that their discriminatory policies have so far prevented one from emerging,” said Minky Worden, director of global initiatives at Human Rights Watch. (post 34)*

47. *We all have the potential to get out there and get going. (post 34)*

15. *and that this “will open the evil door of lesbianism, admiration and their hearts getting attached to each other”. (post 29)*

Drawing on these reification cases, it is possible to link them to three conceptual metaphors. First, it is evident that WOMEN ARE CONTAINED, with the target domain of women represented using images from the source domain of detention. In that sense, it can be linked to another two conceptual metaphors, STATUS QUO IS CONTAINING/ENCLOSED SPACE and CHANGE IS A WAY OUT. Interestingly, it is possible to see contrasting versions of these two metaphors, depending on who is using them. In 47, for instance, a female athlete is encouraging women to come out of this enclosed space; thus, depicting the status quo negatively. On the other hand, in the door-opening metaphor in 15, an opponent to these changes is depicting the same enclosed place as safe and pure.

7.1.4.3. Third metaphoric cluster

The third metaphoric cluster concerns the representation of different social actors and their relationships. One can distinguish between two sub-categories under this cluster. However, they have been combined in this section as they both depict the same target domain. The first of these uses reification of concrete images from the world of winning and losing. While winning and losing are actually used literally throughout the posts, since they report the details of these athletes' participation at the Olympics, examples 3 and 1 (post 30), included below, refer to winning and losing metaphorically. Therefore, even though the two athletes were unable to achieve any significant results in the field, the fact that they were still able to participate, despite the attacks they faced from their opponents, meant that they were still considered triumphant. Even when talking about supporters, as in 26 below, *champion* is used to refer to a famous supporter of this change, in accordance with this particular perspective. It is also essential to point out that the metaphonymy in *backlash*, in the second example, which is used to refer to their opponents, also reinforces this winning/losing image with *win out*. This is mainly because winning entails a number of potential winners competing for a certain prize; in this case, these women athletes and their supporters are on the one hand and their opponents are on the other. In addition to this, *backlash*, which is defined as a sudden backward movement, can be linked to the direction of movement encoded in the first metaphoric cluster. In that sense, backwards is again associated with whoever/whatever opposes these desired changes. The second sub-category uses reification to represent the controversy over these changes as the portrayal of various dramatic acts, during which the intensity of scenes is heightened in accordance with what is taking place in real life. Given this metaphorical conception, supporters and opponents are portrayed as role players with varying levels of significance. In 26, for instance, *Princess Adela*, a supporter of this cause, is depicted as an influential character on this stage. This is also evident in *Drama* in 1 (post 34):

3. *or will the conservative religious backlash win out?* (post 29)

1. *The Olympic triumph of Saudi Arabian women.* (post 30)

26. *A champion of women's rights, she is said to play an influential role on education policy in the country.* (post 33)

1. *End of Drama: Saudi to Send Women to Olympics.* (post 34)

Examination of this particular cluster reveals many similarities with section 6.1.4.2 of Chapter Six examining the same parameter. Therefore, it is not surprising that it can be linked to similar conceptual metaphors. So, one might identify DISAGREEMENT IS BATTLE and DISAGREEMENT IS PLAY/DRAMATIC ACT as underlying these metaphoric expressions. Again, this facilitates the understanding of the power struggle over these controversial changes in these posts. But it should always be looked at in combination with the previous two clusters to allow for a more thorough analysis. As a whole, three metaphoric clusters are identified in this parameter, which resembles previous clusters identified in earlier topics. Clearly, the first cluster, which involves images from the source domain of directed movement and its entailments, takes up a large proportion of the metaphoric language used in these posts. This, along with the remaining two clusters, serves to impact on the representations of the various social actors, as well as the status quo and struggle for change that is taking place.

In a nutshell, on their own, these four linguistic parameters are feeding the analysis with descriptive results, which could indicate more about the various discursive practices and socio-cognitive representations operating outside and underlying the text. As was the case with other topics, the quantitative data for the first and second parameters reveal similar sets of findings, while the third and fourth work collaboratively to offer, qualitatively, a different set of findings. This will be explained more in the remaining levels. The next level, as explained in Chapter Three, will implement both qualitative and quantitative means to understand more about the discursive context of the posts, while linking it to the findings of the first textual level.

7.2. Discursive level

7.2.1. Non-hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Compared with previous topics, this topic on women and sports in Saudi Arabia does not reveal as much argumentation with the readers. This is with the exception of one or two

examples such as 11 below, which simply directs the reader to further relevant reading. Such relative scarcity of argumentation with the reader might be linked to the fact that the change had been already implemented by the government in the 2012 London Olympic Games. Nevertheless, it is still possible to acknowledge how intertextuality and interdiscursivity are used to recontextualise different texts. This is evident, for instance, in the recontextualisation of South African apartheid in 4 to represent the status quo as gender-based apartheid. Considering the international readership expected for these blog posts, this representation serves to highlight the urgency of these changes. Interestingly, this perspective is contrasted by another blogger in 19.a., where he recontextualises the topic of human rights, but only to negate it. It can be assumed that these two examples are recontextualisations of the same point, i.e. human rights, but with two different intentions. 19.a is introduced here as an example of what might be misunderstood from an outsider's perspective, which is likely to happen when addressing an international audience.

11. *[Click here to read on.](#)* (post 30)

4. *For years, human rights organizations hoping to use the Olympics as leverage to challenge Saudi Arabia's restrictive gender policies have looked to the case of apartheid South Africa.* (post 29)

19.a. *I also do not believe it is a human rights issue* (post 31)

A multiplicity of voices is present in the posts as well and this seems to be distributed between both supporters of change and its opponents. Example 23.a, reporting directly from *Princess Adela*, and example 14.a from *AlShathri* represent these two voices respectively. It is worth pointing out that in 14.a, there is interdiscursivity with religious discourse. The findings of the first textual level of this chapter (i.e. evaluation and metaphor) as well as what has been established in previous topics, demonstrate that in the Saudi context, recontextualisation of religious discourse is inevitable in the controversy over change. Due to such multivoicedness, the bloggers often transform from being authors to animators of other social actors' speech. However, in the case of women

athletes, it should be highlighted that they almost never have a voice in all these posts, making them appear just as the discussed topic. The only exception to this is in post 34 when *Sarah Attar* is reported both directly and indirectly.

23.a. *“It’s high time to look into the matter of introducing sports at girls schools seriously.” Princess Adela bint Abdullah, the King’s daughter, told al-Riyadh in 2009.* (post 32)

14.a. *AlShathri (the author) argues that physical education will require that the girls change in front of each other.* (post 29)

7.2.2. Hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

As shown in Table 7.6, below, almost two thirds of the links included in these posts, or 65.52%, are of the second kind linking to international pages, which occur in 19 out of the total of 29 linking cases. These include links to international newspapers and news websites, like the *BBC*, *the New York Times*, *the Guardian* and *the Daily News*. In such cases, as in example 7 of post 34, details of the negotiations prior to the inclusion of women in the Saudi Olympic delegation, as well as the reactions afterwards, are presented.

7. *According to the BBC, the decision came after secret meetings held earlier that month in Jeddah.* (post 34)

Table 7.6: Distribution of hyperlinks in topic 4

Link to:	Number of links	Percentage
Same blogger/poster	6	20.69%
International pages	19	65.52%
Local pages	4	13.79%
Other bloggers/supporters	0	0%
Total	29	100%

Also under this category, a number of links are to the official Olympic website and the Human Rights Watch website. Examples 4.a and 27.a respectively demonstrate these cases. However, it is important to point out that, in another case of linking to Human Rights Watch, there is a critical representation of the conservatives' take on this issue, which is one of the rare cases in which links actually represent opponents, albeit through the language of others who oppose them in their rejection, as in 18.a. A similar case also occurs in 16.a, which links to *Wikipedia*, which appears to be an information page about Al Barrack, but careful reading of the content reveals the indirect association of Al Barrack with extremism and extreme fatwas. In fact, the only inclusion of opponents in links without any negative representations is in 20 of post 33, where the blogger links to a *twitmail* in Arabic about the evils anticipated by these opponents if these changes take place.

18.a. *Speaking to a local TV channel, Grand Mufti Abdulaziz Al Alsheikh declared, "women should be housewives". (post 33)*

16.a. *and as our sheikh. Abdulrahmin Al Barrack, bless him, has stated, "This is currently common among our students before the incorporation of physical education."* (post 29)

In second place come links to the same blogger/poster, at 20.69% of linking cases. Interestingly, this is less than with other topics, and coupled with the fact that there are no cases of linking to other supporters or bloggers, this could provide insights into the reality of the interpersonal relations taking place regarding this topic. In other words, it seems that this particular topic did not trigger any attempts to prompt collaborative calls for support. Even local pages proved to be few in these posts, at only four, to *Arabnews*, *AlHayat*, *Al Watan* and *Al Riyadh*. This could indicate that power was negotiated exclusively at an international level between Saudi Arabia, the IOC and HROs.

Nevertheless, examining the comments on these posts reveals a more engaged negotiation of opposing mental representations. As was the case with the previous topic, supportive comments are very common, especially in the *Saudiwoman* blog. In total, 175 comments are posted –potentially subject to the bloggers’ moderation or deletion- under these six posts, and more than 84.5% of them are in her blog. Careful examination of these comments indicates both the support for the content of the posts as well as the readership of these blogs. What is interesting is that, in a few cases, a commenter reveals vigorous opposition to these changes, and even sometimes questions the hidden agenda of these bloggers. In such cases, other commenters respond immediately, attacking their reasoning and rationale. However, these comments, regardless of their stance on the issue, often use the same stereotypical accusation discussed earlier in this thesis. Put another way, accusations of dishonesty, treachery and Westernisation are directed towards these bloggers and their supporters. On the other hand, accusations of extremism, close-mindedness and the misrepresentation/ misinterpretation of Islam and its teachings are employed to characterise these opponents.

All in all, examining the various links in these posts reveals that the bloggers are taking a more passive role with regard to this particular topic, compared with previous ones. This

is evident in the scarcity of any connection made with other bloggers or the lack of any supportive campaigns. The clash between the status quo and change seen here seem to function at a more international level, rather than a national one. More on this will be presented at the third level.

7.3. Socio-cognitive level

As is the case with previous analyses, this is the level where the descriptive findings at micro- and meso-levels are examined from a broader perspective that analyses the social and cognitive factors fuelling and fuelled by discourse. These findings are utilised collaboratively to infer more about the mental representations in association with the current topic under examination: women and sports in Saudi Arabia. To begin with, it is essential to pinpoint what is meant by change and what is in the status quo that needs to be changed. Clearly, the status quo here refers to the fact that, at the time of these posts, physical education was not allowed in Saudi female public schools, and playing sports competitively or professionally was not possible. The changes introduced at this time were to include women in the Saudi Olympic delegation for the first time and to introduce PE into girls' schools.

The findings for the metaphor and evaluation parameters indicate that these bloggers are revealing positive mental representations with regards to women and sports. This is clearly exhibited in the repeated positive appreciation of these changes as a *triumph* and the acknowledgement of their pioneer status as a *first*. Change-supporting mental representations can also be inferred from the metaphoric tools used in these posts, in which these reforms are represented as steps forward on a journey towards the desired ultimate change. In contrast, the status quo is evaluated negatively, as something depriving and discriminating against girls and women. This negative evaluation goes as far as describing such policies as a form of apartheid, which, as aforementioned, conjures up the negative image of racism in South Africa. Metaphorically, the use of the container source domain entails a limiting and depriving image of the status quo. However, it is important to point out here that these mental representations are still more exclusive and less dominant than the socially shared ones, which have always dominated the status quo.

Consequently, they can be classified as mental representations of this particular subgroup of bloggers and supporters. These are negotiated here in search of more acceptance and hence, eventually, turning into group norms.

On the other hand, the quantitative findings for the first and second parameters offer a different perspective. To illustrate, both women athletes and women in general are not included in more active cases or more initiating roles. So, again, this is a case where these pro-change mental representations, which were proven to motivate the third and fourth parameters, fail to influence the first and second ones. What seems to be the case, then, is that while the findings for the qualitative parameters of metaphor and evaluation are intentionally utilised by these bloggers to express their mental representations, the findings for the first and second parameters actually reveal different representations. In other words, while writing these posts, these bloggers were well aware of the cognitive and social connections between their linguistic forms on the one hand and their content on the other. However, such intentional awareness is unlikely to exist when constructing clauses from social actor representation and process-type perspectives. What seems to be the case then is that there are fossilised forms in their language or perhaps cognition, even within pro-women discourse. Another example of this fossilisation is the very rare inclusion of men in these posts. This happens several times across various topics and it can be linked to the actual gender segregation practised in society being translated into linguistic form.

What is interesting about this particular topic is what it reveals about the power struggle between the various social actors involved. For example, decision makers, who often appear to have the most activation and initiating roles in most of the topics examined, are actually controlled by other international social actors – the International Olympic Committee and human rights groups. It is true that they still have power over women athletes but, nevertheless, they are still being controlled and forced to act by these international actors. In fact, the high number of international links examined at the discursive level proves that this is the first change to be introduced due to international forces and not due to calls for change within Saudi society. This, coupled with the lack of

hyperlinks to supporters or other bloggers, highlights the fact that this topic has not prompted much action on the part of these bloggers/ supporters. Compared to the topics of driving or workplaces, for instance, no campaigns or even webpages were created. This, however, does not negate their support for these changes, which has been shown in previous paragraphs; it just highlights the lack of sufficient interest or necessity to act on their part. What is presented, then, is merely linguistic support, in both the posts and the comments.

This can also be linked to the fact that positive self-representation in this topic is not as strong as it was in previous topics. Instead, the focus seems to be directed more towards other, i.e. opponents', representations. In the latter's representations, however, both negative and positive values are assigned to them in ways similar to the previous topic. To illustrate, the evaluative language used to describe them casts them as backwards, since they perceive women as housewives who should be contained in the home and have nothing to do with sports. This is especially true in the case of the speeches quoted from the official Olympic website. Interestingly, though, it is evident that opponents still use religion to justify their objections, regardless of how unreasonable their arguments are. However, unlike the case with the previous topic in which the Saudi Minister of Labour offers a more tolerant understanding of Islamic teachings, these bloggers report these negative representations without offering the outsider reader any alternative views of Islam. A point like this will be examined in more detail in Chapter Nine. On the other hand, these opponents are also positively evaluated as possessing more power. This is mirrored in the fact that their top role in involvement is as actors in more than half the cases, then sayers in nearly one fifth, while the top role for supporters is sensors and then sayers. So, whether in the form of positive evaluation, in metaphorical expressions, or process type analysis, these findings at the textual level can be an indicator of the dominance of and, to a certain extent, the social acceptance of, these change-resisting mental representations. These appear to be dominant to the point that the government, which clearly has the final decision on which changes to implement, is acting cautiously and in accordance with such dominance.

In conclusion, the three levels of analysis have been examined separately and later combined at the third level, to offer useful insights into the intricate relationship between discourse, cognition and context. In Chapter Nine, the findings for the various topics will be looked at simultaneously to infer more about the competing ideologies of dominance and resistance that operate within Saudi society, in light of section 3.1. But before moving to this discussion, a final topic will be included in this sample of posts under examination. Unlike the first topics discussed in Chapters Four to Seven, Chapter Eight will examine a more comprehensive topic, which can be linked to each of the first four. Gender segregation is strongly interrelated with the details of all the changes suggested in these topics. Therefore, the last analysis chapter will be devoted to examining a number of posts discussing gender segregation as practised in Saudi Arabia.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DATA ANALYSIS (POSTS ON GENDER MIXING AND GENDER SEGREGATION)

This is the last chapter of data analysis, covering an overarching topic that extends across the various topics – gender segregation in Saudi Arabia. In all the changes requested in the fields of politics, driving, work environments and sports, maintaining gender segregation has been always a priority and can sometimes be a barrier to imposing change. As explained in Chapter One, gender mixing has constantly been one of the most controversial topics in the country with a variety of interpretations of the same religious texts. The posts analysed in this chapter discuss this general topic, and it has been assigned a separate chapter in order to analyse how this topic is perceived by Saudi English-language bloggers and the opponents of all forms of gender mixing. Six posts from the four blogs are examined and they are distributed as follows:

Table 8.1: Number of posts and word count for topic 5

	SW	QT	SJ	RB	Total
Number of posts	2	1	1	2	6
Word count	1358	596	391	530	2875

8.1. Textual level

8.1.1. Social actor representation

The main social actors are classified and categorised into nine main groups, the majority of which are similar to those examined earlier in previous topics. They are as follows:

1. Decision makers or authorities with varying degrees of power.

2. Women in general – this category includes Saudi women in general who are not clearly supporting or opposing gender mixing. In other words, this category refers to women who are included without reference to their stance on this issue.
3. Men – this category includes any references to male social actors, who that they cannot be classified under other categories.
4. Supporters – this includes those who oppose the current strict gender segregation practice, and instead support a more culturally and socially appropriate practice of gender mixing.
5. Opponents of gender mixing of any kind and at any level; hence they are considered advocates of the strict practice of gender segregation.
6. Media – this refers to any media channel/item, including newspapers, TV channels and even individual media projects discussing relevant topics.
7. Saudis in general, whether as a nation or as unidentified individuals.
8. Bloggers/authors of these posts. It is important to point out here that this category includes cases where a blogger is describing a more personal experience of, or stand on, irrelevant issues, rather than a clear position supporting a more gender-mixing tolerating practice and opposing strict gender segregation. In the latter case, these bloggers are classified as supporters.
9. Readers of the blog.

The main difference between this list of main social actors and those in previous chapters is the lack of a particular category of woman who are playing pioneering roles in relation to the topic being examined – for instance, women politicians in topic one or woman athletes in topic four. This is due to the fact that this topic is more inclusive and general than other topics, in addition to the fact that there seem to be no national campaigns or collaborative calls by activists. Instead, what we have here are women commenting on their rejection of the strict practice of gender segregation and supporting a more tolerant

stance. As a result, these women are classified as supporters and are not included under the category of women in general; which is consistent with the description of this category throughout the entire study. For the sake of consistency, opponents of strict gender segregation are classified as supporters since they support a practice that is more tolerant of gender mixing. Conversely, the same thing applies to opponents who are classified as such as they support strict gender segregation. As explained in Chapter One, all the different topics will be discussed cumulatively in Chapter Nine. Hence, the consistent categorisation of the main social actors as well as the terminology used to refer to them is of key importance.

That being said, Table 8.2 below demonstrates the inclusion cases of each of these social actors along with their activation and passivation cases, in both figures and percentages. As before, it needs to be kept in mind that social actors are potentially classified in different categories simultaneously.

Table 8.2: Inclusion, activation and passivation for main social actors in topic 5

Social actors	Inclusion		Activation		Passivation	
Decision makers	31	9.14%	21	67.74%	10	32.26%
Women	24	7.08%	10	41.67%	14	58.33%
Men	37	10.91%	17	45.94%	20	54.05%
Supporters	118	34.81%	89	75.42%	29	24.58%
Opponents	77	22.71%	61	79.22%	16	20.78%
Media	7	2.06%	4	57.14%	3	42.86%
Saudis	27	7.96%	20	74.07%	7	25.93%

Bloggers	14	4.13%	13	92.86%	1	7.14%
Readers	4	1.18%	3	75%	1	25%
Total	339	100%	238	70.21%	101	29.79%

8.1.1.1. Inclusion and exclusion

As with previous topics, a Chi-square test was applied to see if the differences between these inclusion cases have any statistical significance. The p value is 2.64412E-58, which is far below 0.05 and is statistically very significant. This means that the null hypothesis has to be rejected and that the differences between these inclusion cases are not due to chance. As evident in the table, supporters account for more than one-third of the inclusion cases, with 34.81%. In second place come opponents at a little over one-fifth of the cases, 22.71%. Then, there are men, who are included in 10.91% of cases; however, many of these inclusion cases are actually represented in association with women, as in 39 below of post 35, which is expected given the nature of the topic. In fourth place are decision makers at 9.14% and Saudis are in fifth place with 7.96% of inclusion cases.

39. and men and women stood next to each other looking up at the screen. (post 35).

8.1.1.2. Activation and passivation

With regards to the activation and passivation cases for each of these social actors, a one-tailed exact binominal test was applied for each main social actor to test the alternative hypothesis that there are more activation cases for each one of these social actors than there are passivation cases. For most of the social actors, the p values proved to be less than 0.05, thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, the social actors categorised as women, men, media and readers all have p values of more than 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis has to be retained. This means that for each one of these main social actors, the difference between activation and passivation cases is not statistically significant different and might be simply due to chance.

Now, it is time to examine the main pairs discussed throughout this study. However, since this particular topic includes only one particular category to account for women, the first pair that was examined repeatedly in each of the previous topics cannot be included here. As a result, only two pairs are to be examined here; the first of these is men versus women. Men are included in slightly more cases than women, 37 cases for the first and 24 for the latter. However, in case of both main social actors, the one-tailed exact binominal test does not prove any statistically significant difference between activation and passivation since the p value is 0.76 for men and 0.85 for women. Examples 3 and 32.a. demonstrate a case for each social actor. Even when doing vertical testing to compare between activation cases only between men and women, the p value is 0.12. Similarly, when attempting vertical testing with their passivation cases only, the p value is 0.2:

3. *when men mix with women.* (post 38)

32.a. *I think a woman never spoke to him that way before* (post 37)

The second pair is supporters versus opponents and as stated earlier in this section, supporters are the most included main social actors in this topic, while opponents are second. However, unlike the first pair, all the four exact binominal tests applied to the second pair reveal p values less than 0.05. Starting with horizontal testing, in each social actor of the second pair, activation cases are more than three times their passivation cases with p values of 1.4115E-08 and 1.2088E-07, respectively. This has happened with previous topics, proving that both supporters and opponents are activated in the majority of their inclusion cases, which will be examined in more detail at the third level of analysis (section 8.3). Even in vertical testing, activation cases only show a statistically significant difference in favour of supporters, with a p value of 0.01. With passivation cases, a significant difference is also established in favour of supporters with a p value of 0.03. Below are examples demonstrating an activation case for supporters and opponents respectively:

7-8.a. *when Okaz Newspaper published a lengthy article last December written by Sheikh al Ghamdi* (post 36)

3. *Shaikh Abdul-Rahman al-Barrak has an impressive ability to occasionally make news headlines with his ridiculous, albeit dangerous, fatwas.* (post 40)

8.1.1.3. Categorisation and nomination

Examining how categorisation is used in posts on gender segregation reveals representations that are consistent with the previous topics to a large extent. To begin with, both women and men are referred to using classification of their gender identities, which can be expected by default due to the gendered nature of the topics. What is more detailed and elaborate in terms of categorisation is the representation of both opponents and supporters, which is another point established across all the previous topics. Starting with opponents, this topic reveals many representations using the term *muttawa* and *muttawas* explained earlier in section 4.1.1.3. This is predominantly used in Al Nafjan's posts as in 28 below. Interestingly, the association between *muttawas* and physical appearance identified earlier is explicitly stated in 62 below, demonstrating that this particular categorisation can be reduced as such. Another classification is 'bullies' in 21, thus representing opponents again as ill-intentioned people. Occasionally, opponents are referred to as conservatives (as in 2) and rarely are they named, as in 7.a. Supporters on the other hand are represented through nomination and functionalisation, as in 4 and 13.

28. *And then a group of influential muttawas got together* (post 36)

62. *Hundreds of people shaking in fear of a couple of bearded men.* (post 35)

21. *Good for the women for standing their ground, and kudos to JLC for not bowing down to a bunch religious bullies.* (post 39)

2. *Saudi conservatives do not like it* (post 38)

7.a. *The motivation to organize the competition, said its supervisor Abdullah al-Mohaisnee, is reports of gender mixing at Princess Nora University that surfaced last month.* (post 38)

4. *Al Ghamdi is a 47-year-old PhD holder in administration and strategical planning* (post 36)

13. *and so did the judge Eissa al Ghaith* (post 36)

In brief, this examination of social actor representation reveals that supporters and opponents take the lead in terms of their inclusion. These two social actors are also predominantly active in most of these cases. But in terms of categorisation, supporters tend to be expressed through nomination and functionalisation while opponents are classified with negative classifications. Men are included more in this topic than in other ones, but they are often used as a circumstance in association with women to express gender mixing or segregation. Women in general are not strongly included in this topic; however, this is due to the fact that many of them are categorised under other social actors. However, in these general inclusion cases, there is no or very little activation.

8.1.2. Process type analysis

8.1.2.1. Overview of involvement

Keeping in mind the same categorisation and classification principles discussed earlier, Table 8.3 shows horizontally the distribution of the various participant roles for each main social actor in comparison with actor-involvement cases while table 8.4 demonstrates vertically how each participant role is distributed between different social actors.

Table 8.3: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each social actor's involvement cases in topic 5

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	13	1	2	0	5	4	1	0	2	28
	46.43%	3.57%	7.14%	0%	17.86%	14.29%	3.57%	0%	7.14%	100%
Women	2	6	0	0	3	1	3	0	0	15
	13.33%	40%	0%	0%	20%	6.67%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Men	6	5	0	1	0	1	4	0	1	18
	33.33%	27.78%	0%	5.56%	0%	5.56%	22.22%	0%	5.56%	100%
Supporters	38	14	17	1	16	7	12	0	0	105
	36.19%	13.33%	16.19%	0.95%	15.24%	6.67%	11.43%	0%	0%	100%
Opponen	34	4	10	2	9	1	9	0	1	70

	48.57%	5.71%	14.29%	2.86%	12.86%	1.43%	12.86%	0%	1.43%	100%
Media	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
	33.33%	33.33%	0%	0%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Saudis	9	2	12	0	0	0	7	0	0	30
	30%	6.67%	40%	0%	0%	0%	23.33%	0%	0%	100%
Bloggers	6	1	5	0	2	0	2	0	0	16
	37.5%	6.25%	31.25%	0%	12.5%	0%	12.5%	0%	0%	100%
Readers	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
	60%	0%	20%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Total	112	34	47	4	36	15	38	0	4	290
	38.62%	11.72%	16.21%	1.38%	12.41%	5.17%	13.10%	0%	1.38%	100%

Looking at Table 8.3, it is evident that the top involved social actor with regard to process types is supporters. With 105 involvement cases, supporters account for more than one-third of the total involvement cases for the whole sample (36.21%). As with the previous topics, the findings of this parameter are consistent with the first parameter of social actor representation. In second place are opponents with 70 involvement cases representing 24.14%. Saudis come in third place with 10.34 % of involvement cases and this is the highest number of involvement cases for this particular main social actor in the entire study. In fact, looking at Saudis' figures in the first and second parameter, it is clear that they have more prominent representation in the topic of gender mixing and gender segregation compared with other topics. Decision makers are in fourth place with 9.66% and men in fifth with only 6.20%.

Table 8.4: Distribution of various process roles of main social actors in relation to each role overall involvement cases in topic 5

	MA/AC	MA/GO-RE	ME/SE	ME/PH-RE	V/SA	V/TA-RE	R	B	E	Total
Decision makers	11.61%	2.94%	4.26%	0%	13.89%	26.67%	2.63%	0%	50%	9.66%
Women	1.79%	17.65%	0%	0%	8.33%	6.67%	7.89%	0%	0%	5.17%
Men	5.36%	14.71%	0%	25%	0%	6.67%	10.53%	0%	25%	6.21%
Supporters	33.93%	41.18%	36.17%	25%	44.44%	46.67%	31.58%	0%	0%	36.21%
Opponents	30.36%	11.77%	21.28%	50%	25%	6.67%	23.68%	0%	25%	24.14%

Media	0.89%	2.94%	0%	0%	2.78%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.03%
Saudis	8.04%	5.88%	25.53%	0%	0%	0%	18.42%	0%	0%	10.34%
Bloggers	5.36%	2.94%	10.64%	0%	5.56%	0%	5.26%	0%	0%	5.52%
Readers	2.68%	0%	2.13%	0%	0%	6.67%	0%	0%	0%	1.72%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%

8.1.2.2. Initiating and receiving roles

As with the previous topics, these figures will be looked at in pairs, and due to the reasons explained earlier, only men versus women and supporters versus opponents will be included. These pairs will be examined after categorising the process types into initiating and receiving roles. Table 8.5 below demonstrates the findings of such categorisation on grammatical grounds based on the figures in tables 8.3 and 8.4:

Table 8.5: Initiating and receiving roles for main pairs in topic 5

Social actor	Grammatical categorisation (action)		
	Initiating	Receiving	Total
Men	6	12	18
Women	5	10	15
Supporters	71	34	105
Opponents	53	17	70

Applying the exact binominal test to these figures reveals that for the first pair, establishing a statistically significant difference for any of the four hypotheses was not possible. Both men and women are involved in few cases, 18 and 15, respectively. Men are actors in about one-third of these cases while women are goals or receivers in material processes for a little over one-third. Examples 32 and 12 below demonstrate these principal roles for both men and women:

32. *They have to be accompanying a wife, mother or sister.* (post 35)

12. *even though the club provided a separate area for them.* (post 39)

Table 8.5 suggests that both of these main social actors are involved in more receiving than initiating roles. However, when applying the exact binominal test on these findings, the attained p values are more than 0.05, thus the null hypothesis is accepted. In the case of men, the p value is 0.12 and for women, it is 0.15. Even when comparing the number of cases of initiating roles of men with those for women (i.e. vertical testing), the p value is 0.5. The same also applies when comparing the number of receiving cases for men with those for women as the p value is 0.42. Consequently, in the latter two cases, the alternative hypotheses have to be rejected. All in all, with this particular pair, there is no statistically significant difference between initiating roles on the one hand and receiving roles on the other for men and women. Also, there is no statistically significance difference between men and women with regard to their initiating roles in the first test and their receiving ones in the second.

As for the second pair, supporters versus opponents, the previous tables and the exact binominal tests reveal different findings. As aforementioned, supporters are the top involved social actor in this topic with 105 cases, while opponents are second with 70 cases. For both of them, the role of actor takes the lead with nearly one-third of the involvement cases of supporters and almost half of the involvement cases for opponents. Examples 6 and 13 below exemplify the role of actor for supporters and opponents, respectively:

6.c. *and we welcome all people,*” (post 39)

13. *What if one of his enthusiastic fans decided to act upon this fatwa* (post 40)

Table 8.5 also reveals that supporters are involved in more initiating roles than receiving ones, and with a statistically significant difference with a p value of 0.0001. A statistically significant difference is also established in favour of initiating roles for opponents with a p value of 9.59985E-06. This clearly demonstrates the level of power expressed by these two clashing social actors. However, in order to examine this pair carefully, another set of null hypotheses needs to be tested by the one-tailed exact binominal test. The first null hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant

difference between supporters' initiating roles and opponents' initiating roles. With a p value of 0.06, this null hypothesis is accepted. On the contrary, when applying the same null hypothesis but with regards to receiving instead of initiating roles, the p value shows a different result. In the latter case, the p value is 0.01, which clearly proves that there are more supporters in receiving roles than opponents and at a statistically significant difference. All this will be examined in more detail in relation to other parameters and levels at the third level of analysis. Nevertheless, it can be inferred here briefly that despite the fact that both supporters and opponents are very powerful in these posts, careful examination of this parameter could suggest that the level of action expressed by opponents can show them as even more powerful. Can such powerful representations translate into qualitative analyses in addition to the quantitative ones expressed in social actor representation and process type analysis? Detailed examination of evaluation and metaphor as used in these posts should provide insight into such a question. The next parameter will therefore examine textual findings qualitatively as it examines evaluative language.

8.1.3. Evaluation

The evaluative language used in these posts will be categorised according to the object of evaluation. This means that instances of evaluative language will be marked using Martin and White's framework and then classified into two major kinds based on what is being evaluated. These are how gender mixing and gender segregation are evaluated by different social actors; and how these actors, namely supporters and opponents, are represented in the posts.

8.1.3.1. First object of evaluation: gender mixing and gender segregation

The first kind of evaluative language targets how different social actors view gender mixing and gender segregation. In 18, for example, positive appreciation (valuation) is used to establish the importance of maintaining gender segregation to CPVPV (Commission for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice) as one of the most powerful bodies opposing gender mixing. This is echoed by the negative affect (non-authorial) on the part of these opponents towards gender mixing as in 5 below. This

negative affect is fuelling and being fuelled by the negative evaluation of gender mixing as *dangerous* in 6.a. It is also fuelled by the association made by conservatives between gender mixing and Westernisation as in 10.a and 18. Considering the social and cultural context examined in section 1.3, this representation frames gender mixing of any kind as worth warning of. The Westernisation accusation is often used by these opponents to question whatever or whomever they do not approve of. Using such a tool in this topic, opponents are actually recreating the same pattern as with previous topics. This means that the Westernisation accusation does, in fact, seem to be a ready-made tool to attack any resisting attempts for change; and this attack, as will be examined in more detail at the third level of analysis, is actually linked to the clash between competing ideologies:

18. *maintaining gender segregation is one of the highest callings of the PVPV.* (post 36)

5. *They actually hate it so much* (post 38)

6.a. *they are organizing a competition to raise awareness of what a dangerous “phenomenon” gender mixing is.* (post 38)

10.a. *“The main goal of this competition is to highlight the Westernization creeping into society,” al-Mohaisnee said during an interview on the Islamist al-Majd television.* (post 38)

18. *A more accurate translation of the lecture’s title would be “Saudi Elite and Westernization Issues.”* (post 39)

Unsurprisingly, gender mixing and gender segregation are evaluated differently by supporters of a more tolerant version of gender mixing. The following evaluative examples demonstrate their stance on gender segregation as it is currently practised in Saudi Arabia. In all the cases stated below, negative valuation is associated with the current practice of gender segregation. For instance, in examples 9.a and 11.a below, Al Ghamdi, among others, evaluates this practice as *extreme* and *illogical* and thus it cannot be viewed as based on Islamic teachings. By stating this, Al Ghamdi is using the same

tool, religion, often used by opponents to support their strict interpretation of gender segregation in Islam. In 1, however, the current practice of gender segregation is evaluated negatively as well, but from a different perspective. By presenting this practice as contradictory, the blogger is using argument and reasoning to demolish the base of gender segregation in its current form (see post 37, Appendix A for further context).

9.a. *He stated that what we are at today is based on extremism and cultural considerations.* (post 36)

11.a. *Anyhow this is not the first time that a Saudi sheikh has written about the illogicality of gender segregation.* (post 36)

1. Contradictions (post 37)

8.1.3.2. Second object of evaluation: supporters and opponents of gender mixing

Starting with opponents, it is evident through the entire sample for this topic that negative judgement is used repeatedly, as well as negative appreciation of whatever comes from these opponents. Again, this is a point that has occurred with all the previous topics and can be directly linked to the strategy of positive self-representation versus negative other representation. In this case, opponents will be the others, who are represented negatively. In 73.a, 48 and 21 below, for example, opponents are judged (against social esteem) with negative values such as being arrogant, baffled, unprepared and bullying.

73.a. *I took Tine outside to show her how arrogant muttawas are* (post 35)

48. *In comparison, the other two shiekhs seemed baffled and unprepared.* (post 36)

21. *Good for the women for standing their ground, and kudos to JLC for not bowing down to a bunch [sic] religious bullies.* (post 39)

By the same token, negative appreciation is used to evaluate the *fatwas*, i.e. religious ruling or opinion by a scholar based on his/her interpretation of Islamic teachings, produced by any of these opponents to gender mixing of any kind. In that sense, such

fatwas are attributed with negative evaluation in 3 and 28. Such negativity is also extended to whoever supports these fatwas; this is another example of how what appears to be positive evaluation on the surface is in fact a negative one underneath. The positive affect and judgement in 12.a. and 13 are representations of the admiration felt for opponents by their followers, which entails the same negativity towards the latter as well. Could these examples be considered as positive appreciation of these opponents? Clearly the answer to this question is no. What is appreciated here is the fact that these opponents possess more power, but definitely not how this power is put to use. In return, people who are not defying this power and surrendering to it passively are judged negatively as in 60, causing the use of authorial effect on the part of the blogger towards them and the whole issue in 63.

3. *Shaikh Abdul-Rahman al-Barrak has an impressive ability to occasionally make news headlines with his ridiculous, albeit dangerous, fatwas.* (post 40)

28. *when al-Barrak released another one of his insane fatwas:* (post 40)

12.a. *This guy has a loyal following who admire him and regard his opinions highly.* (post 40)

13. *What if one of his enthusiastic fans decided to act upon this fatwa* (post 40)

60. *Both Tine and I were angered by how passive people were.* (post 35)

On the contrary, in 1 and 2, Al Ghamdi, who is against gender segregation as it is practised, is represented using positive appreciation in terms of captivating attention. It is possible to argue that such appreciation can be positive or negative, however, further evidence from other examples proves bloggers' positive evaluation of him, as in 47, where he is described as *confident* and *articulate*. This in turn causes positive authorial effect on the part of the blogger in *impressed*. Even when Qusay's wife is represented using negative affect in her furious reaction towards the security guard's attempt to make

her change her place to where the other women are sitting, positive authorial affect is used on the part of the blogger in 46 to account for the pride she is making him feel.

1-2. *The man of the hour. Great controversy is brewing in Saudi Arabia* (post 36)

47.a. *On both shows I was impressed by how confident and articulate al Ghamdi was.* (post 36)

46. *but actually seeing it... made me feel proud of her even more.* (post 37)

The same positive evaluation is also used in 21 below in which positive judgement (against social esteem) is employed to account for the blogger's evaluation of the events that took place in the Jeddah literary club: the presence of women in the same room as men was a point of disagreement as some opponents refused to accept it since they regard it a form of gender mixing. However, while this example demonstrates a positive judgement for the behaviour of both women and the Jeddah literary club, it can also be considered as an expression of positive authorial effect on the part of blogger. These examples represent the other end of the continuum of positive self-representation versus negative other representation, in which supporters and bloggers are all included as self. However, it is worth pointing out that the instances representing the other negatively are far more numerous than those representing the self positively.

21. *Good for the women for standing their ground, and kudos to JLC for not bowing down to a bunch religious bullies.* (post 39)

Compare these positive representations for instance with the negative ones in 39 and 34.a below. Both of these examples evaluate Al Ghamdi; however, they are by his opponents. In the same way that the Westernisation accusation is used to stipulate a threat to the social norms of the Saudi community as well as its original culture, supporters of a more tolerant version of gender mixing are likewise represented as a threat to these social and cultural norms. This is clearly evident in 39, in which opponents of gender mixing represent Al Ghamdi as an embarrassment using both negative judgement (against social

esteem) and negative valuation. Negative evaluation of Al Ghamdi by these opponents is also represented using religion as a tool. So, in addition to defying society and culture, Al Ghamdi is accused of blasphemy by some opponents in 34.a; which is an explicit and extreme attack on his identity as a Muslim and consequently on whatever stance he takes on Islamic matters.

39. *and called him an embarrassment to Saudi Arabia.* (post 36)

34.a. *Another claimed that al Ghamdi was blasphemous towards the Prophet (PBUH).* (post 36)

This concludes the third textual parameter in this analysis, which offered qualitative data analysis of the evaluative language used. Analysis revealed that supporters of change constantly associate the status quo with negative evaluation while change is evaluated positively. This is the exact opposite in the case of opponents of change. Along the same lines, this parallelism in representation is also present in the way that both supporters and opponents are evaluated by different social actors.

The following parameter will also provide insight into the analysis using qualitative findings, examining metaphor and how it is used in the posts.

8.1.4. Metaphor

8.1.4.1. First metaphoric cluster

The first cluster examines the metaphoric expressions derived from the directed movement source domain. The directed movement cluster is one of the most used clusters in the entire study; however, it seems that unlike the previous topics in which directed movement is mainly associated with women, supporters and their journey towards change, directed movement in the topic of gender mixing is associated with different social actors. This must be examined while keeping in mind that posts examining gender segregation are discussing it without proposing a specific plan for change. In previous topics, specific changes were examined, requiring particular reactions; this is not the case in this chapter. In 18, for instance, there is an example of such movement, in the form of

forced movement by another social actor, decision makers, who are higher in the power hierarchy exhibited in the posts. Another relevant form of movement is the lack of movement, which is presented in 39 as good since it conveys the resilience and perseverance shown by these women in their refusal to move away to the women-only areas. In other words, in their literal rejection to move and their insistence on keeping things the way they are, i.e. sitting in mixed-gender gatherings at the Jeddah literary club, these women are actually embodying the well-known metaphor of standing one's ground:

18. *As the government tried in recent years to push more women into the workforce, (post 38)*

21. *Good for the women for standing their ground, and kudos to JLC for not bowing down to a bunch of religious bullies. (post 39)*

As expected, the direction of movement will be judged differently by different social actors, so for the head of the CPVPV to actually speak against strict gender segregation, as in example 25.a. below, is a movement in the opposite direction originally desired by them. So it can be inferred that such movement is in line with the movement desired by the supporters of a more tolerant gender mixing stance. In other cases, the same directed movement is used by opponents to present their support of the status quo. To illustrate, opponents *launch* their campaign in 1, denoting the initiating of directed movement of certain objects (a boat for instance) in which a particular social actor is using his/her power to release this object in their desired direction. The reification in all four examples can be linked to the conceptual metaphor denoting SUPPORT IS MOVEMENT. However, unlike the relevant conceptual metaphor of SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION highlighted in previous topics, support in this topic is used generally. This means that support in these examples can be given by supporters or opponents depending on which direction they want to direct movement in, i.e. supporting or opposing stances on these issues.

25.a. *For the PVPV and the whole ultra conservative majority, to have one of their own, someone who they had given a high position in their hierarchy go against their beliefs is a slap in the face.* (post 36)

1. *Conservatives Launch Twitter Competition to Fight Gender Mixing* (post 38)

8.1.4.2. Second metaphoric cluster

The second cluster revolves around metaphoric images from natural life. Starting with example 10.a, there is personification associated with Westernisation, which is accused of motivating most attempts of change. In this particular example, metaphor and evaluation are used collaboratively to represent the view held by opponents towards the topic at hand. In 10.a, opponents use personification to state how Westernisation is quietly and indirectly affecting/corrupting society in a slow and sneaky way. Using this metaphoric expression evokes a negative image of Westernisation as a sneaky predator while implicitly distorting the integrity of attempts to change.

10.a. *“The main goal of this competition is to highlight the Westernization creeping into society,” al-Mohaisnee said during an interview on the Islamist al-Majd television.* (post 38)

This image of a predator is used extensively in this topic and with other target domains. Unlike the example discussed at the end of the previous paragraph, the second example is used by Eman Al Nafjan, both a blogger and a supporter, to represent her opponents. To begin with, examining 19.a below, it is evident that she is using depersonification to describe the muttawas. Using ‘safari’ implies that these muttawas are like animals/predators that are hunted by an expedition. This is clearly stated in 17 in which these muttawas are described sarcastically as lions, who take it upon themselves to defend what they view as moral in Saudi Arabia. Usually, lion metaphors are used positively, as in the famous example of Richard the Lionheart or the local example of the late Prince Nayef, who used to be described as a lion due to his fight against terrorism. However, *natural habitat* in 20 reveals the sarcastic and rather degrading representation

of these opponents since it focuses on the rather animalistic and primitive features of the lion rather than its highly valued features as the king of animals. Nevertheless, this metaphoric expression still creates a powerful representation of these opponents, which is another feature of opponents that has been highlighted repeatedly with previous topics.

19.a. *That's why we went on a muttawa safari.* (post 35)

17. *These lions of Saudi morality are a staple mark of life here* (post 35)

20. *We headed to their natural habitat, shopping malls.* (post 35)

This primitiveness is also found in another metaphoric expression, which could be further evidence of the degrading representation discussed in the previous paragraph. While examples 2 and 10.a below are not constructed using the source domain of animals/predators, they are still presented here as they bear similarity and further evidence of the points discussed earlier. In 2, admiring *al-Barrak* and his take on gender mixing is represented using the source domain of a caveman, often associated with primitiveness and lack of civility. In 10.a, there is a combination of spatial and time metaphor in which *al-Barrack* is represented using the source domain of past and old. In that sense, *al-Barrack* is presented as belonging to past times, rather than the modern world; another metaphor intensifying the aforementioned primitiveness.

2. *For someone who would probably enjoy the lifestyle of a caveman,* (post 40)

10.a. *It might be true that al-Barrak is an old man who is still living in the past,* (post 40)

The personification in 10.a (post 38) is linked to a conceptual metaphor introduced for the first time in the entire sample. WESTERNISATION IS PREDATOR is based on using images from the source domain of predators, perhaps a snake, moving slowly to attack the moral values of society. Keeping in mind that Westernisation is often used as an accusation attached to any attempts of change, it is possible to link this metaphor to the target domain of change from an opposing perspective. On the contrary, the

depersonalization of opponents as non-thinking animals serves to portray them negatively as they oppose change and support the status quo. This could be linked to OPPONENTS ARE LIONS, while keeping in mind a rather primitive and wild image of such.

8.1.4.3. Third metaphoric cluster

The third metaphoric cluster is adopted from the world of physical encounter/fight. The target domain of the struggle between women and their supporters, and their opponents, is portrayed using different metaphoric expressions from the physical encounter/fight source domain. 25.a below demonstrates a similar case in which the tolerant stance of the CPVPV head on gender mixing is represented as a slap in the face of the CPVPV and other opponents who believe in strict gender segregation. Using this reification also denotes the delicate and humiliating position in which he is placing the CPVPV and other opponents. In 21, there is another example of how supporters are not surrendering or submitting powerlessly to their opponents, which has been evaluated positively by the blogger in the previous parameter. Bowing down is a physical reaction to a higher force denoting submission, sometimes after proving weaker in terms of physical and metaphorical power. Other examples in the posts show this physical encounter to be reciprocal. To illustrate, in 26 and 32, the reaction of opponents is portrayed using reification, involving attacks and throwing objects for the purpose of punishment and humiliation.

25.a. For the PVPV and the whole ultra conservative majority, to have one of their own, someone who they had given a high position in their hierarchy go against their beliefs is a slap in the face. (post 36)

21. Good for the women for standing their ground, and kudos to JLC for not bowing down to a bunch religious bullies. (post 39)

26. Attacks on Shiekh al Ghamdi's character, credentials and articles were on every one of their TV channels and papers. (post 36)

32. Insults were thrown at him right and left. (post 36)

Overall, this cluster could be linked to the previously highlighted conceptual metaphor, DISAGREEMENT IS PHYSICAL ENCOUNTER.

8.1.4.4. Fourth metaphoric cluster

The fourth cluster revolves around images relating to bombs and explosion. In that sense, it could be linked to the third cluster as they all convey two objects that are harmful to the one with less power. These are mainly found in post 37, in the reification in 29.a, 31.a and 41. In these examples, the target domain of the aggressive dialogue that took place between the blogger's wife and the security guard is reified as the explosion of a bomb. Because she was so angry and unhappy about his request for her to change her place away from her family and next to other women, she is portrayed like an explosive object, (e.g. a bomb) that went off in the face of the security guard. So in addition to exploding, she was capable of impacting on him psychologically as evident in the *burning* example. From such a perspective, one might infer SUPPORTER/ACTIVIST IS BOMB as a conceptual metaphor summarising this cluster. Albeit indirectly, this metaphor could be linked to the aforementioned one, SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION in the sense that both metaphors embody reification of support. What is interesting, however, is that in such representation, a supporter is portrayed as powerful. In many examples across different topics, more power has been assigned to opponents. Therefore, when a metaphor embodies a powerful supporter it is worth pointing out.

29.a. *my wife exploded in his face telling him that he has no right to tell her where to sit,* (post 37)

31.a. *she exploded with such fury that he started to stutter,* (post 37)

41. *but she had already burned him,* (post 37)

With this cluster, it is possible to conclude this parameter on metaphor analysis and the textual level as a whole with a brief summary of the main findings. Starting with metaphor, four clusters have been identified in the previous paragraphs. The directed movement cluster established in earlier chapters is present in this topic as well but with a

variety of social actors. Similarly, the representation of disagreement as physical encounter is found in this topic too. Metaphors from wildlife have been identified as well as personification of Westernisation and the dehumanisation of opponents. And finally, a powerful representation of a supporter is identified as it reveals more action on her part. This particular metaphor is linked to the next level of analysis in the sense that it also embodies a powerful intertextual reference. These interrelations between parameters and across levels have been the norm in all previous analyses. Even for this general topic, consistency between the qualitative findings in metaphor and evaluation has been established, as has been with social actor representation and process type analysis. This means that findings from grammar level are revealing similar representations –such as lack of activation for women- while lexis analysis is signifying similar patterns as in the positive self-representation versus negative other representation.

8.2. Discursive level

8.2.1. Non-hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Examining intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the last topic reveals a multiplicity of voices, as with previous topics. However, as the rather general nature of the topic of gender segregation does not relate exclusively to a particular cause like the previous chapters, the argumentative tone in posts 35-40 does not appear as strong as it was with previous posts since they just do not seem to discuss persuasively a given topic. A multiplicity of voices is used repeatedly in these topics, with the bloggers being the authors and animators of direct and indirect speech from both supporters and opponents. Examples 18.a and 7.a below demonstrate a case of each of these social actors.

18.a.-19.a. *As Ebtihal Mubarak tweeted earlier today, “there is a huge number of unemployed men who are agitated, and it’s easy to rally them using the argument that the government is focusing on women and mixing of genders (post 40)*

7.a. *The motivation to organize the competition, said its supervisor Abdullah al-Mohaisnee, is reports of gender mixing at Princess Nora University that surfaced last month. (post 38)*

Example 18.a above also reveals the inclusion of economic discourse as a justification in the discussion on gender mixing. On the same lines, discourse on terror and extremism are also included in the same post. An interesting case of recontextualisation occurs in 40 below, which intensifies the notion of defiance. In this case, the blogger is incorporating a historical figure in the history of African Americans to express the defiance and resistance shown by his wife in these posts. When the security guard requested Qusay's wife to change her place and to sit next to other women rather than sitting next to her husband and son, the blogger compares gender-based with racial segregation. This happened in Chapter Eight in section 8.2.1 and the discussion on gender-based Apartheid in the Olympic Games. The embodiment of his wife as Rosa Parks represents her as brave and strong. While this occurred only once in this topic, it is essential to include as it creates collaboratively a more comprehensive interpretation of the struggle for social change taking place.

40. *before she turned all Saudi Rosa Parks on him, (post 37)*

8.2.2. Hyperlinked intertextuality and interdiscursivity

As with the previous topics, all the hyperlinks were identified and classified in accordance with the categorisation principle specified earlier in Chapter Four. Table 8.6 below demonstrates that the majority of these links are actually of the third kind, linking to local pages, with more than 60% of cases. Of these 20 local linking cases, 16 are linked to Arabic pages in most of the well-known newspapers and news websites in the region, such as *Okaz*, *Al Madinah*, *Al Arabiya*, *Al Riyadh* and *Al Sharq*:

8-9.a. *The ministry of higher education later denied the reports and said in a statement that it is their policy to adhere to Islamic values. (post 38)*

Table 8.6: Distribution of hyperlinks in topic 5

Link to:	Number of links	Percentage
Same blogger/poster	3	9.09%
International pages	9	27.27%
Local pages	20	60.61%
Other bloggers/supporters	1	3.03%
Total	33	100%

There are also some links to more specialised and less widespread sites such as *alqodhat.com*, a network for Saudi judges, and Sheikh Abdulrahman Al Barrack's official webpage. There is also one link to *elaph.com*, a daily online newspaper, which is currently blocked, and one link to the Twitter account of the opposing campaign launched by conservatives to fight gender mixing, which is also currently suspended. The remaining four local links are to English pages such as *Arabnews* and *Saudigazette*. It is worth mentioning that of these twenty links, only one directly links to a webpage that can be classified as an explicit opponent webpage, linking to Sheikh Al Barrack's webpage.

In second place are links to international pages with 27.27%; however, two of them do not bear significant relevance to the topic at hand. For instance, in 52 below, the blogger is linking to a music website and a song title with the same phrase he is using. Another two hyperlinks link to two pictures on Flickr of *Ka'aba*, the black building at the centre of the Holy Mosque in Makkah, and another international Islamic website entitled *noorehidayat*. A third picture of a Muslim couple is mentioned in the post link to a Yahoo. Of the four international hyperlinks, two link to *Wikipedia* pages explaining the meaning of *Haram*, the scared place in Makkah, and the other, exemplified in 40 below, identifies *Rosa Parks* and her brave role in defying race segregation. As for the last two

links, the first one links to a Reuters' report on the stance of opponents towards gender mixing and the fatwas they have issued in this regard while the other links to a picture of Ka'aba, which is no longer found, in a blog page by Seton Hall University.

52. *Anyway, the moral of the story is... contradiction, my prediction...* (post 37)

40. *before she turned all Saudi Rosa Parks on him,* (post 37)

Links to the same blogger are very rare, reaching a total of 9.09%, and they only occur in post 40 from *Saudijeans* blog by Ahmed Al Omran where he links to relevant posts on gender segregation and extreme fatwas. Finally, in last place come links of the fourth kind, which occur only once, in 18.a, where Ahmed Al Omran incorporates in his post a tweet by *Ebtihal Mubarak*, a Saudi journalist opposing these extreme fatwas denouncing gender segregation. Such findings indicate that unlike the first topics, very few connections have been created among these bloggers or other supporters to create the same strong sub-group in which the negotiation of pro-change mental representation is taking place. Even on an international level, links to this topic do not prove to be as strong, for instance, as with the previous topic of women and sports. This, coupled with the fact that this topic is mostly linked locally, indicates that the struggle over this issue is mainly taking place locally, without attempts to rally opinions on the part of these supporters. On the other hand, opponents, who are linked only once throughout the entire topic, are actually creating a national campaign in support of their opposition to gender mixing.

18.a. *As Ebtihal Mubarak tweeted earlier today, "there is a huge number of unemployed men [who are agitated]"* (post 40)

As with previous topics, the comments section has also been examined, revealing 122 comments. Of these 122, more than two-thirds (82) are on Al Nafjan's blog, *Saudiwoman*. The vast majority of comments are clearly supporting the content proposed by these bloggers and attacking their opponents. Even when a commenter or two attack

gender mixing at any level or support whatever strict stance on these issues is presented by opponents, they are argued against vigorously by those supporters.

This detailed examination of intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the fifth and last topic reveals that the closed community that has been created in previous topics is not as strong or as closed as with topics 1-4. Nevertheless, opponents and their links are still excluded, since there is almost second to none of them. This is despite the fact that they are quoted occasionally in the posts. Comments, on the contrary, reveal much stronger ties between supporters of this more open and tolerant stance as they are ready to defend the content of these posts along with whoever speaks out publicly in favour of this. This, surely, has a clear connection to offering a wider understanding of the social and cognitive factors affecting these posts and, in return, being affected by them. This will be the centre of focus of the third level of analysis below.

8.3. Socio-cognitive level

The third level of analysis examines what these micro- and meso-level findings indicate about the intricate relationship between discourse, context and cognition. As with the previous topics, this section examines why discourse is presented as such at the previous levels by attempting to uncover the mental representations underlying and being influenced by such discourse. The first step is identifying what is meant by status quo in this particular topic and what is meant by change.

After careful examination of all these findings, it is clear that the status quo refers to the current practice of gender segregation in Saudi Arabia and how it is practised in most public settings. In education and governmental bodies, gender segregation is practised in its strictest form, with both separate schools and offices for each gender. However, in other places, such as hospitals and shopping malls, where gender mixing is inevitable, certain rules are established to ensure that this mixing is supervised and reduced to the minimum. The responsibility of maintaining this order is often dictated in the conduct rules of these places; however, in the case of certain places like malls, it is often maintained by the PVPV members. The proposed change in this case is a more tolerant

stance on gender mixing, which does not reject the current practice at once, but instead calls for a less strict version, bestowing trust and confidence on the two genders to interact while respecting the social norms dictating the relationship between men and women in this particular culture.

That being established, it is time to examine how the textual and discursive analysis levels are linked to both context and cognition, starting with the parameters of metaphor and evaluation, since these two have revealed similar findings throughout. Clearly, most of the examined cases reveal that the mental representations of the bloggers and supporters assign positive values to the change stated earlier. This is evident in both the positive judgement and positive affect expressed in relation to events in which gender mixing happens. On the other hand, negative judgement and appreciation are used repeatedly throughout these posts to cast the status quo on gender segregation as illogical, overly strict and unfounded from an Islamic point of view. All this is, of course, viewed using completely opposite values by opponents in which negative values are assigned to gender mixing using both Westernisation and the threat to social and religious norms as tools of accusation. Such accusations reveal clearly the clash between the two sets of mental representations at hand: those in support of change assign completely opposite values to gender segregation and gender mixing to those advocating the status quo. This, in turn, supports the presence of two clashing sets of mental representations. The first of these can be likened to the discussion made earlier of the presence of a certain sub-group within the Saudi community that is resisting the more dominant mental representations of the larger group, often defending this status quo and rejecting any attempts for change.

How about the other parameters of textual analysis? Do these quantitative data reveal similar evidence in support of the qualitative data, or is it the same as with previous topics, in which a clash was found between the two? Again, the comparisons between the men versus women pair reveal that in terms of social actor representation or process type analysis, women do not have any more power, as expressed through action and activation, than men. The role of actor, for instance, takes the lead in the involvement cases for men with one-third, while with women, it is the role of goal, also by one-third.

In addition to this, women fail to reach the top five main social actors in terms of inclusion and involvement, which is not the case with men. So, the same clash experienced in earlier topics is taking place in this topic as well. The quantitative findings are again not consistent with the mental representations identified earlier in support of both change and women. Therefore, it can be linked to the same point made earlier in relation to the degree of awareness, control and intention on the part of the blogger while producing such different parameters.

Nevertheless, quantitative and qualitative data are in agreement when it comes to other areas of investigation, for instance the power struggle between opponents and supporters. Despite the negative values attached to the opponents of forms of change, whether in terms of evaluation, metaphor, social actor representation or process types, these opponents are still constructed as powerful and influential, even by those who disagree with them. This can be linked to the dominance of the mental representations possessed by these opponents, as well as the larger scale dominant ideology they originate from. On the one hand, the findings of the discursive level of this particular topic do not reveal that much power on the part of supporters. Compared with previous topics, no campaigns or pages have been created in support of a more tolerant stance on gender mixing; bearing in mind that opponents have actually created a competition on Twitter to raise awareness of gender mixing. Even in terms of linking to relevant posts by other supporters, the only case where this happens is in a tweet by a journalist who is commenting on unemployment issues and linking them to extreme fatwas. This lack of sufficient power, however, does not cast the mental representations held by supporters in support of change as completely powerless. Instead, it can be inferred that these mental representations are at an intermediate stage, in which they are negotiated in order to obtain more acceptance and eventually power; they will be transferred from sub-groups or individuals to larger group norms. This can also be inferred from the high level of support for these posts in the comments sections. Further evidence of this is the fact that more than 60% of the links are to local pages, which clearly indicates that such negotiation is taking place locally, away from any outside or international pressures.

Last but not least is another point of agreement between the qualitative and quantitative findings – the recurrent theme of positive self-representation versus negative other representation. Just as with previous topics, supporters, including the bloggers, are marked with positive values such as confidence and standing one’s ground, while the opponents are portrayed using negative values such as being primitive and uncivilised. Again, this form of representation is used consciously and strategically by these bloggers, which explains why this pattern is present in each of the topics under examination. Highlighting similarities and differences across various topics requires approaching them cumulatively. So, the next chapter will summarise and discuss the findings of each of the analysis chapters combined. In light of this, the summarised results will be used as cumulative evidence to answer the overarching research questions highlighted in Chapter One. Chapter Nine will also frame the general conclusions to the analyses proposed in this thesis as well as some implications and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER NINE: OVERALL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This is the last chapter in this thesis and as the title suggests, it aims to offer discussions and conclusions for the whole thesis. Most of the discussion will be guided by the research questions highlighted previously in Chapter One:

1. What are the top topics requiring social change(s) in women-related posts in Saudi English-language blogs? MACRO LEVEL
2. Who are the main social actors and how are they linguistically represented? How does this representation tie in with the social change(s) requested? MICRO LEVEL
3. What links to other texts/discourses/persons are made in these posts and how do these links tie in with the social change(s) requested? MESO LEVEL
4. Which changing social factors and cognitive models underlie these representations and connections in the blogs under study? MACRO LEVEL
5. What is the potential of the examined discourse to achieve the desired social change? MACRO LEVEL

Each question will be answered by offering overall conclusive findings of the five analysis chapters and explaining how these are used to arrive at answers. Due to the nature of each question, answers to them will vary. Answers to the first and second questions are mainly descriptive, with the second one being longer due to the multiplicity of the parameters it targets. The third answer is partially descriptive and partially interpretive, while the fourth and fifth are primarily interpretive. The chapter concludes by describing some limitations of the study, as well as making suggestions for further research.

9. 1. Answers to research questions

9.1.1: What are the top topics requiring social change(s) in women-related posts in Saudi English-language blogs? MACRO LEVEL

This question has been included in the research questions as it dictates the topics that will be included in the sample. Initial examination prior to and during piloting revealed that there are a large number of topics concerning women in Saudi Arabia discussed in these blog posts. The discussion in section 3.2 limited these to the following five topics:

1. Women and driving (27 posts in population and 12 in sample)
2. Women in unconventional work environments (22 posts in population and 10 in sample)
3. Women in sports (16 posts in population and 6 in sample)
4. Women in politics (13 posts in population and 6 in sample)
5. Gender segregation (13 posts in population and 6 in sample)

This particular selection method highlights the topics that received most of the attention at the time of writing the posts (2009-2012). This should not be confused with the importance of the topics discussed. For instance, the topic of minor marriages is crucial and the practice dangerous; however, it is very rare in Saudi Arabia and perhaps is more practised in neighbouring areas. In light of this, it did not receive attention in the given time span. On the other hand, the topic of male guardianship is (at the time of writing this chapter, 2016) receiving much more attention. In addition, with the exception of topic five (gender segregation), which is very comprehensive, and topic 1 (women and driving), the circumstances of which are still unchanged, the remaining three topics are the only ones that have seen major social changes. As explained in Chapters One, Four, Six and Seven, the government has actually pushed and to a certain degree imposed these changes regardless of the controversy over them. In this sense, it is evident that the proposed changes were brought about due to new policies proposed by the government.

This can be linked to the previously mentioned work by Castro & Batel (2008: 478). According to them, there is a gap between ‘public involvement’ in change as a ‘norm’ and as a ‘practice’. As will be explained in more detail in the answer to the fourth question, by imposing the change officially, it has become a policy (e.g. allowing women to work as salespersons) but as a practice it is still very controversial, although it is becoming more accepted.

9.1.2: Who are the main social actors and how are they linguistically represented? How does this representation tie in with the social change(s) requested? MICRO LEVEL

It has been established in the literature review that the relations between discourse and context are reciprocal and that they are mediated by cognition. It has also been established that if the analysis targets the underlying mental constructions, it must utilise a variety of evidence to make indirect inferences about such constructions. Chapter Three offered a detailed explanation regarding the nature of such evidence, but most importantly it emphasised the multiplicity of levels in approaching the evidence at hand. As a result, approaching this research question must be linked directly to the first and most tangible manifestation of discourse, the textual level. Section (3.2.3.1.) of Chapter Three highlighted four linguistic parameters at this level: social actor representation, process type analysis, evaluation and metaphor. The rationale for the inclusion of these four in particular has been explained in detail in the same section. Each of these parameters has been analysed in detail for different topics and in each of the five analysis chapters. However, as explained in Chapter One, answering the research questions requires cumulative evidence based on the findings of each analysis chapter.

So, in order to answer the first part of the question concerning who the main social actors are, one must examine the main social actor identified in each topic. The next step will be identifying those occurring across all chapters. Below is a list of the social actors who are common to all topics:

1. Decision makers and authorities

2. Women, whether in general or under a specific classification related to the nature of the topic (e.g. women athletes in Chapter Seven)
3. Men
4. Supporters of change, who advocate greater empowerment and equality for women, and who call for resisting the status quo
5. Opponents, who oppose these changes and instead insist on maintaining the status quo without any change
6. Media
7. Saudis in general
8. Bloggers, i.e. the authors of the analysed posts
9. Readers of the blogs

However, since this thesis is mainly concerned with social change and how it is introduced into society, this list has been further reduced. As evident in the analysis chapters, the focus has been on the two genders on the one hand, and supporters and opponents on the other. As a result, the cumulative evidence examined at this textual level will focus only on these four social actors with two pairs under examination – men versus women and supporters versus opponents. As for the other social actors, the findings for them will be included here only if they contribute to the answer to this question. For clarity of presentation, cumulative evidence for each linguistic parameter will be presented separately, then quantitative and qualitative data will be tied in together to present how these social actors are represented linguistically and in relation to social change. It should be pointed out that for the social actor ‘women’, it will comprise general and specific classifications.

9.1.2.1. Social actor representation

Van Leeuwen's work on social actor representation (1996, 2008) has been used to explore two sets of binary linguistic representations. In the original work, van Leeuwen offers an extensive classification of presentation. However, as explained in section (3.2.3.1.1.), due to the multiplicity of parameters involved in this thesis, only inclusion versus exclusion and activation versus passivation were included. Two further categories were added, namely categorisation and nomination. As evident in all the analysis chapters, approaching this linguistic parameter for the first and second sets has been primarily quantitative with occasional reference to qualitative findings whenever necessary. The examination of categorisation and nomination was mainly qualitative. The following table summarises the overall inclusion cases for each of the main social actors under examination:

Table 9.1: Overall inclusion, activation and passivation for main social actors in the whole sample

Social actor	Overall inclusion	Activation	Passivation
Women	422	212	210
Men	114	52	62
Supporters	236	193	43
Opponents	188	152	38

It is no surprise that women are the top included social actor in the entire sample of blog posts under examination. The gendered nature of the topics at hand clearly foregrounds women in these posts compared to other social actors. In each of the first four topics – women in politics, women and driving, women in unconditional work environments and

finally women in sports – women are always the most included social actor. This is more accurate in the case of women who are classified under a specific category with reference to the topic of the chapter, e.g. female sales assistants. However, with regard to the general topic of gender segregation, this is definitely not the case. In fact, women were not even in the top five. This, however, does not change the general findings of the above chapters, especially when comparing women with men. With a p value of 0.00, signifying the statistically significant difference between men and women, and coming in around fourth the inclusion cases of women, men are included rarely in these posts. While exclusion cannot be described in a quantitative fashion, a qualitative examination of this particular social category reveals that such rare inclusion can be counted as backgrounding to a certain extent. An examination of the general findings of the next sets reveals more detail supporting the partial exclusion assumption. Even in topic three, women in unconventional work environments, and topic five, gender segregation, where their inclusion is relatively higher, they are almost exclusively represented using the classification of gender identity and circumstantialisation, which is expected given the nature of the data at hand.

However, careful examination of the inclusion cases of women reveals that they are also represented mainly using the classification of their gender identity. Functionalisation occurs occasionally through the sample, primarily in topic three, women in unconventional work environments, and topic four, women and sports. Nomination occurs rarely with one or two female names in each topic. In addition to this, examining the inclusion cases for both men and women in all the blog posts reveals the lack of any statistically significance difference between activation and passivation. With p values of 0.48 and 0.20 for women and men respectively, a difference in favour of activation could not be established. Focusing on women in particular, this holds true for the overall inclusion cases in the entire sample or in specific categories of women identified in each chapter. The only exception to this is woman activists in Chapter Five, concerning the most discussed topic in the sample under study, the driving ban in Saudi Arabia. This is the only topic in the sample that represented campaigns with women involved in more action.

Included in roughly similar numbers, both supporters and opponents are prominently active in most of their inclusion cases and with statistically significant difference. Whether in each chapter or in general inclusion cases, as shown in Table 9.1, there is always a statistically significant difference in favour of activation, with p values far less than 0.05. Such prominence in presentation is also mirrored in the way that these two social actors are represented using categorisation. Starting with supporters, nomination is predominantly used in the entire sample. Each one of the five topics has numerous instances of nomination of the supporters of change, whether males or females, Saudis or not. Some of these nomination cases are used in conjunction with functionalisation and with positive values, as will be explained in the parameter of evaluation later (section 9.1.2.3.). On the other hand, nomination is not as common when representing opponents. It is only used occasionally and there are topics with almost no nomination cases for opponents as in topic one, women in politics, and topic five, gender segregation. What is quite prominent when representing opponents is the term *muttawas*, which has been explained in section 4.1.1.3. As aforementioned, *muttawas* is a form of classification that could comprise physical and moral values. But as used in these posts, it has been reduced only to its physical identification such as beards and clothing. This classification is much more common in the posts than *clerics* – used only in topic seven examining unconventional work environments – which signifies more functionalisation.

With these overall conclusions, one is able to start drawing inferences from the linguistic representations of the main social actors. It is evident from the quantitative analysis of the vast majority of the posts under examination that women are profoundly present in text; yet their presence fails at creating strong statistical evidence in support of their power. With such finding occurring repeatedly across different topics and chapters (except women activists in Chapter Five for reasons explained earlier in this section), it could be argued that this might be an early indicator of the cumulative evidence compiled in this study. To elaborate on this, such evidence could be informative in understanding the forms and structures embedded within such discourse. This means that it is also possible to assume at this stage of analysis that representations at this level do not support women's empowerment. Not only has this been the case when examining quantitative

findings but also when examining qualitative ones such as the insufficient nomination of women athletes as in Chapter Seven. Yet, it could also be argued that such findings could be an artefact of the methodological choices made while analysing the data. Inherently, social actor representation as applied y in this analysis could run the risk of creating such misrepresentation or emphasizing the clash between what is embedded in discourse linguistically and what it is meant to achieve cognitively and socially. This is to be highlighted in more detail when discussing the limitations of this study in section 9.2. Further evidence from the remaining linguistic parameters is needed in such case in order to support the interpretations and the justifications offered along these representations.

9.1.2.2. Process type analysis

The second parameter is based on Halliday and Mattiessen’s (2004, 2014) framework explained in detail in section 3.2.3.1.2. As is the case with the first parameter, the findings of the process type analysis are reported quantitatively. In light of this, the starting point should be combining all the figures from each topic in one overall table. Table 9.2 below demonstrates the overall figures of involvement in process types for each of the main social actors identified above. It also details how these involvement cases are distributed between initiating roles on the one hand and receiving roles on the other.

Table 9.2: Overall involvement, initiating and receiving roles for the main social actors in the whole sample

Social actor	Overall involvement	Initiating roles	Receiving roles
Women	307	142	165
Men	71	34	37
Supporters	232	166	66

Opponents	168	131	37
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As shown in the above table and throughout each of the five topics, women are always the top social actor in terms of involvement in processes, with the exception of the general topic of gender segregation. It has been explained repeatedly across various chapters that this is hardly surprising due to the gender-related topics covered in these posts. With 307 involvement cases, women are involved in more than four times the involvement cases of men. Keeping in mind the lack of inclusion discussed previously in the first parameter (section 9.1.2.2.), this is one of the first points in process type analysis, following the same lines as social actor representation.

However, when following the same comparison criterion, explained in Chapter Three, between power initiating and receiving roles, this prominent involvement of women cannot be regarded as a sign of power. With close numbers, it is impossible to establish any statistically significant difference between initiating and receiving cases. The p value is 0.10, which is more than 0.05 and thus the null hypothesis must be accepted. This follows from the lack of statistical significance in favour of initiating roles over receiving ones in all the topics under examination. Again, the only exception to this is the case of women activists in topic 2 concerning the driving ban in Saudi Arabia. This echoes the pattern of activation and women activists in the first parameter.

However, the analyses across chapters described some process roles qualitatively as well. Hence, it seems appropriate to include these comments as they provide more insight into the linguistic representations of different social actors. In particular, the role of actor does seem to occur more often. Of course, this is the case with women activists in the topic of driving, with nearly one-third of their involvement cases as actors. For working women in topic 3, the role of actor is nearly half their involvement cases with a percentage of more than 45%. Even for female athletes, the actor role came in second place (after roles in relational processes) with a quarter of the cases. This is due to different receiving roles, which collaboratively are more than the actor roles comprising most of the initiating cases. This is also true in the case of men, who are involved in roughly similar numbers

for initiating and receiving roles. The p value when comparing their overall initiating and receiving roles is as high as 0.41. However, qualitative analysis reveals that out of their 71 involvement cases in the entire sample, they are assigned the actor role in 29 of these cases.

On the other hand, when examining the remaining two social actors, supporters and opponents, the overall findings reveal a statistically significant difference. It is evident from table 9.2 that both supporters and opponents are involved in far more initiating roles than receiving ones. With p values of 2.01525E-11 and 8.00471E-14, respectively, the null hypothesis for each social actor must be rejected. This is another area of agreement between the first and second parameters, with supporters and opponents assigned more power in the posts. This cumulative evidence has been building up gradually in all of the topics under examination. To elaborate on this, when examining the findings of each analysis chapter with regard to supporters and opponents, much more initiating involvement has been assigned to these two. Interestingly, supporters are involved in far more processes than opponents, sometimes in as much as twice the number of involvement cases. The only exception to this is topic three on women in unconventional work environments. In Chapter Six, it is the other way round with opponents involved in 42 processes and supporters in only 21. What does this particular representation say about this topic in comparison to other topics? The answer to this question will be given in section 9.1.5, but it is worth pointing out that the qualitative evidence from the next section can provide further insights into why this is so.

Similar to social actor representation, quantitative findings of the second linguistic parameter, process types, reveal forms and structures that are not as empowering of women as the qualitative findings regarding metaphor and evaluation across chapters Four to Eight. Such a clash reinforces the earlier discussion with regards to understanding how each parameter addresses different manifestations of the same data. So, it worth pointing out a concern that could be relevant to understanding why transitivity analysis results in this clash. With Chapter Three stating the methodological criterion in grouping and classifying processes into initiating and receiving ones and the intention to primarily

analyse this parameter quantitatively, the results could be a by-product of the adopted methodology. This, however, should not exclude or negate the consistency established throughout the diverse topics examined in this study or even the cumulative evidence highlighted in this chapter in sections 9.1.2.1. and 9.1.2.2 between social actor representation and process type analysis. Again, the analysis here provides more detail about forms and structures embedded in discourse which might not be obtained using qualitative analysis. Nevertheless, on its own, such an examination might not be as informative as the eclectic and multi-levelled methodology adopted in this study. Such an eclectic approach can address the above concern about understating the consistency and inconsistency in analysing data. This is because not only is cumulative evidence built on separate and repeated examinations of data across chapters Four to Nine, but also across different parameters and from an integrated perspective. While social actor representation and process type analysis are presented primarily quantitatively, the parameters of evaluation and metaphor were analysed exclusively in qualitative terms.

9.1.2.3. Evaluation

In order to construct how this parameter is represented across various topics, this section will be divided thematically. Similar to the analysis chapters, the following paragraphs will cumulatively account for the qualitative representation of what is evaluated in the posts. Of course, most of the evaluated objects across different chapters are common to all topics. These include the evaluation of proposed changes and the status quo, both of which differ depending on the topic at hand. Parallel to these are the evaluative representations of the supporters of these changes as well as their opponents.

Starting with the status quo that has been identified in each chapter, it is evident that negative evaluation is used exclusively to account for it. This holds true for topics where there has been change, such as women in sports, as well as for topics that are still unchanged, like the driving ban. Be it appreciation, judgement or affect, evaluative languages across all posts portray negative representation of how things are prior to or without change. In doing so, it is evident that the bloggers are employing two tools for their criticism of the status quo (ante); logic and religion. Using evaluative terms

denoting the illogicality and lack of common sense of maintaining current practices, the status quo is represented as discriminatory, restrictive, unjust and contradictory. This goes as far as representing the current practice of gender segregation as a gender-based apartheid. Religion is also used to defend the changes since current practices are portrayed as extreme and based on a misunderstanding of Islamic teachings. In light of this, it is not surprising to see that decision makers are evaluated negatively from both national and international perspectives in cases where they resist changes. However, this negativity changes to positive evaluation when the proposed changes are pushed forwards by decision makers or when appealing to them to support calls for change (e.g. the petitions to lift the driving ban).

Reversely, change is mostly represented using positive evaluation and established as basic, essential and long overdue. This is expressed explicitly in some posts, which depict any reforms as too little too late or as falling short of expectations. Nevertheless, there is also repeated appreciation and positive affect of taking such measures. Such positive evaluation is evident in the language of these bloggers, the women involved and the international community supporting women's empowerment. However, it is quite important for the bloggers to make sure that calls for changes are first and foremost national. Accordingly, foreign intervention is evaluated using negative judgement and valuation. This is more prominent in topic two, the diving ban, where foreign bodies' interest is reduced to being exclusively for the sake of money and publicity and not genuinely to support women. This keenness on maintaining the local nature of calls for change can be linked to the negative representations of these changes held by opponents: repeatedly in the posts, opponents perceive these changes as evils westernising Saudi society and corrupting its morality.

This clash in representation between status quo and change is mirrored in the posts by another clash between supporters and opponents. The examined posts reveal numerous cases where there is positive valuation or judgements of supporters leading to the expression of positive authorial and non-authorial affect by different social actors. This has been established for the first parameter of social actor representation and the focus on

categorisation and nomination. In many cases, these representations are used in conjunction with positive evaluative language. By hailing these supporters, the bloggers are simultaneously evaluating themselves positively as instigating change and resisting the status quo. Reversely, the same supporters who are portrayed positively by bloggers in these posts are represented as corrupting society by opponents. This can be linked to the accusations of Westernization and threats to ideology. Hence, it is hardly unexpected that supporters of change are assigned negative judgements, like being an embarrassment to Saudi Arabia and blasphemous of Prophet Mohammed from the perspective of opponents. Using accusations deeply rooted in the cultural and religious context of Saudi society, opponents reassure the findings established earlier of using religion to support their claims.

By the same token, these opponents are evaluated negatively in these topics. By claiming that opponents perceive women as possessions or sexual objects of temptation, the bloggers are portraying a negative and misogynist image of opponents. This also holds true for the evaluative language used to account for whatever claims opponents use to stop these changes from taking place. Hence, some religious interpretations by opponents advocating the status quo are represented as insane and misogynist. What is interesting, however, is that they are, in a number of cases, assigned the positive value of power. Indeed, across different topics, power has been used to evaluate opponents as competent. This, coupled with the fact that they are portrayed with negative values, results in representing them as bullies.

Last but not least, it is worth pointing out that amid all these evaluation cases, very few are of women: being occupied with this struggle between status quo and change and between supporters and opponents, bloggers seldom represent women positively. For instance, in the topic of unconventional work environments, some business owners repeatedly object to these changes on the grounds that they feel that women are not as qualified to work as men. Such an objection is based on different justifications from the ones proposed by conservative opponents in the posts, which are often linked to religious

or cultural barriers. Yet, there are few counterclaims to this attack on women's abilities in the posts.

The last point supplements the discussion of the first and second linguistic parameters regarding the lack of power assigned to women. However, unlike the first two, the parameter of evaluation targets lexis resulting in a perspective different than the ones approaching grammatical structures. Therefore, it should not be surprising to see areas of potential conflict between the findings reported from each perspective. This is –for instance- evident when examining how evaluation is used in the posts to construct change and its necessity to empower women across different topics while the structures reported earlier reveal much less power with regards to women. This signifies inconsistency between lexis and grammatical structure, with each parameter denoting different manifestations. This clash, however, should not be viewed as a contradiction but rather as addressing a multi-layered phenomenon from different perspectives simultaneously. Sections 9.1.3 and 9.1.4 will offer further insight into what might lead to such clash and how it could be justified. Before attempting to discuss this, however, one must examine the last linguistic parameter at the textual level, metaphor.

9.1.2.4. Metaphor

Examining metaphoric expressions in the posts allows the analysis to include qualitative findings that cannot be inferred otherwise. Employing metaphor analysis allows for the inference of underlying cognitive structures. In this section, the major cognitive clusters identified in the analysis chapters will be introduced cumulatively as they realise relatively similar conceptual metaphors. The first and most recurring cluster revolves around the conceptual metaphor of CHANGE IS MOVEMENT. Across different topics, a number of expressions from the movement source domain have been used to depict how change is approached. Reification is used repeatedly to portray changing the status quo as physically moving towards a desired destination on the part of social actors. Hence, each single change in any domain is commonly depicted as steps in the right direction. Contrary to this, sometimes movement in the other direction is used to portray attempts to reject change and maintain the status quo. By the same token, lack of

movement in either direction has also been used in the clusters. This imagery also denotes that this desired movement forward can be hindered by obstacles. On the other hand, this movement can be facilitated by other actions from supporting social actors. Across different topics, this source domain has been realised in diverse ways, such as cruising and sailing in topic two or racing in topic three.

Along the same lines, in some analysis chapters, the status quo has been identified in metaphors opposite to CHANGE IS MOVEMENT. To illustrate, in Chapter Seven, (on topic four, women and sports) for instance, we find STATUS QUO IS A CONTAINER/ENCLOSED SPACE. With this reification, the posts portray the status quo as limiting, constraining and perhaps imprisoning women. This is consistent with the portrayal of change as movement without limits or, as for some topics, CHANGE IS WAY OUT. This perception of the status quo is also present in portraying particular aspects of the status quo such as the driving ban. In Chapter Five, for instance, the driving ban is presented as a physical barrier. This intensifies the repeated representation of the status quo as hardship that women go through and hence something that needs to be changed.

With regard to supporters and opponents of change, another common conceptual metaphor established in a number of chapters is SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION. Again, this is a reification that can be linked to the portrayal of change as movement in that it requires physical action on the part of whoever social actor wishes to foster these changes. This metaphor intensifies the essential nature of action, through the various forms it takes across different topics. Relevant to this is the perception of attitudes towards these changes as stances in an athletic competition. This is found in Chapter Five on the driving ban, in which the analysis identified ATTITUDE IS STANCE as a conceptual metaphor. The main difference between the latter conceptual metaphor and SUPPORT IS PHYSICAL ACTION is that the first one is common to all social actors as it describes their attitude towards change, while the second specifically describe the action taken by supporters to support change.

This form of representing supporters is contrasted with another metaphorical representation of opponents, evident in the conceptual metaphor identified in Chapter Eight on gender segregation: *OPPONENTS ARE LIONS*. With the depersonification, opponents are portrayed as strong and powerful animals. However, as explained in more detail in the chapter, this metaphor is used sarcastically as it intensifies the rather primitive and violent aspects of opponents; it is no wonder then that supporters are required to be as active and powerful as the opponents. In fact, the struggle between supporters and opponents is repeatedly introduced as a physical encounter. In most of the analysis chapters, *DISAGREEMENT IS PHYSICAL ENCOUNTER/BATTLE*, has been identified as one of the common conceptual metaphors. This reification, naturally, depicts supporters and opponents in positions requiring the public display of power. This is consistent with another less common conceptual metaphor, *DISAGREEMENT IS DRAMATIC ACT*. This metaphor requires interaction between diverse social actors while assuming that the groups have to collaborate to maintain the production at hand. This is different to the battle image in that it allows for compatibility between diverse players to take place without necessarily terminating one for the benefit of the other.

Another finding of the metaphor analysis is worth pointing out here as it highlights how women and men are perceived. This is particularly evident in Chapter Six examining posts on women in unconventional work environments. To begin with, the analysis highlights *MEN ARE WOLVES* as a conceptual metaphor in opponents' discourse. This depersonification presents men as primitive and concerned first and foremost with fulfilling their sexual need. This is consistent with another conceptual metaphor objectifying women: *WOMEN ARE JEWELS* is another common metaphor in opponents' discourse which is used to assign a high value to women. This portrayal is used sarcastically by a supporter to reject the vulnerability embodied in that conception. By portraying women as jewels, opposing discourse is actually highlighting the need for keeping women constrained indoors and away from public life. Interestingly, *WOMEN ARE ROSES* is another conceptual metaphor highlighted in Chapter Six; however, this time it is used by a supporter without any sarcastic intention. Again, this perception portrays women as fragile and vulnerable

Such vulnerability can be linked to another conceptual metaphor highlighted in the analysis, HONOUR IS A CLEAN CLOTH. Because honour is perceived culturally as the most vital moral a woman possesses, it is crucial to maintain the metaphorical purity of such honour and protect it from anything that might tarnish it. (Honour is important for men as well, but it is not as vital or as defining as it is for women.) Hence, any attempts for change, no matter how logical or needed, are portrayed as stains on a clean cloth that cannot be removed. This fear of defying the cultural norms and tarnishing this clean cloth adds to the vulnerability attached to women. It is important to analyse this representation in light of another commonly used conceptual metaphor in opposing discourse, WESTERNISATION IS A CREEPING PREDATOR. With this conception, opponents are taking advantage of the cultural vulnerability attached to women by linking change to Westernisation, negatively represented as a creature sneakily destroying society.

It is now possible to see how the same data can be approached from diverse perspectives. Similar to evaluation and primarily different from social actor representation and process type analysis, metaphor analysis here primarily explores lexis. What is revealed for this parameter is that consistency is firmly established across all the four parameters with regards to constructing supporters and opponents of change and their struggle. This takes place in almost all the topics and across all the posts, which should not be surprising given the nature of the topics under examination. Consistency is also established, albeit to a lesser extent, between the findings revealed by the evaluation and metaphor analyses. This can be exemplified by the negative representations of the status quo lexically both in terms of appraisal and metaphoric expressions. Nevertheless, areas of conflict are also detected here. While lexis positively hails change empowering women, the quantitative findings across chapters Four to Nine fail to significantly assign power to women.

9.1.2.5. Overall discussion

The last section of the second research question will summarise the above parameters while linking them to the social changes requested by the bloggers. The first and second parameters work together on a number of levels, just as metaphor and evaluation reveal similar patterns. What is interesting is that, in almost every topic, these two sets of

findings clash for some social actors. Put another way, the quantitative findings reveal different representations than the qualitative ones, in particular in the way women are represented compared to other social actors.

Starting with the quantitative findings for social actor representation and process type analysis, it is evident that women's presence in these posts is predominant. This is hardly surprising given the nature of the topics under examination. What is surprising is that women are not semantically empowered despite their extensive presence in the posts. This is evident from the lack of any statistically significant difference in favour of activation or initiating roles. While this is partly consistent with the representations expressed by categorisation and nomination, it clashes with some of the qualitative findings from the evaluation and metaphor analyses. For instance, throughout the blog posts, women are rarely nominated, whether women in general or women who are specialised in a given domain relevant to the topic at hand. Again, this point seems surprising considering the bloggers' intentions of supporting the empowerment of women. On the other hand, the findings for the third and fourth parameters reveal a more positive representation of women. Nevertheless, it is true that occasionally even the qualitative findings do not discursively empower women as much as expected. This could be exemplified by the fragile image portrayed by the HONOUR IS A CLEAN CLOTH and WOMEN ARE ROSES conceptual metaphors. It is also evident in the fact that there are almost no examples of evaluative language that positively appreciate women's abilities.

Contrary to this, almost all of the findings about supporters or opponents, whether quantitative or qualitative, portray them in a more active and powerful image. This is evident in the very low p values established in each topic for both of them, which are always in favour of their activation and initiating roles. But when comparing supporters with opponents, it is clear that supporters are allowed more inclusion and involvement in the posts than opponents, with only the topic of unconventional work environments as an exception to this. Even with nomination, the analysis reveals more nomination of supporters as opposed to classification (e.g. *muttawas*) to account for opponents. With

regards to evaluation and metaphor, the analysis also proves a positive representation to account for supporters and change. This is paralleled by the negative representations of opponents and the status quo they wish to maintain. Interestingly, despite this negative representation of opponents, it has been established repeatedly in the posts that opponents are assigned more power than supporters. This reaffirms the fact that the requested social changes face severe resistance.

The next section will examine the third research question targeting the meso level of analysis. Similar to the textual level, the findings of the meso levels will be represented mainly descriptively to account for a combination of quantitative and qualitative findings. The analysis was linked to the findings revealed in the first textual level and used cumulatively to form the basis of the discussion of the fourth and fifth research questions.

9.1.3: What links to other texts/discourses/persons are made in these posts and how do these links tie in with the social change(s) requested? MESO LEVEL

Prior to highlighting cumulatively the overall findings at this level, it is of key significance to reiterate the fact that these blogs are written in English by Saudi bloggers. Keeping in mind that English is not officially used in Saudi Arabia as a first or even second language, the chosen medium for communication is considered foreign in the country. This does not mean that it is never used or taught, but choosing to post in English about local circumstances/events happening in Saudi Arabia no doubt has an effect on the readership of the blogs. These bloggers have intentionally addressed a certain audience – one that consists of Saudis who are able to read English and are thus likely to be highly educated, or non-Saudis who are interested in what is taking place in Saudi Arabia or women's empowerment in the country. This decision is the first attempt to exclude more conservative opponents. Often opting to communicate almost exclusively in Arabic, the more conservative sectors of the Saudi community view interacting in their first language as a sign of their Islamic and Arabic identity. Hence, the choice to post in English can be considered by opponents as a sign of the bloggers disowning their original identity and adopting a Westernised one.

After pinpointing this fact about choosing English as a means of communication, it is time to examine the specific findings of the analysis. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity have been used extensively across different topics in the posts. This implies commenting on the cumulative evidence provided by voice and footing in the posts. It also comprises examining the hyperlinked clauses or sentences. Generally speaking, it is evident that the majority of the posts have persuasive features that have been highlighted in the analysis chapters. This is expected due to the nature of the blogs, which lend themselves to dialogue between bloggers and their readers. However, it has been established that this persuasive tone is stronger for certain topics, for instance, the topics of women in politics and women in the workforce. Topic two on the driving ban, on the other hand, is rather monologic with the exception of the petitions being linked intertextually. This is even less the case for topic four on women and sports and the general topic on gender segregation. However, this does not negate the multiplicity of voices revealed by the analysis in each topic. Both supporters and opponents are represented by direct and indirect speech in the posts, thus making the bloggers both authors of their own posts as well as animators of others' speech. Interestingly, women are rarely allowed the same room for their voices in the posts. With very few exceptions, such as the quotes from Sara Attar, the Saudi Olympian athlete in post 34, women – whether referred to in general or in relation to specific topics – are primarily and predominately talked about in the posts, which is expected due to the nature of the topics, but not really talking, as is the case with supporters or opponents for instance.

Recontextualisation is a common feature revealed by the analysis, with instances of recontextualised phrases, clauses or even whole posts in each topic. For example, topic 2 recontextualises translations of petitions to lift the driving ban. Even instances from opposing discourses are included in Chapter Six with the inclusion of a complete translated fatwa opposing women working in unconventional environments. Three other cases of referencing are worth pointing out, as they shape how the status quo and attempts at change are represented in ways relevant to recontextualisation, which could be linked to the findings at the textual level. The first of these is the reference to racial apartheid in South Africa in Chapter Seven. Presented as such, gender segregation is

portrayed to the international audience as a form of gender-based apartheid. This serves to intensify the negative representation of the status quo established by linguistic analysis in the second research question. Such production can be seen in another case of referencing in Chapter Eight with the inclusion of Rosa Parks. This particular case of referencing a symbolic figure like Parks also presents gender segregation to the reader in parallel to racial discrimination. This is while making sure that calls for change are produced in the posts as national and purely so, with the exception of the topic of women in sports, which inherently involved other international social actors such as the International Olympic Committee.

Interdiscursivity is also quite prominent in all the topics., with the integration of religious discourse being the most common among all the cases. Religious discourse is used repeatedly by opponents to justify their objections to the proposed changes. By the same token, it is also used by supporters to counter such objections. Again, this is a point where the findings of the micro and meso-levels intersect. Economic discourses are also included as justifications but this time to support the cause for change. In addition to this, instances of political and constitutional discourses are common in the posts. Such cases are inserted as they offer the reader background information regarding the controversies in question. Examples from historical discourse are included for the same purpose as well. Cumulatively, this multiplicity of discourse demonstrates is used to impact the production and reception of the posts.

Examining intertextuality and interdiscursivity as embedded in hyperlinks within posts can be insightful and informative to the analysis at hand. Table 9.3 below demonstrates the overall number of links identified in the whole sample. Using the same categorisation explained in Chapter Four (section 4.2), each category is expressed in figures and in percentages. Interestingly, and unlike what has been shown in the individual chapters, these figures were distributed evenly between the four categories with no statistically significant difference in favour of any category. The nature of each topic dictated the links created within the posts. For instance, in women in sports, the main focus was on international links, which mirrors the fundamental role played by international bodies

with regards to the particular topic. In the topics of unconventional work environments and gender segregation, the majority of the links were dedicated to local pages discussing details and giving updates. On the other hand, the vast majority of links in topic one, on women and politics, were to other bloggers and supporters. This shows a closed community. While some topics involved creating strong bonds within this community, others did not exhibit this trend. Nevertheless, the scarcity of this bond by no means negates its existence in general.

Table 9.3: Distribution of hyperlinks in the whole sample

Link to:	Number of links	Percentage
Same blogger/poster	34	21.66%
International pages	40	25.48%
Local pages	48	30.57%
Other bloggers/supporters	35	22.29%
Total	157	100%

Further evidence of the presence of a closed community is obtained after carefully examining the comments section of each post, where they were still available online. Some blogs changed their web addresses to new servers, in which case the new server consists of the same chronologically archived posts but not the comments from the original blog. The vast majority of the examined comments reveal a very supportive attitude to the content of the blogs. The very few negative comments are severely attacked by invalidating these negative comments as well as their posters. These efforts also mean that certain users with negative comments are actively traced back and

revealed as one person creating a number of fake identities to attack the community of supporters. Page (2012: 220) identifies this as creating ‘a sockpuppet’, ‘an online identity created for deceptive purposes’. Taking time and effort to identify these sockpuppets, either on the part of the bloggers or the commenters, clearly demonstrates the commitment shown to this content. Such a supportive background in the comments – coupled with the fact that these bloggers repeatedly link to their own blogs or any of the four blogs under examination in this study – suggests an exclusionary pro-change community.

The detailed examination of micro and meso levels reveals that this community is preoccupied with attacking its opponents, sometimes at the expense of defending its main cause. This last remark will be explained when answering the fourth research question (section 9.1.4), but it is possible at this intermediate level to link this community to what has been identified in psychology as *confirmation bias*. Nickerson (1998: 175) states that confirmation bias, which is ‘typically used in the psychological literature, connotes the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations or a hypothesis in hand’. This is closely related to the worlds of blogging and micro blogging. The majority of these platforms allow their participants to control who to subscribe to or follow. The selective act of controlling the members of this closed community while rejecting any outsiders leads to supportive and passionate readers/subscribers. This is also consistent with another term borrowed from media studies regarding the creation of *echo chambers* where only selected and supportive followers are encouraged to interact, in a way that affirm their views. Evidently, this has its advantages such as the enthusiasm to defeat their opponents, but could potentially impede change as it keeps the relevant negotiations primarily within a closed community.

All in all, while opponents have their voices represented in direct and indirect speech, it is evident that they are excluded from this closed community. This can be seen from the choice made in making English a language for communication. It can also be inferred from the very few opposing comments made by the readers of the blogs in opposition to their content. The severity of the struggle allows opponents to be present but the findings

of micro and meso levels demonstrate an extremely negative image of both the status quo and opponents who are defending it. This can be exemplified by the recontextualisation cases and the hyperlinks examined. The supporter/opponent struggle is expressed vigorously in these posts to the point that it overlooks the bigger picture, i.e. women's empowerment. This is another point recurring at both the textual and intertextual levels; women who are expected to be the centre of these topics are sidelined by such struggles. The next question will attempt to interpret why this is happening from a socio-cognitive perspective.

9.1.4: Which changing social factors and cognitive models underlie these representations and connections in the blogs under study? MACRO LEVEL

This research question is articulated in light of the third level of analysis targeting the socio-cognitive context. Unlike the first and second levels, which are primarily descriptive, the third level builds upon such descriptive findings and uses them cumulatively to make inferences about the underlying mental representations. It is therefore fundamental to first recap a number of premises that have been established in earlier chapters. First and foremost, investigating ideology is closely linked to examining language in the social world (Thompson, 1984). In light of this, discourse offers evidence for the examination of 'the persuasive communication of ideological propositions' (van Dijk, 1995:17). Second, the discussion in the first part of Chapter Three (section 3.1.) is based on the view of ideologies offered by Hodge and Kress (1988: 3), who view them as 'functionally related sets of contradictory versions of the world, coercively imposed by one social group on another on behalf of its own distinctive interests or subversively offered by another social group in attempts at resistance in its own interests'. From this perspective, ideologies are inherently contradictory, a fact expected to be manifested in discourse. The third and last premise is that factors affecting and being affected by discourse are linked to forces outside the immediate context of discourse, and as such can be historical, social, cultural or political. Some of these are more pervasive and dominant than others at certain points in history, thus making them more culturally available (Wetherell, 2001).

That being established, it is time to link the previously mentioned representations and connections (sections 9.1.2 and 9.1.3) to their underlying social factors and cognitive models. The purpose behind creating such links is to identify whether there are consistencies between these factors and if so, how they are manifested in discourse. Keeping in mind the specifics of each of the proposed changes and the status quo discussed in detail in each topic, it is still possible to pinpoint the common thread in all of the requested changes, i.e. allowing women to function in different domains and with the same rights and responsibilities as men. In each topic, changes faced opposition on the part of opponents who felt that they violated their moral and religious values. Simultaneously, they were also hailed by supporters who adopted a stance promoting women's empowerment and resisting the status quo. Examining the posts across different topics has reaffirmed this clash with discourse, which in turn is consistent with the ideological clash mentioned in the previous paragraph and examined in section 3.1.

The biggest manifestation of this clash is the way that supporters and opponents are represented in the posts. As explained in the textual analysis, each linguistic parameter reveals an aspect of this clash. For instance, in social actor representation as well as process type analysis, predominantly active representations have been established for both supporters and opponents, not only in terms of the space they are allowed in the posts but also in the nature of such representations. However, careful qualitative examination of such representation shows some differentiation in categorising supporters and opponents, with the first more often nominated while the latter are expressed primarily through classification or physical identification. Such patterns in representation can be linked to two clashing sets of mental representations.

The first of these portrays supporters of change positively, with them being appreciated as being open to change. Evidence of this has been identified repeatedly in the analysis, showing that siding with reforms activates positive representations. These mental representations are clearly circulated and reproduced by other members of this closed community as evidenced by the comments section. Parallel to these positive representations are the negative representations attached to opponents. Interestingly,

though, it is also evident that such negative representations are almost consistently associated with more powerful models, as exhibited by the quantitative and qualitative findings. Taking into consideration the examination in section 1.3 regarding the relationship between religious authorities and governmental authorities, such power can still be traced back to the prevalence of *sahwa* almost two decades ago. It is true that it is not as strong as it was during the 1980s and 1990s, but it is still present: a number of youths who were mobilised by its ideology have grown up to be loyal followers. So, even in this closed change-supporting community established by, and reflected in, these blogs, power is very much ascribed to opponents and their mental constructions.

Following the same line of thought, this clash between the mental representations of supporters and opponents is paralleled by another cognitive clash between change and status quo. The detailed findings of each topic demonstrate the clashing views of the requested changes by supporters and opponents, as reproduced by the bloggers, who support change. For instance, opponents are represented as linking almost any attempt to change to Westernisation or moral decay. This not only links the opponents to mental representations legitimising the status quo, but also pinpoints the mental models held by the bloggers towards the opponents. On the other hand, supporters are commended for their position and changes are constructed by supporters as basic and necessary, linking change to positive and desired mental representations within this community.

As this takes place repeatedly across different topics, it is an explicit manifestation of *Us* versus *Them*, discussed in detail in section 3.1.5. Being deeply rooted in social psychology and intergroup behaviour, *Us* versus *Them* as a construction entails the dual activation of mental representations towards two clashing groups. Such duality can be understood in the light of self-categorisation theory (Turner, 1985). With its focus on identifying which prototype members of a particular group are assimilated to and which they use to differentiate themselves from the out-group, self-categorisation theory predicts in-group behaviour (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). It has been established in Chapter Three that these prototypes offer descriptive accounts of individual cognitive representations of higher-level group norms (Hogg and Reid, 2006). With this socio-

cognitive component in mind, the representations and connections identified in sections 9.1.2 and 9.1.3 represent a case where a closed community is created with certain cognitive constructions identifying its members. Interestingly, despite intentional attempts made by members of this community (i.e. bloggers and their community) to exclude any connections to their out-group opponents, evidence of active and powerful representation of these opponents has been established.

This clash in discourse is consistent with the socio-cognitive contexts surrounding these posts. However, such consistency has not always been evident in the findings highlighted by the analysis. It has been mentioned in the overall discussion of the analysis that women, whether in general or specifically categorised with regards to the topics at hand, are almost constantly the top social actor in terms of inclusion and involvement in process type analysis. This means that women take up sizeable room in the posts, as expected due to the gendered nature of the topics. What is unexpected is that in every single topic women are not shown to be as active and powerful as should be the case within a discourse seeking to empower women. This is not only established by the quantitative findings but also by the qualitative ones. For instance, an examination of categorisation and nomination reveals the very few cases where women are named. It is true that there are multiple cases with female nomination, but most of these are included under the supporters' category since they represent actors who explicitly demonstrate their support for the changes in question. How about cases where women are included regardless of their support? Evidently, the vast majority of these are expressed primarily through classification in terms of their gender identity and in far fewer cases through functionalisation. Even at an intertextual level, women are hardly ever represented as authors or animators.

There seems to be a clash between what these bloggers are intending to say and the way they are saying it. This could be understood better in light of Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh's (2010) analysis of social actor representation and process types with regard to male and female social actors in *The Interchange*, an international ESL textbook. As explained in section 3.2.3.1.1, the analysis revealed that the positive

perspective motivating the authors' critical analysis – which also motivated the thesis at hand - proved to be evident in the textbook as well. There was an asymmetrical gender representation in favour of female actors as they were portrayed as being more active, assertive and prominent. However, language is intentionally constructed in a textbook, in contrast to the blog posts at hand. It is true that the general motivation has been producing texts promoting women's empowerment, but it is extremely unlikely that similar attention will be paid when thinking in terms of social actor representation and process types. This might explain the clash between the intentions of the bloggers (i.e. supporting women's empowerment) as expressed in their evaluative and metaphoric lexis on the one hand and the form of their language use on the other (i.e. how women are grammatically represented in the posts).

Ndambuki and Janks (2010) showed another clash between form and content. Investigating women's linguistic agency, the study established a mismatch between how Kenyan women and political leaders are constructing women as lacking in agency, while in reality these women are agentive subjects. The study links such deficit discourses to the surrounding discourses of patriarchy, poverty and rurality in Kenya. With the brief examination of Saudi society offered in Chapter One, it is possible to link the clash occurring between form and content in the posts to the longstanding prevalence of more dominant ideological constructs within discourse in Saudi Arabia. Hence, it is possible to see these deficit representations as fossilised forms that still find their way into discursive practices within this change-supporting closed community. This means that the impact of the larger patriarchal society in which these bloggers live has a potential role in creating this mismatch. The next research question will examine in more detail the issue of the socially shared nature of such representations and how they are linked to communication and negotiation.

Prior to moving to the last question, further evidence of the impact of wider society on these blogs is found when analysing the representations of men. In almost all of the topics, evidence of the exclusion of men has been established. Whenever they are included, representations through gender classification and circumstantialisation are also

very common. This could be explained as a linguistic manifestation of the gender segregation practised in Saudi society. Bearing in mind the calls for a culturally appropriate gender mixing, this is another mismatch revealed by the findings. This, along with the other points highlighted in this section, exhibits the strong impact of the socio-cognitive context on the analysed representations and connections. However, the reciprocal nature of the relationships between context and discourse, mediated by cognition, also entails the potential of discourse in changing contexts.

9.1.5: What is the potential of the examined discourse to achieve the desired social change? MACRO LEVEL

As highlighted in Chapter Three, the investigation of the mental models in the analysis is based on the assumption that mental representations that are socially shared are communicated within discourse to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, mental representations that are more individual or peculiar to a sub-group within a given community are the ones often promoting change and resisting the status quo. It has been established too that the negotiation of change-supporting mental representations through interaction and communications could gradually lead to transforming them into more socially shared ones. Of the five most commonly discussed topics, three were actually changed during the time span investigated in this study, 2009-2012. These include women in politics, women and sports and women in unconventional work environments. While all of these changes faced opposition and resistance, granting women the right to work outside traditional domains has been the most resisted topic. This is reflected in the greater presence and power assigned to opponents in the particular topics. This could be because of the three accomplished changes, this topic affects people's daily life more than the other two.

Yet, a common factor in these three cases is that despite all the resistance, these changes were actually pushed forward by governmental policies. Using terminology from section 2.6.1 and Fairclough's work (2013) on Gramsci's structure of power, despite the explicit opposition by ethical power, political power embodied by the government was able to impose change. During earlier stages, these two powers were working collaboratively,

giving the status quo its domination and hegemony. However, with the ideological changes taking place over the late nineties and the first decade of the new millennium, this affiliation gradually started to weaken, although it still exists. This could cast doubt on the potential of the blogs under examination; are they really effective in inducing change? In order to answer this question, one must bear in mind the fact that the most discussed, defended and campaigned-for topic in these posts, i.e. the driving ban, has still not been changed. Support for this particular topic within the examined discourse is very strong and yet nothing has changed¹. This could be evidence that change in this case needs to be introduced in a top-down fashion, with the government imposing new policies just like for the other issues. No matter how severe the initial opposition is to the new policies, it will gradually lose its hegemony as the new policies transform slowly into norms. This has been the case with women's participation in the municipal elections in 2016, in the 2016 Olympic Games and in the Shoura Council in 2017.

So, one might argue that during 2009-2012, these blogs were not the best arena to request change and gain attention for such requests. This should be understood in light of the findings established for the micro and meso-levels. Due to the closed nature of this community, the negotiation of these changes supporting representations continued to take place only among supporters who already held such representations and did not need much convincing. So, these posts should have been produced and distributed within a wider group, where the vast majority of members are not already supportive of these cases. Interestingly, and despite the deliberate exclusion of opponents from a number of perspectives, (e.g. very few links or lack of nomination), they have been proven to be represented actively and in powerful representations. Their powerful existence within a discourse that attacks and attempts to exclude them could be a sign of the asymmetrical relationship between them and supporters. What is presented here is a categorisation process aiming to differentiate between in-group and out-group members. This struggle over categorisation sometimes takes over the big picture. Coupled with the discussion in

¹ About two weeks after the viva discussion for this thesis, the driving ban has also been lifted by a royal decree, granting women in Saudi Arabia the right to drive.

section 2.7 over the end of the original blogging era, this serves to limit the potential of this discourse outside this closed community.

9.2. Limitations and suggestions for further research

It has been mentioned in Chapter Three that the original framework by Koller (2012, 2014) consists of a number of linguistic parameters at the textual level. Determining what and how many parameters to include depends strongly on the topic and the scope of the research at hand. Due to time and word count limits, examining the semiotic layout could not be included among the parameters examined in this thesis. It would be helpful if other smaller scope projects examining online discourses included semiotic analysis as well. In addition to this, incorporating social actor representation with all its diverse classifications was not feasible either. As the analysis at hand incorporates a number of parameters, it has been highlighted in the methodology chapter that social action representation is approached selectively and not in total.

Another point worth highlighting is the small size of data analysed in this research. Due to the multiplicity of parameters and levels adopted for data analysis, the analyst opted for exploring in depth a small sample from diverse angles simultaneously rather than analysing larger samples without comparing and contrasting how the same data can be analysed differently across different parameters. This choice was also motivated by the general goal embedded in the research questions. A smaller sample can be used effectively in this research since the aim is not to generalize the findings or explore larger communities. What has motivated this study is the keen interest in cumulative evidence building up across different topics and creating patterns of consistency or conflict.

In addition to this, utilizing quantitative and qualitative findings to obtain such cumulative evidence was identified earlier in Chapter Three as a point of strength in this research. However, it is essential to point out that such a procedure could possibly undergo similar limitations to restricting the analysis to either type of findings. With quantitative analysis, the results might run the risk of decontextualizing the data while a qualitative one, on the other hand, might lead to some subjectivity. By combining these two aspects, the analyst attempted to reduce these risks. Yet, such limitations cannot be

eradicated completely. The points highlighted in section 9.1.2 regarding the second research question are relevant to understanding the epistemological concern of each approach. It has been argued earlier that the clashes between mostly qualitative and quantitative findings across different topics could be linked to the methodological approaches taken prior and during the analysis. Perhaps the only way to confirm that this is not the case in further research is making sure that each parameter is analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively with equal attention to each approach. As stated earlier in the analysis, some parameters were analysed primarily in quantitative terms while others were approached primarily in qualitative terms.

It is also key to point out that these blog posts were written in English, a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, by Saudi bloggers whose native language is Arabic but who are competent to write and read in English professionally. This means that there might be a few cases of L1 (first language) interference which could inherently affect the linguistic structure and consequently the analysis. However, it should be kept in mind that even in such cases, these structures are still recognized as forms of English regardless of any interference.

As for the suggestions for further research, it must be pointed out that by the time of writing this chapter, many changes had taken place on the Saudi scene. In particular, the years 2016 and 2017 exhibited many gradual changes that are becoming accepted and widely practised. So, it would be interesting to see how these changes are produced, distributed and reproduced with Saudi online discourses. Along the same line, and corresponding to the shift from blogging to micro blogging, examining social media platforms like Twitter could be quite informative. The struggle between supporters and opponents on such platforms is actually more severe nowadays as they are very popular among Saudis, especially the younger generation.

Another area for future research which might be worth investigating is the interaction taking place online between the posters/ writers and their commentators. It has been highlighted in the study that the vast majority of comments in the blogs are supportive. A closed community with echo-chamber features has been also identified, thus rendering

the comments section exclusive and exclusionary. On the other hand, other platforms of micro blogging such as Twitter showcase different patterns of readership. This means that due to the extreme popularity of tweeting in Saudi Arabia, it is often the case that tweets attract replies from both supporting and opposing users. Of course, with inbuilt features like blocking and muting, the opponents can be excluded to a certain extent but cannot be dismissed or marginalized as drastically as in the blogs under study. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how this diverse interaction come plays out in such discourse. Also, at the time of selecting the blogs under examination, most of the blogs identified as potential for data collection and analysis were written by male writers. However, at the time of writing this thesis, micro blogging is very gender-balanced with both male and female writers posting in equal numbers. So, a gender-based comparative study between female and male users could be of interest to. In the same way, a comparative study demonstrating how Saudis and non-Saudis report on these changes could be informative, too.

The eclectic methodology adopted in this research can with some adaptation be applied to data from other languages as well. For instance, the linguistic parameters identified at hand can be used to explore both the grammar and lexis of Arabic. With Arabic being Saudi Arabia's native tongue, taking methodological inspiration from this multi-tiered analysis allows for diverse CDA applications within the Saudi context and across its diverse groups. In line with this, further methodological applications inspired by the current research could be taken with other adaptations. For instance, findings for parameters like evaluation and metaphor can be quantified while social actor representation and transitivity systems can be analysed in a qualitative fashion. With these suggestions, it is possible to conclude this thesis in the hope that further research can benefit from its highlights. Tackling discourse as a complex phenomenon cannot be approached with a fixed theoretical and methodological stance but rather with a dynamic one where the analysts may learn their way through repeated practice.

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APPENDIX A

TOPIC 1: WOMEN AND POLITICS

Post 1: First Saudi woman minister

1. First Saudi woman minister
2. Today **is** definitely a happy day
3. Saudi Arabia **has made** a leap of progress
4. King Abdullah **surprised** everyone yesterday morning with major overhauls to the judicial and educational system
- 5.a. And the biggest bombshell of all **was** that [a woman was appointed as head of girl's education]
- 5.b. [a woman **was appointed** as head of girl's education]
- 6.a. This **is** a position [that has always belonged to the longest bearded most conservative muttawa possible]
- 6.b. [that has always **belonged to** the longest bearded most conservative muttawa possible]
7. and now to have a woman in it **is** FANTASTIC
- 8.a. notwithstanding the fact that [[the woman who was chosen] **is** a moderate Muslim, educated and a highly qualified woman]
- 8.b. [the woman who **was chosen**]
9. She **has** extensive experience in girl's education
- 10.a. I **doubt** that that [they could have found anyone more qualified]
- 10.b. [they **could have found** anyone more qualified]
11. What I **found** most surprising
- 12.a. and I'm sure that [someone out there wanted to send a message by publishing this on the first page of Al Eqtisadiya (Saudi version of Financial Times):]
- 12.b. [someone out there **wanted to** send a message by publishing this on the first page of Al Eqtisadiya (Saudi version of Financial Times):]
13. If you **take a closer look at** the left hand corner,
14. you'll **see** a photo of Mrs. Nora Al Fayez right underneath a photo of the new head of the muttawa vice police.
15. Her face **is** uncovered.
- 16.a. Now there's a lot of buzz that [of course she wouldn't be this progressive [unless she was a non-tribal woman, probably originating from Jordan or Palestine]]
- 16.b. [of course she **wouldn't be** this progressive [unless she was a non-tribal woman, probably originating from Jordan or Palestine]]
- 16.c. [unless she **was** a non-tribal woman, probably originating from Jordan or Palestine]
17. and she definitely **is** divorced [because no "real" Saudi in his right mind would allow his wife to appear publicly with her face uncovered.]
18. [because no "real" Saudi in his right mind **would allow** his wife to appear publicly with her face uncovered.]
- 19.a. I **am** very proud to say [that actually she belongs to one of the biggest tribes in Saudi, Bani Tameem from Al Nawayser part of it]
- 19.b. [that actually she **belongs to** one of the biggest tribes in Saudi, Bani Tameem from Al Nawayser part of it]
20. and she **is** from Al Washim here in Najd.
21. Her husband very much **supports** her and **is** proud of her.

Post 2: Women participation in 2011 municipal elections: same old excuses

1. Women participation in 2011 municipal elections: same old excuses
- 2.a. [The municipal elections that were conducted in 2005] **were** the first taste of democracy and governmental participation [that Saudis have ever had]

2.b. [The municipal elections that **were** conducted in 2005]

2.c. [that Saudis **have ever had**]

3. unfortunately it **was not** up to anyone's expectations

4.a. People **voted** according to tribal affiliation [and who their sheikhs directed them to vote for]

4.b. [and who their sheikhs **directed** them to vote for]

5. Campaigns **were** virtually non-existent

6. and at the end of it all the elected **were not heard of**, nor results seen.

7.a. Above all, the issue that stands out the most with the 2005 elections **were** [that women were banned from voting and nominations.]

7.b. [that women **were banned** from voting and nominations.]

8.a. The real excuse **was** [that a large faction of our society still thinks of women as property, sheep, and/or seductive sinful creatures out to seduce them into damnation]

8.b. [that a large faction of our society still **thinks of** women as property, sheep, and/or [seductive sinful creatures out to seduce them into damnation]

9. However the official excuse **was** a bit more diplomatic;

10. that it **was** the first experiment

11. and that the government **was not prepared**, facilities-wise, to receive women voters

12. Since a lot of younger Saudis **have started to question** the fatwas about women being incapable,

13. lack of women only facilities **has become** the go-to explanation

14.a. This **is** the same excuse [that is currently being employed to explain [why women are still banned from driving cars]]

14.b. [that **is currently being employed** to explain [why women are still banned from driving cars]]

14.c. [why women **are still banned** from driving cars]

15. and not only by muttawas but also by people who **seem** quite pro-women in most other aspects.

16.a. They **say** [we need women traffic police]

16.b. [we **need** women traffic police]

17. as if when an accident **happens**,

18. not the nearest patrol **should attend** the site,

19. but rather the one that **matches** the gender of the driver!?

20.a. They **say** [we can't even begin to think about women driving]

20.b. [we can't even **begin to think** about women driving]

21. until we **have** gender segregated driving schools and traffic administration.

22. Lack of gender segregation **has not stopped** our police, firemen, ambulances, courts...etc.

23. None of these **have** women employees

24. and yet women **are still served** by them all.

25.a. Then we **have** the government faction [that has the most interaction with women on an everyday basis, the PVPV,]

25.b. [that **has** the most interaction with women on an everyday basis, the PVPV,]

26. and they too **have** no women employees to attend to women.

27. Bottom-line it's an empty excuse

28.a. and those who **use** it [know it to be so]

28.b. [**know** it to be so]

29.a. Nothing **says** that louder than [the secret meetings that were conducted regarding the upcoming 2011 municipal elections]

29.b. [the secret meetings that **were conducted** regarding the upcoming 2011 municipal elections]

30.a. In March of last year Alwatan **reported** [that the municipal council members, 1212 in total and of course all men, were asked [if there was any point in allowing women to vote or participate in any way.]]

30.b. [that the municipal council members, 1212 in total and of course all men, **were asked** [if there was any point in allowing women to vote or participate in any way.]]

30.c. [if there **was** any point in allowing women to vote or participate in any way.]

31. This **is getting to be** beyond ridiculous.

32. How long **are** women **going to be treated** like third class citizens?

33. And I'm not the only one frustrated with the situation.

34. Eman Al Asfour, Iman Fallatah and Khulood Al Fahad **have decided** to take things into their own hands

35. and **have started** a promising campaign demanding the right to complete participation in the upcoming municipal elections.
- 36.a. Besides joining the campaign on its Facebook page, Saudis **can actually take part** by sending in their contact information, suggestions and [how they can help.]
- 36.b. [how they **can help**.]

Post 3: Saudi women want to vote

1. Saudi women **want** to vote
2. Some Saudi Women **want** to vote in the municipal elections,
- 3.a which by the way, most men say [they will boycott]
- 3.b. [they will boycott]
4. because the elections **are** a joke
5. since none of this **will have** the power to change anything.
6. I **found** this picture,
7. now these **are not** Saudi women,
8. but the picture really **is** expressive of the situation, at least it is to me.
9. The younger educated generation **refuses** to live like their mothers
- 10.a I **know** [it is a cliché,]
- 10.b. [it **is** a cliché,]
11. since no woman **wants** to grow up to be like her mother
12. or so I **hear**

Post 4: Nora Al Faiz

1. Nora Al-Faiz
2. So my home girl Norah Al-Faiz, I **call** her Umm Abdullah,
- 3.a. because... well, because I **do not know** [if I should call her Miss or Mrs]
- 3.b. [if I **should call** her Miss or Mrs]
4. little **is** known about her, except maybe her professional resume,
5. and she even asked for her picture not to be published
6. however, in spite of all that... eat your heart out President Obama
7. because according to Time magazine she surpasses you by nine in the list of the 100 most influential people in the world,
8. as you were number 20
9. and she **is** number 11.
10. **Don't believe** me
11. **check it out** yourself... right here
12. It's OK Mr. President,
- 13.a. I **am** sure [that if you try a little harder next year]
- 13.b. [that if you **try** a little harder next year]
14. you **might make** it to the top ten
15. **don't give up** just yet.
- 16.a. Joking aside, I **am** proud of her, and happy [that King Abdullah appointed her in that position,]
- 16.b. [that King Abdullah **appointed** her in that position,]
- 17.a. as I **am** sure [her hard work will no doubt pave the way for the future generation of women in our nation]
- 17.b. [her hard work **will** no doubt **pave** the way for the future generation of women in our nation]
18. However, I **must wonder**
19. now that she **is** Deputy Minister
- 20.a. **does** that **mean** [her legal guardian is the King himself?]
- 20.b. [her legal guardian **is** the King himself?]

Post 5: Saudi women granted right to vote

1. Saudi Women **Granted** Right to Vote
2. Yes, you **read** that headline right
3. Saudi women **will be allowed** to vote and run in the next municipal elections.
4. They **will also be appointed** to the Shoura Council in its next term.
5. As I **said** on Twitter yesterday,
- 6.a. this **is** big news for women in Saudi Arabia [any way you look at it.]
- 6.b. [any way you **look at** it.]
- 7.a. You **can read** more in this blogpost [that I wrote on NPR's The Two-way blog.]
- 7.b [that I **wrote** on NPR's The Two-way blog.]
- 8.a. I **have** also **created** a storify to collect the reactions from people [that I follow on Twitter [that you can read after jump]]
- 8.b. [that I **follow** on Twitter [that you can read after jump]]
- 8.c. [that you **can read** after jump]
9. VIDEO] King Abdullah address in Shoura Council today, announcing new political roles for women <http://youtu.be/DeKL9Ncgq78>
10. Full text in English: King Abdullah address at the Shoura Council <http://bit.ly/mVZHaB>
- 11.a. An announcement about women driving **was** [what many Saudi women were expecting,]
- 11.b. [what many Saudi women **were expecting**,]
12. so the news about allowing women to run and vote in municipal elections and serve on the Shoura Council **took** everyone by surprise.
13. Saudi citizens on Twitter **reacted** with excitement
14. "Women **have** the right to Elect , be a candidate and become a member in the Shoura council.
15. ..#HappiestDayAlive Long live The King! #Saudi"
16. ":'D **Crying**!!!"
17. "Heart **is** so overwhelmed and full of joy after hearing about King Abdullah's #Shura decisions.
18. **Congrats** to all #Saudi women around the world!"
19. "A scratch in the surface and the best **is** yet to come!
20. I **AM OVERCOME WITH PRIDE!** AAAAH! #KingShora"
21. "Hey, world! I'm a Saudi woman.
22. I **can vote!**
23. And very soon I'll **be** able to drive, too!
24. **Wait for** it."
25. "OMG finally. girls, NOW, not only we **can vote**
26. we **can run** in Municipal Elections.
27. **Love** you so much King AbdulAllah.
28. you truly **empower** us"
29. "My love for Abo Met3eb **surpasses** that of a teenage girl to Justin Bieber ! #FB"
- 30.a. "NSC spokesman: King Abdullah's reforms **recognize** [significant contributions #Saudi women make to their society.]"
- 30.b. [significant contributions #Saudi women **make** to their society.]"
- 31.a. "NSC spokesman: we **welcome** Saudi King announcement [that women will serve as full Shura members/participate in municipal elections. #Saudi]"
- 31.b. [that women **will serve** as full Shura members/**participate** in municipal elections. #Saudi]"
32. "US National Security Council **commenting** on Saudi women's rights- White House Statement on Saudi's Reforms <http://1.usa.gov/nm16ci>"
33. However, not everyone **shared** the excitement.
- 34.a. They **pointed out** [that women in Saudi Arabia still can't drive,]
- 34.b. [that women in Saudi Arabia still **can't drive**,]
35. and they **are** still under male guardianship rules.
36. "Dear King Abdullah,**Thanks** for allowing me to vote,
- 37.a. I **feel** like [I m human now]
- 37.b. [I **m** human now]
38. but.. what about driving?Sincerely,#Saudi #woman2drive #W2D"
39. "Politics in #Saudi **is** still an exclusive club
40. **Congratulations** on adding female pawns to the list, though.. Really.. #KingShora"

- 41.a. “**Am I supposed** to be thrilled [that Saudi women will vote in two years]
 41.b. [that Saudi women **will vote** in two years]
 42. but **are** still under male guardianship? #21stcentury”
 43. “Women’s right to vote and run in an election years away for councils with little or no power
 44. Democratic reform #Saudi style?”
 45. “Saudi women **will have to hire** drivers to take them to the next meaningless municipal elections.”
 46. “President & members of the #Saudi consultative council **don’t represent** people
 47. because they **lack** constituencies & mandates! #KingShora”
 48. “Appointing #SaudiWomen to the #Saudi consultative & municipal councils **is** too little too late!#KingShora#kingspeech”
 49. “We **still need** full representation in government and in court. Oh, and on the streets. #women2drive”
 50. “This **is** nice,
 51. but **don’t get** too excited.
 52. I **would not call** this drastic change.
 53. We **still don’t have** a constitution. Or law. :)”
 54. “What **did** they **have to lose** by allowing women to drive?
 55. Srsly?! No1 **dared** to do ANYthing to KAUST
 56. even tho all the crazies **were** against it.”
 57.a. “Will soon be **selling** t-shirts in #Saudi [that read: [Other countries went through the Arab Spring] [and [all i got] was this crummy voting right”]]
 57.b. [that **read**: [Other countries went through the Arab Spring] [and [all i got] was this crummy voting right”]]
 57.c. [Other countries **went through** the Arab Spring]
 57.d. [and [all i got] **was** this crummy voting right”]
 57.e. [all i **got**]
 58.a. But many **hoped** [that this would be an important first step] [and that more steps will follow soon.]
 58.b. [that this **would be** an important first step]
 58.c. [and that more steps **will follow** soon.]
 59. “#KingShora #shoraking the burden of reform 4 women **will be** top-down rather than bottom-up rendering most of the public rhetoric irrelevant”
 60. “Hopefully, following this decision, all discussions about gender interaction (workplace, cashiers,etc.) **will become** irrelevant #kingshora”
 61. “Today **was** a great day to be a #Saudi woman.
 62. The possibilities by #Kingshora’s speech **are** exciting. اللهم الحمد”

Post 6: Partition to Separate Women from Men in Saudi Shoura Council

1. Partition to **Separate** Women from Men in Saudi Shoura Council
2. The logistical preparations to welcome Saudi women to the Shoura Council **are** underway,
3. according to an official source who **spoke** Wednesday to *al-Watan* daily.
- 4.a. The official **said** [a special area of the Shoura chamber would be dedicated for women.]
- 4.b. [a special area of the Shoura chamber **would be dedicated** for women.]
5. This area **would be separated** from male members of the Council by a partition “to preserve the privacy of women.”
6. Yes, Saudi women **will be kept** in Shoura Ghetto
- 7.a. King Abdullah **issued** a royal decree in September 2011 [that gave women the right to vote and to stand for municipal election within four years.]
- 7.b. [that **gave** women the right to vote and to stand for municipal election within four years.]
- 8.a. The decree also **said** [that the Shoura Council, an unelected body [that supervises legislation,] will be open to women as full members for the first time.]
- 8.b. [that the Shoura Council, an unelected body [that supervises legislation,] **will be** open to women as full members for the first time.]
- 8.c. [that **supervises** legislation,]
9. Women **have served** as advisers to the Council in the past.
10. All members of Shoura **are appointed** by the King.

- 11.a. In preparation for women participation [that is expected to begin in three months,] a committee “**has allocated** specific areas in the Shoura Council building, in order for female members to perform their duties comfortably,”
- 11.b. [that **is expected** to begin in three months,]
12. the pan-Arab, London-based, Saudi-woned Asharq al-Awsat **reported** last month.
13. Women activists like Badriya al-Bisher **are** understandably **unamused**.
14. “Shoura Council always **reveals** an ambiguous relationship with women,”
15. she **wrote** in her weekly column for *al-Hayat* newspaper,
16. “because this Council **did not come** from another planet.
17. **It is** a representation for our society, with its habits and social manifestations, the traditional as well as the open ones.”

TOPIC 2: WOMEN AND DRIVING

Post 7: Translation of My Right to Dignity Petition

1. Translation of My Right to Dignity Petition
2. My Right to Dignity **has published** an open petition addressed to the King on the occasion of one year since the beginning of the June 17th women driving movement.
3. The petition **renews** the request to lift the ban.
4. You **can sign** it by going [HERE](#).
5. Below **is** a translation:
6. To his majesty, the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, **may God save and bless** him.
7. Peace and God’s mercy and blessing **be** upon you,
- 8.a. We **address** your majesty with thankfulness and gratitude for the utmost care [that you have granted to Saudi women issues]
- 8.b. [that you **have granted** to Saudi women issues]
9. and the progressive steps that you **have taken** to involve women in the national development projects.
10. These steps that you **summarized** in your historical speech on September 25th 2011
11. when you **said**,
12. “We **will not approve** the marginalization of women.”
13. This **was followed** by the two decrees concerning women membership on the Shura Council and women participation in the municipal elections.
14. With the rise in the number of Saudi women granted the King Abdullah international scholarship to 27,500 recipients, many of them **have returned** hopeful to take part in building this nation side-by-side with their brothers.
15. Due to your advocacy towards opening more fields to women and the implementation of your wise decree this past January to allow women to work in retail, more than 300,000 job opportunities for women **have been created**
16. and billions of our immigrating riyals **have been nationalized**.
- 17.a. Thus it **is** our hope [that you take into consideration our campaign [*I Will Drive My Own Car*]] to encourage women who have obtained driving licenses from neighboring countries to forgo their male drivers and start driving themselves [when they need to.]
- 17.b. [that you **take into consideration** our campaign [*I Will Drive My Own Car*]]
- 17.c. [*I Will Drive My Own Car*]
- 17.d. [when they **need** to.]
18. This encouragement **is** nothing more than the practice of a right ensured to us by all religions and national and international law.
- 19.a. A right that **has been denied** [SIC] us by some customs and traditions [that are not of God.]
- 19.b. [that **are not** of God.]
- 20.a. We also **hope** [that you advocate the opening of women driving schools and the issuance of driving licenses to women who qualify]

20.b. [that you **advocate** the opening of women driving schools and the issuance of driving licenses to women who qualify]

21. This campaign **does not seek** to disrupt the government or to violate any national laws or regulations.

22.a. Here it **is** important to point out [that there is no explicit law banning women from driving.]

22.b. [that there **is** no explicit law banning women from driving.]

23. We **are not** in cooperation with any foreign organizations or bodies

24. nor **do** we **represent** a political party or opposition.

25. We **do not intend** to start a public protest.

26.a We merely **request** [that [any woman who needs to go about her daily business] [and does not have a man to help her] be allowed to help herself]

26.b. [that [any woman who needs to go about her daily business] [and does not have a man to help her] **be allowed** to help herself]

26.c. [any woman who **needs** to go about her daily business]

26.d. [and **does not have** a man to help her]

27.a. We **want** this right to be an option [for those who want or need to.]

27.b. [for those who **want** or **need** to.]

28.a. As King Faisal [(God rest his soul)] historically **said**

28.b. [(God **rest** his soul)]

29. when he **decreed** girls' education,

30. "No one **will be forced**

31. nor **will** anyone **be turned** away."

32. Our Precious King, we **trust in** your majesty and our guardians

33. but we **are trying** as adult capable women to do everything in our power for the betterment of our families and society.

34. We **seek** to facilitate the affairs of our lives and the lives of our families while maintaining respect and loyalty to the values of our gracious nation and to the principles of our faith.

35.a. We **are** optimistic [that our campaign will succeed,]

35.b. [that our campaign **will succeed**,]

36. as **did** other campaigns and projects such as ARAMCO, KAUST and women in rural areas.

37.a. Our initiative **comes** as an inevitable result of the failure of ongoing initiatives [that began more than thirty years]

37.b. [that **began** more than thirty years]

38. and have **included** directly appealing to officials, writing in the media, and sending petitions and demands to the members of the Shura Council.

39. These **have** all **had** no real results on the ground.

40. Our hope **is** now hanging on the generosity of your response and support for this campaign.

41.a. We **hope** [that your majesty will instruct [all those who have in their capacity to support us] to do so, such as the regional princes, the police and the Commission for Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue.]

41.b. [that your majesty **will instruct** [all those who have in their capacity to support us] to do so, such as the regional princes, the police and the Commission for Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue.]

41.c. [all those **who have** in their capacity to support us]

42.a. We **hope** [that you will command them to enable women [who have valid licenses] to drive their own cars]

42.b. [that you **will command** them to enable women [who have valid licenses] to drive their own cars]

42.c. [who **have** valid licenses]

43. when **running** their basic daily errands

44.a. and thus **lift** the financial and social burden on some families [that has lasted far too long.]

44.b. [that **has lasted** far too long.]

45.a. We **hope** [that your majesty would hasten the enactment of laws and regulations [that criminalize and punish those [that harm or harass women drivers.]]]

45.b. [that your majesty would **hasten** the enactment of laws and regulations [that criminalize and punish those [that harm or harass women drivers.]]]

45.c. [that **criminalize** and **punish** those [that harm or harass women drivers.]]]

46. In this the government **could gain** from the experience of the other GCC countries.

- 47.a. We also **hope** [that your majesty will hasten the establishment of driving schools and the issuance of licenses for women.]
- 47.b. [that your majesty **will hasten** the establishment of driving schools and the issuance of licenses for women.]
48. Until then, we **raise** to your royal court a number of urgent demands
49. from those who **have been** gravely **affected** by the women-driving ban
- 50.a. These demands **are** [that these families and women be compensated by waiving the Saudi entrance visa fee for migrant drivers]
- 50.b. [that these families and women **be compensated** by waiving the Saudi entrance visa fee for migrant drivers]
- 51.a. and **be granted** by the government a monthly stipend equaling [the amount it takes to employ, board and feed a driver.]
- 51.b. [the amount it **takes** to employ, board and feed a driver.]
- 52.a. Another demand **is** [that the salary transportation allowance be increased for women to three times [what men are paid.]]
- 52.b. [that the salary transportation allowance **be increased** for women to three times [what men are paid.]]
- 52.c. [what men **are paid**.]
- 53.a. The final demand **is** [that government ministries and institutions and private employers be required to provide their female employees the option of safe institutional transportation]
- 53.b. [that government ministries and institutions and private employers **be required** to provide their female employees the option of safe institutional transportation]
54. We **are** still in great anticipation
- 55.a. and **hope** [that public transportation projects will see the light of day soon.]
- 55.b. [that public transportation projects **will see** the light of day soon.]
- 56.a. Your majesty **is** well aware [that the simple yet essentially important request to allow women to drive is practiced easily by all women in the world.]
- 56.b. [that the simple yet essentially important request to allow women to drive **is practiced** easily by all women in the world.]
57. Hence lifting the driving ban **should not be** difficult here in the country of security and safety and under your wise leadership
- 58.a. With sincere efforts we **are** confident [that our wise leadership will realize the ban lift in our compassionate and gracious nation for the benefit of our sons and daughters]
- 58.b. [that our wise leadership **will realize** the ban lift in our compassionate and gracious nation for the benefit of our sons and daughters]
- 59.a. We **pray** [that your majesty will remain our pride, strength, and empowerment]
- 59.b. [that your majesty **will remain** our pride, strength, and empowerment]
60. and that God **grant** you and the nation perseverance and blessedness.
61. Date of petition 20 Rajab 1433, corresponding to June 10, 2012

Post 8: The turning point

1. The turning point
2. I **have been complaining** about the ban on women driving for the past decade
3. Over the years I **have had** in my employment about eight or nine drivers; Indians, Pakistanis, Saudis, Ethiopians, Sudanese, Bangladesh
4. I've **ridden** with all kinds and unfortunately smells.
5. I've **gone through** the full spectrum of problems from attitude issues to "borrowed" cars.
- 6.a. And I've **become** quite experienced in how to be a boss of someone [who won't listen.]
- 6.b. [who **won't listen**.]
7. My current driver **has** almost **completed** his third year in my employment.
- 8.a. Since 2002 everyone **keeps telling** me [that the ban will be lifted by the end of this year]
- 8.b. [that the ban **will be lifted** by the end of this year]
9. The end of this year **becomes** the end of next year and then the year after that
10. and somewhere along the line I've **lost** hope

- 11.a. and **resigned** myself to dragging a strange man to all my classes, on all my errands and to wait outside the gates of [houses I visit]
- 11.b. [houses I **visit**]
12. However on April 14th, 2010 it seems that something **has changed**
13. and I **can** finally **see** a thin line of hope on the horizon.
14. Riyadh Newspaper, one of the more conservative papers in Saudi Arabia **ran** an extensive piece
15. not on whether or not women **should be allowed** to drive cars
16. but on how that can actually **be implemented** on the ground.
- 17.a. The title **was** literally [“Women driving cars...how do we start its implementation”.]
- 17.b. [“Women driving cars...how **do** we **start** its implementation”.]
18. They **interviewed** several influential people including sheikhs, professors of sociology and a retired general.
19. But the real deal **was** sheikh Al Ghaith,
20. his **was** one of the first photos in the article
- 21.a. and **don’t be fooled** by [how young he looks.]
- 21.b. [how young he **looks**.]
22. He’s actually a PhD holder
23. and **is** far from your typical camera chasing sheikh.
24. More importantly he **has** the ears of some of the big decision makers of the country.
25. Currently he **is** a judge at Riyadh’s district court.
- 26.a. It’s even **rumored** [that he has the final say [when it comes to the death penalty]]
- 26.b. [that he **has** the final say [when it comes to the death penalty]]
- 26.c. [when it **comes** to the death penalty]
- 27.a. I would almost go as far as to **say** [that the whole article was a frame for Al Ghaith to subtly inform the muttawas [that the time has come to compromise on this issue]]
- 27.b. [that the whole article **was** a frame for Al Ghaith to subtly inform the muttawas [that the time has come to compromise on this issue]]
- 27.c. [that the time **has come** to compromise on this issue]
28. The article **got** a lot of attention
29. and **had** 1625 comments, on average a comment a minute yesterday!
30. On a lighter note, my shewolf friend **had gone out** for a few more joyrides since that night.

Post 9: Women driving: Topic is getting tedious

1. Women driving: Topic **is getting** tedious
- 2.a. The ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia **is** a topic [that has become tedious due to [the uncountable times it has been written about since the 1980s.]]
- 2.b. [that **has become** tedious due to [the uncountable times it has been written about since the 1980s.]]
- 2.c. [the uncountable times it **has been written** about since the 1980s.]
3. Saudi Arabia **is** infamous for its gender discrimination
- 4.a. when it **comes** to [who gets to sit in the driver’s seat]
- 4.b. [who **gets** to sit in the driver’s seat]
- 5.a. The only thing [that rivals it in [what the country is known for globally]] **is** our never-ending supply of oil.
- 5.b. [that **rivals** it in [what the country is known for globally]]
- 5.c. [what the country **is known** for globally]
- 6.a. [What is ironic] **is** [that on both sides, Saudis who oppose [and those who are calling for lifting the ban,]] is [that they are in agreement [that the whole issue is petty]]
- 6.b. [What **is** ironic]
- 6.c. [that on both sides, Saudis who **oppose** [and those who are calling for lifting the ban,]]
- 6.d. [and those who **are calling for** lifting the ban,]
- 6.e. [that they **are** in agreement [that the whole issue is petty]]
- 6.f. [that the whole issue **is** petty]
7. **Read** more.

Post 10: Right to Dignity's statement on lifting the ban on women driving

1. Right to Dignity's statement on lifting the ban on women driving
2. My Right to Dignity campaign **has issued** its strongest statement so far.
3. With school starting this week, households across the country **are incapacitated** by the ban on women driving
4. and resentment **has again boiled** to the surface.
5. This **is** evident in the more assertive tone of the statement.
6. In the past few weeks the campaign **has received** several messages and videos of support from both Saudi men and women and enquiries about the next step planned.
7. Nothing **is** definite just yet
8. but I **predict** an exciting year ahead.
9. Translation of the original Arabic Right to Dignity eleventh statement;
- 10.a. We all **know** [that the duty of the state is to achieve the greatest facilities for the convenience of citizens of both sexes and of all ages.]
- 10.b. [that the duty of the state **is** to achieve the greatest facilities for the convenience of citizens of both sexes and of all ages.]
11. This **includes** the state's duty to protect them and ensure their rights
12. in order that the people in turn **build** a society.
13. This duty **is recognized** by our government
- 14.a. and **taken** as one of the cornerstones [upon which the state based its Basic Law of Governance decreed by King Fahad in 1992.]
- 14.b. [upon which the state **based** its Basic Law of Governance decreed by King Fahad in 1992.]
- 15.a. Article VIII of The Basic Law **states** [that governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on justice, consultation and equality in accordance to -Islamic law.]
- 15.b. [that governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia **is based** on justice, consultation and equality in accordance to Islamic law.]
16. Unfortunately our government **has contradicted** its own Basic Law of Governance.
17. The State discrimination **is based** on gender
18. so that men **are granted** the right to freedom of movement
19. and even adolescents and children driving **is tolerated**
20. while women **are** strictly **prohibited**.
21. This **is** unjust
22. This is also not **complying** with the Basic Law of governance of the country
23. since, instead of basing it on consultation; the ban **was issued** on the basis of the views of a limited number of men with the exclusion of women.
24. This despite the fact that it **was made** official
25. only after a group of women **protested** the ban
- 26.a. [That group of women who protested] **is** much larger than the number of men consulted when issuing the ban.
- 26.b. [That group of women who **protested**]
27. God **did not distinguish** between male and female,
28. when he **said** in the Holy Quran:
29. "And (He **has created**) horses, mules and donkeys, for you to ride and as an adornment
- 30.a. And He **creates** (other) things [of which you have no knowledge".]
- 30.b. [of which you **have** no knowledge".]
- 31.a. This **is** the text [that many Islamic scholars depend on to legalize driving,]
- 31.b. [that many Islamic scholars **depend on** to legalize driving,]
32. but the state and the religious establishment **has ignored** God's decree of equality
33. and **decided** to take the opinion of jurisprudential evidence as legitimately stronger and more important than God's own words to justify discriminating against women and preventing them from the right to acquiring a license permit to drive.
34. This right to a license permit **is** stated indiscriminately in the traffic law.
- 35.a. Thus the ban and the religious misinterpretation [on which it is based] **causes** damage to millions of women based on assumptions and scenarios of a few [that have no basis in reality.]

35.b. [on which it **is based**]
 35.c. [that **have** no basis in reality.]
 36. As a result of this, religion **has become** a hardship on women.
 37. Saudi women now **have** the duty towards religion, country and society to carry the culpability and the hardship of not practicing their legitimate right.
 38. If any woman **takes** it upon herself to try to ease this hardship by publicly calling for a lift of the ban or by getting behind the wheel,
 39. her patriotism and honor **are** immediately **questioned**
 40. and she **is** publicly **accused of** being corrupt and thereby corrupting society.
 41. All this while the government **stands by**
 42. and **offers** her no protection.
 43.a. We women **are** fully aware [that society will not advance [unless its advancement is with our support, our efforts, our productivity and with us.]]
 43.b. [that society **will not advance** [unless its advancement is with our support, our efforts, our productivity and with us.]]
 43.c. [unless its advancement **is** with our support, our efforts, our productivity and with us.]
 44. However this **has become** virtually impossible
 45. due to the overwhelming financial burden and emotional stress that we **are forced** to undertake just to have access to transportation and the ability to run our own errands within our homeland.
 46.a. The presence of two million legal and illegal migrant male drivers [that exploit the needs of women to bleed them financially of money [that is better spent on these women themselves and their families]] **is** unexplainable and religiously, socially and humanely un acceptable.
 46.b. [that **exploit** the needs of women to bleed them financially of money [that is better spent on these women themselves and their families]]
 46.c. [that **is better spent** on these women themselves and their families]
 47. We are **not asking** for the impossible.
 48.a. [All we want from the state] **is** to stop issuing unfulfilled promises and conflicting internal and international statements about the ban on women driving.
 48.b. [All we **want** from the state]
 49.a. We **want** the state to begin to lift this injustice by issuing a decree to allow women [who want to drive], to do so.
 49.b. [who **want** to drive],
 50.a. Those women [who do not want to drive] **are not forced to**
 50.b. [who **do not want** to drive]
 51.a. Since the rights of citizens **is guaranteed** by Article VIII of the Basic Law of Governance adopted by the state and [on which our government is founded,]
 51.b. [on which our government **is founded**,]
 52. we hereby **will exercise** this right
 53. and the state **has to support** us
 54. and **provide** us with protective laws to practice it safely.

Post 11: Local Student Artist Helps Drive Change In Saudi Arabia

1. Local Student Artist **Helps** Drive Change In Saudi Arabia
 2. a. I **wonder** [if any of the Arabian TV channels will show this.]
 2.b. [if any of the Arabian TV channels **will show** this.]
 3. I **saw** this first at Crossroads Arabia
 4. and **clicked** on the link provided in the post
 5 which **took** me the this page.
 6. there **is** a video
 7. which I **could not link** to,
 8. I **did download** it,
 9. but due to copyright issues I **did not upload** it to youtube
 10. and **link** to it here.
 11. I **am** a supporter of this initiative,

12. and **showing** my support by re-posting this subject.
13. I **have to wonder** though,
14. **is** she **sponsored** by the King Abdullah Scholarship Program?
- 15.a. I **can see** [how this might turn ugly,]
- 15.b. [how this **might turn** ugly,]
16. by stating that she **is not** an original Saudi,
17. one that **does not hold** the true values of Saudi Arabia,
18. that her family **is** an over stayer of pilgrimage
- 19.a. and it's people like her (us) [that will cause the demise of the culture.]
- 19.b. [that **will cause** the demise of the culture.]
20. I **say** to her
21. you **go** girl,
22. if there **was** ever a national vote on this
23. you **can count on** mine.

Post 12: Saudi Women Driving on the 17th of June

1. Saudi Women **Driving** on the 17th of June
2. I **have shared** my thoughts on the issue of Saudi women and their right to drive a couple of times (here and here).
3. I **shared** the experience of my cousin also.
4. And of course I **wrote** a parody,
- 5.a. which should **be** the anthem of the movement [(we still need a singer)]
- 5.b. [(we still **need** a singer)]
- 6.a. This time, [and maybe it is the influence of the Arab Spring,] they **have set** a date, the 17th of June 2011 for women to go out and drive their own cars.
- 6.b. [and maybe it **is** the influence of the Arab Spring,]
7. Here **is** a nice video,
8. which **is** a school project made by Saja Kamal, an international affairs and political science student, tackling the subject in a very nice and intelligent way,
- 9.a. she **got** the conservative view [(and it is not unanimous)] and the government's view on the subject,
- 9.b. [(and it **is** not unanimous)]
10. a great job to say the least.
- 11.a. I **am** eager to see [how all this plays out in the end,]
- 11.b. [how all this **plays out** in the end,]
12. and as usual, Saudis have **taken** [SIC] to Facebook to show their support, or their opposition,
- 13.a. one **says** [it will crash into any woman driving,]
- 13.b. [it [SIC] **will crash into** any woman driving,]
- 14.a. the other **says** [it will "protect" women drivers]
- 14.b. [it [SIC] **will "protect"** women drivers]
15. from those who **will crash into** them,
- 16.a. and some of course **say** [they will hit their women]
- 16.b. [they **will hit** their women]
17. who **want** to drive,
- 18.a. of course that **is** [not what a real man does.]
- 18.b. [not what a real man **does**.]
- 19.a. It **would be** wise to sell [any stocks one has in auto insurance companies,]
- 19.b. [any stocks one **has** in auto insurance companies,]
20. and maybe **invest** in companies with tow-trucks

Post 13: Western Media and Saudi Women Driving

1. Western Media and Saudi Women Driving
2. I **have made** my stance clear on women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia,

- 3.a. what I **would like to make clear** is to say [that Western media does not really care [which way the boat sails,]]
- 3.b. [that Western media **does not really care** [which way the boat sails,]]
- 3.c. [which way the boat **sails**,]
4. and the American congress **is not going to do** anything regarding the issue of Saudi women driving.
5. “**Never put** your trust in Hilary Rodham,
- 6.a. cuz I **can tell** you now [it will turn out rotten”] Ice Cube
- 6.b. [it **will turn out** rotten”]
7. I **saw** a few excited individuals
8. happy that the issue of Saudi women driving **is getting** western media attention,
9. of course it **will**,
10. people **will watch** the news about this
11. because it **is** “exotic”.
12. It **is** big money
13. and the news agencies **now** [SIC] that,
14. Saudi **is** a rich country
15. we **import** everything,
16. and they will **forecast** their projections for their soon to be profits.
17. America **does not care** about women,
- 18.a. they **make** a fuss over [a few young girls getting married to old men in Saudi]
- 18.b. [a few young girls **getting married** to old men in Saudi]
19. but when little girls **start** becoming prostitutes in Haiti for food (or the equivalent of \$2-3 per customer),
20. little attention **goes** that way
21. (and this **has been** in the news, with very little attention for over six months),
22. who **cares** about people
23. when they **have** no money?
24. If they **cannot profit** from your situation,
25. then little to nothing **will be done**.
26. When I **say** this,
27. I **get hit** with a counter argument,
28. but what about the Qatif girl? What about Samar Badawi, what about Fouad Alfarhan?
29. Those **were** individuals,
30. it **is** a different story,
31. media (all of them) **were** in it for the ratings,
32. the issue **was highlighted**,
33. and the problem for them **was solved**
34. But it **is** not always like that.
35. Applying the same and expecting results when it **comes** to 50% of the population,
36. you **get** a whole big ball of messy goop,
- 37.a. [even neqabi women [who have never been to Saudi Arabia] and compare Saudi streets to New York] **get** air time on CNN!
- 37.b. [who **have never been** to Saudi Arabia]
- 37.c. [even neqabi women [who have never been to Saudi Arabia] and **compare** Saudi streets to New York]
- 38.a. that’s how much [they want to fill the airwaves with money making rate increasing programming,]
- 38.b. [they **want** to fill the airwaves with money making rate increasing programming,]
39. who **cares** about anything else?
40. And like everything on the news, people **will get** sick of it,
41. the ratings **will drop**,
- 42.a. and then they **will find** another story [that interests the masses]
- 42.b. [that **interests** the masses]
43. **Remember**,
44. we **had** two seasons of Arab revolutions, Tunisia and Egypt...
45. then... no one **wanted** to watch anymore of that kind of news.

Post 14: Saudi Arabia: Public Consensus On Women Driving

1. Saudi Arabia: Public Consensus On Women Driving
2. As much as I **would like** the restriction on women's driving in Saudi to be lifted,
- 3.a. I **know** [it is not the public consensus,]
- 3.b. [it **is** not the public consensus,]
4. most **do not want** women to drive,
5. even among families with women who **want** to drive,
6. that **applies** to my own family and extended family.
- 7.a. To deny that fact, and to say [it **is** otherwise,] **would be** myopic.
- 7.b. [it **is** otherwise,]
8. It **is** a roller coaster to say the least.
9. Taking a look at the educational system changes which **happened** around ten years ago
10. when, and only administratively, girls schools **were joined** under the administrative umbrella of the Saudi Ministry of Knowledge
11. (previously it **was** a standalone Presidency of Girls Education)
- 12.a. the talk of the town then **was** [this is a first step to make schools mixed]
- 12.b. [this **is** a first step to make schools mixed]
- 13.a. **add** to that [now they approved the teaching of boys as far as the third grade to be taught in mixed private schools, and adding English as early as the fourth grade in the Saudi public education system,]
- 13.b. [now they **approved** the teaching of boys as far as the third grade to be taught in mixed private schools, and adding English as early as the fourth grade in the Saudi public education system,]
14. a and you **know** [that those [who have been fighting against this] are telling [everyone they know]]
- 14.b. [that those [who have been fighting against this] **are telling** [everyone they know]]
- 14.c. [who **have been fighting** against this]
- 14.d. [everyone they **know**]
15. – *we told you so.*
16. In Egypt, and during the recent elections to change the constitution, most of the active Egyptian Facebook users **changed** their profile pictures to NO,
17. and since this recent Egyptian revolution **is being** widely **hailed** as a social networking revolution,
- 18.a. people **thought** [the NO would be the majority.]
- 18.b. [the NO **would be** the majority.]
19. The voters showed up
20. the majority voted for YES,
- 21.a. showing that if you **take** [what is on social networks in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or anywhere [where not everyone has access to the internet (even via public libraries)]] as the voice of the people...
- 21.b. [what **is** on social networks in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or anywhere [where not everyone has access to the internet (even via public libraries)]]
- 21.c. [where not everyone **has access** to the internet (even via public libraries)]
22. Well, I **wouldn't make** any major decisions on that.
- 23.a. Culture **is**, [what culture is.]
- 23.b. [what culture **is**.]
- 24.a. Any sudden movements or changes **will**, [and most of the time it does,] **cause** a re-curling into “the old ways”...
- 24.b. [and most of the time it **does**,]
25. If you **don't believe** me...
26. Then you **better ask** somebody,
- 27.a. but **don't ask** the guy [who approved breastfeeding the driver]
- 27.b. [who **approved** breastfeeding the driver]

Post 15: More on Manal al-Sharif and women's driving

1. More on Manal al-Sharif and women's driving
2. Eman al-Nafjan **has** a good roundup on the latest in Manal al-Sharif's case

3. Al-Nafjan **was** on also on CNN to talk about the issues yesterday.
- 4.a. [Wikileaks documents reveal [that the US government been quietly putting pressure on Saudi Arabia to allow women to drive,]] the *Guardian* **reports**.
- 4.b. [Wikileaks documents **reveal** [that the US government been quietly putting pressure on Saudi Arabia to allow women to drive,]
- 4.c. [that the US government **been quietly putting** pressure on Saudi Arabia to allow women to drive,]
- 5.a. Sabria Jawhar **says** ["There was a time]
- 5.b. ["There **was** a time]
- 6.a. when I firmly **believed** [the endless debate about Saudi women banned from driving cars was trivial.]
- 6.b. [the endless debate about Saudi women banned from driving cars **was** trivial.]
7. It **distracted** Saudis from the real problems of the denial of women's rights: employment, education, guardianship abuses, inheritance, and fair and equitable treatment in the Saudi judicial system.
8. The arrest and imprisonment of Manal Al-Sherif, 32, after driving a car in Khobar, **has changed** all that."
9. I **have said** it before
10. and I **will say** it again:
11. this issue **has become** a symbol for all other reform issues in the country, especially the ones related to women status.
12. It **has become** like a psychological barrier.
13. If we **can overcome** this,
14. then we **can cruise** into our other challenges with more confidence and determination.
15. What if Manal al-Sharif **were** American,
16. and Erin Brockovich **were** Saudi
- 17.a. Tariq Alhomayed, [the man who turned Asharq al-Awsat from a respected newspaper into a joke], **weighs in** on the women driving issue.
- 17.b. [the man who **turned** Asharq al-Awsat from a respected newspaper into a joke]
18. Alhomayed **fails** to name Manal al-Sharif,
- 19.a. but he **says** ["She was stopped]
- 19.b. ["She **was stopped**]
20. and **told** not to drive
21. because there **is** no organization in place [to regulate female driving],
22. but she **returned** the following day to drive yet again."
23. Well, he **needs** to get his facts checked
24. because this **is** simply not true.
25. Al-Sharif **did not drive** again after her first arrest,
26. and she **was arrested** again from her house late at night in violation of the Saudi law of criminal procedures.
- 27.a. Then he **went on to say** [that she filmed her actions]
- 27.b. [that she **filmed** her actions]
28. and **uploaded** them to YouTube "in order to provoke people."
29. How can he **speculate** about her motive like that
30. when she **is** still in jail?
31. But hey, at least Alhomayed **offers** a solution to get us out of this mess:
- 32.a. ["It would be useful to immediately announce the formation of a committee to study this issue,"] he **says**.
- 32.b. ["It **would be** useful to immediately announce the formation of a committee to study this issue,"]
33. Yeah right, that usually **works**.

Post 16: On Alienating Opponents

1. On Alienating Opponents
2. I **respect** the National Society for Human Rights (NSHR).
- 3.a. Compared to the other human rights organization in the country, I **believe** [that they have been doing a decent job.]
- 3.b. [that they **have been doing** a decent job.]

4. For instance, I **was** pleasantly **surprised** by their latest report.
5. But even NSHR occasionally **manage** to get on my nerves too.
6. NSHR still **lacks** a stance on issues like women's driving
- 7.a. One of the founding members of the Society **was** recently **asked** [why they don't have a stance on the issue]
- 7.b. [why they **don't have** a stance on the issue]
8. and he **gave** an interesting answer.
- 9.a. He **said** [some members of NSHR supports women's driving,]
- 9.b. [some members of NSHR **supports** women's driving,]
10. while some other members **don't**.
11. We **don't want** to alienate those.
12. **Say** what?!
- 13.a. I **understand** [that women's driving is a controversial issue.]
- 13.b. [that women's driving **is** a controversial issue.]
- 14.a. But I **believe** [it shouldn't be.]
- 14.b. [it **shouldn't be**.]
15. To me, the issue **boils down** to this:
16. freedom of movement **is** a basic human right.
- 17.a. Therefore, you **would think** [it's obvious [what kind of stance NSHR should be taking.]]
- 17.b. [it's obvious [what kind of stance NSHR should be taking.]]
- 17.c. [what kind of stance NSHR **should be taking**.]
- 18.a. Any member [who has a different opinion] **can** then **express** their reservation on this stance,
- 18.b. [who **has** a different opinion]
19. or they **can quit**.
20. It's that simple, really.
21. But that's just me.
- 22.a. And I **would** gladly **admit** [that I know very little about the inside politics of the few NGOs operating in Saudi Arabia.]
- 22.b. [that I **know** very little about the inside politics of the few NGOs operating in Saudi Arabia.]
- 23.a. So people of NSHR, [if any of you is reading this,] please **enlighten** me.
- 23.b. [if any of you **is reading** this,]

Post 17: New Petition for Women Driving

1. New Petition for Women Driving
2. The Associated Press:
- 3.a. A Saudi online newspaper **says** [more than 3,000 nationals of the kingdom, including prominent writers and academics, have endorsed a study [that recommends lifting a ban on women driving.]]
- 3.b. [more than 3,000 nationals of the kingdom, including prominent writers and academics, **have endorsed** a study [that recommends lifting a ban on women driving.]]
- 3.c. [that **recommends** lifting a ban on women driving.]
4. Sabaq **quoted** on Tuesday Abdullah al-Alami,
5. a researcher who **contributed to** the study,
6. as saying it **was sent** to King Abdullah's main advisory body, the Shura Council, asking them to set a date to discuss it
7. The site later **quotes** al-Alami,
8. who **has** recently **published** a book about the debate over women driving,
9. as saying that the petition **has been faxed** to the Shoura Council.
10. With more than 3,000 names, that's a lot of faxing.
11. If the fax machines of Shoura **break**,
12. you **know** who to blame.

Post 18: Saudi Princess Says Women Driving Needs Constitutional Change

1. a. Saudi Princess **Says** [Women Driving Needs Constitutional Change]

- 1.b. [Women Driving **Needs** Constitutional Change]
2. Princess Basma bint Saud **spoke** at Cambridge recently:
- 3.a. Unexpectedly, the Princess publicly **declared** [that women should not be able to drive.]
- 3.b. [that **women should not be** able to drive.]
- 4.a. Progress, [she thinks,] **needs** to happen over time:
- 4.b. [she **thinks**,]
5. “It’s not safe.
6. They **would be beaten up** by men on the streets
- 7.a. which would merely **reaffirm** [that women driving is bad for them.]
- 7.b. [that women driving **is** bad for them.]
8. First of all we **need** to change the constitution,
9. men and women **need** to be made equal on the streets, in the law courts, in the home, in the workplace, in all rights.
10. Then we **might be** ready,
11. then women **should drive**.”
12. **Let** me get this straight:
13. so to allow women to drive, we **need** to change the constitution first.
14. Otherwise, men **would beat up** women on the streets? Okay.

TOPIC 3: WOMEN IN UNCONVENTIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Post 19: Another day, another misogynist fatwa

1. Another day, another misogynist fatwa
2. Yesterday afternoon a document **went** viral all across the online news agencies and social media.
3. The document **is** dated Sunday the 31st of October
4. and in it **is** a fatwa and not just any fatwa, an official fatwa from the governmentally appointed committee for fatwas i.e. the highest council of our ultra conservative version of Sunni Islam.
5. What’s so important
6. that this committee would **get together**
7. and **issue** a document
8. and on the very same day **release** it to the press?
9. Women, of course!
10. A quick translation of the document:
11. This fatwa **is** issued in reply to the below question:
- 12.a. Several companies and shops **are employing** women as cashiers [who serve both men and women as families].
- 12.b. [who **serve** both men and women as families].
13. Each day these women cashiers **meet** dozens of men,
14. and **speak** to them while handling back and forth money and receipts
15. In addition these women cashiers **are required** to undergo training, attend meetings and interact with their colleagues and supervisor at work.
- 16.a. What **is** the ruling on [women working as such?]
- 16.b. [women **working** as such?]
- 17.a. What **is** the ruling regarding companies and shops [that recruit women?]
- 17.b. [that **recruit** women?]
18. Please **advise**.
19. After study, the committee **has come** to the following reply:
- 20.a. It is not **permitted** for a Muslim woman to work in a place [where they intermingle with men]
- 20.b. [where they **intermingle** with men]
- 21.a. A woman **should stay away** from places [where men gather.]
- 21.b. [where men **gather**.]

- 22.a. She **should search for** employment [that does not expose her to temptation [nor make her a source of temptation.]]
- 22.b. [that **does not expose** her to temptation [nor make her a source of temptation.]]
- 22.c. [**nor make** her a source of temptation.]
- 23.a. And [what you have mentioned in your question] **does expose** her to temptation
- 23.b. [what you **have mentioned** in your question]
24. and **tempt** men
25. hence it **is** Islamically **prohibited**.
- 26.a. And the companies [that employ women] **are collaborating** with them in [what is Islamically prohibited]
- 26.b. [that **employ** women]
- 26.c. [what **is** Islamically **prohibited**]
27. and thus they **too are committing** a prohibition.
- 28.a. It **is** known [that whoever fears God by leaving [what God has prohibited] and does [what God asks of him,]]
- 28.b. [that whoever **fears** God by leaving [what God has prohibited] [and does [what God asks of him,]]]
- 28.c. [what God **has prohibited**]
- 28.e. [what God **asks** of him,]
29. God **will** then **facilitate** his affairs, just as promised in the Quran (translation* verse 3/Al Talaq):
- 30.a. And He **provides** for him from (sources) [he never could imagine.]
- 30.b. [**he never could imagine.**]
31. And if any one **puts** his trust in Allah,
32. sufficient **is** (Allah) for him.
33. For Allah **will** surely **accomplish** his purpose:
34. verily, for all things **has** Allah **appointed** a due proportion.}
35. And the Prophet PBUH **said**:
- 36.a. It **will not be** [that you abandon something for the sake of God,]
- 36.b. [that you **abandon** something for the sake of God,]
- 37.a. but that God **will compensate** with [what is better for you.] (my translation)
- 37.b. [what **is** better for you.]
38. There **is** a glimmer of hope here though.
- 39.a. First off, this council, throughout its history, **has prohibited** things [that remain legal, such as music and satellite TV channels [that are not Islamic.]]
- 39.b. [that **remain** legal, such as music and satellite TV channels [that are not Islamic.]]
- 39.c. [that **are not** Islamic.]
- 40.a. So this fatwa **might join** the list of things [that Saudis feel unwarrantedly guilty about]
- 40.b. [that Saudis **feel** unwarrantedly guilty about]
41. but still **do**.
42. It **would be** a shame
- 43.a. if another door **closes** in the faces of women [who are in desperate need of jobs.]
- 43.b. [who **are** in desperate need of jobs.]
44. A scan of the document
45. * Yusuf Ali translation

Post 20: BAN MEN FROM SELLING LINGERIE IN KSA

1. **BAN MEN FROM SELLING LINGERIE IN KSA**
2. If you really **care** about women's rights
3. and you **are** in Saudi Arabia,
- 4.a. then starting from the 13th of February 2010 and for two weeks **boycott** all lingerie shops that employ men.]
- 4.b. [that **employ** men.]
5. **Get** the word **out**
6. and **tell** your friends to do the same.
7. You'll **be helping** more women get employed.

8. You'll **break** one of our main contradictions regarding interaction between men and women.
9. And most of all, you'll **be supporting** a Saudi women cause
10. and **helping** them have a voice and impact.
11. Background Information:
12. This campaign **was** officially **started** in February 2009 by Reem Asaad, a Saudi lecturer at a college in Jeddah,
13. and **is** now in its second phase.
14. Its aim **is** to address a real contradictory issue here in Saudi Arabia concerning men selling women lingerie.
- 15.a. The contradiction **is** in the fact [that we are supposedly the most conservative nation in the world]
- 15.b. [that we **are** supposedly the most conservative nation in the world]
16. and yet women here **divulge** their bra and undie sizes and colors to strange men on a regular basis.
17. I **have been** to many countries, European, Arab...etc
- 18.a. and I **have** yet to **come across** a lingerie shop or even section of a department store [where a man is employed to help customers.]
- 18.b. [where a man **is employed** to help customers.]
19. Why **is** this?
- 20.a. Because common decency and personal comfort **dictate** [that the majority of women would much rather discuss [and buy their underwear from another woman.]]
- 20.b. [that the majority of women **would** much rather **discuss** [and buy their underwear from another woman.]]
- 20.c. [and **buy** their underwear from another woman.]
21. This very simple fact somehow **flew over** our muttawas' heads
- 22.a. or they just **felt** [that the oppression of women is more important than preserving a woman's modesty.]
- 22.b. [that the oppression of women **is** more important than preserving a woman's modesty.]
- 23.a. The minister of Labour, Dr. Al Qusaibi, **attempted** to tackle this issue by issuing a new law [that only women were to be employed at lingerie shops.]
- 23.b. [that only women **were to be employed** at lingerie shops.]
24. This **was supposed** to be effective in 2006.
25. However powerful people behind the scenes **have been** able to delay its implementation.
26. Why **would** they **do** that?
27. Well it's due to a multiple number of reasons:
28. 1- Many **are** muttawa
- 29.a. and strongly **believe** [that malls and shopping areas are tools of the devil.]
- 29.b. [that malls and shopping areas **are** tools of the devil.]
30. Hence if they **could**
31. they **would** even **ban** women from shopping
32. **let** alone working there.
33. 2- It **costs** money to get lingerie shops run by women muttawa compliant, what [SIC] with screens on the windows and a guard at the door...etc.
34. 3- Women employees **are** more expensive.
35. Saudi women **are paid** more
36. and **work** shorter hours
37. while men imported from poorer countries **will work** longer, for less.
38. 4- They just **hate** Dr. Al Qusaibi and his "liberal" ways
39. and **want** to oppose him in anything and everything.
40. To join the campaign's official Facebook page and show your support **click** here.

Post 21: 14,300 applications per day

1. 14,300 applications per day
- 2.a. On April 23rd newspapers **reported** [that 100,000 applicants applied within one week of first announcing vacancies in women government jobs.]

- 2.b. [that 100,000 applicants **applied** within one week of first announcing vacancies in women government jobs.]
3. While a month before it **took** three weeks to get 50,000 applicants for men government jobs.
- 4.a. And the report quietly **disappeared** without much fuss about its implications and the hopelessness [that Saudi women are going through.]
- 4.b. [that Saudi women **are going through.**]
- 5.a. Yes it's true [that education is free]
- 5.b. [that education **is** free]
6. and the majority of these women **never had to pay** tuition fees on school or university,
7. actually they **were given** a monthly allowance (stipend) for studying after high school.
8. Saudis **have been paid** to study
9. since higher education first **opened** in the country as a way to get more people literate faster.
10. And it **worked**
11. because just three generations ago literacy **was** less than 50%.
- 12.a. It **worked** so well [that most people younger than forty have a college degree.]
- 12.b. [that most people younger than forty **have** a college degree.]
- 13.a. And even though women **studied** [and graduated in larger numbers than men,]
- 13.b. [and **graduated** in larger numbers than men,]
- 14.a. yet it **seems** [like they are expected to think of the whole educational experience as a past-time or just something to make them more desirable as marriage material.]
- 14.b. [like they **are expected** to think of the whole educational experience as a past-time or just something to make them more desirable as marriage material.]
15. Now that all the segregated fields (mostly education) **are bursting** at the seams with all that human resources,
16. the rest of these women **have** nowhere to go and little money to spend.
17. a. To have a hundred thousand applicants in one week in a part of society [with which mobility is an issue] **should be** a matter of great concern,
- 17.b. [with which mobility **is** an issue]
18. especially considering that there **are** over 5 million migrant workers taking up jobs like selling lingerie, waiters and chefs
19. and even our hotel industry **is** mostly **run** by non Saudis.
- 20.a. All the while, Saudi women **wilt** at home waiting for the government to employ them in jobs [that are proper for them to take.]
- 20.b. [that **are** proper for them to take.]
21. Because if they **don't take up** something proper
22. they **are** very likely to have our society drag their reputation and that of their families in the mud.
23. Society **does** this in its own quiet way without much word getting back to the women concerned.
24. The only apparent sign **is** a dry up in the number of suitors to all the daughters of that family
25. Just this week a Saudi news website **gave** this cultural punishment to a group of Saudi women journalists in a much louder form.
- 26.a. The website **reported** [that these lady reporters slept with their editors,] [smoked pot,] [drank] [and had so-called red nights at vacation houses on the outskirts of the city.]
- 26.b. [that these lady reporters **slept with** their editors,]
- 26.c. [**smoked** pot,]
- 26.d. [**drank**]
- 26.c. [and **had** so-called red nights at vacation houses on the outskirts of the city.]
- 27.a. And I'm glad to say [that these women are fighting back with a lawsuit against the website.]
- 27.b. [that these women **are fighting back** with a lawsuit against the website.]
28. A lawsuit that the ladies **are** highly likely to win
29. because our courts **tend** to bring the hammer down hard
- 30.a. when it **comes** to making outright false allegations [that tarnish family honor.]
- 30.b. [that **tarnish** family honor.]
31. Financial gain in the form of student stipends and later employment salaries **has gotten** women over the mountain of family consent to study and then teach.
32. Even the most conservative daddies and hubbies just **can't resist** that boost to the family income.

33. With the economy slowing down and the rise in living costs, financial gain **might** again **come to the rescue** of women in the form of larger numbers of families no longer being able to afford drivers and in expanding society's definition of proper jobs for women.

34. For more on the topic you **can read** an earlier post. And this post from the Susie of Arabia blog.

Post 22: Women are Finally Legally Working

1. Women **are** Finally Legally **Working**

2.a. So Saudi women **are** finally **working** in stores [that they should be working in,]

2.b. [that they **should be working** in,]

3.a. [what I find funny] **is** [that I have seen them working in hardware stores like Extra many months ago advising women on electrical appliances like toasters, microwave ovens, even air conditioners and washing machines]

3.b. [what I **find** funny]

3.c. [that I **have seen** them working in hardware stores like Extra many months ago advising women on electrical appliances like toasters, microwave ovens, even air conditioners and washing machines]

4. (big screen TVs **were** and probably **always will be** a man's territory

5. all those years looking up to the sky **has had to have** some kind of impact on our genes)

6. There **are** economic incentives behind this,

7. 7 billion dollars **being pumped out** of the country in the second quarter of 2011 alone by foreign workers,

8. anyone **can see**...

9. it **is not** good for the economy...

10.a. it **is** only good for the one vary famous bank [which deals with them every month and [gets a transaction fee for every transfer,]]

10.b. [which **deals** with them every month and [gets a transaction fee for every transfer,]]

10.c. [**gets** a transaction fee for every transfer,]

11.a. I **think** [I read [that the owner of the bank [SIC] is one of the richest in Saudi, and one of the worst banks to deal with on a personal banking level,]]

11.b. [I **read** [that the owner of the bank is one of the richest in Saudi, and one of the worst banks to deal with on a personal banking level,]]

11.c. [that the owner of the bank **is** one of the richest in Saudi, and [SIC] one of the worst banks to deal with on a personal banking level,]

12. it **doesn't make sense**...

13. but it **does make** cents and dollars.

14.a. I **assume**, [that once things settle,]

14.b. the big companies [that own everything in the malls] **will begin** to employ non-Saudi women,

15.b. [that **own** everything in the malls]

16. just like they **do** in other gulf countries, for all the obvious outsourcing (but inwards) reasons,

17. and **let's** see

18. if netaqat **is** also applied to Saudi women,

19. since the labor office **says** that employing a Saudi woman is equal to employing four Saudi men to fulfill their Saudization quotas,

20. something all governments **do** in the form of affirmative action

21. (**don't quote** me on this,

22.a. this **is** [what I hear]

22.b. [what I **hear**]

23. and I am [SIC] **have not seen** the labor regulations).

24. So if I **had** a multimillion dollar business to run,

25. I **would have** a lot of leeway to play the system.

26.a. Some **say** [the head of Hay'a was replaced due to this issue being a problem,]

26.b. [the head of Hay'a **was replaced** due to this issue being a problem,]

27. I **never knew** his name

28.a. until I **heard** [he was being replaced,]

28.b. [he **was being** replaced,]

29. so good luck to the new guy
30. **remember**,
31. change **takes** time.

Post 23: Women Selling Lingerie in Saudi

1. Women **Selling** Lingerie in Saudi
2. It **is** official now,
3. women **will be selling** lingerie in Saudi,
4. and not just in closed off for women's only shops like they currently **do**.
5. That **comes out**
6. at the same time [SIC] "no mixing of sexes at workplaces **is** allowed" by the the [SIC] religious council,
- 7.a. which basically **means** (to me) [that lingerie shop employees (men and women) should not work together,]
- 7.b. [that lingerie shop employees (men and women) **should not work** together,]
8. since it **would be** a huge problem to stop that at hospitals (as an example) now.
- 9.a. I **know** [the council seems to have said otherwise]
- 9.b. [the council **seems** to have said otherwise]
10. (not at pharmacies, or schools, or production lines... etc, which **is** almost non existent).
- 11.a. [The question I have now] **is**... [Who will get the sole right to franchise Victoria's Secret]
- 11.b. [The question I **have** now]
- 11.c. [Who **will get** the sole right to franchise Victoria's Secret]
12. and will the angels ever **appear** in Saudi?

Post 24: Saudi Ban on Female Supermarket Cashiers

1. Saudi Ban on Female Supermarket Cashiers
- 2.a. Not that I **have seen** many of them, or [checked out using [one of the lines they operate,]]
- 2.b. [**checked** out using [one of the lines they operate,]]
- 2.c. [one of the lines they **operate**,]
3. but I **am** a hopeful person (with borderline delusions),
- 4.a. I **assume** [they will provide women with better career opportunities,]
- 4.b. [they **will provide** women with better career opportunities,]
5. after all, if a cashiers [SIC] **can never aspire** to be a store managers [SIC],
6. then there **is** little use to make our precious jewels/diamonds work in dead end jobs all while being driven around like queens.
7. **Let's** also continue to let them go to stores
8. where they **are sized up** for bras and panties by strange men
9. (ok those store clerics **are** like doctors,
10. so it's ok
11. No **wait**
12. **Don't** they also **want** all female hospitals in Saudi.
- 13.a. Hmm, maybe that's [why they don't want the supermarkets and shopping centers to take all the female workforce,]
- 13.b. [why they **don't want** the supermarkets and shopping centers to take all the female workforce,]
- 14.a. women rather **go** shopping than [work in hospitals]
- 14.b. [**work** in hospitals]
- 15.a. I **think** [I finally cracked it)]
- 15.b. [I finally **cracked** it)]
- 16.a. Of course this also **means** [that, [and this is for the ladies only,] driving is "far away from your mustaches".]
- 16.b. [that, [and this is for the ladies only,] driving **is** "far away from your mustaches".]
- 16.c. [and this **is** for the ladies only,]

Post 25: Gold Merchants Say [Saudi Women Can't Sell Gold]

- 1.a. Gold Merchants **Say** [Saudi Women Can't Sell Gold]
- 1.b. [Saudi Women **Can't Sell** Gold]
- 2.a. When the Saudi Ministry of Labor (MOL) **announced** [it would limit the retail jobs at lingerie stores to women,]
- 2.b. [it **would limit** the retail jobs at lingerie stores to women,]
- 3.a. store owners **objected** to the decision saying [it will negatively affect their business.]
- 3.b. [it **will** negatively **affect** their business.]
4. The same scenario **is** now **being repeated** with jewelry shops.
- 5.a. Kareem al-Enizy, head of the the National Committee for Precious Metals and Gemstones at the Saudi Chambers Council **told** *al-Eqtisadiah* daily Friday [that working at jewelry outlets **is not** appropriate for Saudi women.]
- 5.b. [that working at jewelry outlets **is not** appropriate for Saudi women.]
- 6.a. [“The work hours, dealing with security authorities, merchants, banks and the huge amounts of cash are things [that we don't believe [Saudi women are capable of doing, ”]] he **said**.
- 6.b. [“The work hours, dealing with security authorities, merchants, banks and the huge amounts of cash **are** things [that we don't believe [Saudi women are capable of doing, ”]]
- 6.c. [that we **don't believe** [Saudi women are capable of doing, ”]]
- 6.d. [Saudi women **are** capable of doing, ”]
7. MOL **has not announced** anything yet regarding a change in employment policies for the jewelry market,
- 8.a. but the newspaper **said** [MOL are working on a study to assess the matter.]
- 8.b. [MOL **are working** on a study to assess the matter.]
9. A previous attempt by the ministry to limit jobs in the gold shops to Saudi nationals **has failed** miserably.
10. Less than 5 percent of workers in the market are Saudis.
11. However, after the the [SIC] success of MOL in getting Saudi women to work at lingerie stores, jewelry shops **are** likely to be the next target for the ministry to fight unemployment among women.
- 12.a. Eighty percent of [those who currently receive unemployment benefits through *Hafiz* program] **are** women.
- 12.b. [those who currently **receive** unemployment benefits through *Hafiz* program]
13. *Al-Eqtisadiah* **spoke** with a number of gold merchants.
14. They all **expressed** their objection to the ministry's intentions.
- 15.a. [The change will not solve any problems,] they **said**,
- 15.b. [The change **will not solve** any problems,]
16. and **will create** other problems.
- 17.a. [I don't support the proposal to limit jobs at gold shops to females, not in objection to Saudization but [because women are not qualified to work there, ”]] **said** Abdulmouhsin al-Nemer, a prominent gold merchant in the Eastern Province.
- 17.b. [I **don't support** the proposal to limit jobs at gold shops to females, not in objection to Saudization but [because women are not qualified to work there, ”]]
- 17.c. [because women **are** not qualified to work there, ”]
- 18.a. Investors and merchants **say** [there are over 7,000 gold shops in the country, hiring more than 35,000 people,] according to the newspaper.
- 18.b. [there **are** over 7,000 gold shops in the country, hiring more than 35,000 people,]

Post 26: Saudi Women Lawyers: Equal Footing

1. Saudi Women Lawyers: Equal Footing
- 2.a. lizabeth Dickinson, reporting for Abu Dhabi-based *The National*, **goes** few years back to tell the story of [how Saudi Arabia finally decided to allow female lawyers to apply for licences and to argue cases in court:]
- 2.b. [how Saudi Arabia finally **decided** to allow female lawyers to apply for licences and to argue cases in court:]

- 3.a. In 2007, a group of women working with Saudi Arabia’s National Society for Human Rights **published** the first legal study arguing [that female lawyers should have equal rights to practice law.]
- 3.b. [that female lawyers **should have** equal rights to practice law.]
4. They **presented** their findings to the government
5. but they also **took** their campaign directly to the people.
- 6.a. [“We were trying to send our voice through the media,”] **recalls** Hanouf Alhazzaa,
- 6.b. [“We **were trying** to send our voice through the media,”]
7. a lawyer who **worked** on the study
8. and **is** now a doctoral candidate at Harvard University.
9. A Facebook group named [“I’m a Lawyer”] **was set up**.
10. [“I’m a Lawyer”]
11. Twitter hashtags **followed**.
- 12.a. Women **posted** YouTube videos arguing [that they were just as qualified as men to be lawyers.]
- 12.b. [that they **were** just as qualified as men to be lawyers.]
13. Small cracks **began** to open in the system
14. as the word **spread**.
- 15.a. As the story later **notes**, [“the new rules seem to place women on equal footing with men across all segments of legal practice.”]
- 15.b. [“the new rules **seem** to place women on equal footing with men across all segments of legal practice.”]
16. On paper, that **is**.
17. The real test **will be** to see
18. if these new rules **will be** fully **implemented**
- 19.a. We **have** many nice rules on paper [that never get implemented.]
- 19.b. [that never **get implemented**.]
- 20.a. We also **have** practices [that are banned]
- 20.b. [that **are banned**]
21. even though laws **say** noting about them.
22. The prime example for that, of course, **is** women driving.

Post 27: Saudi Clerics To Labor Minister: Stop Women Employment [Or You Will Get Cancer

- 1.a. Saudi Clerics To Labor Minister: **Stop** Women Employment [Or You Will Get Cancer
- 1.b. [Or You **Will Get** Cancer]
- 2.a. [Clerics who oppose gender mixing at the workplace] **have given** an ultimatum to Saudi Minister of Labor Adel Fakieh:
- 2.b. [Clerics who **oppose** gender mixing at the workplace]
3. he **has** one month to roll back on the policy allowing women to work in retail,
4. or they **will pray** to God to give him cancer.
- 5.a. Local media **reported** [that more than 200 clerics from around the Kingdom had come to Riyadh [and held a meeting Tuesday afternoon at the Ministry with Fakieh to complain about gender mixing in retail stores, accusing him of challenging religious authorities in the country like the Council of Senior Ulema.]]
- 5.b. [that more than 200 clerics from around the Kingdom **had come** to Riyadh [and held a meeting Tuesday afternoon at the Ministry with Fakieh to complain about gender mixing in retail stores, accusing him of challenging religious authorities in the country like the Council of Senior Ulema.]]
- 5.c. [and **held** a meeting Tuesday afternoon at the Ministry with Fakieh to complain about gender mixing in retail stores, accusing him of challenging religious authorities in the country like the Council of Senior Ulema.]
- 6.a. [“Stop women employment or [we will pray against you [like we have done with the previous Labor Minister,”]]] a cleric named Abdulrahman Aba-Nemai reportedly **told** Fakieh.
- 6.b. [“**Stop** women employment or [we will pray against you [like we have done with the previous Labor Minister,”]]]
- 6.c. [we **will pray** against you [like we have done with the previous Labor Minister,”]]
- 6.d. [like we **have done** with the previous Labor Minister,”]
7. The cleric **was referring** to the late Ghazi al-Gosaibi

- 8.a. who **passed away** in August 2010 [and had to face similar opposition from conservatives over women employment.]
- 8.b. [and **had to face** similar opposition from conservatives over women employment.]
- 9.a. A video uploaded to YouTube **showed** [some attendees cheer with the sounds of *takbeer*]
- 9.b. [some attendees **cheer** with the sounds of *takbeer*]
10. as Aba-Nemai **talked** to Fakieh.
- 11.a. Defending the policy, Fakieh **said** [women have worked in sales since the days of the Prophet]
- 11.b. [women **have worked** in sales since the days of the Prophet]
12. and that there **is** nothing in Islam forbidding such work.
- 13.a. [“Women in our country have worked in sales before, [and in some regions they still do,]”] he **said**,
- 13.b. [“Women in our country **have worked** in sales before, [and in some regions they still do,]”]
- 13.c. [and in some regions they still **do**,”]
14. “But now, foreign men **are selling** lingerie to our women.
15. No jealous man **would accept** this.”
- 16.a. Fakieh also **rejected** the accusation [that his ministry is pushing an agenda to “westernize” society through the employment of women] [and refused to discuss the motives behind his policy.]
- 16.b. [that his ministry **is pushing** an agenda to “westernize” society through the employment of women]
- 16.c. [and **refused** to discuss the motives behind his policy.]
- 17.a. [“Only God knows about motives,] [and I won’t say more on this,]” he **told** the clerics.
- 17.b. [“Only God **knows** about motives,]
- 17.c. [and I **won’t say** more on this,]”]
- 18.a. The Saudi government **has worked** to encourage more women to join the workforce as part of its plans to tackle the high unemployment rate [which they officially put at 10.5.]
- 18.b. [which they officially **put** at 10.5.]
- 19.a. The Minister **told** local media last October [that more than 80 percent of the 1.5 million unemployed Saudi nationals looking for work are women.]
- 19.b. [that more than 80 percent of the 1.5 million unemployed Saudi nationals looking for work **are** women.]
20. This **is** the second visit in two weeks by the clerics to the Ministry of Labor to protest women employment.
21. When the clerics **visited** the Ministry last week
22. Fakieh only **met** with them briefly
- 23.a. because they **showed up** without appointment [and promised to meet them again.]
- 23.b. [and **promised** to meet them again.]
- 24.a. Describing yesterday’s meeting, *al-Hayat* **said** [Fakieh had to face a “heated verbal pelting” by the clerics.]
- 24.b [Fakieh **had to face** a “heated verbal pelting” by the clerics.]
- 25.a. [We don’t want solutions for women employment,]” they **told** him.
- 25.b. [We **don’t want** solutions for women employment,]”]
26. “We just **want** it stopped.”
- 27.a. Fakieh **was** defiant [and told the clerics [they have the right to offer advice]]
- 27.b. [and **told** the clerics [they have the right to offer advice]]
- 27.c [they **have** the right to offer advice]
28. and if he, as a government official, **decided** not to [SIC] to take their advice
29. then they **are** free to go the courts and sue the Ministry.
- 30.a. [“Some of you have already gone to the courts to oppose the Ministry of Labor’s decision,]”] he **said**.
- 30.b. [“Some of you **have** already **gone** to the courts to oppose the Ministry of Labor’s decision,]”]
31. “If the courts **ruled** against the decision,
32. we **will cancel** it.”

Post 28: Women in pharmacies

1. Women in pharmacies
2. The ministry of health **is studying** a proposal to allow women to work in community pharmacies and optics shops

3. Currently, female pharmacists and optics technicians **are** only **allowed** to practice their jobs inside hospitals.
- 4.a. The proposal **was made** by Jeddach Chamber of Commerce, [who said [they will keep pushing this proposal over the next three years.]]
- 4.b. [who **said** [they will keep pushing this proposal over the next three years.]]
- 4.c. [they will **keep pushing** this proposal over the next three years.]
- 5.a. Aysha Natto, member of the Chamber, **denied** [that this proposal is challenging the social norms in any way.]
- 5.b. [that this proposal **is challenging** the social norms in any way.]
- 6.a. Natto **says** [the men who deal with women inside hospitals are the same men [who will deal with them in community pharmacies.]]
- 6.b. [the men who deal with women inside hospitals] **are** the same men [who will deal with them in community pharmacies.]]
- 6.c. [the men who **deal** with women inside hospitals]
- 6.d. [who will **deal** with them in community pharmacies.]
- 7.a. [“It doesn’t make sense to continue viewing men in our society as wolves [that look for women in every place,”]] she **added**.
- 7.b. [“It **doesn’t make sense** to continue viewing men in our society as wolves [that look for women in every place,”]]
- 7.c. [that **look for** women in every place,”]

TOPIC 4: WOMEN AND SPORTS

Post 29: Two Steps Forward....

1. Two Steps Forward....
2. **Do** Saudi Arabia’s two Olympic female athletes — the kingdom’s first ever — **represent** changing times in the Land of the Two Holy Mosques,
3. or **will** the conservative religious backlash **win out**?
4. For years, human rights organizations hoping to use the Olympics as leverage to challenge Saudi Arabia’s restrictive gender policies **have looked** to the case of apartheid South Africa.
5. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), after all, **expelled** South Africa in 1970 for its policy of racial discrimination —
6. a ban that **stayed** in place for 21 years, until the fall of apartheid in 1991.
7. If the IOC **took** action against South Africa to help end race-based apartheid there,
8. **shouldn’t** it **bar** Saudi Arabia from the 2012 London Olympics in protest of gender-based apartheid in the kingdom?
9. **Read** on here.
10. NOTE: Writing this article, I **researched** some of the books and fatwas against women sports
11. and I **refer** to one of these books in the article.
- 12.a. In that same book, I **came across** something interesting [that wasn’t included in the article.]
- 12.b. [that **wasn’t included** in the article.]
- 13.a. So I **thought** [I would share it with you here:]
- 13.b. [I **would share** it with you here:]
- 14.a. AlShathri (the author) **argues** [that physical education will require [that the girls change in front of each other]]
- 14.b. [that physical education **will require** [that the girls change in front of each other]]
- 14.c. [that the girls **change** in front of each other]
15. and that this “**will open** the evil door of lesbianism, admiration and their hearts getting attached to each other
- 16.a. and as our sheikh. Abdulrahmin Al Barrack, [bless him,] **has stated**, [“This is currently common among our students before the incorporation of physical education,]
- 16.b. [“This **is** currently common among our students before the incorporation of physical education,]

17. so how **will it be** after?!”””

Post 30: The Olympic triumph of Saudi Arabian women

1. The Olympic triumph of Saudi Arabian women
2. In Saudi Arabia the Olympics usually **does not get** much attention.
3. The Games **comes** and **goes** every four years without even registering with most Saudis.
- 4.a. The only sport [that Saudis are passionate about] **is** football.
- 4.b. [that Saudis **are** passionate about]
- 5.a. On the world stage, it's the World Cup [that makes them sit up and pay attention.]
- 5.b. [that **makes** them sit up and pay attention.]
- 6.a. It **does not help** [that local media give the Olympics the bare minimum coverage.]
- 6.b. [that local media **give** the Olympics the bare minimum coverage.]
7. Saudis **did not seem** to mind until this year
8. when at the last minute and after much resistance, the Saudi Olympic Committee **relented** and **allowed** women to join its delegation.
9. The committee **had resisted** on conservative grounds
10. and also because it's **not** an easy task to find Saudi women athletes.
11. **Click** here to read on.

Post 31: Saudi Women at the Olympics

1. Saudi Women at the Olympics
- 2.a. My friend Waseem Azib **made** a valid point the other day [that our country with almost 30 million residents [and more than 60% of the population is made up of youth,] saudi [SIC] has only 19 participants [(no one cares to know [who they are] [or what they are competing in])] at the London olympics,]
- 2.b. [that our country with almost 30 million residents [and more than 60% of the population is made up of youth,] saudi [SIC] **has** only 19 participants [(no one cares to know [who they are] [or what they are competing in])] at the London olympics,]
- 2.c. [and more than 60% of the population **is made up** of youth,]
- 2.d. [(no one **cares** to know [who they are] [or what they are competing in])]
- 2.e. [who they **are**]
- 2.f. [or what they **are competing** in)]
3. percentage wise that's [SIC] less than 0.00006%,
- 4.a. I guess [that falls in the negligible percentage,]
- 4.b. [that **falls** in the negligible percentage,]
- 5.a. I **have** no idea as to [what the percentage is for other countries,]
- 5.b. [what the percentage **is** for other countries,]
6. but that **falls** in the negligible margins for a person like me.
- 7.a. On the day of the London Olympics, [which is today], the 27th of July 2012, and where I just **came across** a post by Chase Jarvise titled Naked Titans: Photographs of World-Class Athletes in the Buff
- 7.b. [which **is** today]
8. we in Saudi, **have been raising** a bit of a controversy over the first two Saudi women to participate in the Olympics, one in Judo, the other in the 800 meter dash.
- 9.a. I **find** it funny [how all eyes will be on them,]
- 9.b. [how all eyes **will be** on them,]
- 10.a. even though they **have not received** half [the training male athletes have continued to receive over the years,]
- 10.b. [the training male athletes **have continued** to receive over the years,]
11. and if the Australian numbers **are** a yardstick to measure things by,
12. each gold medal **costs** about \$17 million Dollars,
- 13.a. that **is** the price [which goes into training a gold medal winning athlete in Australia,] [which [I am sure] has local coaches,]
- 13.b. [which **goes** into training a gold medal winning athlete in Australia,]

- 13.c. [which [I am sure] **has** local coaches,]
- 13.d. [I **am** sure]
- 14. unlike Saudi where we **get** our coaches from abroad.
- 15. Anyhow, I **wish** our olympic team all the best,
- 16.a. and I hope [they do not sleep]
- 16.b. [they **do not sleep**]
- 17.a. like they **did** [during the time their competition was going on,]
- 17.b. [during the time their competition **was going on,**]
- 18.a. at least that **is** [what [I heard] happened.]
- 18.b. [what [I heard] **happened.**]
- 18.c. [I **heard**]
- 19.a. I also **do not believe** [it is a human rights issue]
- 19.b. [it **is** a human rights issue]
- 20. as they are **making** it out to be,
- 21. physical fitness **is** not a priority to most of us in Saudi and the Gulf,
- 22. and if that small percentage **is** the numbers for males,
- 23. having a lower number for females **is** only understandable,
- 24. and they both **should be improved** no doubt.

Post 32: Dalma wins bronze

- 1. Dalma **wins** bronze
- 2. I **found** this interesting
- 3.a. “Though this **is** [the first time a Saudi woman athlete officially represented the Kingdom at an international competition,]
- 3.b. [the first time a Saudi woman athlete officially **represented** the Kingdom at an international competition,]
- 4. sev`eral women riders **had been competing** overseas since 2004 under the sponsorship of Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, chairman of Kingdom Holding Company.
- 5.a. Leading women riders [who have carried the colors of Kingdom Holding Company] **include** Alia Al-Huwaete, Nourah Al-Yousif, and Latifah Al-Shaikh,
- 5.b. [who **have carried** the colors of Kingdom Holding Company]
- 6. who all **competed** in several show jumping and endurance competitions in the Gulf.”(ArabNews)
- 7.a. **Makes** you wonder [what the press really sheds light on,]
- 7.b. [what the press really **sheds light on,**]
- 8.a. not to mention they **said** [Dalma was 16] in initial reports
- 8.b. [Dalma **was** 16]
- 9. and they **got** her name wrong.
- 10. **Congrats** to her on the bronze medal.

Post 33: Small Steps: Girls Schools in EP Begin Offering Sports Classes

- 1. Small Steps: Girls Schools in EP **Begin** Offering Sports Classes
- 2. Introducing physical education to public girls schools **has been** a challenge for the government,
- 3.a. but it **seems** [that they have finally managed to make some progress.]
- 3.b. [that they **have finally managed** to make some progress.]
- 4.a. *Al-Hayat* daily **reported** Wednesday [that the General Administration of Education in the Eastern Province has launched the first ever recreational club for girls in the region as part of King Abdullah Project for Development of Education.]
- 4.b. [that the General Administration of Education in the Eastern Province **has launched** the first ever recreational club for girls in the region as part of King Abdullah Project for Development of Education.]
- 5.a. According to the newspaper, [the club that was opened at the 22nd Girls’ Secondary Schools in Dammam] **provides** recreational and sports programs for weight loss and a basketball court.
- 5.b. [the club that **was opened** at the 22nd Girls’ Secondary Schools in Dammam]

6.a. Club's manager Mariam al-Shammari **told** the paper [they only have capacity of 400 students,]
6.b. [they only **have** capacity of 400 students,]
7. admitting that it **is** "small,"
8.a. but she **said** ["they are looking forward to achieve positive outcomes."]
8.b. ["they are **looking forward** to achieve positive outcomes."]
9.a. *Al-Watan* **reported** one day earlier [that 24 out of 25 public girls schools in the Eastern Province have refused to offer physical education classes to their students, despite taking part at the development program.]
9.b. [that 24 out of 25 public girls schools in the Eastern Province **have refused** to offer physical education classes to their students, despite taking part at the development program.]
10.a. Citing unnamed sources, the newspaper **said** [the only reason behind the refusal is the fear [that parents would object to the step.]]
10.b. [the only reason behind the refusal **is** the fear [that parents would object to the step.]]
10.c. [that parents **would object** to the step.]
11.a. The newspaper **added** [that senior officials at the General Administration of Education in the Eastern Province are also against the idea of introducing PE classes at girls schools for the same reason.]
11.b. [that senior officials at the General Administration of Education in the Eastern Province **are** also against the idea of introducing PE classes at girls schools for the same reason.]
12.a. The only school [which took the step] **was** the 2nd Girls' Secondary School in Khobar.
12.b. [which **took** the step]
13.a. Ahlam al-Amer, headmistress of the school, **told** *al-Watan* [that both parents and senior officials were unhappy [when the school began allowing students to play basketball last year.]]
13.b. [that both parents and senior officials **were** unhappy [when the school began allowing students to play basketball last year.]]
13.c. [when the school **began** allowing students to play basketball last year.]
14.a. [But eventually everyone accepted the idea [that they opposed at first,]] she **said**,
14.b. [But eventually everyone **accepted** the idea [that they opposed at first,]]
14.c. that they **opposed** at first,
15. and now they **offer** to present their experience at other schools.
16.a. When the Saudi Ministry of Education **said** few years ago [that they intend to introduce sports to public girls schools,]
16.b. [that they **intend** to introduce sports to public girls schools,]
17. conservative clerics **responded** with fatwas denouncing the plans.
18.a. Speaking to a local TV channel, Grand Mufti Abdulaziz Al Alsheikh **declared**, ["women should be housewives,"]
18.b. ["women **should be** housewives,"]
19. and "there **is** no need for them to engage in sports."
20.a. A preacher named Mohammed al-Habdan **published** a list of fourteen "evils" [that would result from introducing sports to girls schools, including taking the veil off and the "masculinization" of women.]
20.b. [that **would result** from introducing sports to girls schools, including taking the veil off and the "masculinization" of women.]
21. However, the government **has been** quietly **building** gyms into new schools.
22.a. Princess Norah University, the all-women school [which opened its doors for students last fall,] **has a** large sports and recreation center.
22.b. which **opened** its doors for students last fall,]
23.a. ["It's high time to look into the matter of introducing sports at girls schools seriously."]
Princess Adela bint Abdullah, the King's daughter, **told** *al-Riyadh* in 2009.
23.b. ["It's high time to look into the matter of introducing sports at girls schools seriously."]
24. The Princess **does not work** in the government
25. but she **is** married to the Minister of Education.
26. A champion of women's rights, she **is said to play** an influential role on education policy in the country.
27. Earlier this year, Saudi Arabia **sent** two female athletes to the Olympic Games London for the first time ever

- 28.a. The decision, [announced only few weeks before the Olympics started,] **came** after long negotiations between the government and the International Olympic Committee,
- 28.b. [announced only few weeks before the Olympics **started**,]
29. and under high pressure from human rights groups who **urged** the IOC to ban Saudi Arabia from the Games
30. if they **don't send** women.
- 31.a. But experts and observers **said** [that move was little more than a token.]
- 31.b. [that move **was** little more than a token.]
- 32.a. ["This is not a step forward for women's rights,"] activist Aziza al-Yousef **told** the *New York Times* last summer.
- 32.b. ["This **is** not a step forward for women's rights,"]
33. "We've **been asking for** girls to play sports in school for years;
34. here they **give** Saudi women a spot in the Olympics, but not the right to earn a place on the team.
35. This **doesn't add** anything,
36. and it **won't change** anything."

Post 34: End of Drama: Saudi to Send Women to Olympics

1. End of Drama: Saudi **to Send** Women to Olympics
2. After much back and forth, Saudi Arabia **will finally send** two female athletes to the Olympics for the first time.
- 3.a. [A runner and judoka will be representing the Kingdom in the London 2012 Games,] the International Olympic Committee **said**.
- 3.b. [A runner and judoka **will be representing** the Kingdom in the London 2012 Games, the International Olympic]
- 4.a. ["This is very positive news] [and we will be delighted to welcome these two athletes in London in a few weeks time,"] **said** IOC President Jacques Rogge.
- 4.b. ["This **is** very positive news]
- 4.c. [and we **will be delighted** to welcome these two athletes in London in a few weeks time,"]
5. It almost **did not happen**
- 6.a. On June 24, Saudi Arabia **announced** for the first time [that it was going to allow female athletes to compete in the Olympics.]
- 6.b. [that it **was going to allow** female athletes to compete in the Olympics.]
7. According to the BBC, the decision **came** after secret meetings held earlier that month in Jeddah,
8. where "a consensus **was reached** in mid-June between the king, the crown prince, the foreign minister, the leading religious cleric, the grand mufti and others, to overturn the ban" on women participation
9. At the time, all eyes **were** on showjumper Dalma Malhas,
10. who **won** a bronze medal in the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore in 2010,
11. and **was seen** as the country's most likely representative.
- 12.a. However, her mother **told** the Guardian [that Dalma would not be able to compete in London [because her horse was injured.]]
- 12.b. [that Dalma **would not be** able to compete in London [because her horse was injured.]]
- 12.c. [because her horse **was injured**.]
13. This **seemed** like a convenient way out for Saudi officials.
14. By saying they **don't mind** women participation
15. but **don't have** any female athletes qualified to compete,
16. they **can avoid** an Olympic ban
- 17.a. while at the same time **avoid** the rage of powerful clerics in the country [who oppose competitive sports for women.]
- 17.b. [who **oppose** competitive sports for women.]
18. To appease the clerics, Saudi most senior sports official Prince Nawaf bin Faisal **announced** a set of rules for women's participation at the Olympics.
- 19.a. [[Athletes can only take part] [if they do so "wearing suitable clothing [that complies with sharia"] [and "the athlete's guardian agrees and attends with her,"]] he **told** local daily *al-Jazirah*.
- 19.b. [Athletes **can only take part**]

- 19.c. [if they **do** so “wearing suitable clothing [that complies with sharia”]]
- 19.d. [that **complies** with sharia”]
- 19.e. [and “the athlete’s guardian **agrees** and **attends** with her,”]]
- 20.a. [“There must also be no mixing with men during the Games,”] he **added**.
- 20.b. [“There **must** also **be** no mixing with men during the Games,”]
- 21.a. Although the IOC **said** [they remained cautiously optimistic of the Saudi women participation,]
- 21.b. [they **remained** cautiously optimistic of the Saudi women participation,]
22. they **sounded** very doubtful.
- 23.a. [“I cannot guarantee it 100 percent,”] Rogge **told** the AP on July 4, despite ongoing negotiations with Saudi officials.
- 23.b. [“I **cannot guarantee** it 100 percent,”]
- 24.a. Four days later, the pan-Arab Saudi daily *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* **quoted** a Saudi official saying [there is no “female team taking part in the three fields.”]
- 24.b. [there **is no** “female team taking part in the three fields.”]
25. But human rights organizations **urged** IOC to ban Saudi Arabia from the London Games
26. if they **don’t send** women.
- 27.a. [[“It’s not [that the Saudis couldn’t find a woman athlete]] – [it’s [that their discriminatory policies have so far prevented one from emerging,”]]] **said** Minky Worden, director of global initiatives at Human Rights Watch
- 27.b. [[“It’s not [that the Saudis couldn’t find a woman athlete]]
- 27.c. [that the Saudis **couldn’t find** a woman athlete]
- 27.d. [it’s [that their discriminatory policies have so far prevented one from emerging,”]]
- 27.e. [that their discriminatory policies **have** so far **prevented** one from emerging,”]
- 28.a. On July 11, an unnamed Saudi official from the embassy in London **denied** media reports [that no female athletes from his country will compete in the Games,]
- 28.b. [that no female athletes from his country **will compete** in the Games,]
29. telling the BBC “that a ‘shooter’ and ‘a runner called Alia’ **are** under consideration for London 2012.”
30. Saudi Arabia **will send** two female athletes to London, but not the two mentioned by the embassy official
32. Thursday, the IOC **announced** the names of the two Saudi female athletes to compete in London Olympics this summer: Wejdan Shahrkhani in judo above 78kg, and Sarah Attar at the 800m race.
- 33.a. Attar **said** [she is honored to represent her country at London 2012]
- 33.b. [she **is honored** to represent her country at London 2012]
- 34.a. and **hopes** [her participation will encourage Saudi women to get more involved in sport.]
- 34.b. [her participation **will encourage** Saudi women to get more involved in sport.]
- 35.a. [“A big inspiration for participating in the Olympic Games is being one of the first women for Saudi Arabia to be going,”] she **told** the official Olympic website.
- 35.b. [“A big inspiration for participating in the Olympic Games **is** being one of the first women for Saudi Arabia to be going,”]
36. In the video published on the IOC website, Attar **appears** wearing a grey headscarf, with a loose-fitting long sleeves top and black sweatpants.
37. She apparently **did** that to comply with the rules set by the Saudi government.
38. A photo on her school’s website **shows** Attar in regular athletics gear, without a headscarf.
39. Attar **was born** and **raised** in Escondido, California.
40. Her father **is** Saudi,
41. her mother **is** American,
42. and **has been** to Saudi Arabia only a couple times.
43. She **is** a college student at Pepperdine University,
44. where she **is** a sophomore majoring in Art.
45. Attar **has** a message to Saudi women:
- 46.a. [[“To any woman who wants to participate,] [I say [‘go for it] [and don’t let anyone hold you back’,”]]] she **said**.
- 46.b. [“To any woman who **wants** to participate,]
- 46.c. [I **say** [‘go for it] and don’t let [anyone hold you back’,”]]
- 46.d. [‘**go** for it]

- 46.e. [and **don't let** anyone hold you back,']
47. "We all **have** the potential to get out there and get going."

TOPIC 5: GENDER MIXING AND SEGREGATION

Post 35: Muttawa Raid

1. Muttawa Raid
2. Ok I **took** a break
3. and I **learned** something about myself.
4. **I'm** a polygamist,
5. I've **married** this blog over the father of my children
6. and now I'm attached to it
7. and **cannot stay away** too long from my spoiled second husband, let alone two months.
8. If I **try**,
9. I just **miss** it more.
10. I **knew** it all along
11. but I **had to give** it a try.
12. Now that's out of the way,
- 13.a. I **have to tell** you [what I was up to last night.]
- 13.b. [what I **was** up to last night.]
14. My very dear friend Tine **has finished** her time here in Saudi.
15. and **is leaving** soon.
16. Unfortunately, being cooped up in expat compounds; she **has never had** a chance to see muttawas in action.
17. These lions of Saudi morality **are** a staple mark of life here
18. so I **couldn't let** her leave without the experience.
- 19.a. That's why [we went on a muttawa safari.]
- 19.b. [we **went** on a muttawa safari.]
20. We **headed** to their natural habitat, shopping malls.
21. And we **weren't** disappointed.
22. At Riyadh Gallery, a mall that **opened** about a couple of years ago,
- 23.a. they **had** the World Cup match on this humongous TV screen [that you can watch a mile away.]
- 23.b. [that you **can watch** a mile away.]
24. **I'm not exaggerating;**
25. people on all three floors **were watching** the same screen.
26. There **were** about three hundred people there.
27. Halfway through the match the muttawa **came in**
28. and **ordered** the TV **off**.
29. There **were** two muttawas and one police officer escorting them.
30. They **strolled** around this crowd searching for men without women.
31. Because it **is** illegal for single men to go to a shopping mall.
32. They **have to be accompanying** a wife, mother or sister.
33. Every once in a while they **would stop** young Saudi men
- 34.a. and **ask** them [where their women were.]
- 34.b. [where their women **were**.]
- 35.a. [One guy they didn't believe] **had to drag** a little girl over to the muttawas
- 35.b. [One guy they **didn't believe**]
- 36.a. so she could **verify** [that he was related to [the group of women he pointed at.]]
- 36.b. [that he **was** related to [the group of women he pointed at.]]
- 36.c. [the group of women he **pointed** at.]
37. Before the muttawas **came in**
38. it **was** noisy

39. and men and women **stood** next to each other looking up at the screen.
40. At every highlighted moment in the match there **was** either a collective roar or groan.
41. The atmosphere **was** electric.
42. Then the muttawas **came**
- 43.a. and everyone **knew** [that these three men had come in long before seeing them stroll by.]
- 43.b. [that these three men **had come in** long before seeing them stroll by.]
- 44.a. Even Tine **remarked** on [how these muttawas must be feeling [this power they had over the people.]]
- 44.b. [how these muttawas **must be feeling** [this power they had over the people.]]
- 44.c. [this power they **had** over the people.]
45. No one **objected** to having the match turned off.
46. Women **went** scurrying off to find seats in segregated areas.
- 47.a. Teenagers **headed** the opposite direction [that the muttawas were coming from]
- 47.b. [that the muttawas were **coming from**]
48. for fear that they **would be stopped** because of their hairstyles and low worn jeans
49. Everyone **was** silently **glancing** around,
50. **looking for** the muttawas
- 51.a. and **guessing** [who their victims might be.]
- 51.b. [who their victims **might be**.]
52. We **decided** to follow them,
53. albeit from afar to see who **would they take**.
54. They **focused** their energy on young Saudi men.
55. They even **went** into the bathrooms looking for hiding offenders.
56. Before we **lost** them,
57. we had **witnessed** them apprehend two men.
58. They **made** the two offenders come along
59. as they **continued** with their morality raid.
- 60.a. Both Tine and I **were** angered by [how passive people were.]
- 60.b. [how passive people **were**.]
- 61.a. It's [as if they really believed [that they were guilty of something.]]
- 61.b. [as if they really **believed** [that they were guilty of something.]]
- 61.c. [that they **were** guilty of something.]
62. Hundreds of people **shaking** in fear of a couple of bearded men.
63. No wonder that things **remain** [the way they are.]
64. [the way they **are**.]
- 65.a. People **believe** [they deserve to be treated this way.]
- 65.b. [they **deserve** to be treated this way.]
66. It **took** the muttawas about twenty minutes to finish their raid
67. and just like when they **came in**,
- 68.a. you **knew** [that they left.]
- 68.b. [that they **left**.]
69. The match was **turned back on**
70. and everyone **relaxed**
71. and **became** noisy again.
72. Before they **left**,
- 73.a. I **took** Tine outside to show her [how arrogant muttawas are]
- 73.b. [how arrogant muttawas **are**]
74. even in the way they **park**.
75. And sure enough, their jeep **was parked** on the pavement right next to the automatic doors.
- 76.a. You **would think** [they were an ambulance.]
- 76.b. [they **were** an ambulance.]

Post 36: The man of the hour

1. The man of the hour
2. Great controversy **is brewing** in Saudi Arabia

3. and it all **starts** and **ends** with Sheikh Ahmed Al Ghamdi.
4. Al Ghamdi **is** a 47 year old PhD holder in administration and strategical planning
5. and also **has spent** 15 years studying Islam.
6. The whole issue **began**
7. when Okaz Newspaper **published** a lengthy article last December written by Sheikh al Ghamdi
- 8.a. in which he **proclaimed** [that there is no such thing as gender segregation in Islam.]
- 8.b. that there **is** no such thing as gender segregation in Islam.]
- 9.a. He **stated** [that [what we are at today] is based on extremism and cultural considerations.]
- 9.b. [that [what we are at today] **is based** on extremism and cultural considerations.]
- 9.c. [what we **are** at today]
- 10.a. Moreover he **points out** [that [the very thing that we have been prohibiting] is practiced in most Saudi households with the presence of maids.]
- 10.b. [that [the very thing that we have been prohibiting] **is practiced** in most Saudi households with the presence of maids.]
- 10.c. [the very thing that we **have been prohibiting**]
- 11.a. Anyhow this **is not** the first time [that a Saudi sheikh has written about the illogicality of gender segregation.]
- 11.b. [that a Saudi sheikh **has written** about the illogicality of gender segregation.]
12. Sheikh Ahmed Bin Baz **wrote** about it
13. and so **did** the judge Eissa al Ghaith.
14. Although both **got** an earful,
15. their articles **were** eventually **forgotten**.
- 16.a. The difference with Sheikh al Ghamdi **is** [that he is head of the Makkah PVPV commission.]
- 16.b. [that he **is** head of the Makkah PVPV commission.]
17. And as everybody **knows**,
18. maintaining gender segregation **is** one of the highest callings of the PVPV.
19. So for Sheikh al Ghamdi to come out and say that this form of segregation **is** Islamically baseless,
20. it **becomes** an issue of conflict of interests.
21. And then he **tops** his gender segregation article with another article on not banning shops from business during prayer time.
- 22.a. Going around shopping areas to insure [that they close during prayer] **is** another main component of a PVPV member's job description.
- 22.b. [that they **close** during prayer]
- 23.a. As one journalist **points out**, [Shiekh al Ghamdi may be free to write [what he thinks]]
- 23.b. [Shiekh al Ghamdi may **be** free to write [what he thinks]]
- 23.c. [what he **thinks**]
- 24.a. but as an employee of the PVPV, he **shouldn't be publishing** things [that go against their policies and practices.]
- 24.b. [that **go** against their policies and practices.]
- 25.a. For the PVPV and the whole ultra conservative majority, to have one of their own, someone [who they had given a high position in their hierarchy] **go against** their beliefs is a slap in the face.
- 25.b. [who they **had given** a high position in their hierarchy]
26. Attacks on Shiekh al Ghamdi's character, credentials and articles **were** on every one of their TV channels and papers.
- 27.a. Some **claimed** [that he was paid to write [what he wrote.]]
- 27.b. [that he **was paid** to write [what he wrote.]]
- 27.c. [what he **wrote**.]
28. And then a group of influential muttawas **got** together
29. and **decided** to invite Sheikh al Ghamdi to a televised debate.
30. He **came onto** to the show
31. and it **struck** me as more of a trap.
32. Insults **were thrown** at him right and left.
- 33.a. The opposing debaters instead of discussing al Ghamdi's points **kept calling** him a mere accountant [who doesn't know [what he's talking about.]]
- 33.b. [who **doesn't know** [what he's talking about.]]

- 33.c. [what he's **talking** about.]
- 34.a. Another **claimed** [that al Ghamdi was blasphemous towards the Prophet (PBUH).]
- 34.b. [that al Ghamdi **was blasphemous** towards the Prophet (PBUH).]
- 35.a. The call-ins **were** a confirmation of my belief [that the whole show was a set up.]
- 35.b. [that the whole show **was** a set up.]
36. Again a bunch of sheikhs **called in**
37. and **insulted** al Ghamdi
- 38.a. and then HRH prince Khalid bin Talal **called** demanding [that al Ghamdi be fired from his PVPV post]
- 38.b. [that al Ghamdi **be fired** from his PVPV post]
39. and **called** him an embarrassment to Saudi Arabia.
- 40.a. This **lead** to a flurry of news organizations reporting [that a PVPV sheikh was fired for not believing in gender segregation.]
- 40.b. [that a PVPV sheikh **was fired** for not believing in gender segregation.]
- 41.a. The next day it **was learned** [that Al Ghamdi was still at his PVPV post.]
- 41.b. [that Al Ghamdi **was** still at his PVPV post.]
42. The following week sheikh al Ghamdi **was again invited** to the show to debate the issue.
43. The second show **was** an improvement on the first.
44. The debaters **were given** three uninterrupted minutes to state their case
45. and everyone **tried** to avoid personal insults.
46. The call-ins too **were** more balanced with some calling in [sic] in support of al Ghamdi.
- 47.a. On both shows I **was** impressed by [how confident and articulate al Ghamdi was.]
- 47.b. [how confident and articulate al Ghamdi **was**.]
48. In comparison, the other two shiekhs **seemed** baffled and unprepared.
49. However the outcries against him **haven't subsided**
50. and his job at the PVPV **is** still up in the air.
- 51.a. The afternoon of April 25th, a statement **was released** to the newspapers [that a routine shuffle has resulted in the demotion of sheikh al Ghamdi.]
- 51.b. [that a routine shuffle **has resulted in** the demotion of sheikh al Ghamdi.]
52. and then a couple of hours later all newspapers **were requested** not to publish the statement.
- 53.a. And up to the writing of this post no news of [whether or not Sheikh al Ghamdi will be allowed to keep his job] **has come out**.
- 53.b. [whether or not Sheikh al Ghamdi **will be allowed** to keep his job]

Post 37: Contradictions

1. Contradictions
- 2.a. There **are** a few things [that I never understood]
- 2.b. [that I never **understood**]
- 3.a. (and **could not get** an answer [that would satisfy me]) in my own country,
- 3.b. [that **would satisfy** me]
- 4.a. so I **cannot imagine** [how outsiders might feel.]
- 4.b. [how outsiders **might feel**.]
- 5.a. One of them **is**... [how on earth rice became a national dish,]
- 5.b. [how on earth rice **became** a national dish,]
6. when the stuff **is not grown** in the peninsula?
- 7.a. The second, [which is the most debated issue], **is** the segregation between males and females.
- 7.b. [which **is** the most debated issue]
8. One, because anyone from outside of Saudi **can look at** a picture of the Ka'ba,
9. and **see** males and females around the clock going around the Ka'ba in the counter clockwise motion of the ritual. 10. No segregation, and at times when it **is** really crowded
11. shoulders **bump into** each other...
12. and life **goes on**.
13. Yet not even a few meters away from the Ka'ba, segregation **is enforced**.
14. I **can understand** it happening during prayers,

15. most religions **do** that...

16. but then it **seems** the further away from the Ka'ba

17. the more segregation **occurs**.

18. As any place with thousands of visitors every day, a parking space **is** hard to find in Makkah, and expensive,

19. **add** to that the mountainous nature of the area.

20.a. So people, [at least those who know the ins and outs of Makkah] usually **park** their cars a little further away,

20.b. [at least those who **know** the ins and outs of Makkah]

21. and **take** a taxi or a bus.

22. A few years ago we **developed** a habit of parking at a hotel, and taking their shuttle to the Haram.

23. On the way there, my wife **sat next** to me with our son in my lap.

24. After finishing and heading back to the hotel, we **got** on the shuttle.

25.a. There **are** security guys [who make sure [you are eligible to ride the bus, usually the stub from the automated gate at the hotel's parking lot,]]

25.b. [who **make sure** [you are eligible to ride the bus, usually the stub from the automated gate at the hotel's parking lot,]]

25.c. [you **are** eligible to ride the bus, usually the stub from the automated gate at the hotel's parking lot,]

26.a. so after showing it, and sitting down in [the same arraignment we came in], the guard **snapped** his fingers at my wife

26.b. [the same arraignment we **came in**]

27. and **told** her to go to the back of the bus with all the women...

28. and before I **could say** anything,

29.a. my wife **exploded** in his face telling him [that he has no right to tell her where to sit,]

29.b. [that he **has** no right to tell her where to sit,]

30. and that she **is sitting** next to me with our child...

31.a. she **exploded** with such furry [that he started to stutter,]

31.b. [that he **started** to stutter,]

32.a. I **think** [a woman never spoke to him that way before,]

32.b. [a woman **never spoke** to him that way before,]

33.a. **let alone** [scold him like that.]

33.b. [**scold** him like that.]

34.a. [All I had to do] **was** give him the "look"

34.b. [All I **had to do**]

35. Once he **got** out of the bus,

36. bewildered at what just **happened**,

37. I **looked at** my wife

38. and **smiled** (trying not to laugh)...

39.a. I **told** her [I was going to say something to the guy]

39.b. [I **was going to say** something to the guy]

40. before she **turned** all Saudi Rosa Parks on him,

41. but she **had already burned** him,

42. that I almost **felt** sorry for the guy...

43.a. however, deep inside we both **knew** [he got [what he deserved,]]

43.b. [he **got** [what he deserved,]]

43.c. [what he **deserved**,]

44.a. I for one **know** [that if she had her face covered] [he would've directed the comment towards me, and probably in a more polite manner.]

44.b. [that if she **had** her face covered]

44.c. [he **would've directed** the comment towards me, and probably in a more polite manner.]

45.a. As for my wife, I always **knew** [she could take care of herself,]

45.b. [she **could take care** of herself,]

46. but actually seeing it... **made** me feel proud of her even more.

47. Not that busses **are** not mixed seating to and from the holy areas,

48. here **is** a picture of a nice looking couple sitting next to each other,

49. but usually because the bus **is** crowded,
50. they **like** to segregate the males and the females in the bus to accommodate more people...
51. but then again... we **were** all cramped next to each other around the Ka'ba... so...
52. Anyway, the moral of the story **is**... contradiction, my prediction...

Post 38: Conservatives Launch Twitter Competition to Fight Gender Mixing

1. Conservatives **Launch** Twitter Competition to Fight Gender Mixing
2. Saudi conservatives **do not like** it
3. when men **mix** with women.
4. They **hate** gender mixing.
5. They actually **hate** it so much
- 6.a. they **are organizing** a competition to raise awareness of [what a dangerous “phenomenon” gender mixing is.]
- 6.b. [what a dangerous “phenomenon” gender mixing **is**.]
- 7.a. The motivation to organize the competition, [said its supervisor Abdullah al-Mohaisnee,] **is** reports of gender mixing at Princess Nora University [that surfaced last month.]
- 7.b. [**said** its supervisor Abdullah al-Mohaisnee,]
- 7.c. [that **surfaced** last month.]
8. The ministry of higher education later **denied** the reports
- 9.a. and **said** in a statement [that it is their policy to adhere to Islamic values.]
- 9.b. [that it **is** their policy to adhere to Islamic values.]
- 10.a. [“The main goal of this competition is to highlight the Westernization creeping into society,”] al-Mohaisnee **said** during an interview on the Islamist al-Majd television.
- 10.b. [“The main goal of this competition **is** to highlight the Westernization creeping into society,”]
11. Below **is** a promotional video for the competition:
- 12.a. [The competition will take place on Twitter,] **explained** al-Mohaisnee.
- 12.b. [The competition **will take place** on Twitter,]
13. Users **are asked** to read a book warning against gender mixing by Saudi cleric Abdulaziz al-Turaifi
14. then **answer** questions by replying on the social networking site.
15. Participants **will compete** to bag 50 prizes, including cars, jewelry, iPhones, iPads and more.
16. Saudi Arabia **practices** a strict interpretation of Islam
17. and gender segregation **is** the norm in education and the -workplace.
18. As the government **tried** in recent years to push more women into the workforce,
19. gender mixing has increasingly **become** a contentious issue in the country.

Post 39: Jeddah Literary Club Rejects Gender Segregation

1. Jeddah Literary Club **Rejects** Gender Segregation
2. The head of the Jeddah Literary Club **has ruled out** banning women from sitting in the same hall as men during the club’s activities as requested by some people.
- 3.a. [“People have the right to voice their views] [and the club also has the right to make [the decision it sees fit,”]] Abdullah Al Sulami **said**.
- 3.b. [“People **have** the right to voice their views]
- 3.c. [and the club also **has** the right to make [the decision it sees fit,”]]
- 3.d. [the decision it **sees** fit,”]
- 4.a. [“Whoever wants to attend our activities] **is** most welcome to do so,
- 4.b. [“Whoever **wants** to attend our activities]
- 5.a. but those [who feel [that they are not in line with their convictions]] **may leave**.
- 5.b. [who **feel** [that they are not in line with their convictions]]
- 5.c. [that they **are** not in line with their convictions]
- 6.a. [The club is for all] [and we welcome all people,”] he **said**, quoted by local Arabic daily Al Madina on Wednesday.
- 6.b. [The club **is** for all]
- 6.c. [and we **welcome** all people,”]

7. Al Sulami **made** the comments
- 8.a. after a group of people [who wanted to attend the “Saudi Elite and Alienation Issues” lecture] **protested** against the presence of women in the same room as men
- 8.b. [who **wanted** to attend the “Saudi Elite and Alienation Issues” lecture]
9. and **threatened** to leave
10. if they **were not told** to move to another room.
- 11.a. Reasoning with the protesters, Abdullah Jadaa, the club spokesperson, **said** [that women had often opted to sit in the same hall as men]
- 11.b. [that women **had** often **opted** to sit in the same hall as men]
12. even though the club **provided** a separate area for them.
- 13.a. [“We have since the launch of the club taken into account privacy matters of [those who attended our activities,”]] he **said**.
- 13.b. [“We **have** since the launch of the club **taken into account** privacy matters of [those who attended our activities,”]]
- 13.c. [those who **attended** our activities,”]]
14. “However, women **have developed** the habit of sitting in the same hall as men
15. and now **refuse** to move out.”
16. According to the daily, most of the protesters eventually **changed** their mind
17. and **attended** the lecture.
18. A more accurate translation of the lecture’s title **would be** “Saudi Elite and Westernization Issues.”
- 19.a. The religious conservatives [who objected to the presence of women in the hall] **decided** to leave
- 19.b. [who **objected** to the presence of women in the hall]
- 20.a. after the head of JLC **said** [women have the right to be there.]
- 20.b. [women **have** the right to be there.]
21. Good for the women for standing their ground, and kudos to JLC for not bowing down to a bunch religious bullies.

Post 40: Kill Me Now

1. **Kill Me Now**
2. For someone who **would** probably **enjoy** the lifestyle of a caveman,
3. Shaikh Abdul-Rahman al-Barrak **has** an impressive ability to occasionally make news headlines with his ridiculous, albeit dangerous, fatwas.
- 4.a. His latest fatwa **called** for [opponents of the kingdom’s strict segregation of men and women to be put to death]
- 4.b. [opponents of the kingdom’s strict segregation of men and women **to be put to death**]
5. if they **refuse** to abandon their ideas.
- 6.a. Some people **think** [the best way to deal with this fatwa is to simply ignore it,]
- 6.b. [the best way to deal with this fatwa **is** to simply ignore it,]
7. because the more media attention it **gets**
8. the more weight it **will carry**.
9. I **disagree**.
- 10.a. It **might be** true [that al-Barrak is an old man [who is still living in the past,]]
- 10.b. [that al-Barrak **is** an old man [who is still living in the past,]]
- 10.c. [who **is** still **living** in the past,]
11. but failing to address his fatwa **might lead** to serious consequences.
- 12.a. This guy **has** a loyal following [who admire him] [and regard his opinions highly].
- 12.b. [who **admire** him]
- 12.c. [and **regard** his opinions highly].
13. What if one of his enthusiastic fans **decided** to act upon this fatwa
14. and **killed** somebody?
- 15.a. What if someone from [those who spoke in favor of mixing_like justice minister Shaikh Mohammed al-Eisa, Shaikh Ahmed al-Ghamdi, or Shaikh Ahmed Bin Baz] **got killed** over this?
- 15.b. those who **spoke** in favor of mixing_like justice minister Shaikh Mohammed al-Eisa, Shaikh Ahmed al-Ghamdi, or Shaikh Ahmed Bin Baz]

16. That **is** unlikely to happen,
17. but it **remains** a possibility nevertheless.
- 18.a. As Ebtihal Mubarak **tweeted** earlier today, [“there is a huge number of unemployed men [who are agitated,]] 18.b. [“there is a huge number of unemployed men [who are agitated,]]
- 18.c. [who are agitated,]
- 19.a. and it’s easy to rally them using the argument [that the government is focusing on women and mixing of genders]
- 19.b. [that the government is focusing on women and mixing of genders]
20. while ignoring them.”
- 21.a. I think [all those concerned should speak out against this fatwa]
- 21.b. [all those concerned should speak out against this fatwa]
22. and denounce al-Barrak.
23. The official religious establishment, namely the Council of Senior Ulema, should take a stand
24. and make a statement here.
- 25.a. But based on their recent history with the mixing at KAUST drama, I’m pretty sure [they won’t say a single word about this.]
- 25.b. [they won’t say a single word about this.]
26. I hate to repeat myself,
- 27.a. but here is [what I said two years ago]
- 27.b. [what I said two years ago]
28. when al-Barrak released another one of his insane fatwas:
- 29.a. I can imagine [that neither the government nor the official religious establishment would speak out on this issue,]
- 29.b. [that neither the government nor the official religious establishment would speak out on this issue,]
30. but if they fail to address this properly
- 31.a. then they should stop whining about extremism [and how terrorists are simply a “misguided group.”]
- 31.b. [and how terrorists are simply a “misguided group.”]
- 32.a. It is this kind of dangerous messages [that feed extremism] [and donate fuel to terrorists to continue their lethal destructive acts.]
- 32.b. [that feed extremism]
- 32.c. [and donate fuel to terrorists to continue their lethal destructive acts.]
- 33.a. Keeping silent and later blaming “external influences” for [what happens here] will be a hard sell...
- 33.b. [what happens here]