

**The delegitimisation discursive strategies of women's right  
to drive in Saudi Arabia**

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## Abstract

This study investigates gender inequality as embodied in the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia. To do so, the study draws on critical discourse studies (CDS), in particular the socio-cognitive approach (Van Dijk, 1998, 2008, 2013). The socio-cognitive approach emphasises the importance of investigating the social, cognitive and discursive dimensions of social problems such as dominance and gender inequality. This study, hence, investigates gender inequality as exemplified in the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia in relation to society, cognition and discourse.

The social analysis of this study includes an investigation of how sexism is reproduced through the micro level of society: social practices, including laws and regulations and the macro level of society, social structures such as dominance and groups relations. The cognitive and discursive analyses, on the other hand, mainly concern the matter of women driving. The study carries out a detailed textual analysis of texts written by prominent religious and conservative figures in order to delegitimise women's right to drive. The aim of this analysis is to identify the impact of sexism on cognition; how women's driving is understood and interpreted and the impact of sexism on discourse; how women's driving is represented in text. The latter includes an investigation of the discursive strategies employed in the texts in order to delegitimise women's right to drive.

The social analysis shows that gendered power relations in Saudi Arabia emanated primarily from the historical alliance between the monarch, on the one hand, and tribal leaders and Wahhabi clerics on the other hand. Such historical alliance resulted in the state appropriating tribal (patriarchal) values and Wahhabi perspectives of social reality (male centred interpretations of religious teachings) in the formation of public policies. However, gender relations have been,

also, constantly influenced by other different factors such economic development, modernisation, activism and politicisation. Regarding the textual analysis, the analysis shows that the texts analysed employed two discursive strategies in order to delegitimise women's rights to drive. Women's right to drive was discouraged through, first, the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive. The texts utilized religious and national identities in order to conceal its sexist facet and hence discredit the advocates of women's right to drive as the enemy of country and religion. Women's right to drive was also discouraged through the problematisation of women's driving. The analysis shows that the texts were controlled by a sexist mental model whereby women driving was interpreted and evaluated in terms of patriarchal norms and values.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 An overview

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate gender inequality in Saudi Arabia. This thesis does so by focusing mainly on the role of language in legitimising gender inequality in Saudi Arabia. The focus on language is motivated by the main theoretical assumption that underlies the scholarship of critical discourse studies (CDS). That is, linguistic structures and social structures are closely connected (Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2009; Fairclough, 2010). Accordingly, social phenomena such as dominance have a discursive dimension that helps to construct and maintain asymmetrical power relations.

CDS take a special interest in the discursive dimension of power and dominance: “CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society” (Van Dijk, 2001:352). Exposing the role of language in expressing and legitimising dominance and inequality helps to raise awareness of the social consequences of language. Raising awareness of the ideological function of language can, in turn, help to initiate emancipation. Describing the purpose of conducting critical discourse research, Fairclough states that it is “to help increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step toward emancipation” (Fairclough, 1989:1).

In light of this view, this thesis investigates the role of language in delegitimising women’s right to drive in Saudi Arabia. The main research question of this study is what are the discursive strategies employed in texts written in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign in order to delegitimise women’s right to drive. In this chapter, I offer a brief analysis of the context of the study followed by a brief description of the approach used to analyse the data.



The research questions will also be introduced along with the approach. This chapter also offers a brief illustration of the importance of the study, including the political stance of this thesis. The chapter is finally concluded by an outline of the thesis.

## 1.2 Background

### *Sexism in Saudi Arabia*

The approach of this study to gender inequality, as we will see, is multidisciplinary. This type of approach clearly indicates the complexity of the issue under research. In other words, gender inequality cannot be easily attributed to one single cause. It is a multi-layered problem that needs to be investigated from different perspectives. This brief introduction of the problem and its context will help us to understand the complexity of the issue and will hence act as the rationale for the multidisciplinary approach that this study follows.

Sexism is pervasive and entrenched in Saudi society. It can easily be observed in the social, economic and political landscapes of the country. At the social level, patriarchal values still hold a dominant status and hence define a great number of everyday life practices. Some of these values have been institutionalised, which has resulted in them acquiring a legal and normal status. A clear example of this institutionalisation is the guardianship system, whereby women are required by law to obtain their male guardian's approval in order to undertake essential tasks such as studying abroad, getting married, travelling and existing prison. Also, women are still barred from driving, although this ban is expected to be lifted in June 2018.

At the economic and political levels, women are under-represented. Women constitute only twenty percent of the whole workforce in Saudi Arabia, despite the fact that there are more

female graduates than males (Al-Rasheed, 2017). At the political level, it was not until 2013 that women were appointed to the Shura Majlis, an advisory body to the king. In 2015, women were allowed to both elect and run in the municipal elections. Such steps have been depicted in the state media as a breakthrough. However, the effectiveness and genuineness of such developments are questionable, given the symbolic nature of the bodies to which women have been appointed. Also, the fact that women are still required to have their male guardian's approval to undertake essential tasks undermines the effectiveness of these steps. In order to develop a better understanding of the existing gendered power relations, we need to explore the historical and political context that gave rise to them.

#### *The historical and political context*

The existing gendered power relations have historical roots and are also constantly influenced by various economic and political factors. The existing social and political arrangements in Saudi Arabia have their roots in both tribalism and Wahhabism. The latter is a religious movement that developed in the second half of the eighteenth century. Both forces, Wahhabism and tribalism, helped to establish the state. While the former helped provide ideological support, the latter offered military aid (Doumato, 1992). The help of these forces was acknowledged, by the state, through the appropriation of tribal (mainly patriarchal) values and Wahhabi perspectives, the male-centred interpretation of Islamic teachings, into the formation of the social, economic and political landscapes of the country (Ibid). The fact that the state is still dependent on clerics for legitimacy explains the slow progress in the development of more just and equal gender relations.

Although the existing gender relations are, primarily, shaped by Wahhabi perspectives and tribal values, gender relations are constantly influenced by other factors. These factors

include economic development, modernisation, activism and politicisation. Below, I will explore the impact of some of these factors on the way gender relations were shaped in Saudi Arabia. For example, the oil boom in the 1970s led the state to introduce some projects for the purpose of modernising the country and improving the economy. These projects included the introduction of modern technology and the expansion of women's employment in sectors such as education and health. Such projects were highly denounced by radical religious clerics who saw them as a deviation from the pact that the monarch and religious clerics had signed up for (Lacey, 2011). The state was declared unIslamic by some radical groups that decided to take military action, the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, in defiance of the state. Although the state succeeded in ending the rebellion, it had to reaffirm its religious identity in an attempt to appease radical religious groups (Al-Rasheed, 2013). Such reaffirmation translated into granting the official religious establishment more symbolic and material resources. A great deal of these resources were utilised for the regulation of women. This is mainly because women were specified as the symbolic representatives of the piety of the state (Ibid).

Some of the restrictions on women did not go unchallenged. In 1991, Saudi Arabia entered a war with the Iraqi regime in order to liberate Kuwait and put an end to the Iraqi regime's expansion ambitions. Saudi Arabia opened its door to Kuwaiti people who were escaping the atrocity of the war. Saudi Arabia also allowed foreign armed forces to enter the country in order to help with the liberation of Kuwait. Unlike Saudi women, female Kuwaiti citizens and female American soldiers were allowed to drive. The scene of non-Saudi women driving, on the streets of Riyadh, brought into question the ban on female driving (Al-Mana & Al-Shaikh, 2013). This resulted in some Saudi women deciding to challenge the ban. Forty-seven Saudi women, most of whom were educated in the West, decided to gather in a specific

place and to start driving their cars in defiance of the ban. The women were immediately arrested. Their passports were confiscated and some women lost their jobs as a result (Ibid). Moreover, the women and their male relatives were highly shamed and denounced in the ceremonies of Friday prayer. Leaflets denouncing these women were also widely distributed in public. Such harsh steps were sufficient to put a temporary end to Saudi women's activism.

From 2001 onwards, things took a different turn. The September 11 attacks took place. Fifteen out of nineteen of the attackers were Saudi nationals. The involvement of such a high number of Saudi nationals in the attacks resulted in western media scrutinising Wahhabism, the ideology promoted by the Saudi state. Wahhabism was accused, by Western media, of inciting intolerance and hatred towards non-Muslims. Some Western governments placed pressure on the state to grant other competing ideologies platforms from which their voices could be heard (Al-Rasheed, 2013).

The Saudi state complied with such demands. However, only voices critical of the dominant religious ideology were allowed (Ibid). Critical voices of the state were not allowed a platform, which resulted in a small number of issues being open for public debate and discussions, specifically social issues. Political demands and concerns such as public participation in the decision-making process and wealth distribution were off the table. In addition to allowing space to voices critical of the Wahhabi tradition within the country, the state started sending more Saudis to study abroad, mainly in Western countries. As a result of these developments, Wahhabi clerics lost their complete monopoly over defining social reality, including gender relations.

Ten years after the attack on 9/11, the Arab Spring took place. The Arab Spring constituted a series of protests in different Arab countries against authoritarian regimes. The main themes that dominated such protests were freedom, justice and equality. Some of these protests resulted in the collapse of two authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt. Inspired by such calls, some Saudi women decided to protest in defiance of the ban on women driving. Saudi women utilised forms of communication over which the state has no complete monopoly such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Women were encouraged to drive on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011. One of the key organisers of the campaign, Manal Al-Sherif, decided that she would drive and record her experience before the date of the campaign in order to explain the aim of the campaign and encourage women to drive on the date specified.

Soon after the video was posted on YouTube, Al- Sherif was arrested and detained for two weeks. Al-Sherif was charged with inciting public opinion and disturbing public order. Despite the arrest and detention of Al-Sherif, at least 50 Saudi women drove on the 17<sup>th</sup> June. Saudi women's activism did not end there as women continued to challenge the ban through social media websites. The 26<sup>th</sup> October every year was selected as the date on which women would drive in defiance of the ban. In 2014, a Saudi activist, Lojain al-Hathloul, decided to challenge the ban by driving her car from the United Arab Emirates, where she held a valid driving licence, into Saudi Arabia. Al-Hathloul, who filmed herself and posted the film on YouTube, was arrested at the Saudi border and was later transferred to a terrorist court and detained for seventy-three days before she was released.

From 2015 onwards, a change at the political level resulted in some new developments in women's lives. A new king, Salman bin Abdul-Aziz, ascended to the throne after the death of his older and half-brother, Abdullah. King Salman introduced a change to the order of

succession to the throne whereby the succession transferred from the first generation of the royal family, the sons of the founder of the state, Abdul Aziz, to the second generation of the royal family, the grandchildren of the founder. As a result, for the first time in the history of the state, young members of the royal family came to occupy top-power positions. First, the 56-year-old nephew of the king, Mohammed bin Nayef, was appointed as the crown prince, while the 32-year-old son of the king, Mohammed bin Salman, was appointed as the deputy crown prince. In June 2017, the nephew of the king was removed from his post and was replaced by his deputy, the king's son, Mohammed bin Salman.

Such political changes were also accompanied by some economic challenges, for example oil prices witnessed a sharp decrease. Given that the state primarily depended on oil for generating revenues, the economy of the country started to decline. In an attempt to tackle such economic difficulties, the crown prince launched a new economic plan referred to as Vision 2030. The main aim of this vision is to diversify the economy of Saudi Arabia. In order to achieve this goal, the state took a number of steps. One of those steps was promoting internal tourism. A committee was therefore established with the aim of creating an industry of entertainment. Creating this industry involved lifting the ban on musical concerts and cinema industry, which was opposed by religious clerics.

Vision 2030 also includes initiatives to expand women's employment in order to increase household income. In order to facilitate this, restrictions on women have been lessened. For example, the king ordered government agencies not to demand guardian male consent for services that had not been already specified as requiring the approval of men. In September 2017, another royal decree was issued that stipulated lifting the ban on female driving in June 2018.

Such steps were again portrayed, in state and Western media, as remarkable actions intending to improve women's status. However, the motive behind these steps was brought into question. That is, these steps are driven by political and economic demands rather than an actual desire to improve women's status. On the political level, Saudi women's constant activism placed a huge pressure on the state which decided to lift the ban on women in order to avoid criticism. The decision to lift the ban was also utilised politically to lend the new leadership a progressive image, especially in the West. This is evident in the way the state media talked about lifting the ban. In their coverage of the event, the state media completely concealed the role of Saudi women's activism in lifting the ban. Concealing the role of activism can also be partly explained by the state's desire not to encourage further activism.

On the economic level, the decrease in oil prices led the state to consider other alternatives in order to generate revenues. One step that the state took in order to improve the economy was to reduce the number of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia. Allowing women to drive and reducing restrictions on women can help in this regard. For example, women will not need to hire foreign drivers. Women will also take jobs that had been previously occupied by foreign workers. As such, the steps taken by the state to lessen restrictions on women were primarily intended to avoid criticism, improve the state image and increase revenues. A real desire to improve women's status would essentially involve abolishing the guardianship system, which render women minors and places their fate in their male guardians' hands. This brief summary of the socio-political conditions of Saudi Arabia clearly illustrates that women's status in Saudi Arabia is not only determined by Wahhabi and tribal traditions alone. Gendered power relations are also shaped and maintained by various socio-political conditions.

### 1.3 The approach

In investigating gender inequality as exemplified in the ban on women driving, I draw on the socio-cognitive approach to ideology (Van Dijk, 1998; 2008; 2009). The socio-cognitive approach is a multidisciplinary approach that investigates social problems such as gender inequality from social, cognitive and discursive perspectives. While the socio-cognitive approach holds the view that social and linguistics structures are connected, it also emphasises the view that the connection between language and society is mediated through cognition.

### 1.4 The analysis

Considering this multidisciplinary framework, I investigate gender inequality as exemplified in the ban on women's driving in relation to society, discourse and cognition. Below I give a brief description of these different types of analysis along with the research questions of this study.

#### 1.4.1 Social analysis

With regard to society, the thesis investigates the socio-political context of the study with a focus on the social and political manifestations of sexism and the role of such manifestations in the reproduction of asymmetrical gendered power relations. The social analysis includes the investigation of sexism at two levels: the micro level of society, social practices, and the macro level of society, social relations. Regarding the micro level of society, the thesis investigates the various forms of discrimination that women experience at the social and political levels. Regarding the macro level of society, the thesis investigates the historical, social and political conditions that have led to the current asymmetrical gendered power



relations. This includes an investigation of the various groups and institutions involved in the reproduction of sexism in Saudi Arabia.

#### 1.4.2 Cognitive and discursive analysis

Within the socio-cognitive approach, the impact of social structures such as dominance on social practices, including language, is indirect (Van Dijk, 1998). This impact is mediated through cognition – *the way people understand such social structures*. This requires the investigation of the cognitive dimension that acts as the interface between society and language (Ibid). In this study, I investigate the mental model that the texts construe of the *women2drive* campaign and women driving in general, in other words, how the *women2drive* campaign and women driving are interpreted and understood.

Having explored the mental model that the texts construe of the *women2drive* campaign and women driving, the thesis then investigates the impact of this mental model on the way that the texts are structured. This is accomplished through the textual analysis, which involves the examination of global semantic forms, i.e. topics. The analysis of these topics helps to identify the discursive strategies used to delegitimise women's right to drive. Having identified the strategies used to delegitimise women's right to drive, the thesis finally examines the impact of these strategies on both local semantic forms – what is said – and linguistic structures – how it is said.

#### 1.5 The significance of the study

The importance of this study is multifaceted. First, this study, as far as I know, is the first that investigates the ban on women driving from three different perspectives; social, discursive and cognitive. Secondly, this study contributes to the very limited number of studies that take

a critical perspective on social problems in Saudi Arabia. The lack of such studies is mainly due to the authoritarian style of governing that dominates almost the entire Middle East region. In such authoritarian regimes, notions such as critique and dissidence are highly discouraged. These two notions are essential properties of critical discourse research (Van Dijk, 1993b; Wodak, 2013). Therefore, taking a critical perspective calls into question the ready-made explanations of such problems and the ideological basis of such explanations and hence opens up space for alternative ways of understanding these problems (Fairclough, 2003).

Another important reason why this study is significant is that it investigates a highly sensitive issue, namely gender inequality. The sensitivity of this issue derives from the fact that Muslim women's situation has become a recurrent theme in white supremacist discourse and colonial discourses. This theme is usually invoked in order to demonstrate white superiority or to justify (cultural and military) intervention in the Muslim world (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Husain & Ayotte, 2005; Said, 1979). Fearful of advancing western or colonial agenda, many Muslim researchers have taken the decision to avoid this research area, which has resulted in a limited number of studies (Moghissi, 1999).

## 1.6 The position of this thesis

This thesis takes the stance that investigating gender inequality in a Muslim country does not mean that one takes the side of the orientalist or colonist forces. The fact that Muslim women's situation has been used in some discourses for some ideological functions does not mean that researchers, within the Muslim world, should ignore, deny or defend local and cultural discriminatory practices (Ibid). Also, it is important to stress that addressing gender inequality in this study should not be understood as an invitation to adopt the dominant

western view of sexuality, which has been criticised by Muslim feminists (Majid, 1998; Mernissi, 1987; Mir-Hosseini, 2006).

It should be clear by now that this thesis takes a political stance, that of promoting gender equality. This position is justified by the view that scientific research cannot be value-free:

Instead of denying or ignoring such a relation between scholarship and society, they [discourse analysts] plead that such relations be studied and accounted for in their own right, and that scholarly practices be based on such insights (Van Dijk, 2001: 352).

Having said that, it is important to note that critical discourse research upholds the criteria of scientific research. For example, the interpretations that discourse analysts offer of texts are based on an objective description of linguistic structures (Bartlett, 2014). Such interpretations are also informed by scientific theoretical perspectives of language and society.

## 1.7 Limitations

Critical discourse research is criticised for focusing only on negative discourse rather than positive discourse (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). The fact that this thesis is dealing only with the discourse in opposition to women driving makes it susceptible to such criticism. The focus of this study on restrictions against women and the discourse that justifies such restrictions is only driven by the limited scope of this study. This focus should not hence imply an image of Saudi women as victims. In fact, the role played by Saudi women in defying the ban on women driving alone disturbs the stereotypical images of Saudi women.

Saudi women have not only challenged the ban but they have also written about their experiences of the ban. The two major campaigns organised by Saudi women in 1990 and 2011 have been documented in two books. While the first major campaign that took place in 1990 was documented by Al-Mana and Al-Shaikh (2013), who participated in the campaign, the *women2drive* campaign was documented by Al-Sharif, one of the key organisers of the campaign (2017). Saudi women have also used literature in their attempts to challenge and contest the asymmetrical gendered power relations in Saudi Arabia: “Women writers, in writing about women’s experiences, not only politicise women’s lives but redefine women and transform their status from that of a “symbol” to that of a “real” human being” (Arebi, 1994: 269).

## 1.8 Outline of thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. The introduction, Chapter 1, is followed by the literature review, Chapter 2, in which the main tenets of CDS as well as feminist critical discourse analysis are discussed. The literature review chapter is followed by the methodology chapter, which includes a description of the approach used to analyse the data as well as a description of the way that this approach is operationalised. After that, two chapters of analysis, 4 and 5, follow. While Chapter 4 includes the social analysis, Chapter 5 includes both the cognitive and textual analysis of the key texts written in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign. Finally, in the conclusion, Chapter 6, I present a brief summary of the findings of the study along with a recommendation for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

In this study, I draw on critical discourse studies (CDS) in order to investigate the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia. The broad aim of this study is to explore the role of language in legitimising and sustaining gender inequality in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the main theoretical tenets that inform the framework of this study. These theoretical tenets come from critical discourse studies (CDS) and feminist critical discourse analysis (Michelle Lazar, 2005; Michelle Lazar, 2007). This chapter, also, explores the epistemological and ontological assumptions that underlie this research. I do this by investigating the development of discourse analysis research (DA).

### 2.2 Forms of linguistic research

Linguistic research has been significantly shaped by a number of views of language that have led to different research goals and different methods. Evans (2014) identified two mainstream schools of linguistic research. One school is mainly concerned with language per se, with many adherents of this school having been influenced by the view of language as an innate phenomenon we are born with. This view has a big impact on the way that linguistic research has been conducted. For example, research informed by this view of language was initially restricted to the language system. The second school of linguistic research, on the other hand, is more concerned with language use. Many adherents of this approach to language view language as a social construct rather than an innate phenomenon. According to this view, language; “emerges from use, based on more general mental skills and abilities” (Evan, 2014:1). This view of language involves the need to investigate language in relation to

society. One key domain of research concerned with the relationship between language and society is Discourse Analysis (DA).

### 2.3 Discourse analysis (DA)

Discourse analysis is concerned with the relationship between language and the various aspects of social reality (Jones, 2012). A key feature that characterises DA research is the view of language as not only reflecting but also constructing social reality (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). In an attempt to illustrate this role of language, Gee (2014) identifies three functions of language, namely saying, doing and being. As such, in addition to communicating information, language can be used to *perform actions* (doing) and *enacting identities* (being).

A very well-acknowledged function of language is communicating information. This, however, is not the only function of language. In fact, Gee (2014) explained that the three functions of language outlined above are interlinked. That is, when we say something, we simultaneously perform an action and also enact some identity. For example, when, in an encounter with a neighbour, you inform them of the state of the weather, such a statement is not intended to inform the neighbour of the state of the weather because the neighbour can simply see what the weather is like themselves. So by uttering the statement, you are not just trying to say something, but also doing something ‘e.g. starting a conversation’ and being something ‘e.g. being a nice neighbour’.

#### *A shift of focus of analysis*

The view of language as constructing social reality necessitated a shift of focus on the level of analysis. While traditional linguistic research had been mainly concerned with elements

within the sentence level, investigating the role of language in constructing social reality required transcending the sentence level to analyse whole texts (Coulthard, 2014; Jones, 2012).

### *Discourse*

There is no one unified and clear conception of discourse within the various approaches to DA. It is a notion that has been defined differently, even within individual approaches. Discourse can be used to refer to all forms of semiotic including linguistic, visual and body language (Fairclough, 2012). Discourse can also be used to refer to ways of talking or representing some aspect of reality (Ibid). As such, discourse enables us to make sense of reality. This signifies that meaning derives from discourse rather than from out there. This can be evident in the fact that different discourses provide distinct understandings of the same phenomena. Different discourses provide different perspectives not only on social constructs such as social identities and social relations but also on natural phenomena that exist independently from human thought. Jorgensen and Philip (2002) explain that a rise in water levels (flood) can be constructed in different discourses in different ways. For example, in some discourse, the rise in water level can be attributed to an unusual amount of rain water falling down. In other discourse, the same phenomenon can be explained as a form of punishment by God. In another, flood can be said to result from the failure of the government to build efficient infrastructures that can withstand high amounts of rain water.

The capacity of discourse to produce various perspectives shows another important feature of discourse – its exclusionary dimension (Mills, 1997). That is, producing a certain perspective of some phenomenon involves the exclusion of other alternatives. This can have social implications as every way of representing social phenomena involves certain ways of dealing

with these phenomena. For example, the various views advanced above about the cause of the flood involve different ways of dealing with the situation. Promoting one view over others can hence result in restricting our understanding of the event and hence how it should be experienced or attended to. The notion of discourse as explained here involves a number of theoretical assumptions that need to be further explained. The next section will deal with these theoretical assumptions.

*Philosophical assumptions underlying the study of discourse analysis*

The fact that different discourses produce different meanings of the same phenomenon involves the view that meaning is the product of discourse. This view is based on certain theoretical assumptions of reality associated with the school of social constructionism (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). A key theoretical assumption that underpins social constructionism is the anti-essentialist view of reality (Burr, 2015). That is, people and things do not have essential or natural characteristics that can be discovered. Spender (1998) adds that even if there is some kind of essence to people and things, we do not have a transparent and neutral medium through which we can access and express such essence: “The information that we receive through our senses from the material world around us has to be interpreted according to certain human rules, before what we ordinarily call 'reality' forms” (1975: 33 cited in Spender 95: 1998). In light of this view, the views that people form of *who they are*, for instance, come from the way people talk and interact. This makes us the products of the time and place in which we live – “We are fundamentally historical and cultural beings and our views of, and knowledge about, the world are the ‘products of historically situated interchanges among people’ ” (Gergen,1985: 267 cited in Jorgensen and Philips, 2002:5).



The anti-essential view of social reality has significant implications on scientific research. The anti-essentialist view of social reality implies truth is relative and historical rather than absolute (Ibid). Truth, as such, is only true for now in light of the current social and political conditions. What is considered as truth in some societies can be regarded as mere ideological beliefs in other societies or within the same society at a different point of time. For example, scientific knowledge was treated some time ago as mere ideological beliefs. It is now considered as 'truth' (Van Dijk, 1998). Religious beliefs, on the other hand, which are now considered ideological in many places in the world, used to be viewed as reflecting the ultimate truth (Ibid). Scholarships informed by the anti-essentialist view of social reality ask different questions and opt for different methodological choices from scholarships which assume that there is some essence to be discovered. Rather than attempting to discover the essence of people or social life, scholarships, informed by social constructionist views, investigate "the emergence of of current forms of psychological and social life, and... the social practices by which they are created" (Burr, 2015: 7). Discourse analysis research investigates the role of language in creating such forms of psychological and social life. While these philosophical assumptions inform all DA research, discourse analysts differ in the way they approach language use.

### *Two forms of discourse analysis*

Gee (2014) identifies two main forms of DA research: descriptive and critical (Ibid). The former is mainly concerned with offering a descriptive explanation of the role of language in making meaning. The critical form, on the other hand, includes a descriptive as well as an evaluative component of the role of language in making meaning.

The critical form of DA is primarily inspired by the view that discourse, including scientific discourse, is socio-politically situated and hence cannot be ideologically free; "... science, and especially scholarly discourse, are inherently part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction" (Van Dijk, 2001: 352). Considering this view, language including scientific research can function to construct and maintain power and dominance. Discourse analysis hence "can illuminate issues about the distribution of social goods, who gets helped and who gets harmed" (Gee, 2014: 10). The critical form of discourse analysis is, hence, concerned with revealing the ideological functions of discourses, including scientific research. One form of discourse analysis that takes a critical perspective on language use is CDS.

#### 2.4 Critical discourse studies (CDS)

Besides taking a critical perspective on language use, CDS can be distinguished from other approaches to language use by its focus of analysis (Hart, 2014). Critical discourse studies are concerned with the analysis of both the content as well as the structures, e.g. syntactic and phonological structures, of discourse (Van Dijk, 1989). However, the focus of CDS is only on the discursive dimension of dominance. That is, the semantic forms and linguistic structures that serve to express, legitimise or conceal inequality and dominance (Wodak 2009). Hence, doing a critical discourse analysis involves investigating the role of language in the (re)production of social inequality and dominance. Within CDS, there are several approaches to ideological language use. Here, I will only focus on the theoretical perspectives shared by almost all of these approaches.

#### 2.4.1 Discourse as a social practice

Critical discourse analysts see discourse as a social practice (Norman Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2013). This conception of discourse involves two main characteristics of language use. First, language is an integral part of society. Secondly, language has a performative function. The conception of discourse as a social practice has implications:

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 (Fairclough and Wodak; 2013: 258).

This view of the relationship between linguistic and social structures shows that language actively interacts with social components of reality. In other words, the discursive aspect of some event does not simply reflect the event, as is generally assumed. Rather, the discursive aspect is an essential component that, along with other components, brings into being the event in question.

#### 2.4.2 Discourse constitutes social reality

The view of discourse as a social practice shows that discourse has an important role to play in shaping social reality. Such an impact can manifest in three different ways:

Discourse may, under certain conditions, be operationalised or ‘put into operation’, put into practice: they may be enacted as new ways of acting and interacting, they may be inculcated as new ways of being (new identities), and they may be physically materialised, e.g. as new ways of organising space, for example in architecture (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 84).

Some of the effects of discourse can be ideological (N Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). That is, they serve to construct and maintain an unequal power relationship system. In the next section, I look into this specific function of discourse, which is the focus of CDS.

#### 2.4.3 Discourse constitutes power relations

Developing an understanding of the role of discourse in constituting power relations requires investigating the notion of power. Power is a notion that traditionally has been associated with the use of force (Thomas, 2004). As such, power is exercised when force is used. Although true, this conception of power is narrow and limited (Ibid). In modern times, the use of force is not very well received. For example, states that use excessive force when dealing with dissidents are regarded as brutal and cruel. Such a change of attitude towards the use of force resulted in the development of more subtle ways of exercising power. Such subtle forms of power allow for much more effective control. One of these forms is hegemonic power. The notion of hegemony was developed by Gramsci (1971) in order to account for the exercise of power through the manufacture of consent. That is, rather than using coercive means to have people act or behave in a certain way, control can be accomplished through manipulating the way social actors think. Cognitive control can only be achieved or facilitated through having access to public discourse. This includes governmental institutions such as schools and universities, literary works such as music, novels and films, and media institutions such as newspapers and TV programmes, 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996), 1996) . Most CDSs are informed by this conception of power:

Gramsci's observation that the maintenance of contemporary power rests not only on coercive force but also on 'hegemony' (winning the consent of the majority) has been particularly influential in CDA (Fairclough et al, 360: 2001).

#### 2.4.4 Discourse and the process of naturalising power relations

The manufacture of consent can be accomplished through constructing a worldview, an ideology. Constructing a worldview entails creating subject positions for social actors, the main function of ideology (Althusser, 1976). Social actors can be placed into different categories, which are ascribed different values. Being a member of some category involves certain obligations, rights, responsibilities and privileges (Gee, 2014). Constructing a worldview can only be attained through language (P. A. Chilton, 2004; Norman Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012).

While all discourse analysts very well acknowledge the ideological function of the content of discourse, critical discourse analyst also emphasise the ideological function of the structures of discourse (Howarth, 1995; Strauss & Feiz, 2013). Linguistic structures such as syntactic structures can also have an ideological function. One example of the ideological function of linguistic structures, emphasised in many sociolinguistic studies, is the use of complex sentence structures by the elites and institutions; “Elite speakers and institutions may restrict comprehensibility of their discourses in this way (by opting for complex sentence structures) and, thereby, control access to public discourse, e.g., to political and media text and talk” (Van Dijk, 1995: 25).

The ideological function of linguistic structures has also been investigated in the work of critical linguistics (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979). In their work, Fowler et al. (Ibid) investigate the ideological function of various linguistic structures such as transitivity and nominalisation. Fowler et al. found that in the media coverage of events such as demonstrations, media reports tend to use linguistic structures that serve to minimise the responsibility of institutional forces such as the police. For example, media reports tend to

use passive sentence structures when representing the violent actions committed by police forces. The ideological function of such structures is to either erase or background the agency of police forces and thereby minimise their responsibility. Systemic functional grammar has been highly utilised by critical discourse analysts for the investigation of the ideological function of discourse (Halliday, 1994). Having explained the key theoretical assumptions that underlie CDS, I now turn to examine the ideology responsible for gender inequality, namely sexist ideology.

## 2.5 Sexist ideology

Different ideologies give rise to different social arrangements. Social arrangements in turn give rise to certain power relations (Thompson, 1998). Ideology can thus result in unequal power relation systems whereby some groups of people can be discriminated against (Ibid). Discrimination can be based on various social constructions such as race, sex and age, and it can be accomplished through restricting the access of a group of people to either symbolic or material resources (Van Dijk, 1995c). Denying women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia constitutes one of the examples of how women in Saudi are discriminated against. Addressing such gendered policies, hence, requires investigating the ideology that justifies such discriminatory practices, namely sexism.

### *What does sexism mean?*

Sexism is defined as “a deep rooted, often unconscious system of beliefs, attitudes and institutions in which distinction between people's intrinsic worth are made on the grounds of their sex and sexual roles” (Bullock and Stallybrass, 571: 1977 cited in Thompson, 41: 2011). As such, the biological sex that one was born with becomes a determining factor of the value of the person. The definition above also highlights the natural sense that sexist perspectives

have acquired over time. Sexist perspectives are so well established that they have become unconscious.

Sexism is primarily based on the notion of patriarchy, which literally means the rule of the father (Julé, 2008). This type of familial ideology stipulates that male members of the family should control and dominate the family (Lerner, 1986). According to this ideology, men and women have distinct and fixed roles. While the man is responsible for providing for the family, the woman is expected to care for the children and to do the household work. These roles are determined by ‘the nature’ of men and women. For example, women, not men, bear children. This biological fact, along with other bodily characteristics, is used to validate the view that men and women have different tendencies and capacities (Wodak, 1997). Some of these capacities and tendencies include women being inherently caring and nurturing (Litosseliti, 2014). Another key ideological view is that men have an uncontrollable sexual drive (Mernissi, 1987). Although such views are related to the role of men and women within the household, they have far-reaching effects on women’s lives.

#### *The ideological function of sexist perspectives*

Such views of the roles of men and women are ideologically based (Butler, 1999; De Beauvoir, 2014). Establishing a link between certain biological characteristic and the way social actors think and behave is intended to legitimise certain social roles and hence sustain the social arrangement based on them (Julé, 2008; Litosseliti, 2014; Phillips, 1987). For example, the view of women as inherently nurturing is intended to restrict women to the private sphere so that men have an exclusive access to the public sphere. Such exclusive access seems to be the case in almost all societies and includes almost all aspects of social reality:

The military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance - in short, every avenue of power within society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands (Millet, 25: 1971 cited in Thompson 41: 2001).

The view of men as having an uncontrollable sex drive is also intended to justify male aggression towards women (Friedman & Valenti, 2008; Matoesian, 1993).

The naturalisation of some ideological perspectives can result in the normalisation of such perspectives (Thompson, 1997). As such, the ideological perspective becomes both natural and normal. It is likely that people act in a way that accords with their 'nature'. Over time, such actions and behaviours become the norms. Other competing ways of acting or behaving will then not be considered alternatives but rather 'deviant' acts and behaviours: "where people deviate from these gender expectations, sanctions are applied - boys who stray into feminine territory are labelled 'cissy' or 'effeminate' whilst girls who transgress are seen as 'butch' or a 'tomboy' " (Thompson, 2011:18).

Naturalisation and normalisation are thus ideological devices employed in order to legitimise such ideological assumptions and hence perpetuate the social arrangements built on them. Language plays an essential part in constructing and legitimising sexist perspectives. Feminist critical discourse analysis is concerned with this role of language.

## 2.6 Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA)

Feminist critical discourse analysis is specifically concerned with the role of language in naturalising and normalising sexism (Michelle Lazar, 2007). This focus on the role of language is motivated by the view that social identities are the product of discourse (Cameron



1998; Eckert 2003). Accordingly, what people think and how they act is not determined by their physiological characteristics. It is, rather, constructed, negotiated and changed in discourse (Mills, 2008). Feminists, hence, make a distinction between sex and gender (Wodak, 1997). While sex refers to the biological characteristic, gender is a notion that refers to the social meaning that we ascribe to sex categories, male and female.

It is important to note, though, that not all feminists share such constructionist conceptions of gender (Cameron, 2006). Some feminists still hold the belief that there might be a link between biological characteristics and the way that men and women act and behave. It is argued, however, that no legal implications should result from this view: “It may be that men and women are different, that women cannot do all the jobs done by men, that they find their great satisfaction inside home. But what tyranny to legislate them into this role” (Philips, 1987: 6).

#### *The social constructionist of gender*

Within the constructionist view of social identities, gender is understood to be something that we ‘do’ or accomplish rather than something that we ‘be’ or ‘become’ (Butler, 1988; West & Zimmerman, 1987). In that sense, gender does not reflect something inside us, rather it is something that we perform or enact by employing certain linguistic structures. So in expressing certain linguistic structures we are not simply reflecting our social identities but rather enacting or performing these social identities (Talbot, 1998).

#### *The role of language in constructing gender*

In an attempt to explain the role of discourse in constructing social identities, Mill (2008) argues that language is used to create ‘guidelines’ and ‘rules’ that serve to organise the way

we act and relate to one another. Sunderland points out that men and women are manufactured in discourse through a collection of statements that produce different types of discourses such as ‘the neat girl’ discourse, ‘the girls as good language learners’ discourse, and ‘the father as bumbling parent’ discourse (2004, 203). These discourses serve to construct the way that men and women think of themselves and hence the way they act and behave. This means that changing the way we speak or talk about ourselves can result in different forms of (inter)actions. This insight involves the view that the position that people occupy in society is an effect of their position in discourse (Spender, 1985). Accordingly, individuals and groups who are constructed as superior in language are more likely to possess more power than people who are constructed as inferior.

#### *The impact of sexism on discourse*

Sexist perspectives affect both the semantics and the structures of discourse (Litosseliti, 2014; Mills, 2008). In terms of semantics, some sexist perspectives such as ‘male as norm, female as deviant’ show in various ways: (1) The use of derogatory language to describe women; (2) representing women as sexual objects by focusing on women’s appearance rather than their intellect or capabilities; (4) representing women as passive and in relation to their domestic roles (e.g. mother, daughter) (Ibid). The ideological perspective ‘male as norm, female as deviant’ also features in linguistic structures. For example, the use of masculine expressions such as ‘he’, ‘him’, ‘his’, ‘man’, ‘mankind’ as generic referring to both men and women is perceived as a manifestation of the ideological perspective ‘male as norm and female as deviant’. Constructing women as ‘others’ can have implications: “... the other can be exploited, manipulated, constrained...because of their difference from what is considered the usual experience” (Jule, 2008: 13). Moreover, the use of masculine expressions as generic is also seen as a way of signalling and highlighting men’s experience, while concealing and

backgrounding women's experience; "These representations of women trivialise their lives and place an extra level of personal judgment on them" (Ibid: 14).

### *Critique of feminist linguistics*

In some accounts, language is considered a trivial matter that can hardly be responsible for inequities. This argument is, obviously, based on the commonsensical view of language as reflecting what is there. As we have seen earlier, language not only reflects but also constructs and helps to maintain social reality. Changing the way we speak and talk about dominated groups can hence result in a change in their position in social reality (Valian, 1981). Feminism presents a clear example of such a process. Changes in women's situation would not have been possible without a change in the way that women talk and think about themselves.

It is, however, important to note that feminists realise that investigating sexism only at the level of language is not sufficient to correct inequities (Litosseliti, 2006). It is asserted that governments are required to introduce laws that help eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Investigating sexism in language, hence, should go hand in hand with such efforts: "Our language regarding how rapists and their victims are perceived and treated can then reflect as well as help consolidate the legal, institutional and social development in this area" (Ibid: 21).

## 2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the theoretical perspectives that paved the way for the investigation of language use were explored. Also, critical discourse studies (CDS) as well as feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) were introduced. The aim of this chapter was to establish the

main premise on which these two research programmes were based. That is, the view that linguistic structures and social structures are closely connected. Accordingly, social structures, including the relation of dominance, are no longer seen as entities that develop and persist in their own right. Instead these social phenomena have a discursive dimension that helps to construct and maintain them. In this chapter, the ideology of sexism was also investigated. Sexism is based on the notion of patriarchy and is responsible for gender inequality. The role of language in naturalising and normalising gender inequality was also explored. In the following chapter, I discuss the specific approach that I use in order to investigate the role of language in delegitimising women's right to drive.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodology of this study. I first introduce the topic of this study, namely the ban on women driving. This includes a rationale for the choice of topic and a brief description of the data of this study. After that, I introduce the approach I used to analyse the data, namely the socio-cognitive approach (Van Dijk, 1998; Teun Adrianus Van Dijk, 2008; Van Dijk, 2009b). The socio-cognitive approach includes three types of analysis: cognitive, social and discursive. Each type will be explored in detail. This includes a description of how each type of analysis will be operationalised.

### 3.2 The topic of the study: the ban on women driving

It is important to note that the ban on women driving is considered, in this study, as an entrance point to investigate the wider problem of gender inequality and dominance. The ban on women driving constitutes only one example of gendered policies in Saudi Arabia. Another important gendered policy is the Male Guardianship System. This system requires that women attain the approval of their male relatives in order to accomplish fundamental activities such as study, work or travel. Such discriminatory policies serve to maintain the gendered power relationship system.

The ban on women driving has been challenged by women on different occasions. The most salient occasions took place in 1990 and 2011 when some Saudi women took to the street to challenge the ban. Such challenges helped generate a large number of discussions and debates around the issue. The Male Guardianship System, on the other hand, has only been challenged online. Although such online campaigns started in 2011, they did not succeed in

generating the same amount of discussion as the topic of women driving. It was not until 2016 that the hashtag #IAmMyOwnGuardian gained unprecedented popularity (Sidahmed, 2016). The focus of this study on women driving, hence, should not suggest that women driving takes primacy over other gendered policies such as the Guardianship System.

### 3.3 Research data

My data consist of nine texts that were written in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign which Saudi women organised in 2011. The focus of this study is on texts written by key conservative and religious figures in Saudi Arabia. This focus is motivated by the view that public opinion is greatly influenced and shaped by the discourse of the elites "...elites are the ones who initiate, monitor, and control the majority and most influential forms of institutional and public text and talk" (van Dijk, 1990:4). Given the historical alliance between the monarch and Wahhabi clerics in Saudi Arabia, the latter were, for a long period of time, endowed with an exclusive access to public discourse which enabled them to have almost a complete monopoly on some aspects of reality in Saudi Arabia.

The key factors, hence, that affect the choice of the data is the popularity of the authors as well as the extent to which their text was distributed. The two factors, however, are closely connected. It was found that the extent to which the text was distributed was highly influenced by the popularity of the author of the text. The analysed texts were only published online on very well known religious and conservative electronic newspapers. The popularity of the texts was determined by the extent to which they were cited and distributed. Search domains include electronic newspapers, internet blogs and social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook. Each text chosen for analysis was at least cited and distributed twenty times. The texts analysed also included two texts written by Saudi women. The selection of

these two texts was influenced, in addition to their wide distribution, by the desire to highlight the key role that Saudi women played on both side of this ideological struggle.

The texts include a petition that was signed by 118 key religious figures in Saudi Arabia. The petition, *The Scholars' Statement About Women Driving*, was posted on the internet and was widely circulated. This list includes key conservative figures, including judges, lectures and imams. The data also include other texts written by key religious figures in Saudi Arabia, i.e. Al-Dweish Suleiman, Al-Berik Saad, Al-Habdan Mohammed, Al-Hogail Ibrahim and Al-Sakran Ibrahim. The data also include a fatwa, a religious pronouncement issued by Al-Fawzan Saleh, a member of the council of the senior scholars, the highest religious institution in Saudi Arabia. The list also includes two articles written by two conservative women: Qmra Al-Subeai and Hind Al-Qahtani. In the table, below, more information on the texts are offered.

Table 1

<b>The author</b>	<b>Length of the text</b>	<b>Date of publication</b>
Qmra al-Subeai	1115	30/05/2011
The Petition signed by 119 persons	1810	06/06/2011
Hind al-Qahtani	1904	03/06/2011
Ibrahim al-Sakran	476	23/05/2011
Saleh al-Fawzan	113	Unspecified
Ibrahim al-Hogail	1624	26/05/2011
Suleiman al-Dweish	1981	22/05/2011
Mohammed al-Habdan	2300	27/05/2011
Saad al-Berik	1624	22/06/2011

### 3.4 The socio-cognitive approach

In this study, I draw on the socio-cognitive approach in order to investigate how women's right to drive is delegitimised in texts. The decision to draw on the socio-cognitive approach is mainly motivated by the view that it offers a comprehensive perspective on how social inequality and dominance are expressed and legitimised in discourse. In the previous chapter, it was indicated that all CD approaches are based on the view that there is a link between social structures such as dominance and linguistic structures. That is, relations of power and dominance have a discursive dimension that helps to construct and maintain them.

However, most CD approaches do not offer an explicit explanation of the nature of this relationship, which has led to the assumption that there is a direct link between social structures and linguistic structures (P. Chilton, 2005). The socio-cognitive approach, while also based on the same assumption, offers a more explicit theorisation of the nature of this connection. Within the socio-cognitive approach, social structures and linguistic structures are linked through cognition (Teun A Van Dijk, 2008c). In that sense, social structures such as gender, race or social power do not exert a direct impact on the way that language is used. Rather, it is how social actors understand or interpret such social structures that affect the way they use language:

There is no conditional or causal connection between groups, institutions, social position or power relations, on the one hand, and discourse structures, on the other hand. Societal structures and discourse structures are of a very different nature, and if there are 'contextual' constraints at all, these should somehow be mediated



by an interface that is able to act as a conceptual and empirical bridge between social ‘reality’ and discourse (Van Dijk, 2006: 162).

Accordingly, relations of dominance have a cognitive dimension that acts as the interface between the social manifestations of such relation of dominance, and their discursive manifestations. Ideology, hence, has three dimensions, social, discursive and cognitive (Van Dijk, 2013). A comprehensive analysis of ideology, hence, needs to take into consideration all three of these dimensions, and each of these will be explored in the following sections.

### 3.4.1 The cognitive dimension of ideology

#### 3.4.1.1 Theory of context

While CD analysts are concerned with analysing text and talk, they do so in relation to the context in which these text and talks take place (Wodak, 2009). Context in the traditional sense of the word refers to the socio-political conditions of the communicative event in question. However, since, as explained earlier, the contextual properties of some events do not have a direct impact on the way that language is used, the old definition of context fails to explain the complexity of the relationship between social structures and linguistic structures. Such insight led to the development of a new conception of context that provides a more comprehensive view of this relationship. Context within the socio-cognitive approach is considered a mental rather than a social construct: it is how communicators understand or interpret social structures (Van Dijk, 2009).

Context consists of two dimensions that exercise control over the way that language is used; these are local and global dimensions (Ibid). The global dimension of the context deals with the socio-political conditions in which the communicative event takes place. The local dimension concerns the immediate context of the communicative event. That is, who speaks

to whom, where, when and what for. It is, however, important to emphasise again that these dimensions of the context do not exert a direct influence on how social actors use language. The impact of such contextual properties is conditioned by the communicator's unique understanding of these properties: "For instance, age, gender or profession, as well as aims or knowledge of participants often do influence talk and text, but only if and as defined in the context model of the speaker or writer" (Van Dijk, 2009: 209). This shows that cognition – how communicators understand communicative events – plays a fundamental role in the process of language production and comprehension. Such insight necessitates a close look into cognition and its roles in the process of language production and comprehension.

#### 3.4.1.2 Cognition

##### *Personal vs social beliefs*

Cognition can be classified in different ways. For example, cognition can be classified with reference to their users. As such, cognition can be divided into personal and social beliefs (Van Dijk, 1998). Social beliefs, in turn, can be classified into cultural beliefs and group beliefs. While cultural beliefs refer to the beliefs shared by almost all competent members of a society, regardless of their group, group beliefs refer to beliefs shared by members of a certain group of people.

##### *Factual vs evaluative beliefs*

Cognition can also be classified with reference to their nature: factual and evaluative beliefs. While factual beliefs, known as knowledge, determine what we think is true and false, evaluative beliefs, known as attitudes, concern what we think is right and wrong, good and bad. Factual beliefs and evaluative beliefs will be explained separately.

### *Factual beliefs*

Factual beliefs can be divided into three categories: personal, group and cultural knowledge (Ibid). Personal knowledge refers to an individual's beliefs about personal events and situations. Group knowledge refers to the beliefs that some specific group takes to be true. For example, members of a racist group might consider to be true the belief that members of some other ethnic groups are less intelligent than they are. This type of belief is ideological because other members of society do not take it to be true. On the other hand, cultural knowledge refers to beliefs that most competent members of some society take to be true. Cultural knowledge serves as the basis for all types of interactions (Ibid). For example, all members of society, regardless of their ideological affiliation, need to know what immigration is before they can even have an opinion about it.

### *Knowledge as relative*

According to this kind of theorisation of social cognition, the notion of knowledge is taken to be historical and relative (Van Dijk, 1990, 1998). As such, there is no absolute truth. In that sense, knowledge is basically determined by consensus. It is what the majority of people regard as true beliefs. It is relative as different societies have different truth criteria, and it is historical as truth criteria differ throughout history. What is considered knowledge now, e.g. scientific research, was once regarded as mere ideological beliefs. The theorisation of knowledge as relative not only includes social facts but also extends to brute facts, e.g. what we know about natural phenomena (Ibid). This is because natural phenomena, such as trees and mountains, are observed and analysed through conceptual frameworks that developed at a particular historical moment (Van Dijk, 1998).

### *Evaluative beliefs (attitudes)*

Evaluative beliefs include a normative component (Van Dijk, 1998). They are about what we think of something rather than what exists, what it is or whether it is true or false. Evaluative beliefs can also be classified into three categories: personal, group and cultural attitudes (Ibid). Personal attitudes concern what individuals think of some personal matters such as the colour of one's car. Socio-cultural attitudes concern what members of a society as a whole think about certain issues. Just like socio-cultural knowledge, socio-cultural attitudes are usually shared by the majority of a society. For example, almost all societies take a positive attitude towards justice and security. Group attitudes, on the other hand, are usually shared only by members of a particular group. For example, different ideological groups have different opinions on immigration.

#### 3.4.1.3 Social cognitions and discourse

The theoretical account of the different types of social cognition, advanced above, still does not offer a specific illustration of how social cognitions are expressed in language. This section will deal with this issue. Social cognitions can be expressed in discourse in two different ways: direct and indirect ways (Van Dijk, 2009a). Direct expression involves the explicit abstract articulation of social beliefs. This articulation can be achieved through propositions, e.g. freedom is valuable. Indirect expression of social beliefs takes place through mental models (Ibid). This latter type of expression is accomplished through the application of abstract beliefs to specific and concrete events. So, rather than talking of gender inequality in general and abstract terms, we talk about the pay gap between men and women. Social beliefs and attitudes can, hence, be conveyed through different types and means of interaction such as a newspaper report, an article, everyday conversation, lectures, a TV report and so on (Ibid). The concept of mental model will be further illustrated below.

### *Mental models*

It is important to note that views regarding the nature and position of mental models in the brain are based on speculation rather than ‘facts’. Mental models are defined as “representation in episodic memory of situations, acts or events spoken or thought about, observed or participated in by human actors...” (Van Dijk, 1997: 198). These mental representations that people form of their daily experiences are both personal and subjective (Ibid). That is, they are not an actual reflection of what is out there. Rather, mental models represent how social actors see the event in question. They are, thus, stored in the episodic memory, in contrast with the semantic or social memory, where social beliefs are thought to be stored (Ibid).

However, although they are considered personal and subjective, mental models can also feature social beliefs (factual and evaluative). In constructing their mental models of events, communicators, hence, draw on personal, socio-cultural knowledge and, in some cases, ideological beliefs. Socio-cultural knowledge constitutes the basic foundation of all mental models. Without such beliefs no mental models can be formed and hence interaction would be impossible. Personal knowledge, which communicators draw on, explains the unique nature of mental models. In other words, this component explains why social actors experience the same event differently. Ideological beliefs, on the other hand, explain why members of a particular group experience events in a way that differs from members of other groups. Members of different ideological groups construe different mental models of the same event. For example, racists and anti-racist are likely to form a different mental model of a phenomenon such as immigration: “It is not the facts that define coherence, but rather the ways the facts are defined or interpreted by the language users in their mental models of these facts” (Van Dijk, 2009: 111). Mental models, thus, are not simply a reflection of what is out

there. Rather, mental models embody the participant's interpretation of events: "these interpretations are personal, subjective, biased, incomplete or completely imaginary" (Van Dijk, 2009: 111).

### *Context models*

Communicators not only construe mental models of events that they read, heard about or participated in but also construe mental models of events that they are currently engaged in (Van Dijk, 1998). Such mental models are referred to as context models (Ibid). Context models, hence, act as the interface between what we know about an event (as represented in mental models) and the way in which such events are expressed in text or talk (Ibid).

Context models, hence, function as a tool that allows communicators to adapt their talk or text to suit the communicative event in question. In their context model of some event, communicators only represent information that they think is relevant. Information that they do not think relevant will not be expressed. The same process applies to social identities. The decision to enact certain social identities but not others is also controlled by the communicator's interpretation of the event. For example, in a formal meeting, a person might choose not to enact their gender identity simply because it is not relevant in that context. When at home, communicators are also unlikely to enact their professional identity.

Context models are also dynamic (Teun A Van Dijk, 2008b). That is, they evolve throughout the communicative event. As such, communicators engage in a continuous process of context model construction of the communicative event in question. This process of continuous construction can be determined by a number of factors. One of these factors is what has been said or written earlier in text or talk: "They [context models] evolve, and change with each

word being said or written thus making all previously uttered and understood text or talk automatically part of the (known) context” (Van Dijk, 1998: 27).

That having been said, context models are not completely constructed during the communicative event. It is stipulated that context models include some fixed properties that all communicative events share. Such fixed properties allow for an effective interaction (Teun Adrianus Van Dijk, 2008). As such, communicators need not construct a new context model for every communicative event that they participate in. Rather, context models have a cognitive schema with some basic categories that almost every communicative event features.

These include:

- (1) Overall domain: politics or business.
- (2) Setting: temporal and special dimensions of the communicative event.
- (3) Participants in various roles: interactional roles – friends, family, colleagues, opponents. Communicative roles – speaker, writer, hearer or reader. Social roles – ethnicity, race, age or gender.
- (4) Action: legislation, protest, propaganda, opposition.

#### *Ideological context models*

It was illustrated above that mental models, although subjective, can also feature social beliefs, including ideological beliefs. The same applies to context models. That is, communicators can construct a context model of the communicative event in which, for example, their opinions and attitudes about an action, event or other participants can be controlled by their group’s ideology. When they draw on their ideology in order to understand or interpret some event, communicators produce a biased mental model of the event in question. For example, communicators can form a negative opinion about

immigration in the case of racists, and can represent themselves as different from and superior to members of other groups. Such negative representation of one of the properties of the context, namely the participants, can give rise to discriminatory linguistic structures. Since this study is mainly concerned with ideological context models and how they are expressed in language, more discussion of ideology will be offered.

#### 3.4.1.4 Ideology

*What does ideology mean?*

Ideology, as explained earlier, constitutes one form of social cognitions. It is defined as “socially shared basic beliefs of groups” (Van Dijk, 2013:11). Ideology thus differs from other types of social cognitions in various ways. It is social and hence is shared by various members of society, as opposed to personal beliefs. Ideology, however, differs from other types of social cognitions, e.g. socio-cultural knowledge. While the latter concerns beliefs that almost all members of society, regardless of their ideological group, share, ideology refers only to the set of beliefs shared by a group of people within society. In other words, unlike socio-cultural knowledge, ideological beliefs are not accepted by everyone. This means that ideologies involve differences of opinion and perspective and hence give rise to struggle and conflict: “Ideologies are about life and death, birth and reproduction, as the conflicting attitudes about abortion and euthanasia” (Van Dijk, 2013: 11). Finally, ideology is defined not only as social but also as basic beliefs. As such, ideologies control and organise other types of beliefs concerning specific issues and matters:

Thus, a racist ideology may organize many prejudices or racist attitudes, e.g. about immigration, about the intellectual capacities of minorities, about the role of



immigrants on the labor market, on the relation between immigration and crime and so on (Van Dijk, 2013: 14).

Having explained the nature of ideology I now turn to explore the structure of ideology.

### *The structure of ideologies*

It is stipulated that ideological beliefs are not represented in the mind in an arbitrary way (Van Dijk, 2000). Rather, ideology is thought to have a certain structure with its perspectives connected or related to one another in some systemic manner. Such a theoretical assumption is inferred from the fact that ideologies are easily acquired (Ibid), which implies simplicity and systematicity. As there is still no way to identify the actual structure of ideological perspectives in the mind, there can only be speculation of such schema. The socio-cognitive approach to ideology offers a plausible schema that is “derived from the basic properties of the social group” (Van Dijk, 1998: 17). The schema includes the following categories:

- (1) Membership: This category defines who belongs and who does not belong to the group. Identification with the group can be based on various properties such as age, gender, religion, profession and race.
- (2) Activities: This category defines the activities that members of the group are permitted to exercise along with the activities that members are prohibited to exercise.
- (3) Goals: Under this category, goals that group members should strive to attain or accomplish are defined.
- (4) Norms and values: This category defines the most prominent norms and values that members of the group should hold dear.

- (5) Position: This category defines the stance that members of the group should take from other groups.
- (6) Resources: This category defines both the symbolic as well as the material resources that members of a group should keep or defend.

*Research question related to the cognitive analysis of ideology:*

In this section, it was emphasised that the impact of social structures on linguistic structures is mediated through cognition. As such, it is not context per se that controls the way in which language is used but rather the communicator's understanding of the context. It was indicated that communicators construct a mental representation of the communicative event, defined as the context model. This context model acts as the interface between what communicators know about some event and how such an event is expressed in their talk or text. Context models can be biased as communicators can draw on ideological beliefs when construing a model of some event. An ideological context model is a model that represents some event in relation to groups. So through the textual analysis, I aim to examine whether the texts construe a biased mental model of the *women2drive* campaign or not. This can be determined by examining the opinions that the texts express about the event in question and about social actors.

### 3.4.2 The social dimension of ideology

#### 3.4.2.1 Overview

In addition to the cognitive dimension, ideology also has a social dimension (Van Dijk, 1998). Ideology is defined as a *socially shared* basic belief of groups: "These beliefs are acquired,

used and changed in social situations, and on the basis of the social interests of groups and social relations between groups in complex social structures” (Ibid: 135). Ideology, hence, needs to be examined from a sociological perspective. In this chapter, I examine the various social aspects of ideologies. I also investigate the social functions of ideology. The purpose of such an analysis is to investigate the social processes and structures that help to construct and maintain some ideologies and the discourse they are based on:

A fully ‘critical’ account of discourse would thus require a theorization and description of both social processes and structures which give rise to the production of text, and of the social structures and processes within which individuals or groups as social historical subjects create meaning in their interaction with texts (Wodak, 2009:3).

#### 3.4.2.2 The social manifestations of Ideology:

Ideology can socially manifest at two different levels: micro and macro social structures (Van Dijk, 2011). The distinction between micro and macro social structures is merely theoretical (Ibid). In practice, the two levels are woven together. The micro and macro structures take different forms. While the micro structures take a much more concrete form, the macro structures usually take an abstract form. To illustrate, the micro structures are usually embodied in social practices while the macro structures usually reflect abstract notions such as groups, institutions and group relations, especially those of dominance. Both types of social manifestation of ideology help to construct and maintain ideology. It is important to note that this impact of social structures on the way people act or use language is mediated through cognition:

...it is not the group, nor the organization, nor any other abstract societal structure that directly conditions, influences or constrains ideological practices, but the way social members subjectively represent, understand or interpret them (Van Dijk, 1998: 137).

A more detailed explanation of the micro and macro levels of ideology will be illustrated below.

#### 3.4.2.2.1 The micro structures of ideology

Ideology manifests socially in the way that people (inter)act (Van Dijk, 2013). This means that ideology also affects the way that language is used. The impact of ideology on discourse will be explored in more detail when dealing with the discursive dimension of ideology. With regard to other social practices, everyday actions are imbued with different types of ideologies (Ibid). Sexism shows in the roles that men and women possess at home. For example, women, within a sexist ideology, are expected to take up the domestic work (Ibid). Sexism also shows in the different forms of harassment and violence inflicted on women (Ibid). This shows that the social function of ideology at the micro level of society is to organise a joint (inter)action (Ibid). If, for example, the ideology in question is based on a biased representation of social actors, it is likely that it will give rise to biased forms of (inter)action:

... as soon as people act as members of social groups, they may bring to bear their ideologies in their actions and interaction. Thus, men may discriminate against women, whites against blacks, the young against the aged, and the rich against the poor (Van Dijk, 2013: 31).

#### 3.4.2.2.2 The macro structures of ideology

Ideologies not only manifest at the micro level of society, in social practices, but they also show at the macro level of society, in social structures: groups, group relations and institutions. In this section, I investigate the role of these phenomena in constructing and reproducing ideologies.

##### *1- Groupness*

Ideologies, as illustrated earlier, are associated with groups (Van Dijk, 1998). Groupness is thus an essential characteristic of ideology. Ideology, hence, needs to be adopted by some members of society. It needs to be noted though that not all collectivities are ideological (Ibid). A group of students attending a class does not constitute an ideological group. Ideological groups have certain characteristics that differentiate them from non-ideological groups. Here I discuss some of the characteristics that will help us to understand how ideological groups come into being, how they persist and why they exist in the first place.

A key characteristic feature of an ideological group is having shared social representations (Van Dijk, 1998). These shared social representations of a group serve as the basis for the group members' actions and behaviours. Shared social representations are therefore key in the (re)production of ideology. As was illustrated in the previous section, the social representations of ideological groups revolve around the notion of self-identification. Five categories were introduced as constituents of ideological grouping. These categories serve as the criteria that distinguish in-group members from out-group members.

- 1- Membership criteria: This category defines who does and does not belong to the group. The identification process can be determined by factors such as religion, origin, appearance, gender and profession.
- 2- Typical activities: Identification with regard to this category can be based on performing certain actions and behaviours, e.g. teaching, healing, performing certain cultural or religious rituals, campaigning and protesting.
- 3- Goals: Identification with regard to this category can be based on aspiring to achieve certain goals: raising awareness, bringing about a change in the existing power relations.
- 4- Norms: Identification with regard to this category can be based on holding certain norms and values or adhering to a particular hierarchical order of norms and values.
- 5- Group relations: Identification can be determined by the position that members of the group take from other groups.
- 6- Resources: Identification can be determined by preserving or protecting certain symbolic or material resources.

Groups vary in terms of which categories are emphasised in defining their members (Ibid). While some groups emphasise one category, others emphasise more or all categories. For example, professional groups place emphasis on the category of activities, e.g., teaching or programming. Feminist groups might stress the goal category, e.g. ending male dominance. Also, identification with a group can be determined by either a loose or detailed specification of behaviours:

Sometimes these group criteria will be quite loose and superficial, e.g., when based on preferred dress or music styles, sometimes they organize virtually all

aspects of the life and activities of the members of a group, as may be the case for gender, ethnicity, religion and profession” (Van Dijk, 1998: 33).

In the chapter on social analysis, the emergence of Wahhabism, the dominant ideology in Saudi, will be explored in relation to the categories above. In other words, I will be investigating the main factors emphasised in order to define who belongs and who does not belong to the group. Such analysis will help us to better understand how the ideology emerged and continued to persist:

What a theory of ideology needs to explain, then, is precisely the dynamics that relate social members to ideologies and to the collectivities that are constituted by shared experiences, beliefs and ideologies (Van Dijk, 1998:146).

## *2- Relations of power and dominance*

Ideology not only serves to organise the way that members of a group interact with one another. Ideology also serves to organise the way that members of the group interact with members of other groups. One key function of ideology is, therefore, to promote the interests of the group in question. Access to either symbolic or material resources can be based on some of the ideological properties outlined above – membership, actions, goals, norms and position. In the case of racist ideology, it is the race of the person; in sexist ideology, the sex of the person; in religious ideology, the religion of the person. This process will result in “... all social forms of problematization, marginalization or exclusion of the others” (Van Dijk, 1998: 150). This means that ideology, in addition to shared social representations, is also defined by another key characteristic, namely social conflict, whereby ideological groups engage in a struggle for power resources, whether symbolic or material. Ideology is, hence,

closely related to power. Investigating the relationship between language and power will help us to understand how ideologies persist.

### *Ideology and power*

Power can be defined in terms of control (Van Dijk, 2013) . For example, (A) is said to exercise power when (A) controls or restricts the actions and behaviours of (B). Some type of control can be consensual and harmless (Ibid). These types of control include the control that parents exercise over their children, or the election of a person to become leader for a temporary time framework. However, power can be abusive when it is used to serve the interests of a certain group of people. Using power to serve the interests of a particular group usually happens at the expense of other groups, “Thus, the possession and exercise of (more) power of one group usually implies the loss or limitation of freedom for the other group” (Van Dijk, 1998: 151). It is this type of power, namely dominance, that this study is concerned with.

### *Mechanisms of control*

Control can be accomplished through the use of coercion (Van Dijk, 1996). For example, those who choose to challenge or contest dominance can be subject to physical elimination or less extreme forms of physical force such as torture and imprisonment (Ibid). A more sophisticated form of power is having control over necessary resources such as housing, food and jobs (Ibid). As such, only those who comply with the wishes of the powerful can be entitled to such resources. Such forms of control, although they still exist, are not very popular, and they also still need to be legitimised. Legitimation can be accomplished through ideology. The function of ideology in relation to the macro-level structures of society



is therefore twofold: maintaining the existing power relation system and providing a legitimisation for such a system.

If a group is in a dominant relationship ... ideologies have the double function of maintaining or confirming the status quo, and at the same time of providing the basic cognitive framework for arguments to persuade its own members as well as others that his situation is 'just', 'natural', God-given, or otherwise legitimate (Van Dijk, 1998: 152).

Such cognitive control can be best accomplished through language. To illustrate, those who have access to public discourse can control the way that people think and hence indirectly control their behaviours and actions (Ibid). Such control can be accomplished by constructing the ideological perspectives of those in power as just, natural and God-given. Consequently, other alternative ways of being or forms of knowledge can be disregarded as wrong and abnormal. In light of such insights into the role of ideology in sustaining unequal power relations, the social analysis of the study, chapter 3, investigates how asymmetrical gendered power relations in Saudi Arabia are established, confirmed and perpetuated.

### **3- Institutions**

Finally, ideologies have an institutional and organisational dimension that also serves to reproduce them:

such institutionalization may play a prominent role in recruiting new members, setting goals, formulating norms and principles (and indeed ideologies), securing resources, and especially the co-ordination and effective execution of actions that realize the goal of the organised group (Van Dijk, 1998:137).

To give an example, religious institutions and organisations such as churches and mosques play a fundamental role in maintaining religious ideologies. In modern times, ideologies can be promoted and maintained through modern institutions such as educational institutions, media and political organisations. Such institutions, especially educational institutions, can be very effective in the reproduction of some ideology. Such institutions are usually assumed to be neutral. Also, almost all members of society enrol in schools and university and spend a large part of their lives in such institutions:

Geared mainly towards the reproduction of knowledge and the acquisition of skills, they [educational institutions] obviously also operate as major means for the reproduction of the dominant ideologies of society, although in some cases they also facilitate the propagation of counter-ideologies (Van Dijk, 1998: 173).

The social analysis of this study, chapter 3, will investigate the role of institutions and organisations in constructing and reproducing sexism in Saudi society.

### 3.4.3 The discursive analysis of ideology

#### 3.4.3.1 Overview

In addition to the cognitive and social dimensions, ideology has a discursive dimension. In fact, discourse constitutes the main instrument through which ideology is constructed and justified:

...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 prepositions (Van Dijk, 1995: 170).

Investigating the role of discourse in the reproduction of ideology is the primary focus of CDS. In this section, the relationship between discourse and ideology will be investigated. This section also includes an illustration of how the discursive analysis will be operationalised in this study.

#### 3.4.3.2 Discourse and ideology

It was illustrated earlier that ideology, as a form of social cognition, does not have a direct impact on social practices, including discourse. Rather, the impact of ideology on social practices, including discourse, is mediated through context models. Context models are defined as mental representations that individuals construe of communicative events. They, hence, represent a communicator's subjective understanding of communicative events (Van Dijk, 1997).

In constructing mental models of events, communicators draw not only on socio-cultural knowledge. Communicators can also draw on their group-specific factual and evaluative beliefs (Van Dijk, 2013). By doing so, communicators construct a biased context model of the communicative event. Biased mental models, as explained earlier, represent events in reference to groups. This biased context model of events can, in turn, give rise to ideological linguistic structures that serve to justify discriminatory practices.

#### *Ideological linguistic structures*

The view that there are ideological linguistic structures implies that there are also non-ideological linguistic structures. A theoretical distinction between these two types of linguistic structures takes us a step towards the identification and detection of ideological linguistic structures. Ideological linguistic structures, according to Van Dijk, are subject to contextual variation, particularly when linguistic structures vary as a function of social power (2009a). For example, some linguistic structures can be used to enact the social power of participants. Such linguistic structures can be described as ideological because they help to create or emphasise a difference of power among participants. Linguistic structures that do not serve such a function can then be described as non-ideological.

To illustrate, the use of some pronouns, such as *we* and *I*, can vary as a function of the social position of the communicators. The plural pronoun *We*, for example, can be used by some individuals to refer to themselves and hence they function to construct and confirm the social power of the individual in question. Some other structures, on the other hand, are context-free. They hence cannot function to express or confirm any ideological perspective or position. For example, the article will always precede the noun regardless of the context in which it was uttered. It must be noted, though, that linguistic structures need not always be ideological. It is the context that determines whether some linguistic structures perform some ideological function or not (Van Dijk, 1994).

Ideology can manifest at all levels of discourse. It can show in the “paraverbal, visual, phonological, syntactic, semantic, stylistic, rhetorical, pragmatic, and interactional levels and structures” (Van Dijk, 2009). The task of accounting for all ideological manifestations in discourse can, hence, be impossible. The scope of research, however, can be defined by the specific questions of the study (Ibid). For example, investigating sexism in the interactions between men and women might require one to look at features such as intonation and volume.

Such features might not be so relevant if one is interested in the role of language in the reproduction of sexism in general. In the latter, it might be much more useful to focus on the analysis of the content of discourse, topics, propositions and lexical items (Ibid).

### *Identifying ideology in discourse*

This theoretical distinction between ideological and non-ideological linguistic structures still, however, does not offer a complete and practical method for detecting ideological linguistic structures in text and talk. Within the socio-cognitive approach, the cognitive schema of ideology is used to facilitate the task of identifying and detecting ideological linguistic structures (1998). It was illustrated earlier that the schema revolves around the notion of self-identification and is composed of the following categories: Membership, Activities, Goals, Norms, Position, and Resources.

This shows that ideological discourses are characterised by their polarisation nature, whereby social actors and events are represented in reference to the dichotomy of *Us* and *Them* (Van Dijk, 2013). This polarisation can be achieved at different levels, as we can see from the categories above. For example, the category of position can, if represented in the speaker's model of the event, control some of the linguistic structures of the text and talk. Such control can be evident in the use of the pronouns of *Us* and *Them*, which primarily function to define the group's position or stance in relation to other groups. The polarisation of *Us* and *Them* also involves a normative element whereby *Us* is associated with positive properties while *Them* is associated with negative properties (Van Dijk, 1995d). In light of this insight, Van Dijk offers a key strategy that shapes most ideological discourses (2013). This strategy can be realised through the following statements:

- say good things about us

- say bad things about them
- do not say bad things about us
- do not say good things about them

The above strategy is still general and limited as it only includes one dimension of discourse, namely semantic forms (Ibid). In other words, it only provides a way of detecting ideology in the meaning of discourse, i.e. what is said. As such, it does not offer an explicit way of identifying ‘ideology’ in linguistic forms, i.e. how it is said. The strategy was hence developed to cover the second dimension of discourse, namely linguistic structures. This development took the following shape:

Emphasise good things about *Us*

Emphasise bad things about *Them*

Do not emphasise good things about *Them*

Do not emphasise bad things about *Us*

While semantic forms, as Van Dijk points out, are much more susceptible to ideological control, ideology also affects the structures of discourse (2000). For example, the negative representation of out-group members can be *expressed* through semantic forms such as topics whereby only bad information about *Them* is expressed in text or talk. The negative representation of out-group members can also be *emphasised* through linguistic forms such as syntactic structures. For example, the active sentence form can be used to emphasise *Their* bad things while using the passive sentence form to deemphasise *Our* bad things:

... the use of the opposing pairs ‘emphasize’ and deemphasize’ allows for many forms of structural variation: we may talk length or briefly about our good or their bad things, prominently or not, explicitly or implicitly, with hyperbolas or euphemisms, with big or small headlines, and so on (Van Dijk, 1998: 44).

The overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation can be linguistically realised through a large number of semantic forms and linguistic structures. Below is a list of some of the semantic forms and linguistic structures used in the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign in order to delegitimise women’s right to drive.

### **Semantic forms**

Van Dijk makes a distinction between two types of semantics; global and local forms (Van Dijk, 1980, 1989). While local forms of meaning can be expressed through words and individual sentences, the global meaning of the text can be conveyed through the topics of the text. In the following section, I deal with both types of semantic forms.

### ***Global semantic forms***

#### *Topics*

Topics represent the most important information of the text or talk (Ibid). Because they represent the most important information of the text or talk, it is assumed that topics are much more easily recalled than other linguistic structures. The cognitive function of topics is to influence the way in which recipients understand or interpret an issue. This can be accomplished through the selection of some topics but not others: “Speakers and writers may thus emphasize meaning, control comprehension and influence the formation of so-called ‘mental models’ of the event the discourse is about” (Van Dijk, 2009: 102). If the talk or text is based on a biased mental model, its topics will then be reflective of the ideological strategy

outlined above. As such, topics of some ideological text or talk will feature information about *Our* good things and *Their* bad things. It is also likely that bad things about *Us* and good things about *Them* will not be topicalised (Van Dijk, 1995b). Topicalisation will also include the negative consequences of what they advocate and the positive consequences of what we call for.

### ***Local semantic forms***

Local meanings of the text, as indicated above, are expressed through individuals' words and sentences. These individual words and sentences are controlled by global semantic forms, namely topics. Hence, the local semantic forms will usually be reflective of the overall meaning of the text. Local semantic forms, along with global ones, serve to influence the way that communicators interpret some event: "Together with the topics, these meanings are best recalled and most easily reproduced by recipients, and hence may have most obvious social consequences" (Van Dijk, 2009: 103). The local semantic forms include the following properties:

### ***Level of description***

Once topics of text or talk are chosen, communicators need to decide how much information needs to be included. Communicators have to choose between giving a detailed description or a brief account of (aspects) of events. The decision of how much information to include about some event can be ideologically motivated: "We may simply speak of 'police violence', that is, in rather general and abstract terms, or we may 'go down' to specifics and spell out what precisely the police did" (Van Dijk, 1998: 46). Considering the overall strategy of ideology outlined above, a text can include a more detailed description of the negative properties of



out-group members and the positive properties of inside-group members. In contrast, a brief or no description at all can be dedicated to *Our* bad actions and *Their* good actions.

### *Implications*

Implications also constitute an important element of the local semantic forms of text or talk. They also concern how much information is expressed. Communicators need to make a decision over what information needs to be explicit. Information that communicators choose not to explicitly express is referred to as implied information. The decision to leave out some information is usually determined by the communicator's knowledge of what their interlocutors already know. Known information is usually left out. Leaving out known information allows for an effective interaction.

There are two forms of implications (Van Dijk, 1995b). One form of implication is based on conceptual knowledge. For example, the word 'bachelor' in "he is a bachelor" implies that the person in question is not married. Such information is derived from our conceptual knowledge of the word 'bachelor'. Implied information can also be based on our knowledge about some empirical facts. For example, when told that someone had jumped out of a skyscraper, it would be inferred that this person had died, unless something extraordinary had happened (Ibid). This inference is derived from our knowledge about skyscrapers and what could happen when someone falls from such a height.

The two forms of implication involve a different type of relation between propositions (Ibid). There are three types of relationship between propositions: possible, likely or necessary. The form of implication based on conceptual knowledge involves a much stronger semantic relationship between propositions than the form of implication based on knowledge about

empirical facts. When based on conceptual knowledge, implication involves a necessary relationship between propositions. For example, it is necessary that someone is not married in order to be described as a bachelor. On the other hand, it is highly likely, but not necessary, that someone dies when they jump off a skyscraper.

Implied information is usually part of the socio-cultural knowledge. However, implications are not always based on socio-cultural knowledge. Implications can also be based on ideological perspectives. Propositions based on ideological perspectives can only be 'true' or 'valid' from the perspective of the writer or speaker.

### *Presuppositions*

Presuppositions present a good example of semantic implication (Van Dijk, 1995b). Presupposition is considered to be one of the most effective ideological tools (Ibid). Presupposed views are seen as facts and hence need not be asserted. Presuppositions can be ideological when the information presupposed is based on ideological perspectives rather than shared socio-cultural knowledge: "As in the case for implications, they (presuppositions) allow speakers or writers to make claims without actually asserting them, and, moreover, take specific beliefs for granted although they might not be" (Van Dijk, 1995: 273). This tool can, hence, be used to build consensus around controversial issues. Factive expressions such as "I know, understand, the truth of the matter is, the problem is that" present good examples of the ideological function of presuppositions. All of these expressions presuppose that the information conveyed in the embedded clause is necessarily true.

### *Local coherence*

This feature concerns the way that sentences are related to one another in text or talk. A text or talk is considered coherent if its propositions are related to one another in a way that

produces a conceivable (real or imagined) situation (Van Dijk, 1995a). Local coherence is divided into referential and functional coherence (Ibid). Referential coherence concerns the ways that the facts, which the text or talk refers to, are related to one another. Facts can be related to one another in various ways – through conditional, causal, spatial or temporal relations. Functional coherence, on the other hand, refers to how propositions are related to one another within the text. For example, one proposition can serve as a Specification, Generalisation, an Example or a Contrast for another proposition.

It is, however, emphasised that the coherence of a text is not determined by the facts that the text refers to (Van Dijk, 2009). Rather, coherence of the text is determined by the unique understanding of the communicators of these facts: “These interpretations are personal, subjective, biased, incomplete, or completely imaginary” (Van Dijk, 2009: 111). Here is an example of a biased interpretation of some event: “He is from Nigeria, but a very good worker”. The coherence of this excerpt is based on a racist mental model. Two facts were advanced in the statement above: (1) he is from Nigeria, and (2) he is a very good worker. These facts are linked to one another via the presupposition ‘but’ which is used to introduce an exception. So the use of ‘but’ before the second clause ‘he is a very good worker’ is intended to indicate that hard work is not a typical characteristic of people who come from Nigeria. The link made between the two propositions is thus based on a biased mental model of members of other groups. Such a biased description can only be accepted as true by someone with a similarly biased mental model.

### *Representation of social actors*

Social actors can be constructed in talk in various ways. Each construction evokes different social, political and psychological implications (Machin & Mayr, 2012). To illustrate, social

actors can be constructed through their specific religious or cultural group. Such construction serves to highlight the otherness of social actors (Ibid). Social actors can also be constructed by emphasising their gender identities or physical characteristics, which can be ideologically motivated. For example, many studies noted a discrepancy between the way that men and women are represented in media (Folman et al., 2014). While men are usually represented in relation to their intellectual characteristics, women are usually represented in relation to their physical characteristics and emotional capacities: “These representations of women trivialise their lives and place an extra level of personal judgment on them” (Jule, 2008: 14). Social actors can also be depicted as a homogenous group by the use of generics such as Arab, women and Jewish. Individuals, once placed into these group classifications, cease to have individual characteristics or agency (Van Leeuwen, 1996).

### *Modality*

Modality refers to the expressions that communicators employ in text or talk in order to show their commitment to what they say or write (Machin & Mayr, 2012). That is, how certain they are about the information expressed. Communicators can use either high or low modality when voicing their opinions about what they say or write. High modalities show certainty while low modalities express probability. Modalities include mental verbs such as “I think”, “I believe”, “I suppose”; modal verbs such as “may, might, could, will”; modal adjectives such as “probably, certainly, likely”. Modalities are one of the key linguistic features that can be used to achieve ideological objectives (Norman Fairclough, 2003; Machin & Mayr, 2012). This can be accomplished by advancing personal opinions and ideological perspectives as factual and hence they need not be challenged or contested. Van Dijk explains that propositions which lack linguistic devices that reflect their subjective and specific character can be read as if they were preceded by the following expression “It is very

well known that...”(2013). Such statements, hence, leave no room or space for other alternatives.

### *Topoi*

Topoi are defined as ready-made statements that function as arguments on their own (Van Dijk, 2013). Topoi are very widely used in ideological discourses. This is simply because they are so common that they need no extra explanation or justification: “One of the discursive implication of the use of topoi is that as standard argument they need not be defended: they serve as basic criteria in argumentation” (2013: 53). Reisigl and Wodak (2001) have identified a large number of topoi that have been used to legitimise discrimination. To give an example, immigrants are represented in racist discourse as a ‘burden’. Such description stands as an argument that needs no support. The topoi takes the following formula “if X is a burden to Y, then X must be stopped”.

### *Disclaimers*

Disclaimers are a very common feature of prejudiced discourse (Van Dijk, 1984, 1987, 1992). A disclaimer is composed of two clauses. While the first clause includes a negation that serves to deny that the speaker or writer has any prejudiced feelings, the second clause includes negative remarks about other groups. An example of a disclaimer would be “I have nothing against black people but...”. Disclaimers have two ideological functions. First, they serve to deny that the speaker or writer has any prejudiced feelings and hence function as an impression management strategy. By denying feelings of prejudice, disclaimers suggest that the information conveyed in the second clause is based on rational grounds rather than prejudiced feelings (Wodak, 2015).

## **Linguistic forms**

While semantic forms serve to construct ideological perspectives, linguistic structures serve to emphasise such ideological perspectives:

These various ‘forms’ generally do not directly express underlying meanings and hence beliefs, but rather signal ‘pragmatic’ properties of a communicative event, such as the intention, current mood or emotions of speakers, their perspective on events talked about, opinions about co-participants, and especially interactional concerns such as positive self-presentation and impression formation (Van Dijk, 2009: 106).

Linguistic structures include the following properties:

### *Syntax*

The ideological function of syntactic structures is very well acknowledged by many critical discourse analysts (Fowler et al., 1979; Hodge & Kress, 1993). Syntactic structures can be used to (de) emphasise the agency of social actors and hence the positive or negative image of those social actors. For example, the passive sentence form can be used to conceal or play down the agency of social actors while active sentence forms can be used to highlight the agency of social actors. The decision of a communicator to choose a passive or an active sentence form can be ideologically motivated. In other words, it depends on how social actors are represented in the mental model of the communicators (Van Dijk, 1995a). If this representation is negative, it is likely that communicators will use an active sentence form to report *Their* bad actions while using passive sentence forms to report *Our* bad actions and vice versa. Van Dijk showed that, in racist text and talk, the bad actions of members of

minority groups are usually emphasised through the use of the active voice, while the bad actions of members of the majority group are usually deemphasised through the use of the passive voice (1989). Similarly, the agency of women, in sexist texts and talks, is usually concealed or deemphasised through the use of the passive sentence form, while men's active role is usually emphasised through the use of active sentence forms (Machin & Thornborrow, 2006).

### *Argumentation*

Argumentations constitute an important property of text and talk. The purpose of argumentation is to defend or attack a certain position. By advancing arguments, communicators wish to influence the way that recipients understand or interpret an event: "... argumentations typically, implicitly or explicitly, feature cognitive steps that suggest, or force people to draw, conclusion from arguments that are accepted in rational interaction and communication" (2008: 194).

Positions that communicators advance in text and talk are based on the social beliefs of communicators and hence can be ideological (Ibid). As a consequence, such arguments can only be accepted as valid or sound from someone with similar beliefs. Also, when defending a politically incorrect position, more respected arguments can be used in order to avoid criticism. In his analysis of arguments of racist text and talk, Van Dijk noted that in defending their position against immigration, racists tend to avoid using arguments that signal their racist opinions and attitudes (Dijk, 2010). Instead, racists employ cover-up arguments that invoke other social problems such as lack of housing, different cultural differences and problems related to the labour market (Ibid). The manipulation of public opinion can also be

accomplished by advancing only arguments that support one's ideological stance, while ignoring or obscuring arguments that contradict one's position (Van Dijk, 1995a). Fallacious arguments can also be used to defend some ideological perspectives. A very well-known fallacious argument is the Authority Fallacy.

### *Rhetorical structures*

Rhetorical figures do not vary as a function of ideology (Teun Adrianus Van Dijk, 2008). That is, there is no specific collection of rhetorical figures that can be exclusively associated with a particular ideological group. Rhetorical figures are, thus, regarded as mainly linguistic structures that mainly serve to (de)emphasise meaning or ideological perspectives: "Thus, the well-known ideological polarization between in-groups and out-groups, as we know it from racist discourse, typically involves rhetorical emphasise (metaphors, hyperboles, etc.) on any positive attribute of Them, and vice versa, mitigation (euphemism, understatement, etc.) of their good attributes and of our bad attributes..." (2008: 192).

### **Action**

An important dimension of discourse, other than semantic forms and linguistic structures, is the actions that the text or talk attempts to accomplish (Van Dijk, 2000). Statements, if uttered in certain circumstances, can accomplish things. These actions include an order, an assertion, a promise, an accusation or a threat. Such actions can be accomplished in talk and text through speech acts. Speech acts presuppose socio-cultural knowledge. The speech act of a promise, for example, presupposes that whoever issued the promise has to say or do something in future in order to fulfil his or her promise. Some speech acts are associated with power. Orders, for example, presuppose that those who issue them have a higher social status than those who receive them. Some other actions are associated with dominance. These



include discrimination, accusation, delegitimisation, derogation, marginalisation and problematisation.

*Research questions related to discursive analysis*

The main research question concerning the discursive analysis of this study is what are the discursive strategies used in order to delegitimise women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia? In order to detect such strategies, a detailed textual analysis will be conducted. The textual analysis involves an investigation of global and local semantic forms as well as linguistic structures. The analysis starts with the investigation of the global semantic forms of the texts, namely topics. Starting with the global semantic forms, topics, enables us to identify the main themes or notions that the texts invoke. The topics are identified through a process of inference and summary. Having accomplished that, I engage in a process of uncovering the notions or the themes that the topics invoke.

Having identified the key notions, I turned to examine the local semantic forms of the texts. Such analysis includes a detailed textual analysis of the texts. I investigate the various local semantic forms used to invoke these notions. In order to detect all ideological linguistic structures in a systematic manner, the texts are examined in relation to the ideological schema developed by van Dijk (1998). The ideological schema involves the following categories; membership, activities, goals, norms, position and resources. I, hence, examine how social actors are constructed in regard to such categories.

## Chapter 4: The social analysis

### 4.1 Overview

In this chapter, I examine the social structures and processes that help (re)produce sexism in Saudi Arabia. Ideology, as explained earlier, has a social dimension (Van Dijk, 1998). This dimension, along with the cognitive and discursive dimensions, helps to reproduce ideology. A comprehensive analysis of ideology, hence, needs to examine this aspect of ideology. In the methodology chapter, it was illustrated that ideology manifests socially at the micro level of society through social practices, including discourse, and at the macro level of society through social structures such as groups, groups' relations and institutions. In this chapter, both the problem of sexism and its social manifestations will be explored.

### 4.2 Sexism

In chapter 2, it was discussed that sexism is mainly based on the notion of patriarchy, which literally means the rule of the father whereby male members dominate the family. Within such a framework, men and women are believed to have two distinct roles. While men play the breadwinner role, women are supposed to perform the role of the housewife. This familial structure serves to construct and maintain asymmetrical power relations (Julé, 2008). Within this structure, women's role in society is diminished. Women are mainly restricted to the private sphere. Men, as a consequence, have a total monopoly over the various power resources, which enables men to create reality according to their own interests (Thompson, 1998). Sexism can, then, be defined as a system of social inequality based on gender whereby male members of society enjoy more power than female members of society (Van Dijk, 2013). Sexism is maintained through both the micro- and macro-level structures (Ibid). Both levels will be explored below.

### 4.3 Sexism at the micro level of society

The impact of sexism in Saudi Arabia can be clearly noticed at the social, economic and political levels (Al-Rasheed, 2013; Baki, 2004; Le Renard, 2008). In this section, I investigate the impact of sexism on women's lives as well as the social practices and political policies that help perpetuate the existing gendered power relations.

#### *Saudi women in the public and private sectors*

Women constitute only twenty percent of the whole workforce in Saudi Arabia (Al-Rasheed, 2017). With regard to the public sector, women have been concentrated in a limited number of domains, particularly the educational and health domains. Women's presence in the private sector is even worse than in the public sector. It was not until the last five years that women have been able to secure more jobs in the private sector (Toumi, 2017). Such an increase in women's presence in the private sector is due to some recent programmes introduced by the Ministry of Labour such as Saudization and the feminisation of some sectors (Al-Arabia, 2015).

Women's under-representation in both public and private sectors is the direct result of various gendered policies including; barring women from practicing certain enterprises, the restrictions on women's mobility, the male guardianship system and a sex segregation policy. For instance, women were banned from studying or practising enterprises such as law, architecture and engineering (AlMunajjed, 2009; Baki, 2004). Women were first allowed to study law in 2005, and were given permission to practise their profession in 2013 (Carrington, 2013). Women still need their male guardian approval in order to study abroad.

### *Women in political organisations: Shura and municipal councils – real or cosmetic reforms?*

Before I discuss women's presence in political organisations such as Shura and municipal councils, it might be useful to give a brief description of the political system in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has an absolute monarchy. The king not only selects his successor but also forms the cabinet of the government (Long & Maisel, 2010). The king also appoints the members of the *Shura* majlis, an advisory or a consultative body. The state has also banned political and civil organisations and it has a complete monopoly over media organisations. This type of system clearly shows that power is concentrated only in one family, the monarch. The ruler has always been a male member of the royal family. High-ranking positions of power have always been preserved for male members of society. This, however, changed recently when women were appointed to some political organisations, namely the Shura council and municipal councils.

### *Women in the Shura council*

In 2013, women were appointed, for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia, as members of the *Shura* council, a consultative body that resembles most closely parliaments in democratic countries. This change was introduced by a royal decree, which also indicates that one-fifth of the total number of the council seats must always be filled by women (Gardner, 2013). Given that the total number of the council seats is 150, thirty women were appointed to the council.

This move has been described in local and international media as a breakthrough in the history of Saudi Arabia (Al-Arabiya, 2013). However, the effectiveness of such reforms was highly questioned given the symbolic nature of this body (Gardner, 2013). First of all,

members of the council are appointed by the king. Hence, the ability of those members to raise critical questions or debate contentious matters is highly doubted. Secondly, members of the Shura council enjoy a limited power. The council has a consultative function rather than a legislative one. Its role is limited to offering advice, initiating discussions, questioning ministers and proposing laws.

#### *Saudi women in the municipal elections*

The step to appoint women to the Shura council in 2013 was followed by another step: women were allowed to vote and stand as candidates in the municipal elections (BBC, 2015). This step took place after two rounds of elections in which women did not participate, 2009 and 2011. In 2015, when women were allowed to participate as candidates, women won seventeen out of nine hundred and seventy-nine seats (Stancati, 2016). The effectiveness of this step was again questioned. This is mainly due to the limited power of the members of the local council. Local councils receive funding from the government. Also, councils can only debate a limited range of topics, dealing mainly with issues of infrastructure and maintenance. Moreover, members' suggestions and proposals are not law-binding.

Given the nature of such institutions, the impact of these reforms on the situation of women seems limited. While women have been given positions of power that they have never before occupied, women have not been given the power to effect a real change. This is mainly due to the fact that these institutions have symbolic rather than real power. The symbolic nature of these institutions shows that such policies are not driven by a real desire to effect a real change in women's situation. Rather, states sometimes tend to introduce such policies in order to avoid the criticism of being discriminatory. Such policies are hence introduced "for pragmatic reasons or from a desire to project an enlightened self-image" (Lazar, 2007: 153).

#### 4.4 Sexism at the macro-level structures (tribalism, Wahhabism and the state)

Having explored the problem and its manifestation at the micro level of society, I now turn to explore the manifestation of sexism at the macro level of society. Ideologies “are related to groups and social movements, with power, dominance and struggle” (Van Dijk, 2013:38). In the previous section, it was shown that sexism affects almost every aspect of women’s lives in society. Such manifestation of sexism shows in the various forms of exclusion and marginalisation of women. These forms of exclusion and marginalisation are also constituted by and constitutive of larger social structures, namely, groups, relations of dominance and institutions.

In this section, I investigate these larger social structures. This investigation requires a historical analysis of Saudi Arabia. I start with a description of the socio-political conditions that preceded the emergence of the state. Before the state was established, two social phenomena played a key role in shaping the social and political landscapes in the Arabian Peninsula, namely tribalism and Islam. Both phenomena will be explored below.

##### *Tribalism*

Prior to the establishment of the state, the Arabian Peninsula was the home of a large number of nomadic tribes and a small number of sedentary groups (Dakheel, 2013). Tribes are characterised by a number of features that define their political and social structures. For example, the criterion of identification with a certain tribe is limited to having a common descent (Cole, 1982; Shkolnik, 2012). People who have a common descent are thus considered members of the tribe and are entitled to privileges such as solidarity from other members of the group (Ibid). Since having a common descent is the only condition through

which individuals can identify with a tribe, keeping the bloodline pure has been essential to the continued existence of a tribe. Inter-marriage was therefore discouraged. Another important characteristic of the tribe is its patriarchal dimension. Tribes are only led by male members of the tribe. Male members of the tribe also feel responsible for guarding and protecting the female members of the tribe (Al-Rasheed, 2013).

### *Islam*

Islam was also another key defining factor of social reality in the Arabian Peninsula prior to the establishment of the Saudi state (Esposito, 1998). However, before the state was established, various schools or forms of Islam existed in the Arabian Peninsula. These schools of Islam exhibited different understandings of Islam and as a result different religious practices were exercised (Blanchard, 2007; Mouline, 2014). Religious laws were not enforced (Commins, 2009). In other words, religion was more of a personal spiritual path rather than a public or a political project (Al-Rasheed, 2013). This was the case until the emergence of Wahhabism (Ibid).

### *Wahhabism*

Wahhabism is a religious movement that started in the second half of the eighteenth century in Najd, on the Arabian Peninsula (Cook, 1992). The term 'Wahhabism' is derived from the name of the founder of the movement, Mohammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The emergence of Wahhabism was preceded by a change in the demographic nature of the area whereby members of some tribes decided to relinquish their nomadic life style and opt for a sedentary lifestyle (Dakheel, 2013). This demographic change resulted in new forms of political configurations, namely emirates. Unlike tribes, identification with emirates was based on sharing a certain public space rather than sharing a certain ancestor. As a consequence, the

family, rather than the tribe, became the main constituent element of this new socio-political configuration (Ibid). This demographic change is thought to have paved the way for the emergence of both Wahhabism and the state (Ibid). That is, the new sedentary lifestyle allowed for the propagation of some ideology and the social realisation of such an ideology.

Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab's initial approach to disseminating his own version of Islam, named *Al-Da'wa* (the call), was very basic, namely verbal communication with passers-by (Al-Rasheed, 2010). This basic approach proved to be ineffective so ibn Abd Al-Wahhab sought some political alliance. He first turned to the political chief of al-'Uyayyna, a small province in Najd, in the central area of the Arabian Peninsula (Ibid). The political chief of 'Uyayyna, 'Uthman ibn Mu'ammarr, was offered a pact by ibn Abd al-Wahhab whereby the latter would offer ideological support for the former to expand his control beyond Najd. In return, ibn Abd Al-Wahhab would receive the military support he needed in order to enforce his version of Islam.

Ibn Mu'ammarr agreed to ibn Abd al-Wahhab's proposal and hence a deal was made. This deal, however, did not last for long after some religious leaders protested against ibn Abd al-Wahhab's way of establishing his *Da'wa*. Soon after he started his *Da'wa* in 'Uyayyna, ibn Abd al-Wahhab ordered the stoning of a woman for adultery. The laws of Sharia were not enforced at the time. Ordering the stoning of the women therefore resulted in a public outcry, which eventually led some religious clerics to resort to the most prominent political chief of that time, Suleiman al-Muhammad, the political chief of Hasa (Al-Rasheed, 2013). The latter placed pressure on the political chief of 'Uyayyna and hence ibn Abd al-Wahhab was finally expelled.



After he was expelled from al- ‘Uyayyna, ibn Abd al-Wahhab found refuge in al- Diriyah where he made a deal with its chief, Muhammad ibn Saud, in 1744. This pact resulted in the establishment of both the first Saudi state as well as Wahhabism. In their first encounter, the following conversation took place.

Ibn Saud addressing ibn Abd al-Wahhab:

“This oasis is yours, do not fear your enemies. By the name of God, if all Najd was summoned to throw you out, we will never agree to expel you.”

To which ibn Abd al- Wahhab replied:

“You are the settlement’s chief and wise man. I want you to grant me an oath that you will perform jihad against the unbelievers. In return you will be imam, leader of the Muslim community and I will be leader in religious matters” (Al-Rasheed, 2010: 16).

In order to account for its emergence and reproduction, Wahhabism will be investigated in relation to the ideological schema introduced in the methodology chapter. It was indicated that ideologies are associated with groups and have a certain ideological schema with the following properties: membership, activities, norms and values, goals, positions and resources. Such categories serve to define who belongs and who does not. They also serve to facilitate a joint (inter)action including relations of dominance.

The encounter above clearly shows that religion was established as the main criterion through which identification with the group was determined. However, Wahhabism differed from other existing religious movements at the time in that it stressed the importance of acting and behaving in accordance with religious principles (Commins, 2009). While for many religious movements the declaration of shahada, the profession of faith (There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God) was sufficient for someone to identify as a Muslim, ibn

Abd al-Wahhab rejected this view. For him, reciting shahada is not enough. A Muslim, according to ibn Abd al-Wahhab, needs also to act according to Islamic principles as defined by him (Ibid). The category of Action was hence emphasised as a necessary criterion for one's identification with Islam.

In order to define correct worship, ibn Abd al-Wahhab stressed the notion of monotheism (al-Wahhab, 1970). Monotheism, *Tawheed* in Arabic, was the primary value that Islam came to encourage (Hawting, 1997). *Tawheed* was also the primary value that characterised ibn Abd al-Wahhab's *Da'wa*. As such, activities such as the visiting of graves, tombs and shrines, sacrificing animals to beings other than God, and swearing vows to other beings were all considered un-Islamic (Cook, 1992). This is because such activities involve *Shirk*, associating someone or something else with God. Those who exercised such actions were rendered apostates. Both the threat of use of force as well as the use of force were exercised against provinces in which such activities were still practised. It must be noted though that the view that *Shirk* was common at the time is highly questioned; for more details see (Dakheel, 2013). As such, *Shirk* was used as a pretext for the use of force against rivals.

In addition to monotheism, patriarchy was another important notion that was drawn upon in order to define correct worship by Wahhabism (Al-Rasheed, 2013). Although the behaviours and actions of both men and women were regulated, women were subject to harsher restrictions than men: "While men's religious practices and piety were crucial for the revival of true Islam, women were nevertheless seen as important pillars for the return to an authentic religious tradition among a stable, settled community" (Ibid: 44). Control includes restricting women's presence in public places. Women were prevented from practising a

large number of religious and social practices that they used to practise freely before the emergence of Wahhabism (Ibid).

Another important category that Wahhabism emphasised for the identification of members as Muslim is Position. For ibn Abd al- Wahhab, practicing Islam with according to his own views is not sufficient for one to be considered a Muslim. Provinces need also to side with him against provinces in which Islam was practiced differently. Those who fail to do so are liable to punishment. In a message directed to inhabitants of *al-Qassim*, ibn Abd al-Wahhab stated “People of *al-Qassim* were mistaken when they thought they were safe because they do not have tombs and shrines, tell them this is not enough. Sympathy and alliance are key in religion. Without them, there is no religion for the man... abandoning Shirk (idolatry) is not sufficient as long as they sympathize with the people of al- Zulfi” (Al- Dakhil 2014: 200).

The analysis of Wahhabism above shows that religion was established as the main criterion that distinguished in-group members from out-group members. Unlike many other religious ideologies, Wahhabism also stressed both the categories of Action and Position in distinguishing *Us* from *Them*. As a consequence, it was not sufficient for someone to recite the shahada in order to identify as a Muslim; one has to act in a certain way and take a certain position. Action and Position were designed and determined in relation to the norms and values of both monotheism and patriarchy.

A religious ideology was used to legitimise such social and political arrangements. Wahhabism was not advanced as one alternative form of Islam but was advanced as the only true and right form of Islam. Other religious ideologies were, hence, denounced. Such conceptual construction of other alternatives provided the cognitive basis that justified

unequal treatments of social actors; "...the everyday social practices of discrimination presuppose cognitive basis of negative beliefs about the Others: stereotypes, prejudices, racist attitudes or other socially shared negative opinions..." (Van Dijk, 2013: 40). Both the threat of use of force and the use of force were exercised against those who adopted a different version of Islam other than Wahhabism.

*The role of institutions and organisations in the reproduction of sexism in Saudi Arabia*

Although ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings are now two hundred and seventy-seven years old, they still play a fundamental role in shaping the social and political landscapes in Saudi Arabia. This is mainly due to the fact that the state is still dependent on Wahhabi clerics for legitimacy. Such dependence resulted in the state appropriating Wahhabi views of social reality, including gender relations, in forming the national identity of Saudi Arabia. This resulted in a national identity imbued with patriarchal norms and values: "From the eighteenth century onward, Wahhabi religious nationalism aspired to create an ideology of order in which women became boundary markers representing the authenticity of the nation" (Al-Rasheed, 2013: 38).

One way through which patriarchal norms and values are still (re)produced in Saudi society is through educational institutions. This clearly shows in the ideology of *the ideal Islamic women*, which has been instilled through educational curricula (Doumato, 1992). The ideal woman ideology is constructed according to the Wahhabi perspective of gender and gender relations. The female education philosophy reads "The purpose of educating a girl is to bring her up in a proper Islamic way so as to perform her duty in life, be an ideal and successful house wife and a good mother, prepared to do things which suit her nature, like teaching, nursing and giving medical treatment" (Doumato, 1992: 35).

The ideal Islamic woman ideology clearly highlights a patriarchal view of gender. According to this philosophy, women are reduced to being wives and mothers. The woman as a person, not only as a wife and a mother, is concealed. Women are also represented as only capable of performing a limited selection of professions, namely teachers and nurses. As such, women are rendered unfit to practise professions that allow them to participate in the decision-making process. Religion and nature are invoked in order to legitimise this ideological perspective of gender and gender relations.

With regard to religious institutions, discrimination against women has been invoked in a more blatant form, as women are construed as lacking in terms of intellect as well as religion: (Arebi, 1994).

... “the woman” is transformed in many religious interpretations into a physical being, who must constantly be reminded of her “lack,” “incompleteness,” “fragility,” and “natural” propensity for perversion; in a word of being *awra*, a source of shame who has to be concealed” (1994: 18).

The state also established a special religious force that is responsible for observing and enforcing gendered policies, namely The Committee for The Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter investigates the role of social practices and structures in the reproduction of sexism in Saudi Arabia. The analysis includes an investigation of sexism at both the micro

and macro levels of society. At the micro level, sexism in Saudi Arabia manifests and is reproduced through a large number of discriminatory policies which resulted in women being underrepresented in both political and economic domains. At the macro level of society, sexism in Saudi Arabia is reproduced through the dominant ideology, Wahhabism. Wahhabism advocates a patriarchal view of gender's relations. With the help of the state, such patriarchal views of gender relations have been institutionalised and enforced. The next chapter deals with the role of language in delegitimising women's rights, specifically women's right to drive.

## Chapter 5: The discursive analysis

### 5.1 Overview

In this chapter, I investigate the discursive strategies used to delegitimise women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia. The focus of this chapter is thus on the discursive dimension of ideology. Discourse constitutes one, if not the most important, social practice that helps to (re)produce ideology. The importance of this dimension consists in the capacity of discourse to not only explicitly express ideological perspectives but also to legitimise these perspectives: "...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" (Van Dijk, 1995: 17).

It is important to note though that ideology, which has a cognitive and social dimension, does not have a direct impact on the way that people act or use language (Ibid). The impact of ideology on discourse is mediated through mental models. 'Mental model' refers to the mental representation that communicators construe of some communicative event. When constructing a model of some event, communicators draw on shared socio-cultural knowledge and can also draw on ideological perspectives. Drawing on ideological perspectives can result in a biased mental model of the event in question. A biased mental model represents an event in relation to groups and groups' relations. Such a biased model can give rise to a manipulative discourse that functions to influence the mental models of recipients – the way that the recipients think of or understand some event. More importantly, manipulative discourse functions to influence general social beliefs;

Whereas manipulation may concretely affect the formation or change of unique personal mental models, the general goals of manipulative discourse are the

control of the shared social representation of groups of people because these social beliefs in turn control what people do and say in many situations and over a relatively long period (Van Dijk, 2006: 369)

The impact of ideology on discourse includes both what is said – global and local semantic forms – as well as how it is said – linguistic forms. The impact of ideology on global semantic forms shows in topics, in what information is expressed. The impact of ideology on local semantic forms shows in a large number of forms, including, local coherence, lexical items, presuppositions, modality etc. Ideology can also affect linguistic forms. The impact of ideology on linguistic structures includes syntactic structures and rhetorical figures.

It is stipulated that ideological discourse is not unstructured. Rather, ideological discourse is characterised by the notion of self-identification and has the following properties: Membership, Activities, Goals, Norms and Values, Position and Resources. Hence, the semantic and linguistic forms of ideological discourse are designed to express and emphasise “a self interested group opinion, perspective or position” (Van Dijk, 1995: 22). The purpose of ideological discourse is, usually, to legitimise dominance and inequality (Ibid).

In this chapter, I carry out a detailed textual analysis of key texts written in opposition to *women2drive* campaign in 2011. The general aim of this textual analysis is to investigate the impact of ideology on the way that such an event is constructed in discourse. The specific aim is to identify the discursive strategies used across all texts to delegitimise women’s right to drive in Saudi Arabia.



## 5.2 The analysis

The analysis of the texts written in opposition to *women2drive campaign* involves examining both the global semantic forms (topics) as well as local semantic forms and linguistic structures. I start by examining the global semantics forms, i.e. topics. Starting with the analysis of topics, a thematic analysis, will help us identify the key notions that control the texts. Topics function to restrict the way that recipients understand or interpret the event in question (Van Dijk, 2009). Topics also control local semantic forms and linguistic structures (Ibid).

The thematic analysis is accomplished through addressing the following questions (1) what events are talked about? How they are talked about? What notions or themes underlie the topics of the texts? Answering such questions is accomplished through a process of thorough reading, inference and summary. The answer to the first and second question will help in uncovering the key notions that control the texts. Uncovering the key notions of the texts will, in turn, help us identify the discursive strategies used to delegitimise women's right to drive. The thematic analysis is, then, followed by a detailed textual analysis. The aim of the detailed textual analysis is to identify the local semantic forms and linguistic structures employed to realise the discursive strategies used to delegitimise women's right to drive. Examples of local semantic forms and linguistic structures will be provided from all texts. Having accomplished this, I offer a detailed textual analysis of one of the texts in order to illustrate how such strategies are operationalised in a whole text. In the following section, this process is explained with concrete examples from the data.

*Global semantic forms: topics*

The topics of the texts were identified through a process of inference and summary. First, the texts were carefully read. Then, the main topics of each text were identified. After that, the topics of all texts were compared and summarised. It needs to be noted, however, that some topics were stressed in some texts more than in others. The purpose of such thematic analysis is to identify *what and how* events are talked about. Such investigation helps us identify the main notions that control the texts. Below I uncover the topics that the texts express and the notions that control such topics.

The following statements summarise the key information expressed in almost all of the texts:

T1 The *women2drive* campaign is a sedition organised by the enemies of religion and of the country.

T2 The enemies of religion realise the key role that women play in maintaining the piety of Ummah, the Muslim community, and hence they target the Muslim community by targeting women.

T3 The ban on women driving was established by the religious establishment and enforced by authorities – hence the campaign is both forbidden and illegal.

T4 Women driving is decided by an Islamic rule whereby acts are assessed on the basis of their benefits and harms.

T5 Women driving has more negative consequences than positive consequences.

T6 Allowing women to drive will result in norms and values being violated, e.g. women will leave home and will become less dependent on men.

T7 Allowing women to drive will exacerbate some social problems such as sexual assault and car accidents.

T8 The government should put an end to the campaign, sustain the ban and punish those who call for it to be lifted.

The topics above show that the texts address two events; the *women2drive* campaign: the political event and female driving; the social practice. Having identified the events that the texts address, I now turn to examine *how* such events were constructed. Such analysis helps us identify the main notions that control these topics. While topics 1, 2 and 3 serve to define *women2drive* campaign, topics 4, 5, 6 and 7 offer a conceptual framework of the act of women's driving. Topic number 8 includes the conclusion of the texts.

When examining the topics that serve to define *women2drive* campaign, it can be easily noted that these topics are controlled by the notion of Threat. Both the campaign and those behind were constructed in a negative way. While the campaign was constructed as a 'sedition', those behind the campaign were constructed as the enemies of both the country and religion. The second theme, which concerns the social act of driving and its consequences, is mainly controlled by the notion of difference. In the texts, the practice of driving was gendered. Unlike the driving of men, the driving of women is specified as having 'negative' consequences.

Hence, the *women2drive* campaign as well as women's driving are defined and characterised in light of the notions of *threat* and *difference* respectively. In light of this finding, it can be said that the texts employ two main discursive strategies in order to delegitimise women's right to drive. These are (1) the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive; and (2) the problematisation of women's driving. In the following sections, I explore in more detail how such discursive strategies are realised through the local semantics forms (what is

said) and the linguistic structures (how it is said).

### 5.2.1 First strategy: the delegitimisation of the advocates of women driving

The analysis of the global semantic shows that the texts are partly controlled by the notion of *threat* whereby the *women2drive* campaign is constructed as a struggle between Us and Them with the advocates of women driving falling into the second category. This construction of the advocates of women driving shows that the texts are based on a biased context model. That is, the event is viewed and interpreted in relation to groups: *Us* and *Them*. The polarisation of *Us* and *Them* was constructed in relation to both religious and national identities.

The texts opposing the *women2drive* campaign are thus controlled by the overall strategy of ideological discourse: positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. This strategy serves to legitimise discrimination against those rendered outsiders: “... other people can only be treated differently if they are being perceived and categorised as being different” (Van Dijk, 2013: 40). In the case of the *women2drive* campaign, the association of the advocates of women’s right to drive with negative properties such as enmity is intended to discredit them and hence invalidate their position.

In this section, I examine the impact of this overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation on both local semantic forms and the linguistic structures of the texts written in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign. In an attempt to facilitate the task of detecting the ideological semantic forms and linguistic structures of the texts, I draw on the ideological schema introduced in the methodology chapter. The ideological schema is characterised by the notion of self-identification. This schema serves to distinguish between

in-group members and out-group members by defining the following properties: who we are (membership), *Our* actions, *Our* goals, *Our* norms and values, *Our* position and resources.

#### 5.2.1.1 Membership

The category of membership in the ideological schema serves to define who belongs and who does not belong. Identification with regard to this category can be based on either inherent or acquired characteristics; gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, language and origin or nationality.

In the texts written in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign, the delegitimisation of the advocates of women's right to drive is accomplished in reference to both religion and country. Example (1) shows how the advocates of women's right to drive are constructed as the enemy of *Us*, Muslims and Saudis.

(1)

"لكن هذا الفشل لتلك الثورة مما أعاظ أعداء هذه البلاد، ومن أكد ما زاد حنقهم، وأرغم أنافهم، ما أعقب تلك الفترة من أوامر ملكية، جاءت لتؤكد أن هذه البلاد تحمل رسالة الإسلام، وأنها تستشعر به عزها، وتستقي من مصادره قوتها، وأنها مرتبهة به، وأنها لن تتخلى عنه، وأنه سر حفظ الله لها"

"The failure of this rebellion **conjured the loath of the country's enemies** and what further increased their rage and emphasised their defeat were the royal decrees. These decrees confirmed that **this country would always carry the message of Islam, find its glory in it and derive its strength from its sources.** The decrees also consolidated the fact that **this**

**country would always be subject to Islam, would not abandon it and was aware of Islam as the secret of Allah's protection”**<sup>1</sup> (Al-Dweish)

Although, the text was written specifically in response to the *women2drive* campaign, it started by making a reference to another call for protests that preceded the *women2drive* campaign, namely Hunayn's revolution. That call for protests was one of the many Arab Spring events that started in Tunisia and Egypt against authoritarian regimes. Hunayn's revolution, however, did not take place as in Saudi Arabia only a few people took to the streets to protest. In response to this, the King gave a speech thanking Saudis for not protesting.

The text analysed above highlighted certain remarks made by the King, specifically, the King's comments on the position and role of religion in the country. The extract cited the King saying that religion is the 'secret of Allah's protection' and the source of the country's glory and strength. By quoting these specific remarks made by the King, the text does two things. First, the text constructs both entities – religion and country – as inseparable. This construction serves to affirm the power and authority of religious clerics. Secondly, quoting such remarks serves to instantiate both religious and national identities.

The purpose of making these social identities prominent is twofold. First, the text uses both national and religious identities to conceal the ideological motivation that underlies the opposition to women's right to drive. As such, the opposition to women's right to drive is justified through very well-respected social ideologies such as religious and national

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that all texts were written in Arabic and were translated into English for the purpose of analysis. Boldface was also added in order to highlight the key elements that I deal with in the analysis.

ideologies, rather than a sexist ideology. Second, such instantiation of religious and national ideologies allows for the delegitimisation of the advocates of women's driving. Such delegitimisation is accomplished in relation to both religion and country. This shows that local semantic forms of the texts, in particular coherence, are controlled by the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, whereby social actors are categorised into *Us*, Saudis and Muslims and *them*, the enemies of Muslim.

The impact of the overall strategy of ideology is also visible in the way that social actors are described in the texts. In the extract, the organisers of Hunayn's revolution were described as exhibiting feelings of anger towards the King's remark on the importance of religion in the country. Such construction implies the view that the organisers of the campaign hold a negative attitude towards religion. They were also explicitly described as the enemy of the country – '*the country's enemies*'. Although the extract talks about the organisers of Hunayn's revolution, a link is made, later on in the text, between those who organised Hunayn's revolution and the organisers of the *women2drive* campaign. In example 2, below, it is explicitly stated that the failure of the *Hunayn* revolution prompted its organisers to set up a new 'sedition', the *women2drive* campaign. Such a highly negative description of the advocates of women's right to drive is intended to delegitimise them in relation to both religion and country and hence to invalidate their position.

(2)

"حين فاتت عليهم تلك الفرصة وأظهر الله خزيهم، وحديثي هنا ليس عن الأعرار...إنما حديثي عن المنافقين، الذين يجمعهم العداة للدين ورجاله ودولته.. انقلبوا يبحثون عن فتنة أخرى"

**“When they missed the chance and when Allah revealed their disgrace, they started to look for another type of sedition ....”** (Al-Dweish)

The impact of the overall strategy of ideology also shows in the terms selected to describe the event and participants. Example 3 shows how the texts employ religiously loaded terms in order to define the *women2drive* campaign and its advocates.

(3)

" ولما أدرك أعداء الإسلام من اليهود والنصارى والمنافقين هذه المكانة العظيمة للمرأة في الإسلام ودورها الخطير في صلاح الأمة الإسلامية واستقامتها، أو فسادها وضلالها، رموا المرأة عن قوس واحدة يريدون إفسادها ومن ثم إفساد الأمة بها..."

“**The enemies of Islam, whether Christians, Jews or hypocrites**, realised this great position that woman occupies in Islam as well as its crucial role in the Islamic nation’s integrity and righteousness or in the nation’s corruption and aberrance. Therefore, they all targeted her **simultaneously to corrupt her and consequently corrupt the nation through her...**” (The petition)

The biased contextual model of the text clearly shows in the use of the hyperbole ‘the enemies of Islam, Christians, Jews and hypocrites’. This description serves to trigger the *Us* and *Them* polarisation. The *women2drive* campaign is thus framed as a site of struggle between Muslims and the enemy of Muslims. The enemies of Islam are placed into three categories: Christians, Jews and hypocrites. The extract is not explicit about whom the term ‘hypocrites’ refers to. However, it can be inferred that the term ‘hypocrites’ refers to the organisers of the *women2drive* campaign, as the text was written in response to the call for women to drive.

The term ‘hypocrites’ is a religiously loaded term. It is often employed in religious



fundamentalist discourse in order to depict parties with whom the writers disagree. Hence, in order to understand the full impact of using the term ‘hypocrites’ to depict the advocates of women driving, we need to explore the meanings that the term ‘hypocrites’ evokes in religious teachings. In the Quran, a complete surah (chapter) is dedicated to hypocrites. The hypocrite’s surah, in addition to other chapters in Quran, includes a detailed description of hypocrites. Hypocrisy is regarded in the Quran as more dangerous than Kufr (disbelief).

The Quran says that hypocrites spread corruption on earth. In describing hypocrites, one verse reads: “And when it is said to them: ‘Make not mischief on the earth,’ they say: ‘We are only peacemakers. Verily, they are the ones who make mischief, but they perceive not’ ” [al-Baqarah 2:11-12]. Hypocrites are also promised a dreadful fate: “Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth (grade) of the Fire; no helper will you find for them” [al-Nisaa’ 4:145].

The verses above clearly show the highly negative connotation that the term hypocrites evokes. This term is usually used in religious teachings to describe the early ideological conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. The selection of such a highly negative term to depict the advocates of women driving, hence, serves to influence the way that recipients view them and, ultimately, the way that recipients view women’s driving. Using this term is an attempt to establish an association between the advocates of women’s driving and the hypocrites mentioned and described in religious texts. Establishing this association, in turn, helps to invoke the old traditional struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims. Readers are thus invited to view women’s driving as part of this ideological struggle.

Establishing this association between the advocates of women's right to drive and the enemy of Islam, however, is not without problems. Rendering the advocates of women's driving in Saudi Arabia the enemy of religion is perplexing given that, in all other Muslim countries, women drive. If it is ok for women in all other Muslim countries to drive, why would Saudi Arabia be any different? In order to circumvent such a paradox, the texts employ the discursive move of singularisation. Such a discursive move serves to single out the country in question and hence justify its specific ways of doing things (Wodak, 2015). The singularisation move is accomplished in example 4.

(4)

"ولعل من أدرك حجم المؤامرة على هذه البلاد، والرغبة في استهدافها، ورأى في المقابل أنها قلعة الإسلام الكبرى، وأنها إن أصيبت فقد أصيب عمود الأمة الفقري، ونخاعها الشوكي، وأدرك كذلك أن هذه الدولة لا عز لها بغير رفع راية هذا الدين، ولا منعة لها به، وأنها إن تخلت عنه فقد تخلت عن قوتها وعزتها، لعلم أن الخصوصية التي نتحدث عنها ليس مجرد دعوى للهروب من المواجهة، بل هي حقيقة لا مناص عنها"

“Those who have realized the seriousness of **the conspiracy against this country**, **the desire for targeting the country** as well as the fact that **it is the castle of Islam** know that if this country is hurt, then the spinal cord of the Islamic nation is hurt. Indeed, the country will give up its power and dignity if it abandons this religion. Realising all these facts, such people know that the **uniqueness of this country** which we are underscoring is not merely a call for escaping an encounter; rather, it is an inevitable fact even if some of our fellow citizens avoid admitting this.” (Al-Dweish)

In extract 4, Saudi Arabia is represented as unique. This uniqueness is usually referred to as *khuṣūṣiyyah Saudia*. This uniqueness of Saudi, according to the extract, is attributed to two ‘facts’. First, Saudi is the ‘castle of Islam’. Second, it is the most desirable target for the

enemies of Islam. According to the text, those who fully realise these ‘facts’ know that *khuṣūṣīyah* is a ‘fact’ rather than an attempt to escape encounter. This discursive construction of the country serves to distinguish Saudi Arabia from the rest of the Muslim countries. Making such a conceptual distinction serves to justify the way that things are in Saudi Arabia. As such, the differential treatment of women in Saudi Arabia is explained in terms of the unique position that the country occupies in the Muslim world rather than being the result of sexist and misogynistic views.

The use of the ‘body’ metaphor to describe the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Muslim countries is intended to enhance the seriousness of the matter. Saudi Arabia is described as the spinal cord of the Muslim community. An injury to the spinal cord can result in total paralysis of the body. So, if the spinal cord of Islam, Saudi Arabia, is harmed, the rest of the body, the whole Muslim nation, will be harmed.

#### 5.2.1.2 Activities

In the previous section, we have seen how the advocates of women’s right to drive were delegitimised in reference to the membership category. The advocates of women driving were disassociated from *Us* (Muslims and Saudis) and associated with the enemies of both religion and the country. This section will explore how the delegitimation of the advocates of women’s right to drive was also accomplished in reference to the category of activities. The textual analysis shows that the representation of *the actions* of the advocates of women’s right to drive depicts them as enemies of both religion and the country. In the previous section, we saw that they were depicted as not belonging to *Us*, Saudis and Muslims. In this section, the advocates of women’s right to drive are depicted as not acting like we act or even acting against our interests as Saudis and Muslims.

Two forms of delegitimation were identified. First, the demoralisation of the advocates of women driving, whereby their actions are represented as being immoral, violating both religious and moral codes. Second, the criminalisation of the advocates of women's driving whereby their actions are depicted as being criminal, violating the laws and rules of the country. This description of the actions of the advocates of women's right to drive clearly shows the impact of the strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation on the way that the texts were constructed. The demoralisation and criminalisation of the advocates of women driving will be considered respectively.

#### *The demoralisation of the advocates of women driving*

The demoralisation of the advocates of women driving is accomplished through the way that the *women2drive* campaign is represented, as well as the way that the actions of the advocates of women driving are depicted. In example 5, a religiously loaded term is used to describe the actions of the advocates of women's right to drive. This serves to demoralise the advocates of women's right to drive.

(5)

"فلا يخفى على مطلع أن الله قد وقى بفضلله المسلمين من ثورة حنين التي أزمع القيام بها بعض مريدي الفتنة... هؤلاء حين فاتت عليهم الفرصة وأظهر الله خزيهم، انقلبوا يبحثون عن فتنة أخرى"

It is no secret for any observer that it was by Allah's favour that Muslims were protected from the Hunayn Rebellion which **advocates of fitnah** (sedition) were determined to evoke... When they missed the chance and when Allah revealed their disgrace, they started to **look for another type of fitnah** (sedition). (Al-Dweish)

In the above extract, the hyperbole ‘the advocates of *fitnah*’ (sedition) is used to describe what the advocates of women driving are doing – they are described as looking for another type of *fitnah* sedition to evoke. The term *fitnah* is a very highly negative term, generally used in religious teachings to denote disastrous actions and events. The use of such a highly negative and religiously loaded term clearly shows that the local semantics of the texts are controlled by the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The use of such a term serves to emphasise the ideological formulation of women’s driving as a part of the struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In order to understand the effect that the use of this term has with regard to the actions of the advocates of women’s driving, this thesis will investigate how the term *fitnah* was used in the religious teachings of the Quran. In some religious statements, the term *fitnah* has been used to denote *Kufr*, disbelief, sin or turning away from the right path (Manzoor & bin Mukram, 1995). A Quranic verse reads “*la yaftinooka...*”. This verse can be translated as “but beware of them lest they turn you [yaftinooka] (O Muhammad) far away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you” [al-Maa’idah 5:49]. In the Quranic verse above, the Prophet Mohammed was warned about a group of people described as ‘hypocrites’ who wished to turn him away from what he was sent for, delivering the message of God. The warning was verbalised through the phrase *la yaftinooka* which is derived from the term *fitnah*.

Another meaning of the term *fitnah* is persecution. One verse reads “persecution (*al-fitnah*) is worse than slaying” (2:193). This verse has also been mentioned in relation to the struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims, as the verse was used to settle the issue of whether or not Muslims were allowed to fight in the sacred months of the year. In the verse, it was stated that it is allowed for Muslims to fight in the sacred months on the condition that they are

subject to persecution at the time. All these meanings clearly show the highly negative connotations that the term carries. Hence, the application of the term to the actions of the advocates of women's driving, again, clearly shows that the text is controlled by a biased mental model. The use of this term is intended to evoke connotations associated with the term: a lack of belief, turning away from the right path and persecution. Readers are thus invited to view the matter of women driving as part of the struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The negative representation of the advocates of women driving is also emphasised through rhetorical devices such as repetition. The term *fitnah* is repeated several times in the texts opposing the *women2drive* campaign. Al-Dweish's text, from which the extract above is taken, features the highest number of occurrences of the term *fitnah*. *Fitnah* appears seven times in Al-Dweish's text alone. In Al-Habdan's text, the term *fitnah* appears three times. In one of these instances, the term *fitnah* appears in a Quranic verse as example 6 shows.

(6)

The verse reads: "And fear the Fitnah (affliction and trial) which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong, and know that Allah is severe in punishment". (Al-Habdan)

By citing the Quranic verse above, the text attempts to frame the way that the audience interprets the *women2drive* campaign so that it complements the text's position on the matter. The Quranic verse above was not originally said in reference to any issue related to women but rather to warn believers about *fitnah* in general. It emphasises the view that the impact of *fitnah* extends not only to those who have wronged but also to those who have not. This warning from the Quran is intended to encourage people not to tolerate *fitnah*. Citing this verse in this particular context is intended to explain the current communicative event, the *women2drive* campaign, in terms of the meanings of the religious verse. Readers are, thus,

invited to think of women driving as *fitnah*. The advocates of women driving are wrong doers. And the negative impact of the call for women to drive is going to affect the whole of society.

The demoralisation of the advocates of women driving is also accomplished through the explicit depiction of them as lacking moral values. In example 7 the advocates of women driving are explicitly described as being driven by sexual desires.

(7)

" أما السفهاء والفساق الذي يتبعون الشهوات ويريدون أن يميل المجتمع نحو الفساد ميلا عظيما، فلا علاج لهؤلاء إلا الحزم والعزيمة والأخذ على يد السفية وأطره على الحق أطرا..."

"As for those who are **foolish, dissolute and who run after their whims and want the whole society to fall into corruption**, they can only be treated with firmness and determination" (Al-Berik)

In the extract above, the highly negative terms 'foolish' and 'dissolute' are used to depict the advocates of women's right to drive. The selection of these terms clearly signals a very negative opinion of the advocates of women driving. The ideological function of such a negative description is to demoralise the advocates of the *women2drive* campaign and therefore delegitimise their cause. The highly negative description dismisses the view that the call for women to drive is about achieving justice and equality. Rather, the *women2drive* campaign is reduced to an action that is driven by fleeting sexual desires. The advocates of women driving are not only described as degenerate but also as wanting the whole society to deviate from the right path. Such a highly negative portrayal is intended to enhance the seriousness of the issue and hence vilify the advocates of women's right to drive.

The demoralisation of the advocates of women driving is also achieved through the negative depiction of the document that the advocates of *women2drive* campaign produced in order to explain the aim of their campaign. The document emphasises the view that driving is a basic right that women should enjoy. The document also includes some of the negative effects of the ban on women's lives. In the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign, highly negative terms are used to describe the document. Such highly negative terms serve to denounce the *women2drive* campaign and to demoralise the advocates of women's right to drive. This tendency clearly shows in the terms selected to describe the document. The document is described as وثيقة المخادعة "manipulative document" in example 8 and as وثيقة التآمر "conspiracy document" in example 9.

(8)

" إن تلك الوثيقة المخادعة تحدثت عن عدم كسر القانون..."

"this **manipulative document** mentions the non-breaking of the law..." (Al-Dweish)

(9)

" وغير ذلك من الهراء الذي تضمنته وثيقة التآمر..."

"In addition to many claims included in their **conspiracy document**" (Al-Dweish)

This description of the document is consistent with the description of the advocates of women's driving as 'hypocrites'. The terms 'conspiracy' and 'manipulative' imply that there is some 'hidden' motive behind the campaign. Both terms invoke meanings of dishonesty and deceit.



The advocates of women's driving are also demoralised through the use of 'negative' metaphors to describe their actions. In example 10, the text likened the campaign planning of the advocates of women driving to performing sorcery.

(10)

" وإنما حديثي عن المنافقين، الذين يجمعهم العداة للدين ورجالہ ودولتہ، ممن يسعون جهدهم، ويعقدون حبالهم، وينفثون فيها سحرهم.."

"As if they were magicians, these hypocrites **make knots and dedicate all their efforts and magic spells to make their plans succeed**" (Al-Dweish)

The cognitive function of a metaphor is to explain or experience one thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008; Semino, 2008). In the extract, the actions of the advocates of women's driving are explained in terms of another domain, performing sorcery. Sorcery is considered Kufr, 'disbelief', in Islam. Those who perform sorcery in Saudi Arabia are subject to the death penalty (Miethe & Lu, 2005). Hence, depicting the action of the advocates of women driving in terms of performing an action that is very negatively perceived, namely sorcery, serves to vilify them.

Using a metaphor not only helps to frame certain issues with reference to other conceptual domains, but it can also be used to indirectly suggest a way of dealing with the situation in question (Norman Fairclough, 2014). The likening of the actions of the advocates of women driving to those of sorceress can thus be understood as an invitation to deal with the advocates of women's right to drive in the same way that sorcerers are dealt with.

The advocates of women driving are also demoralised by depicting the call for women to drive as part of some foreign project, namely westernisation. In example 11, the *women2drive* campaign is explicitly described as part of a westernisation project.

(11)

"ولا يقطعها (قيادة المرأة) من سياق المشروع التغريبي في السعودية فيتكلف في الاستدلال لها أو اجترار أقوال من يجيزها إلا جاهل بالواقع فحقه أن يسكت حتى يعلم، أو صاحب هوى يرجو بقوله جاهها أو مالا، ولا أرى ثالثا لهذين الاثنين"

**"Only a person who is ignorant of reality** will not think of this campaign as **part of the westernisation project** in Saudi Arabia ... it is better for such a person to be silent until he is more knowledgeable. Another kind of person who advocates women's driving is the **one who has certain interests in social status or money**, and I do not see a third type of people supporting woman's driving" (Al-Hokail)

In the extract above, it is asserted that the *women2drive* campaign is part of a westernisation project. Those who disagree with this perspective are depicted as being either ignorant of reality or seekers of social status and money. This description of the advocates of women's driving involves the view that the writer is both knowledgeable and that his position on the matter is devoid of any ideological interest. Readers are, thus, invited to accept as fact the view that the *women2drive* campaign is part of some westernisation project.

Here, a distinction needs to be made between the general view that there are attempts to westernise Muslim countries and the specific use or application of this view. While the general view need not be ideological, its application can be ideologically based. In fact, the

general view of westernisation is not completely disregarded by Muslim feminists, who have also criticised many western notions, including the dominant western view of sexuality, “The striking characteristic of western sexuality is the mutilation of the women’s integrity, her reduction to a few inches of nude flesh whose shades and forms are photographed ad infinitum with no goal other than profit” (Mernissi, 1987: 184).

However, Muslim feminists contest the ideological use or application of this general view to defend and hence perpetuate gender inequality in the Muslim world (Moghissi, 1999). The suggestion that advocating women’s right to drive is part of the westernisation project constitutes a clear example of the exploitation of this general view in order to further one’s group power and dominance. “This tendency to utilize women in the game of power has been geared towards enhancing the view of women as “a gate of westernisation,” and has thus intensified apprehension about them” (Arebi, 1994: 18).

*The actions of the advocates of women driving as violating legal laws and rules*

The delegitimising of the advocates of women’s right to drive is also accomplished by rendering their actions criminal. This clearly shows in the terms used to depict the *women2drive* campaign, as well as the actions of the advocates of women’s right to drive. In example 12, the *women2drive* campaign is described as an unlawful act.

(12)

"والدولة من واجبها حفظ الأمن، ومنع التجاوزات بأنواعها"

“the state’s duty is to maintain security and to prevent **all kinds of transgression**” (Al-Dweish)

The use of the term تجاوزات ‘transgression’ to describe the *women2drive* campaign is intended to criminalise it. This description of the campaign serves to delegitimise the advocates of women’s right to drive. As such, the advocates of women driving are not simply advocating a basic human right but are, rather, criminals. Framing the campaign in this way is not only intended to delegitimise the advocates of women’s right to drive but it also serves to invite a tough response from the state. In fact, putting an end to the campaign is framed as a ‘duty’ of the state, to keep the country safe. The tendency to encourage and justify violence by the state against political activists is generally noted in media reports:

It is routine media style to represent the police as “having” to act “toughly” when facing “riots” or other social disturbances, which suggests that the perspective of the police (and its excuses for police violence) are adopted by the media (Van Dijk, 1995: 261).

#### 5.2.1.3 Goals

The representation of the goals of the advocates of women’s right to drive, in the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign, is again consistent with how they were represented in relation to the categories of Membership and Activities. The advocates of women driving are depicted as having goals that aim to destroy Islam and undermine the country and its security. The goals of the opponents of women driving, in contrast, are depicted as being intended to protect and preserve both religion and country. The ideological function of this representation is to align people with the position of the opponents of women driving, whose aims and goals are depicted in a positive tone. Below, the delegitimation of the goals of the advocates of women driving in relation to both religion and country will be dealt with respectively.

*The delegitimisation of the goals of the advocates of women driving with reference to religion*

(13)

“رموا المرأة (أعداء الإسلام من اليهود والنصارى والمنافقين) عن قوس واحدة يريدون إفسادها ومن ثم إفساد الأمة بها...”

Therefore, they (the enemy of Islam from the Jews, Christians and hypocrites) all targeted her (the woman) simultaneously **wanting to corrupt her and consequently corrupt the Islamic nation through her...**” (The petition)

The negative opinion of the advocates of women’s right to drive is expressed in the extract above, by representing their goal as being *aspiring to corrupt Islam* by corrupting women. The text employs the highly negative term **يفسد**(corrupt) in order to describe the goals of the advocates of women’s right to drive. The literal meaning of the term **يفسد** is to damage and contaminate something. The use of such a term to describe what the advocates of women’s rights do is, hence, intended to vilify them. The advocates of women’s right to drive are portrayed as aiming to inflict harm not only on women but on the whole Muslim community.

The link that the text made between women and Islam is intended to justify and perpetuate the existing asymmetrical gendered power relations. In the extract above, a connection is constructed between women on the one hand and the fate of religion and the followers of religion on the other hand. The attempts to introduce a change to the existing asymmetrical gender relations are rendered as attempts to corrupt the whole Muslim community:

Indeed, the ideological construction of female sexuality as the symbolic representation of Muslim identity and its centrality in the fundamentalist’s

'cultural purification' schemes means that women lose much more than men do in the process of Islamisation of the already Muslim societies (Moghissi, 1999: 28).

The connection that the texts construct between women and the fate of the whole Muslim community also allows for the delegitimisation of those who advocate women's rights. As such, the advocates of women's rights are seen as a threat to Islam, rather than sexism. The negative portrayal of the advocates of women's right to drive is also emphasised through metaphor. The statement *رَمَوْا الْمَرْأَةَ عَنْ قَوْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ* can be literally translated as "they shot women with an arrow". The advocates of women's right to drive are hence depicted as inflicting bodily harm on women. Such concrete characterisation of the actions of the advocates of women driving is intended to elicit feelings of fear and anxiety and hence vilify the advocates of women's right to drive. The negative evaluation of the advocates of women's right to drive is also amplified by representing them as active participants in this negative action.

The negative representation of the goals of the advocates of women driving is also emphasised by employing religious expressions used in religious teachings to describe the goals of the 'enemies' of Muslims in the past. The use of these expressions in the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign is, thus, intended to define the matter with reference to the historical struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims. Example 14 includes one of these religious expressions.

(14)

"أما السفهاء والفساق والذين يتبعون الشهوات ويريدون أن يميل المجتمع نحو الفساد ميلا عظيما، فلا علاج لهؤلاء إلى الحزم والعزيمة..."

“As for those who are scurrilous, dissolute and who run after their whims **and want the whole society to deviate tremendously from the right path into corruption** (literally: tilt towards corruption a tremendous tilting), they can only be treated with firmness and determination...” (Al-Berik)

In the extract above, the expression “...want the whole society to deviate tremendously away from the right path...” is taken from the Quranic verse that reads:

”والله يريد أن يتوب عليكم ويريد الذين يتبعون الشهوات أن تميلوا ميلا عظيما”

The Quranic verse can be translated as “Allah wishes to accept your repentance, but those who follow their lusts, wish that you (believers) should deviate tremendously away from the Right Path (literally: tilt away a tremendous tilting)”. In this Quranic verse, Muslims are told that God and non-believers want different things. While God wants to turn to you, non-believers, who are described as following their lusts, want you to deviate from the right path.

By using the expression from the religious verse, the text aims to explain the current event in terms of the meanings evoked in the Quranic verse. In other words, readers are invited to think of the advocates of women’s driving as having contradictory goals to those of God. Accordingly, while God wants to direct people to the right path, the advocates of women’s right to drive want to drive people away from that path. Using the metaphor of the right path serves to frame the matter in a way that leads people to only one conclusion, in particular the text’s conclusion. This framing of the issue implies that if people are to continue on the right path and hence attain salvation, they have no choice but to oppose women’s right to drive.

Example 15 below presents another example of the use of the same religious expression.

(15)

" ... لحكيت من القصص التي شاهدت كثيرا منها بعيني، بله ما نقله لي الثقات، عن حال من يريدون أن نميل ميلا عظيما.. "

"I would have told many stories which **I myself saw with my own eyes and others told to me** by trustworthy people, but this is not the place for them. These stories are about those who **want the society to deviate tremendously from the right path**" (Al-Dweish)

In the extract above, the same religious expression was used to describe what the advocates of women driving want to achieve – they are described as ‘those who want the society to deviate tremendously from the right path’. The claim that the advocates of women driving have ‘bad’ intentions is validated by making reference to sensory observations; ‘...*I myself saw with my own eyes and others told to me* by trustworthy people’. Using such sensory observation, seeing and hearing, is intended to lend the text a sense of credibility. As such, the author’s interpretation is not based on some ideological assumptions but rather based on generally accepted every day truth criteria – seeing and hearing.

Women’s right to drive is also delegitimised through the positive representation of the goals of the opponents of women’s driving. The opponents of women driving are represented as wanting to reach the truth and fulfil God’s will. Representing the goals of the opponents of women driving in this way serves to enhance their positive representation and hence validate their position.

(16)



"لذا سنطرح الآراء في هذه القضية وننظر إليها بعين الإنصاف والتجرد ونطرح الأهواء جانبا، ويكون هدفنا هو الوصول للحق، نبتغي بذلك وجه الله تعالى والدار الآخرة"

"That is why we will present the opinions in relation to this issue and **view it fairly and objectively, leaving our whims aside**, setting our objective as reaching the truth and aiming **to satisfy Allah the Almighty and achieving the afterlife happiness.**" (Al-Habdan)

In the extract above, the discursive move of Reasonableness is used to enhance the positive image of the opponents of women driving. The proposition 'setting our objective as reaching the truth' implies the following ideological assumptions: there is a truth to be reached and the goal of the author is to reach the truth. Making such a claim serves to conceal the ideological dimension of the views voiced in the texts. As such, the perspectives voiced by the text are not ideologically based, but are rather reflective of some 'imagined' truth. The view that the text is devoid of any self or group interest is emphasised by representing one's motive as aiming to 'satisfy Allah the Almighty and achieving the afterlife happiness'. This claim implies that the position of this text is ideologically free. Such a claim also serves to enhance the authority of the writer. The view that his aim is 'to satisfy Allah' implies that the writer knows what satisfies God.

*The delegitimation of the goals of the advocates of women driving with reference to the country*

The delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive is also accomplished by representing them as having goals that aim to undermine the country and its security.

"كما تعودنا عندما تكون بلادنا في حرب باردة أو مرحلة خطيرة كما هو حالنا في مواجهة المشروع الإيراني الصفوي، والدعوة إلى المظاهرات، تظهر تحالفات من أطراف متناقضة يجمعها زعزعة الاستقرار من حيث يدرونه أو لا يدرونه في هذا الوطن"

"As was always the case when our country went into a cold war or a critical phase, and as our situation is while encountering the Safawi Iranian project, the call for demonstrations reveals alliances among contradicting sides **brought together by the intention to cause instability in this homeland**, whether knowingly or unknowingly" (Al-Berik)

In this extract, the *women2drive* campaign is explicitly described as intending to cause instability in the country. The negative description of the goals of the advocates of women driving serves to place readers in a position of danger and hence influence the way that they view the *women2drive* campaign. Such representation also serves to vilify the advocates of women's right to drive. The advocates of women driving are described as opportunists who chose a time of difficulty to launch their campaign in order to destabilise the country. This goal is implied in the statement and hence advanced as given. The credibility of the claims voiced in the extract is also enhanced through the use of the evidential كما تعودنا which can be translated as "As was always the case". This fact-presupposing phrase suggests that the information embedded in the following statement is true.

Also, the timing of the calls for women to drive is taken as evidence that the campaigns intend to destabilise the country. The extract most probably refers to the two major campaigns organised by Saudi women in order to defy the ban on women driving. The first major campaign took place in 1990 during the First Gulf War, in which Saudi Arabia was involved. The *women2drive* campaign, on the other hand, took place during the Arab Spring when protests against authoritarian regimes started in some Arab countries. The fact that both campaigns against the ban took place during times of political disturbance is taken as

evidence that they intended to destabilise the country. This claim, however, is substantiated through erasure. The text conceals the fact that Saudi women have always been appealing to the state to lift the ban, with the state neglecting their demands. Moreover, making reference to the almost always unstable political situation in the area has become a common strategy used to delegitimise and deprioritise political demands related to justice and equality.

The same position is offered in example 18.

(18)

"مما يدل على أن هذه المطالبات بقيادة المرأة للسيارة في هذا الوقت المصاحب للأحداث السياسية حولنا في المنطقة، إنما هو محاولة لإشعال الفتنة من الداخل"

"This denotes that demands of allowing Saudi women to drive, amid the political events dominating in the region, is, indeed, **a corrupt attempt to start *fitnah* (sedition) from inside Saudi Arabia** and a corrupt endeavour to cause a disunion in the nation." (Khamra)

The view that the call for women to drive is intended to start a sedition and cause disunion is constructed as definite in example 18. This proposition is preceded by the factive expression 'innma' which means indeed. The evidence offered to support this claim is again the timing of the call for women to drive, specifically that the *women2drive* campaign took place during the Arab Spring. Considering this timing as evidence that the *women2drive* campaign is intended to cause instability in the country implies a negative opinion of the Arab Spring, which took place in 2011 and led to the collapse of two authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt. This negative opinion of the Arab Spring reflects the position of the authoritarian Arab states, voiced through the mainstream media, whereby only images of destruction and violence were widely circulated. Such state media coverage of the Arab Spring events was

aimed to discourage political activism and hence perpetuate the status quo (Bellin, 2012; Gause III, 2011). Establishing an association between the *women2drive* campaign and other events of the Arab Spring was, hence, intended to discourage the campaign. This association was intended to evoke the images of violence and destruction that state media reports published of the Arab Spring events.

#### 5.2.1.4 Norms and values

The delegitimisation of the advocates of women's right to drive is also achieved through the norms and values category. This category plays a fundamental role in (de)legitimising the social position of the group: "The norms and values not only regulate and organise the actions of group members, but also may be used to justify (or indeed challenge) the social position of the group in relation to other groups" (Van Dijk, 1998: 258). This process can be accomplished through the strategic selection of generally accepted values in order to (de)legitimise some policy or practice. Van Dijk explains how, for example, the value of freedom is strategically selected in the neo-liberal discourse in order to justify neo-liberal policies (1998). In this discourse, the value of freedom is only instantiated in reference to market and enterprise. (De)legitimisation can also be accomplished through a process of prioritising social values in a way that complements the social position of the group. The anti-terroristic discourse, for example, places prominence on the value of security at the expense of other values such as equality and civil rights (Ibid). Both moves are employed in the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign. In the texts analysed, values that are in line with the texts' position are made prominent while values that disfavour the texts' position are ignored or relegated: "Depending on its position, each group will select from the general cultural repertoire of social norms and values those that optimally realise its goals and interests and will use these values as building blocks for its group ideologies" (Van Dijk,

1995: 138). In this section, I examine how the texts use some generally accepted norms and values in order to delegitimise women's right to drive.

### *The value of cultural autonomy*

As we have seen earlier, the advocates of women driving were delegitimised by depicting them as engaging in a process of the westernisation of Saudi society. This depiction of the advocates of women's right to drive involves the view that they hold western values and norms as opposed to *Us*, the opponents of women driving, who hold "authentic" norms and values. Accordingly, readers are left with the choice between adopting the position of those who hold 'authentic' views, or those who hold 'western' values. In example 19, advocating women's right to drive is reduced to a mere attempt to imitate western culture.

(19)

"وظنوا أن التقدم بتتبع سنن الآخرين، واقتفاء أثر غيرنا فيما يضر ولا ينفع، وأننا بحاجة إلى مواكبة الزمن، وهي فكرة لو تحققت لكان أول المصطلين بناها، فهي لا تقف عن حد مظاهر التغريب للمجتمع..."

"**They think that development can be achieved by following the ways of the others** and by following the example of others **in what harms rather than benefits**; even if they think that we need to keep pace with modernity. **He who thinks as such will be the first to be burnt** by the fire of achieving the idea of keeping pace with developments because it will not be confined to the **westernisation of the society...**" (Al-Dweish)

The extract above exemplifies the strategic use of the value of cultural autonomy in order to delegitimise women's right to drive. The advocates of women's right to drive are described as having formed a wrong conception of development. According to the extract, the advocates of women driving think that development can be accomplished by following the

ways of the others, as seen in ‘in what harms *Us*’. This depiction of the advocates of women’s right to drive involves the view that the call for women to drive is not motivated by a desire to achieve equality and justice. Rather, it is only motivated by a desire to imitate some other culture. The ideological function of this description is to delegitimise the advocates of women’s right to drive and hence invalidate their position. The alleged harm that women’s driving will bring is described in terms of bodily harm; ‘will be the first to be burnt...’. The text therefore uses some visualisable terms, e.g. body and fire, in order to depict the alleged impact of women’s driving. This description serves to elicit feelings of fear and anxiety.

The value of cultural autonomy is one of the key values utilised by fundamentalist Muslims in order to delegitimise women’s rights in the Muslim world (Moghissi, 1999). This is partly due to the colonial discourse, which focuses on the status of women in the Muslim world in order to both emphasise the superiority of the West and justify colonial intervention in the Muslim world (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Husain & Ayotte, 2005). Such focus on Muslim women in the colonial discourse served to both invigorate and even define fundamentalist discourse: “The cultural concern about women as the “gate” of Westernisation has led to cultural discourse on gender that derive their power from the imperatives of resistance to Western encroachment rather than from Islamic principles themselves” (Arebi, 1994: 282).

In addition to the value of cultural autonomy, the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign also appropriated the value of authenticity in order to delegitimise women’s right to drive. In the texts, the advocates of women’s right to drive are represented as deviating from *Our* norms and values while the opponents of women’s right to drive are represented as protecting such norms and values. The authenticity value is invoked by employing some of

the expressions used originally in religious teachings to discourage Muslims from imitating others. In the extract above, the expression **تتبع سنن الآخرين** (following the norms of others) was used. This expression is taken from a religious teaching in which the Prophet anticipates what his followers would do in the future.

The Prophet said, "You will follow the wrong ways (سنن), of your predecessors so completely and literally that if they should go into the hole of a mastigure, you too will go there." We said, "O Allah's Messenger! Do you mean the Jews and the Christians?" He replied, "Whom else?"

In the religious text, the Prophet expresses his dissatisfaction with what his followers will do in the future. In this text, Muslims are predicted to follow the norms of others so closely that they will abandon their own norms and values. The word 'سنن' does not literally mean 'the wrong ways' but rather means 'ways' or 'norms'. However, in the English version of the Hadith, it was translated as 'the wrong ways' in order to convey the sense of dissatisfaction that is clear to the readers of the original text.

The use of this specific expression (**تتبع سنن الآخرين**) 'following the way of others' in the text in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign helps to evoke the religious text in which the Prophet expressed his dissatisfaction with how 'Muslims' would follow the norms of others. The text, thus, aims to frame the way that readers think of women driving, in light of that religious text. As such, readers are invited to think of women driving as one of the 'wrong ways' that the Prophet had predicted his followers would take.

Example 20 also shows how the texts use the value of authenticity, along with the value of security, to delegitimise the advocates of women's right to drive.

(20)

" ومنها أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم نهى المرأة أن تسافر بغير محرم ولو كان سفرها للحج لأن ذلك ذريعة إلى انتهاك عرضها وذهاب كرامتها، وهذه القاعدة العظيمة مطلوبة في جميع الأمور الدينية والدنيوية"

“**The Prophet forbade women from travelling alone**, even if it was for Haj: pilgrimage, because travelling alone is a pretext for **violating women's honour and the loss of their dignity**. The application of this great principle (blocking the means) is, thus, required in all worldly and religious matters.” (The petition)

The extract above offers an example of how the Prophet dealt with the matter of *women travelling alone*. It is indicated that the Prophet discouraged women from travelling alone. The instantiation of this incident serves to both authorise and authenticate the position of the opponents of women's right to drive. Such instantiation serves to represent the opponents of women driving as inspired by a moral leader, the Prophet. As such, the ban on women driving seems to be an example of a continued process initiated by the Prophet and motivated by a concern for women.

However, the text attempts to sharpen the contrast between women driving cars and women travelling through comparison and erasure. With regard to comparison, the text draws a comparison between two different events – driving and travelling. Driving does not necessarily involve travelling. With regard to erasure, the text conceals information that does not fit the ideological perspective advanced in the text. For example, information on the differences between the time of the Prophet and the modern time is ignored. Whereas travelling used to be very dangerous, given previous means of transportation and the lack of



security, new means of transportation have been invented with several security measures introduced to minimise danger.

The extract above also shows how women's right to drive is delegitimised by giving prominence to the value of security. The emphasis that the extract places on the value of security comes at the expense of other values such as freedom, justice and equality.

The authenticity and moral superiority of the opponents of women's right to drive is also emphasised by invoking religious principles. Example 21 shows how one general Islamic principle is used to delegitimise women's right to drive.

(21)

" لقد جاءت الشريعة الإسلامية بسد الذرائع والوسائل المفضية إلى المحظورات والمفاسد، حتى وإن كانت هذه الوسائل مباحة في الأصل، بل حتى وإن كانت واجبة"

“**Sharia** has provided us with the **rule of the prohibition of evasive legal devices and the prevention of the means leading to prohibited actions and evils**, even if such devices and means were originally permitted or mandatory”. (The petition)

In this extract, Sharia (the Islamic law) is invoked to both authorise and authenticate the opponent's position. In the extract, it is recognised that there is no specific religious teaching that prohibits women from using any means of transportation. However, it is argued that women's driving should be prohibited on the basis of a religious principle, namely *sad al-dhara*, which literally means blocking the means. This religious principle stipulates that actions that can lead to vices must be prohibited even if they are not themselves vices. In fundamentalist discourse, the strategic use of such broad religious principles to delegitimise

women's rights has become prolific. The principle of blocking the means constitutes a very good example of how *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) has been used to perpetuate the existing asymmetrical gendered power relations: "*Fiqh* texts, which are patriarchal in both spirit and form, are frequently invoked as God's law, as a means to silence and frustrate Muslims' search for legal justice and equality, which are intrinsic to this worldly justice" (Mir-Hosseini, 2006; 22).

### *The value of Ird*

Another important value that some of the texts invoke in order to discourage women's driving is the value of *Ird*. Example 22 shows how this value was used to delegitimise women's right to drive.

(22)

" هل ستلزم النساء كشف وجوههن حال القيادة حتى لا يتستر تحت الحجاب مروج ومهرب سلاح ومتفجرات. أم سنثق بكل سائفة محجبة ولن نفتش أحدا ومن الذي يرضى أن توقف امرأته في نقاط التفتيش ليكشف وجهها ويتحقق من هويتها ومركبتها إلا من لا غيرة عنده على عرضه ومحارمه"

"Will women be committed to unveiling their faces while driving, so that no weapon and explosives trafficker can hide under the veil? Will we trust every veiled driver and not check anyone? **Who will accept for his wife to be stopped** at check points for her face to be unveiled and her identity and vehicle to be inspected **except those who have no concern for their ird (sexual-based honour) and female family members?**" (Al-Berik)

In extract 22, the cultural value of *Ird* is instantiated in order to delegitimise the advocates of women's right to drive. *Ird* is a traditional cultural value that used to be very common among Bedouin tribes. This value was mainly established as a result of the nomadic lifestyle of these

Bedouin groups. These groups had no modern means of securing safety, such as modern security and legal institutions (Kostiner, 1990). As a result, some moral codes were established among them in order to ensure peace and safety. The value of *Ird* was one of these mechanisms.

According to this code of morality, people maintain their *Ird* by performing good deeds and by refraining from committing bad acts. *Ird* can be violated by committing several actions that are considered bad or immoral, such as the sexual assault of women from other adversary tribes (Al-Rasheed, 2013).

Although this nomadic lifestyle has almost completely ceased, the value of *Ird* is still in use. However, the value of *Ird* has been strategically instantiated in sexist discourse in order to discourage policies or practices in favour of gender equality. In such discourses, initiatives to promote women's position in social reality are usually rendered as a threat to the value of *Ird*.

The extract above presents a clear example of such strategic use of the value of *Ird* in order to discourage women from driving. The text does so by establishing a causal relationship between two propositions: losing the 'value of *Ird*' and allowing women to drive. Allowing women to drive will result in the loss of *Ird*. The question 'who will accept for his wife to be stopped at check points for her face to be unveiled and her identity and vehicle to be inspected except those who have no concern for their '*ird*' and female family members?' implies that men who approve of their wives being stopped by police fail to appropriately value and protect their *Ird*. As such, the value of *Ird* is defined in a way that allows the control and subjugation of women.

Later in the same text, the advocates of women driving are vilified as being concerned with material or economic resources such as money, at the expense of their cultural value of *Ird*.

(23)

وختاماً فإن دعوى توفر الأموال والحد من حوالات السائقين الأجانب للخارج بقي معادلة فاسدة تقول إن المال أهم من العرض وهذا جهل كبير والله در القائل:

أصون عرضي بمالي لا أدنسه لا بارك الله بعد العرض في المال

In conclusion, the claim that permitting women's driving saves money and minimises foreign drivers' international transfers is also an invalid argument implying **that money is more important than ird**. This is great ignorance and how great he is who said: **"I use my money to protect rather than sully my ird. May Allah not bless money if one spoils his ird."** (Al-Berik)

In this piece, the text includes a response to an argument in favour of women's driving. The argument is as follows: allowing women to drive will result in economic benefit for both families and the country as a whole. According to the argument, barring women from driving results in Saudi women hiring foreign drivers to drive them around. As a result, women need to pay part of their income to foreign drivers who would supposedly send the money that they receive abroad. If women were allowed to drive, women would not need to hire and pay for foreign drivers and the money would therefore stay in the country.

The text considers this argument as invalid because it is based on the assumption that money is more important than *Ird*. In order to validate such a position, the text quotes one of the Prophet's companions, Hassan ibn Thabit, who used to say poetry to praise the Prophet and Islam. Invoking the verse above in the context of women driving implies that allowing

women to drive does indeed involve the violation of the value of *Ird*. Invoking this verse also serves to enhance the image of the opponents of women's right to drive by suggesting that they are much more concerned with cultural values than the proponents of women driving, who are only interested in material benefits.

#### 5.2.1.5 Position

Position is another important category through which the delegitimisation of the advocates of women's right to drive was accomplished. This category defines "friends and foes, allies and enemies, opponents and proponents, as well as social relations of domination and intergroup competition and conflict" (van Dijk, 1995: 250). Regarding this category, the delegitimisation of the advocates of women's right to drive was accomplished by framing the matter of women's driving as the site of a struggle between *Us*, Muslims and Saudis, on the one hand, and the enemies of Islam and the country on the other hand. The advocates of women's right to drive were explicitly placed in the latter category.

In addition to the foe and enemy pairing, the text constructs another type of hierarchal relationship between the advocates of women's right to drive and the opponent of women's right to drive. This hierarchal relationship is constructed in relation to authority, morality and knowledge, whereby the advocates of women driving were constructed as morally and intellectually inferior to the opponents of women driving. I focus in this section on the positioning of the advocates of women's right to drive as inferior to the opponents of women driving in terms of morality, knowledge and authority and how such positioning is used to delegitimise women's right to drive.

The texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign construct the advocates of women's right to drive as inferior to the opponents of women's right to drive in different ways. One way in which such a hierarchical relationship is accomplished is by associating the position of the opponents of women driving with some authoritative entities, namely governmental and religious institutions. Example 24 shows how such authoritative entities are used to delegitimise the *women2drive* campaign.

(24)

على الرغم من وضوح الأنظمة وقبل ذلك صدور البيانات الجلية من هيئة كبار العلماء بدفع المفسد الكبيرة ولو على حساب المصالح القليلة..."

This demonstration took place **despite the clear regulations and before them the evident announcements by the Council of Senior Scholars** concerning the prevention of the greatest harms even if at the expense of the less significant benefits, which is a religious rule. (Al-Berik)

The extract above includes an expression of surprise that the *women2drive* campaign took place, given the state's regulations and warnings issued by the Council of Senior Scholars against the *women2drive* campaign. The Council of Senior Scholars is the highest religious establishment in Saudi Arabia. This statement involves the view that the campaign should not have taken place given the state's regulations and the warnings of the clerics. The extract above hence exemplifies how power or authority can be used in the process of (de)legitimation.

... strategies of delegitimation presuppose power and imply dominance, that is, power abuse. In the domain of discourse and communication, such power need

not merely be political or socio-economic. It may also be symbolic. That is, dominant discourse may be presented as legitimate because it has authority and prestige, and hence is associated with truth (Van Dijk, 1998: 262).

In the extract above, both types of power are invoked: political power – the state, and symbolic power – religious discourse. Invoking both laws and religious edicts is an attempt to authorise the position of the opponents of women’s driving. Authorisation is one of the most powerful discursive moves used to (de)legitimise policies or practices. The power of this discursive move lies in the fact that it needs no justification:

... the answer to the implicit question ‘why is it so?’ Or ‘why must be so?’ is essentially ‘because I say so’, or ‘because so-and-so says so’, where the ‘I’ or the ‘so-and-so’ is someone in whom institutionalized authority is vested – a parent, a teacher, a doctor, an expert, a famous contemporary French philosopher, etc. The authority may also be impersonal, e.g. ‘the regulation’, ‘the law’, ‘the bible’” (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999:104)

The authority of both the state and the religious institution is justified in the extract below.

(25)

"أيها المسلمون من المقرر في دين الإسلام أن الأمور بمقاصدها والمصالح لا يقدرها إلا أهل العلم وأولو الأمر"

“O, Muslims, in Islam it is asserted that any issue is decided in light of its purpose and consequences which **cannot be evaluated except by scholars and the men in charge of the country.**” (Al-Berik)

In extract 25, it is explicitly stated that only scholars (religious clerics) and rulers have the capacity to assess and evaluate the consequences of matters. This serves to reinforce a hierarchal moral and intellectual structure in which the decision-making process is confined to only these two groups of people. Such a statement, hence, undermines the moral and intellectual capacity of not only the advocates of women's right to drive but also of individual members of society. This hierarchal structure is justified through religion, Islam: "In Islam it is asserted that...". As such, the existing hierarchical moral and intellectual structure is framed as being reflective of divine law rather than an ideological power structure.

The same ideological proposition appears in example 26:

(26)

" وإني أتساءل!! أليس للعلماء قيمة في هذا البلد؟ أليس هناك جهات رسمية من قبل ولي الأمر، قد بينوا فيها رأيهم، ووضحوا فيها حرمة قيادة المرأة للسيارة، أيقظ لغيرهم من الكتاب والصحفيين أن يتكلموا في القضايا المصيرية للأمة بعد أن فصل العلماء فيها؟"

"I wonder whether **there is any value for scholars given that writers and journalists still speak about the nation's crucial matters** after these issues have been decided by official bodies and scholars?" (Al-Habdan)

The question above involves the view that the final word about the nation's crucial issues must be decided by *Ulama*, clerics. It also involves the view that different perspectives should not be voiced once official organisations and religious clerics have given their opinion. This portrayal of religious discourse is a clear example of the natural status that it has acquired, as voicing different perspectives to those of religious clerics has come to invoke feelings of surprise and wonder:



If a discourse so dominates an institution that dominated types are more or less entirely suppressed or contained, then it will cease to be seen as arbitrary (in the sense of being one among several possible ways of ‘seeing’ things) and will come to be seen as natural, and legitimate because it is simply the way of conducting oneself” (Fairclough, 2014: 113).

The intellectual and moral superiority of the authors of the texts is also emphasised by making reference to authoritative texts such as religious teachings. Incorporating religious teachings has semantic and rhetorical functions. While the semantic function is intended to frame the matter of women’s driving as a struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims, the rhetorical function is intended to lend the texts a sense of credibility and authenticity (Suchan, 2010). In analysing the previous categories, we have seen how the texts incorporated terms and expressions used in religious teachings in order to define the current event, women driving, in the light of old historical incidents, e.g. the struggle between Muslims and non-Muslim. With regard to the rhetoric function, verses of the Quran are considered to be the word of ‘God’, the ‘all knowing’. These verses are said to reveal the ‘truth’ and guide people to ‘salvation’. The teaching of the Prophet is also taken to be ‘true’ as the Prophet Mohammed is considered not ‘to speak of his desires but of God’s will’ (Quran). Hence citing religious teachings serves to enhance the credibility of the texts as well as to promote the positive image of the authors (Suchan, 2010). The constant repeating of these religious quotes, expressions and lexicons is also used for purposes of persuasion (Koch, 1983). In addition to this indirect way of promoting one’s superiority, in some other instances this superiority is invoked in a much more direct way, as is the case in example 27.

(27)

"فلا يخفى على مطلع أن الله قد وقى بفضلله المسلمين من ثورة حنين التي أزمع القيام بها بعض مريدي الفتنة وانساق خلفهم بعض الأعرار.."

“Any observer would figure **that it was by Allah’s favour that Muslims were protected from the Hunayn Rebellion** which advocates of Fitnah were determined to evoke wanting to cause sedition.” (Al-Dweish)

The expression that “It was by Allah’s favour that Muslims were protected” presupposes the view that God did not approve of these campaigns, so God eventually decided to interfere and put an end to them. It also presupposes that the author was aware of God’s disapproval. This perspective is advanced as factual. The expression “Any observer would figure that...” suggests that the writer’s observation of the event is objective and rational.

Another example comes from Al-Berik’s article.

(28)

"فلا علاج لهؤلاء (مؤيدو قيادة المرأة للسيارة) إلى الحزم والعزيمة والأخذ على يد السفية وأطره على الحق أطرا.. فإن لم تفعل أو شك الله أن يعمنا بعقاب من عنده ثم يدعو الأخيار فلا يستجاب لهم"

“The scurrilous should be taken by the hand and forced to follow the right way. **If this is not done, Allah will include us all in His punishment** and then even the supplication of the righteous might not be heard.” (Al-Berik)

The statement above again involves the assumption that God disapproves of the *women2drive* campaign. Similarly, the statement affirms the writer’s authority as it presupposes that Al-

Berik was aware of God's intention. Women's right to drive is also delegitimised through the warning of a doomsday scenario. According to the text, the advocates of women driving 'must be' prevented otherwise we will all be 'punished' by God; "Doomsday scenarios are rife, and generally intended to both demonize the others as well as call to action those of us (and especially the politicians) who are not taking things seriously enough" (Van Dijk, 1995: 156).

#### 5.2.1.6 Resources

The advocates of women's right to drive are also delegitimised through the category of resources. Unlike the opponents of women's right to drive, the advocates of women driving are depicted as lacking key symbolic resources such as knowledge, authenticity and authority. The advocates of women driving are also represented as drawing on 'foreign' norms and values and relying on 'foreign' mediums such as western media in order to undermine religion and the country. Again, such a negative representation of the advocates and positive representation of the opponents of women driving is intended to align people with the position of the opponents of women driving.

#### 5.2.1.7 Summary

The textual analysis of this section reveals the manipulative nature of the texts. The analysis shows that the texts were based on a biased mental model of the communicative event, whereby the matter of women's driving was mainly perceived and interpreted in light of the polarisation of *Us* vs. *Them*. Such a biased mental model gave rise to an ideological discourse whose semantic forms and linguistic structures are controlled by the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

Women's right to drive was hence partly delegitimised through the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive. The delegitimation of the advocates of women driving was accomplished in relation to the various categories of the ideological schema. So the advocates of women driving were categorised as outside-group members; not only not belonging to *Us*, Muslims and Saudis, but also the enemy. The advocates of women's right to drive were also depicted as aspiring to destroy Islam and undermine the country, engaging in sedition and trying to implement western ideas and values, holding foreign 'western' norms and values, taking an antagonistic position from our religion and country and relying on foreign resources in order to achieve their goals. Such a highly negative portrayal of the advocates of women's right to drive is intended to align people with the view against women driving.

The impact of the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is evident in both the semantic forms and linguistic structures of the texts analysed. The impact of the strategy on local semantic forms can be seen in lexicons where the text employ hyperboles such as 'the enemy', 'hypocrites' *'fitnah'*, in order to depict both the advocates of women's right to drive and the *women2drive* campaign. The use of such highly negative and religiously loaded terms serves to construct the matter of women's driving as a struggle between *Us*, Muslims and Saudis, and the enemies of Muslims.

The impact of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is also evident in other semantic forms. This includes local coherence, whereby sexist ideology is combined with both national and religious ideologies in order to allow for the delegitimation of women's right to drive and the vilification of the advocates of women's right to drive; implications whereby negative information about the advocates of women's right to drive are

advanced as given; argumentation whereby fallacies such as the fallacy of authority are used to validate the position in opposition to women driving; level of description whereby the texts include a detailed negative description of the advocates of women's right to drive; modality whereby the texts employ linguistic structures such as evidentials in order to objectify the perspectives of the opponents of women's right to drive; metaphors whereby the 'negative' impact of the actions of the advocates of women's right to drive is described in a visualisable and concrete manner in order to elicit feelings of fear and anxiety.

The overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is also visible through linguistic structures such syntactic structures. The texts, for example, tend to use active sentence forms when reporting the 'bad' actions of the advocates of women's driving. The impact of the overall strategy also includes rhetorical structures, for example the 'negative' impact of the actions of the advocates of women's right to drive is constantly repeated in the texts. In the next section, I deal with the second discursive strategy used to delegitimise women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia; namely the problematisation of women's driving.

### 5.2.2 The second strategy: the problematisation of women's driving

The analysis of the macro structures of the text, topics, reveals that, in addition to the notion of *threat*, the texts are also controlled by another notion, namely *difference*. The notion of *difference* is invoked in order to frame the matter in relation to gender, whereby we have women driving as opposed to men driving. It needs to be noted that the distinction made in the text between men and women driving does not only involve the notion of *difference* but also the notion of *inferiority*. Social actors, as we will see in the next textual analysis, are not simply represented as different but also as unequal: "This principle [inferiority] acts as the

main justification for discrimination: they have no equal rights because they are not equal to us” (Van Dijk, 1983: 197). This shows that the texts, in addition to religious and national ideologies, are also controlled by a sexist ideology.

In this section, I investigate the impact of this sexist ideology on the way that the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign are constructed. The impact of sexism will be investigated in relation to both semantic forms – what is said – and linguistic structures – how it is said. On the semantic levels, two types of analysis will be carried out: an analysis of both *global* semantic forms and *local* semantic forms. The aim of the analysis of the *global* semantic forms, topics, is to identify the impact of sexism on the way that the information in the texts is structured and organised. Such analysis allows for the identification of the main themes that characterise the texts.

The aim of the analysis of the *local* semantic forms, on the other hand, is to identify the semantic forms and linguistic structures used to realise the global meanings, main themes, of the texts. This includes linguistic features such as lexicons, local coherence, argumentation, presuppositions, metaphors and social actors’ descriptions. The textual analysis also involves an examination of linguistic structures, how information is organised and structured in the text. This includes an examination of features such as syntactic structures as well as rhetorical figures.

The analysis of the global meaning of the texts shows that sexism has affected the way that the texts are structured in two fundamental ways. First, the impact of a sexist ideology shows in the way that women driving is interpreted and understood. In an attempt to define and evaluate women driving, the texts draw on patriarchal norms and values as well as gendered

stereotypes. Such appropriation of ideological norms and values results in a biased contextual model of the event in question, which in turn results in the problematisation of women driving. Below I examine in detail the impact of both the patriarchal norms and values and gendered stereotypes on the way that women driving is interpreted in the text. The impact of sexism is also evident in the way that social roles are portrayed in the texts. The textual analysis shows that the texts tend to represent old traditional gender roles in a positive light while portraying progressive gender roles in a negative tone. As such, women's driving is also problematised by romanticising traditional gender roles and deriding progressive gender roles. The following detailed textual analysis explores the impact of these two main themes on the local semantic forms and linguistic structures of the texts.

#### 5.2.2.1 The appropriation of patriarchal norms and values in order to interpret women's driving

The impact of the appropriation of patriarchal norms and values on local semantic forms shows clearly in the local coherence of the texts. The analysis shows that the texts are based on biased forms of coherence. In the texts, women driving is problematised. It is advanced as having 'negative' consequences. Such problematisation, however, is the effect of a sexist mental model. That is, women's driving is interpreted and evaluated, in the texts, in light of patriarchal norms and values. This appropriation of patriarchal norms and values in the process of interpreting and evaluating women driving results in a biased view of the practice of women driving. The view of women's driving as a problem can only be accepted as such by someone who holds patriarchal norms and values. Examples from the texts will be offered in order to illuminate the point made above. The texts offer a large number of reasons as to why women should not be allowed to drive. Example 1 includes one such reason.

(1)

" لأنها أي القيادة تفضي بالمرأة والمجتمع إلى الوقوع في مفاصد عظيمة وعواقب وخيمة"

" إضعاف قوامه الرجل، إذ أن المرأة إذا قادت السيارة وقضت حوائجها بنفسها، قلت حاجتها للرجل الذي يقوم على شأنها"

"...women's driving leads both women and the society to fall into **great evils and disastrous results**, the most important of which are the following:"

"**Woman's driving will diminish man's responsibility for her** because if she drives the car and provides her needs by herself, her need for the man who is responsible for her will decrease." (The pledge)

In the extract, women becoming less independent on men is constructed as one of the 'great evils' and 'disastrous' results of allowing women to drive. The use of the hyperboles 'great evils' and 'disastrous results' is intended not only to define the consequences of women driving in a negative way, but also to amplify such 'negativity' and hence enhance the seriousness of the matter. This highly negative evaluation of an event, like women becoming less dependent on men, clearly shows that the semantics of the texts are controlled by a biased mental model. To illustrate, the independence of women from men is seen by people with an anti-sexist ideology as a positive development that needs to be encouraged rather than denounced; "Women should be free to pursue independent careers and economic independence, as well as to have freedom from any male-based oppression in their personal relationship" (Jule, 2008: 11). Rendering the independence of women as negative is thus reflective of sexist ideology. Such an opinion can only be accepted as true by a person with a sexist ideology who believes that women should remain dependent on men.

The impact of sexism also shows in another semantic forms, namely presuppositions. In the texts, patriarchal norms and values are advanced as given. The statement 'her need for the



man who is responsible for her will decrease' implies the view that women need men and that men are responsible for women. These views are implied in the text and hence are advanced as natural rather than mere ideological perspectives.

Example 2 offers another reason why women should not be allowed to drive. The reason in example 2 also clearly shows the impact of sexism on the meaning of the text.

(2)

" لأنها أي القيادة تفضي بالمرأة والمجتمع إلى الوقوع في مفسد عظيمة وعواقب وخيمة"

"كثرة خروج المرأة من البيت وعدم القرار فيه، ولا شك أن هذا مصادم لأمر الله تعالى في قوله: ((وقرن في بيوتكن ولا

تبرجن تبرج الجاهلية"

"...women's driving leads both women and the society to fall into **great evils** and **disastrous results**, the most important of which are the following:"

"**Women will leave their houses more often** and there is no doubt that this is contradictory to Allah's commandment: '**And stay quietly in your houses**, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance' ". (The petition)

The extract above again confirms the biased form of coherence of the text. In the extract, women leaving home is advanced as one of the 'great evils' and 'disastrous'. Such a negative evaluation of women leaving home, again, is the result of patriarchal norms and values. It is based on the ideological assumption that women should be confined to the private domain of social reality. This norm is ideologically based. It is intended to restrict women and hence disempower them (Lerner, 1986). As such, the negative evaluation of *women leaving home* can only be accepted by someone with patriarchal norms and values.

The view that women should be confined to home is authorised through the Authority fallacy. The text cites a Quranic verse that orders women to stay at home. Allowing women to drive is portrayed as contradictory to the will of God. Readers are thus invited to accept this view because it is simply reflective of the will of the divine, of course as interpreted by the author:

specific kinds of fallacies might be used to persuade people to believe or do something, for instance those that are hard to resist, such as the Authority fallacy consisting of presenting devote Catholic with the argument that the Pope believe or recommends a certain action, or addressing Muslims and pointing out that a certain action is recommended by the Koran” (Van Dijk, 2006: 375).

#### 5.2.2.2 The appropriation of gendered stereotypes in order to interpret women’s driving

The problematisation of women’s driving is not only accomplished by drawing on patriarchal norms and values in order to interpret and evaluate women’s driving. Women’s driving is also problematised through the appropriation of gendered stereotypes in order to evaluate the practice of women driving. In this section, I examine how gendered stereotypes were appropriated in the process of formulating a theoretical conception of women’s driving. Example 3 clearly shows how such a process is accomplished.

(3)

" زيادة ازدحام السيارات وكثرة الحوادث، لأن المرأة بمقتضى طبيعتها أقل من الرجل حزما، وأقصر نظرا وأعجز قدرة،  
فإن داهمها الخطر عجزت عن التصرف"

“Road congestion as well as car accidents will increase **because, in her nature, a woman is less strict, less wise and less capable of action than a man.** So, she will not be able to act properly if she encounters danger.” (The petition)

In example 3, it is asserted that traffic problems such as congestion and car accidents will increase if women were allowed to drive. This increase is, however, explained in the light of some gendered stereotypes. The potential increase in car accidents and traffic problems is attributed to the view that women lack some essential traits, namely strictness, wisdom and capability. This again clearly shows that the semantic forms of the texts, in particular coherence, are controlled by a sexist mental model. The cause of traffic problems is not explained in terms of 'facts'. Rather, traffic problems are explained in accordance with certain biased views of women. The same phenomenon, car accidents, can be explained by ideological-free reasons such as inadequate infrastructure, speeding, reckless driving, weak enforcement of the law... etc. This shows that the interpretation or explanation of this problem is highly dependent on one's mental model, i.e. opinions, attitudes and ideologies. An individual with a biased mental model is very likely to produce a biased explanation of social problems.

The ideological views of women as 'less strict, wise and capable' than men are naturalised through the attribution of these qualities to the nature of women. Accordingly, such qualities are inherent to women rather than qualities that anyone regardless of their gender can develop or acquire. Rendering these qualities natural serves to close discussion on the matter. That is, such qualities are inherent to women. Hence, there is nothing we can do to avoid such problems but bar women from driving.

The same discriminatory view of women is invoked in example 4 in order to produce the same conclusion that women should not be allowed to drive.

(4)

" وقد أكدت الدراسات في شتى دول العالم أن خمساً وثمانين بالمائة من أسباب الحوادث ترجع إلى السائق؟ مع العلم أن

الرجل أثبت قلباً، وأقوى إرادة، خاصة في وقت الأزمات، فماذا سيكون الحال مع قيادة المرأة الرقيقة الناعمة؟

"Studies in all countries have confirmed that eighty-five per cent of the reasons for accidents are attributed to the driver. Taking into account that a man is more courageous and more determined during crises, what will be the case when the tender and soft woman will be driving?" (Al-Habdan)

Driving, according to example 4, requires that one knows how to deal with difficult situations. Unlike men, women, the example maintains, lack qualities that enable one to deal with difficult situations, such as courage and determination. Readers are thus led to infer the conclusion that more car accidents will result from allowing women to drive. Again, this conclusion is based on a biased mental model. The text assumes an essentialist view of men and women. Men and women are depicted as having different fixed characteristics. While men are associated with qualities that qualify them to handle difficult situations, women are stripped of these qualities. Such a biased construction is intended to disqualify women and hence delegitimise their right to drive.

The ideological perspectives voiced in the text are conveyed as factual. The ideological perspective that men are more courageous and determined than women is preceded by the factive expression 'ma' al-'lm' which can be translated as 'knowing that'. As such, readers are invited to accept this ideological perspective as truthful, as something that need not be questioned or challenged. The statement also involves other linguistic devices that help to emphasise the information voiced. For example, the statement 'a man is more courageous' is topicalised with another factive expression, namely 'inna', which means 'indeed'.

In example 5, the stereotype of women as irrational is used in order to render women driving problematic.

(5)

"ولا يخفى أن بعض النساء في حال الغضب والمشاجرة مع الأهل والزوج يلجأن إلى ترك المنزل في أي وقت وربما تسافر وحدها وتضرب الطريق في لحظة عناد وإصرار"

**“It is also not unknown that some women resort to leaving their homes at any time when angry or after a quarrel with the family and the husband. In such a case, the woman might travel alone at a moment of obstinacy and determination”.** (Al-Berik)

The extract above involves the view of women as irrational. It is explicitly stated that some women are likely to leave home when they feel angry. This statement implies that women are not capable of controlling their emotions. This gendered stereotype is used in order to create a hypothetical scenario that serves to elicit feelings of fear and anxiety and hence discourage women from driving. That is, women might decide to leave home and travel alone. Travelling alone is also presupposed to be an action that women should not be doing. These implications, again, show that the ideological position that women should not be allowed to drive is based on a sexist mental model. That is, women are irrational and hence should be treated as a minor.

The ideological perspective of women as emotional and irrational is conveyed as self-evident. This is accomplished through the use of the expression ‘it is also not unknown that ...’ which precedes the ideological assumptions voiced in the texts. The use of such an expression helps to render such ideological assumptions as factual rather than as mere ideological perspectives.

Another stereotype of women used to discourage women’s driving is the view of women as

sexual objects. This view of women is asserted by associating women driving with sexual harassment. Such an association is made in example 6.

(6)

"إذا كانت المرأة لم تسلم من التحرش والمعاكسة وهي بين الناس فهل ستسلم من التحرش والمعاكسة والإيقاف والعدوان وهي تقود سيارتها في الأماكن النائية والأوقات المتأخرة وساعات السكون فضلا عن التحرش عند إشارات المرور ومحطات البنزين. فإذا كانت المرأة صالحة تعرضت للأذى والتحرش وإن كانت فاسدة لا رقيب ولا حسيب"

"If the **woman is not safe from sexual harassment and improper advances** are made to her when she is in public, **will she be safe** from them, in addition to **stopping and aggression** while driving her car in **remote places and late, quiet hours** – let alone sexual harassment at **traffic lights and petrol stations**? In this case, if the woman is moral, **she will be harmed**, and if she is immoral, her misbehavior will go unwatched." (Al-Berik)

In this excerpt, a causal connection is constructed between allowing women to drive and sexual harassment. According to the extract, women already suffer from sexual harassment even when they are always in the presence of other people. If allowed to drive, women would be driving alone without a male guardian. Given the 'fact' that women suffer sexual harassment even in the presence of other people, the text asks what would happen if women were driving on their own? Recipients are, thus, led to only one conclusion – that women would definitely be subject to more sexual harassment if they were allowed to drive.

The argument advanced in the extract presupposes a certain attitude towards sexual harassment that complements the position of the text on women driving. This attitude

involves a number of ideological implications. The argument that women would experience more sexual harassment if they were alone in public involves the view of women as sexual objects or physical beings rather than human beings. This type of argument invites only one course of action to solve the problem of sexual harassment: minimising women's presence in public. Basing the argument on the view of women as physical beings shows that the text is based on biased forms of coherence. This representation of sexual harassment places the blame on the victim rather than on the perpetrator (Matoesian, 1993). A more comprehensive attitude towards sexual harassment attributes offences against women to the perpetrators, in particular to male chauvinists (Ibid). The latter attitude towards sexual harassment involves a different approach to the problem of sexual harassment. This approach involves raising awareness of the danger of the objectification of women. It also requires introducing laws that specifically criminalise sexual perpetrators in places where such laws still do not exist, as is the case in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the view of women as physical beings, it is implied, in the extract above, that sexual harassment is pervasive and inevitable. This view is emphasised through different linguistic features. One of these is the level of description, whereby the text provides detailed descriptions of imagined sexual harassment scenarios. For example, various forms of harassment are mentioned in the text. According to the text, women are subject to sexual harassment, improper advances, stopping and aggression. The extract also includes a detailed description of when and where women will be sexually harassed. The list includes late and quiet hours, remote places, traffic lights and petrol stations. Such a detailed description serves to amplify feelings of fear and anxiety.

The pervasiveness of sexual assaults is also promoted through the use of the passive sentence

form. The statements read ‘if the woman is not safe from sexual harassment’ ‘she will be harmed’. In these statements, readers are not told who will commit such acts. This construction implies that anyone can commit such acts. That is, sexual harassment is not restricted to a certain category of people, e.g. criminals, but rather it can be done by anyone.

Sexual harassment is not only represented as pervasive but also as definite. The modal verb *will be harmed* (تعرضت) invokes certainty and thus serves to reinforce sexual harassment as an inevitable outcome of women driving. The ideological function of representing sexual harassment as pervasive and definite is to elicit feelings of fear and anxiety and hence discourage women from leaving home (Odem & Clay-Warner, 1998).

Almost exactly the same discursive moves are employed in example 7.

(7)

"الإيذاء الكثير" التحرش والمضايقات والخطف والاعتصاب" الذي سيحصل لها من ضعاف النفوس في الطرقات وعند التوقف وتعطل السيارة، ولا يخفى ما تتعرض له المرأة في وقتنا هذا من تحرش ومضايقات ومعها محرّمها وسائقها، فكيف إذا كانت تقود السيارة وحدها"

“Driving the car will cause the woman **much harm like sexual harassment, improper advances by those with low morals, kidnapping and rape**. This will happen **on the roads**, when **stopping the car and when the car breaks down**. The **harassment and improper advances** to which women are exposed in our days are not unknown now when she is with her driver, so how would the case be when she will be driving her car alone?” (The petition)

In the extract above, hyperboles such as الإيذاء الكثير “much harm” is used in order to describe what the text predicts will happen to women if they were allowed to drive. Various negative



scenarios are advanced. The scenarios include sexual harassment, improper advances, kidnapping and rape. This detailed description of the negative hypothetical scenarios in which women are described as in constant danger again serves to intensify emotions of fear and anxiety.

The biased accounts of the facts, in the extract, can also be noted in the way that the perpetrators of sexual harassment are represented in the texts. While in the previous extract, the perpetrators were completely erased through the use of the passive sentence form, in this extract, the perpetrators are mentioned, but backgrounded. That is, they are mentioned at the end of the sentence rather than at the beginning – ‘by those with low morals’. The texts thus make prominent the act of sexual harassment and its impact on women while concealing or backgrounding the agents responsible for such acts, male perpetrators. Furthermore, while the texts in opposition to women driving employ hyperboles such as the enemies of religion and of the country to denote the advocates of women’s right to drive, male perpetrators of sexual harassment are erased, backgrounded and described in euphemistic terms. In the extract above, the perpetrators of sexual harassment are described as ‘ضعاف نفوس’ ‘people with low morals’.

Women’s driving is problematised not only by reinforcing the ideological view of women as sexual objects, as explained above, but also by viewing them as a sexual subject.

(8)

السؤال: فضيلة الشيخ! من الشبه التي ترفع لقيادة المرأة للسيارة أنها لا تحدث لها خلوة مع السائق، فكيف الرد عليهم؟  
الجواب: هذا محذور آخر، إذا أعطيتها السيارة ومكنتها منها أعطيتها الحرية التامة، تسوق السيارة وتروح للي هي تبغي،  
ولا رقيب ولا حسيب...

“Question: Among the pretexts that support women's driving is that driving her will prevent woman from being left alone with a foreign male- driver in the car, so what is the response to this?”

“Answer: This is another forbidden act. **If you give the woman the right to drive, you give her the utmost freedom.** She would drive the car and **go to whomever she wants** without being **watched or punished...**” (Al-Fawzan)

This extract includes a fatwa, a religious pronouncement, by a high-ranking member of the religious establishment, Al-Fawzan, Saleh. The fatwa was issued through a weekly TV show where Al-Fawzan receives questions from the public on various issues. During one of these shows, Al-Fawzan was asked about women’s driving and provided the answer quoted above.

The question pertains to an argument in favour of women driving. That is, if allowed to drive, individual women will avoid mixing with individual unrelated males (foreign drivers), which constitutes *Khalwa*. *Khalwa* is considered a forbidden act. Unlike women’s driving, which is not prohibited by any direct or explicit religious teachings, there are religious teachings that directly and explicitly prohibit *Khalwa*. The ban on women driving is hence considered paradox given the following facts: (1) there is no religious teaching that directly prohibits women from driving; and (2) the ban on women driving leads some women to commit an explicit forbidden act, *Khalwa*, being with an unrelated man alone.

In the answer to the question, driving is just rendered another forbidden act. The extract provides an explanation as to why this is the case. The explanation, however, is clearly based on a biased view of women. The extract reads “... because if you give a woman the right to

drive, you give her the utmost freedom” to go wherever she wants. In the reply to the question, only one option is considered as to how women would use cars. That is, women would drive to wherever they wanted. Driving is a means by which several tasks can be accomplished, such as working, shopping, taking children to school, travelling, socialising, etc. All these functions of driving are disregarded. The only highlighted function of women driving is that women will use cars to go and visit other men. This clearly shows that the speaker has a mental model of a woman as a sexual and morally incompetent being.

Such representation of women as an active agent, however, contradicts the common representation of women in fundamentalist discourse as weak and passive (Shehadeh, 2003). In the extract above, women are represented as active; women would simply drive to visit other men. Such representation is, however, not ideologically free. Women are simply reduced to only one aspect of their identities, namely sexuality. Furthermore, women are represented as active in some ‘immoral’ acts. That is, women will simply disregard their moral obligations if they are not restricted or watched. This construction of women is, thus, intended to justify the control and subjugation of women. The paradox of having two contradictory representations of women is noted by Moghissi: “Underlying the sexual and moral beliefs and practices in Islamic societies is the conception of women as weak in moral judgment and deficient in cognitive capacity, yet sexually forceful and irresistibly seductive” (1999: 20).

#### 5.2.2.3 Romanticising the current status of women

The textual analysis of the examples above clearly shows that the semantic forms and linguistic structures of the texts are controlled by a sexist ideology. This results in a biased view of women driving; a view that problematises women driving. This view is based on

sexist perspectives whereby men and women are represented as having different characteristics. The ideological function of this construction is to justify discrimination: “It is precisely the essentialist differences between men and women as constructed in sexist ideologies that are used as a basis for the sexist discrimination against women (and gay men, etc.)” (Van Dijk, 2008: 157). In the examples above, women are not only represented as different but also inferior to men. While male social actors are associated with positive characteristics, women are associated with negative characteristics. These characteristics are rendered as God-given, factual and natural. This construction serves to close the discussion on the topic and hence perpetuate the status quo.

What I would like to show here is that the impact of sexism also shows in the way that social roles and the status quo are depicted in the texts. Both social roles and the status quo are represented in a way that serves to problematise women driving. While the traditional social roles of men and women are rendered natural and normal, the existing conditions in which women suffer discrimination is romanticised. The ideological function of romanticising the current conditions of women is to mask the hard conditions that women experience (Jorgensen and Philips 2012) . For example, women are usually represented in text talk as honoured and very well respected when, in fact, they enjoy fewer rights and privileges than men do (Ibid).

This tendency to depict the status quo in a very positive tone is pervasive in the texts written in opposition to women driving. In example 9, women are depicted as already enjoying a high status and dignified position.

(9)

" فإن مما لا شك فيه أن للمرأة في الإسلام منزلة رفيعة ومكانة عظيمة، وقد أعز الإسلام شأنها وأعلى مكانتها واحترم حقوقها وضمن لها حريتها وكرامتها وأحاطها بسياج منيعة من الصيانة والحماية، وشرع لها ما يحفظها ويحفظ الرجال من الافتتان بها"

**“It is beyond doubt that woman occupies a great and high position in Islam** and that Islam has given her a **great value** and made her **position even higher** as well as **respected her rights, ensured her freedom and dignity**, surrounded her with a strong **fence of protection and defence** and sets laws that both **protect her** and protect men from being tempted by her.” (The pledge)

The impact of a sexist ideology clearly shows in the way that women’s status and position are described, as well as in the way that they are described. The extract involves a number of presuppositions, including (1) women occupy a great and high position; (2) women enjoy their rights; and (3) women are free and dignified. These ideological views are not only presupposed but also preceded by the factive expression ‘it is beyond doubt’. The ideological function of this representation of women’s position is to induce a sense of consent and acceptance. The utopian representation of women’s current situation implies that any change or modification to women’s current situation is unnecessary or even harmful. The fact that these views are presupposed and preceded by a factive expression helps to render them factual rather than mere ideological perspectives.

The status quo is also justified through the way that restrictions on women are described. Restrictions are described as ‘solid fences of protection and preservation’. The use of the terms ‘protection’ and ‘defense’ to describe constraints on women serves to lend such constraints a positive light, and hence diminish their negative impact on women. Readers are thus led to think that such constraints are in their interest rather than the interest of some

ideological group, e.g. fundamentalist movements and men.

Moreover, the assertion that the current status and position of women are dictated by Islam serves to conceal the particular ideological nature of these perspectives. For example, the text reads ‘Islam... sets laws that both protect her...’ The statement implies that the restrictions placed on women are motivated by divine principles rather than ideological perspectives. By invoking religion and suggesting that the restriction is motivated by a concern for women, the texts “...focus on those cognitive and social characteristics of the recipient that make them more vulnerable and less resistant to manipulation, that make them credulous or willing victims to accept beliefs and do things that they otherwise would not do” (Van Dijk, 2006: 367).

The same construction of women’s position is also emphasised in example 10.

(10)

"المرأة في هذه البلاد تدرك جيدا أنها غالية ومعززة ومكرمة، فمعاملاتها تسير في الجهات الرسمية أولا لأنها امرأة، ولا تقف في الطابور لإنها امرأة، وتتعامل معها الدولة وكافة الجهات الرسمية بكثير من الاحترام والتقدير والمراعاة لكونها امرأة، فتمثل قيمة لدى حكومتها ولدى أسرتها، فهي محاطة بهالة من القدسية والعفة والاحترام"

“**Women in this country realize very well that they are dear, valued and honored.** For example, running a woman’s paperwork in governmental institutions **is given priority because she is a woman.** She does not queue and all governmental bodies deal **with her with a great deal of respect, esteem and considerateness.** All this treatment is due to her status as a woman. Hence, the woman represents a value for her government and family; she is surrounded by **a halo of sanctity, modesty and respect.**” (Al-Habdan)

In the extract, the women in Saudi Arabia are represented as valued and honoured. The view that women are valued and honoured is conveyed as factual in the text. The view is preceded by a factive expression ‘realize’ in ‘the women... realize very well’. As such, the view of women as valued and honoured becomes a fact that women themselves know and experience.

In order to validate this view, the text offers some examples of how women are being respected and honoured – for example, women’s cases and issues are prioritised in governmental offices. In addition, women do not have to queue in all governmental bodies. The extract illustrates that such treatment of women reflects the high respect and value that society holds for them. Respect is thus defined in a way that complements the perspective of the text. That is, respect for women is realised by preventing women from queuing and prioritising their cases in governmental offices. As such, respect does not involve granting women the rights and privileges that men enjoy.

The text also employs some hyperboles portraying the status that women enjoy in Saudi. According to the text, women are “surrounded by a halo of sanctity, modesty and respect”. Hyperboles such as “a halo of sanctity, modesty and respect” paint a fanciful picture of the status of women. Such a construction of the status of women helps to generate a sense of satisfaction and contentment.

Women’s right to drive is also delegitimised by romanticising the traditional role of women as housewives. In the extract below, the glamorisation of the traditional role of women as housewives is accomplished by deriding some outside home jobs and activities.

" لم نسمع بحملات على الفيس بوك من نوع: سأقود بيتي بنفسي!! نحن نتخيل أنفسنا نفعل أي شيء خارج البيت.. وزيرة.. مديرة روضة.. خادمة طائرات عفوا أقصد مضيضة.. طبخة.. رائدة في مطعم ماما عبلة! ولكن لا نتخيل أنفسنا نفعل الشيء نفسه في البيت.. لا نتخيل أنفسنا ونحن نرعى شؤون بيتنا ونقضي الوقت الأكبر مع أطفالنا"

"We have not heard of campaigns on Facebook such as: **“I will lead my home myself.”** We imagine ourselves doing anything outside our houses: ministers, nursery managers, **servants on a plane** (sorry! I mean a flight attendant), **a distinguished chef in Mama Abla Restaurant!** But, we do not imagine ourselves doing the same things at home. We do not imagine ourselves **looking after our houses** and spending the largest part of our time with our children.” (Hind)

The effect of a sexist ideology manifests in the texts in the way that social roles are represented. The extract notes a change in aspirations and demands among women in Saudi Arabia. This change is evident in the kind of campaigns that women have started to organise. That is, women now tend to organise campaigns in which they demand that they are granted more space and opportunities than before. This tendency is rendered abnormal. The statement ‘We imagine ourselves doing anything outside our houses...’ involves the view that this is not what women should imagine or focus on. This suggests that the tendency to take up new jobs represents a deviation from the norm, namely looking after one’s home. As such, leading one’s home is assumed to be the natural activity of a woman.

The tendency of women to leave home to work is also discouraged by the way that outside jobs are described. In the extract, degrading terms and sarcastic remarks are used to describe some of the jobs that some Saudi women have started to take up. The term ‘servants’ is first used to describe those who work as flight attendants before the text, in sarcastic way, introduces the proper term, namely مضيضةflight attendant. The job of a servant is socially



stigmatised and hence is not usually desirable. Thus, describing flight attendants as servants is an attempt to degrade the job. The same applies to the use of the terms ‘distinguished’ and ‘Mama Abla’ in ‘a distinguished chef in Mama Abla Restaurant’. The term رائدة “distinguished” is usually associated with ‘highly respected’ jobs. Using this term before ‘chef’ which is not perceived as a highly respected job in society is intended to belittle the job.

#### 5.2.2.5 Summary

The textual analysis of this section shows that the semantic forms and linguistic structures of the texts in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign are controlled by a sexist ideology. The analysis of the global semantic forms of the texts, topics, shows that women driving has been problematised. This problematisation has been accomplished through the appropriation of patriarchal norms and values as well as gendered stereotypes in order to interpret and evaluate women driving. Women driving is also problematised through the way that social roles and women’s current position are portrayed in the texts. This appropriation of ideological perspectives to interpret the communicative event in question results in a sexist mental model of the event which, in turn, gives rise to ideological linguistic structures.

The detailed textual analysis of the texts examines the impact of this sexist mental model on the local semantic forms as well as the linguistic structures of the text. With regard to the local semantic forms of the texts, the impact of the sexist mental model is evident in a large number of semantic forms including local coherence, presuppositions, lexical items, level of descriptions and modality. For example, the appropriation of patriarchal norms and values as well as gendered stereotypes to interpret and evaluate women driving results in biased forms of coherence. The texts, for example, render events like *women leaving home* and *women becoming independent* as problematic. These negative evaluations of such events are the

result of a sexist ideology. Someone with an anti-sexist ideology would produce positive evaluations of such events.

The texts' biased forms of coherence also show in the way that women driving is linked to social problems such as car accidents and sexual harassment. The texts construct a causal relationship between women driving and such social problems. That is, allowing women to drive will result in an increase in both the rate of car accidents and sexual harassment. This causal relationship, however, is based on gendered stereotypes of women, e.g. women as sexual beings and as lacking capability and rationality. These sexist views are presupposed in the texts and usually preceded by factive expression such as 'it is known that'. This representation of such views helps to render them as given and hence in need of no further discussion or debate. The impact of a sexist mental model also shows in features such as levels of description, whereby the texts include detailed descriptions of the 'negative' consequences of women driving. Such detailed descriptions serve to elicit feelings of fear and anxiety.

The impact of the sexist mental model shows also in the way that social roles and women's current status are represented. While traditional gender roles are naturalised, women's current position is romanticised. Saudi women's current status and position are rendered utopian and hence in need of no modification. Restrictions on women are also depicted in a positive light. They were designed to protect women rather than to disadvantage them. The impact of a sexist mental model also shows in linguistic structures such as syntactic structures whereby sexual assaulters are either erased or backgrounded.

### 5.2.3 The analysis of the Petition

In this section, I offer a textual analysis of one whole text from the texts analysed. The purpose of this analysis is to show how the two strategies, identified across all the texts, are operationalised in a whole text. The Petition was selected for this analysis because unlike the other analysed texts, the Petition was signed by 119 persons including judges, imams and lecturers. This high number of signatures makes the document a good candidate for detailed textual analysis.

The analysis, in the previous section, showed that the texts written in opposition to the *women2drive* campaign implement two key strategies in order to delegitimise women's right to drive. These are the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive and the problematisation of women's driving. The two strategies serve two different cognitive functions. While the first strategy serves to influence the way readers understand and interpret the immediate event, the *women2drive* campaign, the second strategy is intended to influence the general shared social beliefs regarding gender relations. Both functions are typical of manipulative discourse: "Whereas manipulation may concretely affect the formation or change of unique personal mental models, the general goals of manipulative discourse are the control of the shared social representation of groups of people because these social beliefs in turn control what people do and say in many situations and over a relatively long period" (Van Dijk, 369). In this section, I explain how such strategies were put into effect in the Petition, one of the key documents written in opposition to women driving<sup>2</sup>. Below is the translated version of the document followed by the analysis.

- 1 It is beyond doubt that woman occupies a great and high position in Islam and that
- 2 Islam has given her a great value and made her position even higher as well as

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<sup>2</sup> The original version of the text will be included in the appendixes.

3 respected her rights, ensured her freedom and dignity, surrounded her with a strong  
4 fence of protection and defence and set laws that both protect her and protect men from  
5 being tempted by her.

6 The enemies of Islam, whether Christians, Jews or hypocrites, realised this great  
7 position that woman occupies in Islam as well as its crucial role in the Islamic nation's  
8 integrity and righteousness or in the nation's corruption and aberrance. Therefore, they  
9 all targeted her simultaneously to corrupt her and consequently corrupt the nation  
10 through her. In this regard, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said: "I have not left men  
11 with a temptation more harmful than women."

12 Since falsehood is repugnant, condemned, hateful and unacceptable to the faultless  
13 instinct, it is certainly inevitable for every falsifier to use reform and the sophistication  
14 of speech and style to disguise the falsehood they are advocating, so that they can  
15 circulate it among people.

16 Therefore, the enemies of Islam always try to give the Muslim woman the illusion that  
17 she is wronged, deprived of her rights and vulnerable. They depict the house for her as  
18 an imprisonment for life, the husband as a tyrannical jailor and the male responsibility  
19 for her as a sword unsheathed over her neck. They give her the illusion that hijab is  
20 backwardness, that motherhood is just an animalistic breeding and that non-mixing  
21 with men disables her movement and kills her creativity.

22 These falsifiers have known that people do not move without an issue that infuriates  
23 and worries them. Hence, they picked the issue of the oppressed woman in our  
24 countries illustrating in the media one aspect of this alleged oppression every day. The  
25 last of what they highlighted, in this respect, is the issue of woman's driving of cars,  
26 claiming that they aim at granting the woman her right and protecting society from  
27 religious, social and economic harms.

28 Therefore, aided by Allah and depending on Him, we pronounce the following  
29 statement regarding women's driving of cars:  
30 Sharia has provided us with the rule of the prohibition of evasive legal devices and the  
31 prevention of the means leading to prohibited actions and evils, even if such devices  
32 and means were originally permitted or mandatory. The examples in this regard are  
33 too many. To demonstrate the importance of this rule in Islam, Ibn al-Qayyim (may  
34 Allah have mercy on his soul) said: "the prohibition of evasive legal devices represents  
35 a quarter of the religious commandments and a commandment is either an order to be  
36 followed or a prohibition".  
37 When Allah has prohibited something, He has also prohibited all the methods and  
38 means leading to it with the aim of putting into action and ensuring its prohibition in  
39 addition to preventing any transgression of it. If Allah had permitted the means leading  
40 to a prohibited thing, then this permission would have been in contradiction with the  
41 prohibition itself.  
42 Consequently, we say that women's driving of the car is not allowed because the rule  
43 of prohibiting evasive legal devices applies to it because women's driving leads both  
44 women and the society to fall into great evils and disastrous results, the most important  
45 of which are the following:  
46 -Women will leave their houses more often and lack settlement in them and this is  
47 unmistakably contradictory to Allah's commandment "And abide in your houses and do  
not display yourselves as (was) the display of the former times of ignorance".  
48 -Driving will lead to consequences like make-up and veil removal. It is certain that  
49 women's driving will be one of the fastest ways of veil removal under the pretext of  
50 the need to see the road clearly. Moreover, women's driving will be the means to force  
51 them to remove their veil under the pretext of security necessity.

52 -Driving will cause women to mix with men and, even more dangerously, to be alone  
53 with men in workshops, stations, check points and traffic centres. Yet, what is more  
54 dangerous is that a woman might be detained in traffic police centres when she  
55 commits an offense or is involved in an accident.

56 -Driving women will be stripped of their modesty due to their frequent interaction with  
57 men at stations, workshops, car exhibitions and check points and when accidents or  
58 car breakdowns occur. Will modesty still have a place in a woman after all this?

59 -Driving will facilitate corruption means for the woman who will be able to go out  
60 whenever she wants and go wherever she wants without being asked or watched.

61 -Woman's driving will diminish man's responsibility for her because if she drives the  
62 car and provides her needs by herself, her need for the man who is responsible for her  
63 will decrease.

64 -Driving the car will cause the woman much harm like sexual harassment, improper  
65 advances by men, kidnapping and rape on the part of those with low morals. This will  
66 happen on the roads, when stopping the car and when the car breaks down. The  
67 harassment and improper advances to which women are exposed in our days are not  
68 unknown now when she is with her driver, so how would the case be when she will be  
69 driving her car alone?

70 -road congestion as well as car accidents will increase because, in her nature, a woman  
71 is less strict, less wise and less capable of action than a man. So, she will not be able  
72 to act properly if she encounters danger. To well realise the expected increase in  
73 congestion if women drive, we only need to multiply the number of the buses  
74 transporting the female employees, teachers and students every morning and afternoon  
75 by the number of the seats of these buses.

76 - Advocating women's driving might lead to sedition, disunion and a destabilisation of

77 the society. It will implicate society in disagreements and secessions the consequences  
78 of which are not known to anyone but Allah and are useful to none but enemies.

79 Finally, we say:

80 Is not it strange and dubitable that no scholar, herald, reformer or treasurer has called  
81 for women's driving? Rather, all those who are zealous for it are the ones who call  
82 for westernising the Muslim woman. Does not this prove that there is a hidden agenda  
83 behind this enthusiasm for women's driving and that it is an issue planned secretly  
84 with the aim of corrupting the Muslim woman? Does not this show that the call for  
85 women's driving is the work of those who advocate Muslim women's westernisation  
86 and that it is a dangerous means of achieving these advocates' malicious aims?

87 Concluding this pronouncement, we ask the advocates of women's driving to fear  
88 Allah and repent, to abstain from provoking sedition and spreading chaos in our  
89 society and to beware of Allah's torture and punishment. We thank everyone who  
90 demonstrated to the nation the evils of women's driving and warned against its  
91 consequences. We also call scholars to do for this nation what Allah demands by  
92 advising, reforming and demonstrating.

93 We appeal to the people in charge, may Allah grant them success, to stop the foolish  
94 people who want to destroy society. We ask the people in charge to be up to the  
95 responsibility and guardianship assigned to them by Allah, to prevent disunion,  
96 disagreement and conflict especially in light of the wars and unrest which the whole  
97 region is witnessing. We pray to Allah to improve Muslims' and their rulers'  
98 circumstances and to defeat their enemies, whether atheists or hypocrites, and to  
99 protect Muslim women from any evil, affliction and vice.

The thematic analysis involves the following questions.

- 1- What events does the text address?
- 2- How such events are talked about?
- 3- What notions underlie the topics of the text?

The text addresses two events; (1) *women2drive* campaign, lines 1-44, (2) women's driving lines 45-78. The rest of the text, line 79-99, features an appeal to the state and public to reject women driving. In order to answer the second and third questions, we need to examine the pieces of information that the text express in describing each event. I first deal with the first section of the text, which addresses the *women2drive* campaign. Below are the topics that the text used in order to frame the *women2drive* campaign.

#### *Global semantic forms*

- Women in Islam enjoy a high status and play a fundamental role in preserving Ummah, the Muslim community (lines 1-5).
- The enemies of Islam realise the key role that women play in preserving the Muslim community, and hence target Islam by targeting women (6-11).
- The enemies of Islam deploy deceptive methods in their attempts to corrupt women (lines 12- 27).
- The campaign for *women2drive* is an example of such deceptive ways.
- The ban on female driving is based on Sharia law (27-44).

The topics above represent the most important information invoked in the first part of the text. The key aim of these topics is to frame the *women2drive* campaign in a way that complements the communicative purpose of the text. The text, through these topics, construes a mental model of the event as part of the struggle between Muslims and the enemies of Muslims. As such, rather than viewing the *women2drive* campaign as simply a political event



whose aim is to defy a ban on female driving that hampers women in a myriad of ways, the matter is rather portrayed as part of a struggle between Us, Muslims, and Them, the enemies of Muslims.

This framing shows that the first part of the text is controlled by the notion of danger. The advocates of women's right to drive are represented as part of some outside and hostile group. The *women2drive* campaign is represented as part of some evil project 'to corrupt women and Islam'. Such negative representation is intended to delegitimise the advocates of women's right to drive and hence invalidate their position. The analysis of the topics of the first section of the text, hence, shows that women's right to drive is partly discouraged through the delegitimation of the advocate's of women's driving. I now turn to examine the local semantic forms and linguistic structures used to implement this strategy.

#### *Local semantic forms and linguistic structures*

The analysis of the micro-structure of the text shows that the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive is accomplished through various local semantic forms and linguistic structures. One of the local semantic features of the text used in this regard is coherence. The text constructs a link between some propositions in order to build up the Us and Them polarisation. To illustrate, the text constructs a link between women's status and their position in society, on the one hand, and the fate of religion, on the other, lines 6-10. The ideological function of this link is to religionise the matter and hence frame it in terms of Us, Muslims and Them, the enemies of Muslims.

Another key local semantic feature used to construe the polarisation of Us vs. Them is the representation of social actors. The text construes an explicit negative representation of the

advocates of women's right to drive. The advocates of women's right to drive are negatively represented in relation to all the categories of the ideological schema developed by van Dijk (1998). Such negative representation clearly shows in the text's choice of lexical items used to depict the advocates of women's right to drive.

Membership: The enemies of religion and hypocrites

Action: *يروج باطله على الناس*disguise and disseminate the falsehood

Goals: *يريدون إفسادها*They want to corrupt her

Norms and Values: *المبطلون*the falsifiers

Position: *ولذلك يحاول أعداء الإسلام*The enemies of Islam always try to give

Resources: *التأثير الغربي*The western influence

Two main features characterise the lexical items used to denote the advocates of women's right to drive – their highly negative nature as well as their religious nature. Associating the advocates of women's right to drive with negative qualities such as enmity and falsehood serves to discredit them and hence invalidate their position. Moreover, the advocates of women's right to drive are associated with the enemies of Islam. Making this association helps to frame the matter as a struggle between Muslims and the enemies of Muslims. The religious nature of these lexical items also serves a cognitive function. Religious texts are associated with the truth; hence, using terms from resources seen as divine help to lend the text a sense of credibility.

The text's preferred mental model of the *women2drive* campaign as part of the struggle between Muslims and the enemies of Muslims is confirmed through the Authority Fallacy. In order to confirm and authorise the text's mental model of the event, the text deploys a

number of religious teachings. This move, the Authority Fallacy, is very well known for its powerful impact on communicators:

“specific kinds of fallacies might be used to persuade people to believe or do something, for instance those that are hard to resist, such as the Authority Fallacy consisting of presenting devote Catholics with the argument that the Pope believes or recommends a certain action, or addressing Muslims and pointing out that a certain action is recommended by the Koran”  
(van Dijk, 2006: 375)

In the text above, a number of religious teachings were strategically cited and interpreted in a way that serves the communicative purpose of the text, manipulating readers into believing that the *women2drive* campaign is part of some evil project that intends to destroy the whole Muslim community. The cited religious teachings include warnings issued by the Prophet about the charm of life and women. Citing these sayings with regard to women driving is intended to promote and authorise the ideological position of the text. For example, it implies that barring women from driving is intended to fulfil a divine obligation rather than an ideological goal. The teachings are thus utilised to further some ideological ends. The teachings can be simply interpreted as a warning that does not involve any legal implications for women.

The Authorisation Fallacy is also accomplished by invoking some religious principles, specifically the prohibition of evasive legal devices and the prevention of the means leading to prohibited actions and evils. Since there is no direct religious principle that denies women the right to mobility, sexists usually draw on this religious principle in order to authorise their ideological positions. The broad nature of this principle allows for such exploitation. This

principle simply stipulates that acts that lead to forbidden acts can be prohibited. Women driving is seen in the text as not forbidden itself but as an act that will definitely, according to the text, lead to forbidden acts.

In order to enhance the importance of implementing this principle with regard to women's driving, the text includes sayings by some key Muslim scholars emphasising its significance. The text cited Ibn al-Qayyim (a key scholar) saying: "the prohibition of evasive legal devices represents a quarter of the religious commandments and a commandment is either an order to be followed or a prohibition". Readers are thus invited to take as given the ideological view that women driving indeed falls into the category of evasive legal devices.

The analysis of the first part of the text shows that women's right to drive is partly delegitimised through the ideological polarisation of Us vs. Them. Constructing this polarisation serves to influence the way readers understand and interpret the *women2drive* campaign. Readers are invited to think of the campaign as part of the struggle between Muslims and the enemies of Muslims. The advocates of women driving are placed in the latter category. Such highly negative portrayal of the advocates of women's right to drive is intended to delegitimise them and hence invalidate their position. I now turn to the second strategy, which was primarily accomplished in the rest of the text.

#### *The problematisation of women driving*

While the first strategy, the polarisation of Us and Them, serves to influence the way readers perceive the immediate event, the *women2drive* campaign, the second strategy is primarily concerned with influencing the way readers view the practice of driving in general. The text does so by drawing on patriarchal norms and values in the evaluation of women driving. The

appropriation of patriarchal norms and values, in the evaluation of driving, happens at the expense of other norms and values such as equality, justice and freedom and results in the problematisation of women driving. Below, I offer an illustration of how the second strategy was accomplished in the text.

The second half of the text is primarily dedicated to explaining why women should not be allowed to drive. It was illustrated above that the text's opposition to female driving is based on the view that it will lead to 'negative' consequences. These 'negative' consequences are offered as a list in the second half of the text. What I would like to show here is that the construction of the event as having 'negative' consequences is biased for it is based on ideological rather than rational grounds. Revealing the biased nature of this construction necessitates an investigation of the local semantic structures of the text such as lexical items, coherence and presuppositions.

The text lists a large number of 'negative' consequences that would result from allowing women to drive. These consequences can be divided into two sections: religious forbidden acts and social problems. I will start with religious forbidden acts. These include women leaving home, the removal of the veil, mixing with men, and diminishing men's responsibility for women. The text selects the hyperboles of مفاسد عظيمة وعواقب وخيمة (great evils and disastrous results) in order to describe such events. The ideological function of selecting such highly negative lexical items is to denounce female driving and enhance the seriousness of the matter.

The manipulative nature of this construction lies in the fact that the highly negative evaluation is advanced as given when, in fact, it is based on ideological perspectives, namely

sexist views. Accordingly, the text's evaluation of these events can only be accepted by someone who holds similar norms and values. In order to illustrate this point, we need to examine some of the ideological views presupposed in the text. These ideological views include that women should not leave home and that women should remain dependent on men. Such views, advanced in the text as given, are not shared by all Saudis and Muslims. These views are regarded by Muslim feminists as ideological. They serve to restrict women to the private sphere of life and hence help maintain gendered power relations whereby men control all aspects of society. In other words, these views presuppose certain ideological values, in particular the primacy of man. By using these norms and values in order to evaluate female driving, the text relegates other values such as equality, justice and freedom.

The Authority Fallacy is utilised in order to authorise the text's position as well as to obscure its ideological basis. The text invoked a number of religious teachings, interpreted in a way that serves the text's communicative purpose. For instance, the religious teaching "And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as (was) the display of the former times of ignorance" is cited in order to assert the view that women are commanded to stay at home and that allowing women to drive would facilitate an action that is discouraged by God. Citing this particular teaching in this context serves to suggest that the text's position is motivated by a desire to fulfil God's commandment rather than a desire to maintain a reality where women play a minor role in influencing the way reality is shaped. Other interpretations of the same religious teaching can indeed highlight the manipulative nature of this move. For example, the commandment in the verse is interpreted by other Muslim scholars to have been exclusively directed to the wives of the Prophet for some particular reason at the time the commandment was issued. So the extension of this commandment to include all women in a completely different time and place is a clear attempt to justify sexist policies.

The delegitimisation of female driving is also accomplished through the move of Association, whereby female driving is associated with social problems such as car accidents and sexual harassment. The link that the text constructs between female driving and social problems is again based on ideological rather than rational grounds. This bias can be uncovered by investigating the assumptions that underpin the text's claims. For example, the claim that sexual harassment will rise if women were allowed to drive implies a view of women as sexual objects. The text, hence, reinforces a view of women as sexual objects rather than human beings. The emphasis that the text places on the dimension of sexuality is ideological. Sexual harassment is strategically invoked in sexist discourse in order to instil fear and hence discourage women from leaving home (Burr, 2015). This is evident in the way that sexual harassment is described in the text above. In addition to representing sexual harassment as definite and inevitable, the text offers details of when and where such horrible hypothetical events can take place: "This will happen on the roads, when stopping the car and when the car breaks down. The harassment and improper advances to which women are exposed in our days are not unknown now when she is with her driver, so how would the case be when she will be driving her car alone?"

In addition to sexual harassment, the text makes an association between allowing women to drive and a rise in the rate of car accidents. This association is again based on explicitly biased views of women. Women are portrayed as lacking wisdom, strictness and capability. Such qualities are attributed to women's nature. The text hence assumes an essentialist view of social actors whereby female social actors are associated with negative qualities. The ideological function of this construction of women is to justify discriminatory policies and hence maintain gendered power relations.

The manipulative function of the second strategy is therefore primarily intended to influence the shared social beliefs, norms and values of readers. This is accomplished through the instantiation of patriarchal norms and values in evaluating female driving. The appropriation of such norms and values resulted in a mental model of female driving that complements the communicative purpose of the text.

To sum up, the textual analysis of the Petition shows how the delegitimisation strategies of women's right to drive are operationalised in one whole text. The analysis of the Petition is consistent with the analysis of the other texts. The Petition exhibits the same discursive strategies that the other texts employ in the delegitimisation of women's right to drive, namely the delegitimisation of the advocates of women's right to drive and the problematisation of women's driving. In doing so, the two strategies function in two different ways. While the first strategy serves to influence the way readers interpret the immediate event, the *women2drive* campaign, the second strategy serves to influence the readers' view of women driving. The latter is accomplished by influencing the general social beliefs, norms and values.



## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### 6.1 Overview

In an attempt to develop a comprehensive understanding of gender inequality in Saudi Arabia, this study investigates gender inequality as embodied in the ban on women driving. In order to do so, I draw on the socio-cognitive approach (Van Dijk, 1998: 2008: 2009), which investigates social problems such as gender inequality from three different perspectives: social, discursive and cognitive. Given the multidisciplinary approach of this study, the ban on women driving was investigated in relation to discourse, society and cognition. The aim of this multidisciplinary study is to reveal the social, cognitive and discursive dimensions of sexism and how such dimensions relate and interact with one another to legitimise discriminatory practices such as the ban on women driving. In this chapter, I offer a brief summary of the findings of this study. I also discuss the contribution and limitations of the study and offer some suggestions for future studies.

### 6.2 Summary of findings

As illustrated above, this study considers three dimensions of ideology that help to reproduce gender inequality, namely social, cognitive and discursive. Below I offer a brief summary of the findings of these different types of analysis. The social analysis will be presented first, followed by discursive and cognitive analysis.

#### 6.2.1 The social analysis

With regard to the social analysis, the social manifestations of sexism in Saudi society were investigated. The social analysis explores the impact of sexism on both micro-level structures, social practices, and macro-level structures, social relations. The investigation of sexism at

the micro level shows that women experience various forms of discrimination which resulted in women being underrepresented at both political and economic levels.

Such low representation of women is due to various gendered policies. Under the Guardianship System, women are required to obtain the approval of their male relatives, whether a father, husband, brother or even son, in order to perform some essential tasks such as study, travel and marry. Restriction extends to mobility, as women are not allowed to drive. Restrictions are also placed on interaction – a policy of sex segregation is in effect in almost all governmental and public places.

The analysis of the macro-level structures of society shows that sexism is established and reproduced by three key institutions: Wahhabism, tribalism and the state. The current asymmetrical gendered power relation can only be understood through a historical analysis of the establishment of the state. The state was established as a result of an alliance between ibn Saud, the founder of the first Saudi state, and ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of the Wahhabi movement. The two leaders, with the help of some tribes that provided military aid, managed to establish the first Saudi state. This alliance resulted in the appropriation of both Wahhabi clerics' views of social reality, their male-centred interpretation of religious teachings and the patriarchal norms and values of tribes, in the formation of the social and political landscapes of the country.

The fact that the state is still dependent on such institutions for its legitimacy explains the slow progress in women's issues. Also, gender has always been used as a tool for fulfilling political objectives including projecting an enlightened image of the state as well as

obscuring pressing political issues such as corruption, poverty and public participation in the decision-making process.

### 6.2.2 The discursive analysis

The discursive analysis involves two types of analysis; cognitive and discursive. While the cognitive analysis examines the mental models that the texts construe of the *women2drive* campaign and women driving, the discursive analysis involves examining the impact of these mental models on the way that the texts are structured. The discursive analysis includes investigating the key discursive strategies used to delegitimise women's right to drive, the main research question of this study, as well as the impact of these strategies on semantic forms and linguistic structures.

The analysis shows that the texts employed two key discursive strategies in order to delegitimise women's right to drive. These are: (1) the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive and (2) the problematisation of women driving. The two strategies have different functions. While the first serves to influence the reader's interpretation of the immediate event *women2drive* campaign, the second strategy serves to influence the general social beliefs and values of readers.

#### 6.2.2.1 The first strategy: the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive

The textual analysis shows that women's right to drive was partly delegitimised through the delegitimation of the advocates of women's right to drive. The *women2drive* campaign was represented in reference to the *Us vs. Them* dichotomy, whereby the opponents of women driving were constructed as in-group members and were associated with positive properties (religion and country) while the proponents of women driving were constructed as out-group

members and were associated with negative properties (the enemies of both religion and the country).

The impact of this strategy clearly shows in both the semantic forms, i.e. what is said, and in the linguistic structures, i.e. how it is said. Below are some examples of the impact of the strategy on semantic forms and linguistic structures respectively.

### *Semantic forms*

Local coherence: The texts construct a connection between women's position in society and the fate of religion and country and thereby use both national and religious ideologies to conceal the ideological motivation that underlies the opposition to women's right to drive.

Lexical items: The texts made use of hyperboles such 'enemy', 'evil', 'disastrous', etc., in order to vilify the advocates of women's right to drive. Also, religiously loaded terms, e.g. *fitnah* and hypocrites, were used in order to construct the matter as a struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Level of description: The texts describe in detail the 'negative' qualities and characteristics of the advocates of women's right to drive.

Argumentation: The use of fallacious arguments to authorise and validate the ban on women driving.

Modality: The use of factive expressions to objectify the perspectives voiced in the texts, e.g. *it is very well known that*.

### *Linguistic structures*

The impact of the strategy of the delegitimisation of the advocates of women's right to drive also shows in linguistic structures. For example, the texts tend to use the active sentence form to report the 'negative' actions and behaviours of the advocates of women's right to drive. The ideological function of this construction is to amplify the negative image of the advocates of women's right to drive. The texts also employ some rhetorical figures such as repetition for the same purpose.

#### 6.2.2.2 The second strategy: the problematisation of women driving

The textual analysis of the texts also shows that the texts are controlled by a sexist ideology. The impact of the sexist ideology shows clearly in the way that *women driving* was interpreted and evaluated in the texts. The analysis shows that the texts appropriated patriarchal norms and values as well as gendered stereotypes in order to formulate a conceptual understanding of the practice of *driving*. The instantiations of sexist perspectives resulted in the problematisation of *women driving*. Women driving was constructed as having 'negative' consequences.

The impact of this strategy shows in both semantic forms and linguistic structures. Here are some examples of these semantic forms and linguistic structures.

**Hyperboles:** The use of highly negative terms such as 'evil' and 'disastrous' to define the consequences of women driving. These highly negative terms also serve to enhance the seriousness of the matter.

Local coherence: The appropriation of sexist perspectives for evaluating women driving resulted in biased forms of coherence. For example, the texts rendered events problematic, such as *women becoming independent*. This negative evaluation of an event can only be accepted by one with a sexist ideology. The texts also constructed a causal relationship between women driving and social problems such as car accidents and sexual harassment. This causal relationship is based on gendered stereotypes of women, e.g. women as incapable, irrational, sexual and physical beings.

Level of description: The texts include detailed descriptions of the ‘negative’ consequences of women driving, e.g. when and where women would be sexually assaulted. The ideological function of this construction is to elicit feelings of fear and anxiety and hence discourage women’s driving.

Modality: Information about the ‘negative’ consequences of women driving was advanced as both definite and factual.

### 6.3 Contribution of the study

The key contribution of this study is its critical edge. Studies that take a critical perspective on social problems in Saudi Arabia are rare. The rarity of such studies led to forms of dominance acquiring a normal and natural status. Forms of dominance have become very difficult to notice, let alone challenge and contest. Taking a critical perspective, hence, helps to uncover the ideological basis that underlies the existing social and political arrangements. By doing so, these studies help to bring into question a large number of ideological assumptions that help to stabilise and perpetuate inequality and dominance.

This study, with its multidisciplinary approach and analysis of the social, cognitive and discursive aspects of ideology, also attempts to offer a comprehensive understanding of gender inequality in Saudi Arabia. The study offers a detailed textual analysis of the discourse responsible for legitimising gender inequality. The finding of this study, also, shows that gender inequality is not only the product of sexist discourse. The finding shows that gender inequality is also reproduced and maintained by the state and its institutions. The study also considers an important dimension of ideology that is usually neglected in many discourse studies, namely the cognitive dimension of ideology.

#### 6.4 Limitations and opportunities for future research

There are two main limitations of this study. These are; the focus on the issue of women driving and the focus on written texts. The ban on women driving represents only one example of how women are discriminated against. Sexism is also expressed and reproduced through various forms of communication including spoken, visual and non-verbal means. Future studies, hence, can address other gendered policies such as the guardianship system and investigate the various forms of communication through which sexism is (re)produced and legitimised.

### بيان العلماء وطلبة العلم حول قيادة المرأة للسيارة

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين، أما بعد:  
فإن مما لا شك فيه أن للمرأة في الإسلام منزلة رفيعة ومكانة عظيمة، وقد أعز الإسلام شأنها وأعلى مكانتها واحترم حقوقها وضمن لها حريتها وكرامتها وأحاطها بسياج منيعة من الصيانة والحماية، وشرع لها ما يحفظها ويحفظ الرجال من الافتتان بها.

ولما أدرك أعداء الإسلام من اليهود والنصارى والمنافقين هذه المكانة العظيمة للمرأة في الإسلام ودورها الخطير في صلاح الأمة الإسلامية واستقامتها، أو فسادها وضلالها، رموا المرأة عن قوس واحدة يريدون إفسادها ومن ثم إفساد الأمة بها، وقد قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: ((ما تركت بعدي فتنة أضر على الرجال من النساء)) متفق عليه،

وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: ((فاتقوا الدنيا واتقوا النساء فإن أول فتنة بني إسرائيل كانت في النساء)) رواه مسلم.

وقديما قال قائلهم "إن التأثير الغربي الذي يظهر في كل المجالات ويقلب المجتمع الإسلامي رأساً على عقب لا يبدو في جلاء أفضل مما يبدو من تحرير المرأة".

وإن مما لا شك فيه أن كل مبطل لا بد أن يلبس باطله ثوب الإصلاح وزخرف القول والبيان، حتى يروج باطله على الناس، لأن الباطل قبيح ومسترذل ومكروه لا ترضى به الفطر السليمة، كما قال تعالى: (( وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ)) .

ولذلك يحاول أعداء الإسلام دائماً إيهام المرأة المسلمة أنها مظلومة مسلوقة الحقوق مهينة الجناح، إنهم يصورون لها البيت وكأنه سجن مؤبد، والزوج وكأنه سجان قاهر، والقوامة وكأنها سيف وصلت على رقبتها، ويوهمونها أن الحجاب تأخر ورجعية، والأمومة تكاثر رعوي، وعدم اختلاطها بالرجال شل لحركتها وقتل لإبداعها.

ولقد علم هؤلاء المبطلون أن الناس لا يتحركون بغير قضية تزعجهم وتقض مضاجعهم، فافتعلوا قضية المرأة المظلومة في بلادنا، وفي كل يوم يطرحون في وسائل الإعلام وغيرها مظهراً من مظاهر الظلم المزعوم، وآخر ما طرحوه قضية قيادة المرأة للسيارة، زاعمين أنهم يريدون إعطاء المرأة حقها، ودفع الأضرار الشرعية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية عن المجتمع، ولذا فإننا نصدر هذا البيان حول قيادة المرأة للسيارة مستعينين بالله متوكلين عليه فنقول:



لقد جاءت الشريعة الإسلامية بسد الذرائع والوسائل المفضية إلى المحظورات والمفاسد، حتى وإن كانت هذه الوسائل مباحة في الأصل، بل حتى وإن كانت واجبة، وأمثلة ذلك كثيرة جداً، منها نهيه سبحانه عن سب آلهة المشركين مع كون السب غيظاً وحمية لله وإهانة لأهلهم - لكونه ذريعة إلى سبهم الله تعالى (( وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ )) ... الآية.

ومنها أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم نهى المرأة أن تسافر بغير محرم ولو كان سفرها للحج لأن ذلك ذريعة إلى انتهاك عرضها وذهاب كرامتها، وهذه القاعدة العظيمة مطلوبة في جميع الأمور الدينية والدنيوية، بل لا يقوم الدين ولا الدنيا إلا بها، ومن الأمور الدنيوية الظاهرة: كثير من التنظيمات والترتيبات في واقع الناس اليوم "الإشارات والسرعة وغيرها.." التي وضعت سداً للذرائع والوسائل المفضية إلى وقوع المفاسد والخسائر في الأرواح والأموال.

قال ابن القيم رحمه الله مبيناً أهمية هذه القاعدة في الإسلام: باب سد الذرائع أحد أرباع تكاليف الدين ، فإنه- أي التكليف- أمر ونهي ، والأمر نوعان : احدهما مقصود لنفسه ، والثاني وسيلة إلى مقصود ، والنهي نوعان : احدهما ما يكون النهي عنه مفسدة في نفسه ، والثاني ما يكون وسيلة إلى المفسدة ، فصار سد الذرائع المفضية إلى الحرام أحد أرباع الدين " ثم بين رحمه الله أهميتها أكثر في كلامه بديع فقال : "لما كانت المقاصد لا يتوصل إليها إلا بأسباب وطُرُق تُفْضِي إليها كانت طرقها وأسبابها تابعة لها معتبرة بها، فوسائل المحرمات والمعاصي في كراهتها والمنع منها بحسب إفضائها إلى غاياتها وارتباطاتها بها، ووسائل الطاعات والقُرْبَات في محبتها والإذن فيها بحسب إفضائها إلى غاياتها؛ فوسيلة المقصود تابعة للمقصود، وكلاهما مقصود، لكنه مقصودٌ قصدَ الغايات، وهي مقصودة قصد الوسائل .

فإذا حَرَّمَ الرَّبُّ تَعَالَى شَيْئاً وَلَهُ طَرِيقٌ وَوَسَائِلٌ تُفْضِي إِلَيْهِ فَإِنَّهُ يَحْرِمُهَا وَيَمْنَعُ مِنْهَا، تَحْقِيقاً لِتَحْرِيمِهِ، وَتَثْبِيثاً لَهُ، وَمَنْعاً أَنْ يَقْرَبَ حِمَاهُ، وَلَوْ أَبَاحَ الْوَسَائِلَ وَالذَّرَائِعَ الْمُفْضِيَةَ إِلَيْهِ لَكَانَ ذَلِكَ نَقْضاً لِلتَّحْرِيمِ، وَإِغْرَاءً لِلنُّفُوسِ بِهِ، وَحِكْمَتَهُ تَعَالَى وَعِلْمَهُ يَأْبَى ذَلِكَ كُلَّ الْإِبَاءِ، بَلْ سِيَاسَةُ مُلُوكِ الدُّنْيَا تَأْبَى ذَلِكَ؛ فَإِنْ أَحَدَهُمْ إِذَا مَنَعَ جُنْدَهُ أَوْ رَعِيَّتَهُ أَوْ أَهْلَ بَيْتِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ أَبَاحَ لَهُمُ الطَّرِيقَ وَالْأَسْبَابَ وَالذَّرَائِعَ الْمَوْصِلَةَ إِلَيْهِ لَعُدَّ مُتَنَاقِضاً، وَلِحَصْلِ مَنْ رَعِيَّتَهُ وَجُنْدَهُ ضِدَّ مَقْصُودِهِ. وَكَذَلِكَ الْأَطْبَاءُ إِذَا أَرَادُوا حَسْمَ الدَّاءِ مَنَعُوا صَاحِبَهُ مِنَ الطَّرِيقِ وَالذَّرَائِعِ الْمَوْصِلَةَ إِلَيْهِ، وَإِلَّا فَسَدَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَرُومُونَ إِصْلَاحَهُ. فَمَا الظَّنُّ بِهَذِهِ الشَّرِيعَةِ الْكَامِلَةِ الَّتِي هِيَ فِي أَعْلَى دَرَجَاتِ الْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَصْلَحَةِ وَالْكَمَالِ؟ وَمَنْ تَأَمَّلَ مَصَادِرَهَا وَمَوَارِدَهَا عِلْمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى وَرَسُولَهُ سَدَ الذَّرَائِعَ الْمُفْضِيَةَ إِلَى الْمَحَارِمِ بِأَنْ حَرَمَهَا وَنَهَى عَنْهَا " انتهى كلامه رحمه الله.

وإذا عُلِمَ هَذَا فَإِنَّا نَقُولُ إِنَّ قِيَادَةَ الْمَرْأَةِ لِلسَّيَارَةِ لَا تَجُوزُ لِأَنَّ قَاعِدَةَ سَدِ الذَّرَائِعِ مَنْطِقَةٌ عَلَيْهَا تَمَاماً، لِأَنَّهَا أَيْ الْقِيَادَةُ تَفْضِي بِالْمَرْأَةِ وَالْمَجْتَمَعُ إِلَى الْوُقُوعِ فِي مَفَاسِدٍ عَظِيمَةٍ وَعَوَاقِبٍ وَخِيمَةٍ، وَمِنْ أَهْمِهَا:

- 1- كثرة خروج المرأة من البيت وعدم القرار فيه، ولا شك أن هذا مصادم لأمر الله تعالى في قوله: (( وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى ))... الآية.
- 2- ما يترتب على القيادة من تبرج وسفور وخلع لحجاب المرأة، فمما لا شك فيه أن قيادة المرأة للسيارة من أسرع الطرق لخلع الحجاب بحجة رؤية الطريق بوضوح، بل إن القيادة طريق لإلزامها بخلع الحجاب احتجاجاً بالمصلحة الأمنية ، كما حدث هذا في بعض الدول الخليجية الملاصقة لبلادنا ، إضافة إلى تكرار مطالبة المرأة بخلع حجابها وإظهار وجهها للتأكد من هويتها.
- 3- تصوير المرأة حيث إنها ستلزم باستخراج رخصة قيادة للسيارة، والتي لا بد فيها من الصورة، وسيُنظر إلى صورتها الرجال عند إصدار الرخصة وتجديدها، وعند التحقق من هويتها عند التفتيش، وعند وقوع الحوادث والمخالفات ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله.
- 4- الاختلاط بالرجال، وأشد من ذلك الخلوة المحرمة بالرجال في الورش والمحطات ونقاط التفتيش ودوائر المرور ، وأشد من ذلك وأمرّ حجزها في حجز المرور عند وقوع المخالفة منها أو الحوادث ، وربما يقول قائل : المخرج من هذه البلايا والمحرمات أن نسمح للنساء بالعمل في القطاع العسكري والمرور والورش والمحطات ، وهذا المخرج مع صعوبة إمكانيته ، فهو كما قال الأول "كالمستجير من الرمضاء بالنار".
- 5- نزع الحياء منها، نتيجة تكرار مقابلتها للرجال ومحادثتهم عند المحطات والورش ومعارض السيارات ونقاط التفتيش والحوادث وعند تعطل السيارة، وهل سيبقى للحياء مكان في قلبها بعد هذا كله.
- 6- تسهيل أسباب الفساد أمام المرأة بحيث تخرج متى شاءت وتذهب أين شاءت بدون حسيب ولا رقيب.
- 7- أنها ذريعة قوية لسفرها وحدها بدون محرم وهو من كبائر الذنوب.
- 8- إضعاف قوامه الرجل، إذ أن المرأة إذا قادت السيارة وقضت حوائجها بنفسها، قلت حاجتها للرجل الذي يقوم على شأنها.
- 9- الإيذاء الكثير "التحرش والمضايقات والخطف والاعتصاب" الذي سيحصل لها من ضعاف النفوس في الطرقات وعند التوقف وتعطل السيارة، ولا يخفى ما تتعرض له المرأة في وقتنا هذا من تحرش ومضايقات ومعها محرماً أو سائقها، فكيف إذا كانت تقود السيارة وحدها.
- 10- إيجاد الشك والريبة لدى الزوج عند تغييبها وتأخرها، مما يؤدي إلى الخصام والفرقة والطلاق، ونظن أن مجتمعنا ليس بحاجة لزيادة نسبة الطلاق العالية فيه.
- 11- زيادة ازدحام السيارات وكثرة الحوادث، لأن المرأة بمقتضى طبيعتها أقل من الرجل حزمًا، وأقصر نظراً وأعجز قدرة، فإذا داهمها الخطر عجزت عن التصرف، ولنتصور هذا جلياً علينا أن نضرب أعداد الحافلات الناقلة للموظفات والمعلمات والطالبات كل صباح وظهيرة بأعداد مقاعدها.
- 12- الأضرار الصحية التي تلحق بالمرأة جراء قيادتها للسيارة كما أثبتت ذلك الدراسات العلمية المعتمدة.

- 13-** امتهان المرأة بوظائف لا تناسب طبيعتها وتؤدي بها إلى مفسد عظيمة مثل سائقة ليموزين وشاحنات وحافلات نقل ومندوبات توزيع وساعات بريد ومراقبات بلدية... وغيرها،  
ولا تسأل عن حرص المنافقين على إقحام المرأة في كل عمل حتى يتسنى لهم إخراجها والعبث بها وبأخلاقها.
- 14-** أنها سبب للإرهاق في النفقة ، إذ أنه من المعلوم عشق المرأة للزينة والتفاخر بالجديد والباهظ بالثمن.
- 15-** أن في هذه الدعوة إيقاظاً للفتن النائمة وتفرقة للصف وخلخلة لكيان المجتمع وتوريطاً له في خلافات وانشغاقات لا يعلم عواقبها إلا الله ولا يستفيد منها إلا الأعداء.

شبهتان وجوابهما:

الشبهة الأولى:

أن في قيادة المرأة مصالح. وعلى تقدير تسليمنا بوجود هذه المصالح المزعومة ، فإن مفسدها الشرعية أعظم وأكثر وأطم كما تقدم بيانه ،ومن قواعد الشريعة : "درء المفسد مقدم على جلب المصالح" ، والشريعة مبناها على جلب المصالح ودفع المفسد ، فما غلبت مصلحته أباحته ، وما غلبت مفسدته منعه. قال تعالى: (( يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِنَّهُمْ أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا )) ... الآية.

الشبهة الثانية:

أن في وجود السائقين في بلادنا أضراراً اقتصادية. ونحن نسلم لهم بهذا ونقبل منهم ومن أي أحد ما كان حقاً ، ولكننا نقول الضرر لا يزال بضرر أكبر منه إذ أن الأضرار الاقتصادية لقيادة المرأة للسيارة أكبر من ضرر وجود السائقين وذلك من عدة أوجه:

- تعدد سيارات المنزل الواحد بدلاً من سيارة واحدة بيد السائق.
- تكرار تبديل السيارات من المرأة نتيجة عشقها لكل جديد.
- كثرة الحوادث نتيجة ضعفها وارتباكها في المواقف الصعبة والأزمات المرورية
- اضطرار الدولة لفتح أقسام كثيرة خاصة بمراجعة النساء والتكاليف الاقتصادية المترتبة على ذلك لا تقارن بتكاليف السائقين.

- كثرة الزحام مما يتقل كاهل الدولة بإقامة مشاريع لتوسيع الطرق وتهيتها لتناسب مع الزيادة في السيارات . علماً بان الدول التي سمحت بقيادة المرأة للسيارة لازالت تعاني من وجود السائقين وبكثرة ، والدول المجاورة لنا شاهد على ذلك ، ولهذا فإننا نقول إن المخرج من هذا أن يتم إنشاء مشروعات نقل متطورة وفعالة وسريعة حكومية وأهلية خاصة بالنساء . ومخرج آخر أن لا يُستقدم إلا سائق مسلم مستقيم عند وجود الحاجة والضرورة إليه ، فإن كان لابد من السائق الأجنبي أو قيادة المرأة للسيارة اخترنا السائق

الأجنبي لأنه أخف ضرراً بكل المقاييس من قيادة المرأة ، ومن قواعد الشريعة "الضرر الأشد يدفع بالضرر الأخف" و"ارتكاب أدنى المفسدتين لدفع أعظمهما".

ولا يفوتنا أن نذكر الجميع ببيان اللجنة الدائمة للإفتاء برئاسة سماحة الشيخ / عبد العزيز بن عبد الله بن باز رحمه الله ، بتاريخ 1420/1/25 هـ والمتضمن التحذير من المطالبة بقيادة المرأة للسيارة لما يترتب عليها من مفساد.

وفتوى فضيلة الشيخ / محمد بن صالح بن عثيمين رحمه الله بتاريخ 1420 هـ ، المتضمنة التحذير من مفساد قيادة المرأة للسيارة.

أخيراً نقول:

أليس من العجب ومما يدعو إلى الشك والريبة أنه لم يدع إلى قيادة المرأة للسيارة عالم ولا داعية ولا مصلح ولا محتسب، بل إن أغلب المتحمسين لها هم الذين ينادون بتغريب المرأة المسلمة ، أليس في هذا دليل على أن وراء الأكمة ما وراءها وأنه أمر قد قضي بليل وأريد به إفساد المرأة المسلمة ، وأن الدعوة لقيادة المرأة للسيارة صنعة دعاء تغريب المرأة المسلمة ووسيلة خطيرة لتحقيق أهدافهم الخبيثة.

وإننا في نهاية هذا البيان نطالب هؤلاء الداعين إلى قيادة المرأة للسيارة بتقوى الله عز وجل والتوبة إليه ، وعدم إثارة الفتنة وإشاعة البلبلة في مجتمعنا وأن يحذروا عذاب الله وعقابه ، ونشكر كل من بين للأمة مفساد قيادة المرأة للسيارة وحذر من عواقبها ، وندعو العلماء إلى القيام بما أوجبه الله عليهم من النصح والإصلاح والبيان للأمة .

وندعو ولاة الأمر وفقهم الله إلى الأخذ على أيدي السفهاء الذين يريدون خرق سفينة المجتمع وإغراقها قياماً بالمسئولية والأمانة التي ولاهم الله إياها، ومنعاً للفرقة والاختلاف والتنازع في ظل ما تعيشه المنطقة من حروب وقلاقل .

نسأل الله أن يصلح أحوال المسلمين وولاة أمورهم وأن يكبت عدوهم من الملحدين والمنافقين وأن يحفظ نساء المسلمين من كل شر وبلاء ورذيلة.

وصلى الله وسلم على نبينا محمد.

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