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*Why Arab-Muslim Women in War Matters: A Case
Study Analysis of Women in the United Arab
Emirates' Armed Forces*

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Power with, or the ability to act in concert, pooling (symbolic or material) power, resources, and/or knowledge, suggests that a model of state behavior in which we understand actions and responses to actions dichotomously does not tell the whole story

- Sjöberg, 2013, p. 115.

Abstract

Knowledge about women's participation in combat roles, yet alone in national armed forces in the Arab countries is very limited. Although more women are acquiring access to combat roles worldwide, most scholarly investigations have focused on servicewomen in the West. As the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is emerging as a rampant participant in international relations and it contributes forces to global security agendas, the objective of this thesis is to describe the inclusion of women in the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces. The study uses the case example of Major Mariam Al Mansouri who is the United Arab Emirates' first female air force fighter pilot and whom dropped bombs for the intergovernmental Anti-ISIL Coalition in July/August 2014. The case study was used to describe aspects of the issues that surround the participation of females in the military of a Muslim country. Furthermore, the case study was chosen because when the participation of Major Al Mansouri was made public, it received a very gender-based coverage by the media and scholars particularly from the West.

The research uses an interpretivist analysis of scholarly work and media reports from the Gulf region and the United States. This methodology was chosen due to limited public data on the Emirates' Armed Forces. Furthermore, in a globalized world with the ease of disseminating information quickly and widely, media reports may bias international public and state perceptions of Arab countries based on how women are described by such sources of information. Neo-Orientalism was used as the theoretical framework to provide an additional perspective to the analysis.

The analysis showed that the inclusion of women in the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces has been enabled by a top-down approach, as the state is very involved in the process. It also indicated Emirati women are joining the military for nationalistic and religious reasons.

In summary, this thesis describes the inclusion of women in the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces and it reveals how these women may play an increasingly significant role nationally and internationally. However, the participation is greeted with skepticism likely due to a perceptual bias by some Western media of the propensities towards women in Arab-Muslim countries.

Keywords: women in the military; the United Arab Emirates; Islam and women; Emiratization; Neo-Orientalism

Word Count: 19,955

Authors Note

From July 2014 until February 2015, I worked as an intern at the Royal Danish Embassy in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates. During my stay, I reported directly to the Ambassador of Denmark for the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. I conducted research on various subject matters related to the UAE and particularly, defense policies; women in the military and; international security systems/ coalitions. I also took part in several meetings (as cohort to the Ambassador), where we met with several United Arab Emirates state officials and ministers and other UAE delegates. In addition, I tagged the Defense Attaché of Denmark to the United Arab Emirates in official meetings for UAE diplomatic-defense affairs and I worked with other diplomatic offices in the UAE. This Master Thesis is inspired by the events and discussions I was exposed to during meetings and conferences. As such, the compilation of scholarly work, media reports and my own experiences provide the content for the ultimate product of this Master Thesis.

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	DISPOSITION	3
2.1	Research Aim and Question	4
2.2	Literature Review	4
2.3	Research Methodology	6
2.4	Research method	7
2.4.1	Side Comment on the Use of the Media and Propaganda	7
2.5	Research Analysis	9
2.6	Limitations of the Study	11
2.7	Theoretical Framework	12
3	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	16
3.1	The Geo-Political History and Socio-Political Stance of the United Arab Emirates	16
3.2	Political Power and Distribution of Power in the United Arab Emirates	18
4	ARAB WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN WAR (HISTORICALLY AND CONTEMPORARILY)	20
4.1	The Historical Accounts of Arab Women at War	20
4.2	A Contemporary Account of Emirati Women at War	23
4.3	Military Women in the Gulf; A Statistical Comparison	24
4.3.1	Increased Conscription of Emirati Females in the Armed Forces	26
5	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMIRATI POLITICS ON WOMEN AND WAR	27
5.1	NATIONALISM	28
5.2	Emiratization	29
5.3	Emiratization in Practice	32
5.4	The Impact of International Covenants	36
5.5	Female Body politics and Major Al Mansouri	38
6	THE ROLE OF RELIGION, ITS RELATIONSHIP TO EMIRATI WOMEN AND THE MILITARY	40
6.1	<i>Muftis</i> , Shari 'a traditions and Emirati women	41

6.2	Women, Shari'a and a 'Gender Regime'?	43
6.2.1	Not in the Company of Men	45
7	SPECIFIC GULF AND WESTERN MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN AT WAR	47
7.1	<i>The National & Gulf News</i> on Emirati Military women	48
7.2	Western Media Portrayals of Arab women at war	50
8	CONCLUSION	54
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	55
	LIST OF APPENDICES	65
	GLOSSARY	72

1 INTRODUCTION

The terrorist organization, the *Islamic State in Iraq and Syria* has expanded as a threat to global security during the past year. Therefore, a conglomeration of states near and far the Middle East have come together to form the defense force called the *Anti-ISIL Coalition*.¹ In 2014 as a member of the Coalition, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had its first female Air Force fighter pilot: Major Mariam Al-Mansouri lead the germinal air mission.² Major Al Mansouri's participation has gained a tremendous amount of interest by scholars and media. Some of the key questions asked in reports of the event are, *how are women included in the UAE national military?* Alternatively, *how was Al Mansouri, given such a prominent leadership role in the Air Force?* It shows that knowledge about women's inclusion in the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces is limited but has generated significant curiosity.³

Some of the media portrayals of the case event express stereotypic views of Arab women. Others depicted the case event according to typical or more "recognizable" pictures of women in war situations. Some of these reports referred to the image created of American military women in advertisements during the 1930s/1940s (*Ghazal, 2014*).⁴ These women were symbolic war images that held supportive roles behind the 'heroic male fighters'. What most people still *do not* anticipate, is that the image is outdated. Though the image of Major Al Mansouri

¹ The terrorist organization is often, referred to as ISIL, ISIS or IS. The decoration of DAESH refers to the Arabic translation of the Islamic Caliphate in the Levant of Syria and Iraq. Many states wish to refer to the terrorist organization as DAESH, since ISIS (etc.) makes the implied claim that the organization is a state.

² To see a full list of all member states in the Coalition, see LIST OF APPENDICES Appendix B.

³ There is a technical difference between "military" and the "armed forces" though the terms are often used synonymously. "Military" denotes the entirety of a nation's protective services whereas, "armed forces" incites the agents and sections of the military that deal with direct missions and combat. The armed forces is regularly separated into three branches: (1) the navy, (2) the army, and (3) the air force.

⁴ For image see Appendices E & F, (both images are classic examples of what an advertisement looked like during the 1940s in the USA). Source: www.pinterest.com.

contrasts with the otherwise invented white, blonde, American female with red lips, the Emirati female fighter pilot does not have to pose sexually on top of a tactical vehicle or kiss a rifle in order to show her participation in war efforts.⁵ Fittingly, Major Al Mansouri sits in the cockpit of an F-16 and takes off along with her male air force colleagues. Even prior to the Anti-ISIL Coalition, the UAE engaged in other international and intergovernmental security coalitions both in Kuwait and in Afghanistan (*Katzman, 2010*). Women in the UAE Armed Forces have participated in all of these wars. Yet, the stories of these service women and their specific tasks are sparse and difficult to find and are rarely highlighted in international media. Thus, the case event of Major Al Mansouri may specifically signal a significant change and exercise in UAE policies towards women in security institutions and in the military and more expressively, the changing role of Emirati women in its society.

This thesis addresses the knowledge gap on women in the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces by focusing on how the case of Major Mariam Al Mansouri may signal a potential change of the role for women in the society of the United Arab Emirates. The thesis will also speculate on the media portrayals made of Major Al Mansouri in order to, critically analyze general perceptions of women in war and specifically, Arab-Muslim women in the armed forces. The study is motivated by the substantial lack of investigations on women in non-Western militaries. The few exceptions of studies on women outside the West are *Levy (2013) and Tekoah and Harel-Shalev (2014)* who investigated women in the Israeli Defense Force. *Al-Ameen (2014); AP (2014); Catic and von Hlatky (2014); Dirik (2014); Ghitis (2014); Ismail (2014); Robson (2014); and Zulver (2014)* who have written on the Kurdish Peshmerga forces and *Fieseler et al. (2014)* who studies females in the former Soviet Union. It is only in recent years that studies of Arab women in national militaries have gained some attention by researchers (*AL-Oraimi, 2008*).

⁵ For image see Appendix B, (The Major sits in an F-16 at the Armed Forces Air Base in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates). Source: www.CNN.com.

2 DISPOSITION

Section 1 has introduced the topic of the paper.

Section 2 moves on from the disposition, to describe the research aim and the research questions. This is followed by a literature review of the primary source of the investigation. In addition, the research design of the study, the methodology, the research methods, the analysis, the limitations of the study and lastly, the theoretical framework are described.

Section 3 provides background information on the United Arab Emirates, the state and government structures. Understanding the delegation of state power and essentially, the foundation of the state will help clarify how and why women have been included in the national armed forces in the main analysis.

Section 4 presents the main analysis of the investigation with a historical account of Arab women in war and a brief discussion of Emirati women in the national armed forces specifically, the case study of Major Mariam Al Mansouri. Then, a figure of women in the military in the other Gulf countries is highlighted to show how women's inclusion in the military greatly differs in the Gulf countries.

Section 5 develops a more thorough framing of the political basis that has granted Emirati women the option to join the military and participate in the armed forces. Nationalism in the United Arab Emirates is elaborated with a discussion on Emiratization. Both subjects are vital grounds for women's inclusion in the military.

Section 6 describes the role of religion as Islam has a very prevalent role in Emirati women's lives and because there is no separation between Church and State in the United Arab Emirates, which means Islam influences politics.

Section 7 makes more use of the research methods by discussing media portrayals of women in the UAE Armed Forces and the case study of Major Al Mansouri. This is done to answer to the second research question.

Section 9 summarizes the thesis points and provides the conclusion of the study.

2.1 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTION

Because there is currently limited amount of information available on women in the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces, it is difficult to discern what the reality is inside the institution. To understand how women are included and participate in the United Arab Emirates military, the following research questions based on the case study and the study of media reports are asked,

1. *What does Major Mariam Al Mansouri's role in the military indicate about the progression of women's status in the UAE society?*
2. *How does the case example render Western impressions of Arab women / women in Islam?*

The objective is therefore, to assess if there is a possible political or public change in the attitude towards women in the Emirati society by looking at a core national institution, the military. Moreover, the aim of the research is to understand how the potential impact media and portrayals has on our perceptions of Emirati women.

The investigation is intended for scholars, researchers and students alike who are interested in politics of the Gulf, women in the military, women in security and defense affairs (globally and nationally) and the effects of globalization in contemporary political-security issues.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

AL-Oraimi (2008) has written one of few scholarly works on Emirati women in the national armed forces. AL-Oraimi's contribution raises awareness to the portrayals made of women who have acquired positions in the UAE national defense system. The qualitative study analyzes the women's own experiences and it reviews some of the headlines published by *The National*. AL-Oraimi lays out the argument that women's inclusion in the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces is challenging the patriarchy and male domination of the public sphere. As such, Emirati women are beginning to change some of the core foundations of the culture and social setting of

the Emirates. What is clear from AL-Oraimi's study is that the scholar believes the state has been a predominate force in pushing the women and their motivation to join the Armed Forces. This is a known fact as AL-Oraimi discerns, the UAE is very strict with providing information, data and statistics to the public on national institutions such as the military. Furthermore, AL-Oraimi argues that one way to uncover any information on women in its military is by understanding the national *Emiratization* program. Emiratization is a political program that seeks to establish a national Emirati identity or Emirati collectiveness. It occurs at a meta-individual level of determination, freedom and autonomy by creating jobs for Emiratis with a specific emphasis on women becoming professionals and employed. One of the more interesting findings of the study by AL-Oraimi revealed women joined the military due to economic factors (i.e. those enlisted came from poorer families and belonged to tribes of the non-oil rich Emirates).⁶ AL-Oraimi discerns that the reality for women's participation in the military is therefore, motivated by first and foremost, economic reasons. While the women may first join the military to provide financial stability to their family and themselves, other interviewees described that they still feel bound to some cultural gender dichotomies. The study (*AL-Oraimi, 2008*) unfortunately did not go into further details on how Emiratization seeks to amend financial stability and culture as first promised by the scholar.

The military is an interesting place to begin an investigation on how gender based changes may occur for women in the United Arab Emirates because the military institution has a global reputation for being very male-dominated and intrinsically linked to nationalistic sentiment. The importance of nationalism and political programs of newer nation-states will be discussed later in reference to the military and women's inclusion in the UAE. Thus, what remains nearly eight years after AL-Oraimi published her article, is a more comprehensive investigation of how all these facts are at the core of Emirati women's participation in the national armed forces.

⁶ Abu Dhabi is the Emirate, which is richest in oil-resources. The second largest is Dubai but it has more discovered gas resources. The remaining Emirates have a much smaller amount of natural oil and gas.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis adopts a qualitative research design. A qualitative study describes real-life situations (Creswell, 2013) and gathers information from various forms of observation. Due to the nature of the inquiry, the investigation has made use of an instrumental case study methodology. What is distinctive about the instrumental case study methodology is that focus is on the purpose of the study rather than making use of a theory to conduct an investigation. Usually, an instrumental case study allows theory to be decided and applied as a description of the study after the findings have been collected and interpreted (Creswell, 2013; Mills et al., 2010). There are three types of case studies (1) intrinsic, (2) instrumental, and (3) collective (Mills et al., 2010, p. 474). An intrinsic case study focuses on the case alone and does not apply extended analyses to broader themes (Mills et al., 2010). While an instrumental case study is one, where information is gathered, before the case study is chosen and is “secondary to understanding a particular phenomenon” (Mills et al., 2010, p. 474). The collective case study looks at several case studies.

Case study typologies can be combined if the researcher wants to learn something that is new and otherwise unexplored (Mills et al., 2010). The event of Major Al-Mansouri is to be argued as a unique case example that highlights other general themes of the development occurring for women in the United Arab Emirates’ and its Armed Forces. Therefore, the typology of this case study has used the intrinsic case study with the instrumental case study approach. Combined, an intrinsic instrumental case study allows a social science investigation to pinpoint a certain event as a portrayal of social policy reforms or progresses that need to be understood within a larger framework. It is fitting to syndicate the intrinsic case study approach with the instrumental case study approach as the study of Al Mansouri is difficult to categorize as either or and other specific case studies were not used in the investigation.

2.4 RESEARCH METHOD

The techniques or procedures for gaining substantial information on the study have been very difficult. As the study analyzes public newspapers, scholarly papers, statements, and reports from political agents, the data collection method of the investigation has been observations, interviews and sampling from by secondary sources. These are the only sources of information that have been available to the researcher and which have otherwise been publically printed on the subject matter In the United Arab Emirates publication of government policies, politics and events that concern national security and international collaboration is most often kept confidential. The UAE Constitution legislates in Article 111 that the Government will use public media sources if such information is to be made public.⁷

Due to the lack of research done on specifically women in the UAE Armed Forces, there is also no other scholarly work, apart from AL-Oraimi (2008) on the inquiry of this study. Although I requested meetings through the Danish Embassy, it was impossible to get interviews with the General Headquarters in Abu Dhabi. I also reached out to public officials and I inquired about statistics and general information on women in the Armed Forces with no success. The data collection has taken place over the past year (July 2014 – May 2015). This study therefore, uses a cross sectional analytical timeframe because the event in focus occurred sometime between late June and early August 2014 (the specific date is unknown due to military confidentiality). Most of the reports on the case have been published sporadically during this period. Furthermore, allowing for a collection of data over a period, has granted me with a larger set of data from the media and public government reports.

2.4.1 *SIDE COMMENT ON THE USE OF THE MEDIA AND PROPAGANDA*

This paper will often refer to the use of media by the UAE and what this in turn has done to create social, cultural and political standpoints. When a state uses the media

⁷ Article 111 of the UAE Constitution writes, "An act is published in the Official Gazette [The National] of the UAE within a maximum of two weeks from the date it is signed and promulgated by the President of the UAE after it is sanctioned by the Supreme Council. An act is put into operation after one month from the date it is published in the Official Gazette unless another date is specified in the act itself" (By-Law of the Federal National Council, 2010, p. 46).

to publish information and influence the public, some perceive the practice as propaganda. Propaganda can be used to describe specific mechanisms that has individuals adhere to a deliberate message in order to achieve a specific goal. Propaganda is a very thought-through operation, it uses several types of methods the psychological, sociological and political (*Ellul, 1973*). Propaganda is also used to support and preserve a political entity, a culture and enforce different types of norms. Historically, the term propaganda has held a very negative connotation as it is often associated with the cognitive dissonance created by Nazi “information” tools. The Nazi Party used mass campaigns, newspapers and advertisements (even radio broadcastings) to lead the public to believe in the ideology of the party and to stray away from speculation on the atrocities the government was committing (*Shore, 2008*). In other words, some have come to believe that propaganda is a way of negatively manipulating a civility’s mind.

Contemporarily, propaganda should also be understood as a mechanism that can be used with good intentions. The understanding and the character given to propaganda should depend on what goal(s) is meant to be achieved and how. Propaganda, as a way to inflict ideas to the public, should therefore, be understood as a multilateral phenomenon and as based on different principles (*Ellul, 1973*). Another scholar who has focused on describing propaganda when used by states and their national media is Nancy Snow. Snow argues that states using the media to promote political ideas is simply how public diplomacy is practiced. Furthermore, according to Snow, state officials who use public diplomacy to achieve some political goal or who use propaganda are essentially, ‘Chiefs of Persuasion’ (*Snow, 2010*). To recognize public diplomacy in the media, Snow describes public officials are quoted or their statements, ideas, values, norms and ethics are referenced. Joan Pedro (2011) has also focused on describing contemporary models of propaganda by states. The scholar however, argues that propaganda in newer states is usually tied to interests that relate to political economy. Pedro outlines ‘five filters’ of a newer state’s political economy and how using mass media to propagate interests are identified. The filters can be recognized when news reports refer to: (1) ownership and maximizing profits by the public, (2) advertisement revenues that grant the state

direct influence on sponsors to public programs (etc.), (3) news sourcing and describing a natural influence on the public and intellectuals, (4) describing countermeasures to discipline possible attacks to ‘natural’ mechanism or norms, and lastly (5) converging a dominant ideology based on creating and maintaining an ideology, a pro-factor which includes morals and nationalistic identities (Pedro, 2011, p. 1871).

The United Arab Emirates and the Abu Dhabi Government has been relying heavily on the use of media to distribute and circulate ideas of nationalism, public programs and its government policies. It is clear that they want to develop a strong nationalistic sentiment and at the same time ensure that the national economy progresses without being too dependent on expat workers. There is therefore, a clearly political economic motivation (*Pedro, 2011*) behind the heavy coverage of Major Al Mansouri as reported by the national newspapers and coupled with statements from the political leaders.

2.5 RESEARCH ANALYSIS

In line with the research design and the research methods, this thesis more clearly adopts an interpretivist research approach. An interpretivist analysis realizes that the social world is subjective and has subjective meanings. Furthermore, “The aim of all interpretive research is to understand how members of a social group, through their participation in social processes, enact their particular realities and endow them with meaning, and to show how these meanings, beliefs, and intentions of the members help to constitute their actions” (Goldkuhl, 2010, p. 136). The idea of describing and denoting that there are subjective meanings is indicative of how to accommodate for various interpretations, there needs to be some basic and general understandings of the social world. Max Weber was a famous interpretivist scholar. Weber argued that understanding the subjective meanings and locating the general understandings of our social world, the researcher must situate him/herself in the context of the research: *Verstehen*. The concept literary translates from German to English as ‘understanding’. The concept describes that the researcher is making a systematic

understanding of the social world being researched, which includes knowledge of cultural, religious, economic and social issues. The purpose is to acknowledge their (e.g. the issues) existence, to reconstruct them, to understand them, to avoid distorting them, to use them as building-blocks in theorizing” (Goldkuhl, 2010, p. 138). Traditionally, *Verstehen* is bound to sociological research, but it can also be made in political science studies. In terms of political science research, this means understanding the political nature of the social world explored.

What deviates in this analysis from Weber’s initial conceptualization of the interpretivist approach is that I will also draw on the traditional hermeneutical interpretivist approach first conceptualized by German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey. Dilthey held that a social actor’s action(s) could construct a meaning of the social world by looking at texts and written words. Furthermore, a mixture of Diltheyian and Weberian interpretivism has been used for the analysis as Blaickie (2010) describes, according to Weber, “Rather than trying to establish the actual meaning that a social actor gives to a particular social action, Weber [...] considered it necessary to work at a higher level of generality”. This study will not *simply* generalize what has been investigated as Al Mansouri’s action was unique, but it is argued as representing a general change for women in the UAE and the military. In addition, Weberian interpretivism is also important since it can contend the Major’s actions describes a “social action that is rational in character [and] consciously selected as a means to some goal” (Blaickie, 2010, p. 509). It is argued that the UAE’s goal is to process a larger inclusion of women in its public working force.

An interpretivist analysis of a case study can be done in several ways. According to Goldkuhl (2010), there are many forms of interpretivist analysis, though the main types are the *conservative*, *the critical*, *the deconstructionist* and *the constructivist*. This investigation uses constructivist interpretivism as it falls in line with the ontological perspective of this study. The ontological stance is that, “interpretive information systems assume that the social world (that is, social relationships, organizations, divisions of labors) are not given” (Goldkuhl, 2010, p. 136). Instead, social reality and their meanings are continually changing. As

Goldkuhl further argues, “The cognitive orientation is also emphasized (as) the intentions of researchers (using constructivist interpretivism is used) to understand the actor’s view of their social world and their role in it” (Goldkuhl, 2010, p. 5). A constructivist ontology of an interpretivist analysis requires that the epistemology of and the ontology of the study have the same philosophical stance (*Blaickie, 2004*). The epistemology is thus, emphasized in Diltheyian hermeneutical interpretivism as it finds *Verstehen* by historical and social texts. All “truths” described in this paper have been constructed by humans and situated within the historical moment and the social context of the United Arab Emirates in 2014. The report therefore contends that multiple meanings and interpretations may exist of the presented data, but has underlying generalized acceptances by the actors/ society studied.

2.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The investigation has encountered a variety of issues. As mentioned in the introduction and in the description of the analysis, there are no sufficient data or concrete statistics gathered on women in the United Arab Emirates’ (not to mention in the military). This has made it difficult for the research to draw on more substantial numbers as support for the arguments presented in the main analysis. Furthermore, as the scope of the investigation correlates with a number of other social issues (i.e. economics, religion, culture and tradition); I have extracted arguments from analyses in related fields made on women. The specific topics have circumvented women in leadership positions in the Gulf (See *Madsen, 2010*); women and war historically (See *Kronsell, 2012; Miles and Cross, 2008; Sjöberg et al., 2010*), socio-economic development in oil rich countries and Islam and its traditions towards women (*Williams et al., 2013*). Furthermore, most of these studies have not focused specifically on the UAE but on the other Gulf countries, (though brief mentioning of the UAE has occurred). Furthermore, the military in the United Arab Emirates remains one of the country's most confidentially restricted institutions. It is nearly impossible to find sources and specifics on the armed forces, its service-folks or its expenditures, even apart from information on women. Evidently, most of the

shortcomings of this study is due to the confidential and restrictive political nature of the state of the United Arab Emirates.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study uses Neo-Orientalism as its theoretical framework. The theory was chosen after the investigation had been done. Choosing a theoretical framework after having conducted an investigation is something that is not done often in social science research. Nevertheless, it is something that an interpretivist analysis allows (Blaickie, 2010). Neo-Orientalism is the modern conceptualization of Orientalism. Orientalism is a classical imperialist theory that stipulates a claimed superiority of Western thought over societies and countries in the Middle East (i.e. Orient; East). The theory seeks to distinguish Arabs as "Others" or barbarians in comparison to the "civilized" people from Western populations. Scholars (*Altwaiji, 2014; Enloe, 2000; Said, 1997 and; Samiei, 1978*) regularly define Orientalism in an evocative manner. One description articulates, "The Orient literally means the sunrise, pointed above all to the region that lay immediately to the East of Europe" (Samiei, 2010, p. 1145). The scholar Said (1997) held a very negative perception of the Orient and thus coined the description of the theory as simply, a "hostile ideology" to the West (*Samiei, 2010*). What Said was referring to was the difference in political regimes: western democracy and Eastern monarchical/ tribal autocracy.

A more common conception of the Orientalist theory is that it surrounds Western dominance and especially a political dominance or power-over, Arab countries and societies. With the historical context from under which the theory developed, other scholars (*Enloe, 2000*) describes Orientalism as a theory which holds an odd fascination with foreign cultures yet an unwillingness to see the society from the view of its natives. In addition, it has developed a stigmatization that distinguishes the West as developed and civilized from an underdeveloped (or emerging) East. On top of this, the theory does not seem to discriminate the differences between the Arab countries despite social, cultural, religious and political deviations. Therefore, orientalism is a theoretical way of establishing and

distinguishing a social hierarchy among people of the world, a global North from a global South – democratic countries from the non-democratic. For example, and in relation to the developments occurring in the United Arab Emirates on women and their empowerment, the idea of Orientalism was that Arab women needed protection by Western men from the Arab men, in order to become free and feel safe. As Enloe (2000) describes it:

The image of the tantalizingly veiled Muslim woman was a cornerstone of this Orientalist ideology and the imperial structure it supported [...] Women as symbols, women as nurturers have been crucial to the entire colonial undertaking (Enloe, 2000, p. 40).

Further Enloe describes, "British colonial officers (used) to blame the existing ideologies of masculinity in the colonized societies for women's degradation; if men's sense of manliness was such that it didn't include reverence toward women, then they couldn't expect to be allowed to govern their own societies" (Enloe, 2000, p. 48). In one sense, it may seem good that the British colonialist seemed aware of the suppression of women. However, what is problematic was that they found that the women had to be protected without understanding the cultural and religious creeds dictating the gender-roles. The oxymoron is that women in the UK were not exactly treated any better during the time. British women were up until the early Twentieth Century placed more like 'second-class citizens. Thus, the idea that Arab women were in dire need of being 'saved' is something that has historically transgressed from European imperialist to the global era.

Analyses of the Middle East and Muslim societies such as Said's has refurbished Orientalism and reinstated it in current times as the Neo-Orientalist thought. Neo-Orientalism is the contemporary version of Orientalism but has adapted to the modern context. It purports that there is still a far way to go for the cultures and societies of the East to reach the progress and advancement made in the West. More particularly, Neo-Orientalism explicates a diminution of Arab societies since most Arab countries (such as the United Arab Emirates) are influenced by Islam and guided by the Islamic law, Shari'a. Not having a separation between church and state or religion and politics, is more commonly seen as backwards and inhibiting modernization. The

countries of the 'Orient' are therefore, purportedly uncivilized (to a certain degree). Neo-Orientalism can also serve as a political ideology. As a political ideology, states or other actors with a Neo-Orientalist mindset or framework engage with the Orient only with a limited amount of trust due to historical conceiving of the societies' capacities. The perceptions that contend that some states are more developed than others are simply does not work in the very multicultural world that today is. With different histories, diverse cultural and religious norms and states that have consequently, been shaped by these notions, politics in regards to society and women have several ways of developing.

An additional concerning facet of the Neo-Orientalist pertains to the element of political security where Arabs and Arab culture is often seen as distinct enemies to the West. A great contributor on the explanation and description of Neo-Orientalism in global politics is Mohammad Samiei. Samiei (2010) believes that, "eradicating the roots of Orientalism and Occidentalism alike, and accepting, protecting and even promoting diversity are the first steps toward countering the devastating threats that endanger humankind as a whole" (Samiei, 2010, p. 1145). What Samiei is referring to is the fight against terror and the stereotypes it has created to define who is a threat and an enemy. Samiei's focus is on the ideology's influence on power-relations and who is the most advanced economically, technologically and militarily. While it is indisputable that the United States military is one of the most advanced in the world and that China may hold the most progressive financial status, the financial prosperities of the Gulf nations and the military advances are quickly emerging. Furthermore, the investments made by the governments should not be underestimated or undermined due to a historical anthropological perspective of the culture and religion vis-a-vis, the West. Still, Neo-Orientalism maintains the 'inferiority' of Islamic culture to that of the West, predominately due to the influence of religious doctrines on the social system. Another definition of Neo-Orientalism that describes this facet of the theory argues it is something which,

"promote(s) Western dominance by inventing the ideology as dualis(tic) [...] Dualism is a way of thinking that promotes the duality between 'the self' and 'the other' in order to justify and naturalize some structured patterns of domination and exploitation" (Samiei, 2010, p. 1146).

Particularly after the events of September 11, 2001 and other recent events and wars related to the 'War on Terror' the concept and theory have been apprehended (*Altwaiji, 2014; and Brooks, 2002*) into a concerning system of beliefs on Arabs and the Arab world. As Altwaiji (2014) argues, “The term “Orient” has been influenced by escalating waves of global political changes, and thus its geography is reconsidered and reshaped accordingly” (Altwaiji, 2014, p. 314). The region is generally seen as untrustworthy and the people are perceived suspicious or potential terrorists (*Rytter and Holm Pedersen, 2014*) and the “others from the underdeveloped Orient” (Said, 1997). More specifically, GCC nationals have become suspicious because a handful of the terrorist who participated in the attacks on September 11 were from Saudi Arabia and one individual was from Ra's Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates.⁸ In addition, the other terrorists who participated in 9/11 had financial ties (*Katzman, 2014; Rytter and Holm Pedersen, 2014*) or similar relations to other Gulf countries. Currently, Neo-Orientalism functions as both a theory and a political practice. It is not only a postulation for states to intervene in domestic politics of Arab countries but it is used to support clauses for wars and at the other end of the spectrum, to vitiate Arab civilizations. Moreover, in some way it has implanted itself in international relations where there seems to be a mistrust in the capacities of Arab countries even in international security coalitions.

⁸ See map of the division of the United Arab Emirates in LIST OF APPENDICES.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When the United Kingdom (UK) ended its protectorate of the Gulf the result was the creation of several sovereign states that today are Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Yemen, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The United Arab Emirates officially declared independence in 1971. Even though the Gulf countries were all under the same protectorate authority, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and, Yemen spurred in very different paths of secession than the UAE. The latter states still have quite a lot of hardships to deal with domestically as civil unrests are still very prevalent and socio-political issues are very conservative. In comparison, the United Arab Emirates seems to be developing in a more stable manner. When in 1971, the UAE declared independence the leaders officially stated a commitment to establish an open, moderate, Islamic state with liberal politics. Liberal politics enabled policies that included all Emirati nationals, men and women alike. A few categorical discussions on the United Arab Emirates to provide background information may support the stipulation. This section will therefore, describe the geo-political history and the state-power apparatus of the UAE in order to introduce the nature of the politics.

3.1 THE GEO-POLITICAL HISTORY AND SOCIO-POLITICAL STANCE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Geographically, the United Arab Emirates borders with Oman and Saudi Arabia while its shores break with Qatar and Iran. The Emirates was the result of the unification of seven different tribe-based regions that today consist of Abu Dhabi (the capital), Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm Al-Quwain (see map in Appendix).⁹ Originally, parts of Qatar and Oman were to belong to the United Arab Emirates, but the tribe leaders in each of the areas had a desire for two separated sovereign nations of Qataris and Omanis. Since 1981, the United Arab Emirates has been a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with Saudi

⁹ For full list of Deputy Rulers, see LIST OF APPENDICES.

Arabia (KSA), Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Yemen and Qatar. The Council deals predominately with regional security issues. However, the UAE's own security was an important backdrop if the GCC had issues.

Today, the national armed forces are still perceived as the key public institution that ensures state stability, security and that power is maintained in the hands of the delegated Sheikh Al Nayhan. In light of recent terrorist trends, the UAE military has been at the forefront of the domestic political agenda. In mid-2014, the mandatory conscription law was established for all Emirati males. The law only stipulates it is optional for women. The military service may be done in the UAE Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Interior or, the State Security Service (Information assembled by *The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, D.C., USA*, 2008). It is therefore, obvious that the national security apparatus is quite large. More specifically, the Heads of State and the Federal National Council (FNC) approved the Mandatory National Service Law in July 2014 after its proposal in January 2014.¹⁰ The law accentuates the following rule: military service is mandatory for all Emirati males aged 18 - 30. Those who are within this age range and who have finished secondary school, must do at least 9 months of service. Emiratis who have not finished secondary school must do at least 2 years of service. Those who do not sign up or follow the creeds of the law may face jail time for up to 10 years or receive a heavy fine. Men, who have in their secondary education scored 80 per cent or higher in grade point average, may be able to opt for a later commencement of their service (i.e. at the latest, once they have finished their education). As mentioned, women have also been encouraged to sign up for the military. The law describes, Emirati women who decide to join the optional service will serve and train for 9 months (regardless of their level of education or their grade average). Lastly, the women must be at least 18 years old and have approval from a male guardian.

¹⁰ The Federal National Council (FNC) is the Parliament of the United Arab Emirates). For further information, see discussion in 3.2.

3.2 POLITICAL POWER AND DISTRIBUTION OF POWER IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The United Arab Emirates is a tribal-based society. As such, Islam plays a duty role in the politics of the Government and the everyday life of all Emiratis. Yet, its political regime is characterized as a constitutional federation as it has a single constitution (United Arab Emirates Yearbook, 2007, p. 38). Nearly all the social policies that were initiated during the early stages of the new sovereign nation have been outlined in the UAE Constitution. Therefore, it is theoretically a constitutional federation. Metcalfe (2011) argues, though "The UAE constitution does not have provision for democratic elections, and the country has no political parties" (Metcalfe, 2011, p. 139) - it is not equivalent with a totalitarian political culture. Therefore, ideologically, the UAE is an Islamic monarchy due to the tribal tradition. The current leader (Sheikh) of the country is His Highness (H.H) Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nayhan from the Al Nayhan tribe of Abu Dhabi. The Prime Minister of the UAE is H.H Sheikh Mohammed Bin Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum from the Maktoum tribe of Dubai. H.H bin Rashid Al Maktoum is also the ruler of Dubai-Emirate (*Business Monitor International, 2014; United Arab Emirates Yearbook, 2007*). The United Arab Emirates also has a national parliament or the Federal National Council (FNC). The FNC aids in the construction and amending of policies.¹¹ It has a presiding authority, the speaker H.H Mohammed Al Mur who acts in collaboration with the Supreme Council Members H.H Al Nayhan and H.H Al Maktoum. In total, there are always 25 Members of the (FNC) Cabinet and they are chosen by elections and appointed by the Heads of State.¹²

In terms of the dispersion of delegated federal power under the constitution, issues are sporadically granted to the seven emirates.¹³ This means, that even though

¹¹ Electoral colleges (*Business Monitor International, 2014*) elect the Federal National Council members.

¹² For full list of all current FNC members, see LIST OF APPENDICES.

¹³ According to the Constitution Article 116, "The Emirates shall exercise all powers not assigned to the Federation by this Constitution". In May 1996, The Federal Supreme Council approved two amendments to the provisional Constitution, making it permanent and naming Abu Dhabi as the capital of the state" (United Arab Emirates Yearbook, 2007, p. 39).

each of the seven Emirates has a local government reporting to the central government in Abu Dhabi, each Emirate is responsible for creating and maintaining various types of politics (in accordance with what is outlined in the constitution). For example, though there is the central national military each of the emirates also has their own military force. However, the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Abu Dhabi always holds overriding power of the forces. This is emphasized in several Constitutional amendments as a way to maintain a uniform national security agency. There are seemingly quite a few ambiguities on power distribution in the UAE and at several levels. Furthermore, most of the political and decision-making power is held by Abu Dhabi as it is the richest of the emirates and it is where the royal family, the Al Nahyan are from. Whereas, the Government of Dubai is dedicated to business or it regularly structures politics that relate to business and trade. Unfortunately, the division of politics does not always take into account the socio-economic, financial and overall capability differences of each of the seven emirates. For example, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah have no oil and therefore, are both less rich Emirates. Economic power is still the predominant force behind state power.

Nevertheless, there are three specific principles, which all Emirates are bound by when practicing politics and power: (1) the attention to Emirati traditions, (2) the willingness to modernize legally (through the constitutional amendments and with the approval of government officials). Lastly, (3) harnessing personal ambition, (i.e. the leader's incentive is to prioritize the wealth and good fortune of the Emirati civility and not their own personal gains). These three principles are the lead-way on how the central and each local government is to act. The distribution of state power is thus, delegated between the leaders of the major tribes of the country and the state Parliament; the Federal National Council where women now, have a much larger impact due to central Government policies towards women. By having established a brief overview of state power and politics, the information serves as a backdrop to the discussions in the main analysis.

The Analysis

4 ARAB WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN WAR (HISTORICALLY AND CONTEMPORARILY)

According to the Islamic jurisprudence, war must always be done for the security and protection of the *Umma* (Lewis, 1995). The *Umma* is the Arabic term for the collective Islamic community. In addition, war can only be *rightfully* conducted if it is against one of four types of enemies, "infidels [(the *Kufr*)], apostates, rebels, and bandits" (Lewis, 1995, p. 234).¹⁴ While this does not deliberately imply women should or can partake in the securitization of the *Umma*, further in-depth discussions of historical accounts and contemporary situations where Muslim women have and now conduct war, may instead reveal the perspective. The Anti-ISIL Coalition and the acts of Major Mariam Al Mansouri is for example one way the United Arab Emirates is currently eradicating 'bandits' (i.e. the terrorists in Syria and in Iraq) in accordance with Islamic Law. Simultaneously, a historical perspective is also helpful in understanding how Emirati women are now partaking in combat roles, now.

4.1 THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF ARAB WOMEN AT WAR

Arab women in war are a historical fact even though most sources and documentation are difficult to find. There are however, tales of female legends. In the Middle East, there has been quite a long tradition of women fighting with the rest of their family or tribe; Arab women have even fought side-by-side the Prophet Mohammed. While it is difficult to find substantial details of Arab women at war there are some female warriors whose stories have been safe-kept both from pre-Islamic and Islamic times in the Arabian world. These stories given an understanding why perhaps the case event of Major Al Mansouri was not as divergent as otherwise portrayed by media and scholars from outside the region.

¹⁴ To see the translation of Islamic concepts go to GLOSSARY.

One very well-known Arab female warrior is Khawlah bin Al-Azwar. Khawlah bin Al-Azwar lived during the 7th Century and has since been a highly praised female figure in the Arab world. A reference to Al-Azwar is often made during motivational speeches in the UAE and serves as a figurative role model for females in many Arab countries. As one account of Al-Azwar describes,

"(she) was at first taken to be a man because of her height, she revealed herself as a woman when the battle was won [...] (still) Mohammed himself paid tribute to the prowess of the most famous female warrior of the period" (Miles and Cross, 2008, p. 4).

Al-Azwar is accounted as a warrior and a respected fighter by the Prophet. Another tale of Al-Azwar writes, "She formed them into a phalanx and led them to victory. And why not?" the narrator of the story concluded, "If a lost battle meant their (the men's) enslavement" (Miles, Cross, 2008, p. 9). The narrative distinguishes the discrepancy of what may seem to be an early preconception of the role and inclusion of women in historical Islamic battles. In the passage, there is no mentioning that Al-Azwar, as a woman, was limited in her combat role. What the narrative does question in relation to her sex is "*why wouldn't females lead men in war?*" There was also another Arab war heroine by the name of Salaym bint Malhan. Just as Al-Azwar, Malhan fought "in the ranks of Prophet Mohammed and his followers with an armory of swords and daggers strapped around her pregnant belly" (Miles and Cross, 2008, p. 10). Not only was Malhan carrying the *weight of the nation* in her belly (symbolically referring to the fruit barer of the nation), but she was also doing so by fighting an enemy and thereby securing the Muslim community. Even more, one *Sunnah* (Islamic narrative habit by the Prophet) describes how the Prophet and his wife Aisha and other close female relatives actively fought together in war:

"young wife Aisha, threw of her veil to take command at the Battle of the Camel, and [...] granddaughter Zaynab bin Ali fought in the Battle of Karbala [...] Umm Al Dhouda bin Mas-ud, fought so magnificently at the Battle of Khayber that the Prophet allotted her a share of the spoil's equal to a man's" (Miles and Cross, 2008, p. 11).

Besides the aforementioned female Arab fighters, Miles and Cross (2008) provide an extended list of other celebrated Arab female warriors. Initially, it shows that Arab

women in war is not something remote from the history of the Arab world.¹⁵ However, seeing that these types of defense roles of women did not hold for a long period as tales of Arab-Muslim women quickly faded, one might presume that these early tales quickly gained attention by orthodox Islamic scholars (*Caliphs*). The Orthodox *Caliphs* decided that women in war was completely immoral. During the 14th Century, there was a rise in Orthodox Islam and women were in the center of focus. It was questioned what was the rightfulness of letting women participate in the public sphere. Essentially, women became a serious predicament to following Islam and the Islamic law correctly. According to the Orthodox Islamic scholars, those in society whom carry children should not risk the livelihood of the whole clan by engaging in war or appearing in public life. Women had to be protected and 'treasured' (*Rippin, 2005*) in safe quarters meaning, at home. Without the women protected, the future generations of the Islamic communities would be at risk.

The Islamic community later separated between two sects: the Shia and the Sunni.¹⁶ According to the Shiites, the concept and representation of Muslim female warriors was also problematic. One of the main credos Shiite *Caliphs* had extracted from Orthodox Islam into their understanding of Islamic law was a broadened sphere of 'social protections' placed on women. The religious law applied that all men perform "a code of modesty that rests on the dignity of the woman...*qiwama* which requires the men must 'protect' a woman's sexuality" (Metcalf, 2011, p. 136). There is "In addition, a code of modesty that rests on the dignity of the woman [...] *qiwama* (protection in Arabic). *Qiwama* requires men to 'protect' a woman's sexuality" (Metcalf, 2011, p. 136) and in some sense, it was understood that with women in the military or in war men would not be able to fulfill that responsibility.

¹⁵ Other well-known female Arab warriors are Nusaybah bint Ka'b and Umm 'Umara who according to historical narratives were both, "armed with sword and bow and arrow, fight (ing) at the Battles of Uhud and Mecca in 630 CE (one of them) with her husband and two sons [...] (Miles and Cross, 2008, p. 10)

¹⁶ The split between the two denominations of Islam is based on the way the Islamic dogmas are followed. Sunnis follow strictly the sayings (*Sunnah*) of Prophet Mohammed and his actions (*hadiths*). The Shiites (singular: Shi'a) are proclaimed 'followers of Islam'. They follow the way of Islam as directed by *Caliphs*.

As such, tales of women and their activity in the public sphere rapidly decayed in order to “protect” the “clean” image of women and to avoid a vulnerability of the *Umma*. War became faceted as purely masculine and could only be carried out by men and even more so, as ideas of men having advantageous bodies due to strength became part of the justification. Muscular strength was seen as necessary to carry the tools of war (i.e. muskets) (*Miles and Cross, 2008*) - something a woman could not do. The tales of Al-Azwar with her vigor of having been mistaken for a man and Malhan fighting with her pregnant belly were put aside. The remnants of historical Arab women at war, is still seen by some sects of Islam as a challenge to Islamic communal norms and practices. The conservative Muslims, particularly of *Wahhabism/ Wahhābiyya*, follow a radical form of Islam that dictates a very conservative lifestyle.¹⁷ According to *Wahhābiyya* contemporary conceptions and norms of womanhood is premised on preserving her “value” and “dignity.” The two traits can only be ensured if a woman is limited in her public appearance and she must not engage with people outside her family – especially men. Saudi Arabia has officially declared the state Wahhabists while; the United Arab Emirates on the other hand, practices a moderate and more liberal form of Islam. Moderate Islam clearly allows women more freedom, as they are not restricted to their homes and are instead encouraged to participate in the public sphere.

4.2 A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT OF EMIRATI WOMEN AT WAR

In a recent National Public Radio (NPR) broadcast (*Khatib, 2014*) the 'situation in the Middle East' and the Gulf countries participating in the U.S lead Anti-ISIL Coalition was discussed. Lina Khatib, a specialist on the Middle East was interviewed for the broadcast. Khatib focused predominately on the acts of Major Al Mansouri where

¹⁷ *Wahhabism/ Wahhābiyya* is a form of Islamic religious movement. It was created by *Imam Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787)* (*Rippin, 2005*). *Wahhabism* has a very orthodox nature as it seeks to follow the most pure interpretation of the *Qur'ān*. This was outlined in al-Wahhab's emblematic text: *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, "The Book of Unity" (*Rippin, 2005, p. 168*). Today most prefer to be denoted as *Salafis* or to refer the belief as *Salafism*. This is since more recently, *Wahhabism* has been dogmatized as the radical and extremist interpretation of the *Hadiths* and therefore linked to terrorism. Whereas, *Salafism* is seen as a positive connotation of the "followers of the purified Islamic traditions."

Khatib stated that the event purposed to instigate a bandwagon effect on women's empowerment in the region. By stating this, Khatib implicitly emphasized how women in the military of the UAE is an underlying way women's role is being reshaped in the Arab-Muslim society. The NPR Broadcast addressed this point as the anchor questioned Khatib, "There were photographs released by Saudi Arabia of some of the pilots involved in the campaign (against DAESH). In addition, we heard about a (UAE) female pilot [...] involved. I'm curious how this played out in the media" (Khatib, 2014). In response, Khatib argues there was an underlying purpose for each of the two fighter pilots to join in the campaign, "Both of these sets of images are about presenting Saudi Arabia and UAE as modern, progressive states [...] when they appear in the media [...] their kind of exalted status (is) meant to attract recruits" (Khatib, 2014). In this sense, both the UAE and KSA defied odds by having a Prince and a woman fight on behalf of the nation and it also served as role models for the 'average' Gulf woman. Though it is still unknown how many women from the other GCC countries are participating in the Anti-ISIL Coalition, the reports of a woman from the UAE and the KSA Crown Prince fighting side-by-side (both of which who were previously restricted from having such public roles) – shows key societal changes. Mariam Al Mansouri as a female has 'ascended women's role' in the Gulf by entering public space and regaining Arab women's role in the defense of the Umma.¹⁸

4.3 MILITARY WOMEN IN THE GULF; A STATISTICAL COMPARISON

To briefly highlight the issue of women in the entire Gulf and their participation in the national armed forces, Sjöberg et al. (2010) refer to a database created by The WomanStats Project. The project compiles as much information and statistics on women as is available on all countries in the world, but particularly it makes maps on issues regarding women in the Middle East. The project has a codebook tool that allows one to choose the country of interest and the topic of choice. There are

¹⁸ The term: "Women's Ascent" coined by Sally Armstrong can be found in Catic and von Hlatky (2014). See Bibliography for reference.

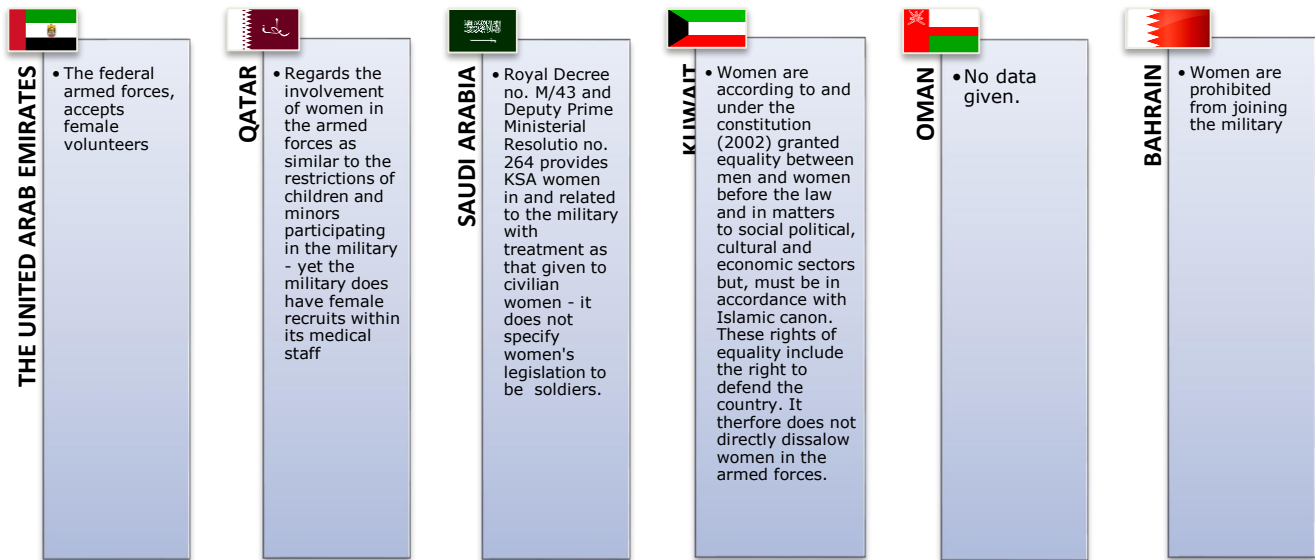


Figure 1: EWCMS-LAW-1

categories such as, scales on "Security through Community Investment in Women" and, sub-categories to the main topic categories that allows one to choose another folder such as: "Women's Security in the State" or "Women in combat/ military services." I ran a search on the United Arab Emirates and compared it to the other GCC countries: KSA, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen.¹⁹ My search started with EWCMS-LAW-1 which has collected data on the provision of the following question: "Are women allowed to serve in the military? What about in combat? Compared to military service requirements for men? Are women the targets of recruitment as men?" The results are indicated in **Figure 1** above. I also tried to find information on other questions including EWCMS-LAW-2: *Are women draftable (including military conscription)?* EWCMS-LAW-3: *Can women be required to serve in a combat position?* And EWCMS-LAW-5: *Are there laws preventing rape/assault within the military (soldiers raping other soldiers from their own or friendly countries)? Are there laws that protect victims/accusers and/or encourage*

¹⁹ The data collection taken from the WomenStats Project used the following sources as reference:

UAE: US, Department of State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (CRonHR)," <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003> AND http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/Display_news.asp?section=Local_News&month=August2007&file=Local_News2007081423330.xml.

them to report crimes? Are there laws that discourage reports? But, there was no available data.

4.3.1 INCREASED CONSCRIPTION OF EMIRATI FEMALES IN THE ARMED FORCES
Some military personnel hypothesize that there is always an increase of conscription during times of war.²⁰ The rates rise for both men and women wanting to join military services. Furthermore, war tends to effect a temporary if not permanent revision of military laws that now almost globally, allow women's inclusion in the armed forces. In recent history, women have only been temporarily included due to the shortage of men (*Fieseler et al., 2014*), primarily because of high casualty rates in lengthy wars. A comparative case to the UAE and which exempts from this postulation is how the Israeli Defense Force uses nationalism to conscribe women (*Levy, 2013; Tekoah and Harel-Shalev, 2014*). Though, the Emirates is not currently conducting an "on-ground" war or experiencing an overall high casualty rate of men in the Armed Forces, it is the low birth rates (*Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014*) and the overall small Emirati national population, which gives out a clear deficiency of available nationals for the military.²¹ One might wonder has this caused a desire by the Central Government to include women in its armed forces. It is unclear. What data shows is that currently, 70 per cent of all graduates in the Emirati educational system are females. Emirati women also achieve superior grades in higher educations (*Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014*), compared to their male counterparts which may indicate the better the Emiratis are educated, the more appealing they become to military recruiters. A PricewaterhouseCoopers report provides the numbers of women's successful and high educational attainment in the UAE: "Women in the UAE are in fact outperforming males at every educational level [...] by 77 per cent (and), *the*

²⁰ The stipulation came from Defense Attaché, Jesper Gade Thygesen during a discussion I had with the Lt. Col. at the Royal Danish Embassy in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates.

²¹ Only Emirati nationals are allowed to become professional soldiers in the Armed Forces whereas, expats and non-nationals with residence status are allowed in administrative, training or supportive positions within the military (*See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html>*). The estimated total population in the UAE counted at 5,628,805 inhabitants. Of that number, about 19% are Emirati nationals.

UAE is registering the highest rate of females in higher education in the entire world." (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, 2010, p. 8).

In addition to Emirati women's higher level of education, another prospect that has led to a larger inclusion and motivation for women to join the military are the benefits that come with the job. As the military is part of the public sector employment scheme, women are guaranteed specific rights and protections. According to the employment laws of Emiratization (the national employment program), all women are entitled to a six-month maternity leave in addition to other benefits related to pregnancy, delivery and parenting. More specifically, during the women's maternity leave, the first two months are with full pay, the third and fourth month is with half their original salary and the last two months of the leave is without pay. In addition, eighteen months after the maternity leave the employed mothers can take a one hour paid break to nurse their child. Emiratization seems to have enabled women to preserve cultural traditions (i.e. to create families and care for their children) while pursuing careers.²² The following section will go into further detail of how Emirati nationalism shapes the country's politics for women through Emiratization.

5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMIRATI POLITICS ON WOMEN AND WAR

Women's ability to serve in the military in the United Arab Emirates stems from political initiatives that focus on enabling women's employment in the public sector. The political language behind the policymaking is grounded in "women's empowerment programs". Through national legislation and established civil programs such as Emiratization, the United Arab Emirates has reformed its politics geared towards women. Though Emiratization is ultimately undiscussed and

²² For further discussions on Emiratization, see sub-section 5.2.

otherwise scrutinized as not working desirably, the change in politics more importantly has challenged cultural and religious barriers previously placed on women. The following section will develop some of the key topics that enables politics and policies for improving women's status and participation in the United Arab Emirates and probable reasons why it has occurred.

5.1 NATIONALISM

The ideological transformations (*Stachowitsch, 2013*) that occur when nation-states become sovereign and governments are formed often rely on nationalistic rhetoric. According to Enloe (2000) and Stachowitsch (2013), nationalism is the political tool used when an assembled group of people come together and who contend to have the same history, identity and, language or, "a collection of people who [...] (are) commit(ed) to fostering beliefs and promoting policies which permit the nation to control its own destiny" (Enloe, 2000, p. 45). Since independence, the UAE has sought to do this. Nationalism derives from the concept of a 'nation' and is an ideology that has become a theory in practice. Nationalism has a core focus, which is for the nation to ensure it has established full control of its own destiny (*Enloe, 2000*).²³ Nationalism in especially former colonies or protectorates and *young* states, "remains a powerful political force (as) [...] Nationalist ideas, inform people's relationship with their neighbors - and the larger world" (Enloe, 2000, pp.45-46).²⁴ Thus, when considering Emirati nationals account for only 11 per cent of the total population, it becomes quite clear why nationalism is a political tool meant to encourage more Emiratis to participate in the running of the society. In addition, while trying to define what it means to be an Emirati when the nation is a minority, the Government has decided that being an Emirati is primarily a national who protects the nation, its culture and upholds the Islamic religion.

²³ This is furthermore, because scholars such as Enloe (2000) describe, "Nationalism, by definition, is a set of ideas that sharpens distinction between 'us' and 'them'".

²⁴ In the same paragraph, Enloe (2000) continues to describe that more contemporarily, "The most stable political system, is now thought (to be) one in which state power rests on a bed of national identity [...] shared public pasts and futures" (Enloe, 2000, p. 46).

The institutions that enforce security and defense measures are the United Arab Emirates military and Armed Forces. The Abu Dhabi Government has created a nationalistic program that builds on the idea of formalizing and conveying Emirati identity to the current and future generations by mandating that they engage in the public sector such as the Armed Forces. The national and nationalistic program is called *Emiratization* and follows in accordance with the instigated 'ideological transformation' (*Stachowitsch, 2013*) that nearly all new nation-states go through when seeking to succeed independence. Although, the UAE is aware that it cannot sustain itself without the expat community, which throughout the past twenty years has become a sturdy workforce empire, it also sees a danger in relying too much on expat prevalence. Being able to maintain sovereignty and “full” control of the state with so many foreigners has its consequences. In addition, though the discovery of oil has brought extensive fortunes to nearly all Emirati national families, consequently many did not find it necessary to have jobs or become professionally educated. As oil is expected to run out within the next generation, education and mass-employment of Emiratis has become necessary for sustaining sovereign Emirati state control.

5.2 EMIRATIZATION

Emiratization as a political program is also part of the national doctrine of social rules as stated in the Constitution - just as it reinforces international obligations. The program has taken its roots from Article 20 of the UAE Constitution which states, "The community shall esteem work as a cornerstone of its development. The community shall provide jobs to the citizens, and create the suitable conditions for service by enacting legislation [...]" (By-Law of the Federal National Council, 2010, p. 10).²⁵ Even though, Emiratization was only recently verbalized in government politics as an official program, it has existed and been part of politics in the United Arab Emirates since the 1990s (*Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014*). The initial

²⁵Article 10 in its totality states, "The community shall esteem work as a cornerstone of its development. The community shall provide jobs to the citizens, qualify them for those jobs, and create the suitable conditions for service by enacting legislation protecting the rights of the employees and the interests of the employers in the light of the advanced international labor legislation" (By-Law of the Federal National Council, 2010, p. 10).

proposal for Emiratization came under Article 11 of the UAE Constitution and by Labor Law No. 9 of 1980 (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014). Labor Law No. 8 of 1980, "requires the Ministry of Labor to take an active role in finding job opportunities for nationals and to establish within the Ministry a section for the employment of citizens" (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014, p. 169). There are a combination of issues that relate to the overall enforcement and effectiveness of the program. As mentioned prior, Emiratis are not only disproportionately skilled from the total population, but their low birth rates predicts a continuation of their minority status (*see 4.3.1*). According to the CIA World Factbook, the birth rate in the UAE is at two children per woman. The overall birth rate of the country is No. 129 out of all countries in the world with only 15 births/ 1,000 population.²⁶ To put the numbers into further statistical perspective, Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner state that, "foreign workers coupled with high local fertility rates (among the expats and foreign workers) contributed to the increase in the country's population from 3.3. Million in 2005 to 8.19 million in 2010" (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014, p. 167). However, the statistics do not specifically outline or classify these numbers between Emirati nationals and the expat community.

Gallants, S. and Pounder (2008) describe, that even though the program has resulted in women in the public sector, the program itself has not adequately dealt with some cultural factors that hinder the full realization of the Emirati employment (for both men and women). Accordingly, culture is still an inhibiting factor to Emirati women's own desire to work and to a certain degree, the influence of their family has affected their choice because some family members find it negligent of Islamic law to let women work. For example, those professions which have traditionally been labeled professions as 'male-work' (*Gallants, S. and Pounder, 2008*) or where the women are interacting with men outside of their family, have been labelled as problematic. Such "obstacles" have slowed down the progress of Emiratization and the desired effect to empower women through career opportunities. Nevertheless, Gallant, S. and Pounder (2008) argue, there are three ways these issues may become

²⁶ See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html> for more information.

outmoded: (1) through legal measures; legislations; facilities and; (2) by educational attainment and acquiring professional work skills or; (3) from extensive public awareness focused on promoting the need to expand the workforce (*see section 5.2*).

Another issue of Emiratization is that the media which are to inform and report the public about program take for granted the definition and understanding of what 'Emiratization' actually encompasses. Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2014); Gallant S. and Pounder (2008); Metcalfe (2011); and Williams et al. (2013) have all described and analyzed Emiratization in more detail. One definition that describes the national program states, it is "focused social capital program that seeks to overcome structural barriers to employment of Emiratis in organizations and to address the social issues arising from citizens' entry into the labor market" (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014, p. 169).²⁷ Other scholars, who have investigated the concept and national program of Emiratization, focus on the "tactic" aspect. The tactical aspect of the program is to preserve Emirati heritage through engaging the Emiratis in the working force of the country (*Williams et al., 2013*) – such as the military. In addition, it is obvious how extensive the national program is – in all sectors as Emiratization creates not only public sector jobs for the Emirati nationals, but it also requires all foreign and national (both the public and private) - companies to follow a quota system of hiring Emiratis (*Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014; Business Monitor International, 2014*). As such, Emiratization is a form of political initiative coupled with a form of speech. An underlying issue is the lack of indicative numbers that the program has actually materialized. One may therefore wonder, whether this is so far, just part of a plan to propagate to the public that the Emirates is a strong state and nation despite its marginal representation in the country.

Emiratization has become an extremely vital part of national security politics (*Al Dhaeri, 2014; Al Wasmi, 2014; Ghazal, 2014; Salama, 2015 and; Zriqat, 2014*). Now all Emiratis by citizenship-duty are mandated to join the military. Though, conscription is a public sector profession that is only optional to women, the moral

²⁷ Al Ali (2008) provided the definition; the full citation can be found in Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014).

space (*Metcalfe, 2011*) created by nationalism and the appealing wages and other benefits, is a strong motivator for nearly every Emirati man and woman. Apart from this, another outcome has been that it has enabled Emirati women to raise the bar and led them to move up the career ladder.

5.3 EMIRATIZATION IN PRACTICE

Former President and leader of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nayhan saw the notion coming of the necessity to educate the entire Emirati population to sustain the sovereignty of the country. The Sheikh therefore believed it was wise to include Emirati women in the public sphere. The Sheikh once stated, "*Women have the right to work everywhere.*" And that, women's right to work would be based on merit not favoritism, "*Like men, women deserve the right to occupy high positions according to their capabilities and qualifications*" (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress, 2010, p. 4*).²⁸ According to the UAE Constitutional labor, law there should be no difference in wage between a male and female doing the same work. The report and the constitution combined, create a legislative protection net that ensures Emirati women have specific benefits due to their marginalized position in society (Brooks, 2002). Nationalism and the UAE political program: Emiratization, form the legal-political basis. The UAE military is a very dominant government institution that makes use of nationalistic language.

The media is deliberately used to pave the way for Emiratization to the minds of the public. News and information sources promote the government ideas nearly every day. Though the headlines may differ, they all cover the exact same topic with reformulations. One headline of the UAE national newspaper *The National*, for example reads, "*Emiratis should engage politically*" (Haza, 2014). Whereas, other headlines (*Al Dhaeri, 2014; Al Otaibi, 2014; Al Wasmi, 2014; Almazroui, 2014; Ghazal, 2014; Salama, 2015; UAEinteract, 9 December, 2014; WAM, 8 July, 2012; WAM, 18 October, 2014 and; Zriqat, 2014*) - of the local newspaper easily connect

²⁸ In addition to the noted topics, the report also refers to several of the UAE constitutional laws, which support women, married, divorced, pregnant, young and old.

with Haza (2014). The prints are all about women, their UAE identity and nationalism. Furthermore, these articles were all published shortly one after the other.

In 1997 during the early years of the Emiratization program, female UAE nationals comprised only 9 per cent of the public working force (*Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014*). Whereas, in 2013 The National listed that women made up 66 per cent of the Government workers in the UAE (*The National, 13 December 2013*). Emiratization has enforced a larger span of political focus on how to include and empower women both according to nationalistic, cultural and religious aspects and, it seeks to establish women as part of the productive workforce by imprinting it as a norm. The newspaper article by Chaudhary (2014) is a biographical account of three Emirati women who are now pioneering in their careers.²⁹ One of them is the first female pilot for a commercial airliner, the other is a dental surgeon and the third is a filmmaker. Despite having three different types of jobs, the women are collectively described as, "symboli(zing) the synergy between their country, the UAE - that empowers them to be achievers -- and their personal goals that goad them on to participate in the nation building" (Chaudhary, 2014).

When each of the three women were interviewed for the article, they were asked the reasons how they became professionals within their fields and why. Captain Salma Al Beloushi, the first Emirati female pilot for Etihad Airways answered that, "*Our leaders believe in the talents Emirati women have and trust us to fulfill these*" (Chaudhary, 2014). The other two had similar statements when asked. The statements of the three women denotes how essentially, the government and Emiratization has granted them not only the dexterity for jobs through free education, but it has also changed the public's perception of the role and capabilities of women in its society. In support of Chaudhary's (2014) findings, other reporters such as Almazroui (2014) and Maki (2014), argue the changes desired from Emiratization are important and are in fact experienced by more and more Emirati women. However, these reporters also contend the implementation is still superficially executed.

²⁹ The article was written in connection with the 43rd UAE National Days, which was held on 1 December 2014.

The paternalistic social norms of Emirati culture still needs to develop in accordance with women's economic and political freedoms (*Maki, 2014*). Emirati women are therefore, still experiencing cultural implications not *just* because of religious decrees, but also from the lack of understanding from their parents. Most of the women interviewed in other studies such as *Williams et al. (2013)* report that nearly all of their father and mothers, "had limited or no schooling" and that, while there was a support to go to school their parents did not quite comprehend the underlying reason or need to become educated and to later have a profession. For example, in *The National*, Qabbani describes that a woman interviewee stated, "*I think being part of the Air Force is very interesting, but some of our parents feel like the positions on offer may be better suited to males,*" said Ms. al Sharif, who is completing a higher diploma in electronic engineering at Sharjah Women's College" (Qabbani, 2011). Lieutenant Colonel Afra Saeed Al Falasi (the director of the Khawlah bint Al-Azwar Academy) was quoted in another newspaper article as having said, "Women are today holding leadership roles and [...] National and Reserve Service has opened the door for them to contribute along with men in the development of (this and) the nation."

The arguments from the study of Williams et al. (2013) and the statement by Lt Col. Al Falasi coupled with the purported message other newspaper articles (*see: Gornall, 2014; Khatib, 2014; WAM, 30 September, 2014; WAM, 25 October, 2013; Wardeh, 2014*) describe, indicate hindrances to Emirati women gaining different types of careers (such as the military) or leadership positions. Emirati women clearly need to hear stories of women from the region (*Madsen, 2010*) who acquire leadership positions to which they can relate. Women such as Ms. al Sharif need to hear stories of women such as Major Al Mansouri in order to develop a critical opinion to that of her parents and to be confident in her desire to become a professional and have a career. Qabbani (2011) further argues, that the national women's organization: the Dubai Women Establishment (DWE) gives access to "Role models at the forum (who) provid(e) insight to young women on the skills needed to succeed." Thus, such forums such as DWE in addition to news reports of women with professions are important backdrops to alleviate the barriers.

Other studies (*Madsen, 2010; Williams et al., 2013*) have found that nearly all Emirati women, who not only have careers but are leaders or are holding top positions within their fields, had travelled abroad and/or (interestingly enough) were motivated by their fathers or father figures. However, it argues against the lack of paternal understanding in Emirati women becoming educated initially found in Williams et al. (2013). The study by *Madsen (2010)* found that it was more common fathers understood the wishes of their daughters and believed in their empowerment. One interviewee stated that her father was a high-ranking military colonel and this motivated her to join the military (*Madsen, 2010*).³⁰

With initially conflicting findings from the two studies (*Madsen, 2010; Williams et al., 2013*), it is difficult to disclose a generality of women's experiences in regards to professional options, implementation of Emiratization and cultural barriers. However, in the latter part of the study by Williams et al. (2013), the investigation also discovered through applying the social constructivist framework, how Emirati women interpreted the "legitimacy of career paths within (the) particular culture [...] the father, as traditional head of the household in Emirati families was expected to be a significant factor" (Williams et al., 2013, p. 139). This discovery is distinctive to the previously noted finding, that the parents, together, have a difficulty in seeing the rational of their daughters having careers. Moreover, with other relational factors taken into the context of the study it was discovered that religious creeds of Islam dictated the father's own perspectives and views. As long as there is a balance between women's own decisions and the Islamic doctrines then, "the decisions and actions of Emirati women joining the workforce frame(s) the religious context of Islam" (Williams et al., 2013, p. 139). Therefore, this might indicate that Emirati fathers have a slightly more liberal interpretation of cultural traditions than Emirati mothers do.

What is apparent is that in the UAE, the civic façade of family structures must be repainted and parents must share the same liberal opinion in regards to their

³⁰ Madsen (2010) states that this is a common denominator in Western women's history as well, "Fathers also proved to be important influences in most of the past research based on Western samples [...]" (*Madsen, 2010, p. 85*).

daughters, or "*The gender gap will remain until opinions change*" (Almazroui, 2014). It is "*Changing minds on women's role*" (Al Khoori, 2014), which is the core issue for ensuing women being able to experience the implementation of a national gender all-inclusive workforce and furthermore, women in leadership positions later on in their career paths. With the world becoming more globalized, Emiratis and the national program also seems to have been influenced by the international community for women's empowerment and the politically changing civic and cultural perceptions this arena seeks to shape.

5.4 THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS

The United Nations' (UN) Beijing Platform for Women and the UN Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs) have been predominant international conventions influencing UAE politics on women. Under MDG protocol, "A requirement for country governments engagement with MDG planning was for national gender plans to be implemented and national government machineries created to monitor women's progress" (Metcalf, 2011, p. 132). The UAE has considered the conventions and effectively implemented them in national politics. For example, though there are many counter-arguments to the presence and inclusion of women in the military, usually relate to women's childbearing ability. It is also often argued as a reason for the 'un-deployment' of women in direct combat. In the UAE, even with a stagnating or even lowering birth rate of Emiratis, the government has kept an incremental focus on rebuilding the national population vis-a-vis national defense or security policies and the creeds of both the UN Beijing Platform and the MDGs. All employed females in the UAE national Armed Forces have rights related to maternity leave and family upbringing with guaranteed state sponsored economic stability (Almazroui, 2014).

The national legislations on women have also been pursued in accordance with other international responsibilities. One example is the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which obliges all signatories and the member states who have ratified the convention, to exercise and implement all the articles in the national policies. In correlation to the previous

discussions, CEDAW Article 5 requires: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures: (a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women; (b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development [...]" (United Nations, *CEDAW Convention*, 1979, Article 5). While CEDAW mentions women's right to work (*Chishti, 2012*) and breaking down gender-based stereotypes, it does not explicitly state women's right to acquire all forms of citizenship duty such as a right to be included in national militaries and its combat roles. Article 11 of the Convention does however, highlight, that all efforts to end systematic policy-discrimination towards women needs to be enforced.³¹ What could be argued as coming closer to women's rights to defend the country or participate in security and defense affairs, under international law, has to do with the precepts to nationality and citizenship rights described in CEDAW. For example, Article 7 of the Convention stipulates, "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country [...]" (United Nations, *CEDAW Convention*, 1979).

CEDAW has in a way contributed to the UAE's own version of affirmative action towards women's participation in the civic duty/ citizenship sphere. For example, one article in *The National* describes, "defending the Union is a sacred duty of every citizen" (UAEinteract, 9 December 2014). Despite this, some scholars (*Chishti, 2014 and; Devriese, 2008*) would contend that there is still a degree of hindrance to the full implementation of CEDAW in the UAE due to Islamic law. Chishti (2012) makes a reference to the Qur'anic verse 2:228: *And women have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a*

³¹ Article 11 outlines, "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, in particular: (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, and "The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service [...]"(United Nations, *CEDAW Convention*, 1979, Article 11).

degree over them'. The initial rule explicated in the verse refers to another division of gender-roles according to the Shari'a; where men are protectors and women are protected (as discussed in 4.1). Despite the strong critiques, the steps taken to implement such international laws and to revise Islamic law, has in the UAE been very prompt considering, *"In other countries, women have had to fight for their political rights, whereas women in the UAE have been granted these rights, so let us never take our rights for granted. We shall remember every right entails responsibilities and we will work hard to live up to the expectations of our leaders and our society"* (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, 2010). The statement made by an unknown interviewee in the report, presents a very interesting detail: the rapid development and implementation of these rights and acts towards women's improvement in the UAE society have not necessary come from women's own movements or instigations. Yet, some of the approaches to include women in the public sector have had the task of including women in male dominated spheres in a very creative way. It has been creative for multiple reasons, to protect women (see discussion in 4.1), to uphold religious norms and to ensure women could participate even in traditionally male professions (e.g. the military). The section below will more precisely discuss Major Al Mansouri as an example of how the discussed Emirati politics have played into the inclusion of women in its Armed Forces.

5.5 FEMALE BODY POLITICS AND MAJOR AL MANSOURI

The conscription requirements and regulations formalized in the National Conscription Law; Federal Law No. 06 for the Year 2014 (*UAEinteract*, 9 December, 2014) articulates women have to have at least 80 per cent or higher in grade point average (GPA) if they should be allowed to conscribe to military duty.³² In general, those who finish with high grade point average and who then commit to serve their duty, tend to advance to the more complex positions within the military (*Business*

³² Federal Law No. 06 for the Year 2014 is premised on Article No. 43 in the United Arab Emirates Constitution, "which states that defending the Union is a sacred duty of every citizen and national service is an honor for citizens as per the law" (*UAEinteract*, 9 December 2014).

Monitor, Q3, 2014) such as fighter jet pilots or the Special Forces. In other words, this may be put in place in order to grant the more advanced positions in the military to those with a higher education, which consequently would be Emirati women. This corresponds well with the very selective rates of air force personnel which comprises of about 2,500 out of the total military force standing at around 51,000 (*Business Monitor, Q3, 2014*). However, it is currently unknown how many of the 2,500 air force personnel in the UAE are women and the amount of female air force bomber pilots.

The requirements to enter the air force usually are not just based physical strength but also on high IQs and prior attainments of secondary educations within related fields (such as engineering, biology, mathematics and chemistry). The background of Major Al Mansouri has in relation, been reported during the past six months in Gulf news. Publicized information describes Al Mansouri graduated from Khalifa bin Zayed Air College in 2007. Prior to that, she had received a Bachelor's degree in English literature from a university in Abu Dhabi. She entered university with a 93 per cent grade average, which had been attained by the time of her high school graduation (*The National Staff, 11 June 2014*). Nevertheless, some Gulf news reports have had headlines that described, "Easier norms ordered for women to join reserve service" (WAM, 26 August 2014). The "easier norms" for women in the military revolve around the mandatory guardian consent for all Emirati women and not an "alleviated" military training for women. While this is utterly based on a guardianship tradition in Emirati culture, where the male head of the family holds responsibility for the security of the women in the family, improvements are being exerted to see how to accommodate women's own empowerment and choice for professions when they are of legal age (i.e. 18 years old).³³

In relation, a brief 'Opinion' in *The National* deliberates on the concept of women in the UAE acquiring leadership positions. Women, who have as Al Mansouri climbed the ranks and become key actors in UAE defense, are deemed as holding

³³ Emirati tradition to guardianship is premised on Sunni interpretation of protecting women along with various Islamic Jurisprudence developed by *Caliphs*.

leadership positions (Narayan, 2014). Currently, Al Mansouri is a Veterans Operations Pilot in the UAE Armed Forces Air Force and flies F-16 Block 60 aircrafts. These types of bomber planes are some of the most advanced technologically, in the world of war aircrafts and requires extensive training and experience. The writings on the wall are therefore loud and clear, "To climb up the ranks and run a company requires certain characteristics: perfectionism, efficiency, vision, creativity and courage. Women in top roles must have all these qualities" (Narayan, 2014). On top of that, in countries where cultures have been built on patriarchy and where the role of women has been very conservative or restricted from the public sphere, these women have had to acquire a deal of other additional skills to climb the career-ladder. Not only have they had to remove themselves from stereotypes and gender dichotomies, but they have also had to do exceptionally well in school. After having described the politics of the Emirates in regards to women, the military and the case example of Major Al Mansouri in the Armed Forces, the impact of religion has been an underlying topic of all discussion. Therefore, as Islamic religion already has been mentioned several times throughout this paper (and as being extremely important to the Emirati society, the Emirati women and Government politics), the following section will elaborate more specifically on Islamic law in relation to Emirati women, the Armed Forces and war.

6 THE ROLE OF RELIGION, ITS RELATIONSHIP TO EMIRATI WOMEN AND THE MILITARY

From the inauguration of UAE independence and as part of the grounds of nationalism, the leaders of the United Arab Emirates have purportedly been committed to establishing equal benefits for men and women. The policies are referred to as deriving from tenets of Islam and Islamic law and correlating with universal social justice principles. However, it is tricky to implement because it requires that Emirati nationals accept the perception of the religious doctrines that have been determined by the policymakers. For example, if some of the Emirati

women have a more conservative understanding of Islamic creeds, the notion of liberal politics on women can seem troublesome with other concepts in Islamic law. This section will go deeper into the various sectors of Islamic law, its apprehension in UAE society and in relation to women.

6.1 MUFTIS, SHARI 'A TRADITIONS AND EMIRATI WOMEN

In the United Arab Emirates, there is no separation between the state and the practice of religion. The official religion on the state is Islam. The Islamic law *Shari 'a*, has a primary influence on all aspects of Emirati life and the country's politics.³⁴ The understanding by the Abu Dhabi Government is that incorporating Islam in politics and state affairs is a way to ensure all Muslims of the country are able to uphold and follow all creeds of Islamic law and so they can serve as dutiful and observing Muslims. A key component of the formality of installing and executing *Shari 'a* in the UAE is to inquire with national *Muftis*. They are the Muslim clerics (also called: *Caliphs*) who support the state system as they are specialists in Islamic jurisprudence. *Muftis* give *fatwas* (e.g. understandings of Islamic law) or *Shuras* the understandings deemed as wanted by the rest of the Muslim community.³⁵ Once this is interpreted and outlined by the *Muftis*, the discretionary powers of the Sheikhs legally allows them to implement the jurisprudence of *Shari 'a* by various political measures.

One example of this formality in the United Arab Emirates are the Friday Prayers. Friday prayers occur on every first work-free day of the week, Friday. The Friday prayer is one of the fundamental traditions held in most Muslim countries and a key component and source of the political-philosophical messaging-medium by *Muftis* and public officials to the Muslim community. Prayers are delivered publically by *Imams* and are broadcasted through the national TV programs, on the radio and on

³⁴ Policy and politics being governed by the religious laws and doctrines of Islam, is in Arabic called: *Siyāsa* (see Glossary for a thorough description).

³⁵ Islamic jurisprudence is in Arabic and Islamic terms denoted as, *Fiqh*. Furthermore, for explicit descriptions of *Caliphs*, *Mufti*, *Fatwa* and *Shura* see Glossary.

street speakers.³⁶ In the UAE, the government each week chooses a new topic, message or theme from public or current international issues, they confer with *Muftis* and then they are broadcasted. Usually, the topics are based on current events that the government wishes to bring awareness to the public.

In recent years, the topic of women, nationalism and military duty has more often been delivered at the Friday prayers. The national newspaper and the media have followed up to provide more rudimentary rather than philosophical information. As Rippin (2005) argues, the idea of this is to make Islam and *Shari 'a* remain relevant in a changed and modern world. In the UAE, the Friday prayer has been a way to maintain a very important Islamic tradition while using the medium to change earlier presumptions of women. Some of the ideas that the government seeks to change is the belief that women are always a distraction to men and to negate that women should still be restricted from the public sphere (Rippin, 2005) – as discussed in previous sections. Although, men and women are still separated during prayers, the UAE Government does not see the rationale in keeping women from all other public places during non-prayer times. However, some directives of the *Shari 'a* on women are not as straightforward and *Muftis* are still conferring on how to correctly interpret them in the modern context. The quest is thus, for the Islamic jurists and interpreters of Islamic Law to decipher and then describe their understandings to the public, presumably with women's rights in mind and the Sheikhs' political support.

The Friday sermons have also been very relevant in motivating women to join the military and influencing public opinion on the issue. One recent prayer pronounced how, "The Law on national services and reserve [...] has given the young Emirati men and women the honor and dignity to join the compulsory military service. Engagement of Emirati youth in national military service [...] is a religious obligation and a sacred duty" (United Arab Emirates, *Friday Sermon*, 24 January 2014). By using the Friday prayer and having Imams disseminate this message, is a strong way to legally, but also philosophically affect Emiratis' opinions to women's role in the

³⁶ In most Muslim countries, the weekend and work-free days officially commence Thursday afternoon at 17.00. The weekend ends on Saturday and work resumes on Sundays.

society. Though traditionally *Shari 'a* dictates a very stereotypical gender role between a man and a woman, the Friday prayer partnered up with national legislations and religious laws has clearly altered early religious ideas of Islamic gender roles.

6.2 WOMEN, SHARI'A AND A 'GENDER REGIME'?

Previously, traditional interpretations of Islam divided people of the community into three categories of: 1. the unbelievers, 2. slaves, 3. women. Out of the three categories, women were seen as worst placed due to Islamic law as, "the slave could be freed by his master; the unbeliever could at any time become a believer by his own choice [...] only the woman was doomed forever to remain in what she was" (Lewis, 2004:67 found in Altwaiji, 2014, p. 318). However, it should be noted that Lewis was a very neo-colonialist scholar and for that reason Altwaiji (2014) maintains a very critical position of the explication of the 'three categories of people according to Islam. The *Shari'a* has traditionally maintained that men were the 'protectors' and the 'breadwinners' of Muslim families; women were required to stay at home and were not encouraged to get jobs. The liberal interpretation of Islamic law according to the Government of Abu Dhabi indicates that these earlier interpretations are highly conflicting (*Metcalf, 2011*) to international conventions on women's inclusion and empowerment (see discussion in 5.4). According to the *Shari 'a* it is written that a man who cannot fulfill his duty as the protector of the family, or essentially provide for his family, is sacredly *aib* (Arabic for 'shame'). Despite this, the Abu Dhabi Government is trying to stray the Emirati understanding of *aib* by actively pursuing public decrees that push women to first become educated, then to take on jobs, and finally enter formal full-time employment. As such, the patriarchal traditions are no longer the cornerstone of the Emirati society.

The past and present "relationship" of women and the *Shari 'a* have undoubtedly evolved from an inherent 'Islamic Gender Regime' (*Metcalf, 2011*). The Islamic Gender Regime "(wa)s premised on the biological differences between men and women, and (that) these biological differences determine(d) social function"

(Metcalf, 2011, p. 133). Furthermore, gender-roles is described as, "socially proscribed expectations of behavior associated with one's sex" (Carreiras and Kümmel, 2008, p. 50). However, according to most Muslim countries gender is intrinsically the same as one's sex. However, with women in the Armed Forces, and previous understandings of gender-sex roles according to Islamic jurisprudence, the Islamic gender regime is changing. For example, though Metcalfe (2011) found that in the UAE men and women believe at first, "it is the man's responsibility to support and protect [...] the family", the orthodoxy of the belief and its implementation might not be as strict now that women are allowed in the military and can essentially be caretakers of themselves. Emirati women are earning money and entering politics, which means they are gaining power and thus, no longer feel morally bound to previous religious-ideological reins that have been described by the Shari'a and/or constructed by men. An important part of Emirati women entering careers is that they also gain a legal standing due to their acquisitions of jobs in the public sector. In fact, one example is how the Abu Dhabi Government has sought to highlight in public reports (Brooks, 2002) the clash between wages and women generally earning less. It has even become a part of constitutional law. Essentially, with a profession in the Armed Forces, women have reverted, distorted the social-religious rule, and begun to disperse the Islamic gender regime (Metcalf, 2011).

The traditional concept of a woman's "modesty" is another way to understand how the gender regime has changed. As women are entering public spaces and are engaging with people outside of the family, they are developing new frameworks for what it means to maintain Muslim 'women's modesty'. One recent *fatwa* drawn by the Abu Dhabi Government, "State(s) that parents should encourage their daughters to go out and work in order to benefit society" (Williams et al., 2013, p. 140).³⁷ The *fatwa* gives responsibility to both the mother and father of the family as well as, their daughter(s) for developing the role of women in the society. Even more, the *fatwa* indicates co-responsibility between men and women. This way, a clampdown on gender-based domination in decision-making is occurring and women are more regularly required to make decisions within the family. Seen from another perspective

³⁷ A *fatwa* is a religious declaration usually made by Imams or Islamic Jurists.

namely that of the state, the acquired responsibility of Emirati women is part of the so-called: patriarchal bargain (*Williams et al., 2013*) that has been ongoing in the UAE for the past thirty years and which seeks to change the society structure. Part of the 'patriarchal bargain' has in the UAE, also to create spaces for women to participate in professions and public spheres even though they have traditionally been male dominated. An example of this is the Khawlah Bint Al-Azwar Military School for women in the United Arab Emirates.

6.2.1 *NOT IN THE COMPANY OF MEN*

The Khawlah Bint Al Azwar Military School (KBAMS) is the UAE's and the region's first female only military college. The Khawlah Bint al Azwar Military School is dedicated to not only training formal and professionalized soldiers, but also it is also specifically mandated to educate soldiers for peacekeeping missions and humanitarian aid and assistance. For example, the UAE contributed and stationed military personnel to Kuwait in 1991 (Armed Forces and Government Spending under the "*United Arab Emirates Defense & Security Report*," 2011, Q4; Business Monitor International, 2014, p. 45). The women stationed were affiliated with the academy. The first batch of graduates from KBAMS was in 1992 (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, 2010, p. 8) and it has since, had many other graduates including Major Al Mansouri. The option for women to train in either an all-female military academy or a mixed-one, has allowed women in the UAE more freedom towards attaining a military profession depending on what they feel comfortable with due to some degree of precedence by Islamic law. Metcalfe (2011) found in her study that, UAE women purportedly, "feel they have greater social protection from sexual advances" (Metcalfe, 2011, p. 135) due to the separate training facilities.

In addition, segregated training facilities also uphold some Islamic jurisprudence (i.e. *Caliphs' Figh*) that has traditionally dictated that women must limit

their interaction with men outside their family (*Chishti, 2012*).³⁸ This also falls in line with some of the findings from Madsen (2010) and Williams et al. (2013) as discussed in section 5.3. Researchers (*Gallant, S. and Pounder, 2013*) also argue this is something the women themselves have requested so that they can uphold cultural norms and maintain their own wellbeing in a physically and mentally demanding workplace. AL-Oraimi (2008) discerns KBAMS gives a leeway to Islamic jurisprudences that say women are socially prohibited from being in the military and engaging in combat. With the establishment of KBAMS, the UAE has shown that the country has considered the difficulty in managing sexual harassment, fulfilled some women's own wishes and cultural/ religious creeds. Even more, Emirati women argue that having a separate military academy has given them a broader opportunity to expand their skills (*Al Dhaeri, 2014; Al Wasmi, 2014; Brooks, 2002; The National Staff, 11 June, 2014*) and doing so without facing competitive pressure from male colleagues (*WAM, 31 August, 2014*).

Nevertheless, there are those who argue against having separate training academies for men and women in national militaries (*Carreiras and Kümmel, 2008; Kronsell, 2012 and; Sjöberg, 2013*). The critique is that it hinders cohesiveness and group-orientation, which is otherwise vital for the success of any given armed force. According to the authors, cohesion is "essentially based upon the presence of *trust* among group members, both in their own ability and that of their peers" (*Carreiras and Kümmel, 2008, p. 23*). If men and women are to fight together they, also need to be trained and educated in combined military academies (*Carreiras and Kümmel, 2008*). Teamwork is based on trust and trust derives from knowing and understanding each other. The authors (*Carreiras and Kümmel, 2008*) contend that co-ed training in the military is imperative to task successes as whatever party participates in a military exercise it always completely dependent on the others in the group. Hence, according to Carreiras and Kümmel (2008) trust and reliance in the Armed Forces can only be built with excessive exposure to each other and constant socialization between the sexes (if it should be a successful co-ed armed force). In the case of Al Mansouri,

³⁸ *Figh* is Islamic jurisprudence. See more at Glossary.

though she graduated from KBAMS, she also trained with male colleagues when she made it to the Air Force. Al Mansouri has explicated in some interviews that she experienced no differential treatment due to her gender and sex from male colleagues.³⁹ As one interview describes,

"As for being in competition with her male counterparts, the Major said this was never an issue, she (was) focused on competing with herself to improve her skills. There is also no difference between men and women with regards to training and assignments. Everybody is required to have the same high level of combat competence [...]. She received no special treatment because of her gender" (The National Staff, 11 June 2014).

The comfort of Emirati women in training for the Armed Forces is therefore, very individualistic. Emirati women can choose to be educated in separated military academies or they may like Major Al Mansouri, do their training "in the company of men" (*Draper, 2014*). Nevertheless, the outcomes of having separate military academies for men and women has yet to be investigated and the results of the effectivity should be measured. AL-Oraimi (2008) concludes that even with the option of training separately from men, Emirati women (even those who have graduated from KBAMS) face other underlying struggles similar to what has been found in *Boyce and Herd (2003)*; *Kronsell (2005)*; *Matthews and Ender (2009)*; and *Sjöberg (2013)*. Women are still subject to questions on their capacities and leadership capabilities in the armed forces. This occurs not only domestically but also internationally.

7 SPECIFIC GULF AND WESTERN MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN AT WAR

According to some authors (*Carroll, 2014*; *Stachowitsch, 2013*) the media has had a tremendous role in discerning women and their placement (or displacement) in

³⁹ For more information on the interview, see reference and CNN interview with Becky Anderson (2014).

militaries around the world. In some reports, women in the military are described as participating due to national duty, while in other articles women's inclusion has yet to find a place outside a reference to traditional gender dichotomies. Depending on whether the information on the case of Major Al Mansouri comes from a local newspaper / news forum or from a Western source, the written language in each provides a clear discrepancy on the perception to Arab women's role in society and consequently, in the military. This section will draw on examples that are more concrete in order to see how the media portrayals relate to the previous discussions in the paper. The section will also more deliberately make use of the Neo-Orientalist theoretical framework, as the study will be coming to its conclusion.

7.1 *THE NATIONAL & GULF NEWS ON EMIRATI MILITARY WOMEN*

In June 2014, the United Arab Emirate's government sponsored national newspaper, *The National* had a front-page headline that read: "Emirati woman who reached for the skies [...]" (The National Staff, 11 June 2014). The title was striking and other similar *The National* articles followed pursuit. *The National* and the *National Gazette* have combined done a great deal of reporting on Emirati women (and women in the Gulf region); their conscription, acquisition of military leadership positions and related it to reports on fighting terrorism and DAESH (Khan, 2014; WAM, 30 September, 2014). According to Stachowitsch (2013), the media has in the Gulf, had a pertinent role in motivating women to join the national military as it has been writing enthusiastically and positively about their inclusion. Apart from *The National* and the *National Gazette*, other media accounts from the Gulf (Al Dhaheri, 2014; Asfour, 2014; Carroll, 2014; Ghazal, 2014; Gornall, 2014; Khatib, 2014; Khoori, 2014; Salama, 2015; Subhaihi, 2014; The National Staff, 10 June, 2014; WAM, 30 September, 2014; WAM, 9 December, 2014) have reported on Major Al Mansouri's actions. These articles describe the event as a way of showing duty to the nation and protecting the interests of Emiratis. Therefore, the media in the Gulf has also established a symbolic motive of an Arab-Muslim woman in war. In addition, all the aforementioned reports correlate with the image and role of Al Mansouri and Emirati

women increasingly becoming a vital part of the development of the Emirati nation and its "productive populace".⁴⁰

Apart from newspapers, a report by the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs published a report. It makes suggestions for the advancement of Emirati women and at the same time, addresses the issue of women's key role in Emirati national development.⁴¹ The report begins by addressing the changing perspectives and cultures in the Arab world as it writes, "Despite the many preconceptions and stereotypes with regards to women in the Arab world, the lives of women in the UAE (and) such stereotypes do not necessarily apply to this country" (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, 2010, p.3). It is therefore, believed that the Abu Dhabi Government is aware of what 'outsiders' view of women within the military and their supposed "roles" in the society. Even more, it is interesting how the report refers to media coverage and informing nationals to keep updated through these sources. By doing so, Emirati women's role and rights in the UAE society becomes something publically conferred and imprinted due to media coverage. Furthermore, in its "Overview" the report denotes,

"women have always been the backbone of family life and social structure of the UAE and they continue to remain an integral part of maintaining the nation's Islamic heritage and national culture [...] (with this in mind) the government's strategic vision for women is based on providing them with the necessary tools to achieve professional excellence" (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, 2010, p. 3).

The report clearly emphasizes women are sought after in the upholding of the society and implicitly this means in the productive part of society - not just family life, but the working force. Further along the lines of the report, it is described the UAE strives to be an example not only regionally but also in the rest of the world.

There has been an obvious increase in media reports on women in war and in the UAE military, yet there are still earlier news reports of Emirati women's participation and contribution to the national defense. In 2012, one Gulf News article

⁴⁰ The notion of the nation's 'productive workforce' refers to the participants and the employees in public sector jobs.

⁴¹ The report is titled: "*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*". In addition, it was created in 2009 and published in 2010.

wrote, "UAE women prove competency in military" (WAM, 8 July 2012). Therefore, Gulf reporting on women in the military is not necessarily something new. What is more recent is the increased attention to the need for an expanded military force (which is gender-inclusive) and the idea of imprinting women's involvement in the fight against terrorism to the entire population. For example, one article had the headline: "*Sheikha Fatima applauds Emirati women who signed up for national service*" (The National Staff, 5 August, 2014). The title eludes the UAE leadership with the media, enabling Emirati women's inclusion in the public sphere of defense and security. Though it would be unfair to argue that most of the attention has increased due to the case event of Major Mariam Al Mansouri, there is still some truth to the notation. Besides applauding the increased voluntary conscription of Emirati women in the military, *The National* has also gone through extensive measures to highlight the related issues to women such as the wage gaps, the cultural barriers and the role of the state and its politics to which these women's experiences revolve around (as mentioned in the earlier sections of this paper).

Nevertheless, some articles (Ghazal, 2014) criticize Gulf news coverage of these issues. The critique goes that not enough reporting is made on women in war. *Gulf News* wrote an article with the title: "*the unworthy Jihad Janes [...] get all the attention*" (Ghazal, 13 November 2014). Ghazal was arguing women who serve the country by protecting the nation and its borders, need more support for their efforts than those who conduct violence. A later report related to Ghazal's argument read, "*Women warriors deserve credit for fighting against ISIL*" (Ghazal, 2014). These titles have a tremendous weight in the public conception to war. Unfortunately, the arguments of Ghazal (2014) and the media coverage of Al Mansouri yet alone Arab-Muslim are not necessarily shared globally.

7.2 WESTERN MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF ARAB WOMEN AT WAR

Sexed bodies (*Sjöberg et al., 2010*), women with big guns (*Stachowitsch, 2013*) or Muslim female fighters becoming fashion icons (*Ismail, 2014*) are just some of the symbolic representations some Western media have created to make an understanding

of Arab women in wars. Other attempts to stereotype Arab women and those in national militaries have been to place them in country specific images. As sex is often a selling point in advertisements and commercials, Asfour (2014) describes that when Major Al Mansouri's story is covered she is continually placed in the stereotypical American 1950s "poster girl image"(Asfour, 2014 and; Ghazal, 2014).⁴² The activities and the participation of Major Al Mansouri have seemingly needed a symbolic representation in order for the American public to understand her participation in the Emirates' Armed Forces and her role in the international security coalition, the Anti-ISIL Coalition. Simply put, the Major's role as an Arab or even Muslim female Emirati fighter has seemed incomprehensible and does not match any previous depictions the West has made of women in Muslim countries.⁴³ The so-called 'pretty' fighter pilot (Asfour, 2014) that Major Al Mansouri was patronized as overrides the focus of her actions. When reading the title: "the pretty fighter pilot" the instantaneous awareness one gets is on the Major's appearance. Suddenly, the female role model and the legends of how *Arab-Muslim women fight in wars too*, is lost amidst Western fascination with sexualizing women and framing them in earlier imperialist symbolism.

On Fox News, the daily anchor program: "The Five" discussed the event of Major Al Mansouri participating in the Anti-ISIL Coalition airstrikes. When delivering the report on-air, one of the male anchors said, "After she bombed them (the terrorists in Syria and Iraq), she couldn't even park it," speaking of the F-16 bomber plane that Major Al Mansouri had flown.⁴⁴ One of the female reporters present, thinking she would address her male colleague's discriminatory comment responded, "*Hell came down on ISIS because the first female air force pilot for the UAE [...] dropped bombs on ISIS [...]. I wish it were an American Pilot; I'll take a woman doing this any day [...]. I hope that hurt extra bad for you, because in some Arab countries women can't even drive*" (Carroll, 2014; CNN, 26 September 2014).

⁴² To see an example of a classical U.S military poster-girl from the 1940s/50s see: *Appendices*.

⁴³ For example, Saudi Arabia's also has female fighter pilots. The first was Hanadi Al-Hindi (*Maki, 2014*). There are in addition a number of other females in the KSA Air Force.

⁴⁴ The video reference can be found in BIBLIOGRAPHY under, *Lifestyle News (2014)*.

Perhaps the female reporter thought her comment would amend the clear discrimination of not only a woman in the military but also an Arab woman initially expressed by her male colleague. However, the statement, which purportedly made it seem even worse that a *woman* dropped bombs, only serves as an indicator of how women, when in the Armed Forces, are seen as a bewildering thing. Even more, the latter reference to women not even being able to drive shows the general misleading perception there is to women in Muslim countries and the drawing on *Wahhabis* creeds (which in fact, is only practiced in KSA). The example is not a representation of all media accounts from the United States of the event. There were many responses to the comments made on “The Five”. CNN (*Carroll, 2014; CNN, 26 September 2014*) condemned the mocking comments and another article by CNN described, "It's important for us -- moderate Arabs, moderate Muslims -- to step up and say this is a threat against us [...] this is a threat to our way of life" (CNN, 26 September 2014). The latter CNN report however, lacked in follow up material that could show a separate window of information on for example, “Emirati way of life” or a study on “women in the military of Arab countries” (etc.) as this would inform readers better on the differences in politics and events in the Middle East.

Despite some exceptions to discriminatory reporting of Arab-Muslim women and countries, other media depictions of women in war, even those that seek to applaud their efforts, can be perilous. Even more so, when the portrayals propagate women in a strengthened character of the 'beautiful souls' (*Kronsell, 2012*). Accordingly, it is believed that woman would never and could never engage or handle lethal weaponry. Women as ‘beautiful souls’ carry out peaceful conflict resolutions and practice an ‘ethics of care’. The idea is that women engage with their enemy and act in peacekeeping missions, non-violently. Other ways Western media have done similar symbolic coverages of Arab/ Muslim women in war, are reports on the female forces of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Some of the headlines on the PKK have read, "*Female fighters of the PKK may be the Islamic State's worst nightmare*" (Robson, 2014) or, “take that ISIS from *A Woman's Touch*” (Robson, 2010), and “*Why women fight against ISIS*” (Ghitis, 2014). The titles succumb to

portraying Arab-Muslim women at war in a very demeaning manner. Similar portrayals have even, been used by the fashion industry.

Ismail (2014) writes, H&M recently got caught in a media storm as it tried to profit from marketing Neo-Orientalist portrayals of the female fighters of the Middle East (e.g. the PKK). Ismail does indicate that the use of the female fighters as fashion icons did not fit well with the public. The slogan H&M used for selling khaki military pants was 'Pershmerga Chic'. Ismail goes on to explain that, "In a mediatized landscape where Muslim women are almost exclusively presented as subjugated or burqa-clad, female Pershmerga seem to have genuinely inspired people, offering an alternative image of the Muslim woman to a mainstream audience" (Ismail, 2014), that is why such media usage can be very destructive. Ismail lastly contends, that the women efforts are mocked in the sense that just as fashion swiftly changes with seasons, symbolically, so does the seriousness we consider of the Pershmerga women's acts. The problem with companies using these type of "catching headlines" or ways of selling items in advertisements is not premised on the argument that military wear should not be made popular (*al-Ameen, 2014; Ismail, 2014*). Instead, the issue is that women who fight should not have to be sexualized, sensationalized or commercialized within the media frenzy of myopic portrayals (*Dirik, 2014*).

The findings of media portrayals of Arab-Muslim women in war and more specifically, Major Al Mansouri were quite the opposite of those from the Gulf and the Emirates. The western reports (*CNN, 26 September 2014*) which did applaud Al Mansouri argued furthermore, that the United Arab Emirates is using a female to communicate a message to other Coalition states. Sjöberg (2013) denotes this practice as "gendered tactics used as communication among men and among states" (Sjöberg, 2013, p. 247). Hence, if the stipulation is true the investigation of Emirati women in the military opens up for a completely new window of discoveries (apart from the changing role of women in its society). The new window of discoveries may lay at an international level.

8 CONCLUSION

This thesis concludes that political directives of the United Arab Emirates have enabled the inclusion and participation of women in the military. Even more, the top-down approach to shaping Emirati women's own nationalistic and religious incentives has motivated more women to join the Armed Forces. It appears that the Sheikhs of the United Arab Emirates have made a commitment to define a role for women in the military and it will be interesting to observe how this may further develop. The Gulf media portrayals have clearly revealed some of the controversies around Arab women and women's overall engagement in the military; a typically male dominated profession. Nevertheless, the reports have also instigated the opportunities available to women due the development of women's empowerment in politics of the United Arab Emirates.

By using Major Mariam Al Mansouri as a case example of women's ability to obtain a leadership position in an Arab country's national armed forces, this thesis has also revealed that media portrayals from outside the Gulf region convey a biased perception of Arab women and an Arab country. The reports indicated potential cultural and gender biases by some media reports from the West against Arab culture, Muslim beliefs and women. Predominately, the reports from the United States suggested a very gender discriminatory perception of Emirati/Arab-Muslim women that fall in line with the Neo-Orientalist theoretical framework. Asfour (2014) states, "the US press are happy to defend Mansouri from schoolboy-style sexist jokes, [yet they] allow less overt sexist and racist assumptions about Islam or Arabs and social discrimination of the region to slip by" (Asfour, 2014). Why such biases are continually drawn upon in line with Neo-Orientalism, is still not understood. What is hypothesized is that, in a globalized world where states must engage in intergovernmental affairs to ensure security against international threats such as terrorism such perceptions of women, Arab-women and Arab-Muslim states may negatively affect intergovernmental efforts. This is due to the invertible neglect of recognizing social progress outside the Western hemisphere that have allowed women to gain an increased presence in national armed forces and consequently made them acquire leadership roles.

As national militaries commit to cooperative deterrence, women inevitably will be affecting the international arena on security relations. Sjöberg (2013) argues that this is *the genderization of international relations*. Although, Major Al Mansouri represents just one case study of women in the UAE Armed Forces it is rather intriguing that it has received such global attention. In this context, some experts argue against the possibility for individuals (e.g. women like Major Al Mansouri) to effect specific actions in and between states. Political Scientists like Alexander Wendt contend that, "individuals' actions can sometimes reverberate in the international arena, but the *individual* is not internationalized [...] any would-be individualist theory of how agents are constructed, can play only a causal but not constitutive role" (*statement by A. Wendt found in Sjöberg, 2013, pp. 168-69*). Sjöberg (2013) would not agree with Wendt's postulation as, the scholar holds the firm belief that the contemporary era is not a purely Westphalian system; it is state-oriented as it is non-state oriented. This is also, why Major Al Mansouri's act signifies the impact one woman can have on international relations and the *genderization* of it.

Therefore, the intrinsic case study proves to have a much larger impact than anticipated within the domestic Emirati context. It also why it is important to discern how the Neo-Orientalist portrayals are an interruption to collective international relations. The hope is therefore, that this thesis will inspire further studies on the gender-inclusive Armed Forces and the socio-political developments geared towards women in the United Arab Emirates. Moreover, how these issue-areas have an effect at the national as well as the global political level.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Map of the United Arab Emirates, illustrating the division of the seven Emirates.

APPENDIX B

List of all the Anti-ISIL Coalition Member States

APPENDIX C

The Gulf Cooperation Council

APPENDIX D

UAE Military Spending and Defense Policies

APPENDIX E

A portrait of UAE Major Mariam Al Mansouri in the cockpit of an F-16. The photograph was provided by the www.national.ae.com.

APPENDIX F

Major Al Mansouri walking alongside three other male colleagues at the Abu Dhabi, UAE Armed Forces Air Force Base. The National provided the photograph.

APPENDIX G

Classical poster-girl posters created sometime during the 1930s/40s by the United States Army Air Force.

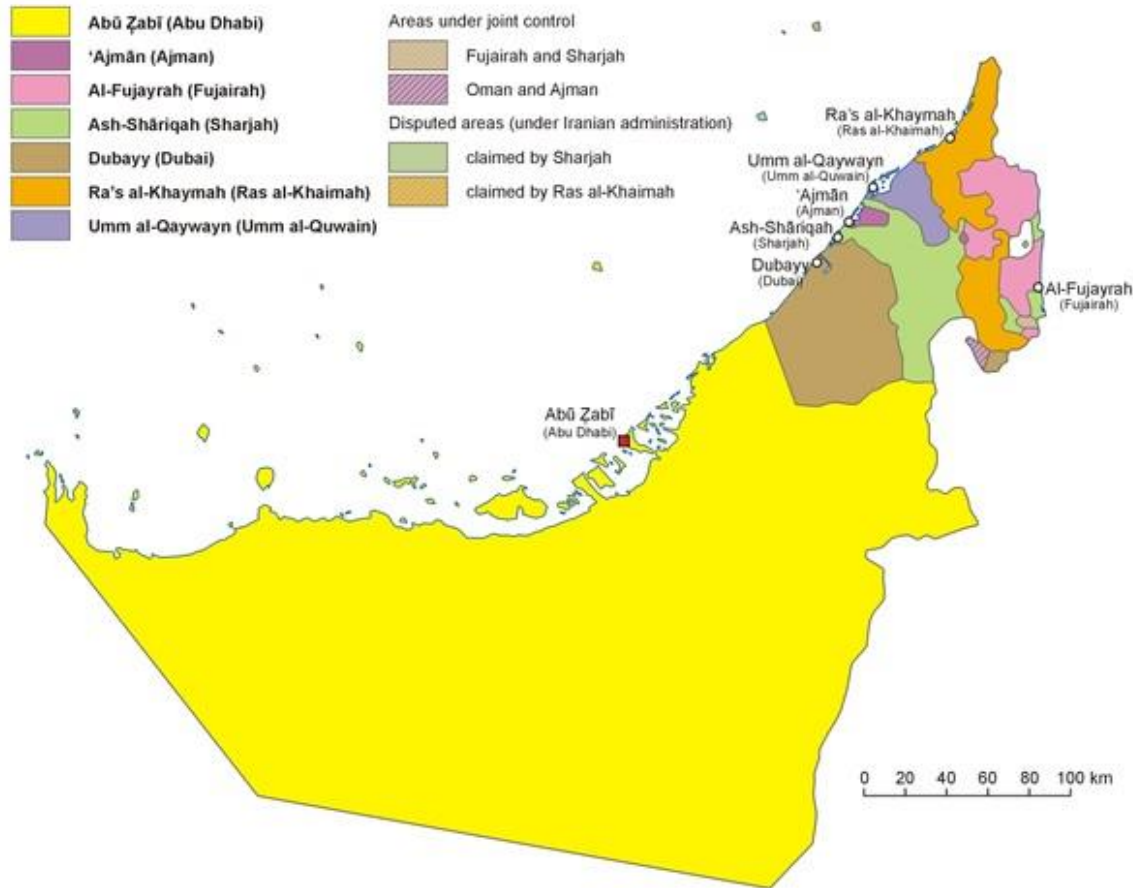
APPENDIX I

Full list of all FNC members

APPENDIX J

Full list of UAE Deputy Rulers

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

The following list of countries are members of the Anti-ISIL Coalition as of October 2014. It should be noted that there is a separation made of the member states who have contributed in combat / air strikes and those which have provided equipment to the forces of the Coalition. Apart from this, there are also member states that have contributed parallel to the efforts of the Coalition, by providing humanitarian aid on ground in Syria and in Iraq. Fantz (2014) has compiled the lists of member countries. See BIBLIOGRAPHY for full reference.

States that have participated in Airstrikes:

- Australia
- Bahrain
- Denmark
- Egypt
- France

- Germany
 - Jordan
 - Qatar
 - Turkey
- The United Arab Emirates
 - The United Kingdom
 - The Netherlands
- The United States of America

States that have provided military equipment to the Coalition:

- Albania
- Canada
- Croatia
 - Italy
- Poland

States that have provided humanitarian aid:

- New Zealand
- Romania
- South Korea

APPENDIX C

The Gulf Cooperation Council was created due to the geostrategic history of the Arabian Peninsula. In order to understand how the United Arab Emirates is unique, it is important to detail the differences to the other Gulf States and briefly describe the collaboration between them. The collective political identities deriving from the historical Gulf Maritime culture along the Arab littoral caused the normative social structure of the organization. Fast forwarding to the late 19th Century and early 20th Century and, when the United Kingdom (UK) began pulling out of the Middle East and the Gulf, contingencies towards the right to rule over the various tribes and populations had to be strategically and peacefully be resolved - even though shared history and culture bound the respect and collectiveness. The protectorate and the arrangements negotiated between various tribe leaders with British imperialists suddenly had no meaning. The Gulf was mapped and divided into territories by the British, the new independent states had to figure out a way to protect their own interests, maintain regional stability and out-manage the luring threats of Iran. Iran was particularly threatening as it clearly expressed its intentions and desire to take over parts of Bahrain and Qatar as the Middle East was in a clear political turmoil after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Among the Gulf States there were common issues at hand; how to overcome tensions of

borders, regime structures and how establish official state relations that collaboratively dealt with Iran. The domestic interests and national objectives along with a longstanding Khaleeji society formed the coalition.

One of the most conflicting threats to the cohesion of the GCC pertains to the differing political regimes of each GCC country. While as stated above, there are common issues, a shared history and borders, domestic political discourses have surfaced. This has in turn played into some pretty nasty and serious clashes between the leaders and effected an important distinction between the Gulf: politics are not bound to certain normative structures or collectively shared public policies. For example, during the past year the UAE, KSA and Bahrain have removed their ambassadors and closed down their diplomatic services in Doha, Qatar, as they were unhappy with the Government's close relationship with leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). The UAE, KSA and Bahrain all have noted the Muslim Brotherhood as designated terror organizations and each have them on their national terror list. The differentiation between the GCC states in terms of their political ideologies, is often noted in the following categorization: Bahrain is said to be the most democratic and liberal (or moderate of the Islamic states) and Qatar the least or; on the considerations and empowerment policies for women, the UAE is argued to be the most progressive while KSA is the most conservative. The differences are an important part of distinguishing the way the media can damage the reality through imagery of a Gulf country. Either the Gulf is generally characterize as rogue towards the rest of the international community or, as undemocratic and unequivocally negative and repressive towards the people where all together, the governments are not concerned with the rights of women. While it is outside the scope of this investigation to give accounts of the initiatives made and done by all Gulf countries setting the United Arab Emirates as a role model example of how one of these states acts suffices. The active membership and the duties exercised in relation to the current fight against the terrorist organization in Syria and Iraq, premises such a platform.

APPENDIX D

UAE Military Spending and Defense Policies

A report made by Business Monitor International gathered the expectancy rates of the United Arab Emirates' total defense spending for 2014. Though the year has passed and we have entered 2015, the numbers provide a clearer picture of the "price" which the government in Abu Dhabi is paying to rely on its security institutions. The information also provides a more comprehensive depiction of

how women (with their inclusion) in the establishment, share the impressive imperative. In 2013, it was expected that, "the UAE [would] spend up to AED90.8bn (about 240,750.0000 USD) in defense spending [and that this will] continue to rise throughout the remainder of the forecast period until 2018" (Business Monitor International, 2014, p. 7). Most of the spending and the resources to fund the high figure of defense investments, were premised on the healthy oil prices (Business Monitor International, 2014) and were used to advance the technology and modernize the overall military capacities of the Armed Forces. With the oil prices, now rapidly falling it is wondered whether this will have a heavy impact on the investments and the forecast projected. It is highly unlikely that the Government will dramatically change its funding and purchasing of military technology, but it may be that will mandatory conscription put in place, that manpower will be a more highlighted asset.

According to the core building blocks of the United Arab Emirates Constitution, the state must maintain a strong yet separate armed service. Each Emirate has its own security force (as mentioned in section: Background Information). Under the General Headquarters' (GHQ) command, the central government in Abu Dhabi has the united GHQ Armed Forces split into three sectors: the army, the navy and, the air force. The total number of military personnel under GHQ personnel reaches somewhere around 51,000 personnel (AL-Oraimi, 2008; Business Monitor International, 2011; Business Monitor International, 2014; Military Technology, 2009) though the number is reportedly increasing (see Emirati Females in the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces). Defense politics in the UAE have been sorted out so that the security of the nation is protected by its national Armed Forces until a foreign invasion occurs. Then, the country is only capable of withstanding attack for a short period of time (Business Monitor International, 2011). Apart from national defense sources, it depends on support from the Gulf Cooperation Council forces (see also footnote: 40 and 43) and in addition, it has mutual defense support from the UK and U.S.A and, other allies such as France (Business Monitor International, 2014; Foley, 1999; Military Technology, 2009).

APPENDIX E



APPENDIX F



APPENDIX G



APPENDIX I

As of March, 2015 the members of the FNC are as follows: Prime Minister of and Minister of Defense: Vice-President H.H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum; H.H Shiekh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; H.H Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidency Affairs; H.H Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Minister of Finance, Deputy Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai; H.H Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Minister of Foreign Affairs; His Excellency (H.E) Sheikh Nayhan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development; H.E Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research; H.E. Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi Minister of International Cooperation and Development - former Minister of Economy; H.E Mohammed Abdullah Al Gergawi Minister of Cabinet Affairs of the Federal Government of the UAE, Deputy Chairman of the Ministerial

Council for Services, Deputy Chairman of the Emirates Investment Authority and Chairman of Dubai Holding; H.E Sultan Saeed Al Mansouri Minister of Economy; H.E Mariam Al Roomi Minister of Social Affairs; H.E Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi Minister of Education; H.E Abdul Rahman Mohammed bin Nasser Al Owais Minister of Health; H.E Saqr Ghobash Minister of Labor; H.E Dr. Anwar Mohammed Qarqash Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs; H.E Sultan bin Saeed Al Badi Minister of Justice; H.E Dr. Rashid Ahmad Bin Fahad Minister of Environment and Water; H.E Suhail Mohamed Faraj Al Mazrouei Minister of Energy; H.E Dr. Abdulla Bilhaif Al-Nuaimi Minister of Public Works; H.E Obaid Humaid Al Tayer Minister of State for Financial Affairs; H.E Dr. Maitha Salem Alshamsi Minister of State and Chairwoman of Marriage Fund Institution; H.E Reem Ebrahim Al Hashimi Minister of State and Chairperson of Dubai Cares; H.E Sultan Bin Ahmed Al Jaber Minister of State and Chief Executive Officer of Masdar; H.E Abdulla Ghobash Minister of State and Chairman of The National Human Resource Employment and Development Authority, "Tanmia" Board Directors, a Board Member of DIFC, and a Board Member of Noor Islamic Banking Group; H.E Najla Mohammed Al Awar Secretary General of the UAE Cabinet and Secretary General of the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs" (See more at <http://uaecabinet.ae/en/TheCabinet/Pages/CabinetMembers.aspx>).

APPENDIX J

The Deputy Rulers of each of the Emirates are as follows: Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Finance and Industry; Sheikh Ahmed bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah; Sheikh Khalid bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah shared with, Sheikh Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah and; Sheikh Hamad bin Saif Al Sharqi, Deputy Ruler of Fujairah. Apart from this, the Crown Princes of the UAE are: General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nayhan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Chairman of the Executive Council of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi; Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah, Chairman of the Sharjah Executive Council; Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah; Sheikh Saud bin Rashid Al Mu'alla, Crown Prince of Umm al-Qaiwain and; Sheikh Ammar bin Humaid Al Nuaimi, Crown Prince of Ajman (*United Arab Emirates Yearbook, 2007*).

GLOSSARY

Allāh: the Divine/ God of all Muslims/ Arabic for God

Caliphate / Khalīfa: the denotation for an Islamic state led by a supreme religious and political leader

Fatwā: Arabic for the legal opinion / learned interpretation on the *Shari 'a*. A qualified Mufti (i.e. an Islamic scholar on the *Shari 'a* usually gives this

Figh: is Arabic for Islamic jurisprudence. It translates into the 'human interpretation of Islamic law or understanding of *Shari 'a*. Usually, it relates to social policies or the observance of social norms according to the *Shari 'a*. *Figh*-schools have also been created to develop and teach on 'the theory of Islamic law'

Hadiths: In English, this translates to the traditions. In the *Qur'an*, it is also the teachings or sayings of the Prophet Mohammed

Hurriyya: this is the Islamic term for 'the state of being a perfect slave to *Allāh*'. *Some *Fatwas* describe this as the concept of 'freedom'. The understanding of 'freedom' in Islamic terms is completely different from what it means in the West. 'Freedom' in Islam, is being able to completely 'give yourself to following *Allāh*'s way' and practicing beliefs written in the *Qur'an*'

Ijma: a scholarly consensus made on the *Shari 'a*

Imam: is a leader; the Muslim Sovereign - could be a worship leader of a mosque or of a Muslim community.

La Dīniyya: In Arabic, this means something or someone who is none-religious

Mufti: Arabic for an Islamic scholar on the *Shari 'a*

Qiyas: legal analogy made on the *Shari 'a*

Qur'an: the compilation of religious texts in Islam

Shari 'a: this is the legislation for Muslims. It encompasses a moral code, is the religious law and the prophetic religion. The *Shari 'a* is divided under five categories: (1) the obligatory, (2) the recommended, (3) the permitted, (4) the prohibited and (5) the disliked. All categories refer to actions of Muslims. According to the *Shari 'a*, despite a Muslim's actions, the two principle notions that count under Islamic law is, the intention and sincerity of one's actions. All five categories of the *Shari 'a* are placed in 4 themes: (1) rules that are about 'personal acts of worship'; (2) rules that are about 'commercial dealings'; (3) rules that 'relate to marriage and divorce' and

lastly; (4) rules that relate to 'penal laws'. Moreover, such, the four themes focus on the necessities, which all Muslims must uphold: religion, life, intellect, descendants and wealth. According to the *Qur'an*, it took Prophet Mohammed twenty-three years to learn and be trained on the understandings of the *Shari'a*. The Prophet, thus acquired the knowledge through two types of mediums: (1) *Ijma* (scholarly consensus) and (2) *Qiyas* (legal analogy)

Shura: is the term used to describe Islamic consultation - as in accordance with the Islamic law. In other words, it is a decision made by consultation(s) of a Muslim community

Umma: is the Arabic word for a Nation / Muslim community (it is also synonymous for an Islamic Community or a Commonwealth of Islamic Believers)