JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY
Jönköping International Business School

Doctoral Thesis

Women Entrepreneurship

Masculinity, Legitimacy and Well-being

Sumaya Hashim

Jönköping University
Jönköping International Business School
JIBS Dissertation Series No. 145 • 2021

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To Khadijah…

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Jönköping, August 2021

Sumaya Hashim

Abstract

The overarching research purpose of this dissertation is to understand how women entrepreneurs establish and grow their businesses in a patriarchal society. This research question is addressed through the compilation of four research papers. The first research paper is a literature review that synthesizes current literature on women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States and identifies possible research avenues.

The remaining three papers are empirical studies that use Bahrain, one of the Gulf States, as an empirical setting. The first empirical study challenges the assumption of entrepreneurship as a gendered phenomenon and sets out to understand entrepreneurship as a new phenomenon in a context that is male dominated. It draws on masculinity theory to understand the interplay between women entrepreneurs and the different forms of masculinity enacted by men. The second empirical study challenges the persistent traditional representation of the male entrepreneur as the founder and leader of a family business by using legitimacy-as-perception as a theoretical lens to investigate how female-led family ventures gain legitimacy from family and non-family members. The third empirical study challenges the stereotypical view of women entrepreneurs in developing countries by drawing on eudaimonic well-being literature to understand why and how some women start or grow a business after initiating a divorce, while others do not.

The dissertation makes several contributions to (women) entrepreneurship and to the different theories that it adopts in various ways. First, the dissertation extends women entrepreneurship literature by showing how women entrepreneurs influence their social context to attain royal awards, deal with different forms of masculinity enacted by men, and rebuild their eudaimonic well-being through their entrepreneurial activities. Second, the dissertation introduces the notion of "Asabiyyah" to explain the unique social makeup that informs the behavior of women entrepreneurs. Third, the dissertation contributes to the theoretical lenses that it adopts, for instance to the legitimacy-as-perception lens by showing the reciprocal nature of legitimacy. It broadens the masculinity theory by bringing attention to "own-business" as an institution where the private and the public spheres overlap and organize gender relations. This dissertation also contributes to the growing literature on eudaimonic well-being by offering an understanding of the interplay between entrepreneurship, engagement in meaningful activities, and eudaimonic well-being, an area that has largely remained a black box. Last but not least the dissertation offers several practical implications to further improve and foster entrepreneurship for women in Bahrain.

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1 Introduction

This dissertation gives voice to a marginalized group in women entrepreneurship research by bringing attention to and challenging certain taken-for-granted assumptions as well as providing insights into different aspects of social embeddedness. More specially, it sheds light on different angles of women entrepreneurs' social embeddedness in a patriarchal society where family remains the strongest institution and society's core. Making the voice of this group of women heard is not only contributing to more inclusive entrepreneurship research but is also important for advancing theories within the field of entrepreneurship and beyond (Alkhaled, 2021; Baker & Welter, 2017). It does so by empirically exploring the interplay of women entrepreneurs with different forms of masculinity enacted by men in a patriarchal context, the legitimacy process, and well-being through self-actualization.

The empirical research studies and the literature review paper are framed with a 'kappa.' The kappa consists of an introductory chapter that sets the stage for the current intellectual debate on women entrepreneurship, identifies the gaps, presents the key research questions of the dissertation, and introduces the theoretical frameworks, followed by the methodological justifications, before offering an overarching discussion of the findings.

While each research paper included in this dissertation makes a distinct contribution to entrepreneurship literature and to the adopted theories, as a whole this dissertation contributes to the literature on contextualizing entrepreneurship and the social context more specifically.

1.1 Setting the stage

The marginalization and otherness of women entrepreneurship has been well documented in entrepreneurship literature (Ahl, 2002a, 2006; Baker et al., 1997; Baker & Welter, 2017; Hébert & Link, 1989). The otherness of women in entrepreneurship has contributed to a distorted image of an entrepreneur that is equated with a masculine heroic persona, mainly a European/North American white male (Ahl, 2006; Bruni et al., 2004; Ogbor, 2000). In the American context, an entrepreneur represents the "symbols of individualism, drive, and intuition, they are the embodiment of the romantic view of capitalism" (Hébert & Link, 1989, p. 39). This gendered view of entrepreneurship is not only deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and economic conditions that reflect the context and are mirrored in the theories and concepts adopted and developed by scholars (Ogbor, 2000), but it is also a result of the authors' own perspectives and values that influence and shape their development of theories (Nkomo, 1992). As such the

domination of white males over knowledge production has maintained "the political and intellectual superiority" of the West (Joseph et al., 1990, p. 1).

Fortunately, over the last few decades, "the others", in this case, women, who have been excluded from the norm of an entrepreneur have made progress in making themselves heard (Ahl, 2002a; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Nkomo, 1992) by capitalizing on social changes and bringing attention to their experiences. This is evident in the great expansion of women entrepreneurship studies that has evolved to include different research streams such as entrepreneurial characteristics, financing, strategy & networking and performance (Poggesi et al., 2016). However, scholars have warned of the great danger of repeating the mistakes of entrepreneurship studies that were conducted by men, about men, and for men (Baker et al., 1997; Calás et al., 1999; Marlow, 1997), that imposed and to some extent still impose the male centered view and disregard women's experiences in research models (Ahl, 2002a). This demonstrates the need to consider the "otherness" within women entrepreneurship research through the marginalization and isolation of non-western contexts.

Different scholars have argued that the Western/Global North entrepreneur has been treated as "universal" and the norm (Gupta & Fernandez, 2009; Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018). This also assumes stable characteristics of individuals across different contexts (Randerson et al., 2015) and portrays Arab women as passive victims (Golkowska, 2014). Therefore, some have suggested that studies on women entrepreneurship in developing countries, is in itself, a contribution as it is an attempt to broaden the western-centric domination of entrepreneurship literature in general and women entrepreneurship in particular. While these studies have contributed to broadening the geographical context of women entrepreneurship literature, they are descriptive in nature, lack strong theoretical frameworks, are weak in terms of empirical analyses, and fail to reflect societal contexts (De Vita et al., 2014; Poggesi et al., 2016) such as family embeddedness, social stigmas, gender ideologies, and social relations. Zahra (2007) argues that a misalliance of theory and context could lead to questionable findings. Thus, entrepreneurship scholars who have an empirical context focused on women in the developing world need to problematize the underlying assumptions of theories developed in a western context for advancing knowledge.

One possible way of addressing this issue of contextualizing entrepreneurship studies is by considering the status of the theory adopted and the phenomenon being investigated in terms of being established versus new (Zahra, 2007). I argue that the phenomenon of women entrepreneurship in an Arab patriarchal society such as the Gulf States (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) is a rather new phenomenon. Exploring this new phenomenon in a non-western context may challenge and/or offer new and novel insights into well-established theories by considering different contextual tensions. Hence, I use Jennings and Brush (2013) literature review to take stock of women entrepreneurship research and the key impact that this body of research has had on the broader entrepreneurship literature. By doing so I am mindful that I am walking a fine line as my work may be perceived to be positioning women

entrepreneurs in the Global North as the norm or the standard. However, I do firmly believe that real learning can occur through mutual knowledge sharing, embracing each other's lived experiences, and accepting different worldviews. One way of achieving this is by drawing on current studies and understandings to be able to point out the unique substantive contexts that women entrepreneurs face in non-western countries (Johns, 2006; Welter, 2011). These overlooked or missed aspects related to substantive contexts can advance our knowledge and entrepreneurship theories.

According to Jennings and Brush (2013), the four key impacts that women entrepreneurship research has had on the broad entrepreneurship field are: (1) Entrepreneurship is a gendered phenomenon, (2) Entrepreneurial activity is embedded in families, (3) Entrepreneurial activity can be a result of necessity as well as opportunity, and (4) Entrepreneurs pursue goals beyond economic gains. This body of research has undoubtedly been instrumental in building our knowledge about women entrepreneurship. Using context as a lens, I present possible tensions that might be valuable to consider and which enable identifying additional avenues that could further extend research on women entrepreneurship. Thus, the rest of this section elaborates on the suggested impacts and presents important contextual tensions.

1. Entrepreneurship is a gendered phenomenon

Jennings and Brush (2013, p. 681) argue that the "most fundamental contribution of women's entrepreneurship" is revealing the gendered nature of entrepreneurship. In the West, historical economic rhetoric such as an entrepreneur as "he who discovers new worlds", "he who exerts control" and "he who imposes the order of rational management" have turned "masculinity into a universal parameter of entrepreneurial action" (Bruni et al., 2004, p. 410) and laid the foundation for who is regarded as an entrepreneur. These critical studies have shed light on the construction of women as the "other" that is "portrayed as something weaker and in need of special assistance in research as well as in practice" (Ahl, 2002a, p. 52). Ahl (2002a) further warns that research models have not captured women's experiences; instead, they have used women as research objects and imposed the perception of "male centered notions" (p. 58). This may be true and relevant in western contexts. Adopting a more contextualized lens, more specifically the spatial contextual lens (Welter, 2011), I argue that the characteristics of a male-figure being associated with an entrepreneur is a western-centric view for different reasons. In the next paragraphs, I will illustrate different characteristics and associations prevalent in other contexts that can challenge the embodiment of the entrepreneur in a male-figure.

Firstly, in other contexts such as the Muslim world, historical and religious accounts narrate that the Prophet's wife, Khadija bint Khuwaylid, was a very successful and respected merchant and businesswomen of her time. Her wealth is considered an important factor in establishing the religion of Islam 1443 years ago. Thus, the cultural dimension of entrepreneurship is socially represented by the Prophet's wife as a symbolic domain that could be associated with women due

to its self-evident social and religious values. In other words, the idea of a woman leading a successful venture is not necessarily perceived as an activity that is embedded in a masculine persona as it has been documented in a western context (Bruni et al., 2005). This offers women in this context the possibility to "describe, explain and legitimate to themselves and to others what they do" (Bruni et al., 2005, p. 13).

Secondly, zooming in on the context of the Gulf States, I argue that entrepreneurship, as we know it today, is a new concept and phenomenon for both women and men because the oil discovery in the 1930s, led to a social contract where citizens aspired to have a secure job in the public sector that offered generous working conditions. Or they wanted to be employed in one of the large corporations and the financial sector that provided good economic returns. Many governments in the region adopted entrepreneurship as one of the strategic pillars in Vision 2030 in their effort to diversify their economies. As such, women and men are being encouraged, supported, and funded simultaneously and are used as role models for others to follow.

While entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon in this context and is not gendered to the same extent as it might be in a western context, the context of the Gulf States is characterized by being patriarchal with strong male domination (Barragan et al., 2018; Goby & Erogul, 2011). Male domination has practical implications for women entrepreneurs such as dependence on their men (fathers, husbands, brothers, and other male family members) in gaining access to networks and obtaining different resources. In some cases, this could even restrict women's mobility both within and outside the country, something that can hamper not only the growth but also the establishment of a business. However, these countries rely heavily on non-nationals in the labor market, for example in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, non-nationals are expected to make up more than 85-88 percent of the labor market, in Kuwait 70 percent, and Bahrain more than 50 percent. Moreover, many of the previous and current generations in the labor market have travelled and lived abroad for academic qualifications and work experience in international settings which have made men and women more open to egalitarian views of the family. These social, economic, and cultural factors have changed and are continuing to change. These have influenced gender relations and developed different forms of masculinities enacted by men that women must deal with.

Therefore, it will be valuable to understand ***what forms of masculinities are enacted by men in relation to women entrepreneurs and how does the interplay with different forms of masculinity influence women's entrepreneurial activities?***

2. Entrepreneurial activity is embedded in families

Another important contribution of women entrepreneurship literature to the broad entrepreneurship field is the clear documentation of how entrepreneurial activities are embedded in family systems (Jennings & Brush, 2013; Randerson et al., 2015). Studies demonstrate how the family can represent a unique bundle

of resources that enable an entrepreneur to overcome challenges associated with the liability of newness (Davidsson & Honig, 2003), incubate the first entrepreneurial behavior (Habbershon & Williams, 1999; Steier, 2009), and provide family support (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003). These studies also shed light on the fact that many entrepreneurial decisions, processes, and outcomes are influenced by and influence the family (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Dyer Jr, 2003; Firkin et al., 2003). A lot of attention has been paid to the fact that many women are motivated to establish a business with the hope of attaining work-life balance as well as the various challenges associated in realizing these aspirations. The reality, however, is that it seems to be harder for women entrepreneurs especially if they want to grow their businesses as they also have the lion's share of the unpaid work at home along with childcare responsibilities (Ferguson & Durup, 1998; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Jennings et al., 2010; Jennings & McDougald, 2007; Loscocco & Bird, 2012; Sullivan & Meek, 2012).

Others have investigated how state initiatives such as parental leave can influence women's decisions to embark on entrepreneurial journey (Naldi et al., 2019).

Knowledge about family and entrepreneurial activities has also been discussed and developed between two streams of research – entrepreneurship and family business. These streams of research recognize that family plays a role in fostering entrepreneurial behavior (Bettinelli et al., 2014; Dyer Jr & Handler, 1994), acts as an incubator (Steier, 2009) hatching and fostering entrepreneurial spirit through stories, informal processes, role modelling, family routines, and dynamics; and employment in the family business that helps engage, socialize, and reproduce the next generation of family entrepreneurs (Bettinelli et al., 2014). This stream of research seems to reinforce the traditional view of an entrepreneur and a family business founder as a male-figure and women are discussed as wives who provide care to the family (Bettinelli et al., 2014; Bowman, 2009). In this setting, the discussion extends further to include career opportunities and advantages of women's involvement and succession in a family business with special attention to the father-daughter relationship (Campopiano et al., 2017), legitimacy of appointing women to the family business' board (Samara et al., 2019), and women's ceremonial appointment in leadership positions (Samara, 2020). A literature review of women's involvement in family firms suggests that "without spousal support, it would be difficult for women to start up a family business" (Campopiano et al., 2017, p. 204).

All these findings have advanced our knowledge of entrepreneurs' social context and how family embeddedness influences entrepreneurial activities. A lot of what has been discussed can apply to patriarchal societies. However, in the context of the Gulf States, the family remains the core of society and represents the strongest informal institution where the male head of the family is responsible for providing and maintaining the well-being and behavior of his family members (Al-Ati, 1977; Joseph, 1996). The family is also the main social welfare system that provides an individual with the support and survival mechanisms needed (Al Mutairi & Fayez, 2015; McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003; Mulnix et al., 2014; Welsh

et al., 2014). Thus, to avail oneself of the benefits of the family's social welfare, there are "mutual expectations" (Al-Ati, 1977, p. 19) bestowed on family members. These mutual expectations within a family unit are informed by religious interpretations, reinforced by law, and internalized by an individual (Al-Ati, 1977).

The rights and obligations within a family are there to reinforce identity, maintain affection between family members, offer the younger generation a socialization environment, securing the elderly, and maximizing the family's efforts in ensuring family continuity and welfare (Al-Ati, 1977). To complicate things further, in this context familial norms and values are not limited to the nuclear family as is often the case in mainstream literature. Instead, the family and mutual expectations are extended through marriage to include other family systems such as the family that the person marries into (known as the affinal family) and the family that one establishes (family of procreation) and in some instances of polygamy (supplementary family) (Al-Ati, 1977). This web of multiple family systems that women entrepreneurs are embedded in could be particularly challenging for them since the socialization process is governed by different familial values and social norms led by a male figure(s), the patriarch.

Patriarchy in this context is not limited to a social system that is controlled by a male, but it also extends to include the "elders (including elder women) and the justification of those rights within kinship values which are usually supported by religion" (S. Joseph, 1996). The family plays an important role as an evaluator and legitimator where a family's perception of what is deemed to be desirable, proper, or appropriate influence an individual's behavior. What needs to be emphasized here is the fact that family in this context is not only the evaluator and legitimator, but it also has the power to de-legitimize individuals and their activities. Hence, gaining legitimacy is a critical step when embarking on an entrepreneurial activity, especially for women who might be perceived to be engaged in non-traditional activities.

Taken together, women entrepreneurs establishing and leading family businesses have been largely missed in literature. This group of women face added challenges (Martinez Jimenez, 2009), but even more so in the context of Arab societies. Attending to this group of women will not only bring attention to women entrepreneurs but it will also reinforce the notion of them as founders and leaders of family businesses. A focus on this group of women entrepreneurs in the context of a family business will present the legitimacy issues that women face with family and non-family members more clearly. Hence, the next research question is ***how do female-led family ventures gain legitimacy in an Arab society?***

3. Entrepreneurial activity can result from necessity as well as opportunity & Entrepreneurs pursue goals beyond economic gain

The third and fourth contribution suggested by Jennings and Brush (2013) is discussed together in this section as they are inter-related in terms of the institutional context dimension that I would like to discuss. Starting with the

contribution made to entrepreneurship with a focus on the motivators and drivers of entrepreneurial activity, women entrepreneurship literature provides strong evidence to support the idea that entrepreneurial activity can be driven by necessity and push factors rather than just an opportunity or the pull factors that have dominated entrepreneurship literature (Jennings & Brush, 2013). Some scholars suggest that women can be pulled or pushed into entrepreneurship depending on their family situation (Brush, 1990). Others argue that women tend to be pushed more into entrepreneurship due to the "glass ceiling" issues in employment (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Rodriguez & Santos, 2009), gender discrimination, specifically against mothers with young children (Budig, 2006; Rodriguez & Santos, 2009), or because they have lower levels of education, less work experience, and more frequent career interruptions. It has also been argued that women seek refuge in entrepreneurship out of economic necessity both in developed and developing countries for reasons such as being single mothers, immigrants, or belonging to a minority group (Budig, 2006; Buttner, 1993; Duchéneaut, 1997; Fischer et al., 1993; Glas & Petrin, 1998; Hughes, 2003).

Different studies also consider women's empowerment and emancipation through entrepreneurship (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018; Jennings et al., 2016; Rindova et al., 2009). This groundbreaking, paradigm-shifting idea introduced by Rindova et al. (2009) has been instrumental in shifting the focus from wealth creation to change creation which has dominated entrepreneurship literature (Jennings et al., 2016). It also reinforces the idea that women are far more motivated than men to engage in entrepreneurial activities for the sense of autonomy (Carter et al., 2003; Jennings et al., 2016) that it brings.

This brings us to the last contribution suggested by Jennings and Brush (2013) which maintains that entrepreneurs pursue goals beyond economic gains.

These streams of research argue that women attach less value to business growth and financial success and that some women entrepreneurs could be motivated by both economic and non-economic goals (Jennings & Brush, 2013). To this end, I would like to bring in the recent developments in entrepreneurship literature that attempt to go beyond a focus on satisfaction with work or life and hedonic well-being (Stephan, 2018; Wiklund et al., 2019) to consider self-realization and eudaimonic well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Stephan et al., 2020). Interestingly, Stephan et al. (2020, p. 2) argue that eudaimonic well-being "depend on the country's normative context".

Given all these developments and contributions to entrepreneurship literature, I put forward various contextual tensions that offer different perspectives and provide the potential for new research avenues. Firstly, I argue that entrepreneurship literature has, for the most part, assumed that women in developing, non-western contexts have low education, are poor with limited financial resources, and are passive victims of social norms and family. These underlying assumptions are clearly exemplified in the following quote from Jennings and Brush (2013, p. 691) literature review: "In less developed countries, women tend to become entrepreneurs due to necessity for survival, nutrition, health care or family educational reasons (Minniti, 2010); in developed countries,

there is evidence that they are frustrated by a lack of career advancement opportunities (Belcourt, 1990; Buttner & Moore, 1997)". This extract indicates the generalization and the stereotypical characteristics across all countries that have been labelled by the United Nations as "developing countries" (UN, 2020). While, different studies on the Gulf States argue that women's academic achievements outnumber and outperform that of men (Danish & Smith, 2012; Faisal et al., 2017; Jabeen et al., 2015; Majumdar & Varadarajan, 2013) and that women enjoy high economic wealth (Danish & Smith, 2012; Itani et al., 2011). This leads me to another institutional context that is worth presenting.

A large bulk of the research that focuses on women's work-life balance and gender roles stresses that women perform most of the house and childcare responsibilities and this is true in the Gulf States as well. However, how women and society, in general, deal with this issue might offer a different reality. Firstly, while house and childcare do fall under the women's responsibilities in the traditional sense, many families and households use and outsource this role to live-in maids, domestic helpers, and caregivers. According to Human Rights Watch (2017), the Gulf States are home to 2.4 million, mainly Asian and African domestic helpers. Secondly, the Gulf States are collectivist societies and as such, extended families may provide a lot of support in terms of childcare. Thus, the work-life aspects may not be as pronounced in the Gulf States as they are in a western-context; if they are, I will argue that they have different effects on women entrepreneurs.

Considering the necessity versus opportunity discussion that has received widespread attention in women entrepreneurship studies (Jennings & Brush, 2013), I argue that in this context, men are seen as the main and sole providers for their families. Thus, women may not have the same "necessity" drive towards entrepreneurship since it is not socially, culturally, or traditionally expected of them. The same could apply to single mothers; the family law in this context stresses that the man is responsible for providing for his children and their mother, even in the case of a divorce. However, women who go through divorce face many challenges. Given that the father is recognized as the provider, a divorced mother could lose child custody, especially if she has given up her work. Divorced women face strong stigma to the extent that their own families could withdraw their support to them. These issues can have a detrimental impact on women's health and well-being. Yet, we see an increase in divorced women who have established and grown their businesses. This is interesting and is arguably paradoxical especially because being an entrepreneur is intensely demanding and is "one of the most stressful jobs" (Stephan, 2018, p. 290) with a lot of unpredictability, ambiguity, and can be an emotional roller-coaster (Hahn et al., 2012). Hence, the third research question is ***why and how some women start or grow a business after initiating divorce, while others do not?***

1.1.1 Making sense of the identified contextual tensions

The discussion so far may suggest that this dissertation explores different contexts such as a patriarchal society, the Arab World, Gulf States, and Bahrain. I realize that these different labels are distinct, but they are also interwoven. A more detailed articulation of the connection between these contexts is provided in the discussion of the empirical setting. However, I think it might be worth articulating briefly how these contexts are interconnected to avoid any possible confusion. Patriarchy is a prevalent social structure in most societies today but it is more pronounced in countries such as the Gulf States (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018). The Arab World includes 22 countries from North Africa to West Asia. What these countries have in common is the Arabic language, but they have different Arabic dialects, cultures, norms, history, economic systems and natural resources. However, the Gulf States share many of these characteristics. They have also adopted similar national strategies to diversify their economies with Bahrain having the highest share of women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States (Gibbon, 2020). Thus, this brief backdrop provides an insight to how these different contexts are linked, however, what I am specifically interested in is the substantive context of women entrepreneurs in Bahrain. After outlining how these different contexts are linked, I take the discussion back to the different substantive contexts (spatial, social, and institutional) to frame the three empirical research questions.

It is important to note that the substantive contexts overlap (Welter et al., 2014). In fact, all the substantive contexts have a social dimension, for instance the institutional dimension includes social norms, the place dimension could entail physical places where individuals are allowed to use depending on their gender, and the spatial dimension may suggest when certain roles or career paths are perceived to be acceptable. Therefore, I argue that the backdrop of all the identified research questions points to the importance of the social context, and more specifically family embeddedness. The concept of embeddedness refers to the potential influence that social relations can have on an entrepreneur's decisions and actions (Arregle et al., 2015). This then points to how the family and business are interwoven (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Hence, the first set of research questions — *what forms of masculinities are enacted by men in relation to women entrepreneurs? And how does the interplay with different forms of masculinity influence women's entrepreneurial activities?* focus on developing a better understanding women entrepreneurs' social context and their interaction with different forms of masculinity enacted by men in their social networks. The second research question — *how do female-led family ventures gain legitimacy in an Arab society?* — seeks to understand the process that women entrepreneurs follow for gaining legitimacy from family and non-family members.

The third research question — *why and how some women start or grow a business after initiating a divorce, while others will not?* — brings attention to the challenges that women entrepreneurs face when attempting to break away from certain family systems. Furthermore, these research questions point to the dynamic aspect of context and the co-construction of context that takes place between an entrepreneur and various social actors (Baker & Welter, 2020). In other words, while there are different contexts that operate at different levels with differing influence on entrepreneurs (Welter, 2011), I argue that focusing on the social context with special attention to women's family embeddedness in the Gulf States warrants special attention as it is the context dimension that seems to have the most influence on their entrepreneurial activity.

Before delving into the empirical world, it is important to first take stock of existing literature on women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States by conducting a literature review to identify ***what do we know about women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States? And where should research go from here?***

1.2 Purpose of the dissertation

Using Jennings and Brush's (2013) literature review on women entrepreneurship research and problematizing the current debate from various contextual dimensions, the main aim of this dissertation is advancing our understanding of women entrepreneurship beyond the Anglo-Saxon context by attending to women entrepreneurs' lived experiences. As explained earlier, women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States are embedded in a social context that is made up of various and different family systems. These family systems are led by patriarchs. Therefore, the overarching research purpose is to understand:

How do women entrepreneurs establish and grow their businesses in a patriarchal society?

1.3 Outline of the dissertation

Having identified the overarching purpose of this dissertation, the following section discusses the different theoretical frameworks adopted for each paper and offers a rationale for how the different theories are linked. The methodology section presents my philosophical stance and outlines the research design of the dissertation. This is followed by a discussion of the contributions of the dissertation. The specific contributions of each research paper are discussed separately in each paper.

2 Empirical Context

The empirical context of the dissertation was deemed to be fitting to offer new theoretical insights, challenge certain assumptions inherent in entrepreneurship literature, and understand women entrepreneurship beyond the Anglo-Saxon context to contribute to a more inclusive research on entrepreneurship and further advance entrepreneurship research. This section provides a general articulation of the empirical setting (a more detailed elaboration of the context is done in each empirical study reflecting what is relevant for each research question). This section starts by introducing the empirical context of the Gulf States before discussing the empirical context of Bahrain.

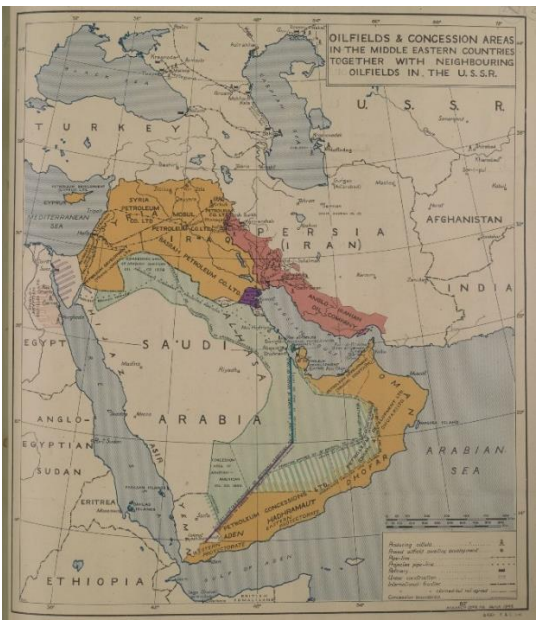
2.1 The Arab Gulf States

The Gulf States consist of six countries around the Arab Peninsula – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. These are among the oldest inhabited places in the world (Zahlan, 2016). They have been characterized by their strategic location in terms of the spice and silk route to India and the export of dates and pearls for centuries prior to the discovery of oil (Zahlan, 2016). These characteristics turned the Gulf States into a hub for commercial and political rivalries between western countries such as Portugal, Holland, France, and Britain from the late 15th century till the 19th century (Zahlan, 2016). To eliminate the rivalry from new emerging powers at the end of the 19th century such as the Ottoman Empire, France, Russia and Germany, the British signed several treaties with the ruling families in the Gulf States (Zahlan, 2016). In some cases, these ruling families were appointed by the British and were tasked to deal with domestic affairs while the British controlled foreign affairs (Weiner, 2016). To maintain domestic stability, members of the royal family established a direct relationship with other families that had strong social positions such as merchant families. These families were usually "large, hierarchical and organized groups" (Weiner, 2016, p. 4). This direct relationship between the royal family and other families laid the foundation for powerful mutual relationships that is lasting till today.

The discovery of oil in the region further reinforced the domination of the British in the region through the establishment of oil companies. The discovery of oil also attracted American oil companies in 1933 which led to stronger domination of the US policy that eventually superseded British power (Zahlan, 2016). However, it was the British-mediated treaties that defined the current geographical borders of the Gulf States (Weiner, 2016). The extent to which the West had an interest in this region throughout the 20th century is reflected in a map (Figure 1) prepared by the British Government's Foreign Office that reflects

the oil companies and their boundaries. These boundaries were drawn without considering human settlements and came to dictate the national boundaries which till then had been vague and indeterminate. These national boundaries meant that large families existed and continue to exist in multiple Gulf States (Weiner, 2016).

Figure 1 - Oilfields & Concession in 1945



Source: BritishLibrary

By the early 1970s, the Gulf States had received their independence and a decade later, they signed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) protocol for promoting their joint interests in security matters, foreign policy, and economic development.

An important characteristic of the Gulf States is the strength and uniqueness of family systems that have historically played a critical role in securing different resources and still play an important role in shaping individual identities. For instance, the family name can convey important information about the family's genealogy, the "apical ancestor of the family", place of origin, traditional occupation, and sometimes even family members' characteristics (Weiner, 2016, p. 2). These qualities can grant an individual certain benefits, power, and resources but it can also have the opposite effect (Weiner, 2016). Moreover, just like an individual may enjoy the positive and negative effects of being a member of a certain family, the family may also be affected and face spillover effects from an individual's actions and behavior (Weiner, 2016). This may provide the rationale for the pervasive and strong involvement of a family in an individual's affairs, especially women's affairs.

2.2 Bahrain: The Empirical Context of the Research

This study is focused on the Kingdom of Bahrain, the smallest country in the Gulf States with the highest score compared to the other Gulf States in terms of reducing the gender gap between men and women for economic participation and opportunities (Global Gender Gap Report, 2017). Bahrain was also one of the early Gulf States that promoted women's education. More recently entrepreneurship has become one of the key pillars of Vision 2030 for increasing youth employment and reducing reliance on oil revenues.

Historically, the first oil well in the Gulf States was discovered in June 1932 in Bahrain. Oil revenues that started flowing resulted in record fast economic growth, a large influx of non-national labor, and modernization of infrastructure that created major socioeconomic changes such as employment, education, and scholarships to universities in western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Like other developing countries with national resources, Bahrain was also caught by the "Dutch Disease". The Dutch Disease model suggests that oil production results in a decline of traded goods such as agriculture and manufacturing. Ross (2008) suggests that in many developing countries women tend to represent the largest workforce in the traded goods sector and hence women are inclined to be most affected by this phenomenon. At the same time, there was an expansion of the non-traded sectors like construction and retail (Ross, 2008). Consequently, the Dutch Disease ultimately leads to swift modernization, higher wages that boost household incomes, prosperous lifestyles, and reduce women's motivation to join the workforce (Minnis, 2006; Ross, 2008). While these symptoms have been evident in Bahrain, women have been participating in the economic sphere for many decades and it is not uncommon to see women in senior positions. Women have also enjoyed access to education and higher education both in Bahrain and beyond.

However, the dependence on oil as the major source of the national economy created a gap between the private and public sectors with a unique social contract amongst the Gulf States' nationals where governments do not need to tax their citizens to secure social welfare (Eide & Rösler, 2014). According to a report published by the World Economic Forum (2014), the social contract entails governments offering nationals' subsidiaries, free access to public services, and comfortable, well-remunerated jobs in the public sector. This social contract has been put to the test with the continued increase in the population, where more than 50 percent of the population is below the age of 25 years, and there has been a continuing decline in oil prices since 2009. Consequently, some of the Gulf States including Bahrain launched the National Economic Strategy in 2008. Central to this strategy is the creation of an environment that promotes entrepreneurship. The Supreme Council for Women which was established in 2001 has also been promoting and pushing for women's economic empowerment. Several entities were tasked with the operationalization and implantation of these strategic visions.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was established in Bahrain in 1996 to facilitate cooperation between companies in Bahrain and other countries. Through its Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion (EDIP) program, UNIDO has been able to develop programs to support ventures. Tamkeen is a local establishment that was established in 2004 to support the private sector in Bahrain with funding and training programs. In addition, an incubation center, Riyadat Mall, designed specifically for supporting women entrepreneurs for the first three years of their ventures was founded in 2010. These national efforts have attempted to create a shift in the social contract that relied on employment in the public sector. However, having these macro-level activities that encourage alternative forms of employment does not necessarily mean that the people and the public regard entrepreneurs and their activities to be legitimate. The family has been and continues to be the strongest informal institution that both secures the welfare and regulates the behavior of its members (Al Mutairi & Fayez, 2015; McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003; Mulnix et al., 2014; Welsh et al., 2014). The patriarch, the father and/or the husband, holds traditional authority and responsibility for the family unit. According to Joseph (1996), unlike the western world, patriarchy in the Arab World is not limited to prioritizing the rights of the males but also includes the rights of the elders (including elder women) and kinship. These rights are reinforced through religious interpretations (Joseph, 1996).

3 Theoretical Perspectives

As outlined in the introduction, this dissertation includes three empirical studies and one literature review paper. This section describes the different theories adopted, provides a rationale for adopting these theories, and discusses their relevance. It starts by introducing *masculinity* studies, which frame the first study exploring the interplay between women entrepreneurs and different forms of masculinity. Second, it discusses the *legitimacy* theory and identifies *legitimacy-as-perception* as a useful framework for informing how female-led family ventures gain legitimacy. Lastly, it presents the *self-determination theory* and *eudaimonic well-being* to understand why and how some women start or grow a business after initiating divorce. The section ends by offering a brief synthesis of the theoretical frameworks.

3.1 Masculinity

As articulated in the introduction, studies on women entrepreneurship provide valuable information about the challenges that women face in establishing their ventures due to the stereotypical image of a male-entrepreneur (Ahl, 2006; Eddleston & Powell, 2008) as well as traditional gender roles that still prevail where women perform the lion's share of the unpaid household work (Jennings et al., 2013). Despite the growth and increased focus on this important subject, masculinity enacted by men in women's entrepreneurship literature has been treated as a homogenous group without any problematization. Hence, it will be valuable to draw on masculinity studies to better understand the interplay between women entrepreneurship and the masculinity enacted by men.

Masculinity studies as a field of research has emerged over the last 50 years as a response to the increase in feminist and gender research that accompanied the women's liberation movement towards the end of the 1960s (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1993a) Many social, political, economic, and cultural factors changed and are continuing to change at great speed that demand and require attention to better understand gender relations (Connell, 1993a). The psychological view of conceptualizing masculinity disregards social structures and historical dynamics that influence gender relations (Connell, 1993a). The conceptualization of masculinity in the sex-role theory addresses the gap in psychological literature on masculinity by focusing on the social aspects of masculinity in terms of expectations, stereotypes, and role models (Connell, 1993a). However, the sex-role theory has been criticized for its focus on the individual agency that leans on personality and analysis of motive and disregards the social structures that impact power and the organization of gender relations (Connell, 1993a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a). Some scholars have investigated masculinity in terms of

a discourse or cultural representation (Connell, 1993a). While this group of researchers address the issue of power, the complexity around masculinity representation and the issues that arise with change, it is treated through a reactive approach and does not allow for an opportunity to change the oppressive gender relations other than going back in time (Connell, 1993a).

West and Zimmerman (1987) coined the term "doing gender" by suggesting that gender is more than just a sex category assigned to individuals at birth. They argue that gender involves "the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions, attitudes, and activities appropriate to one's sex category" (p. 127). Connected to this is the notion of accountability where individuals realize that their actions are accountable to others and therefore individuals tend to organize and orchestrate their behavior according to how it might be perceived by others in a particular social context. This indicates that gender, in this case masculinity, can vary according to the social situation and social circumstances (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In other words, men consistently construct masculinity by monitoring their response as well as that of others (Messerschmidt & Cheng, 2017).

Yet, despite recognizing the influence and the importance of the social context, through "European imperialism, global capitalism under U.S. hegemony, and modern communications" (Connell, 1993a, p. 601), the focus of masculinity studies has been on a few contexts while marginalizing most (Connell, 1993a). Consequently, to contribute to the development of men and masculinity studies, Connell (1993a) proposes two conceptually important aspects that need to be considered. The first aspect suggests that "human activity is institutionally bound" (p. 602) by three main institutions: (1) the state, (2) the workplace or labor market, and (3) the family (Connell, 1993a; Segal, 1993b). The other aspect is that masculinity in its cultural form cannot be isolated from sexuality since it is not limited to the body but is made up of social practices that are both situational and transformative (Connell, 1993a). Similar to West and Zimmerman's (1987) discussion, this indicates that there are multiple masculinities (Connell, 2014a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a; Segal, 1993b) and yet the focus has been mainly on hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a).

Hegemonic masculinity is defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 2005a, p. 77). In other words, hegemonic masculinity can be regarded as the practice of patterns to allow the domination of men over women. Scholars have also investigated hegemonic masculinity in relation to subordinated masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a). So, while hegemonic masculinity does not represent most of masculinity enacted by men, it was considered to be the ideal representation of masculinity and the type of masculinity that men should aspire to (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a). It is important to note that it does not mean violence but rather dominance acquired through culture, institutions, and persuasion (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has received attention in multiple research fields such as education, criminology, media, health, decision-making, and military. Connell (1993a) gives an interesting historical account of European masculinity and makes a fascinating connection to the dominance of masculinity in the form of an entrepreneur in the 1980s where "gender imagery, institutional change and political strategy intersected" (p. 614). The problem and dilemma of focusing on only one form of masculinity is that it "hegemonizes men by reducing all masculinities to one normative standard type, and is therefore unable to account for human agency and the social construction of different masculinities" (Messerschmidt & Cheng, 2017, p. 2).

Like entrepreneurship studies, most of what we know about masculinity is based on knowledge developed about men in the Global North context and calls have been made to explore masculinities in other contexts (Connell, 2014a). Furthermore, while masculinity studies tend to dichotomize men and women's experiences (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a), masculinity has mainly been theorized in relation to other men which does not take into account the experiences of women in relation to different forms of masculinity enacted by men. Adopting this theoretical lens will provide a solid frame in exploring the interplay between different forms of masculinity and how they influence women starting a business. Specifically, I ask *What forms of masculinities are enacted by men in relation to women entrepreneurs? And How does the interplay with different forms of masculinity influence women's entrepreneurial activities?*

3.2 Legitimacy

Entrepreneurs and their newly established ventures are subject to legitimacy issues. Legitimacy is paramount for entrepreneurs to secure human and financial resources for their entrepreneurial activities (Aldrich & Yang, 2012; Stinchcombe, 1965). Suchman (1995, p. 574) famously defined organizational legitimacy as "generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions". Different theoretical and empirical perspectives have contributed to a better understanding and knowledge insights but have also created confusion around the concept and its meaning. In their literature review, Suddaby et al. (2017) clarify the legitimacy construct and reveal three different configurations of legitimacy: (1) legitimacy-as-property, (2) legitimacy-as-process, and (3) legitimacy-as-perception. I adopt the legitimacy-as-perception perspective for multiple reasons.

Firstly, legitimacy is regarded as property but it is not a physical property; instead, it is a judgement or perception (Suddaby et al., 2017). Secondly, it recognizes legitimacy as a process but focuses more on making judgements (Suddaby et al., 2017). This perspective of legitimacy brings attention to the role of an individual in the process of socially constructing legitimacy. This means that individuals perceive organizations, make judgements, and take actions based

on their judgement that eventually impacts the collective level (Suddaby et al., 2017). This leads to the third reason, legitimacy-as-perception which adopts a multi-level approach but primarily focuses on what happens at the individual level. The multi-level approach consists of two important components – propriety at the individual level (that is, at the micro-level) and validity at the collective level (that is, macro-level). According to Bitektine and Haack (2015), propriety is an individual level construct that refers to the "individual evaluator's own judgement of social acceptability" (p. 51), that is, in terms of approval of the organization and its actions and practices. Validity, on the other hand, is a collective level construct that suggests "general consensus within a collectivity that the entity is appropriate for its social context" (Bitektine & Haack, 2015, p. 51). Despite the overwhelming consensus in legitimacy literature that legitimacy is a judgement formed through interaction, the literature has either regarded an individual actor as active and the evaluators as passive or vice-versa (Überbacher, 2014). Another important assumption in legitimacy literature is the view that legitimacy benefits the organization only (Überbacher, 2014). As a result, this assumption has contributed to a possible oversight of the duality that might exist in the legitimacy process. A third issue pertaining to legitimacy literature is the need to further identify the diverse evaluators who exist in different contexts and industries for developing a better understanding of their respective judgements and motives (Fisher et al., 2017; Suddaby et al., 2017).

For entrepreneurs to gain organizational legitimacy it is paramount that they promote activities and strategic actions that will assist them in gaining collective consensus among various stakeholders for their ventures (Garud et al., 2014; Middleton, 2013). Collective consensus, which is also known as validity in legitimacy literature, enables an individual to overcome issues and challenges by mobilizing biases, that is, "the making, reinforcing, or invoking of values, beliefs, rules, practices, and procedures that make actors, issues and tactics legitimate or illegitimate" (Thomas et al., 1986, p. 379). A comparative study of a content analysis of magazine advertisements in the US and the Arab World found that there was a difference in how women were portrayed in an Arab society where female models tended to have less revealing clothes, which is in line with cultural and social values (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000). Scholars have argued that consumers respond more favorably to advertisements that are consistent with their culture. Hence, given the limited resources when establishing a venture, women entrepreneurs may use pictures of themselves for promoting their products. Simple things like how these women dress and portray themselves may signal messages that influence evaluators' perceptions that render different types of legitimacy to their ventures.

Women entrepreneurs in an Arab society may face additional challenges than what has already been documented in literature, such as those that women entrepreneurs face due to their gender (Ahl, 2002a; Baughn et al., 2006; Bruni et al., 2004). Family business literature suggests that women in family businesses face yet another layer of challenges as they are confronted with "conflict over roles and loyalties, relationships with parents, siblings and nonfamily members,

and struggles for power and authority" (Martinez Jimenez, 2009, p. 54). While this quote is valuable in highlighting the additional challenges that women encounter in family businesses, it, just like most family business literature, assumes the family venture to be led by a male figure. Furthermore, we know from literature that a family has an important role in a family venture by dictating expectations that reinforce norms and values that could influence decision making, practices, and processes in the business (Melin & Nordqvist, 2007).

In an Arab society, the family not only acts as an evaluator and legitimator, but it also has the power to de-legitimize an entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, given that this dissertation is interested in extending the discussion around entrepreneurial activity embedded in a family, focusing on women establishing and leading family ventures will be an ideal setting that facilitates the process of acquiring legitimacy more clearly. Hence, the research question is: *How do female-led family ventures gain legitimacy in an Arab society?*

3.3 Self-determination Theory

Studies in the field of psychology document that certain life adversities provide individuals with an opportunity to grow personally. According to the self-determination theory (SDT), one possible way of achieving personal growth is through the fulfillment of three fundamental psychological needs: (1) *autonomy*, (2) *relatedness*, and (3) *competence* (Allan et al., 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2002). SDT theorists suggest that individuals have an active innate tendency for seeking challenges, exploring new perspectives, and internalizing and transforming cultural practices by stretching one's own capacities and expressing talent to gain a sense of fulfillment and self-actualization (Ryan & Deci, 2002). More importantly, the integration of an individual's own experiences offers the basis for a coherent sense of self. The sense of the integrated self informs an individual to the degree to which she is acting in line with or is being 'true' to that self (Ryan & Deci, 2002). The true self is built on two main pillars, know 'thyself' and striving to become what you are (Ryff, 2019). While SDT recognizes the integrative tendency as a fundamental aspect of life, it suggests that the social context plays a key role in nurturing or hampering the process of integrating the self (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Hence, contextual aspects could result in some individuals attaining a relatively active and integrated self, while others might end up in "highly fragmented and sometimes even a passive, reactive or alienated self" (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 5). For example, individuals who belong to lower social classes may often lack access to societal resources and mainly focus on satisfying external needs such as economic constraints; they are also limited in terms of the possibility of choosing work that meets their intrinsic needs (Allan et al., 2016). The general assumption is that social contexts that offer individuals a possibility of satisfying these needs are expected to support healthy functioning, while contexts that impede the satisfaction of these needs are anticipated to be incompatible and antagonistic.

Where SDT studies seem to fall short is in the treatment of context as something out there, an external environment, circumstances, conditions, or situations that enable or constrain an individual. We know that individuals not only have an active role in attaining an integrated self but women entrepreneurship literature also shows that individuals, and in this case entrepreneurs, play an active role in "doing context" through the construction of their context and by lifting their agency in influencing their contexts (Welter, 2020).

3.3.1 Eudaimonic well-being and Entrepreneurship

SDT has recently gained traction in the entrepreneurship field (Hahn et al., 2012; Ryff, 2019; Stephan, 2018; Stephan et al., 2020) as a way of moving away from hedonic well-being that emphasizes a positive evaluation of life with a focus on happiness and pain avoidance to eudaimonic well-being that deals with human potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 2019). Eudaimonic well-being is believed to be "personal excellence built on striving to realize one's true and best nature" (Ryff, 2019, p. 648) through self-realization, purposeful life and meaning. Given this new focus on entrepreneurship and well-being, scholars have called for the need to better understand the eudaimonic processes (Ryff, 2019; Stephan et al., 2020). The scarce research that is emerging on entrepreneurs' eudaimonic well-being finds that eudaimonic well-being has an impact on entrepreneurs' performance, persistence, and innovativeness (Hahn et al., 2012).

Stephan et al. (2020) identified societal legitimacy of entrepreneurship, that is, the cultural acceptance of entrepreneurship acting as a boundary condition and shaping a self-determined choice. Some argue that the nature of entrepreneurial activity offers more self-determination options than employment which makes their work more meaningful (Stephan et al., 2020). Scholars have suggested that eudaimonic well-being helps solve the puzzle of why people enjoy higher well-being despite the hardships associated with entrepreneurship (Hahn et al., 2012; Stephan et al., 2020).

Ryff (2019) outlines the six dimensions of eudaimonic well-being that are relevant for entrepreneurship with purpose in life as one of the key dimensions. It refers to the capacity of finding meaning when faced with adversity and the creative and productive endeavors through one's life journey. The meaning, goals, and purpose that an entrepreneur associates with the entrepreneurial activity seems to heighten this dimension of eudaimonic well-being. Even though purpose and meaning in life are critical dimensions of eudaimonic well-being little attention has been paid to how meaning in life is created, especially when an individual faces adversity. Hence, it would be valuable to draw on Baumeister (1991) work that focuses attention on the sources of meaning in life.

3.3.2 Sources of Meanings in Life

Baumeister (1991) argues that individuals search for meaning in life: (1) to identify "patterns in the environment" that enable an individual to live a harmonious life with her surroundings, and (2) to "control oneself, including regulating one's internal state" (p. 17). Baumeister (1991) offers four different sources of meaning: (1) value, (2) purpose, (3) self-efficacy, and (4) self-worth. These sources and what people decide to engage in are influenced by their context and social norms. Most of these norms dictate what an individual should not do such as the Ten Biblical Commandments in which eight of the ten are explicit instructions about what not to do. However, the social norms of an Arab patriarchal society include many 'don'ts', especially for women. Like the Ten Commandments, the Arab patriarchal society's emphasis on what not to do is designed to restrain the pursuit of self-interest and instead, it stresses harmony of the group to enable people to live together (Baumeister, 1991, p. 38).

Studies have indicated that being married provides eudaimonic "well-being advantage compared to divorced, widowed, or never married, but single women score higher on autonomy and personal growth compared to married women" (Ryff, 2019, p. 650). Going through life-changing events such as a divorce can produce a sense of disorientation and emptiness that deprives an individual of key sources of meaning which leads to a state of "meaning vacuum" (Baumeister, 1991, p. 313). This state is not merely cognitive and psychological but could also result in physical pain (Baumeister, 1991). To deal with the meaning vacuum an individual must fill the vacuum by searching for higher goals and purpose to "restore broad, acceptable, and desirable ways of thinking about self and world" (Baumeister, 1991, p. 266). According to Baumeister (1991, p. 318) to overcome the meaning vacuum, individuals will have to "stretch remaining sources of meaning to make up the deficit, or find new, replacement sources of meaning".

New and valuable insights might be found when these perspectives are integrated that is, drawing on the self-determination theory, eudaimonic well-being and sources in meanings in life to understand *why and how some women start or grow a business after initiating divorce, while others will not?*

3.4 A Synthesis of the theoretical frameworks

The three theoretical frameworks discussed earlier are arguably different. However, given that I am interested in the social context dimension, I argue that these three theories can be linked and synthesized from a family embeddedness perspective. As outlined earlier, this dissertation has been done in a context where a family maintains its core position in society. We also know by now that an individual is embedded in multiple families. Family embeddedness literature suggests that the family's social system influences entrepreneurial activities carried out by an individual (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). The patriarchal nature of this context assigns the man the role of head of the family. This means that women

must engage with different men since they are embedded in multiple families. These men enact different forms of masculinity and arguably have different influences on women's entrepreneurial activities. Consequently, the masculinity theory used in the first empirical study was deemed to be a suitable theoretical lens for better understanding women entrepreneurs' social context in relation to different forms of masculinity enacted by men in a patriarchal society.

Considering the family's strong influence, the second empirical study adopts legitimacy-as-perception as a theoretical lens for better understanding how legitimacy is formed with critical family members and beyond. Being embedded in multiple families may not always work and circumstances may force an individual to file for divorce. Given an individual's strong family embeddedness this may be a challenging and emotional process with a negative impact on well-being, particularly among women who are stigmatized for being divorcees.

Therefore, adopting the self-determination theory with special attention to eudaimonic well-being was found to be a useful theoretical lens for better understanding why and how women start or grow businesses after initiating a divorce.

Taken together, the theoretical focus adopted in this dissertation is useful for a better understanding of how women entrepreneurs establish and grow their businesses in a patriarchal society from different perspectives. More specifically, the three empirical studies represent a continuum where on the one end the first empirical study deals with an analytical focus of women entrepreneurs strongly embedded in a patriarchal family structure, the second empirical study move the discussion further to an understanding of the legitimacy formation process that female-led family ventures adopt to gain legitimacy from the family and non-family members. The third empirical study is on the other side of the continuum where women are attempting to break away from strong family embeddedness in certain family structures.

4 Methodology

This section deals with the research design and the methods used in the dissertation. Since a researcher's own worldviews and paradigms influence and shape the development of theories (Nkomo, 1992), I start by outlining my philosophical stance and my role as a researcher that has guided and informed my decisions regarding the research design and method. I then discuss the research design, the empirical material and analysis, before discussing research quality and ethics.

4.1 Philosophical Stance

Social sciences are characterized by diverse paradigms – a set of basic beliefs (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). According to Zahra (2007), entrepreneurship scholars seldom articulate their assumptions and a lack of clarity about assumptions not only hampers the advancement of knowledge but could also lead to disputed findings. As a researcher, it is important to understand the different worldviews since they indicate different ontological, epistemological, and human nature's assumptions that form the basis of our knowledge about the social world and the methodology used in building our knowledge (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Ontology relates to assumptions regarding the nature of social reality (Cunliffe, 2011) and epistemology refers to "the nature and the purpose of knowledge" (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 649). The two key words, 'reality' and 'knowledge', have been the main focus of philosophical inquiry (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Berger and Luckmann (1991) define reality as a "quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition" and knowledge as "the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics" (p. 13). Morgan and Smircich (1980) place the different ontological assumptions on a continuum with an objectivist view at one extreme and a subjectivist view at the other extreme.

As its name suggests, the objectivist view regards objective reality as a social fact and something that can be specified and transformed into something that is tangible (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). The subjective view, on the other hand, is a more phenomenologically oriented perspective where reality is more a projection of human imagination. The overarching research purpose of this dissertation is understanding how women entrepreneurs establish and grow their business in a patriarchal society. As such my aim is to explain and generate insights into certain events and to understand how the social reality is constructed and maintained from the perspectives and experiences of the research participants (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). As indicated earlier, the empirical context of this dissertation is not only geographically

different from mainstream literature on entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship, but this context also entails different "historical, temporal, institutional, spatial and social contexts" (Welter, 2011, p. 165) that shape people's behavior by offering opportunities and setting boundaries.

In this sense, the reality of everyday life exists through continuous interactions and communication with others where meanings are exchanged to shape a common sense of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). These interactions can be in different forms: face-to-face, signs and symbols, and language that build an individual's social stock of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). The extent and distribution of the stock of knowledge that each person possesses is different and dictates the 'location' of the individual in society and how s/he deals with this knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

The researcher's stock of knowledge and working paradigm influences her/his interpretation of the research data (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Melin, 1976). According to Melin (1976), scholars should be aware of their own worldview and should explicitly articulate it. This articulation should inform the reader not only of the researcher's understanding of reality and how it works but her/his values. In the next section, I elaborate on my own working paradigm.

4.1.2 My personal background in relation to the theories and context

Born in a Bahraini family, a product of Swedish and Irish education systems with professional experience in higher education across all three countries, I am aware that I have had the privilege of what some have referred to as the 'insider-outsider' approach. This research approach mainly reflects immigrant scholars who study their own communities but are affiliated to western universities (Hamdan, 2009). As an insider I agree with Hamdan (2012, p. 587) that I have been equipped with knowledge about the "weaved power structures that an outsider cannot dismantle". And as an outsider, who has analyzed the empirical material collected from Bahrain, in Sweden where I had the opportunity to discuss my findings either in formal settings such as conferences, paper development workshops, and research seminars or informally either through frequent discussions with my co-authors who come from different countries in the Global North or with my international fellow colleagues. This enabled me to locate myself both physically and mentally away from the 'insider' cultural understanding to defamiliarize and assess my analysis and findings more critically and constructively (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007; Moghissi, 1999).

What the 'insider-outsider' approach essentially entails is an active process of reflection throughout the research process of one's own values as well as the research participants' values. I argue that being privileged with the 'insider-outsider' approach also equips me to overcome the 'etic/emic dilemma' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This dilemma points to the potential misfit between the theory adopted by the outsider (etic) with the research participants' and/or context who are the insiders (emic) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Being able to address the

etic/emic dilemma is important in addressing the critique of how the mainstream has failed to adequately reflect the lived experiences of the 'others' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, this process has not been easy since it also forced me as a researcher to conduct an "inward journey" (Hamdan, 2012, p. 588).

This inward journey pushed me to many "zones of discomfort", but it has also enriched my research since I was able to assess the analysis using a more "well-rounded view" (Hamdan, 2009, p. 385). For instance, in the study where I focus on women entrepreneurs' initiating divorce, I explain the literal translation of the Arabic label for a marriage certificate which is the "intercourse contract". Being myself married and having signed the intercourse contract; I had never reflected on what it really meant. However, I found myself constantly pondering on why did Islam refer to it as an intercourse contract rather than as a marriage contract? What is the significance of highlighting intercourse in a marriage contract? And why is it important? How does that impact and influence the expectations of a married couple? How does the expectation of an active sex life influence women, especially women entrepreneurs? I believe that these questions will be very interesting to unravel. However, given the extreme sensitivity of the topic in a context that stresses the privacy of the home (Almatarneh, 2011), it will be challenging to find research participants who will be willing to discuss this aspect of their lives.

In other situations, I found myself very conscious and concerned about the possible negative impact that my research may have on my research participants and their businesses. These concerns are reflected in the disclaimer to the legitimacy study that brings attention to interaction and legitimacy by royal family members. I found that even though it is self-evident in the academic world that the analysis and findings are reflections of the author's interpretation, I had to add this disclaimer to clarify once and for all that the findings are a reflection of mine and my co-authors' interpretations to avoid any possible negative impact on the participants.

Many times, I also found myself in the same discomfort zone that I perceived to be a huge burden as a child and young immigrant Muslim women wearing hijab (headscarf) in Sweden. This burden was due to different misconceptions, stereotypical views, and prejudices that existed in Swedish society back then and are still prevalent even within a well-educated community of academics. For instance, I recall how an esteemed American female professor at a conference in the United Arab Emirates found it surprising that local Arab men were playing with their kids while waiting for their wives who were shopping. Another esteemed professor at a doctoral consortium suggested that given my empirical setting, women had to first be free from their men to become entrepreneurs. Other academics mentioned that these women do not even have the right to drive, so how can they become entrepreneurs? These remarks, comments, and observations from the academic community served as a clue to certain assumptions.

However, when I asked the research participants if they faced any challenges in their entrepreneurial activities just because they were women, I received different and sometimes conflicting answers. Some women claimed that they did

not face any challenges in establishing their entrepreneurial activities. In fact, some research participants claimed that "it was the best time to be a woman in Bahrain" while others suggested that they became entrepreneurs because of the support that they got from their husbands and other men in their social networks. Yet other research participants shared heartbreaking stories of being in an abusive relationship, challenging divorce process and court system that supports men and families that reject a woman's decision of seeking a divorce. These different realities, experiences, and voices of women entrepreneurs became central to my research.

Today, I am grateful for this inward journey that pushed me to deal with topics that I had considered a burden for a long time. This journey also forced me to question different deeply held beliefs and assumptions that I hold. I hope that my research will encourage others to reflect on their own worldviews, assumptions, and even prejudices that they may have about others.

Having articulated my own reflexive approach and self-critical inward journey and how that influenced my current research, I would like to share what I envision to be the ultimate contribution of both this dissertation and future research.

Being nested by what has been defined as Eastern and Western knowledge, experiences, and understanding I found myself puzzled by the terms East and West and more so with the term Middle East. Middle East to whom? By stating that this part of the world is the Middle of the East, it implies that another part of the world is at the center, in this case the Anglo-Saxon world. By acknowledging that my ancestors belonged to the East I am reinforcing the notion of the "West and the rest" (Mahbubani, 1992) where the Anglo-Saxons or what Connell (2020) refer to as the Global North have self-positioned themselves as universal and the center of the world while the rest are the 'other'. To this end Connell (2020, p. ix) argues that "social thoughts happens in a particular places" and offers a clear example of how British colonizers regarded themselves to be living at the end of the world. However, the original people of Australia regard themselves to be in the center of the world.

Inspired, encouraged, and empowered by the work of two sociologists, Connell (2014b, 2017, 2020) and Alatas (2014) and being a product of globalization, I would like to join my voice with other scholars from both North and South, East and West (Dinh & Calabrò, 2019; Van De Ven, 2011; Van de Ven & Jing, 2012) to challenge the monopoly and the self-positioned universality of the Global North by crafting research that not only provides knowledge *about* context but where others can learn *from* the context. This dissertation is my first baby step towards this goal.

4.2 General approach to research

This dissertation relies on a literature review that takes stock of the current literature on women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States and three empirical studies with different research questions and theoretical lenses. I adopt a qualitative

approach in my empirical research as I am interested in understanding the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs. The lived experiences "cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purpose attached by human actors to their activities" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 106). I relied extensively on life-story interviews for all my empirical studies. I have also made use of multiple sources of empirical material such as social media, media archives, and other available secondary empirical material such as reports, websites, and interviews with other actors that helped me form a better understanding of the context. This empirical material is consistent with the social constructionist paradigm. I adopt abductive reasoning (Peirce, 1878) since it recognizes the "process we all engage in as we use our existing mental models to make sense of experiences" (Hansen, 2008, p. 455).

Making sense of an experience is an interpretive process where the researcher focuses on and organizes the experience (Weick, 1995). Thus, the empirical material that I had, played an important role in problematizing different theories in relation to the phenomenon by attending to "unanticipated and unexpected" issues (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007, p. 1266). For instance, the empirical material indicated that many of the research participants had been through a divorce. While divorce is a difficult and emotionally draining experience regardless of where the person is located, in this empirical context it is even more challenging due to the potential social stigma, outdated court systems, and risk of losing child custody.

Despite these challenges women did venture into entrepreneurship or focused on growing their businesses which is surprising given the hardships and difficulties inherent in entrepreneurship (Stephan, 2018). What was even more interesting is the fact that many of the research participants were employed and had good incomes, thus they were not driven by the financial necessity of starting a business after a divorce. This triggered the need to better understand why and how some women started or grew a business after initiating divorce, while others did not. Similar puzzles triggered the focus of the other empirical studies. This process enabled me to focus on "interpretations that allow a productive and noncommonsensical understanding of ambiguous social reality" (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007).

4.3 Data Collection

One of the key sources of empirical material collected for this dissertation is life-story interviews using McAdam's (2008) interview protocol. This interview protocol was deemed to be a good qualitative tool for understanding women entrepreneurs' behavior and experiences since it captures how individuals assign purpose to their lives by "constructing internalized and evolving narratives of the self" (McAdams, 2001, p. 100). What is perhaps important to note is that life stories are not 'biographical facts' narrated by the research participants, but they represent selective appropriation, interpretation, and meaning of their past and their lives that will make sense to them and their audiences (McAdams, 2001). To

understand what the research participants went through or their potential thought processes during the interviews, I decided to ask myself the questions and write down the answers. What I realized from this exercise, is the rich memories and emotions these questions evoked. It was also interesting to note which of these memories I decided to write down and which ones I decided to conceal either because I considered them to be trivial or because they may reveal too much about me. In other cases, I decided not to write certain things because they were too painful to remember and write about.

I also conducted a test interview on a close male family member. The reason I wanted to test the interview with a man is because I wanted to be better equipped with what to expect and the potential reaction I might get from a man in a context where men are socialized to conceal certain emotions such as weakness, fear, or crying. When this person started sharing deep aspects about his life and even cried, I was convinced of the power of this interview protocol.

I was fortunate to be able to secure funding from my university to travel and conduct these interviews face to face. Conducting face to face interviews was important since it enabled me to get a better sense and observe the body language which was important to get a sense if the question posed triggered any painful memories, when the research participant was not comfortable answering the question, and if I should provide explanations as to why this question was important or reassure them that their answers will be anonymous. I also think that face-to-face encounters built certain trust between the research participants and myself as a researcher. This was important since in this context the notion of privacy is stressed by Islamic values, more specifically the privacy of the home (Almatarneh, 2011). In general, a marital relationship's secrets and family issues are highly concealed and protected. However, I think the interview protocol used allowed for trust to be built before delving deep into issues in an individual's life. I travelled to Bahrain on multiple occasions between 2017 and 2020. When I first entered the field, I knew that I wanted to focus on women entrepreneurs in Bahrain, but I did not have a clear vision about what issues were the most pressing for this group, what research questions would be most relevant, or which theory to use. Since I was conducting the interviews in batches, I had the time to transcribe, read, and analyze the transcripts. During this time, I was also working on the literature review on women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States. This is where I noticed an interesting and perhaps a surprising issue between the data I had collected and what was mentioned in literature.

One of the surprising issues that I found is that most of the literature seemed to suggest that this is a patriarchal context, and it would be virtually impossible for women to become entrepreneurs without the support of men in their lives. However, many of the women entrepreneurs I interviewed had gone through a divorce, so this male figure that literature was referring to did not exist, especially for women who started their business after a divorce. Being guided by this surprising contradiction I made sure to include more women entrepreneurs who had gone through a divorce. Similar surprises guided the other two empirical studies.

While some studies conducted in this context claim that their research participants reflected a privileged class (Alkhaled, 2021; McAdam et al., 2020a), it was very difficult for me to label the research participants in terms of class. It was my intention to include a diverse group of Bahraini women in terms of age and different socioeconomic backgrounds. However, I think it will be challenging and also problematic to apply class classifications developed in Victorian and European societies (Newton et al., 2012) and imposing them in this context. There is virtually no academic study that discusses social class in this context (Zogby, 2007). One study that eludes to social class in a rentier state and suggests that it has an "inverted pyramid of social classes…[where] a large non-productive, consumer-driven, middle class dominates the social structure in the absence of a producer class" (Minnis, 2006, p. 986). However, I argue that state-society relations in this context are more complex and need further and closer examination to really understand the make-up of the various social classes in this context. This may require another PhD dissertation.

For this dissertation, I conducted 70 interviews with women entrepreneurs and some family members. The women entrepreneurs were all native Bahrainis. However, given my 'insider' position in the context I attempted to include a diverse sample of research participants. I interviewed women who are members of the royal family as well as very poor women from the villages, women who belong to affluent families that have close allegiance to the government, and women entrepreneurs from families that belong to the political opposition. Some of the women come from family business backgrounds while others did not have any family members engaged in business activities. Some women had received western academic education, others were from local universities, while some research participants could not afford local universities. I interviewed women from both religious sects, Sunnis and Shias. I interviewed those who suggested that they were "SuShis" since their parents belonged to different religious sects. I also interviewed women who had parents who did not believe in God. I interviewed Bahraini women representing the main social communities that make up the social fabric of Bahraini society, known locally as the "Baharna", "Arabs", "Ajam" and "Howala" I also interviewed women born in Bahrain who only knew Bahrain as a country and defined themselves as Bahraini and with women who have one Bahraini parent while their mothers are Asian. The research parents also had different marital status.

Some of these women were aiming to be the next millionaires under 30, some had established multiple businesses, and others were finding it challenging to make ends meet. The women also engaged in diverse business activities such as manufacturing, restaurants, consultancies, and the fashion and entertainment industries. Given this diversity in my sample I believe I can confidently claim that the research participants in this dissertation are not limited to a privileged class.

In addition to the life-story interviews I also collected data from the women entrepreneurs' public social media accounts such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Social media as a source of empirical material is of particular relevance

and importance for studies carried out in the Gulf States. In 2018, 'We are Social reported' that the Gulf States were amongst the leading nations in social media growth due to ownership of smartphones, high level of internet penetration, and a large youth population that is digitally savvy (Radcliffe, 2018). The continuous increase in social media platforms has made it possible for many ventures to tap into the power of social media, not only for promoting their activities (Liang & Turban, 2011) but also to "'authentically' engage with customers" (Smith et al., 2012, p. 102). The visual aspect of the content shared through social media platforms represents great social and political power and is rich with information (Highfield & Leaver, 2016), perhaps more so for women, since they have been traditionally restricted in terms of visual representation (Hurley, 2019).

Social media as empirical material has been extensively used in the second empirical study by analyzing Instagram and Facebook posts. LinkedIn was used for the second and third empirical study to form a better understanding of critical events in the research participants' lives.

Lastly, press and media coverage published in the general press in both local and regional media was also used. This empirical material included newspaper articles and press releases, magazines, and television interviews. This type of data has been regarded as a popular source for understanding the emergence of new businesses (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). This empirical material was only used to inform the second empirical study on legitimacy.

Table 1 outlines how the various data was used in each study.

Table 1 - Data sources for the empirical studies

Data source	*Empirical Study 1 Masculinity*	*Empirical Study 2 Legitimacy*	*Empirical Study 3 Self-determination*
Life story interview	X	X	X
Follow-up interview	X	X	X
Social Media		X	X
Media Archive		X	

4.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis started during the data collection phase with continuous interpretations and reflexivity. As such, the theory generation and further data collection happened simultaneously (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Gioia & Pitre, 1990). This suggests that my approach to theory building is iterative and non-linear. While I did use a thematic analysis across all four research papers, I had to adopt additional analytical tools such as critical events, content, and a semiotic

analysis for the second empirical study due to the multiplicity of empirical material. The empirical material included life-story interviews, press and media coverage, and around 15,000 social media posts. Table 2 provides an overview of the different analytical tools used. It is important to note that while I have life-story narratives as empirical material, I did not perform a narrative analysis. Similar to other studies, the papers that had multiple data sources, had multiple stages of analysis (Huy et al., 2014; Lawrence & Dover, 2015; Toubiana & Zietsma, 2017). These analytical tools assisted me in adhering to the three key steps of qualitative research: (1) sorting, (2) reducing, and (3) arguing (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018).

Since the analysis and the display of the data is crucial in ensuring the rigor of a qualitative research (Tracy, 2010), Gioia et al. (2013) served as an inspiration in structuring the data for each empirical study. This was done by maintaining the voice of the research participants in the first-order concepts before moving to more abstract second order themes. These different themes were then categorized into aggregate dimensions. As a visual person, structuring the data in such a way enabled me to reflect on how the various categories made sense together.

Table 2 – Type of analysis used in the respective papers

Data source	*Paper 1 Literature Review*	*Empirical Study 1: Masculinity*	*Empirical Study 2: Legitimacy*	*Empirical Study 3: Self-Determination Theory*
Thematic Analysis	*X*	*X*	*X*	*X*
Critical Events			*X*	
Content Analysis			*X*	
Semiotic Analysis			*X*	

4.5 Research Quality and Ethics

As indicated earlier, Gioia et al. (2013) work was applied as one possible approach to demonstrate rigor of the empirical studies. However, I also shared my background in relation to theories and context, my reflections on both the privilege and the challenges of the 'insider-outsider' approach as well as my honest critique of the hegemony of western knowledge production. These are all efforts to be as authentic as possible, communicate transparently, and establish rigor through trustworthiness, an aspect that is necessary for qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Delving into the details of trustworthiness Guba (1981) offered four key criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of the qualitative study: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability. I now elaborate on these criteria and how they were dealt with in this dissertation.

According to Guba (1981) credibility attempts to overcome potential distortion between the empirical material and the researcher's interpretation. I believe I have worked actively to secure credibility by travelling to Bahrain and

conducting the interviews with the research participants. I remained in contact with the research participants through digital media like WhatsApp and Zoom. Through these digital media I was able to clarify some issues further and double check quickly with the research participants if what I have theorized made sense to them. For instance, I approached the research participants during the theorization of the legitimacy study to better understand what influence a royal validity had on them and their businesses. At this stage, the entrepreneurs who received awards argued that they had received market validity and that they were legitimate entrepreneurs prior to the royal awards. However, the royal validity gave them a "shiner profile", the final legitimacy stamp and more importantly it provided them with stronger bargaining power.

In addition to sense-checking with the research participants, I presented my research at international conferences such as AOM, BABSON, and DIANA, participated in paper development workshops, and had ongoing conversations with my co-authors, colleagues, and the broader research community about my research. For example, the third empirical study which focuses on divorce. At first, I had only included research participants who had been through divorce and were engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Following different conversations with the research community, the co-authors and I decided to include research participants who had divorced but were not engaged in entrepreneurial activities. By including this group, we modified the research question by adding "while others do not" at the end of the research question. Thus, the final research question became "why and how some women start or grow a business after initiating divorce, while others do not". Adding this group of women became central to our theorization.

The transferability, is slightly harder to achieve in qualitative research since human action are "context-bound" Guba (1981, p. 86). To overcome this challenge Guba (1981) suggest that the qualitative researchers should offer rich description of both the sampling process and the context. This richness of description will enable others to evaluate if the finding is transferable to other contexts. I have attempted to offer as much as possible detailed and thick description of the sample, process, and context in this dissertation which is also complemented with additional and relevant information in each of the research papers. I believe that many of the theoretical concepts identified in this dissertation can be transferable to other contexts. For instance, there are different European countries that are ruled by monarchs. These monarchs also recognize entrepreneurs through royal awards. Thus, the theoretical concept of "Royal Validity" may be transferable. However, the findings regarding the influence of family norms may not be as strong in Europe as it was found in this study. The same could be said about concepts developed in the other research papers where certain concepts could be transferable such as the various forms of masculinity enacted by men. Future research could explore the transferability of these concepts to women entrepreneurs in the Global North who interact with men originating from the Arab Middle East. The theoretical concept of entrapment versus marriage discontent may also be transferable to other contexts.

The dependability criteria stress the importance of articulating the decision trail so it can be audited and followed by other researchers (Koch, 1994). As mentioned earlier, I engaged with and participated in various international conferences and with different international scholars. For instance, the masculinity study is a single authored paper and draws on gender studies. For this study, I felt the need to double check if the decision trail I was making in my study was dependable. During my research visit to Australia where I purposively sought to join the department of gender and cultural studies to have more expert views, I got the advice to bring to the fore the experiences of women in relation to different forms of masculinity enacted by men. Presenting the more developed version of the study at paper development workshops and in other settings the discussants who might not have had much expert knowledge of masculinity studies seemed to be hesitant to use masculinity theory. Therefore, I approached a well-established gender scholar, who was the person who introduced me to masculinity studies in the first place, for a friendly review. The friendly review served as an excellent audit and provided me with much valuable feedback that has helped me in further clarifying the decision trail and other issues that might have confused previous evaluators.

The last criterion is confirmability which is mainly to ensure that the empirical material used supports the interpretations and that the interpretations are in line with the empirical material (Guba, 1981). Reflexivity is one potential way of ensuring credibility (Guba, 1981) and is something that I have adopted and elaborated on in detail in the previous section.

Having addressed the four criteria to ensure the qualitative research's rigor, I now address important points in relation to research ethics. Qualitative research is "saturated with moral and ethical issues" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005) since it enables a researcher to access private, intimate, and sometimes secret and untold thoughts that the interviewee may have about a particular issue. To make things even more complicated, conducting research in non-democratic societies or cultures where certain issues can be taboo or critiquing certain social powers/authorities may sometimes subject not only the researcher but also the research participants to unwanted or sometimes even harmful consequences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). Therefore, it was important to adhere to the GDPR requirements, seek consent from the research participants to record and transcribe the interviews after I had introduced myself and my research and before we formally started with the interview protocol. I also offered the research participants the possibility to opt out of answering sensitive questions; in many instances the research participants became emotional and sometimes cried. I thanked them for sharing sensitive and emotional experiences and reassured them that what they were sharing would be anonymized.

In other instances, I felt the need to tell the research participants why I was asking more detailed questions about certain aspects that they had discussed such as divorce and who initiated the divorce and why. By clarifying these aspects most of the research participants were willing to share these very delicate private experiences. When I asked the research participants at the end of the interviews

to share their reflections on how they felt about having a stranger like me asking such intimate questions about their lives, some of the research participants said that had given many interviews to the media and they were used to sharing certain aspects of their lives. Two research participants were clear that they did not want to discuss issues related to their divorce. However, most of the research participants were positively surprised with how open they were with me about their lives. Some thought that I was a "good listener", "easy to talk to", "non-judgmental". Others suggested that they shared more with me about themselves than with their close friends. A few research participants suggested that I should change my field and become a therapist while others felt that they "had been sitting with a life coach."

Some research participants were honest in sharing that they had to be extra cautious about certain issues such as questions in relation to their political values. Concealing or refraining from sharing their political values was something that I had expected, and it did not have an impact on my research as I was more interested in issues related to their social context and family embeddedness.

Some research participants were so busy with life, so this interview was an opportunity for them to piece together different pieces of their lives. While it was heartwarming to receive such positive feedback from the research participants, it was also challenging in certain situations. In an extreme case, a research participant had gone through various traumatic events from a very young age and to make matters worse one week before our interview she was raped. However, she had not shared this story with anyone due to the threats that she got from the man who raped her and for risk of being blamed or discredited by others. I was the only person whom the women trusted with this devastating experience. I felt I was not well prepared as a researcher to deal with experiences like these. What is my role in situations like these? Can I remain just a researcher? Should I offer help? If so, what kind of help can I offer? I left the interview feeling devastated with what I had just heard. I shared the story, of course with complete anonymity with close people and was shocked by some of the reactions of certain family members and friends who straightaway accused the entrepreneur of lying. This reaction triggered a lot of anger in me. However, I could understand why the entrepreneur had decided to share this horrific story with me and not with other people in her community.

I did not feel that I was well equipped or in a position to give advice even when the entrepreneur asked me for guidance. All I could do was to offer her a place to stay if she needed or put her in touch with people who might have the knowledge and professional expertise to support her.

Reflecting on this and given the character of this man had she taken up my offer it might have put me and possibly other women who might have helped at risk. This encounter took place at the end of my data collection. I wished that I was better prepared since I had not come across any research that addresses such difficult ethical dilemmas in qualitative research.

5 Conclusions

This dissertation is based on the argument that entrepreneurship literature can be extended by considering the substantive contexts that women entrepreneurs face in a non-western country. It focuses attention on the social context and more specifically family embeddedness, by addressing the overarching research purpose of how women entrepreneurs establish and grow their business in a patriarchal society. The dissertation builds on a literature review on women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States as well as three qualitative empirical studies. Different theories were adopted for each empirical study, and each make distinct contributions to entrepreneurship and to the adopted theories.

In the following section I provide a summary of the contributions of each research paper before attending to the broader contributions of the dissertation.

5.1 Outline of the research papers' contribution

As outlines in table 3, the first research paper in this dissertation contributes to literature on entrepreneurship by offering a more holistic understanding of the current debate on a substantive context of women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States and discusses and explains unique substantive contexts that might be worth investigating in future research. It also extends the notion of "doing context" by offering different conceptualizations about how women entrepreneurs enact and do context.

The empirical studies contribute to literature by broadening our understanding of different social contexts. The first empirical study contributes to literature by problematizing the category of men in entrepreneurship literature by showing the different forms of masculinity enacted by men, the influence that these have on women entrepreneurs, and the approaches adopted by women in dealing with these forms of masculinity enacted by men. While the first empirical study uses a broad question to understand the interplay between women entrepreneurs and the different forms of masculinity enacted by men, the second empirical study delves deeper into the specifics to understand how women entrepreneurs can gain legitimacy from family and non-family members. This study shows different evaluators that exist in the women entrepreneurs' social networks and the different types of legitimacy that can be rendered through the active efforts of women entrepreneurs in changing and influencing others' judgements. The third and last empirical study contributes to literature by focusing on women who attempt to break away from certain family structures and the process they undertake to self-realize themselves and where entrepreneurship is a part of the overall process of self-discovery and self-development. The question then is, how do these different

contributions make sense together and what are the broader contributions of the dissertation? This is addressed in the next section.

Table 3 - Brief outline of the research papers' contributions

RESEARCH PAPER	KEY CONTRIBUTIONS	FIELD OF CONTRIBUTION
Paper 1: Literature review: Women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States: Taking stock and moving forward	Responding to calls for more inclusive knowledge production	Entrepreneurship
	Extending emerging literature on "doing context"	Contextualizing entrepreneurship
Empirical Study 1: The interplay between women entrepreneurs and different forms of masculinity	Extending women entrepreneurship literature beyond hegemonic masculinity	Women entrepreneurship
	Developing the typology of masculinity based on women entrepreneurs' experiences	Women entrepreneurship and masculinity
	Offering an alternative view to emancipation and women entrepreneurship literature by showing that in this context breaking away from exploiting masculinity is the actual emancipatory activity	Women entrepreneurship and emancipation
	Identifying "own-business" as an additional institution that may organize gender relations	Masculinity
	Presenting a social arrangement where certain women are enabled to become entrepreneurs, maintain traditional gender roles, and subject other women to "double hegemony"	Contextualizing entrepreneurship
Empirical Study 2: "The Royal Award goes to…": Legitimacy processes for female-led family ventures	Developing a process model of legitimacy for female-led family ventures	Family business
	Advancing family business literature by moving the discussion on legitimacy beyond succession to focus on the legitimacy process of newly established family businesses	Family business
	Bringing attention to reciprocal relationships between an entrepreneur and the evaluators to influence, form, and change their perceptions	Legitimacy
Empirical Study 3: From entrapped to enraptured: eudaimonic well-being through entrepreneurial activities	Developing a process model of personal crisis toward eudaimonic well-being and entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship and eudaimonic well-being
	Showing the complexity of the psychological needs and contributing to a better understanding of the interplay between entrepreneurship, meaning, and eudaimonic well-being	Entrepreneurship and eudaimonic well-being
	Introducing the concept of prosocial well-being	Entrepreneurship and eudaimonic well-being

5.2 Contributions of the dissertation

While the social context dimension has been the main lens used for understanding different influences in women entrepreneurship literature (Welter et al., 2014), the literature has mainly reflected experiences of "entrepreneurs in the Global North" (Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018, p. 8). This dissertation moves the discussion forward by bringing the 'other' in entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship (Baker & Welter, 2017; Welter et al., 2017) to the center. By focusing attention on an understudied context, through this dissertation I respond to calls for the need to better understand how entrepreneurs "do context" (Baker & Welter, 2020; Welter, 2020). Consequently, a combination of the four research papers in this dissertation provides novel insights into how women entrepreneurs construct and enact the social context in which they are embedded, especially the social context of the family that is headed by a patriarch.

The first research paper in this dissertation, the literature review, shows that women entrepreneurs in this context enact their context in three distinct ways: (1) unmaking context – challenging different social norms and patriarchal structures without open confrontation and open defiance to social values; (2) making context – through negotiations with family and non-family members; and (3) remaking the context by enacting societal logic.

I argue that to better understand these approaches it is paramount to take into account the social makeup of this context. Therefore, drawing on the work of sociologist Ibn Khaldun, who studied Arab societies amongst others (Alatas, 2014), was deemed useful. According to Ibn Khaldun the social makeup of Arab societies depends on the notion of "Asabiyyah" (Alatas, 2014). As explained in the literature review the notion of Asabiyyah emphasizes common cause and destiny through three forms of social relationships (1) "silat al-raham" – blood ties, (2) "wala" – loyalty, and (3) "hilf" – alliance. I argue that women entrepreneurs enact and construct the context by reproducing Asabiyyah. This could perhaps explain why the women are engaged in unmaking the context but without open defiance and through constant negotiations with their family to ensure that they move ahead with their entrepreneurial activities while maintaining a sense of common cause and destiny of the multiple families that they are embedded in.

The empirical studies also reflect the enactment and the construction of a context that reinforces these different relationships.

The first empirical study shows that women entrepreneurs adopt different approaches to deal with different forms of masculinity enacted by men, "4C approaches" – comply, combine, collaborate, and cut out. While the first three approaches reflect women's efforts to enact the Asabiyyah the last approach of cutting out exploiting masculinity seems to go against the notion of Asabiyyah. The divorce study brings specific attention to this by illustrating the challenges that women may face, since they are embedded in multiple families who are technically attempting to reinforce Asabiyyah by, for example, withdrawing their support from the women who want to divorce. Women are also subject to stigma

which is perhaps a social mechanism used against those women who defy Asabiyyah. According to Ibn Khaldun, blood ties are not the only foundation to Asabiyyah but loyalty (wala) and alliance (hilf) are other important relationships for creating a sense of common cause and destiny. I argue that when it was no longer possible to maintain Asabiyyah through blood ties, the women enacted and constructed Asabiyyah through alliances. While the alliance in the first empirical study reflects an alliance with men, the third empirical study on divorce reflects how women construct alliances with other women through prosocial well-being. Interestingly, the enactment of prosocial well-being may perhaps counter the "double hegemony" found in the first empirical study where women depend on outsourced support from mainly Asian and African women for maintaining traditional gender roles in the private sphere.

The second empirical study on legitimacy, reflects the construction of Asabiyyah by enacting the three forms of social relationships. For example, the family is not only evaluator, but the entrepreneurs also enacted loyalty and alliance with their blood ties through sibling partnerships. The women constructed alliances with other actors such as the interest community and aligned themselves with 'large voices' by following different logics encouraged by institution and society, such as employing locals and women. Consequently, by drawing on conceptualization developed to reflect the context of the Arab society, I am able to contribute to the newly attained focus in contextualizing entrepreneurship by bringing attention to how entrepreneurs "do context" by enacting different forms of social relationships.

My dissertation also informs the debate in family embeddedness literature. We know that entrepreneurs can obtain much needed financial and non-financial resources from their families (Arregle et al., 2015), and we also know that this reliance on family may restrain and have negative consequences for an entrepreneur (Granovetter, 1985; Sieger & Minola, 2017). Literature also suggests that family embeddedness can support entrepreneurs in overcoming a potential institutional void in an emerging economy depending on family members' willingness to support an entrepreneur as well as the potential authority or status that the entrepreneur has to "mobilize family members" (Ge et al., 2019).

Others argue that the extent to which an entrepreneur is in congruence with the family structure will influence their ability to access different resources (McKeever et al., 2014). However, in patriarchal societies a woman may arguably be sanctioned from accessing different resources if she decides to take on untraditional roles such as entrepreneurship. The patriarchal nature of society also limits the authority that women may have to mobilize family members and if a woman decides to break away from certain family structures this might not only strip her of valuable resources, but it could have a negative effect on her well-being, which makes it even harder for a woman to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

This dissertation contributes to these overlooked aspects in literature by focusing on how women entrepreneurs establish and grow a business in a patriarchal society.

Literature is critical of the traditional nuclear family that has dominated entrepreneurship literature (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). The first research paper, the literature review, focuses attention on multiple family embeddedness that women entrepreneurs must navigate. Given the patriarchal nature of the context this means that each family is headed by a man. This social structure is mirrored in broader society. The first empirical study highlights how women entrepreneurs are related to and are in constant interaction with various men who enact different forms of masculinity. The enactment of masculinity has different influence on women entrepreneurs which requires them to adopt different approaches to influence the willingness of the patriarchs and maneuver support from family members to access additional resources.

This is also evident in the second empirical study, where women entrepreneurs sought support from other family members such as the mother to influence the legitimacy judgement of the father who rendered legitimacy on behalf of the family.

Drawing on legitimacy as perception (Suddaby et al., 2017) also shows how women entrepreneurs go through three main phases by actively interacting with family and non-family members and acquire different forms of legitimacy including the highest form of national legitimacy, something that my co-authors and I identify as "Royal Validity". Acquiring this form of validity seems to influence the norms of the family and in some cases changes the social position of a woman entrepreneur to be in line with the family patriarch. As such, the dissertation extends family embeddedness literature by showing how through the legitimacy process and the acquisition of Royal Validity, women entrepreneurs can shift their social position and gain authority within the family.

The third empirical study brings special attention to the challenges that women may face when attempting to break away from certain family structures in which they are embedded. The study reflects on the challenging psychological journeys that these women undertake to find new sources of meaning in life. Entrepreneurship is one of the many activities that they engage in, to rediscover, develop and accept themselves. To maintain this sense of self-actualization, the women engage in what my co-authors and I identify as prosocial well-being, that is, strengthening their own well-being by helping other women in a similar situation to realize themselves.

5.3 Practical Implications

In addition to theoretical contributions, this dissertation has a number of practical implications. As a researcher who had the opportunity to interview hardworking, dedicated, and resilient women entrepreneurs, it is important that the work I present will have practical relevance and hopefully lead to a positive impact on them and their businesses. This dissertation brings to the fore the need for policymakers in the Gulf States to move beyond the narrow economic view that focus on economic reforms by attending to socio-economic policies. Hirdman

(1998) discusses how the gender contracts need to be considered when formulating state policy, something that I firmly believe is necessary in this context. This dissertation clearly articulates the great social development and advancement that has been made to encourage women to be more active in the market, and more specifically becoming entrepreneurs. However, the studies also reflect that these women have been left to their own devices in dealing with challenges that might arise in the social context and the private sphere.

This points to the need for social debates at different levels regarding not just the gender contract in a post-rentier economy but also debates regarding the forms of masculinity that should be enacted by men. If men are to enact a particular form of masculinity what social changes need to happen and how?

The quest for these reforms is evident in both the literature review as well as the first empirical study that shows how both men and women express a sense of being torn between traditional gender roles and a more egalitarian view. Another question pertains to the notion of Asabiyyah introduced in the literature review to reflect the characteristics of common cause and destiny. If Asabiyyah is something that society would like to continue to embrace, how can this be achieved without having women pay the price at a cost to their happiness, health, well-being, and rights in the process of a divorce? As is shown in both the divorce and masculinity studies, women were not only subject to different challenges imposed by men and for taking the initiative to file for divorce, but the challenges are also present in formal institutions such as the family court as well as in informal institutions through the withdrawal of family support and social stigma. In short, economic reforms must also take into account social reforms to support both women and men in realizing themselves both in the private and public spheres.

A related but different social debate should take place on the current social arrangements of outsourced domestic help provided mainly by women from Asia and Africa. As is evident in the literature review and the masculinity study, while this arrangement enables Bahraini women to enter the market and pursue their entrepreneurial activities, the traditional gender roles at home seem to be maintained by having other women do the housework. What is perhaps interesting about this group of women who travel, live, and work abroad with their families depending on them financially is that they become the main breadwinners for their families back home. But the work that they engage in, subjects them to "double hegemony".

I would encourage social debates and policymakers to have an open dialogue regarding not only gender roles and what is the man's role in the home regardless of if he is the main provider or not? In cases where the man is no longer the only provider for his family, what would be his role, especially if he does not have an income and the woman is the only provider? How does that influence other current laws and policies such as inheritance and child custody? While outsourcing domestic work enables these women to provide for their families, how can their employers and society ensure that these women are not subject to hegemony?

The last practical implication should spillover to women beyond the geographical context of this dissertation. I am referring to women who come from the Arab Middle East but live in the West. I hope that this dissertation will not only break certain prejudices and stereotypes that these women encounter in their host countries but that this dissertation will also help highlight certain power and social structures that might not have been obvious to an outsider. For instance, being equipped with knowledge regarding the marriage contract, the importance of common cause and destiny or the possibility of changing one's social position in the family and changing family norms might provide authorities a better understanding of how to handle and provide the necessary support to facilitate better integration of these women in the host country.

5.4 Limitations and future studies

Like any other study, this dissertation has limitations that create an opportunity for future research. The sample included a group of women who had mixed race parents where the father was Bahraini and the mother an Asian (Indian, Philippian, and Thai). This group of women seem to have faced added challenges either in terms of cultural clashes between the families that they were embedded in and how certain things might be socially acceptable in one family and not in other families or in other cases being subjected to racism despite having a Bahraini father. Future research could focus more specifically on these experiences to understand its influence on women's entrepreneurial activities.

It is also common for Bahraini men to marry women from the West such as British and Americans. Using legitimacy as a perception lens, future research could do in-group comparisons between Bahraini women entrepreneurs who have parents of eastern descent compared to western descent and explore the potential influence their family backgrounds may have on their entrepreneurial activities.

Related but a different research avenue involves an in-group comparison study between women entrepreneurs who come from a family business background and those who do not. The second empirical study in this dissertation suggests that there is a spillover effect that speeds up the legitimacy formation process. The discussion in the empirical setting of the dissertation brings to light the unique social structure between the royal family and families that have a strong social position such as family business owners. We also know that the family influences an individual and vice-versa. Thus, focusing on these two groups of women may yield new and novel insights regarding resource acquisition and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The final research avenue that I would like to propose is linked to the unique social arrangement that relies on a group of women to take care of the traditional roles in the household to enable other women to become entrepreneurs. An interesting avenue for future research could be interviews with domestic helpers. Conducting this type of research will provide interesting and novel insights in relation to "households as entrepreneurial sites" (Carter et al., 2017).

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Collection of Papers

Paper 1
Women entrepreneurs in the Gulf States: Taking stock and moving forward
Sumaya Hashim

Paper 2
The interplay between women entrepreneurs and different forms of masculinity
Sumaya Hashim

Paper 3
"The Royal awards goes to…" Legitimacy processes for female-led family ventures
Sumaya Hashim, Lucia Naldi and Magdalena Markowska

Paper 4
From entrapment to enraptured: Eudaimonic well-being through entrepreneurial activity
Sumaya Hashim, Lucia Naldi and Magdalena Markowska

Women Entrepreneurship

Masculinity, Legitimacy and Well-being

This dissertation provides insights into women entrepreneurship literature by shedding light on the interplay with different forms of masculinity enacted by men, the legitimacy processes and women's self-realization following personal adversity such as divorce. Attending to the experiences of women entrepreneurs beyond the Anglo-Saxon context is both contributing to more inclusive entrepreneurship literature as well as advancing theories within the field of entrepreneurship and beyond.

The dissertation includes four research papers. Each of these papers attempts to provide a novel understanding of women entrepreneurs' social context. The first paper is a literature review that provides insights into how women entrepreneurs do context in the Gulf States. The three remaining empirical studies delve into different aspects of women's personal and professional life to understand how it influences their entrepreneurial activity by challenging different assumptions.

SUMAYA HASHIM is a doctoral candidate in Business Administration. Her research reflects her passion for issues related to women and entrepreneurship. Sumaya has had more than a decade of experience in higher education before embarking on the PhD journey. Her research has appeared in academic journals and public media both in Sweden and Bahrain.

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