



Female Visibility/Representation in Saudi Arabia:

**A Critical Multimodal/Discourse Analysis of the 2013 IKEA catalogue and Press
Discourses on Saudi Arabia**

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Abstract

This study examines gender representation in Saudi Arabia using combined approaches of Multimodal Social Semiotics (MSS) and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). The thesis conducts a critical analysis of both advertisements and media discourses. The former focuses on verbal and visual analysis of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (in Arabic and English), and the latter pertains to the verbal and visual discourse of ‘Western’ newspapers’ portrayal of Saudi Arabia in their coverage of this particular catalogue issue, i.e. removal of female images from the Saudi version. The aim of this study is to investigate both the discursive practices in the catalogue and in the press coverage so as to deconstruct the issue of female visibility in Saudi Arabia and how publication of the catalogue would provide a suitable discursive opportunity for stereotypical representation of Saudi Arabia as the ‘Other’.

Two overarching questions guide the analysis in the thesis: (1) how were females represented in the 2013 Arabic IKEA catalogue, which was distributed in Saudi Arabia? (2) How do the examined newspapers discursively represent the social actors when reporting the exclusion of females? In light of these questions, the thesis undertakes a twofold analysis. The first is a verbal linguistic analysis of both the catalogue in Arabic and the news reports covering the issue. The subject of analysis for the linguistic representation of males and females in the Arabic version of the catalogue mainly examines the masculine and feminine forms in morpho-syntactic categories, in order to determine the audience in the language used by the catalogue. A qualitative data analysis software tool, MAXQDA, is used to obtain accurate results that describe the frequencies of the examined variables. In terms of media discourse, approaches from CDS are utilized to analyze the discursive representation of the social groups involved. Following CDS notions of Self and Other representation (KhosraviNik 2015), the subject matter of this research involves examining how stereotypes of Self and Other, in terms of gender equality in Saudi Arabia, may have been applied by IKEA and in subsequent coverage of the perceived problem. Analytical tools from the Discourse Historical approach, Socio-cognitive approach and Socio-semantic approach are incorporated in the analytical design to answer the research questions.

The second part of the twofold analysis for this study is a visual analysis of the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue as well as the images accompanying the news reports, based on the Multimodal Social Semiotic approach, mainly drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen’s Visual Grammar (1996, 2006). More specifically, the visual representation of social

actors in the IKEA catalogues is examined in terms of how the social actors are positioned in the visual representation as well as the ways they would be related to the prospective viewer. Therefore, CDS tools are utilized to study lexical and grammatical choices in language while the visual characteristics are deconstructed through Multimodal tools.

The findings reveal a sharp contrast between the textual and visual representations of females in the catalogues. Females are linguistically visible within the Saudi edition but are visually excluded, which revealed IKEA's linguistic sexism. Conversely, linguistic and visual representations in the newspapers complement each other and reveal the ways in which news sources construct Saudi Arabia in the context of women's rights, as certain negative themes associated with Saudi Arabia emerge, e.g. 'backwardness' and 'the oppression of women's rights'. The analysis further reveals that women's rights is a common discourse in this context, with a tendency to be accompanied by discourses that perpetuate stereotypes of Saudi women being 'oppressed' and 'invisible'. Such representations are inherently linked to a wider critique of Orientalism and negative Other representation of Islam in the mainstream 'Western' discourses on Saudi Arabia.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated with love

To the soul of my **father**

Your dream came true; I kept my promise

To my **mother**, my Heaven.

Acknowledgement

It is a truth academically acknowledged that a PhD is a very tough journey, and mine is no exception. It was even more challenging and difficult due to unexpected health problems, which culminated in my being diagnosed with a shocking brain tumour in the middle of my studies. At that moment, I knew that the journey was going to be *tougher* and *more challenging*, but I was ready. My faith in God's mercy fuelled my passion and provided me with the strength and perseverance to survive. And here I am writing this acknowledgment and I declare that it is a divine miracle to reach this stage. Thank you, my God, most Gracious and most Merciful.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables	xiii
List of Figures	xiv
List of Abbreviations	xvi
Glossing Abbreviations	xvii
Transliteration	xviii
The Arabic orthography of phonemic sounds and their IPA equivalents	xviii
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. The Problem of Research	2
1.3. Overview of the incident: Case Description	4
1.4. Reaction of the KSA and the Saudi Media	6
1.5. Rationale	7
1.6. Research Questions	11
1.7. Thesis Layout	12
Chapter 2. Background and Context	13
2.1. Introduction	13
2.2. Saudi Arabia	13
2.2.1. Historical Overview	14
2.2.2. Geographical Setting and Diversity	15
2.2.3. Religion	17
2.2.4. Economy	18
2.2.5. The Investment Climate in KSA.....	20
2.2.6. Political Setting	21
2.2.7. Social Setting of KSA.....	26
2.3. Female visibility in the KSA: Past and Present	27
2.3.1. Female Visibility Pre-1979 Saudi.....	27
2.3.2. Female Visibility Post-1979 Saudi	28
2.3.3. Female Visibility since 2004- Present.....	29

2.4. Doing Business in the KSA.....	37
2.4.1. Standardization vs. Adaptation.....	38
2.4.2. Advertising in KSA	40
2.5. The Case Study: IKEA	46
2.5.1. The Swedish approach to Gender and Domestic Roles.....	46
2.5.2. Advertising in Sweden	48
2.5.3. IKEA and Swedishness.....	49
2.5.4. Company Background.....	50
2.5.5. Company Values.....	51
2.5.6. IKEA Catalogue.....	51
2.5.7. IKEA in the KSA: History and Operation.....	53
2.5.8. IKEA’s Adaptation Strategy in the KSA.....	53
2.6. Concluding Remarks	55
Chapter 3. Theoretical Frameworks	56
3.1. Introduction.....	56
3.2. Multimodal Analysis	56
3.2.1. Theoretical Assumptions of Multimodality.....	57
3.2.2. Core Concepts of Multimodality.....	57
3.2.3. Multimodal Social Semiotic Approach.....	59
3.3. Critical Discourse Analysis.....	68
3.3.1. Characteristics of CDA.....	69
3.3.2. Approaches to CDS.....	72
3.4. KhosraviNik’s (2010) Analytical Framework.....	75
3.4.1. Level One: Actors	77
3.4.2. Level Two: Actions.....	78
3.4.3. Level Three: Argumentation.....	80
3.5. Theoretical Concepts	80
3.5.1. What is meant by the term Critical?.....	81
3.5.2. Discourse.....	82
3.5.3. Ideology	84
3.5.4. Power.....	86
3.5.5. SELF and OTHER / Othering.....	87
3.5.6. Genre	89
3.6. Concluding Remarks.....	95
Chapter 4. Methodology and Procedures.....	96
4.1 Introduction.....	96
4.2. Visual Analytic Tools.....	96

4.2.1.	Depicting People	96
4.2.2.	The Image and the Viewer	97
4.3.	Discourse Analytic Tools: CDA Approaches	97
4.4.	KhosraviNik's (2010) Analytical Framework.....	101
4.5.	Data: The rationale for data selection	103
4.6.	Data Sampling procedures.....	103
4.6.1.	Data (1): IKEA 2013 catalogue.....	103
4.6.2.	Data (2): Newspapers.....	105
4.7.	MAXQDA Software.....	108
4.8.	Concluding Remarks.....	110
Chapter 5. Feminine presence in the 2013 IKEA Catalogue in Arabic:		
Verbal/Linguistic Analysis		111
5.1.	Introduction.....	111
5.2.	Theoretical background of the gender agreement system in Arabic.....	112
5.3.	Arabic Orthography and Diacritics.....	115
5.4.	Verbal Data Analysis.....	119
5.4.1.	The criteria for examining verbal data.....	119
5.4.2.	Method of collecting verbal data.....	120
5.4.3.	Addressing consumers verbally in the 2013 Saudi edition in Arabic	120
5.4.3.	Results.....	131
5.5.	Concluding remarks.....	135
Chapter Six. Female Representation in IKEA Catalogues:.....		136
Contrastive Visual Social Semiotic Analysis		136
6.1.	Introduction.....	136
6.2.	Visual data.....	136
6.3.	Presence of social actors in the IKEA 2013 catalogue.....	137
6.4.	Depicting People.....	139
6.4.1.	Exclusion.....	139
6.4.2.	Roles.....	149
6.5.	The Image and the Viewer	153
6.5.1	Social Distance.....	153
6.5.2	Social Interaction.....	158
6.5.3	Social Relation.....	159
6.6.	Multimodality as a combined mode	161
6.7.	Concluding Remarks.....	162
Chapter 7. Representation of Saudi Arabia in Newspapers:.....		164

Verbal and Visual Analyses.....	164
7.1. Introduction.....	164
7.2. Verbal Data.....	165
7.2.1. Discursive construction of US and THEM.....	166
7.3. Visual Data.....	193
7.4. Concluding Remarks.....	201
Chapter 8. Conclusion.....	202
8.1. Introduction.....	202
8.2. Discussion of findings.....	202
8.2.1. Discussion of Findings of Research Question 1.....	202
8.2.2. Discussion of Findings of Research Question 2.....	211
8.3. Concluding Remarks.....	215
8.4. Contribution.....	216
8.5. Limitations.....	221
8.6. Future Research.....	221
References.....	223
Appendices.....	249
Appendix A.....	249
Appendix B.....	250
Appendix C.....	251
Appendix D.....	252
Appendix E.....	253
Appendix F.....	254
Appendix G.....	255
Appendix H.....	256
Appendix I.....	258
Appendix J.....	259
Appendix K.....	261
Appendix L.....	263
Appendix M.....	264
Appendix N.....	265

Appendix O	266
Appendix P	267
Appendix Q	268
Appendix R	269
Appendix S	270
Appendix T	271
Appendix U	274
Appendix V	277
Appendix W	278
Appendix X	279
Appendix Y	281
Appendix Z	283

List of Tables

Table 1: Adaptation of Western-oriented Ads in the KSA	45
Table 2: Distribution of source newspapers by country according to Google News Search.	107
Table 3: Pronominal Free Morphemes in Arabic	113
Table 4: Pronominal Possessives.....	114
Table 5: Pronominal Object Suffixes.....	114
Table 6: Pronominal Subject Suffixes	115
Table 7: Feminine marker 'Bound Morphemes' in the IKEA 2013 Saudi edition catalogue in Arabic	121
Table 8: Masculine Marker 'Bound Morphemes' in the IKEA Saudi edition 2013 catalogue in Arabic	125
Table 9: Addressee by gender in the IKEA Saudi edition catalogue in Arabic	131
Table 10: Instances of occurrence of the participants in the UK edition.....	140
Table 11: Instances of occurrence of the participants in the Saudi edition.....	140
Table 12: Distribution of source newspapers by genre and type.....	166
Table 13: Referential strategies to refer to the Other.....	168
Table 14: Headlines of source newspapers	176
Table 15: Distribution of action in <i>headlines</i>	176
Table 16: Processes in the headlines.....	179
Table 17: Distribution of Halliday's (2014) process types associated with social actors	179
Table 18: Material process types found in the headlines	180
Table 19: Mental process types found in the headlines	184
Table 20: The photographs and captions accompanying the news coverage.....	196

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of KSA showing the five provinces.....	16
Figure 2: Labor Force in the KSA – Employed (<i>source</i> : GASTST 2017).....	32
Figure 3: Employment as Percentage of the Population (<i>source</i> : GASTST 2017).....	32
Figure 4. Main types of visual representational structure.....	63
Figure 5. The structure of interactional meaning.....	65
Figure 6. Structure of Compositional meaning.....	67
Figure 7: Creation and consumption of texts (<i>source</i> : KhosraviNik 2010).....	71
Figure 8: Types of process in English (<i>source</i> : Halliday 2014).....	80
Figure 9: Actor descriptions analysis process (adapted from KhosraviNik 2010).....	101
Figure 10: Action Attribution Analysis Process (<i>source</i> : KhosraviNik 2010).....	102
Figure 11: Argumentation Analysis Process (<i>source</i> : KhosraviNik 2010).....	102
Figure 12: Vowel Diacritics in Arabic.....	117
Figure 13: Percentages of addressees in the Saudi edition 2013 catalogue in Arabic.....	132
Figure 14: Instances of occurrence of gender markers according to setting.....	134
Figure 15: Percentages of all participants occurring in the 2013 IKEA catalogues.....	138
Figure 16: Percentages of instances of occurrence of social actors in the UK edition.....	141
Figure 17: Percentages of instances of occurrence of social actors in the Saudi edition.....	141
Figure 18: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 158/160).....	142
Figure 19: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 132/134).....	143
Figure 20: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 145/147).....	144
Figure 21: Social actors in the UK edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 152).....	145
Figure 22: Social actors in the Saudi edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 154).....	145
Figure 23: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 121/123).....	146
Figure 24: Distribution of social actors in the UK 2013 IKEA catalogue according to setting.....	147
Figure 25: Distribution of social actors in the Saudi 2013 IKEA catalogue according to setting.....	148
Figure 26: Types of exclusion of social actors in the Saudi edition of the catalogue.....	149

Figure 27: Comparison between the UK and Saudi editions on the visual level (pages 93/95)	151
.....	
Figure 28: Social actors in the UK edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 102).....	152
Figure 29: Social actors in the Saudi edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 104).....	153
Figure 30: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 119/121).....	154
Figure 31: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 314)	156
.....	
Figure 32: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the IKEA 2013 catalogue (page 213)	158
.....	
Figure 33: Interpersonal aspects and female exclusion in the Saudi edition	160
Figure 34: The bathroom scene	196
Figure 35: The <i>Metro</i> Sweden front page	196
Figure 36: IKEA store name	197
Figure 37: Now you see her ... the American catalogue, left, depicts a wholesome scene of a family sharing a bathroom, but bosses decided to airbrush all the women out of their pictures for the Saudi edition, right, a decision it says it now regrets.....	199
Figure 38: A barefoot woman wearing earrings in the lower right corner, is enjoying a cup of tea at a dining table in the Swedish version of the magazine but in the Saudi edition the woman is morphed into a man with the earrings removed and black socks a fitted t-shirt added. A couple lounging on a couch are removed entirely	199
Figure 39: The four designers are proudly pictured in the Ikea catalogue and websites with their latest creations.....	199
Figure 40: But on the Saudi website and in the printed edition, the female designer is deleted while her three male colleagues remain	200
Figure 41: Two young women smile at each other in the versions seen across the world, left, but vanish in the Saudi version, right.....	200

List of Abbreviations

ARAMCO	Arabian American Oil Company
BLOG	The Basic Law of Governance
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	Critical Discourse Studies
DHA	Discourse Historical Approach
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
M&S	Marks and Spencer
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MNCs	Multinational Companies
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
MSS	Multimodal Social Semiotics
SA	Saudi Arabia
SAGIA	Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority
SCA	Socio-Cognitive Approach
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SSA	Socio-Semantic Approach
SSMA	Social Semiotic Multimodal Analysis
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization

Glossing Abbreviations

2PL	Second Person Plural
2SG	Second Person Singular
3PL	Third Person Plural
3SG	Third Person Singular
ACC	Accusative
ADJ	Adjective
F	Feminine
FUT	Future
IMP	Imperative
IMPF	Imperfective
IND	Indicative
M	Masculine
NOM	Nominative
PAST	Past
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
PREP	Preposition
PRES	Present
S	Singular
SG	First Person Singular

Transliteration

The Arabic orthography of phonemic sounds and their IPA equivalents

1. The transcription of the Arabic phonemic consonants and their IPA equivalents

Arabic letter	IPA symbol	Description
أ	ʔ	Voiceless glottal stop (plosive)
ب	b	Voiced bilabial stop
ت	t	Voiceless alveolar plosive
ث	θ	Voiceless dental fricative
ج	ʒ	Voiced post-alveolar fricative
ح	ħ	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	x	Voiceless velar fricative
د	d	Voiced alveolar plosive
ذ	ð	Voiced dental fricative
ر	r	Voiced alveolar liquid (rhotic)
ز	z	Voiced alveolar fricative
س	s	Voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	ʃ	Voiceless post-alveolar fricative
ص	s ^ʕ	Voiceless emphatic alveolar plosive
ض	d ^ʕ	Voiced emphatic alveolar plosive
ط	t ^ʕ	Voiceless emphatic alveolar plosive
ظ	ð ^ʕ	Voiced emphatic dental fricative
ع	ʕ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	ɣ	Voiced velar fricative
ف	f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative
ق	q	Voiceless uvular plosive
ك	k	Voiceless velar plosive
ل	l	Voiced lateral approximant
م	m	Voiced bilabial nasal
ن	n	Voiced alveolar nasal
هـ	h	Voiceless glottal fricative
و	w	Voiced labial-velar glide
ي	j	Voiced palatal glide

2. The transcription of the Arabic phonemic vowels and their IPA equivalents

Arabic harakaat and muduud symbols	IPA symbols	Description
اَ	a	open back (short a)
اُ	u	close back round (short u)
اِ	i	close front (short i)
آ	aa	open back tense (long a)
و	uu	close back round tense (long u)
ي	ii	close front tense (long i)

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This study focuses on examining gender representation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (henceforth KSA), particularly in terms of female visibility in advertisement discourse and the consequent representation of KSA in media discourse, in light of the occurring gender representation. To be more specific, this research refers to the exclusion of female social actors from the 2013 Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue and the subsequent media coverage that arose due to IKEA's removal of female images only from this edition. The study therefore examines both the catalogue in question, and the press coverage of the exclusion that took place.

There are a number of key objectives for conducting this particular study. In terms of the representation of females in the IKEA catalogue, and by extension in the KSA, the first objective is to determine whether or not females are addressed/ represented in the catalogue on both the verbal and visual levels, and if they are, what strategies have been adopted by IKEA in addressing/ representing them. With regard to the representation of Saudi Arabia in newspapers, the aim is to examine whether there are any stereotypical elements employed by the 'Western' media in their portrayal of this country. The representation of different social groups and the discursive qualities for the demarcation of 'US' and 'THEM' occur on the basis of many different factors, such as race, ethnicity, religion, nationality and gender, all of which have consistently formed the main bulk of research in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies over the past few decades (KhosraviNik 2010). Bearing this in mind, another aim of this research is to determine whether such coverage has systematically projected certain perspectives and, if so, with what assumptions, as well as whether such coverage reinforces images of Saudi Muslim society as the cultural, political and moral 'Other' in opposition to the 'West'¹.

¹ 'West' and 'Western' in this study are used in a broad sense to refer to the geographical location of Australia, Europe, New Zealand, North America and the UK, as well as to a way of life that is known among Muslims as a secular way of life that 'brings to mind a set of cultures that have established over the last two hundred years a series of more or less liberal and democratic regimes based on sovereignty of the people rather than their religious revelations' (Geaves & Gabriel 2004). This is in line with Mostafa's (2007: 372) definition of the 'West' as 'those North American, West European and Australian democracies that have evolved and functioned as a somewhat coherent political and military alliance, under US leadership since the Second World War (especially when faced by a common threat), despite differences arising from identity, cultural, social and political diversity within the alliance that have often led to divergent foreign policy interest and approaches'.

In accordance with the study aims, two types of data are gathered: the first is the Saudi 2013 catalogue itself, while the second is written press data that covered the issues concerning the female exclusion that took place in the catalogue and any accompanying images. The catalogue and the written press data will be examined both linguistically (language) and visually (images). Thus, content analysis approach is used in the verbal linguistic analysis of the catalogue (Chapter 5), while combined approaches and analytical frameworks from Multimodal Social Semiotics (MSS) and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) are used in the analysis (Chapters 6–7). The first aim is to examine the content of the 2013 Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue, using the UK version as a means of comparing how males and females are visually depicted in both, and the second is to examine the discursive strategies used by the Western press in reporting the female exclusion.

In outlining the structure of this chapter, the following section begins with stating the problem that this study examines, followed by the background to the incident under investigation. This is followed by the rationale behind this research, as well as the underlying questions that this study seeks to answer. Finally, the structure of the whole thesis is summarised.

1.2. The Problem of Research

One of the main tenets of CDS is that it addresses social problems (Fairclough & Wodak 1997; Wodak & Meyer 2016). In CDS, '[t]he intention of the analyst is explicitly oriented toward locating social problems and [analysing] how discourse operates to construct such issues' (Rogers 2004: 4). Thus, identifying the linguistic patterns in a text helps to tackle social problems by making the way language contributes to the perpetuation of negative discourses more explicit (e.g. racism within society). Therefore, CDS identifies a social problem with discursive aspects (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999). The specific problem that this thesis addresses is that much of the Western media's coverage of Saudi Arabia reinforces certain stereotypes. According to Morris (2008: 94), these stereotypes are based on a major problem that exists with Western misperceptions about women in Saudi Arabia, i.e. 'that the West sees no further than the outward trappings of a Saudi woman's life — the veil, the inability to travel without permission and the inability to drive or vote'. Furthermore, Ferguson (2008: 106) argues that the fact that Saudi women are banned from driving or that they have to wear a cloak 'abaya' is often used as 'symbolic shorthand for a whole gamut of human rights issues', such as 'if Saudi women can't drive and have to wear abayas, they must be underprivileged and backward and repressed and we must promote their development'. Ferguson (2008: 113) further

states that, from a Western perspective, ‘Muslim women are clumped into a single group and viewed as homogenous clones of one another’, and that:

Negative stereotypes of Muslim women also arise from Western media’s tendency, for whatever reason, to latch onto a handful of examples of unjust behavior in the Islamic world, and use them to brand Islam as a backwards and “fundamentalist” religion, especially in its treatment of women, ignoring the fact that Islam was the first religion to accord women equal rights.
(Ferguson 2008: 108)

Likewise, findings from Alharbi’s (2015) study reveal that the American mainstream coverage of stories about Saudi women portrays Saudi women as oppressed, deficient, subordinate, submissive and non-agentive women who unquestioningly accept patriarchy and domination, and hence they need to be saved and their rights need to be defended. Hence, it is possible that these preconceived stereotypes subsequently reinforced the perceptions that IKEA had towards Saudi Arabia (hereafter SA), particularly regarding feminine presence and appearance in advertisements, which directly influenced their decision to remove almost all females from the Saudi edition of their catalogue. One could therefore argue that since these stereotypes affect an outlook that some multinational companies (henceforth MNCs) have of certain societies, it is worthy of investigation. Hence, the study aims to examine the visual and verbal strategies employed to reflect the misconceptions occurring regarding the Saudi edition of the catalogue, as well as the linguistic and visual strategies employed in media texts, in order to convince their readers that removing female pictures from the Saudi edition catalogue is a “problem”.

Feminine appearance is an important cultural value that is related to this study. According to Kalliny and Gentry (2007), one of the main differences between the West and the Arab world is how women should appear within society. They further state that these cultural differences and contrasts are found within Arabia itself (ibid.). For example, in Saudi Arabia, women are required to cover up when they leave the house, whereas in Lebanon, Egypt and other Gulf countries, e.g. Kuwait and Bahrain, no such requirement exists as the practices are different. These differences have to do with people’s way of life, where much of it stems from cultural practices as well as religious interpretations of the teachings of Islam.

In light of this, since Muslim women, including Saudi women, tend to adhere to religious commands to adopt a specific type of dress code (Kalliny & Gentry 2007), one would expect this to be reflected in advertising and marketing. In their study of advertising magazines, Al-Olayan and Krande (2000) found that in 83 per cent of Arabic magazine advertisements showing women, the women wore long clothing, compared to 29 per cent of women in US

advertisements. Based on this study, one may argue that, when targeting Arab countries in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, advertisers must be cautious in how they portray females in their advertisements. In other words, MNCs advertising their products and services in different countries should be aware of a target country's existing norms regarding gender representations, and the way these countries effect these norms.

This study will demonstrate how the exclusion of females by IKEA was regarded as representative of Saudi society by their marketing department, which was subsequently criticized by the 'Western' media and, in turn, had a knock-on effect that caused significant problems for IKEA and Sweden. Additionally, it will also show how this incident prompted an explicitly negative reaction from certain 'Western' societies against SA, especially regarding female visibility and freedom. This will be highlighted using some of the key reactions that targeted IKEA, Sweden and Saudi Arabia, all of which were initiated as a result of the news articles covering this case.

Finally, in the tradition of CDS, I will make my position transparent, that is, I will assess both the deletion of female pictures from the Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue, and the consequent representation of SA in the Western media, as a social issue that has deemed gender inequality issues to be a problem worthy of investigation. The eagerness to carry out this investigation is further intensified by the complete absence of any Saudi Arabian voices from the whole issue. Therefore, I declare that my research may be a way of introducing an otherwise absent Saudi Arabian voice to comment on this problem.

1.3. Overview of the incident: Case Description

This section aims to outline a brief account of the incident that occurred, including the consequences that emerged as a result of it. However, before delving into the intricate details of the incident, it is noteworthy to mention that IKEA's primary annual external marketing tool is based on printed catalogues, which account for half of the company's marketing budget (Stolba 2009). The catalogue is distributed during August/ September each year to 48 countries around the world (Inter IKEA Systems B. V. 2018).

The removal of female images from the Saudi edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue in early October 2012 gave rise to many editorials and news reports in both the quality press and the tabloids of some 'Western' countries. These began appearing after the discovery of the image removal by Sweden's free daily newspaper, *Metro*, which, on 1 October 2012, published an

article in which “Kvinnor går inte att retuschera bort” (women cannot be retouched) was the headline on its front page (see Appendix A). Below the title, two pictures from IKEA’s home furniture catalogue were shown. They both appeared to show a family in a bathroom, but a closer look revealed noticeable difference. The picture on the right-hand side did not show a woman in her pyjamas in front of the bathroom mirror, it only showed a man with two children. In contrast, the picture on the left-hand side showed a woman, a man and ‘their children’. This picture was from the Swedish edition of IKEA’s catalogue, whereas the father-only picture was from the Saudi Arabian edition. *Metro* (Sweden) revealed that other pictures showing women were absent from the Saudi edition. The *Metro* criticized the ‘odd’ removal of female pictures from IKEA’s 2013 product catalogue for SA. The decision that was made by IKEA was to ‘airbrush’ all the women models from their Saudi catalogue, under the assumption that they believed this would be more appropriate for Saudi culture. The rationale behind this was because IKEA’s marketing strategy is based on the integration and standardization of its products and their adaptation, in the sense that – in spite of offering standardized products to the entire world to keep their Scandinavian origins at heart – IKEA will adapt its products to suit local standards and preferences (Pan 2005; Stolba 2009; Miska & Pleskova 2016) (see section 2.5.5).

As a consequence, the female exclusion ‘sparked global media attention and considerable criticism’ (Miska & Pleskova 2016: 121). International news reports as well as Swedish politicians followed up on *Metro*’s coverage criticizing IKEA’s adaptation of its marketing strategy and the issue of gender inequality in Saudi Arabia. This is because, in Sweden, IKEA is proudly regarded as something of a national symbol, where it functions as Sweden’s face in the world and ‘promotes the image of a country’s culture, ideology and politics’ (Kristoffersson 2014:2). According to Miska and Pleskova (2016: 122), IKEA is ‘an icon of Sweden, commonly associated with its liberal lifestyle and values. These include, in particular, gender egalitarianism and equality.’ That is why the exclusion offended Swedish ministers, including equality minister Nyamko Sabuni, who expressed their objections to such exclusion, stating that it went against the values of Sweden, which prides itself on its gender equality. Besides, Jacqui Hunt, a director in the *London office of Equality Now*, a global non-governmental organization fighting discrimination against woman around the world, indicated: ‘Women are equal and integral members of society and cannot just be airbrushed out. The IKEA Group has to take responsibility for the messages it is sending and take extra care, particularly as a global corporation, to promote messages of equality and non-discrimination of all peoples’ (The Telegraph 2012). Similarly, Isabella Sankey, director of Policy for Liberty, the human rights

group, said: ‘There are sadly much worse things happening to women in Saudi Arabia than being airbrushed out of photos. But we would ask ethical companies to consider the signal they send when they make seemingly minor adjustments in countries that flout human rights’ (The Telegraph 2012). Moreover, political analyst Dee Madigan added, ‘a visit to IKEA is a quasi-visit to Sweden. Their values are akin. IKEA is a brand that prides itself on inclusiveness and social decency. And Sweden is a country that prides itself on its strict gender equality protections’ (Madigan 2012). Madigan stated that what IKEA had done was a ‘cultural overreaction’ and she estimated that the issue caused a fair bit of brand damage in IKEA’s home country, with even politicians weighing in. She further argued that ‘you can change a name, a colour, a strapline, even a promise, but what you cannot do, regardless of the culture you are trying to market to, is act in opposition to your own brand values’ (ibid). Thus, the primary contention from the news reports that covered the incident conveyed sentiments of ‘gender inequality’ and an ‘anti-women’ culture that was present in Saudi Arabia. IKEA was ‘heavily criticized for censorship and for putting commerce ahead of values’ (Gray 2014: 188).

In response to such criticisms, an official apology was issued by IKEA’s head office in Sweden and published on its website, accepting fault (IKEA 2012). Its spokesperson stated that the company was re-evaluating its work processes and clarified that the decision to edit women from the images was not made by the local franchise owner in SA (see Appendix B). Nevertheless, IKEA did not remove the edited Saudi edition catalogue and so it remained in Saudi Arabian IKEA stores, as well as online. The only change this case prompted was noted in the 2014 IKEA Saudi edition catalogue, which did not exclude the females. Females have been visible in all editions, up to the present time, distributed in the KSA since the 2013 catalogue incident.

1.4. Reaction of the KSA and the Saudi Media

It is noteworthy to mention that, during this incident, the KSA met the criticisms and reactions formally by silence. The government did not issue any formal comment regarding this incident as there was not any opinion given by any government official. In addition, there was not even any legal action taken by the government against IKEA whose deletion of female pictures put the KSA in hot water. Similarly, the KSA government did not prevent the inclusion of female pictures in the post 2013 editions of the catalogue in the KSA. In other words, no legal action was taken against IKEA regarding the female pictures in the catalogue. With respect to the reaction of the Saudi media towards this incident, it did not show much interest in the reactions of other news outlets, nor to the criticisms that were directed towards SA and its culture in

general. I searched the online versions of prominent Saudi newspapers and I found that they did not have available archives; thus, I conducted a manual search by looking at newspapers from 1–30 of October 2012 at first. I went to AlHaram Library in Makkah, which has a comprehensive archive that holds all old newspapers. The research retrieved zero results, as most of the prominent newspapers in Saudi Arabia, such as Al Watan, Okaz, AlSharq AlAwsat, AlRiyadh, Al-Madinah, Alhayah, AlJazeera and Albilad, did not cover this issue (from 1–30 of October 2012). Nevertheless, Al-Arabiya, a major pro-Saudi News Channel, reported the news with the headline: ‘A vanishing act? IKEA ‘erases’ women from Saudi catalogue’ (Al-Arabia 2012). In fact, there was nothing else written in the Saudi media concerning this incident, with the exception of two online newspapers, which only reported on what had occurred without offering any opinion. There were some readers of these online newspapers who commented on the issue by saying that it is their country, and that MNCs should respect its rules and customs, while others condemned the commercialization of female images in Western marketing; however, no Saudi writer commented on the issue or tried to correct the Western misconception about women in Saudi society. In sum, due to the lack of coverage in Saudi media, one may assert that the issue was not deemed ‘newsworthy’ within the KSA.

1.5. Rationale

Before delving into the intricate details of the reasons for conducting this research, it is worth mentioning why the case of the IKEA catalogue is worthy of investigation. According to Bodker (2009), there are no set definitions of what it takes to turn more low-key stories across media/ newspapers into what may be termed events. However, Wien and Elmelund-Præstekær (2009: 194-195) list four necessary criteria, based on case studies, for a story to be deemed a media event:

1. The event must be appropriate for public debate, i.e. there must exist a range of legitimate positions as well as people willing to air and debate these.
2. The issues at stake must, and this is linked to the first point, be something that can be interpreted within a number of contexts or frames.
3. The event must also, at least in their study of a limited number of events, contain some deviation from, a break of, norms.
4. And finally, the event must be able to condense a complex problem into a striking image and/or draw upon a number of existing stereotypes.

In light of the above points, the 2013 IKEA catalogue case seems to fit all four criteria rather well. The media coverage of the incident is connected to the newsworthiness of the case, which

is due to the deviation from ‘Western norms’ with regard to female visibility. This is even evident in the coverage of this case by different international news agencies and YouTube programmes.² Furthermore, IKEA’s uniqueness, criticality and global reach make the company particularly relevant as a case (Hultman *et al.* 2011; Jonsson 2008; Ghauri *et al.* 2008). Moreover, this case is related to stereotypical misconceptions about the KSA, specifically in terms of women’s rights, and the consequent representation that took place.

The impetus for the implementation of this study stems from a number of underlying reasons. To start with, research on IKEA is usually about economic and organizational aspects (Kristoffersson 2014). There has been a great deal of research on IKEA from various perspectives, ranging from an interest in its founder (Daniels 2002) to recalling its historical successes in retail (Kippenberger 1997; Edvardsson & Edquist 2002; Barthelemy 2006). Studies have also discussed IKEA’s performances in/on specific countries/ continents, such as the USA, Europe or China (The Economist 1994; Pan 2005; Howell 2006; Miller 2004), as well as accounting for its failure and success in the Japanese market (Stolba 2009). In addition, and more in line with the current research, comparative studies have also been conducted on the 2007 IKEA catalogues in the United Kingdom and the United States on the verbal level, which revealed several kinds of linguistic, stylistic and some incidental differences (Blancke 2007). Furthermore, many other studies have had a specific focus pertaining to IKEA. For instance, one such study looked at how IKEA is perceived in the UK, claiming that the shopping experience is of great importance to how British consumers perceive it (Andersson 2009), while another study compared how customers in Stockholm and Dublin view shopping at IKEA (Garvey 2010). There are more recent studies that adopt a social semiotic approach to study and analyze an IKEA commercial about its kitchens (Ledin & Machin 2017), as well as studying the representations and designs of kitchens in the IKEA catalogue from 1975 until 2016 (Ledin & Machin 2018). To date, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no study has examined gender representation in any of the IKEA catalogues, on both verbal and visual levels, in the way that this study intends to do. In terms of the 2013 IKEA catalogue and the gender representation in it, an extensive search found that no comprehensive linguistic verbal analysis of the gender markers in the IKEA catalogue, or multimodal social semiotic study, has been undertaken in the way this study intends to do. Therefore, this thesis contributes towards filling

² I searched the LexisNexis database and I found that this case was covered by many other media outlets and YouTube programmes which are not included in the study due to word limitations and where the focus is merely on press discourse.

a void in that particular area. Moreover, the literature relating to this case is scant and limited to newspaper articles or news reporting about exclusion. Hence, this research study is a way for this topic to be given formal academic consideration and thus contribute to knowledge. Furthermore, previous research on gender portrayal has focused on how stereotypical gender roles of men and women are portrayed in advertisements. However, in this study, the focus is not primarily on gender roles, but rather on the stereotypes of a country that have affected gender representation in its advertisement discourse and led to the visual exclusion of female social actors in particular, thus causing some sort of gender imbalance in a catalogue and revealing other gender role stereotypes.

The visual exclusion of females took place in the Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue. According to Dahlan (2012), SA is defined as being a Muslim society that is seen as the cultural, political and moral 'other' of the West. Its religion is Islam, which is perceived to be 'at odds with Western culture and civilization' (Elgamri 2010: 45). Moreover, according to Ahmed (1992), it is further described as being a heavily gender-segregated society, as opposed to Western societies. Therefore, the examined case regarding the removal of female pictures specifically from the Saudi version of the IKEA catalogue became an issue related to gender inequality/ discrimination. This provides further focus/ scope for this investigation, since the literature of Western discourse that refers to Muslim/ Arab societies regards these as being highly gendered (Ahmed 1992; Andersson & Togelius 2010). For decades, Western media, scholars and activists have discussed the lack of equality that Saudi Arabian women face. They also think that Islam plays an important role in this kind of inequality between men and women. For example, in a study that focused on Saudi women, Mishra (2007: 267) found that Saudi women were represented in American newspapers as 'passive victims of Islamic law' and were portrayed as leading 'oppressed lives' by focusing on their restrictions. These restrictions were manifested in their not being allowed to drive, not permitted to travel alone without a male guardian, being segregated in public places and, most importantly, having to wear black cloaks that cover them from head to toe. Moreover, Kaufer and Al-Malki (2009) state that postcolonial and media literature has documented the West's association of Muslim/ Arab women with passivity and oppression. Nevertheless, their study revealed less weak and less passive Muslim women than other previous studies. Hence, the forceful media attack on IKEA's assumptions about Saudi Arabia's preconceived culture may have been based on the stereotypical Western view of Saudis being 'anti-women', whereby Saudi women are seen as objects of oppression and subjugation, and that their right and ability to contribute to society are suffocated by Islamic traditions and by a male-dominated world where 'women not only didn't have a face, they

didn't have a place or a voice within the hierarchy of Saudi Arabian society' (Morris 2008: 93). In fact, women are seen as submissive to an 'authoritative patriarchal regime' in Saudi Arabia (Dahlan 2011: 5). Thus, it is hoped that this study will shed some light on this issue, especially given the new social reforms that are taking place in the KSA.

In amalgamating the aforementioned points, it is evident that they highlight Saudi Arabia's *otherness*, which stands for 'the perception of an alien culture, values, way of life' and which 'emphasizes the "foreign values" of Muslims' (Zebiri 2008: 10–11). Hence, questioning whether or not there are stereotypical elements in the portrayal of this incident is a valid question to ask, whilst also exploring that, if this is the case, how those elements appeared in both female representation in the catalogue and subsequent press coverage. Therefore, the argument that one could put forth here is that some Western news reports may have constructed an ideological representation of Saudi Arabia as the *other*.

Moreover, the IKEA catalogues examined in this study are viewed as a '*multimodal ensemble*', which is a type of text that combines written language, design elements and visual images (Serafini 2014: 2). Therefore, since viewers encounter visual images accompanied by written language, they need to expand their repertoire of strategies that are necessary to make sense of the multimodal text they are encountering. Hence, this study also aims to shed light on how to approach this catalogue in a more conscious manner, especially since the various elements of visual composition have a 'cultural bias'. This, according to Serafini (2014), means that visual images offer *meaning potentials* only when associated with a specific socio-cultural context. These *meaning potentials* should therefore be the starting point for interpreting visual images and multimodal ensembles. In fact, the understanding of multimodality is still underdeveloped and there is a considerable need for further research that might offer a finely focused point of entry into this area of concern (Bateman 2014). Therefore, the results of the multimodal analysis in this study aim to contribute to this field.

Despite the growing interest in critically analyzing Western discourses describing Muslims in the media (e.g. Poole 2002; Macdonald 2003; Akram 2002; Merskin 2003; Wilkins and Downing 2002; Dunn 2001; Macdonald 2006; Richardson 2004; Smeeta 2007; Navarro 2010; Morey & Yaqin 2011; Al-Hejin 2012; Baker et al. 2013), and while there is a wealth of information about Arab and Muslim women in general, some literature focuses specifically on Saudi women (Vidyasagar 2004; Smeeta 2007; Dahlan 2011; Damanhour 2013). To the best of my knowledge, after an extensive search, no study has traced how misconceptions based on

stereotypes led to excessive action, which in turn caused the misrepresentation of certain social groups. In other words, IKEA's perceptions of Saudi Arabia led to excluding females in a way that is more extreme than what is actually the case in the KSA. The media coverage made IKEA's exclusion of females seem representative of Saudi society, and hence led to the criticism that it received. Thus, this will enable the researcher to focus a critical lens on news discourse dealing with any possible existing misconceptions about SA and Saudi women.

1.6. Research Questions

The gender representation that took place in the 2013 IKEA Saudi edition catalogue raises questions about whether it is an accurate reflection of actual Saudi society. Moreover, being a country that predominantly adheres to the Islamic faith, this research makes the claim that the similar ideological basis of Western newspapers' representation of Islam and Muslims holds true for the representation of the KSA in the press coverage of the catalogue issue, a representation that is based on Othering as a means to distance the KSA from the global society. Hence, there are two main research questions that guide this study, which are answered in Chapters 5–7:

1. How were women verbally and visually (images) represented in the 2013 IKEA catalogue that was distributed in Saudi Arabia?
2. How do the examined newspapers discursively represent the social actors in reporting the exclusion of females from the 2013 IKEA catalogue, and does such representation reinforce images of Saudi society as the cultural, political and moral 'other' of the 'West'?

In respect to the main research questions, there are several narrowly focused sub-questions that will be addressed throughout the analysis and in the conclusion. Thus, Research Question One implies a set of specific sub-questions:

- A. Were women completely invisible in the catalogue?
- B. If not, what was IKEA's strategy for including/excluding females in/from the Saudi Arabian version of their 2013 catalogue?

Research Question Two implies the following sub-questions:

- A. How is Saudi Arabia linguistically represented in the news coverage of the incident under study?

- B. What are the macro-structure arguments at work in these representations?
- C. What are the visual communicative strategies used by newspapers in their coverage of the incident and how are they employed in order to persuade the reader to agree with their argument?

1.7. Thesis Layout

The thesis consists of eight chapters and adheres to the following structure. Chapter One is an introduction that outlines the problem of the research, and the aims and research questions. Chapter Two sets the context of the study: Saudi Arabia. This is where the linguistic analysis is contextualized. Chapter Three conducts a relevant theoretical literature review, which will be about MSS and CDS, giving a brief introduction to the main approaches of each framework, their theoretical premises and the empirical fields they have been applied to. This is intended to establish the relevance of the selected approaches for the thesis at hand. In Chapter Four, the research methodology and procedure will be described, expanding upon actual data, also methods and tools of analysis. Chapters Five, Six and Seven are the core chapters of the thesis, where data analysis will ensue, based on the analytical tools of the theoretical frameworks employed. Lastly, Chapter Eight brings the discussion to a close by discussing the main findings; it seeks to reflect upon the significance of the findings and contributions of the thesis, highlights the limitations of the study and suggests possible future lines of enquiry. It is intended that any future suggestions may aid in gaining a deeper understanding of Western responses and reactions to Saudis and, by extension, Islam and Muslims.

Chapter 2. Background and Context

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the basic background to the thesis by introducing the context of Saudi Arabia. This is done in line with the requirements of context-setting in CDS, since what distinguishes it from other discourse analysis approaches is the inclusion of context in linguistic analysis, because this is where meanings exist. Wodak and Meyer (2016: 5) consider the ‘context of language use’ to be crucial. According to KhosraviNik (2015: 53), in order to explain meanings, a discourse approach needs to ‘account for *texts in contexts* as a unit of analysis’ (emphasis in original). Therefore, a cultural and religious comprehension of the KSA will be used as fundamental point of reference in analyzing the discourses emerging around the controversy that arose because of IKEA’s strategic initiatives regarding its 2013 catalogue.

In its endeavours to give an account of the socio-political, economic and cultural contexts of SA, this chapter starts with a historical account of the Saudi state, followed by the geographical setting of the country, its religion, economy and socio-political context. This is followed by some background on the business environment in SA. It covers the strategies of doing business in general and in the Saudi Arabian market in particular, and how the application of Islamic law affects this. This is followed by the regulations affecting the content of advertisements in KSA. Then, moving on to the examined case study, sociocultural contextual intricacies pertaining to the case in question, including an account for gender equality issues in the country of origin of IKEA, namely Sweden, are introduced. Next, IKEA is introduced, including its operation and strategy in SA. Accordingly, this chapter in essence collects different threads that are related to the investigated case to form a texture that leads to comprehend the background that led to its occurrence. Finally, a conclusion that summarizes the main points is drawn.

2.2. Saudi Arabia

This section sets out the historical background to the formation of the current Saudi state by briefly pinpointing the relationship between the political and religious spheres in the kingdom. This is followed by the geographical, religious, economic and social contexts of the country, in addition to its political structure and the state’s scope of authority.

2.2.1. *Historical Overview*

The story of SA began in 1744 when Muhammad bin Suṣuud³(1726–1765), who was the ruler of the city of Ad-Dir‘iyah in Najd, joined forces with the religious Sheikh Muhammad bin Ṣabd ʔl-Waḥaab (1703–1792) to bring the Arabs of the peninsula together and back to the ‘true faith of the Islamic religion’ (Al-Farsy 2003: 14). The two men entered into a political alliance and their joint efforts led to the first Saudi state (Wagemakers et al. 2012). Upon the death of ʔibn Suṣuud, the relationship was re-sealed with his son and successor, Ṣabd ʔl-Ṣaziz bin Muhammad bin Suṣuud, in 1765 (Kechichain 1986). According to Kechichain (1986: 55), the relationship between them was not ‘limited to the interpretation of the law ... it included political counselling ranging from questions of domestic affairs to war with enemy tribes’. As a man of religion, Ṣabd ʔl-Waḥaab shared a mutual goal with Ṣabd ʔl-Ṣaziz, namely, ‘to prove that the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia derived from a divine contract based on the Shari’a’ (ibid.). The state, thus, ‘formed an integral part of religion which was not separate from politics, nor politics from morals’ (ibid.). With the expansion of Ṣabd ʔl-Ṣaziz’s rule during subsequent years, people accepted Sheikh Muhammad bin Ṣabd ʔl-Waḥaab’s movement of *ʔl-daṣwa ʔila ʔl-tawḥiid* (a call to the doctrine of the Oneness of God), often referred to in Western writings as *Wahhabism*. Nevertheless, this first Saudi state collapsed in 1818 as a result of the Ottoman Empire’s military attacks.

The second Saudi state regained political control within a few years when, in 1824, Turki, the cousin of Suṣuud bin Ṣabd ʔl-Ṣaziz, ‘assumed the Amirship of Najd’ (Al-Farsy 1990: 15). After his assassination in 1834, Turki’s eldest son, Faisal, became Imam; and he in turn was succeeded by his son, Ṣabd ʔl-Raḥman, who assumed the leadership of the Saudi dynasty in 1889. In 1891, Abd Al-Raḥman was defeated by Muhammad bin Rashid, a tribal leader of the Shammar. This defeat forced Ṣabd ʔl-Raḥman to leave Riyadh and go to Kuwiat to live there in exile. Hence, with the fall of Riyadh under the authority of the Rashidis, the second Saudi realm collapsed (Al-Farsy 2003; Al-Rasheed 2010).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia we know today was formally declared a nation-state in 1932 after king ʔabd ʔl-Ṣaziz ʔaal Suṣuud, the son of Ṣabd ʔl-Raḥman bin Faisal, returned from Kuwait and united the different groups of peoples in the Arabian Peninsula through 30 years of battles. According to many scholars, the rise of a Saudi state was achieved by an ‘indigenous

³ Throughout this thesis, ‘Suṣuud’ will be the standard spelling used for the eponymous ancestor of the royal family of the kingdom. The family as a whole is called *ʔaal Suṣuud*. ʔaal is used for the Arabic word meaning ‘extended family of...’, while ʔl -, with a hyphen, is used for the Arabic definite article ‘the’ in all occurrences: for example, Ṣabd ʔl-Raḥman.

ruler' (Al-Rasheed 2010: 4), who had a 'genuine talent for knitting together the diverse elements of the Arabian Peninsula into a modern state' (Quandt 1981: 77).

2.2.2. Geographical Setting and Diversity

KSA is a major country in the Middle East. It is situated in Southwest Asia and 'it encompasses around 80 per cent of the Arabian Peninsula' (AlMunajjed 1997: 1). It constitutes a distinct geographical entity that is bordered by the Red Sea to the west; by the Indian Ocean to the south; and by the Arabian Gulf⁴ to the East. The kingdom shares its border to the east with Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates; to the south with Yemen and Oman; and to the north with Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait (Al-Farsy 1990). This setting led it to hold a 'strategic position and influence on regional issues in the Gulf and the wider Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean regions' (Niblock 2006: 6).

The total population of KSA is 32,552,336, including 20, 408,362 million Saudis, based on reports issued by The General Authority for Statistics, including nearly 12 million expatriates⁵ (2017 estimate) (The General Authority of Statistics 2017). In addition, geographically, the KSA is divided into four major regions and has a diverse population. First is the central region, Najd, which is in the heart of the kingdom, it is located in the middle of three deserts and a mountain chain (Metz 1993). Second, the western region, Al Hijaz, runs along the Red Sea coast and has the busy sea port of Jeddah. Third, the southern region, Ğasiir, is a fertile area. Fourth, the eastern region, Al Ahsaa?, is the richest of the regions in petroleum resources. According to Yamani (2009), prior to the unification of KSA in 1932, these regions were politically separate domains and culturally distinct. They have sustained some measure of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations (Metz 1993). According to Metz (1993: 1), '[t]ribal identities were paramount among the nomadic population and among those in towns and villages who recognized a tribal affiliation'. Nevertheless, the population was characterized by a high degree of cultural homogeneity, which was reflected in a common Arabic language and adherence to Islam (Metz 1993).

⁴ The Gulf Cooperation Council, to which Saudi Arabia belongs, insists on using the name *Arabian Gulf*, despite it being officially recognized by the United Nations and other international bodies as the *Persian Gulf*. See KhosraviNik & Sarkhoh (2017) on the discursive appropriation of names in the geopolitics of the region.

⁵ The number of expatriates leaving KSA is increasing in 2018, following recent changes to the economic focus of the country.

The administrative unity of the country was accomplished in 1954, when *Riyadh* became the capital of the country and the *Council of Ministers* was created (Saleh 1975). Therefore, on the administrative level, the country is divided into thirteen provinces ‘*manatiq*’. The five key ones are as follows. The Western Province (Al Hijaz) is cosmopolitan because of its global importance, both in commerce and in Islam, as the home of the two holy cities of Makkah and Madinah and the destination of Hajj, for pilgrimage. Hence, the population of this province have been infused for centuries with descendants of foreign Muslims who came for pilgrimage and stayed (Metz 1993). The Central Province (Najd) is the most conservative part of the country, and at the same time it is where the national government is (Jordan 2011: 4). According to Yamani (2009: 2), the Najdis were mainly tribal, nomadic, illiterate and subject to almost no foreign influence, unlike those in the Hijaz region. The Eastern Province (Al Ahsaa?) is an area of oil fields. Then there is the Southern Province (ʕasiir), between the Hijaz and Yemen, it consists of two distinctive parts : a coastal plain and rugged mountains (Saleh 1975); and the Northern Province (Tabouk). Figure 1 below shows these five provinces.

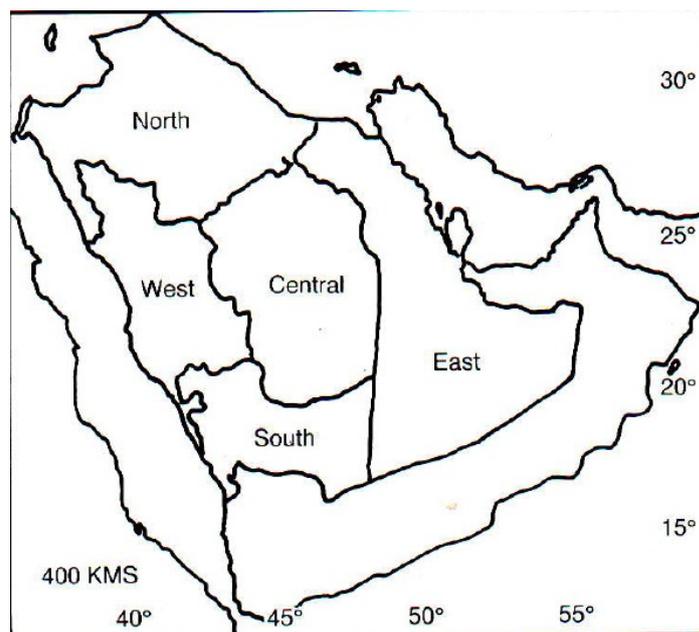


Figure 1: Map of KSA showing the five provinces

Moreover, the large size of Saudi Arabia led to the existence of differences in traditions and customs between the regions. Cordesman (2003) states that major cities are generally less conservative than remote areas and smaller towns and cities, though Riyadh, the capital, is seen as being more conservative than the second city, the coastal port of Jeddah in the West, which

is more cosmopolitan, as mentioned above. This is, for example, seen in the shape of the veil,⁶ which varies from one region to another (Al-Khateeb 1998). Women in the Western and Eastern regions are more flexible in covering their faces than women in the Middle region, such as Najd and Qassim (ibid.). Moreover, Yamani (1996b) states that Hijazi women are more used to going outdoors and expressing themselves publicly, unlike in other regions, especially Najd, where this phenomenon tends to be reserved for men.

2.2.3. Religion

The official and only religion of the KSA is *Islam*, it is a requirement of citizenship. According to Benbaz (2015), the KSA's Islamic identity is further emphasized by the fact that the two holidays of the State are *ʿiid ʔl-ʔitʿr* and *ʿiid ʔl-ʔdʿħaa*, following the lunar months of Ramadan and Dhul-Hijjah, respectively, and in the centre of the Saudi flag is the expression 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' Moreover, Al-Farsy (2003) states that the KSA is the only Islamic nation to use the Holy Qur'an as its Constitution, and at the same time it adjusts well to the conditions of the twenty-first century while sustaining its distinctive Islamic identity. Moreover, according to Al Kahtani (2013), the privileging of the role of religion in Saudi Arabia goes back to the foundation of the country, when King ʿabd ʔl-ʿaziz ʔaal Suʿuud agreed with *ʔl-ʔxwaan* (the nomadic tribes and fighters) to form a united country that accepted Shariʿa legislation. According to Al Farsy (2003: 16):

In unifying the Arab States into a cohesive nation, it is Islam, which like a spinning wheel, moves the various Arab people together in one strong fabric. It was the tie of faith rather than anything else which enabled the King Abd al-Aziz to found his kingdom.

The KSA holds a position of particular religious significance amongst other Islamic countries because it is home to Islam's two holiest cities, Makkah and Madinah. Makkah is the birthplace of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH⁷), and it is the direction of prayer for more than two billion Muslims, whereas Madinah is the city of the mosque of the Prophet (PBUH) and is the place where he is buried. In this respect, according to Al-Rasheed (2010: 5), the KSA's position as the location of the holiest shrines of Islam means that its 'internal politics and society are not only the concern of its own rather small population, but also the concern of millions of

⁶ Veil in this context refers to covering the face.

⁷ It is a Muslim practice to follow the name of the Prophet with "Peace Be Upon Him" (Henceforth, PBUH is used throughout the thesis due to word limit constraints).

Muslims in the world'. Therefore, Al-Rasheed asserts that the symbolic significance of the KSA for Islam and Muslims cannot be overestimated. This position means that it becomes the 'prerogative' of the state and its people to 'preserve [their] Islamic heritage [...] [and] to cherish the responsibilities of geographical [location] which have made [the KSA] the destination not only of Muslim pilgrims but also the direction for their five daily prayers' (Al-Rasheed 2010: 5).

In conjunction with the above, for Saudi Arabia, caring for these two holy cities is a sacred trust exercised on behalf of all Muslims. Furthermore, along the lines of Al-Rasheed, the official title of the King of Saudi Arabia, which was adopted by the late King Fahd ʔaal Suʔuud, is '*Khādim al-Haramayn al-Šarīfayn*', is officially translated by the government of Saudi Arabia as the *Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques*. This title refers to the ruler taking responsibility for guarding and maintaining the two holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah, and it is thus an expression of the king's deep sense of responsibility towards Islam. This in turn suggests that the King of Saudi Arabia, as custodian of the two Holy Mosques, is, spiritually, an important and powerful figure for all Muslims, not only for Saudi people. According to Rice (2004), the KSA leads the Islamic world because of its custodianship of the Muslim holy cities.

2.2.4. Economy

The KSA is the largest economy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority 2017). Before the discovery of oil in the KSA, the Hijaz region had a more heterogeneous character than other regions of the kingdom due to its distinctive economic activities (Yamani 1996b: 264). It gained an international reputation for trade and as a focus of Hajj (pilgrimage), which 'contributed to its relative economic prosperity and enhanced its political significance' (Yamani 2009: 1). The location of the Red Sea port of Jeddah on the ancient trade routes and its status as the seaport and airport for pilgrims have ensured it being the most 'cosmopolitan' city in the Kingdom (Al-Farsy 1990: 11). Hence, the people of the Western region are merchants by tradition, and they are of mixed racial origin because of the region being inhabited not only by Arabs, but also by Muslim immigrants, who came from different countries, such as Turkey, Indonesia, India, Egypt and Syria, and settled in the major cities of the region, such as Makkah, Madinah and Jeddah (AlMunajjed 1997).

The most profound agent of change for the economy of Saudi Arabia was the discovery of huge reserves of oil in the 1930s, which is the key to its wealth and status in the international community (Quandt 1981). This very important natural resource in the kingdom led to Saudi

Arabia's incorporation into the world economy, which in turn became an important aspect of its development (Al-Rasheed 2010). Accordingly, Saudi Arabia has transitioned from an economy based on agriculture, fishing and the Hajj (pilgrimage) and hosting pilgrims, to an economy based mainly on oil revenues. The KSA's 'brisk rate' of economic development in recent years has allowed the country to secure its standing as a key G20 member state (MLSD 2016).

Moreover, the discovery of oil gave the country 'unprecedented wealth', and hence it started to build its economic and material infrastructure and significantly transform its landscape. According to Metz (1993: 118),

The establishment of the Arabian American Oil Company and the oil towns around the oil fields triggered major changes in the economy of the kingdom ... Development of the oil fields required ancillary construction of modern ports, roads, housing, power plants, and water systems. Saudi workers had to be trained in new skills. In addition, the concentration of oil field employees and the range of services the oil company and employees needed opened new economic opportunities on a scale previously unseen by local merchants, contractors, and others ... The discovery of oil ... introduced new ways to organize the production and distribution of goods and services.

Besides, the economic advancement affected the majority of inhabitants of the kingdom. They were rural Arabs of 'nomadic' or 'semi-nomadic' origin who migrated to major cities under the influence of rapid economic development, due to the increased income from oil which 'affected the whole structure of society' (AlMunajjed 1997: 2). Furthermore, the oil-generated revenue in the early 1970s introduced large-scale changes and more openness was witnessed in the country. These changes included the opening of education to both boys and girls. The economic upheaval stemming from the increased income from oil gave rise to a trend towards education abroad, and a change in lifestyles, and these two changes affected the whole structure of society (Yamani 1996: 265). Besides, the American presence on the KSA began with the production of oil in 1970 and the establishment of the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) in Dhahran, a city on the east coast of KSA where most American companies are located. American engineers and oil executives brought their families and built many companies and Western-style houses, schools and compounds (Hamdan 2005).

Moreover, instead of just exporting oil, Saudi Arabia began to integrate its economy into the international system. Hence, in 2005, it joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) after long and extensive negotiations. It decided to open its markets to more international investment and

participation in its economy (Bowen 2008). Recently, in April 2016, the KSA announced a reform plan that aims to free the kingdom from oil dependence through diversifying the economy and social politics (Horschig 2016). The unpredictability of oil revenues, since summer 2014 to the onset of 2016, led Saudi Arabia to diversify its economy into other commodities (Bokhari 2017). As a result, the kingdom encouraged the growth of the private sector to help diversify the economy and employ more Saudi nationals (Alkadry 2015).

2.2.5. *The Investment Climate in KSA*

KSA is one of the largest markets in the Arabian Gulf region, and one of the more sought-after investment destinations in the Middle East, as it belongs to the Gulf Cooperation countries, most of which are producers of oil. Besides, the Saudi market is very competitive and business transactions take place on the basis of quality and cost (Al-Qahtany 2003). In 2000, Saudi Arabia established the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) in order to boost the business climate, so that it ‘fosters and attracts quality investments that contribute to a diversified economy’ (SAGIA 2017). The SAGIA is responsible ‘for proposing and implementing policies to promote foreign investment in Saudi Arabia, and for issuing investment licenses, visas, residence permits, and other related documents to foreign investors’ (Rice 2004: 69). This policy of the government to reduce restrictions affecting investment has increased the attractiveness of the country for foreign investors.

Moreover, joining the WTO has led to significant changes that influence the way the country does business with foreign parties, as this created a more favourable business climate and hence positively influenced the flow of Foreign Direct Investment⁸ (FDI). Moreover, in the period between 2005 and 2010, Saudi Arabia became the 8th biggest recipient of FDI in the world. This happened partially due to the opening up of additional industries, such as petrochemicals, gas and telecommunications. to foreign investment (WTO 2012).

Therefore, the KSA has welcomed increased commercial activity and at the same time issued numerous regulations to encourage and control foreign investment in the country. According to Homsy (1982), the ‘explosive growth’ of the Saudi economy has put great demands on its legal system; and hence, in the last few years, there was a promulgation of legislation in response to the new complexities in the business environment. He further asserts that access to and

⁸ The World Trade Organization (WTO) secretariat defines FDI as ‘when an investor based in one country (the home country) acquires an asset in another country (the host country) with the intent to manage that asset’ (WTO 1996).

understanding of the latest Saudi legal developments is critical to have a successful business there. In fact, knowledge and understanding of these regulations is crucial for any multinational company that intends to invest in the KSA. In sum, foreign firms get into the Saudi market because of the advantages related to its economy, the considerable market size and revenues, and an improved business climate and opportunities.

2.2.6. Political Setting

The political system of the KSA is an absolute monarchy, where the king is both head of State and head of government, and reference to all the powers therewith. According to Benbaz (2015: 184), political power “*Al-Hay’a Al-Hakima*” in the KSA is divided between the governing body “*Mu’assasat Al-hukm*” and the general authorities “*Al-Sulutat Al- ‘amma*”. The former consists of the king and the crown prince, whereas the latter is divided into a regulatory (legislative) authority “*Al-Sulta Al-Tashri’yya*”, an executive authority “*Al-Sulta Al-Tanfeeziyya*” and a judicial authority “*Al-Sulta Al-Qada’yya*”. Thus, this part is divided into the following subsections. I will start with a brief account of the Saudi Basic Law of Governance⁹ (henceforth BLOG) and the executive and regulatory authorities in the kingdom, which are vested in two bodies: The Council of Ministers and the Shura Council. The judicial authority follows this.

2.2.6.1. Basic Law of Governance

The government of SA has introduced many internal economic and political reforms in recent years. According to Sakr (2009), these reforms started in the 1990s and thus preceded both the terrorist attacks of September 2001 and the international pressure that those attacks attracted, causing SA to initiate social reforms. The first push for political reform came in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, when the government of SA introduced numerous internal political reforms, which were carried out according to the provisions of Islamic Shari’ah, to modernize the kingdom’s system of government (Al-Farsy 2003; Kapiszewski 2006). King Fahad Al Sa’ud (1921–2005) affirmed the promulgation of three significant laws, which were issued by a royal decree in 1992, namely *Al-Nizam Al-Asasi Lilhukm* (the Basic Law of Governance), *Majlis Al-Shura* (the Consultative Council Law) and *Nizam Al Manatiq* (the Law of Provinces), and also an amended version of the old *Majlis Al-Wuzara’* (the Council of

⁹ All the Articles of the Basic Law and other laws that are mentioned in the thesis are taken from the *Bureau of Experts*, which is affiliated to the Council of Ministers. It is an officially authorized government online database that offers reliable English translations of Saudi statutory laws and regulations.

Ministers Law).¹⁰ The BLOG is ‘the most crucial piece of legislation of the above-mentioned laws and comprises nine chapters with eighty-three legal clauses’ (Al Kahtani 2013: 13). According to Kechichian (2013: 67), the issuing of these key documents was ‘a momentous step forward because an institutionalization process was clearly established’.

The BLOG sets out the general principles on which the KSA is founded and how the government is to be run, and it stipulates the responsibilities of both the State and citizens vis-à-vis the obligations imposed by Shariʿa law (Benbaz 2015). In accordance, the importance of Shariʿa for governance in SA can be seen in its position as the first general principle of the BLOG, as Article (1) of the law states that:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a fully sovereign Arab Islamic State. Its religion shall be Islam and its constitution shall be the Book of God and the *Sunnah* (Traditions) of His Messenger, may God’s blessings and peace be upon him ... Governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia derives its authority from the Book of God Most High and the *Sunnah* of his messenger, both of which govern this Law and all the laws of the State ... Governance ... shall be based on justice, *shura* (consultation), and equality in accordance with Islamic *Shari’ah*¹¹.
(Basic Law of Governance 1992)¹²

The aforementioned Article (1) of the law confirms the kingdom’s status as an Islamic monarchy and formalizes its system of government, which is based on Shariʿa law. It further accentuates the fact that these laws are subordinate to the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah.

Despite the fact that the KSA’s legal constitutional structure is based on the Qur’an and the Sunna, nonetheless, the BLOG is synonymous with *Constitution* (Benbaz 2015). According to Al Kahtani (2013: 14), the term ‘constitutional’ in the KSA does not mean the same as it does in universal law. Instead, from a Saudi perspective, the term refers ‘to the platform of all aspects of life in Saudi society’. Thus, the BLOG maintains the main principles of the constitution, to serve as true constitutional law. It establishes in written form both ‘a description of the essential structure and organization of Government and, in effect, a bill of rights for the citizen’ (Al-Farsy 2003: 54).

¹⁰ The Basic Law of Governance, Royal Order, No. A-90, dated 1 March 1992. The Consultative Council Law, Royal Order, No. A-91, dated 1 March 1992. The Regional Law, Royal Order, No. A-92, dated 1 March 1992. The Council of Ministers Law, Royal Order, No. A-13, dated 20 August 1993.

¹¹ Islamic canonical law based on the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

¹² According to Article (71) of the Basic Law of Governance, all laws and Royal Decrees shall be published in the country’s official gazette, *Umm Al-Qura Gazette*, and shall be effective on the date of publication unless another day is specified therein.

Islamic Shariʿa is the foundation on which the country’s basic system of government has been built. The Qur’an and the *Sunnah* are the primary sources of Shariʿa law, and no regulations may contradict the Islamic law and its principles (Abdur-Rahman 1988; Al Kahtani 2013). According to Bassiouni & Badr (2002: 135), the majority of Islamic rules fall into two categories, which are unknown to secular legal systems: ‘those pertaining to faith and ritual norms ‘*ibadat*’; and those that deal with societal relations and individual interactions in society, ‘*mu‘amalāt*’’. In accordance, Saudi law is composed of two sources: the Shariʿa, which is based on Qur’an and Sunnah, and *civil law*, which is composed of regulations promulgated by royal decree and ministerial decisions (Homsy 1982). The Shariʿa deals with personal, family and criminal matters, while the *civil law* generally regulates the areas of business or commercial day-to-day transactions in the KSA that are not covered by the Shariʿa (Homsy 1982; Asherman 1982). The enacted royal decrees embody principles derived from continental jurisprudence, such as ‘Investment of Foreign Capital Regulation’ and ‘Companies law’ (Asherman 1982: 326). Nevertheless, the role played by these regulations is limited under Shariʿa and should not contradict it (Asherman 1982). In fact, the Shariʿa is ‘the ultimate yardstick against which both the personal and commercial conduct of affairs in Saudi Arabia are judged’ (Homsy 1982: 51).

In a nutshell, the significance of the Basic Law emerges from the following: besides reaffirming the principles of government, it delineates the frame of government as it confirms the monarchical system of the land and that the king enjoys the power to rule the country, which is based on the Islamic political system *Shura*, which will be explained in the following parts. All related Articles from the BLOG would be quoted where relevant. It provides specific definitions of each state authority, including the executive, the legislature and judiciary (Kechichian 2013).

2.2.6.2. The Council of Ministers

Governance occurs in KSA through a regulatory (legislative) authority as well as an executive authority. To start with, *Majlis Al-Wuzara*¹³ (The Council of Ministers) is the regulatory authority. In 1953, King ʿAbd ʿAl-ʿAziz ʿAl Suʿuud issued a Royal Decree to establish the country’s first central administrative body, the Saudi Council of Ministers. The king is the president of the council, as stated in Article (1) of the law of the Council of Ministers, and the

¹³ The first ‘Law of the Council of Ministers’ was published in Umm Al-Qura (Government Official Gazette), No. 1508. 26 March 1954.

ministers of the council are appointed by a Royal Order (Al-Farsy 2003). Accordingly, the king has ultimate legislative command, since he has the authority to make a final decision, as long as it is based on Shariʿa, which is the source of legislation.

Moreover, on the executive level, the Council of Ministers is the principal executive organ of the government as it ‘implements the policies of the state’ (Kéichichian 2013: 25). According to the system of law in the KSA, the king has ultimate authority ‘over the executive branch’ (Al Harbi 2014: 143). He is the head of state and prime minister of the Council of Ministers, which directs general state policy. As for the Council of Ministers, according to Article (56) of the Basic Law, it handles the country’s internal and external interactions, such as overseeing economic principles, financial affairs, defence and education. It also gives permission for franchising and investing in any of the country’s natural resources (Al Kahtani 2013).

Moreover, according to Article (3) of the Law of the Council of Ministers, a member should be ‘[a] Saudi national by upbringing and descent. A person well known for uprightness and competence. Not previously convicted of a crime impinging on religion and honour’ (Law of the Council of Ministers 1993).

2.2.6.3. The Shura Council

Shura is the principle of consultation and it refers here to a key element of Muslim political affairs, and when combined with the term *Majlis*, which means council, it indicates a body of individuals that advises or is consulted. Hence, the primary function of this council is to provide the king with advice on issues of importance in the kingdom.

Hence, *Shura* is a key element of Muslim political affairs and Muslim leaders practise it because it was mentioned in the Holy Qur’an and the Prophet (PBUH) emphasized it (Kéichichian 2013). This *Shura* system provides a framework that ensures scholars and experts from a variety of backgrounds are consulted on issues related to governance. Currently, the role the members play in governance of the Saudi State is decided by the king, who appoints individuals to the council according to their perceived suitability (ibid.).

Shura passed through several stages in Saudi Arabia. According to Kéichichian (2013), ʿaāl Suʿuud leaders relied on *Shura* during the first, second and third monarchies. The recent variation of the *Majlis Al-Shura* was established and formalized in 1992 by a Royal Decree,

which identified its rights and duties. As for its formation, the Shura Council Law¹⁴ states in Article (3) that:

The Shura Council shall consist of a speaker and one hundred and fifty members chosen by the king from amongst scholars, those of knowledge, expertise and specialists, provided that women's representation shall not be less than 20% of members in number. Their rights, duties and affairs shall be determined by a royal order.
(The Shura Council 1992)

Moreover, *Majlis Al-Shura* (Consultative Council) was established to confer with and advise the Council of Ministers and propose and review laws. Hence, the Shura Council also shares legislative authority. Furthermore, the king has the power to appoint and dismiss council members, dissolve the council, restructure it and appoint a new one, if needed (Al-Farsy 2003). Additionally, there are credentials and restraining limits for those sitting on the *Shura Majlis*. An Al-Shura council member should to be '[a] Saudi national by descent and upbringing; a person well known for uprightness and competence; [and] a person not less than 30 years of age' (The Shura Council 1992). Beyond these specific criteria of age, citizenship and good character, there are also personal characteristics that influence whom will be appointed to the *Shura* Council. Typical members come from four major categories: the *ʿulamāʾ*¹⁵ (Islamic scholars), *ʿahl ʿilm* (people of learning), *ʿahl ʿraʾj* (shapers of opinion) and *ʿahl ʿxibra* (experts) (Al Harbi 2014). Thus, members of the council were chosen to represent a wide mix of Muslim scholars, businessmen, professionals and government officials, as well as a large number of academics with advanced degrees who are experts in their fields (Al-Farsy 2003).

2.2.6.4. The Judicial Authority

The judicial system is independent of the country's executive; this means there is no interference in the decisions of judges, even from the king. Article (46) of the Basic Law states that '[t]he Judiciary shall be an independent authority. There shall be no power over judges in their judicial function other than the power of the Islamic Shari'ah' (Basic Law of Governance 1992). Thus, Shari'a law remains the overarching basis for the legal system, and arbitral awards, local or international, are not enforceable if they are non-compliant with Shari'a law and public policy (Latham & Watkins 2010).

¹⁴ This Law was enacted by Royal Decree No. A/91, in Umm Al-Qura (Government Official Gazette), No. 3397. 5 March 1992.

¹⁵ Category of religiously inclined persons who study Islamic law with great care and with a well-established methodology for interpretation and precedence (Kechichain 1986: 55).

In sum, the above parts are intended to give a glimpse of Saudi Arabia and how it is connected to Islam. It seeks to introduce the KSA historically, geographically, religiously, economically and politically. The BLOG, the Shura Council, and the country's executive, legislative and judicial authorities were examined briefly, thus guiding our understanding of these particular issues, which will assist in defining how this legal structure affects the KSA. The following parts cover the social setting of the KSA and the position of women.

2.2.7. Social Setting of KSA

Islamic law and Arab customs and traditions are recognized as the two main forces that shape Saudi society. Saudi society is characterized and being guided by Islamic teachings, along with values and attitudes that are observed in Arabian tribal society, in general, and in the family, in particular. The values and attitudes that are commonly observed in Saudi society generally include the belief in one God, a common Arabic language, adherence to Islamic teachings, strong and extended family relationships, a religious, conservative and moral society, respect for the old, protection of the weak, forgiveness, kindness, modesty, obedience, courage and unlimited hospitality and sincerity (Al-Sweel 1993). Accordingly, Al Lily (2011: 119) states that the KSA has 'a high cultural homogeneity', which is based on both tribal and Islamic affiliations and therefore has a unique and complex culture to a degree that makes it difficult to distinguish between 'the social' and 'the religious'. Nevertheless, the degree of adherence to Islamic teachings varies from one region to another, and even from one family to another.

A distinctive feature of Saudi society is the division between males and females in both public and private spaces, which is called *gender segregation*. The KSA is a state characterized by legally, politically and religiously enforced gender segregation. According to Doumato (2009), gender segregation in the public domain is a cornerstone of the Saudi interpretation of Islam. The fields in which there are women-only public spaces include, among others, education, banking, access to public transportation, the labour market, leisure and consumption (van Geel 2012). According to van Geel (2012: 57), '[g]ender segregation does not necessarily relegate women's participation to the realm of domesticity, but rather separates the two sexes in the public sphere'. Van Geel (2012: 58) further asserts that from the perspective of the Saudi government, the development of women-only public spaces is not conservative. Rather, it is seen as 'progress' and modernity for both women and the nation. Thus, the notions of Islam, gender segregation and progress/modernity converge in the state's policy towards the institutionalization of women-only public spaces (ibid.).

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that many Saudi families observe gender segregation, even in their extended family gatherings. That is, men and women of the family do not sit and mingle together in any private indoor gathering. But this practice too varies among different families and depends on the degree of their application of Islamic rules and being conservative. Saudi citizens embrace the cultural and religious attributes of society in their totality, while the norms for public behaviour are generally regarded as conservative. Hence, this brief introduction aims to offer a basic background, which will be a foundation that enhances the reasoning behind the social problem that was caused by IKEA's 2013 catalogue in the KSA.

2.3. Female visibility in the KSA: Past and Present

The focus of this part is on female visibility in the KSA, as this is relevant to the research questions. Therefore, the following three subdivisions briefly trace female visibility in the KSA, from past to present. Although main changes and social reforms took place starting from 2004, it is important to understand them in the context of a much longer history of change going back several decades. The division is based on the social and political events that have contributed to the position of women in Saudi society and the media.

2.3.1. Female Visibility Pre-1979 Saudi

According to Yamani (1996b: 265), the period from the formal declaration of Saudi Arabia as a nation-state in 1932 to the late 1990s can be divided into three stages. The first stage began with the unification of the kingdom. The second stage, from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s, witnessed increasing oil wealth and contact with the West. The third stage began in the 1980s and was marked by a 'religious revival' whereby the state and the people were less receptive to Western influences and focused more on defining their identity. As mentioned before, Saudi society has witnessed massive changes in a short period of time because of the influx of wealth into the country after the discovery of oil (Al-Khateeb 1998). Women have benefited from some of the socio-economic changes that took place in the country. The most important benefits for them were 'female education and employment', as education 'has widened a woman's knowledge outside her domestic sphere, awakened her consciousness, and given her the chance to undertake paid work away from home' (Al-Khateeb 1998: 170). According to Doumato (1999), women have been moving progressively into new areas of private-sector employment that were not acceptable a generation ago, such as broadcasting, advertising and journalism. In fact, prior to 1979, women's presence had been established for many years, especially in the

media (Sakr 2008). Women regularly appeared on Saudi television, their writings have been published in the printed press since 1950s and their work in broadcasting grew in the 1960s with the expansion of local Saudi broadcast media. Issues such as women's right to drive, where women could and should work, and the types of education appropriate for women were all hot topics at that time (Doumato 2000). Sakr (2008) states that, as for the broadcast media, there were negotiations between King Faisal, who ruled at that time from 1962 to 1975, and members of the religious police regarding females' presence in it. The religious leaders protested to the king about hearing women's voices on *Radio Makkah* for the first time in 1963, to which the king's answer was that Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) listened to the poetess Al-Khansa. When television was introduced in 1965, there were strong oppositions to that from a small group, after which women and girls were involved in television plays and children's programmes (Sakr 2008). Sakr (2009) further states that in the 1970s people used to watch open-air cinema in SA in mixed company. After the end of the 1970s they could not. The following section sheds light on the reasons behind this change.

2.3.2. Female Visibility Post-1979 Saudi

An important event that occurred in 1979 reshaped the kingdom's approach towards women. That was the year when Juhayman Al-Otaibi, leader of some religious extremists, led a failed attempt to seize the Holy Mosque in Makkah to officially put an end to what he called 'Western influence' in the country (Hamdan 2005: 46). He protested at what he and his followers described as the 'religious and moral laxity and degeneration' of Saudi rulers (Sakr 2008: 391). They contested what they viewed as excessive Westernization (Alhoussein 2014). The aftermath of the failed revolt was that King Khalid (1913–1982), Saudi Arabia's king at the time, chose to give more power to religious conservatives, as Juhayman's seizure was an important signal of 'the threat of internal Islamist forces' (Al-Rasheed 2013: 108). Thus, the siege had immediate negative consequences for Saudi society, and particularly for women (whose rights were seen as linked to Westernization). The state gave back the upper hand to the scholars in terms of decisions on matters related to women, their public presence and marriage (Al-Rasheed 2013). This decision had many consequences for women specifically. According to Hamdan (2005), women's issues became the focus in any discussion about progress. A woman's right to participate fully in the development of the nation was forbidden. In addition, after that, television stations were prohibited from broadcasting images of unveiled women (ibid.). According to Sakr (2009), the government responded to the protest with a wave of 'anti-women' activity, which included removing women from many types of television programmes, and strict gender segregation became more prevalent in public places. This segregation

negatively affected Saudi women's visibility and delayed their access and entry to the labour market (Alhussein 2014). A Royal Order was issued in March 1983 forbidding women from being employed in jobs that allow mixing with men. This was followed by the Council of Ministers' Order in 2001 stressing the importance of segregation between men and women in the workplace. Sakr (2009) argues that such a reaction conformed to what often occurs when certain interest groups need to act together in unity. They do so by pressurising the less powerful to abide by norms legitimized by reference to 'tradition', which in this case is equated with Islam.

Furthermore, direct censorship prevailed in Saudi Arabia then: 'offending' articles imported into the country were removed or blackened, or pages were glued together. Offenses ranged from news critical of the administration to pictures in fashion magazines of bare female legs and couples kissing or embracing (Green & Karolides 2005: 494). Moreover, photographs of women in newspapers were banned and the religious police became more assertive (Lacey 2009: 52). In fact, discussions around increasing women's freedom and mobility through education and work were perceived from the very beginning by the religious groups as dangerous 'Western ideas' (Arebi 1994: 17). Hence, these actions justify why Saudi Arabia features one of the most restrictive media landscapes in the world (Duffy 2013: 29).

2.3.3. Female Visibility since 2004- Present

The focus of this part is on the reform initiatives that took place in the KSA in order to ease the restrictions on women in society and then in the media. To understand whether recent political openings have provided Saudi women with actual power and had a feasible impact on women's equality and rights in the kingdom, it is necessary to look at the reign of the late King Abdullah 'Al-Sa'ud (1924–2015), who is seen as a reformer and supporter of women. According to Montagu (2008), King Abdullah's reform programme formally put women at the centre of the reform process. Once he became king in 2005, the kingdom's Global Gender Gap Index improved from 0.52 to 0.57 (on a scale of zero to one, with one being the best score for gender equality) and it was considered the 13th most improved country globally in that index in 2012 (Hausmann et al. 2012: 305). This is because the increased political support for women during King Abdullah's reign provided opportunities for empowerment that led to an increase in leadership and decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors (Thompson 2015: 18). For the first time in the country, in 2009, King Abdullah named a woman for the Council of Ministers, appointing Noor Al-Fayez as deputy minister for women's education (Jamjoom 2009). Further, in 2009, he opened the first coeducational university in the kingdom.

He also provided women with more access to jobs through the Ministry of Labour, as well as providing equal opportunities for males and females to gain scholarships to study abroad (Damanhoury 2016). In September 2011, the king announced that women would have the right to vote in the 2015 municipal elections.

Moreover, when the late King Abdullah ascended the throne (2005–2015), the KSA embraced vital steps towards reform (Damanhoury 2013). In this respect, Echague and Bruke (2009: 3) state that ‘King Abdullah has shown a willingness to adopt a more inclusive approach to religious minorities and women, who have been invited to partake in official state sponsored dialogues on the future of the country.’ On 11 January 2013, King Abdullah issued a decree amending several articles of Shura Council law. The changes included the appointment of 30 councilwomen, with academic degrees, for the first time in the history of the kingdom (Admon 2013: 1–2). Hence, women became visible formal members of the highest political body in the country (Alhusein 2014). This move was in line with Islam, which regards women as equal to men. This decision was based on consultations with clerics and experts, who confirmed that councilwomen would enrich the Council’s debates and activity, women had the right to be consulted and there is no Shari’ah law banning them from serving on the Shura Council (Admon 2013: 5). In fact, the decision was an important move in strengthening the role of women in Saudi society. According to Thompson (2015: 15), this appointment showed the commitment of the late king to engaging Saudi women in ‘the nation-making process’. Nevertheless, this decision was criticized by some clerics who believed that such a decision would corrupt Saudi society. Many harsh opposing statements started to be made on social media, mainly Twitter hashtags, regarding women Shura Council members. In response to such statements, legal consultant Ahmad Al-Muhaimid announced that ‘slandering the councilwomen on the social networks is an offence punishable by up to a year’s imprisonment and a fine up to 500,000 riyals, under the Anti-Cyber Crime Law’, whose article 3 refers to: ‘[d]efamation and infliction of damage upon others through the use of various information technology devices’ (Anti-Cyber Crime Law 2007).

In contrast to the negative views regarding the effectiveness of having women members on the council, the Shura Council Speaker admitted that the impact and influence of councilwomen had exceeded expectations, as they were able to reflect their expertise in a variety of topics they brought to the council for deliberation, and he emphasized that they did intervene in issues ‘where they can have an impact and be constructive’ (Admon 2013: 8). The first concrete achievement of women members was when the council approved a proposal permitting women

to apply for property loans regardless of their marital or social status, including widows, orphans or divorcees, a right previously reserved for men (ibid.). Therefore, this great visibility on the Shura Council helped Saudi women to voice their opinions and informal positions.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that King Abdullah also met with representatives of women working in various sectors, including the media, and according to Sakr (2009) little is known about these meetings, which indicates that he urged them to adopt a ‘softly, softly’ approach so as not to alienate the kingdom’s conservatives. The king later also met with local editors and instructed them to “take care” not to contravene restrictive local social customs when publishing pictures of women (ibid.). This again shows that there was a slow and steady move towards female visibility within conservative Saudi society, which was achieved through high-level support, i.e. it was the result of top-down initiatives, as the king and key members of the royal family put their weight behind these efforts.

Furthermore, notable examples of the kingdom’s reforms include encouraging women to enter the labour market, and a better response to domestic violence. Recent developments, including some Saudi families’ need for additional sources of income, resulted in a royal decree in 2011 that allowed women to work in domains that were previously restricted to men, such as law. This, crucially, helped validate women’s entry into the workplace. There was widespread opposition to this decree, but it did not stop its enforcement and the creation of 500,000 jobs for women in less than three years (Alhussein 2014). As a result, women have become more visible in the workforce and public sphere. For example, the feminisation of Saudi employment in shops was enforced by royal decree, despite widespread opposition in the country. In 2011, the first phase of this feminization started, resulting in the hiring of 43,383 Saudi women (Alhussein 2014). The following figure shows that women entered the labour market despite the fact that women’s labour-force participation continues to be significantly lower than for men.

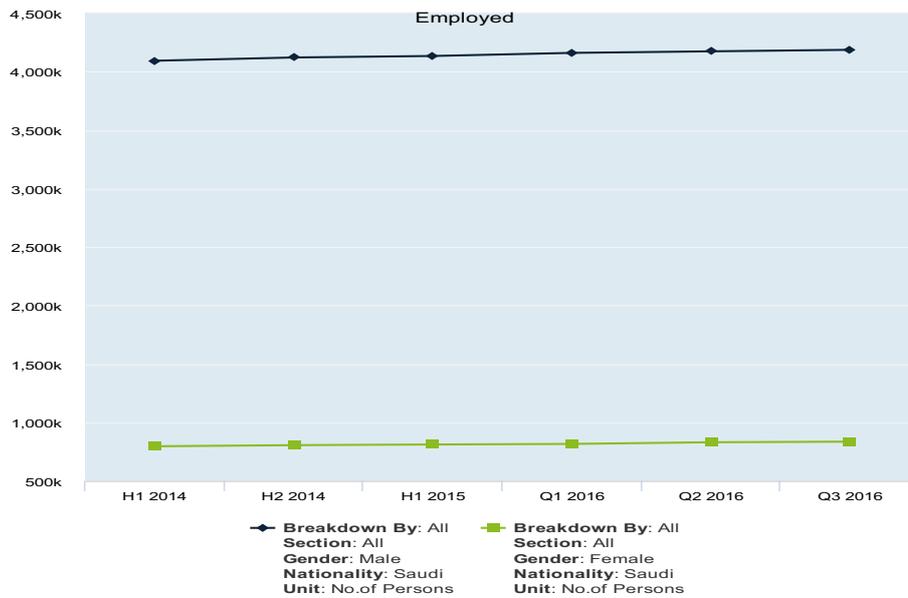


Figure 2: Labor Force in the KSA – Employed (source: GASTST 2017)

Moreover, the following figure shows employment as a percentage of the population. It shows that, in 2016, the female employment percentage was 12.4% compared to males at 60.9%.

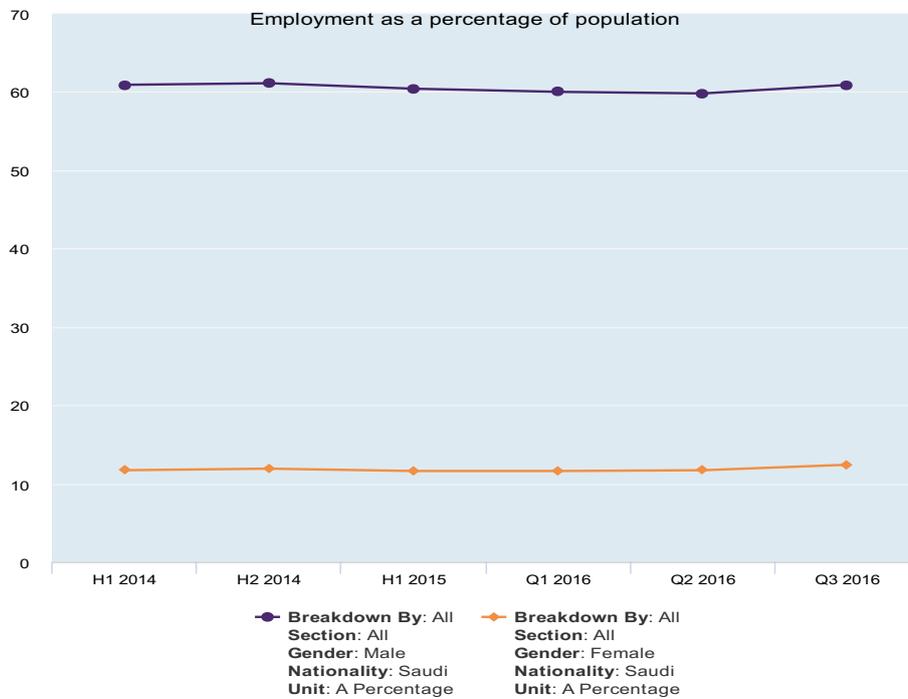


Figure 3: Employment as Percentage of the Population (source: GASTST 2017)

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia confirmed its keenness to protect women's rights through the issuance of a number of regulations and laws including, among others, a ban on domestic violence in 2013 (MOFA 2016). It is relevant to note that this was preceded by Saudi Arabia signing the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (with reservations¹⁶) in 2000 (Sakr 2009). Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 enhanced female visibility by stating that:

Saudi women are yet another great asset. With over 50 per cent of our university graduates being female, we will continue to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy.
(Vision 2030 2016)

Additionally, in June 2012, although the decision was strongly opposed by some clerics, the kingdom announced that it would allow women to compete in the Olympics. The Saudi national Olympic Committee stated that Saudi female competitors should be dressed modestly (Human Rights Watch 2016: 5). Indeed, Saudi Arabia's recent 'Vision 2030' recognized that: 'opportunities for the regular practice of sports have often been limited. This will change' (Vision 2030 2016). This again shows that there are no legal constraints on reform regarding women in society. Notwithstanding, social and cultural norms, rather than legal ones, play a vital role in triggering such constraints. According to Damanhoury (2016: 54), 'the participation of women in Saudi society is governed by social norms rather than religious or legal ones'. The basis for this argument is the late King Abdullah's consistent approach to reform and improving the status of women. In addition, Damanhoury (2013: 130) argues that the position of women in SA has always been controversial due to the existence of a 'grey area between social and religious norms'. In other words, the grey area exists because of the misconceptions over what exactly is related to religion and what is related to social norms. This argument is in line with Khayat's (2006) assertion that this misconception is as a result of the following process: the misinterpretation of Islamic teaching that gives men absolute power, the implementation of such misinterpretations as laws by the government, and then the adoption of such rules by society as customs and norms. To illustrate this point, Damanhoury (2013) argues that Saudi women were not allowed to participate in the first round of the municipal elections as candidates or as voters due to this grey area. This is supported by the views of the participants in her study (males and females) who 'thought that religious consideration was a reason behind excluding

¹⁶ There was one reservation, in that Saudi Arabia would not follow the terms of the convention that contradicted Islamic Law.

women from participating in municipal elections' (131). Furthermore, Alhussein (2014) asserts that the issue of women and their situation is a highly politicised in Saudi society. She substantiates this by putting forth the arguments of two opposing groups in the society. On the one hand, there are the politically active Islamists who argue that norms and customs in Saudi Arabia protect women and, therefore, should be maintained. On the other hand, there is the modernising movement that aims to highlight the distinction between norms and traditions, on the one hand, and religion, on the other, because of the difficulties and challenges that individuals and society as a whole face to separate norms and customs from religion after decades of maintaining this religious discourse.

In order to resolve the aforementioned misinterpretation, AlMnajjed (1997: 32) advises that it is vital to differentiate between 'the teachings of Islam as a religion and a way of life, and the local costumes and social traditions that are not part of religion but rather erroneously conceived as part of it'. Similarly, Damanhoury (2016: 59) suggests that Saudi women's empowerment can be attained by studying Islamic law so that women can speak in the name of Islam in order to challenge prevailing customs and traditions related to women's issues and which are not based on Islamic principles. Gaining the right knowledge about Islamic principles would positively affect fighting the misconceptions about religion that some people have, which led the historian Lacey (1981) to conclude, 'reform in Saudi Arabia had never been a simple matter, [and will never be given the religious mentality of people]' (363).

Moreover, in a recent study, Damanhoury (2016) looked at the chances of women's empowerment in Saudi society from a linguistic angle and she recommends that changes in women's role in Saudi society should be reflected in the use of language as well raising the awareness of society about the presence of women in the labour market. This recommendation is based on her study where she looks at some articles about Saudi labour law in order to test the existence of biased use of language. The analysis is based on a consensus of Arabic language scholars about using the masculine noun generically to refer equally to males and females in theory and in practice for the sake of language economy. In this respect, Damanhoury (2016: 55) considers linguistic sexism to be 'any violation of language use when the generic noun is used to refer to females in theory but not in practice'. Based on her fieldwork data, the findings reveal that the generic use of the masculine form inclusively in the Labour Law resulted in a biased use of language as the underlying attitude that controls the interpretation of the masculine form as referring exclusively to men only, even when used generically. Accordingly, Damanhoury asserts that the Labour Law should be clear about whether women are included or

not to avoid any ambiguity that might lead to different interpretations depending on the definition of women's role in society. Moreover, Damanhoury (2016: 57) reveals that the ambiguity of the language of law also lies in the lack of 'a comprehensive narrative defining some codes', such as what professions are open for women's employment, particularly in the private sector, which might result in discouraging women's employment in that sector.

In a nutshell, the above part has sought to shed some light on the past and present position of women in Saudi Arabia. There have been very big steps towards empowering women, especially regarding voting and candidature. Royal decrees have been a primary vehicle for changing and challenging conservative norms and customs, and thus allowing women greater access to job opportunities and increased visibility in the public sphere. It is clear that some sort of social resistance, which usually has no realistic basis in religion, faces every change that is introduced to the society regarding women's empowerment and hence visibility. Other linguistic causes that affect women's empowerment also prevail and need to be addressed. It also shows that women's issues in Saudi society are often mistakenly connected to Islamic teachings. Based on the aforementioned facts, the following part aims to demonstrate the position of women in the media in Saudi Arabia.

With regard to the media, according to Sakr (2009), there was a big increase in women's visibility in the Saudi media in 2004. This is because the Saudi media had undergone a 'remarkable' and 'unprecedented' transformation in a period of two years from 2004 to 2006 due to the following changes. Al-Yamama Press Company appointed five women to senior positions. Women were appearing daily on the front pages of all eight official newspapers in the kingdom, which has been nominated by men before. Further, official television channels, which once minimized the presence of women in newscasts and programmes, had turned into advocates of women invading the media (Sakr 2008: 390). In 2004, there was the launch of *Al-Ekhbariya*, a 24-hour news channel with female newsreaders which was set up as part of Saudi state-owned television. Then, Saudi women's faces could be seen in public, where they were barely seen only a short time before. This sudden visibility of women was in itself a news story in 2006 because of its incompatibility with the official prevailing norms of sex segregation and restrictions on women's travel (Sakr 2008). Nevertheless, such appearances of female newsreaders were restricted by certain regulations as the Saudi Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) has begun implementing a new dress code for its women TV anchors. The code demands that they wear black headscarves and abayas (black cloaks). However, 'their abayas could be

decorated on the sides with ribbons to match the corporate colours of the channels they represent, for example blue for the Al-Ikhbariya channel' (Al-Khotani 2015).

Sakr (2008) further states that disseminating pictures of women's faces whether in broadcast or print directly contradicts the very taboo on images of women that was invoked by opponents of women having their own individual identity. A woman working as a journalist needs to travel independently or speak to unrelated men, and this was a challenge to those members of the Saudi religious establishment for whom 'Islamic teaching' meant that there is something called 'women's nature', which strictly limits what they are allowed to do (Sakr 2008: 390). The former Grand Mufti, Sheikh Abdel-Aziz ibn Baz, once warned that 'removing a woman from her home, which is her kingdom, means removing her from what her natural state and her character require' (ibid.). Despite Sheikh Abd ʔl-ʔaziz bin Baz's death in 1999, similar references to 'women's nature' persist in official policies on media and education. If a woman works outside the home, 'Islamic teaching' is said to require that she should only undertake activities that are 'compatible with her nature' and avoid mixing with men. In fact, officially, all Saudi media are directly instructed to observe these norms. The Media Charter adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1982, which remained in force in 2006 even though the media licensing and regulation system was changed in 2001, calls on editors and journalists to observe 'the nature of women and the role she is called to play in society without that role conflicting with such nature' (Sakr 2008: 390).

Lately, in the reign of King Salman ʔal Suʔud, sweeping social changes have taken place in the KSA which increased female visibility in the country. The following are some of the activities that Saudi women were once banned from. To start with, Saudi Arabia lifted its longstanding famous ban on women driving. Starting in July 2018, women were allowed to drive. This initiated female linguistic visibility on the billboards on main roads. That is, the Saudi General Department of Traffic altered the content of electronic billboards on main roads to accommodate messages for women, reading 'Sister Driver, Brother Driver: The General Department of Traffic wishes you a safe trip on the road' (Ali 2018). Another billboard read: 'Sister Driver, Brother Driver: Abiding by traffic rules and regulations is evidence of your high awareness' (ibid.). A third message reminded drivers of both sexes that 'Commitment to traffic rules helps you avoid road accidents' (ibid.). Moreover, on 17 April 2017, Saudi Arabia's King Salman issued an order to all government agencies that women should not be denied access to government services because they do not have a male guardian's consent, unless existing regulations require it (Human Rights Watch 2018). Another royal decree made by King Salman

in May 2017 allowed women to access government and health services without requiring consent from their male guardians, who otherwise have the ultimate authority over what women in the country can do. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Commerce and Investment said in February 2018 that women would be able to 'start their own business freely', and no longer face more obstacles than men in becoming entrepreneurs (Arab News 2018). Additionally, King Abdullah Sports City stadium in Jeddah made history when it allowed women to sit in the stands to view a national soccer game in January 2018 (Shaheen 2018). Nevertheless, despite gaining entry, women were segregated from men and had to use special entrances designated for women and families. This is observed in most public places in the kingdom, where there are separate sections for individual males and for family members including males and females. In terms of the labour force, in March 2017, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development said in their report that women represent 30 per cent of the private-sector workforce. Moreover, the report said that the government hopes to see that number jump by an extra 28 per cent by 2020 (Al Arabiya 2017).

Thus, it is clear that there have been different policies in force in different periods in the history of SA. Each policy changed in accordance with different periods. According to Alhussein (2014), in Saudi patriarchal society, women have rarely been considered as individuals, rather they are usually viewed as a part of the family unit in both the private and public spheres. However, this viewpoint has gradually changed as women have become more visible and, most importantly, increasingly been considered as individuals. In fact, the reform agenda that started in the reign of King Abdullah could be seen as a preparative phase for the current social changes. These reforms have taken some important steps, even if they have not fulfilled all of the aspirations of Saudi women, who acknowledge the progress in recent years.

2.4. Doing Business in the KSA

The emergence of the KSA as a main player in the business and trade world with significant investment potential has attracted global corporations and business. Moreover, Islam and the country's customs and traditions influence the business culture in the KSA, as they influence the whole aspects of life in the kingdom (Rice 2004). Hence, it is vital to highlight that Islamic culture is one of the key factors that underscore the success of multinational business operations in the KSA. According to Mababaya (2002), the most important factors that contribute to the success of MNCs in the Saudi market include having the right people, familiarity with the Saudi business and legal environment and knowledge of local culture, as well as sensitivity to cultural differences. This also includes the nature of advertising messages and appeals of these MNCs.

According to Luqmani et al. (2015), matching the advertising content with sociocultural norms and legal environment is crucial for the success of advertisements.

In line with the above, the structure of the following part is as follows. The first subsection focuses on MNCs in general and how should they understand the culture of the local/ foreign market in order to avoid cultural blunders and embarrassing mistakes that might result from misunderstandings. It also focuses on their strategies in operating in that market. The second subsection is about the regulations on advertising in the KSA, specifically with regard to advertising strategies and how they are adapted to suit the kingdom's fundamental cultural factors, such as religion, values and customs. The third subsection focuses on the case study: IKEA and its operations and strategy in the KSA.

2.4.1. *Standardization vs. Adaptation*

It is important for MNCs to study the local cultures where they are operating and understand the cultural differences of customers when entering foreign markets. This will help them to achieve a competitive advantage and success by having a strong position in such markets by avoiding cultural blunders and failed business. In fact, 'the problem of communicating to people in diverse cultures has been called one of the greatest challenges in marketing communications' (Mueller 1996). When MNCs misunderstand the local culture, many problems will arise because of employing the wrong marketing and advertisement strategy. As a consequence of the increasingly global market, MNCs are forced to either standardize or adapt their international marketing strategies and advertising campaigns to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

The literature on international marketing presents an ongoing debate between two opposing schools of thought over the extent of *standardization* or *adaptation*. This debate has been continuing for more than five decades (Nasir & Altinbasak 2009). Medina and Duffy (1998: 230) define standardization as '[t]he process of extending and effectively applying domestic target-market-dictated product standards – tangible and/or intangible attributes – to markets in foreign environments'. According to them, standardization is a process that involves the creation of a standard to be *applied* rather than to be *achieved* (ibid.). As for adaptation, Medina and Duffy (1998: 231) define it as '[t]he mandatory modification of domestic target-market-dictated product standards – tangible and/or intangible attributes – so as to make the product suitable to foreign environmental conditions'. According to them, there is a greater degree of involvement and flexibility on the part of multinational companies towards the local

environment. Hence, supporters of standardization believe that the ability to standardize is the best thing for an MNCs' survival. According to this view, companies should have a uniform product and marketing strategy throughout the world to minimize total costs and reflect a global image. Wang (1996: 89) states that the 'decades-long debate about standardization and adaptation has recently reached the general consensus that the real issue is not whether to standardize but rather to what degree of standardization'. Buzzell (1968) believes that all elements of the marketing mix, product, price, promotion and distribution, must be identical. According to Walters (1986), cost savings are the main advantage of standardization. Levitt's (1983) argument is the most notable one in favour of standardization, where he asserts that global companies will achieve long-term success by concentrating on what everyone wants rather than worrying about the details of what everyone thinks they might like.

On the other hand, supporters of adaptation argue for the need for international adaptation in marketing strategies (Cavusgil & Zou 1994). This means that MNCs must adjust their whole marketing plan in order to fit new market demands, suit local tastes, meet special market needs and the different requirements of consumers in specific foreign countries. Walters (1986) states that lack of expected benefits is the main reason for not adopting full-scale standardization.

Nevertheless, there is a third view that maintains that MNCs need a marketing strategy that integrates both standardization and adaptation (Quelch and Hoff 1986, Vrontis & Thrassou 2007). According to Keegan and Green (1999: 28), 'the essence of global marketing is finding the balance between a standardized (extension) approach to the marketing mix and a localized (adaptation) approach that is responsive to country or regional differences'. For example, a typical MNC like McDonalds in spite of offering a standardized product to the entire world adapts its products slightly for local markets, as it uses *chili sauce* on hamburgers in Mexico instead of ketchup and offers *Alpine burger* and *McBaguette* in France. According to Medina and Duffy (1998), as long as domestic environments are different from foreign ones, there will always be a need to accommodate foreign country requirements in product design. There will be more emphasis on adapting to the demands of the local environment. Such adaptation might result from varied ecological, cultural, legal and/or infrastructural characteristics that necessitate mandatory changes for MNCs that want to operate in these countries.

Hence, international companies see cultural differences as one of the most challenging issues in their business activities and as the greatest potential barrier to their success, profitability and even survival. This problem is complex and puzzling, because every single market has its own

economic and cultural features, which differ from other markets. Therefore, the first step for global companies to cope with this dilemma is to investigate the typical features of each target market and get to know their cultural characteristics. After examining a market, international corporations may have the ability to decide between either implementing their own standardized marketing policies or adapting their products and procedures based on the cultural particularities of foreign target markets. The solution is not only answered by selecting one of these two approaches. In some cases, it might be even smarter to mix these two policies and create a middle-road strategy, which respects some features from both approaches.

Moreover, inspecting cases broadly that are reported in the international marketing literature reveals that marketing problems derive from two main causes: macro-environmental factors and causes relating to firms' international business strategies (Dalgic and Heijblom 1996: 88). As for the former, some of the macro-environmental factors are related to misinformation. This includes the failure to understand the local culture, traditions, customs, legal issues, religion and values of host markets. The latter cause of marketing problems is due to the selection of wrong markets or wrong modes of entry to a foreign market, as well as having unrealistic marketing objectives or targeting the wrong groups of costumers and having unqualified partners (ibid.).

2.4.2. Advertising in KSA

An understanding of the regulations on advertising in the KSA is essential for foreign marketers interested in the region. This in turn presents an opportunity to study how Western-oriented business and advertising practices are modified to accommodate the kingdom's religious beliefs, traditions and life-styles. Therefore, the focus of this part is on the KSA's regulations regarding advertising and how marketing strategies employed in it differ from those in other countries, especially regarding the appearance of women in them, as these are relevant issues to the study. As aforementioned, the investigated case study is related to the marketing *adaptation* strategy that was implemented by IKEA in its marketing tool, i.e. the 2013 catalogue, so that it suits the KSA culturally. Entering the Saudi market is challenging because it possesses culture and business infrastructures that are different from most Westernized foreign investors, thereby providing a salient cause for the controversy that emerged from the deletion of female pictures.

Most of the literature on the factors influencing advertising regulations focus on the decisions of foreign practitioners to either standardize their advertising strategies or follow specific

regulations in their advertising messages that have an effect on content (Abdul Cader 2015; Luqmani *et al.* 2015). Nevertheless, there is a consensus about the areas which are more influential on advertising content. According to Luqmani *et al.* (2015: 61), these areas are: 'religion, socio-economic conditions, consumer orientation, ecological attitude, media infrastructure, and government control and regulatory structure'. All these factors operate in the KSA but two prevail: religion and government control. As for religion, in the KSA, it takes precedence over all other cultural considerations (Wright 1981; Abdul Cader 2015), and thus it should not be grouped with them (culture, here, refers solely to local customs and traditions), as is the common practice. According to Luqmani *et al.* (2015), from an advertising perspective, countries are grouped into three categories: (1) religious-dominant, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, (2) culture-dominant, with religion as only one among several factors influencing culture, such as Japan and Korea, and (3) nonpartisan, that is, culture and religion have a lesser influence, such as Sweden and Austria. According to Abdul Cader (2015), religion contributes to the difficulty of employing common marketing practices in the KSA as it is more challenging than culture. Therefore, a decision as to whether to standardize or customize advertising is affected by factors such as culture and religion (Harris 1994). Many studies have documented the influence and effect of religion on consumer behavior (Luqmani *et al.* 2015; Michell & Al-Mossawi 1999). Therefore, according to Abdul Cader (2015), the global standardization of advertising is not a feasible strategy in the KSA, as religion takes precedence over culture in the social fabric of the society regarding its influence on advertising in the country. Hence, the customization of advertising requires companies to understand the religion and culture that they want to operate in. That is, advertisements have to conform to religion and ethical codes in the KSA.

The second factor affecting advertising content is the Saudi government, which controls large sectors of the economy, ecology and media infrastructure. Public policies and developmental priorities have a vital effect on business activity and advertising (Luqmani *et al.* 2015). Moreover, according to Abdul Cader (2015: 61), factors affecting the content and regulation of advertising in Saudi Arabia can be grouped into three areas. First, the legal environment, which is derived from Shari'ah and to which all legislation is referred and must be compatible. In their study, Luqmani *et al.* (2015) establish the basis of Islam's influence on advertising in the KSA as they determine three Qur'anic messages that influence advertising messages:

1. Haraam: ¹⁷ such as alcohol, gambling and deceptive advertising. For example, alcoholic products are banned in the KSA and hence there are no local ads for them, and foreign print media are only allowed in the country after all advertisements for alcoholic beverages have been censored.
2. Islamic activities: respecting Islamic duties such as prayer times, fasting during Ramadan and caring for parents. For example, during the five prayer times, which last from 10 to 20 minutes, shops close and no commercial or official transactions are permitted until the end of prayer time. Also, ads should not depict children being disrespectful to parents and elders.
3. Being thankful for the blessings of God the Almighty. For example, it is a recommended practice for advertisers to introduce or link their messages with verses from the holy Qur'an. Such verses also may be used to legitimize operations or to assure that services are in accord with Islamic principles.

Second, the socio-economic environment affects the content of advertisements in the KSA. This includes cultural and economic factors, which affect consumer and company orientation. As the above shows, the most serious violations are ads that conflict with Islamic law. Nevertheless, following the rules does not guarantee approval. According to Luqmani et al. (2015), all types of ads may be censored for insensitivity to cultural norms and values. Hence, cultural adaptation of advertising messages among foreign entrants to the market is needed. Luqmani et al. (2015) assert that although there are no laws that specifically regulate the culture content of ads, insensitivity may destroy credibility. For example, a major tea company alienated Saudi customers after it aired a commercial that showed a Saudi host serving tea with his left hand (instead of his right hand) to one of his guests. Furthermore, for ads that do feature women, the women must abide by the proper dress code and this leaves MNCs the task of designing very creative marketing campaigns. Therefore, direct censorship exists in the print media, it does not stop with local newspapers, magazines and advertisements. Foreign newspapers and magazines also are subjected to censorship, especially in the case of content of a sexual nature, for example, nudity, pornography or homosexuality. Any offending articles that are imported into the country are 'excised or blackened or pages are glued together' (Green & Karolides 2005: 494). This ranges from critical news to news pictures in fashion magazines of bare legs and cleavages, couples kissing or embracing.

¹⁷ Haraam refers to anything that is prohibited in the holy Qur'an and would result in sin if used.

It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Information in the KSA is the main agent that is responsible for all Saudi media and other channels of information (Green & Karolidis 2005). In addition, Luqmani et al. (2015) confirm that there is no self-regulatory industry group in the KSA. Increasingly, however, companies are involved in self-compliance, that is, individual efforts to meet Saudi norms, which may eventually lead to self-regulation. Possible violations are monitored in two ways: formal and non-formal. The former refers to the involvement of the government through the Ministry of Commerce, which ensures that ads remain within legal bounds, and the Ministry of Information, which approves television commercials. As for the latter, less formal oversight is provided by a voluntary religious group called the Organization for the Prevention of Sins and Order of Good Deeds. It observes promotional materials for any violations of Islamic law. This organisation works closely with the Ministry of Interior, Information and Commerce in reporting violations and taking corrective action (Luqmani et al. 2015).

Regarding females' appearance, the Ministry of Information makes sure to remind advertising agencies and media owners that any pictures used in editorial material or magazines should be respectful and expose no more of a woman than her face, hands, neck and feet (Addington 2006). In fact, the restrictions on what can be used in advertising make agencies become more creative. According to Addington (2006), the challenge in the KSA is to be creative in trying to communicate messages while abiding by the rules. Khalil Minawi, managing director at Impact BBDO in Riyadh, further states that:

We are more careful. We are abiding by the rules definitely. We actually adapt quickly and we have to challenge ourselves on creativity and be more creative in delivering the message with a twist. The narrower it is the more challenging it is. It will challenge us more.
(Addington 2006)

Therefore, these rules force companies to sell their products mainly by promoting their usefulness. Hence, after understanding the legislation of the KSA regarding advertising, international brands should adapt their communication and campaigns in KSA in ways that conform to those restrictions and the culture when it comes to women's advertisements. This can be challenging when redesigning a foreign advertisement to fit Saudi Arabian norms. There are many ways for MNCs to adapt their advertising strategies in order to respect the laws of the KSA. Many of these companies have to edit or sometimes completely change their advertising campaigns in the KSA. Others use their creativity to overcome the barriers of censorship and

restrictions. If an advertisement does not violate the rules and laws of the KSA, then no modification is needed. For example, in order to succeed in adapting their advertisements, some international brands use creative self-censorship. They therefore keep the same advertisements but amend certain elements. Indeed, they *dress up* their models to be able to communicate internationally with similar campaigns. This is the case with the Dior *Christal* campaign. In fact, Dior communicated with an international model, Sharon Stone, and it did not want to change its communication campaign in the KSA (which would cost time and money) and therefore it preferred to dress up its model a little bit more, and so the cleavage of Sharon Stone and her arms are covered in an unremarkable way (see Appendix C).

Another example is the advertisement for Christian Lacroix's perfume, which is also amended from the original. This time, the same background and atmosphere are there, but only the product is highlighted. The woman is not there anymore, the emphasis is on the product itself. Changes to this advertisement are not excessive in nature but the adjustment is much more noticeable than for the previous example, due to the absence of a female figure (see Appendix C). Furthermore, with the advertisement for Marc Jacobs' perfume *Daisy*, the advert aimed at Saudi Arabia was modified and is different from the original. The naked woman was removed and only the fragrance is highlighted. The advertisement loses its sexual side to keep only the product. However, the spirit of the campaign is still the same, since the page setting does not change, and the background is still a natural setting (see Appendix C). Therefore, in the business context, choosing the correct marketing strategy and following the regulations set by the foreign market are crucial to succeed in that market, especially if it is intrinsically associated with religion, as is the case with the KSA.

Moreover, in the peak of the economic boom, Western-oriented ads were effective in adding credibility and status to products. Visual advertising was very common and standardised ads were appealing to Saudis as long as they did not conflict with religious and cultural values (Luqmani *et al.* 2015). Furthermore, the representation of various foreign manufacturers by local dealers also influenced the nature and content of advertising. Some dealers reproduced foreign ads, while others placed products in local settings, but with prominent displays of foreign brand names (*ibid.*).

Third, government priorities (affecting media infrastructure, ecology and regulatory change) influence the content of advertisements in the KSA as well. Luqmani *et al.* (2015: 67) state that '[t]he commitment of the government to certain causes has influenced the legal system, and

areas of particular relevance for advertising include consumer and ecological protection and domestication of business'. Consumer protection is the top priority of the government, especially in such sensitive areas as safety, health or possible deception. Accordingly, the protection of the consumer is also reflected in restrictions placed on advertisements for products which are perceived to be harmful to society. For example, cigarette promotion is banned by the Ministry of Health, although newspapers published abroad and containing cigarette ads are not restricted (ibid.).

Hence, the aforementioned discussion of the factors influencing advertising in the KSA sheds light on the fact that ads in the KSA should be designed to be compatible with religion, the socio-economic environment and government priorities. The following table, which is taken from Luqmani et al. (2015), shows some recommended adjustments to Western-oriented ads for a Saudi audience.

Elements of Advertising	Nature of Adaptation	Influencing Factor
Message length	Short copy	Cultural/Government restrictions on media
Message content	Emphasise visual aspects; add parental and family themes; avoid perceived product benefits and themes	Religious
Slogans	Use with caution	Religious
Sexual themes	Avoid	Religious
Pictorial backgrounds	Add landscapes/floral designs	Socio-economic
Language of message	Bilingual (English/Arabic)	Sociocultural/ Government priorities

Table 1: Adaptation of Western-oriented Ads in the KSA

In sum, understanding of cultural differences is often considered a prerequisite for successful international advertising, because consumers grow up in a particular culture and become aligned with that culture's value system, as well as beliefs and perception processes. The following parts focus on IKEA as an example of a MNC operating in the KSA.

2.5. The Case Study: IKEA

This section aims to provide some background information about Sweden, the country of origin of IKEA, focusing on some Swedish sociocultural aspects relating to gender, domestic roles and female representation. This is followed by some general information about the company itself, and in particular how it operates in Saudi Arabia.

2.5.1. The Swedish approach to Gender and Domestic Roles

Gender equality is a fundamental value shared by the Nordic countries,¹⁸ which are known for advanced gender equality policies that lead the international rankings for gender equality (Kosunen, et al., 2017). It means that women and men have equal power to shape society and their own lives and thus the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all domains of life (SOS 2018). Sweden, like the other Nordic Countries, has led the way in gender equality and is often considered a gender equality role model. Heinö (2009: 308) argues that gender equality is an ‘absolute Swedish national value’ and that Swedish self-understanding is often related to ‘conceptions of Sweden being the most gender-equal country in the world’. This is intensified by the Swedish media’s regular publishing of international ranking lists on different aspects of gender equality, with Sweden at the top. The overall objective of gender equality policy in Sweden is to guarantee that women have equal power to shape society and their own lives. Therefore, the Swedish government is working towards six interim goals: equal distribution of power and influence between men and women, economic equality between women and men, equal education, equal distribution of unpaid care and household work, equal health, and stopping men's violence against women (SOS 2018). The key Swedish principle for gender equality is that ‘everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to work and support themselves, to balance career and family life, and to live without fear of abuse or violence’ (Swedish Institute 2019). Gender equality and the prohibition of gender discrimination in Sweden are promoted through the Discrimination Act, which entered into force in 2009 and aims to prevent discrimination and guarantee equal rights and possibilities for everybody, regardless of their gender (Kosunen et al. 2017). Accordingly, gender equality does not only imply equal distribution between men and women in all domains of society, it is also about ‘qualitative aspects, ensuring that the knowledge and experience of both men and women are used to promote progress in all aspects of society’ (Swedish Institute 2019). This is underpinned by a strong ‘national equality discourse’ and the existence of many men who are engaged in

¹⁸ The Nordic countries are: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

traditional joint roles of parenting and domestic tasks, whereas women are seen in agentic roles (Sendén, et al. 2019). Thus, it is not surprising to find that four Nordic countries came out on top in two recent rankings of “best countries for women” in a 2018 survey by the World Economic Forum, while Sweden was No. 1 on a similar list published this year by U.S. News and World Report (Bohlen 2019).

In Sweden, ‘signs of gender equality are evident everywhere, from men taking their toddlers to preschool in pushchairs every morning to women rising [through] the ranks in traditionally male-dominated industries’ (The Local 2018). Swedish women and men must take the same responsibility for housework and have the possibility to provide and receive care on equal terms (SOS 2018). A longitudinal study of magazine advertising in Sweden and the United States conducted by Nowak (1990) illustrates this point clearly. In his examination of gender role portrayals, Nowak found that magazine advertising in Sweden did not reflect the increased percentage of women in the labour force, and regarding household work, he found an increase in men being portrayed in this type of activity. Moreover, in their study of role portrayals as presented in magazine advertising, Wiles et al. (1995) found that Sweden leads the USA and Netherlands in utilizing family roles and recreational roles for both genders. Another cross-cultural study by Wiles and Tjernlund (1991) examined men’s and women’s roles as depicted in magazine advertising in the US and Sweden. They found that US magazine advertisers placed women in decorative roles within the nonworking role category. In contrast, Swedish magazine advertisers were more likely to depict women in recreational and family roles.

Moreover, Sweden made sure that women and men are treated equally in the workplace and, hence, gender discrimination in the workplace has been illegal since 1980 (Swedish Institute, 2019). In terms of work-family balance, Sweden is well known for having a family policy that supports working parents with the same rights and obligations for both women and men. This in turn makes it easier for parents in Sweden to strike a good work-life balance (Swedish Institute 2019). Furthermore, in 1974, Sweden was the first country in the world ‘to replace gender-specific maternity leave with parental leave’, which enabled couples to take six months off work per child, with each parent allowed half of that time (Swedish Institute 2019). Every year, the international organisation World Economic Forum ranks more than 140 countries based on the gap between women and men according to four indicators: health, education, economy and politics. Since 2006, Sweden has never ranked lower than fourth (Swedish Institute 2019).

2.5.2. *Advertising in Sweden*

Gender-discriminatory advertising has been on the political agenda in the Nordic countries since the 1970s and '80s, the time when equality legislation was adopted, (WUNRN 2016; Kosunen et al. 2017). Sweden is the only Nordic country where there is no law against sexist advertising. Moreover, there is no government authority in Sweden responsible for 'supervising and disseminating information about the legislation' and there are no sanctions imposed on companies using sexist advertising (WUNRN 2016: 8). This matter was last raised in a government public inquiry presented in January 2008. The inquiry concluded that legislation banning sexist advertising was needed (ibid.). Legislation on gender-discriminatory advertising has been a highly controversial issue in Sweden. The main reason for not having such legislation has been the argument that 'prohibiting gender-discriminatory advertising would conflict with freedom of expression' (Kosunen et al. 2017: 82). Both gender equality and freedom of expression are cornerstones of Swedish society, and they are provided for in the Swedish Constitution, thus balancing these two fundamental rights is the problem. Since the 1970s, there has been an ongoing debate about how these two fundamental rights should be balanced in the context of advertising (ibid.).

It is worth mentioning that Sweden is one of the world's most advertising-dense countries. Thus, it is incongruous that there are no regulations against gender inequality in advertising, especially as gender equality has great value and is of general interest to the Swedish public. According to Kosunen et al. (2017), gender discrimination is currently allowed in advertising in Sweden, even though gender discrimination is prohibited in most areas of society. They argue that 'the freedom to communicate commercially in business is more appreciated than gender equality' (Kosunen et al. 2017: 100).

However, Sweden has chosen to encourage and protect gender equality in advertising by leaving the matter to a self-regulatory body that controls gender-discriminatory advertising, the *Advertising Ombudsman* (Kosunen et al. 2017). The Advertising Ombudsman considers advertising to be gender discriminatory if it satisfies the following criteria:

- (1) advertising portraying men or women as sex objects that can be considered offensive (objectifying);
- (2) advertising portraying men or women in a stereotypical way in terms of gender roles and where men or women are represented in a degrading way (stereotyping);
- and (3) advertising that is discriminating or degrading in any other way.

(Kosunen et al. 2017: 88)

As described in the above excerpt, any advertising portraying a male or female is offensive if it discriminates against them in any way. Therefore, totally removing females from an advertisement could be defined as a discriminatory act because exclusion based on gender is highly discriminatory and hence classifies as sexist in the Swedish context. Moreover, Sweden has recently banned sexist advertising in public spaces, giving the authorities the power to remove offending images of women 24 hours after they are posted (Orange 2018). Stockholm City Council has voted to ban adverts which ‘present women or men as simply sex objects’, ‘show a stereotypical image of gender roles’ or ‘in any other demeaning fashion are obviously sexually discriminatory’ (Orange 2018). This was in an attempt to prevent companies from putting up ads which are sexist or objectifying if they know they will be removed after 24 hours.

2.5.3. IKEA and Swedishness

IKEA is one of the world’s most ‘recognized and reproduced archives of national culture in the global marketplace ... [and it] helps construct, reproduce, and disseminate a narrative of Swedish exceptionalism worldwide’ (Lindqvist 2009: 43). It is ‘an icon of Sweden, commonly associated with its liberal lifestyle and values. These include, in particular, gender egalitarianism and equality’ (Miska & Pleskova 2016: 122). Moreover, IKEA is a place where values and traits identified as ‘distinctively Swedish’ are communicated to customers worldwide by its ‘Nordic-identified products, organized walking routes and nationalistic narrative’ (Lindqvist, 2009: 44). Therefore, it is not surprising to find that Swedishness is represented and used within IKEA. In fact, ‘Swedishness’ is an important part of IKEA’s corporate culture, which is described as ‘ethnocentric’ (Swedishness), while the company is diverse and international (Rask, et al. 2010). Moreover, Swedishness is a marketing strategy that can be linked to IKEA’s expansion in countries outside Scandinavia (Wigerfelt 2013). That is, even though IKEA is a global actor, it is still associated with its country of origin to the extent that IKEA/Sweden can sit alongside Coca Cola/USA and Sony/Japan (Garvey 2009). Moreover, the exterior of each IKEA store is painted in the blue and yellow colours of the Swedish flag. It has influenced how Sweden and Swedishness are understood in other countries (Wigerfelt 2013).

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that IKEA’s strong connection with the values of the country of origin is the main reason for the criticism directed at it by both international news reports and Swedish politicians (see 1.3.). The evidence reviewed here seems to suggest a pertinent role for IKEA’s strong connection with Swedish culture and the fact that

it is ranked as one of the most egalitarian countries in the world. It justifies the anger of Swedish people and their objection to the exclusion of females from IKEA's catalogue. This is because, in Sweden, IKEA is proudly regarded as something of a national symbol, where it functions as Sweden's face in the world and 'promotes the image of a country's culture, ideology and politics' (Kristoffersson 2014: 2). According to Gray (2014), IKEA was trying to address the cultural sensitivities of the Saudi market when it ended up tying itself in knots.

2.5.4. Company Background

IKEA insists on the particularity of its Swedishness from the name IKEA, in capitalized yellow letters against the blue building, which indicates the particularity of the company's patriarch and his geography. That is, IKEA is an acronym for Ingvar, Kamprad, Elmtaryd and Agunnaryd (Rothacher 2004). Ingvar Kamprad was the founder of IKEA, Elmtaryd was his farmhouse and Agunnaryd was his home county in Småland, Sweden. It is a retail furniture company that was established in 1943 in Sweden (Stolba 2009). At the age of 17, Kamprad started his own company by selling pens and cigarette lighters at reduced prices and then switched to furniture retailing. Today, IKEA is an international retailer, which actively operates on all inhabited continents. The first IKEA store outside Sweden opened in 1963 in Norway. Two years later the company opened its flagship store in Stockholm. In 1974, IKEA opened its first store in Germany. By the late 1970s, the company had expanded to Asia and Canada. IKEA opened its first store in the U.S. in 1985 and in Great Britain in 1987 (Inter IKEA Systems). In 1983, IKEA decided to create Inter IKEA Systems, the franchisor of the IKEA brand and concept, which licensed its intellectual capital to several different franchisees, and in return received an annual fee of 3% of their sales (Inter IKEA Systems 2012 annual report 8).

In the early 1980s, with IKEA stores in almost 20 countries and with a plan to keep expanding, Kamprad realised that in order to secure international expansion and ensure an aligned brand experience for customers, he needed to further develop and protect his unique and fast-growing business. An important challenge was to keep the concept consistent without limiting or hindering the innovative spirit. Therefore, Kamprad divided his empire into three entities: The IKEA Group, The Inter IKEA group and The IKANO Group (Rothacher 2004). The IKEA Group is owned by a Dutch Foundation, the INGKA Foundation, and it owns stores worldwide, except the franchises (ibid.). The Inter IKEA Group owns the concept of the IKEA brand, the group's intellectual property and the worldwide IKEA franchisor (ibid.). Today most IKEA stores operate under franchise agreements, which enables worldwide expansion. The IKANO Group is the only group that the Kamprad family owns, it controls all Kamprad-owned

companies that are not controlled by INGKA. The main aim behind having these companies was to ensure the survival of IKEA and save it from any possible succession disputes.

2.5.5. *Company Values*

From the start, Kamprad's vision was 'to create a better everyday life for the many people' (IKEA Group 2015: 3) by selling affordable, quality furniture to mass-market consumers around the world, at prices so low that many people would be able to afford them. He believed his company would succeed if it operated according to a particular set of values, '[t]he true IKEA spirit is still built on our enthusiasm, from our constant striving for renewal, from our cost consciousness, from our readiness to take responsibility and help, from our humbleness in approaching our task and on the simplicity of our way of doing things' (Kamprad 1976: 6).

In 2000, IKEA Group, the largest franchisee of Inter IKEA Systems, developed its code of conduct—the IKEA Way on Purchasing Products, Materials and Services (IWAY)—to specify minimum acceptable standards for working conditions and environmental standards at its manufacturing suppliers (IKEA Group 2012). In 2004, IKEA Group became a participant in the United Nations (UN) Global Compact, an initiative for companies to follow standards and best practices globally, by taking responsibility for universally upholding human rights standards (ibid.). IKEA Group also signed the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights launched in 2011 and the Children's Rights and Business Principles launched by UNICEF and Save the Children, and the UN Global Compact in 2012 (IKEA Group 2012: 73).

In addition, the owner of IKEA Group, the Stichting INGKA Foundation, funded the IKEA Foundation, a charity registered in the Netherlands, which donates money to organizations focused on protecting children from child labour and empowering girls and women. In February 2012, the IKEA Foundation donated €700,000 to the Half the Sky movement, a global group of NGOs using stories, videos and social media to support women's rights in developing countries (ibid.).

2.5.6. *IKEA Catalogue*

Kamprad, the founder of IKEA, sold his products through mail-order when he was no longer able to make individual sales due to his flourishing business (Rothacher 2004). Later, he saw the opportunity to sell furniture on a larger scale using a brochure (IKEA News), which he published and sent to customers. This was the 'precursor for his future IKEA catalogue'

(Rothacher 2004: 104). The IKEA catalogue that is known today was born and the first IKEA catalogue was published on 9 November 1951 (Inter Ikea Group 2012). The catalogue is IKEA's primary annual external marketing tool, which brings the brand closer to many people and presents a selection of named furniture/products available in local stores. Integral to its brand promise, the IKEA catalogue inspires its readers with functional and affordable ideas to create a better life for the many (IKEA 2014). Each year, IKEA prints over 200 million catalogues in 32 languages, which are launched simultaneously across 48 countries around the world. This means a catalogue is issued in the native language of each particular country (Blancke 2007). The IKEA Catalogue is full of IKEA's well-designed, low-priced home furnishing products to inspire, inform and make people's home life more beautiful and affordable. This annual catalogue is usually distributed in August/September of each year and it can be viewed in three ways: print, online or using the IKEA Catalogue app. The IKEA catalogue is one way through which the IKEA Concept comes to life.

The IKEA catalogue is distributed across the KSA throughout the months of September and October (IKEA 2014). It is available in Arabic and English in all IKEA stores in Saudi Arabia (ibid.). IKEA Saudi Arabia commenced door-to-door distribution of its catalogue in Jeddah, Makkah, Riyadh and the Eastern Province of the kingdom. Through the catalogue, 'IKEA Saudi Arabia reaches out to individuals and families in Jeddah, Riyadh and most of the cities in the Eastern Province, including Al Kharj and Al Qassim through order and collection points that have been recently opened' (Saudi Gazette 2017). It is distributed across the KSA throughout the months of September and October (IKEA 2014). It is available in Arabic and English in all IKEA stores in Saudi Arabia (ibid). IKEA Saudi Arabia has commenced door-to-door distribution of its catalogue in Jeddah, Makkah, Riyadh, the Eastern Province of the kingdom.

Before the 2013 catalogue edition in Saudi Arabia, the catalogues were devoid of most of the female pictures that were included in other non-Saudi editions. For example, when I compared the 2010 IKEA catalogue in Saudi Arabia with the USA edition of the same year, I found that women were not included in the Saudi edition. Starting from the 2014 edition of the IKEA catalogue, all female models were included in the catalogue as they appear in the rest of the editions worldwide. This shows that the criticism IKEA received against the exclusion of female images from the 2013 edition resulted in the depiction of females in the post 2013 edition until the present. This is also observed by Quito (2017) who asserts that erasing females from the catalogue was a common practice for IKEA Saudi Arabia, even prior to 2012. The 2011 catalogue has several instances where women disappeared (see Appendix D).

2.5.7. IKEA in the KSA: History and Operation

As of August 2015, there were 390 IKEA stores in 48 countries worldwide. As previously stated (see section 2.5.1), IKEA stores are operated under franchises from Inter IKEA Systems B.V. Of the eleven non-IKEA Group companies that owned and operated IKEA stores worldwide in 2012, four were in the Middle East region: one franchisee was responsible for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) market, one for Kuwait, one for Israel and one for Saudi Arabia, Ghassan Alsulaiman Furniture Co (GHASSANCO Subsidiaries) (Inter IKEA Systems 2012: 15).

Saudi Arabia was the first country in the Middle East in which IKEA sold its products. IKEA stores then opened in Kuwait (1984), Dubai (1991) and Israel (2001) (Ghassanco 2011). IKEA generally chose its new locations based on certain criteria, such as population density, market-growth potential and brand awareness. The first IKEA store in Saudi Arabia opened in January 1983 in Jeddah as a pilot project to test the market, long before the brand had any recognition within the local community (ibid.). In May 1993, a second IKEA Saudi store opened in Riyadh. In 2004 IKEA closed down its two existing stores and opened two IKEA ‘concept stores’ in the same cities, each measuring about 28,000 square metres. The third IKEA store in Saudi Arabia opened in November 2008 on the east coast in the city of Dhahran (21,799 square metres) (Ghassanco 2011).

2.5.8. IKEA’s Adaptation Strategy in the KSA

Inter IKEA Systems had a tradition of complying with local norms in the Middle East. It managed to co-exist harmoniously with the local culture whilst keeping its Scandinavian origin at heart. It was aware of the fact that Saudi Arabia banned items that are opposite to the principles of Islamic regulations. IKEA was aware that in Saudi Arabia there is no pork, alcoholic beverages, religious symbols other than Islam or pornography. For instance, IKEA’s world-renowned meatballs are Halal in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, Inter IKEA Systems also allocated rooms in its Saudi stores to be mosques, usually used for prayer several times a day. During prayer time, IKEA stores close their doors to new customers for around 25 minutes, while allowing customers in the store to continue shopping (while tills are closed), a practice prevalent among all other retail stores in Saudi Arabia.

On most occasions, Inter IKEA Systems kept the same model nomenclature in its Saudi stores as in its other stores globally. For example, it kept the Swedish product names instead of

tailoring them to the local Arabic language, as they were clearly seen in the catalogue and on price tags. However, part of IKEA's offering was also tailored to suit local demand. In a study conducted on IKEA in Saudi Arabia, Eskandar and Abdul Aal (2010) found that the company, for instance, developed special collections during the month of Ramadan. Moreover, its wine glasses were simply called 'glasses' or 'juice glasses', because alcohol is prohibited in the country. According to the IKEA range manager in Saudi Arabia, some product ranges are removed altogether from IKEA's Saudi offerings since they do not align with Saudi preferences: Christmas-themed products for instance are omitted from the product range (Eskandar & Abdul Aal 2010: 44, 46, 56).

IKEA targets the whole family with a focus on 'the housewife' in its outdoor advertisements (Eskandar & Abdul Aal 2010: 69). IKEA advertises in magazines and newspapers and on outdoor billboards. In its T.V. advertisements, and in line with local traditions, IKEA in SA displays women dressed in traditional local clothes and wearing headscarves, while men in its online ads wear the traditional long white robe (*thob*). In fact, women existed in the earlier Saudi versions of T.V. advertisements, as Eskandar and Abdul Aal (2010) state that they saw a TV advertisement from the marketing manager of IKEA Jeddah that shows a man wearing the local Saudi *thob*, driving a yellow beetle with his wife, who is dressed in a black *abaya*, a gown covering her body, going to shop at IKEA. This shows that women were visible, but they were dressed according to the traditions of their culture. In fact, like IKEA, many other Western companies also adapted their practices to the KSA market. For example, when the U.S. coffee company Starbucks opened coffee shops in Saudi Arabia in early 2011, it removed the long-haired mermaid from its logo, keeping only her crown (Fox 2011). Also, British retailer Marks & Spencer hired exclusively female sales staff for its female lingerie store in Saudi Arabia (Jones 2012). Spanish clothes brand Zara does not play music in its Saudi stores and also blurs the images of female models on video screens in its stores to abide by Saudi customs (Jones 2015). Industria del Diseño Textil SA, or Inditex, the parent of Spanish fashion retailer Zara, says the Saudi market is important enough to make it worth altering its stores and branding (*ibid.*).

According to Eskandar and Abdul Aal (2010), workers were separated by gender in IKEA stores. Most of the workers are men. There is one exception to this as women work in Småland, a place where visitors can leave their children to play while shopping. In 2010 IKEA store in Jeddah, Småland had six female co-workers who were working and taking care of customers' children. However, nowadays, IKEA store employees in Saudi Arabia are a mixture of males

and females. Women employees are found inside IKEA Saudi walls as they work in Småland as well as cashiers in the stores. In fact, because women are a crucial part of Saudi society, IKEA Saudi Arabia's restaurant layout is adapted to fit the conservative culture of Saudi Arabia; hence, in accordance with local customs, restaurants in Saudi IKEA stores are segregated, i.e. split into two areas with single and family sections. The former is for individual men only; the latter is for families, which include men, women and children.

2.6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter started with a review of the research context in terms of giving some background on the KSA as a country that adheres to Islam, and how this Islamic identity affects all aspects of life in it. Then, the chapter shed light on the business environment in KSA. Moreover, it emphasized that a key process of adaptation is having comprehensive information about foreign markets and applying such knowledge in developing a successful global strategy. Furthermore, the regulations on advertising in the KSA and Sweden were also discussed as they form the basis from which the current study can be applied to extend this knowledge in a Saudi/ IKEA context. Moreover, Swedish sociocultural aspects relating to gender, domestic roles, and female representation in advertisements were covered in order to shed light on the reasons behind the criticism that was directed towards KSA and IKEA because of excluding females from the catalogue. In the chapter that follows, I present the theoretical frameworks upon which the study is based on.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Frameworks

3.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical frameworks upon which the analyses that follow in Chapters 5–7 will be based. Keeping in mind the two research questions that guide the research, section (3.2) starts with a general introduction to the field of multimodality, including the main assumptions that underlie this approach, and the core concepts that inform multimodal analysis. Then, the discussion turns briefly to investigate the differences between some approaches to multimodality, with a focus on Kress and van Leeuwen's Social Semiotic Multimodal Analysis (henceforth SSMA) for the reading of visual images (1996, 2006), which is adopted in the analysis chapters (6–7). This is followed by a move to discuss the origins and characteristics of CDS as a problem-oriented research approach and its interdisciplinary nature (section 3.3). This is followed by an overview of the main CDS approaches that are related to the study. Then, the main theoretical concepts that are employed in this study are examined. This is followed by discussion of KhosraviNik's (2010) analytical framework. The last section concludes the chapter.

3.2. Multimodal Analysis

This study targets both (a) the Saudi edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue from a visual perspective, comparing it with the UK edition on a visual level, (b) and the images accompanying the subsequent news articles that emerged from the deletion of female pictures from the catalogue. Therefore, utilizing a multimodal approach that focuses on modes of communication other than language is significant for this study for interpreting images. Multimodal analysis, more generally called 'multimodality', is a rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field in linguistics and language-related fields of study (O'Halloran et al. 2014). It is a term that has often been used in place of social semiotics since its emergence in the mid-1990s (Ledin & Machin 2018). It goes beyond traditional linguistics to assert that meaning is created in texts by language as well visually (*ibid.*). Two intertwined theories of language have influenced multimodal research to a great extent: (1) social semiotics and (2) systemic functional linguistics (Jewitt 2009a). This influence is evident in the early works of Kress and van Leeuwen (1990, 1996) and O'Toole (1994), which drew heavily on the two aforementioned linguistic theories and are now considered seminal works in the field of multimodal research.

3.2.1. Theoretical Assumptions of Multimodality

According to Jewitt (2009a), there are a number of theoretical assumptions that underpin multimodality. First, language is part of a multimodal ensemble and hence meanings are made, distributed, received and interpreted through many communicative and representational modes besides language. That is, multimodality extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, gestures, actions, music and sound. Second, each mode in the multimodal ensemble has a different communicative task and modes are shaped ‘through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions’ (Jewitt 2009a: 15). Third, the interaction between modes is part of the production of meaning, i.e. people ‘orchestrate meaning’ through their selection of modes and therefore the interaction between modes is crucial for meaning-making. Finally, these meanings produced from multimodal resources are social. This means that these meanings are shaped by the ‘norms and rules operating at the moment of sign-making, influenced by the motivations and interests of a sign-maker in a specific social context’ (Jewitt 2009a: 15–16).

3.2.2. Core Concepts of Multimodality

It is important to shed light on some of the core concepts of multimodal analysis as they are often taken up in different ways by different approaches to multimodal research. The key concepts of multimodal analysis in this study can be listed as follows: mode, semiotic resources and metafunctions. To start with, according to Kress (2010: 79), a *mode* is ‘a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning’. Therefore, music, images and writing are all examples of modes used in representation and communication (ibid.). When modes combine to make meaning, such as the photographs and textual elements in a news article, the resulting representation is termed ‘multimodal’. In fact, the discourse of multimodal texts places emphasis on modes of representation that are not written to catch people’s attention. This means that both the visual element and the contexts surrounding a text should be considered to see how they contribute to the experience of the reader (van Leeuwen 2008). Moreover, according to Jewitt and Kress (2003: 1), a mode is ‘a regularised organised set of resources for meaning-making, including, image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech and sound-effect’. They further assert that modes are understood ‘to be the effect of the work of culture in shaping material into resources for representation’ (ibid.). Therefore, the IKEA catalogues examined in this study and the pictures accompanying the news reports are viewed as *multimodal texts*, as they combine written language, design elements and visual images. Hence, since viewers encounter visual images accompanied by written language, they need to

expand their repertoire of strategies that are necessary to make sense of the multimodal text they are encountering.

Next, *semiotic resources* are central to multimodality and refer to the connection between representational resources and what people do with them (Jewitt 2009a). They originated in the work of Halliday (1978: 192) who argued that the grammar of language is not a code, not a set of rules for producing correct sentences, but a ‘resource for making meanings’. The term ‘resource’ is in fact a key difference between social semiotics and Paris school structuralist semiotics where the key word is ‘code’ and not ‘resource’ (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002: 134). Based on this, van Leeuwen (2005: 3) defines semiotic resources as

...the actions and artefacts we use to communicate, whether they are produced physiologically – with our vocal apparatus; with the muscles we use to create facial expressions and gestures, etc. – or by mean of technologies – with pen, ink and paper; with computer hardware and software; with fabrics, scissors and swing machines, etc.

Van Leeuwen (2005) further states that these resources were traditionally called ‘signs’, which were the main concept of semiotics. However, the focus in social semiotics changed from ‘signs’ to the way people use semiotic resources both to produce communicative artefacts and to interpret them (van Leeuwen 2005). Moreover, signs are product of the ‘social process of sign-making’, as a sign-maker chooses a semiotic resource (a signifier) and brings it together with the meaning (the signified) that they want to express (Jewitt 2009a: 23). Therefore, meaning is a choice in this system and this choice is socially located and regulated. Moreover, Kress (2010) argues that language is dynamic because the relationship between the material form of the sign (the signifier) and its meaning (the signified) is not arbitrary but motivated by the sign-maker’s interest. In other words, people ‘use the resources that are available to them in the specific socio-cultural environments in which they act to create signs’ (Jewitt & Kress 2003: 10).

Another important concept in a multimodal analysis is that of *metafunctions*. The focus here is on ‘how language is shaped by how people use it – the social functions that the resources of language are put to’ (Jewitt 2009a: 24). This turn to the social is the basis of Halliday’s (1978) theory of the social function of language, where he recognizes three kinds of semiotic work that he calls ‘metafunctions’. Halliday saw the linguistic modes of speech and writing as semiotic resources that could be used to perform three social metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The ideational metafunction is related to ‘the function of creating

representation' (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002: 140). The inter-personal metafunction refers to 'the part language plays in creating interaction between writers and readers or speakers and listeners' (ibid.). It facilitates examining the way in which speakers interact with one another and how they negotiate the exchange of information. The textual metafunction 'brings together the individual bits of representation and interaction into the kind of wholes' that are recognized as specific kinds of text or communicative events (advertisements, interviews etc.) (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002: 140). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) extended this idea of metafunction to images, as will be seen in the coming section.

3.2.3. Multimodal Social Semiotic Approach

The focus of this part is on the SSMA which is the approach utilized in the analysis chapters (6–7). As will be seen shortly, the interest in the agentic role of the sign-maker is high in this approach. Therefore, it is an appropriate approach to visually analyse the 2013 IKEA catalogue to find out how IKEA's chosen semiotic resources take the culturally and socially constructed nature of gender in the KSA into consideration. Before proceeding to examine the SSMA, it is necessary to give a brief overview of the three main approaches within multimodality. The differences between them are due to 'the historical influences and directions that shaped them, as well as the degree of emphasis each gives to context, the internal relations within modes ... and the agentic work of the sign-maker' (Jewitt 2009b: 29). The first approach is the SSMA (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; Van Leeuwen 2005). Halliday's theories of social semiotics and systemic functional grammar provided the initial starting point for this approach. The attention here is on representation and communication, as well as a great interest in the sign-maker and the semiotic choices made. The second approach is Multimodal Discourse Analysis (O'Halloran 2004 2005). Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFL) provided the foundations and is the theoretical framework of this approach. The focus here is on 'the multimodal phenomenon, not the sign-maker' (Jewitt 2009b: 33). Lastly, the third approach is Multimodal Interactional Analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2003; Norris 2004). The work of Scollons on mediated discourse analysis and Goffman's work on interactional sociology provided the foundations of this approach, as well as the work of Kress and van Leeuwen on multimodality (2001). This approach explores how the physical and material characteristics of language give meaning to people's actions, i.e. what is going on in a given interaction. The attention here is on the social actor performing an action.

Turning now to SSMA, theorists like Hodge and Kress (1988) and Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) found that much visual analysis lacked the necessary toolkits to facilitate a systematic

description that leads to an accurate analysis. According to Ledin and Machin (2018: 24), Hodge and Kress (1988) ‘pioneered a social semiotic approach to visual communication’. They analysed objects as family photos in their social contexts ‘to point how they shape experience and action as part of different ideologies’ (ibid.). Later, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001) began to develop some concepts and tools that would allow analysts to describe the features of images as well as how these worked together. They published ‘what has been the main inspiration for the whole new field of multimodality, *Reading Images*’ (Ledin & Machin 2018: 24). Their toolkit enhances the ability to describe what analysts see more systematically. Kress states that ‘it is now impossible to make sense of texts ... without having a clear idea of what these other features might be contributing to the meaning of the text’ (2000: 337).

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) believed that a set of tools allowing the study of the visual choices would be as beneficial as the CDA tools that allow studying lexical and grammatical choices in language. They found that some principles of linguistic analysis found in the systemic functional theory of Halliday (1978) could be applied to visual communication as well. Thus, they extended Halliday’s theory of ‘speech functions’ to images and they coined the term ‘Social Semiotic Multimodal Analysis’, which is interested in showing how visual images, such as press photographs, work to create meaning. They explain that ‘Halliday’s model with its three functions is a starting point for [their] account of images [...] because it works well as a source for thinking about all modes of representation’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 20). Thus, SSMA is functionalist as it sees that visual resources’ function is to do certain kinds of semiotic work (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) adopted the theoretical notion of ‘metafunction’ from Halliday (1985) and they recognized three kinds of semiotic work as well, but they used a slightly different terminology in discussing the meaning of images in visual communication: representational instead of ideational; interactive instead of interpersonal; and compositional instead of textual.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), in every semiotic act there are two types of participants: interactive participants and represented participants. The former refers to those ‘in the act of communication – the participants who speak and listen or write and read, make images or view them’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 48). The latter refers to

...the participants who constitute the subject matter of the communication; that is, the people, places and things (including abstract ‘things’) represented in and by the speech or writing or image, the participants about whom or which we are speaking or writing or producing images.
(ibid.)

It is the participants represented that are relevant to this study and these will be the focus of analysis in Chapter Six. The next part of this chapter moves on to describe in greater detail the main features of the three aforementioned semiotic works as this will be beneficial in the analyses in Chapters 6–7.

3.2.3.1. Representational Meaning

Regarding representational meaning, it is conveyed by the (abstract or concrete) participants depicted in pictures (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) describe visual syntactic patterns in terms of their function of relating visual participants to each other in significant ways. According to them, there are two kinds of patterns: narrative and conceptual. Narrative representation relates participants in terms of ‘doing’ and ‘happening’, of unfolding actions, events or processes of change. Thus, images can represent the world narratively in terms of ‘doing’ and ‘happening’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). Moreover, narrative pictures are recognized by the presence of lines called ‘vectors’. A vector is a line, often diagonal, and it connects participants and expresses a dynamic ‘doing’ or ‘happening’ kind of relation (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002: 141). An example of a vector is an arrow connecting boxes in a diagram or the outstretched arms of a person in a picture. They may be formed by ‘bodies or limbs or tools ‘in action’’ (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 59). These vectors represent directions and because the participants are connected by these invisible lines, the viewer understands that the participants are interacting with each other. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 46) encapsulate what a vector is in the following ‘[w]hat in language is realized by words of the category ‘action verbs’ is visually realized by elements that can be formally defined as *vectors*’ (emphasis in original). In short, we can say that vectors are ‘visual verbs’.

Moreover, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 63) distinguish different narrative processes by the ‘types of vector and the number and kinds of the involved participants’. They state that there are two types of processes in narrative representation: action process and reactional process. Furthermore, there are two types of participants in a narrative process: actors and goals. The action process is when the actors are active participants in the image and from whom or which the vector emanates, or who themselves form the vector (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006). Goals are the participants ‘at whom the vector is directed’ and those that the actor is interacting with (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002: 143). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), this action process is also divided into further three subdivisions.

1. If there is one participant in the narrative process it can be considered an Actor and the resulting structure is called a *non-transactional* image. There is no goal in the image and the vector is not done or aimed at anyone or anything.
2. If a narrative visual process has an Actor and a Goal that are connected by a vector, which stems from the actor, it is a *transactional process*, representing an action taking place between two parties, i.e. something done by an Actor to a Goal.
3. If there is only a vector and a Goal in an image, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) call the action an *Event*. This means that something is happening to someone, but the viewer cannot see who or what makes it to happen. This means that there is an actor but it is either deleted or made anonymous, and this is exactly like passive agent deletion in the linguistic form of representation.

The second type of narrative process is the reactional process. It is a process in which the eyeline, such as a glance from one or more participants, forms a *vector* that connects those participants. In this case, the Actor becomes the 'Reactor' who does the looking. It must be a human or a human-like animal, i.e. 'a creature with visible eyes ... capable of facial expression' (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 67). The Goal becomes 'Phenomena', the participant at whom the Reactor is looking. The reactional process can be either transactional or non-transactional. In the former, an eyeline connects the Reactor and the Phenomena, so it is a *unidirectional transactional action*. It is a *bidirectional transactional action* if the participants are interacting with one another at the same time. In the latter, there is no Phenomena. A vector emanates from 'a participant, the Actor, but does not point at any other participant' (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 74). In other words, it is left to the viewer to imagine what the Reactor is looking at.

It is worth mentioning that the concepts discussed above regarding narrative visual analysis are important in helping the analyst to 'interrogate' a visual text. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2002: 143) rightly argue that these concepts 'help to frame questions such as who are playing the active roles of doing/or looking and who the passive roles of being acted upon and/or being looked at in visual texts with certain kinds of participants'. They show who are shown as acting or reacting. This also shows how males and females are represented, who is represented as passive or less active, etc.

Turning now to the conceptual process, for van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2002), images that do not contain vectors are 'conceptual'. There is no interaction between the elements in the picture. Conceptual images visually 'define', 'analyse' or 'classify' people, places and things (ibid.).

That is, they do not represent the participants as doing something, but rather as being something, meaning something, belonging to some category, or having certain characteristics or components that represent a static concept rather than engaging in action. Conceptual representation is divided into three subcategories to further define the way visuals define their participants. These are the classificational processes, the analytical processes and the symbolic processes. Due to word restrictions, a brief definition is provided for each process with a focus on the analytical process as it is the one related to the analysed data. To start with, classificational processes ‘relate participants to each other in terms of a ‘kind of’ relation, a taxonomy: at least one set of participants will play the role of *Subordinates* with respect to at least one other participant, the *Superordinate*’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 79). Symbolic processes are about ‘what a participant *means* or is’ (ibid.: 105). There are two participants: the *Carrier*, the participant whose meaning or identity is established in the relation, and the *Symbolic Attribute*, the participant which represents the meaning or identity itself (ibid.). For Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 89), in analytical processes, participants are related in a part-to-whole relationship where a ‘Carrier’ (the whole) is related to its ‘Possessive Attribute’ (the parts). There is no vector here and this process serves to identify a Carrier. There are different types of this process and I will focus on the type that is detected in the data, i.e. the catalogue. Some analytical processes are *unstructured*. This means that they exhibit a Possessive Attribute of the Carrier, but not the Carrier itself, they show the viewer ‘the parts but not the way these parts fit together to make up the whole’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 92). This type of process is described and analyzed in Chapter Six. The following figure sums up the two processes reviewed in this section.

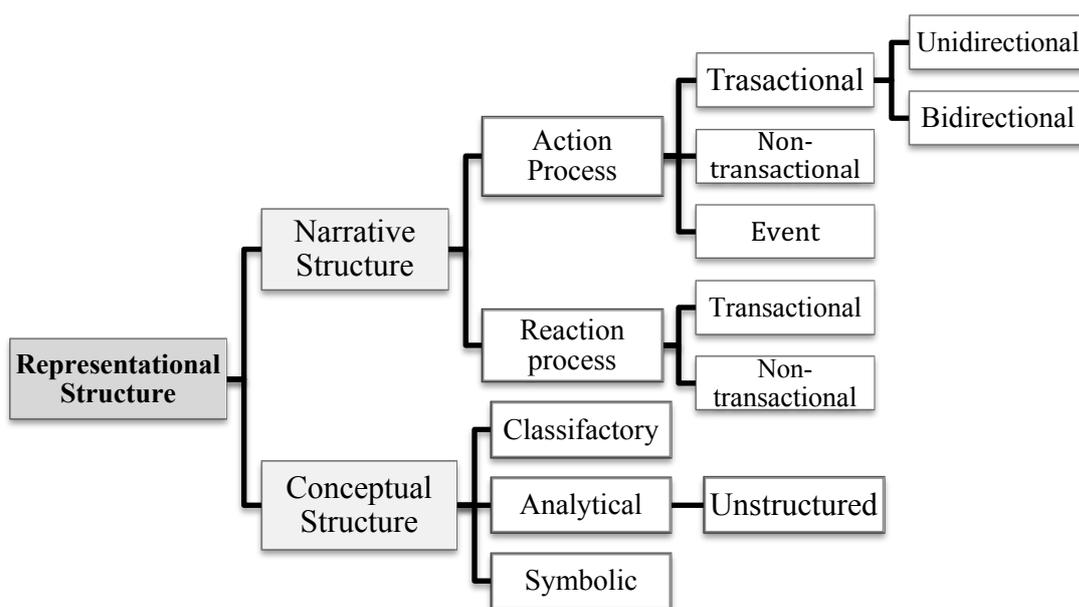


Figure 4. Main types of visual representational structure

3.2.3.2. Interactive Meaning

According to van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2002), images can create specific relations between the viewer and the world inside the picture. Therefore, they interact with the viewer and suggest how the viewer should react towards what is being represented. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) consider three key factors in looking at how the people depicted in images are related to the viewer and hence are key in the realization of the meanings in images: (a) distance: the social distance between depicted people and the viewer, (b) angle: the social relation between depicted people and the viewer, (c) and gaze: the social interaction between depicted people and the viewer. The following subdivisions elaborate further on these factors.

3.2.3.2.1. Social Distance

Images can bring people, places and things close to the viewer or far. Distance communicates interpersonal relationships and indicates closeness, in the sense that people keep their distance from strangers and stay close to their nearest (van Leeuwen 2008; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002; Ledin & Machin 2018). In pictures, this translates into the size of the frame of shots. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2002: 146) sum up the types of shots in the following:

...a close-up (head and shoulders or less) suggests an intimate/personal relationship; a medium shot (cutting off the human figure somewhere between the waist and the knee) suggests a social relationship; and a 'long shot' (showing the full figure, where just fitting in the frame or even more distant) suggests an impersonal relationship.

Therefore, distance becomes symbolic as people who are shown in a 'long shot' are shown as if they are strangers; while those shown in a 'close-up' are shown as if they are one of the *us* group.

3.2.3.2.2. Social Relation

In terms of social relation, the focus is on the angle from which a person is seen. This includes the vertical angle, whether the person is seen from above; and the horizontal angle, whether the person is seen from the front, the side or from somewhere in-between. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 139), these angles express two aspects of the social relation represented between the viewer and the people in the picture: 'power and involvement'. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) see the vertical angle as related to power differences, whereas the horizontal angle realizes symbolic involvement or detachment. For example, a frontal angle increases

audience identification and involvement with the represented participants (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002).

3.2.3.2.3. Social Interaction

With regard to social interaction, the focus here is on whether the people depicted are looking at the viewer or not. This feature of images influences viewer engagement (Ledin & Machin 2018). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out that images can either ‘offer’ or ‘demand’, just like linguistic representations. This is realized by the system of gaze (van Leeuwen 2005). This means that ‘[i]f a person (or animal) represented in an image looks at the viewer, the image realizes a ‘demand’: the gaze ... demands something from the viewer’ (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 122). Conversely, if such a look is not present, then the image is an ‘offer’, which Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 124) explain ‘offers the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case’. Van Leeuwen (2008: 140–141) believes that the picture in this case makes us look at the people depicted as ‘we would look at people who are not aware we are looking at them, as “voyeurs”, rather than interactants’. The interactive meaning can be briefly summarized in the following figure.

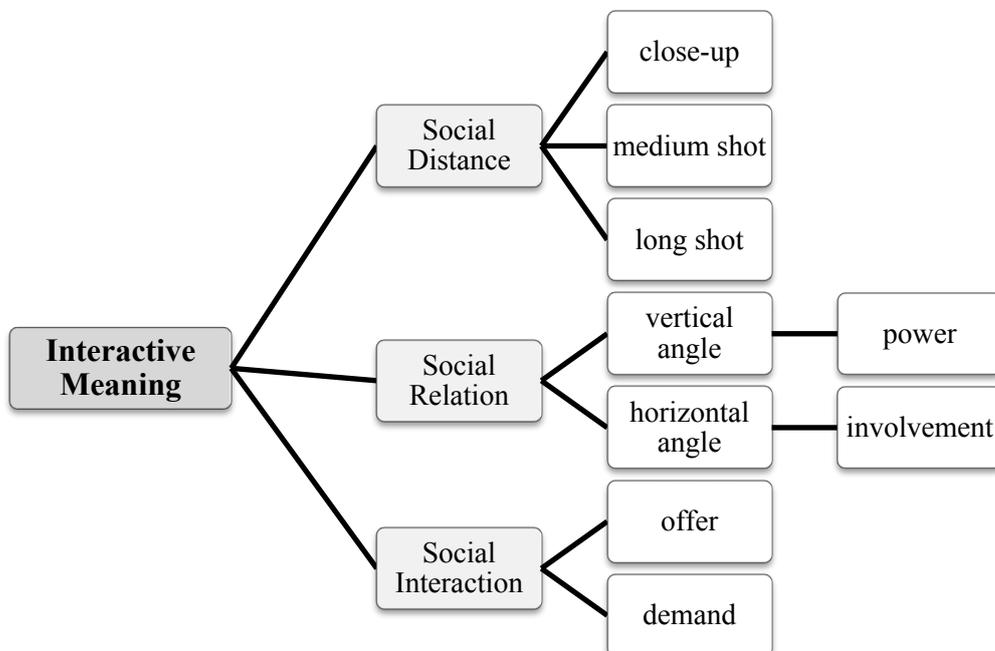


Figure 5. The structure of interactional meaning

3.2.3.3. *Compositional Meaning*

The compositional meaning relates the representational and interactive meanings of the image to each other (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006). This is realized through three interrelated systems. The first is *information value* which has to do with the placement of elements (participants and the syntagms that relate them to each other and to the viewer) in the composition (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006). The idea here is that the role of an element depends on where its zone in the image is: right or left, centre or the margin, top or bottom. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), left-right placement creates a ‘given-new’ structure. That is, ‘given’ means that something is presented as something the viewer already knows and is familiar with and therefore it is presented as commonsensical. On the other hand, they see that for something to be ‘new’ it is presented as something not yet known or not yet agreed upon by the viewer, hence as something to which the viewer must pay certain attention as this ‘new’ is problematic and contestable. With regard to top and bottom, if an element is placed at the top then it is presented as ‘ideal’ in Kress and van Leeuwen’s terms (2006: 186), and this means that it is represented as idealized or generalized and hence the most salient part, showing ‘what might be’; whereas what is placed at the bottom is the ‘real’ and represents more informative and practical information, showing ‘what is’. It is evident that there is a sense of contrast between the two. With regard to centrality, if a visual composition places one element in the middle and other elements around it, then the central element is the Centre and the other elements are Margins. The centre is presented as the nucleus of the information to which the margins are subservient.

The second system is *salience* and for Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) it indicates that some elements can be made more eye-catching than others. This is achieved through size, colour, tone, focus, perspective etc. The third system is *framing*, and this refers to the presence or absence of framing devices such as dividing lines and frame lines. It connects or disconnects elements of the image as it indicates whether each element is given a separate identity, or they are represented as belonging together (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002). The following figure summarizes compositional meaning.

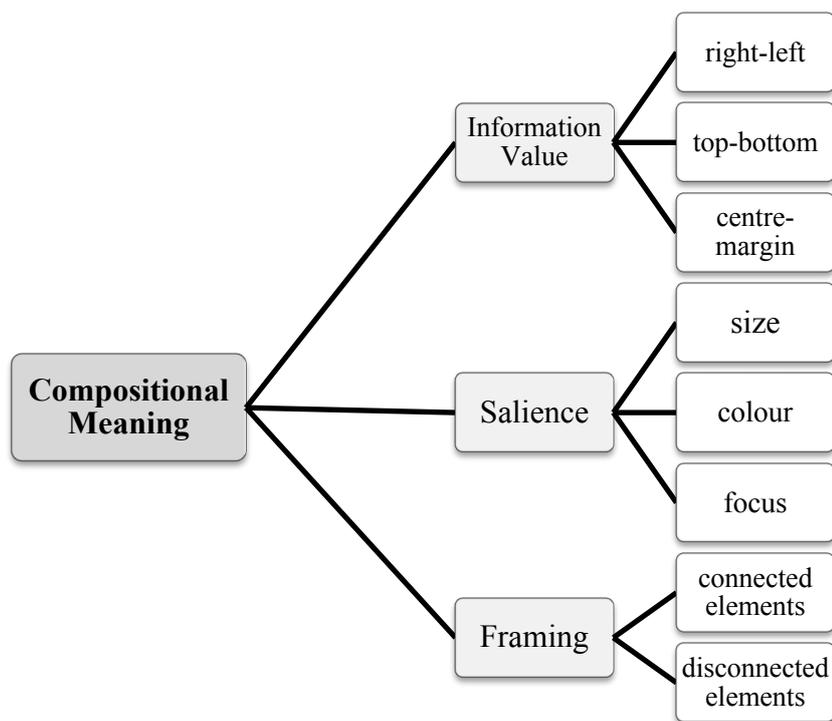


Figure 6. Structure of Compositional meaning

This section has provided an overview of multimodality and multimodal social semiotics. This will further the understanding of how and why various modes are incorporated in the meaning-making processes of multimodal texts and how the theories have evolved. Moreover, this section sheds light on the investigative tools that are necessary for the analysis of the various visual texts selected for this study (Chapters 6–7). In sum, social semiotics is an approach used in communication to understand how people converse in a variety of ways within a particular social setting. The emphasis is on ‘the sign-maker and their situated use of modal resources’ (Jewitt 2009b: 30). Thus, this study implements this approach to examine how pieces of information are interlinked, whether visual, verbal or both. Since MSSA focuses on the sign-maker, it is suitable for this study to determine whether various semiotic resources created by sign-makers (e.g. IKEA/ newspapers) have been utilized in conveying specific social and political messages to a specific target audience. The following part moves on to describe the second theoretical framework that the textual analysis in Chapter Seven is based on.

3.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

As previously stated in the introduction chapter, the second data set of this study is the newspaper reports that covered the exclusion issue that occurred in the IKEA catalogue. Therefore, to answer the second research question regarding the discursive strategies employed to represent the social actors involved in the female exclusion issue and to work out any existing macro-structure arguments at work, CDA is utilized to uncover the hidden meanings of the examined texts. Hence this part gives an overview of the origins of CDA, its characteristics and main approaches.

In the 1970s there was growing interest in relating the study of discourse to social events, and hence that period was characterized by the transformation of linguistics theories and methods in the social sciences from traditional linguistics to interactional linguistics and to critical linguistics (Rogers *et al.* 2005). This was due to the awareness of linguists in traditional linguistics about the necessity to address questions related to society. This awareness resulted in the publication of two seminal books, *Language and Control* by Roger Fowler, Robert Hodge, Gunter Kress and Tony Trew (1979) and *Language as Ideology* by Gunter Kress and Robert Hodge (1979). These books were highly influential as they influenced the way in which scholars approach questions of language and society. These scholars developed a critical approach for understanding the social meanings of texts through a methodology influenced by Halliday's (1975, 1978) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) (Rogers 2011: 13). This foundation rests on the theoretical premise that language and society are inextricably connected. SFL emphasized language as a meaning-making process and it informed Critical Linguistics (CL) and then CDA. It is a theory of language that focuses on the functions of language (what language does, and how it does it). This is opposed to other more structural approaches, which focus on the elements of language and their combinations (Rogers 2011). In the British tradition, SFL is considered 'the linguistic backbone' of CDA (*ibid.*).

The critical study of discourse can be traced back to language philosophers and social theorists such as Bakhtin (1981) and Foucault (1969, 1977), among others. Wodak and Meyer (2016: 19) assert that 'CDS emerged as a mixture of social and linguistic theories' and that 'there are a variety of theories ranging from theories on society and power in Michael Foucault's tradition, theories of cognition, and theories of functional grammar as well as individual concepts that are borrowed from larger theoretical traditions' (*ibid.*: 13). Similarly, Rogers (2011: 3) states that CDA is 'a broad framework that brings critical social theories into dialogue with theories of language to answer particular research questions'. Moreover, Fairclough's *Language and*

Power (1989) is considered to be the landmark publication for the emergence of the term Critical Discourse Analysis (Rogers *et al.* 2005; Blommaert 2005). This is because Fairclough explicitly analyzed powerful discourses in Britain and offered a combination of linguistic methods, objects of analysis and political commitment that have become the trademark of CDA.

CDA is influenced by a wide range of disciplines from different areas of study in the social sciences and humanities, e.g. linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, social psychology, cognitive science, literary studies and sociolinguistics, as well as applied linguistics and pragmatics. Because various approaches in media and cultural studies, the political sciences, sociology and communication studies have been using their own interpretations of critical discourse analysis, and because discourse has been used in analyses of other meaning-making systems such as visuals, music etc., such as the works of Machin (2007), the term Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)¹⁹ has recently been adopted by researchers (see for example the new edition of Wodak & Meyer 2016). This is in part a reaction to the term CDA, which was predominantly used in the 1990s and 2000s (Wodak & Meyer 2016). Wodak and Meyer (2016: 3) state that a shift in the name from CDA to CDS was first proposed by van Dijk, who believes that the term ‘analysis’ insinuates that researchers are only interested in analysis, with an absence of theory, even though this is not necessarily the case, as CDA is a combination of both theory and method. Van Dijk (2016: 63) further explains that he avoids the term CDA because, ‘it suggests that it is a *method* of discourse analysis and not a critical *perspective* or *attitude* in the field of discourse studies (DS)’ (emphasis in original). Therefore, he recommends using the term CDS for theories, methods, analyses and other practices of critical discourse analysts. In other words, CDS can be viewed as a way of conducting discourse analysis with an emphasis on certain concepts (e.g. power and ideology), but also in which multiple approaches interplay.

3.3.1. Characteristics of CDA

Having discussed the origins of CDA, I will now move on to an overview of its main characteristics that distinguish it. There is a key difference between discourse studies and CDS that lies in the descriptive nature of the former and the problem-oriented nature of the latter, along with its interdisciplinary approach. According to Bloor and Bloor (2007), the problems that are addressed by critical discourse analysts can be either macro issues that are of major

¹⁹ I will use CDS/CDA interchangeably, depending on their use in the sources that I consult.

international importance or micro issues that are small-scale ones concerning individuals. However, they assert that these macro and micro issues are interrelated and are both valid as subjects for analysis. Van Dijk (2001: 354) asserts that in everyday interaction and experience the macro and micro levels form one unified whole:

Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order. Power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro level of analysis. This means that CDA has to theoretically bridge the well-known “gap” between micro and macro approaches.

According to Wodak and Meyer (2016), CDS is not about investigating a linguistic unit by itself, but rather about analyzing, understanding and explaining social phenomena that are complex, and therefore in need of a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach. This is in line with KhosraviNik’s (2015: 65) statement that ‘CDA is theoretically founded on the analysis of meanings as they are formed in society rather than as isolated linguistic structures [and that] the object of study in CDA is social *meaning*, i.e. language in use or language in action’ (emphasis in original). For Blommaert (2005), CDA works at the intersection of language and social structure, and this is clear in the choices of topics and domains of analysis by CDA practitioners, such as racism (van Dijk 1987 1991); immigration (van Leeuwen & Wodak 1999; KhosraviNik 2009); advertisements and promotional culture (Fairclough 1989, 1995); media language (Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 1991); and gender, especially with regard to the representation of women in the media (Wodak 1997; Caldas-Coulthard 1993). Hence, the focus in CDS is not on describing only linguistic features but rather on the *why* and *how* these features are produced, and whether there are any possible ideological goals achieved (Machin & Mayr 2012). Bloor and Bloor (2007) assert that critical discourse analysts are interested in the way in which language and discourse are used to achieve social goals, rather than focusing on the way in which language and discourse works. In other words, what distinguishes CDS from other discourse analysis frameworks is that it is not just about analysing the text merely for the sake of analysis; it includes textual analysis as well as the social, historical and cognitive contexts that surround the creation/ consumption of a text. The following relational diagram clarifies this.

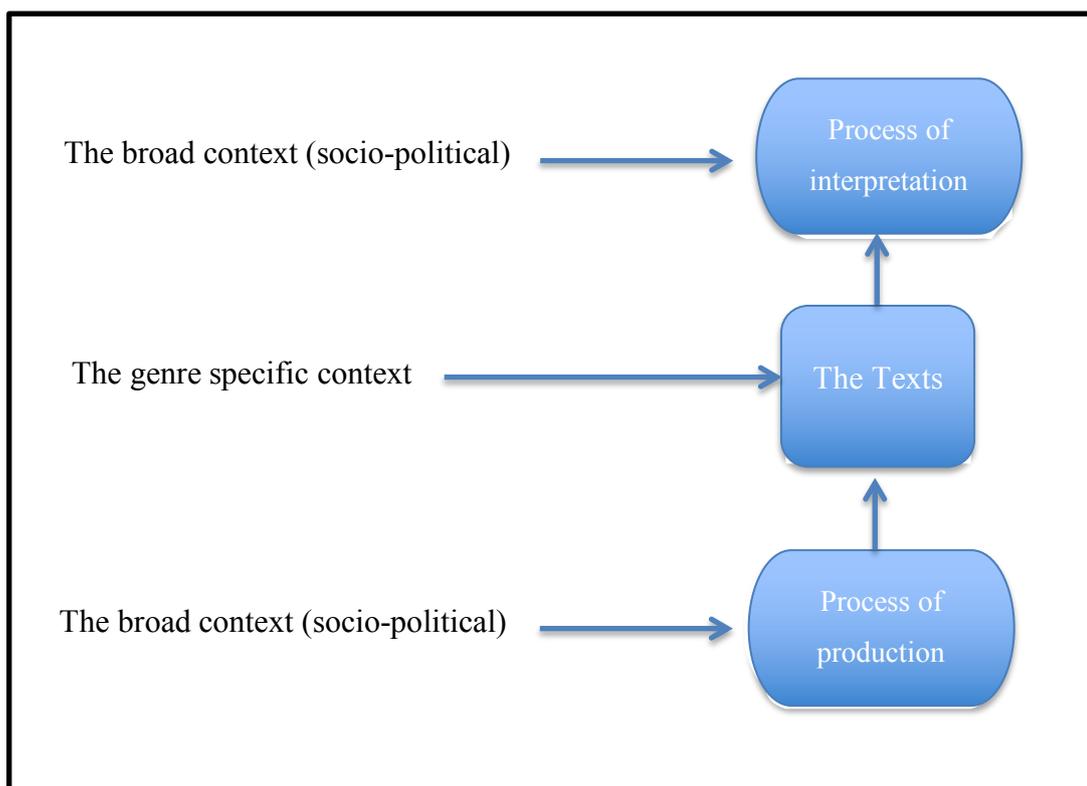


Figure 7: Creation and consumption of texts (source: KhosraviNik 2010)

As a consequence, a combination of these elements in an analysis offers a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse by situating it in its social and cultural context, and it further explains the indirect ideologies that are hidden in and between the lines. Thus, the analysis of discourse is to some extent the analysis of the society from which it emerges.

Further, CDS is interested in studying social groups and social structures. It encompasses manifold research approaches to tackle social issues such as unequal power relations and prejudice against outgroups and minorities. Wodak and Meyer (2016: 12) define CDS as:

...fundamentally interested in analysing hidden, opaque, and visible structures of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDS aim to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse).

It is noteworthy to emphasize that although CDS researchers view themselves as strongly grounded in theory, they neither provide a single theory nor have one specific methodology of research (Wodak & Meyer 2016). Studies in CDS are varied, derived from different theoretical backgrounds and oriented towards different data and methodologies. As indicated previously,

CDS emerged as a mixture of social and linguistic theories. Theory formation in CDA is highly influenced by the mediation between the social and the linguistic, and according to KhosraviNik (2015), this mediation problem is the cause of the difficulties of operationalizing theories within the research process. This is because it is difficult to analyze the interrelation between discourse and society, particularly if linguistic and sociological approaches are not combined. Nevertheless, the sociological, cultural and historical characteristics of a society explain a great deal about the mediation between discourse and society. In fact, one of CDS' major drawbacks is the fact that it is hard, theoretically speaking, to ground it, given its eclectic theories and methodologies. Notwithstanding, Rogers (2011) asserts that such hybridity is a strength of the field because the creative union of theories and methods generate new insights for understanding social problems and produces new research questions.

3.3.2. Approaches to CDS

Having discussed what CDA is, this section of the chapter briefly address influential critical approaches of CDA that are relevant to the study, such as those of Wodak (1995, 2001), van Dijk (1984, 1988, 2016) and van Leeuwen (1996). These approaches differ in terms of the theoretical foundations and the tools they use to analyze discourse, but the concepts of ideology, critique and power are present in all of them.

3.3.2.1. Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

Wodak places discourse into historical context (including society and politics) and develops CDA from a historical perspective in her discourse-historical analysis approach. The Discourse Historical Approach (henceforth DHA) (Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak 2001) was developed for an in-depth study that intended to trace, in detail, an anti-Semitic stereotyped image that emerged in public discourse during the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign (Reisigl and Wodak 2001). This approach can also be applied effectively to other contexts, including this study's context of news reports on the representation of different *in* and *out* social groups.

Furthermore, an important aspect of DHA is to bring together the textual and contextual levels of analysis. In the context of news reports, Fairclough (1995: 97) points out 'a key question (which requires historical research and research on the production process) is where the discourses of reporters come from'. This dimension of discourse is best addressed in the DHA to CDA, which emphasizes the importance of tracing the source of a particular discourse and how it re-manifests itself across different genres and media. The term *historical* occupies a

unique position in the DHA, since it denotes an attempt by this approach to ‘integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text’ (Wodak 1995:209). In other words, ‘historical’ here is not synonymous with ‘diachronic’, meaning that a discourse-historical study need not look at texts over a period of time; rather, it will analyze them in the specific historical moment of their production, distribution and reception. Accordingly, examining the historical context behind a given discourse in the process of explanation and interpretation, as well as addressing how that discourse may re-manifest itself across different genres and texts, is a feature that distinguishes this approach from other approaches within CDA.

In addition, DHA has a specific notion of context. In analyzing discourse, it addresses four levels of context surrounding the discourse: (1) the immediate language context (intra-textual), that is, the immediate co-text for a particular linguistic feature found in the text, (2) the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between texts, genres and discourses (i.e. the other texts and discourses that the text draws upon), (3) the extra-linguistic social situation, which may relate to the conditions of text production, distribution and reception, and finally, (4) the wider historical context of the discursive event, including the topic itself (socio-political context) (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 41). One of the perceived problems with CDA is that the analyst’s interpretation of a text is based on an ideological commitment rather than an analytical one (Schegloff 1997). However, exploring these four levels of context adequately can provide the analyst with a much stronger basis for the interpretive claims that they make.

3.3.2.2. *Socio-semantic (Social Actor) approach*

As explained earlier, the focus of this study is on the representation of social actors both linguistically and visually. That is, because of the multimodal data at hand, it is crucial to examine their presence and representation in the analyzed texts on two levels. Therefore, van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2008) framework for analyzing social actors both linguistically and visually is crucial for this study. The social actor network was developed by van Leeuwen (1996: 32) as a ‘sociosemantic inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented in discourse’. This network has the potential to include any semiotic resources. It is introduced as a ‘pan-semiotic’ system of the kind needed for conducting critical analysis of verbal-visual media texts (1996: 34), and a reduced and adapted network is developed for visual representation (2008). This approach is argued to be ‘the starting point of discourse analysis and representations of different social actors are accounted for by linking these socio-semantic categories with their linguistic realizations’ (KhosraviNik 2008:14). Moreover, van Leeuwen’s socio-semantic and

linguistic categories have laid the foundation for an explanatory framework within CDA studies, since it offers ‘a comprehensive inventory for the ways in which people can be classified and the ideological effects that such classifications may have’ (Machin & Mayr 2012: 79).

In representing social actors, van Leeuwen (1996: 33) highlights a potential problem with the categorization of participants based on grammatical transitivity, stating that ‘there is no neat fit between sociological and linguistic categories’. The following example is provided to illustrate that a grammatical Actor may actually be a Participant who is sociologically a Patient:

- (1) People of Asian descent say they received a sudden cold-shoulder from neighbours and co-workers.
(ibid.)

In deconstructing this example, the ‘people of Asian descent’ referred to are, grammatically, Actors, but not Actors sociologically. Van Leeuwen’s point addresses a danger in CDA’s potential overreliance on functional linguistic categories for interpreting sociological meanings. His categorizations of social actors are hence based on sociological categories, although he provides a range of linguistic realizations for each case. Nevertheless, according to KhosraviNik (2010: 58), despite its immense value, by simply assuming that sociological relations are merely realized in language, van Leeuwen’s (1996) account downplays the role of language and communication in shaping social meanings as well as oversimplifying ‘various levels of interactivity between discourse and society and reduces the process to morpho-syntactic or intra-textual levels’.

With respect to the visual representation of social actors, van Leeuwen (2008) adapts the framework for analyzing social actors to the domain of visual communication and applies it to the visual representation of others. Here, the visual-verbal link is useful for interpreting text-to-image relationships. For example, visual features besides linguistic ones might communicate much of the meaning in an advertisement. The same is true of a news text that is accompanied by a photograph where there are linguistic and visual parts to be analyzed. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 136), in the ‘division of labor’ between words and images, words provide the facts, the explanations, the things that need to be said in many words; while images provide interpretations, ideologically coloured angles, and they do so implicitly, by suggestion, by connotation. Nevertheless, these semiotic divisions of labour are contextually specific. That is,

either visualizations are the best way of explaining things, and words are supplements, or vice versa.

3.3.2.3. The Socio-Cognitive Approach

Van Dijk places particular emphasis on text linguistics and cognitive linguistics and concentrates on analyzing discourses in a social cognitive approach. According to van Dijk (2001), a theory of discourse must incorporate a cognitive dimension that accounts for the complexity of the links between discourse and society and incorporate the mental processes that are involved in news text production and comprehension. Hence, the Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA) is characterized by the interaction between discourse, cognition and society (van Dijk 2001: 97). Within the paradigm of SCA, discourse is meant as a communicative event, including conversational interaction and written text, as well as associated gestures, typographical layout, images and any other semiotic or multimedia dimensions of signification (ibid.). Cognition relates to both personal and social cognition, beliefs and goals, as well as evaluations and emotions, and any other mental or memory structures, representations or processes involved in discourse or interaction. Society is intended to include both local and microstructures of situated face-to-face interactions, as well as more global, societal and political structures that are variously defined in terms of groups, group-relations (such as dominance and inequality), movements, institutions, organizations, social processes, political systems and more abstract properties of societies and cultures (van Dijk 2001: 97–98).

The SCA is helpful when examining genre-specific categories of newspapers discourses, which form the second data set of this study. Van Dijk (1988) provides a useful framework for describing the organization of news reports using news discourse categories. The focal point that attracts the attention of both discourse analysts and ordinary language users is meaning (i.e. what is the text about? what does it mean? and what implications does it have for language users?). In light of this, van Dijk (1991: 112) believes that the answer to such questions is given in ‘text semantics’, which formulates interpretation rules for words, sentences, paragraphs or whole discourse’. An important semantic notion that is used in describing *meaning* is called **proposition** and it is defined as ‘the conceptual meaning structure of a clause’ (ibid.).

3.4. KhosraviNik’s (2010) Analytical Framework

In view of all that has been mentioned so far regarding how CDA theories are sometimes difficult to operationalize due to their grand nature, it is worth focusing on KhosraviNik’s (2010) analytical framework. It is an attempt to propose an amalgamation of CDA analytical

categories, specifically with the aim of drawing attention to the general structure of CDA research. KhosraviNik (2010) has introduced a systematization of various micro/ macro levels and assembled a selection of CDA methodologies and linguistic categories that have been applied in various CDA studies on the representation of social groups. He subsequently proposes a three-level analytical framework to investigate the discursive representations of ‘in’ and ‘out’ social groups (Self and Other). This framework primarily draws upon the analytical categories that are proposed by Wodak’s (2001) DHA to CDA (Reisigl and Wodak 2001) and macro-strategies of positive ‘self’-presentation and negative ‘other’ presentation (van Dijk 1987, 1991; Wodak and van Dijk 2006), as well as the representation of social actors (van Leeuwen 1996).

In KhosraviNik’s (2010: 63) three-level text analysis framework, the ‘distinct and yet interwoven’ levels are **social actors**, **social actions** and **argumentation**, which according to him ‘roughly correspond to [the] *referential*, *predicational* and *argumentative* strategies proposed by DHA’. On each level, analytical procedures are followed to address two main questions: the *what* and the *how* within these three levels of analysis. The ‘*what*’ question focuses on critically examining ‘what is actually present in the text’, as well as what is not included, while the ‘*how*’ question is concerned with scrutinizing ‘the qualities of operationalization of such presence through linguistic mechanisms/processes’ (ibid.). In this study, these two questions are considered to be the main devices that guide the procedures of the analysis in Chapter Seven. KhosraviNik (2010: 60) explains,

Such systemization should at one end start from a pure linguistic analysis of single texts, working upward to more macro categories. At the other end it needs to show how different levels of language use and discourse link together with abstract ideologies and corresponding context levels.

Moreover, KhosraviNik (2010: 56) justifies his proposed method by stating that ‘[p]art of the problem seems to lie in the lack of sufficient attention paid to [the] overall structure of a CDA study in terms of clarifying the links between ideologies, discourses, texts and intra-textual analysis’. He goes on to state, that ‘unclear accounts for the links among various levels of discourse analysis seem to have created a multitude of discursive strategies that can be overwhelming if not confusing’ (ibid.). Consequently, KhosraviNik’s (2010: 55) framework is an attempt to make the various levels of discourse analysis on the representation of social groups clearer by providing a detailed textual analysis of discourse topics, whilst

simultaneously attempting to show ‘how micro-level analytical categories are related to macro- the structure within various levels of context’.

Considering all of the above points, this present study adopts this proposed analytical framework for the analysis in Chapter Seven (i.e. media coverage of female exclusion in the 2013 IKEA catalogue). From the extensive research that has been conducted in this area, it is found that this framework presents the first attempt to conduct a ‘systematization’ that is not supposed to eliminate the eclecticism of CDS. Nevertheless, it is expected to provide systematized procedures that contribute towards minimizing the problem of confusion that a researcher may face when applying CDS critically in practice. One may add that, by adopting this framework within the study, it will test the effectiveness of the adopted systematization when analyzing the representation of a social group (i.e. Saudi Arabia) that is different from those usually represented and studied. This is because, most of the studies in CDS focus on different social groups, such as immigrants, asylum-seekers and minorities as out-groups and they have developed methods of analysis for the representation of Self and Other in discourse. As previously explained, KhosraviNik’s (2010) systematization is based on two devices, which are the two questions of *what?* and *how?* These are implemented on each level of the three-level analytical framework. Notably, these two devices interact with the context levels and the macro-structure in a network. Consequently, KhosraviNik’s (2010) framework is formed by integrating several analytical categories from different CDA approaches, mapping the interactions between the elements of micro/ macro levels, and implementing the two devices on each level. In the next subsections, this systematization is illustrated in terms of the three levels of analysis and the context levels of interaction.

3.4.1. Level One: Actors

The first level of analysis is that of **social actors**, wherein analysts focus on ‘the presence and qualities of presence of the social actors’ (KhosraviNik 2010: 64). Thus, on this level, the suggested procedures are concerned with:

- 1- Examining the social actors that are both present in the text and not present.
- 2- Explicating the reasons behind the presence and absence of social actors.
- 3- Investigating the qualities with regard to the presence of social actors.
- 4- Exploring the linguistic mechanisms that are employed in *perspectivizing* this presence.

Due to their impact on the qualities of referential strategies for social actors, the following analytical categories should be considered in the process of *perspectivization*: i) *naming* (how certain actors are called), ii) *functionalization* (referring to social actors by their function, i.e. ‘entrants’) and iii) *aggregation* (if social actors are referred to as a collective entity), along with the positioning of us/them categorization (KhosraviNik 2010). One should note that these analytical categories are not restricted to those highlighted above, there may be other linguistic mechanisms that impact on referential strategies. In turn, the flexibility of this framework makes it useful for all types of data.

3.4.2. *Level Two: Actions*

The second level of the analysis in KhosraviNik’s (2010) framework is that of social actions. This analysis focuses on ‘the qualities of social *actions*’ (KhosraviNik 2010: 64; emphasis in the original). Thus, the procedures on this level are concerned with the associations of actors/ actions in terms of:

- 1- Classifying the actions of a text, based upon the social actors that they are connected to. In other words, the actions of the text are to be assessed in terms of their attribution to actors, for both the in-group and out-group.
- 2- Signalizing the actions attributed, in contrast to the range of choices that are obtainable but have been left out.
- 3- Examining linguistic mechanisms/*perspectivization* (e.g. transitivity) to reveal the qualities of the actor-action associations that are realised through them.
- 4- Examining linguistic mechanisms/*perspectivization* processes to explore ‘*how* the actions are connected to the actors’ (emphasis in the original).
- 5- Examining linguistic mechanisms/*perspectivization* processes to reveal the ‘intra-textual or contextual effects’.

It is worth mentioning that the analysis on this level is conducted by exploring the operationalization of various mechanisms. I will focus on the *transitivity* mechanism within the text, as it is employed in the analysis in Chapter Seven. It is based on Halliday’s (1994) Systemic Functional Grammar, which is about the implicit ideological workings of verb choices and the functions they carry in meaning-making. Transitivity refers to the grammatical system that represents the ‘world of experience’ through the categorization of processes (i.e. verbs) and the ways in which they unfold through time and space (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 170). Richardson (2007: 54) further explains that the study of transitivity is concerned with ‘how actions are represented; what kinds of actions appear in a text, who does them and to whom

they are done' and makes it clear that 'transitivity forms the very heart of representation'. Additionally, according to Machin and Mayr (2012), when analyzing agency (who does what to whom) and action (what gets done), three aspects of meaning are the focus of analysis:

1. The **participants** involved in the processes, whose roles are usually realized by noun phrases. This includes the 'doers' of the process as well as the 'done to' (i.e. those who receive the action).
2. The **process** itself, which is expressed by verb phrases.
3. The **circumstances** associated with the process, usually expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrases.

Transitivity therefore describes the relationships between different participants and the roles that they play in the processes described in reporting. Such relationships are constructed by the text producer or speaker, and hence depend on a range of choices. This relates to choices in how to represent an event, as well as choices in the way participants or circumstances are represented. In light of this, it consequently justifies Richardson's (2007: 54) important remark, that 'every text which has been produced could have been produced differently'. This realization is central to the study of transitivity, as it enables an understanding of how the construction of a clause may reflect the speaker's/ writer's personal view. In other words, by situating the micro-aspects of language (lexicogrammar) in society, it is possible to establish the ideological implications of how and why messages are communicated in a certain way, and not in other ways.

Thus, within a transitivity analysis, participants in a clause and the process types employed should be identified. Halliday (2014) distinguishes process types in various ways, but it is generally acknowledged that there are three main types of processes in the English transitivity system: material, mental and relational. 'Material' processes refer to the processes of 'doing and happening', in which some entity – the *Actor* 'does' something, and sometimes to some another entity – the *Goal*. As for 'mental' processes, they construe reflection, sensation and awareness of the internal self, whereas 'relational' processes, identify and classify carriers and tokens (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:171). The following figure represents a summary of process types.



Figure 8: Types of process in English (source: Halliday 2014)

3.4.3. Level Three: Argumentation

The third level is **argumentation**, which primarily focuses on ‘the presence and qualities of argumentative strategies’ (KhosraviNik 2010: 65). Here, the arguments for or against social actors are critically analyzed. Hence, the steps in the analysis are to focus on the following:

- 1- Assess the arguments of the analysed text in terms of their being ‘for or against’ the social actors involved.
- 2- Evaluate the arguments of the text against the possible range of arguments that ‘have been kept out’.
- 3- Establish the reasons behind the strategic exclusion of some arguments.
- 4- Analyse the qualities of the existing arguments and examine how they relate to the social groups under investigation. That is, investigate the *perspectivization* processes that the arguments have undergone, so that they ‘cater for certain ideological manipulation’.

Two other devices are also implemented on this third level of analysis. These are in the form of two questions: *what* are the arguments for/against social actors? *How* are they put forward and related to the social groups investigated?

3.5. Theoretical Concepts

The concepts of *critique*, *discourse*, *power* and *ideology* are the focus of this section. These concepts are constitutive of every approach in CDS and are employed with different meanings. Hence, it is necessary to define them according to their relevance to this study. Understanding

these concepts is crucial as it leads to an understanding of how the data are analyzed here. Moreover, I define other concepts, which are also relevant to the investigated case study, such as Self and Other, and genre.

3.5.1. What is meant by the term Critical?

The term ‘critical’ may be understood in different ways. ‘Critical’ in CDS is often related to studying ‘power relations’ (Rogers 2011). CDS is critical by definition; and according to Titscher et al. (2000: 144), there are two strong critical impetuses come from two influences: the Frankfurt school and the East Anglia school. The concept of ‘critical’ is rooted in the Frankfurt school of Critical Theory and Jürgen Habermas (Wodak & Meyer 2016: 6). Wodak and Meyer (2016: 6) explain that being critical in this sense means advocating research that is based on a sound understanding of social theory and ‘oriented towards critiquing and changing society as a whole’, rather than just ‘understanding or explaining it’, i.e. its orientation is towards transformation and emancipation. Moreover, Wodak and Meyer (2016: 7) point out that *Critical Theory* falls short with regard to the analyst, since the position of the analyst is ‘rarely reflected in this understanding of critique’. CDS, however, does incorporate self-reflectivity by making the researcher’s position explicit. This principle has led to criticisms that CDS researchers favour interpretations that conform to their own ideological stance (Widdowson 1998: 144; 2000: 22). However, Van Leeuwen (2006: 293) contends that no form of research is immune to subjectivity and political motivations. He argues that ‘critical discourse analysts at least make their position explicit and feel they do not need to apologize for the critical stance of their work’.

In the meantime, in the context of language studies, the term ‘critical’ can be traced back and linked to ‘Critical Linguistics’ (CL) (Fowler et al. 1979; Kress and Hodge 1979), which had a significant influence on CDS, and whose scholars held that ‘the use of language could lead to a mystification of social events which a systemic analysis could elucidate’ (Wodak & Meyer 2016:7). In other words, the approach was mainly emphasizing demystifying language in texts, i.e. demystifying discourse and power relations underneath the discourse. According to Simpson and Mayr (2010), ‘critical’ means focusing on how and why certain linguistic features are produced rather than describing and detailing them. Thus, the term ‘critical’ means ‘unravelling or ‘denaturalizing’ ideologies expressed in discourse and revealing how power structures are constructed in and through discourse’ (Simpson & Mayr 2010: 51).

Within DHA, Wodak and Meyer (2016: 24) conceptualize ‘critical’ in terms of taking a critical stance, which means getting closer to the data, embedding the data in the social context, clarifying the political positioning of discourse participants, and focusing on self-reflection throughout. I adopt this conceptualization in this research. Therefore, ‘critique’ in DHA should make both the object under investigation and the analyst’s position very transparent and then theoretically try to justify why certain readings and interpretations of discursive events are more valid than others (Wodak & Meyer 2016: 25).

3.5.2. Discourse

Discourse is one of the main concepts that constitute CDS. It has been subject to a large number of usages and definitions within the social sciences. It might mean different things to different scholars according to their slightly different theoretical or methodological preferences. To start with, *discourse* is defined differently in terms of two main paradigms: structural and functional. Structurally, it is a particular unit of language (above the sentence), and functionally, a particular focus on ‘language use’ (Schiffrin 1994: 20). Differences in paradigms influence definitions of discourse. A classic definition based on the structuralist paradigm views discourse and defines it as ‘language above the sentence or above the clause’ (Stubbs 1983: 1). While a definition derived from the functionalist paradigm views discourse as ‘language use’ (Schiffrin 1994: 20). Another definition supporting this view comes from Brown and Yule (1983: 1), ‘the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions, which these forms are designed to serve human affairs’. Furthermore, Blommaert (2005: 2) treats discourse as a ‘meaningful symbolic behaviour’ and sees it as language in action. As for Machin & Mayr (2012: 20), discourse is ‘language in real contexts of use’. They sum up the meaning of discourse by stating that in CDA, the broader ideas communicated by a text are referred to as ‘discourses’ (ibid.).

Discourse within a CDS framework traces its linguistic roots to CL and SFL (Fowler et al. 1979; Kress & Hodge 1979). Linguists, within a functional approach to language, see that ‘language responds to the functions of language use and has different work (or functions) to perform’ (Rogers 2011: 5). Here, within this discipline, discourse is a system of statements, which ‘give expression to the meaning and values of an institution’ (Kress 1985: 6). CDS view language as a ‘social practice’ and consider the context of language use to be crucial (Wodak & Meyer 2016). A famous definition of discourse among CDS researchers is as follows:

CDS see discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and group of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people.
(Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 258)

Further, Reisigl and Wodak (2016: 27) provide the following characteristics for a definition of discourse:

... a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action; socially constituted and socially constitutive; related to a macro-topic; linked to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors who have different points of view.

Discourse for Fairclough (2003: 92) primarily refers to ‘spoken or written language use’, as well as including ‘semiotic practice in other semiotic modalities such as photography and non-verbal communication’. Moreover, discourse for him is more than just language use; it is seen as a type of ‘social practice’ (ibid.). His definition of *discourse* as practices that are both semiotic and social means they signify meaning and constitute modes of social action and representation. Following Foucault (1972), Fairclough views discourse as having a dialectical relationship with social identities, social relationships and systems of knowledge and beliefs (Fairclough 1992: 64). This means that discourse is socially determined and socially constitutive. A discourse is indexed through language and reflects opinions on a given topic resulting from a certain belief, ideology or world view. Such language may be identifiable either implicitly through common cultural knowledge, or more explicitly through specialized knowledge by social or academic observers to describe the language of, for example, the ‘Third Way’ political discourse of New Labour government (Fairclough 2000).

Following Fairclough, I use the term *discourse* to refer to a particular way of using language in order to negotiate power in social contexts. Discourse, in the generic sense, generates and draws on discourses, the specific, and countable forms of a ‘discourse’ whose most salient defining feature, according to Wodak (2016), is its macro-topic (e.g. the discourse of immigration). Thus, a discourse reflects a certain opinion (e.g. *I do not agree*) on a given topic (e.g. restrictions on gender equality) resulting from a certain stance (e.g. liberal) within a social domain (e.g.

politics/ culture). Thus, a CDS approach would view discourse as social practice or social action, besides it being language in use. In this view, discourse both reflects and constructs the social world and is referred to as constitutive, dialectical and dialogic.

3.5.3. *Ideology*

Ideology is an essential concern in CDS and hence it continues to be variously defined and studied by its practitioners. Kress and Hodge (1979: 6) define ideology as ‘a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view’. Bloor and Bloor (2007: 10) define ideology as ‘a set of beliefs or attitude shared by members of a particular social group’. They assert that most discourse used by members of a group is ideologically based. However, Bloor & Bloor (2007: 10) assert that ‘the beliefs or attitudes that stem from ideology may not always be held consciously by individuals; [t]hey can be so deeply ingrained in [their] thought patterns and language that [they] take them for granted as self-evident’. Once ideology becomes ‘a socially imbued unconscious attitude, it is much more difficult to question’ (ibid.).

Moreover, Wodak and Meyer (2016: 8) state that CDS is not interested in the explicit type of ideology, i.e. as a belief system, it is rather interested in the ‘more hidden and latent inherent in everyday-beliefs, which often appear disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies, thus attracting linguists’ attention’. They further stress dominant ideologies that appear to be very neutral and are related to certain unchallenged assumptions (Wodak and Meyer 2016). Therefore, by identifying the linguistic mechanisms or semantic categories through which ideology is constructed, CDA is able to make apparent the hidden methodology an author may employ within discourse to package representations of the world, whether consciously or unconsciously. Crucial to CDA is the view that the choice of one word over another within a discourse can encode an ideological package of information to reveal a speaker’s ideological stance towards a given topic. Through such analysis, CDA can form perceptive insights into the methodology used to construct ideology across texts.

Moreover, Fairclough’s definition of ideology demonstrates a close link between ideology, identity and discourse:

Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation. They may be enacted in ways of interaction (and therefore in genres) and inculcated in ways of being identities (and therefore styles). Analysis of texts [discourse] ... is an important aspect of ideological analysis and critique.

(Fairclough 2003: 218)

As far as van Dijk is concerned (1998b: 23), ‘the concept of ‘ideology’ is one of the most elusive notions in the social sciences’. For him, ideology is social, and he emphasizes this social dimension by stating that:

Ideologies are not merely sets of beliefs, but socially shared beliefs of groups. These beliefs are acquired, used and changed in social situations, and on the basis of the social interests of groups and social relations between groups in complex social structures.
(van Dijk 1998a: 135)

He further discusses the concept of *group ideologies*, which informs this study. According to van Dijk (1998b: 24), ‘the main social function of ideologies is the coordination of the social practices of group members for the effective realization of the goals of a social group, and the protection of its interests’. His concept of ideology refers to the social representations within a group, embodying between-group conflicts. He further states that when conflicting group interests occur, the typical content of group ideologies tends to be structured in a polarized way: ‘Self and Other, Us and Them ... We are Good and They are Bad’ (ibid.: 25). Such a polarized structure of group ideologies might result in polarized discourses as well, i.e. as the strategy of positive self-presentation of the in-group and negative other-presentation of the out-group. This polarized representation follows an abstract evaluative structure he calls the *ideological square*. According to this concept, a positive self or in-group is a result of emphasizing the good qualities or actions of in-group members and mitigating their bad ones, while emphasizing the bad properties of the out-group. In other words, one of the main strategies of *othering* is accentuating negative points about the other while minimizing positive ones about them.

In sum, van Dijk (1998a) defines ideology as follows:

Ideologies are representations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are, and what our relationships are with other groups, in particular our enemies or opponents, that is, those who oppose what we stand for, threaten our interests and prevent us from equal access to social resources and human rights (residence, citizenship, employment, housing, status and respect, and so on). In other words, an ideology is a self-serving schema for the representation of Us and Them as social groups. This means that ideologies probably have the format of a group schema, or at least the format of a group schema that reflects Our fundamental social, economic, political or cultural interests.
(van Dijk 1998a: 69)

Furthermore, ideology, as conceptualized by the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), is seen as a ‘worldview and a system composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes, values and evaluations, which is shared by members of a specific group’

(Reisigl & Wodak 2016: 25). According to the DHA, ideologies are reproduced in a range of social institutions by linguistic and some semiotic practices, and hence it aims to ‘deconstruct the hegemony of specific discourses by deciphering the ideologies that serve to establish, perpetuate or resist dominance’ (ibid.).

In a nutshell, bearing in mind the above review of the concept of ideology, we can conclude that, in this research, ideology is defined as a system of beliefs that are specific to a social group that have become firmly fixed in individuals’ ways of life in that particular society so that these beliefs are taken for granted as common sense. It is worth mentioning that as a concept, ideology, based on van Dijk’s approach, does not mean positive or negative here, but rather it means that beliefs tend to be implicit and embedded rather than explicit and overt. These implicit meanings are significant as they are ideological and hence must be understood in accordance with an appropriate social context with appropriate embedded assumptions. According to (van Dijk 1991: 176), implicitness can be used as a ‘strategic means to conceal controversial claims’, since it is more difficult to challenge implicit assertions than straightforward ones. Therefore, anything that is not explicit and requires some inferential work will need an individual to draw on his/her common sense (ideology) to make sense of a situation. According to Blackledge (2005: 9), understanding anything requires judging it against a background of assumptions and expectations and considering its coherence with the community. This is why many researchers in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis find it impossible to avoid ideology and they prefer to remain self-reflective and clear about their own assumptions as much as they can.

3.5.4. Power

A central point of CDS is the fact that discourse is an integral aspect of power and control, because discourse is socially consequential and thus entwined in social power (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Power is transmitted and practised through discourse. Therefore, it is possible to study ‘how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse’ (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 272). According to van Dijk (2001), power and specifically ‘the social power of groups and institutions’ is a central notion in critical work on discourse. Therefore, ‘power’ is of significance for this study, which critically approaches two groups in media discourse. Van Dijk defines power in terms of *control* and hence ‘groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups’ (Van Dijk 2001: 355). This ability presupposes privileged access to either some social resources, such as force, money, status and knowledge, or to various forms of public discourse and communication. Van

Dijk (1996) further stresses the *cognitive* dimension of control and how it might affect the *minds* of people. He states that:

...through special access to, and control over the means of public discourse and communication, dominant groups or institutions may influence the structures of text and talk in such a way that, as a result, the knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are – more or less indirectly – affected in the interest of the dominant group. (van Dijk 1996: 85)

Moreover, van Dijk (1996: 85) states that unless readers or listeners have access to alternative information, which oppose such persuasive messages, ‘the result of such manipulation may be the formation of preferred models of specific situations ... which may in turn be generalised to more general, preferred knowledge, attitudes or ideologies (e.g. about blacks)’.

Furthermore, power is discursively realized by both grammatical forms and by ‘a person’s control of the social occasion, by means of the genre of a text, or by the regulation of access to specific public spheres’ (Reisigl & Wodak 2016: 26). According to the DHA, language is not powerful on its own, rather it has power ‘via the use that powerful people make of it’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2016: 26). As a result, discursive practices can produce and reproduce unequal power relations between races, classes, genders and other majorities and minorities.

Having defined the main concepts that are constitutive of every approach in CDS, the final section of this chapter addressess other concepts relevant to this study, mainly those related to Othering and genre.

3.5.5. *SELF and OTHER / Othering*

Discourse operates through mediums that represent the social reality it aspires to bring about, and one key representational phenomenon to do that is ‘Othering’. CDS is interested in Self and Other discourse participants’ representation. It is applied to extract where ‘Othering’ appears in order to identify representational phenomena at work within texts. According to Coupland (2010: 241), the concept of ‘the other’ is used to explain how texts and practices situate individuals and groups, especially as ways of ‘deprecating’ or socially ‘excluding’ them. As for ‘representations’, Coupland (2010: 242) defines them as the ‘totality of semiotic means by which items and categories, individuals and social groups, are shaped and made intelligible’. He asserts that, in this sense, representing a class of items or people is more than ‘merely referring to them’. Moreover, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), representations are

ideological if they express social or cultural values and priorities. Machin and Mayr (2012) state that there is no neutral way to represent a person/ group in any language because each choice serves psychological, social and political purposes for the writer and reader that draws attention to a certain aspect of that person/ group.

It is worth mentioning that discursive choices that are linked to self-differentiation position the subject in relation to others who are being referred to or talked to. The ingroup vs outgroup representation becomes especially important if there is conflict (e.g. political, ethnic, cultural, religious etc.). The dynamics of such representation are captured by van Dijk's 'ideological square' (1998b: 33), which is set to present 'us' in a favourable light and 'them' unfavourably, and it consists of emphasizing 'our' good properties/ actions, while highlighting 'their' bad properties/ actions. Indeed, the terms 'us' and 'them', for insiders and outsiders, respectively, are very powerful linguistically because this dichotomy prompts the personalization of conflict, which in turn 'functions to promote straightforward feelings of identification, empathy or disapproval and to effect a metonymic simplification of complex historical and institutional processes' (Fowler 1991: 15). In other words, when describing ourselves as part of a group of people united in a 'we/us', while other people are constructed as fundamentally different, united in a 'they/them', we are using a powerful weapon that might serve to delegitimize others. And all too often, these distinctions are drawn along discrimination and power differences, like religion, gender, ethnicity, race, class and so on.

Moreover, for this study of how the 'other', i.e. Saudi Arabia, is constructed through discourse, it is useful to look at Baumann's theoretical approach where 'othering' takes place through three 'grammars' (2004: 18). He proposes a model of thinking about identity that highlights the fact that identities are simultaneously about the groups that you belong to and about the groups that you do not belong to, i.e. about sameness and difference. Baumann builds on the work of Edward Said (1978), E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1940) and Louis Dumont (1980) to articulate three 'grammars' of identity/ alterity that systematize the study of the processes of *selfing* and *othering*. He uses the term 'grammars' broadly, referring to the language and ideas that people and groups use to establish and make sense of self and other. These grammars are Orientalizing, segmentation and encompassment. The focus here is on Orientalizing, as it is relevant to the study, bearing in mind that the aim of this research is to see how stereotypes of Self and Other in terms of gender equality in Saudi Arabia may have been at work in the conduct of IKEA and the following coverage of the perceived problem; and to determine whether such coverage has systematically projected certain perspectives and, if so, with what assumptions, as well as

whether such coverage reinforces images of Saudi Muslim society as the cultural, political and moral 'Other' in opposition to the Self/West.

Baumann (2004) argues that 'othering' is the way in which 'collective or individual' identities are defined through the assertion of another's difference or 'alterity'. For Baumann, 'othering' is inextricably linked to the process of 'selfing'. Baumann's (2004: 20) first grammar, 'Orientalism', refers to Said's (1978) work, which has long been celebrated for its ground breaking analysis of the encounters between Western Orientalists and the Orient as a form of 'Othering'. As a founding text of post-colonial studies, *Orientalism* examines the development of Western depictions of the Orient from the eighteenth century to the present day. The Orient, in Western conceptions, is stereotypically inflated *Other* drastically different from the collective imagination of the civilized West. Said's argument was initially focused more on Europe and Islamic Culture, but now it has been applied to the general cultural dynamics between developed countries and the rest of the world. Said's (1978: 3) theory sees the Western discourse of orientalism as a 'corporate institution for dealing with the Orient' through representations of the Oriental other as ontologically and epistemologically distinct from those in the Occident. Said argues that the Europeans divided the world into two parts: the East and the West, or what they referred to as the Occident and the Orient, or as uncultured and cultured, respectively. This was an artificial boundary and existed solely on the basis of the concept pertaining to 'Them' and 'Us' or 'Theirs' and 'Ours'. Moreover, he focuses on how the East is represented by the West and believes that during the process of representation, the Orient was also remade (Said 1978).

Thus, Baumann's grammar also operates through binary representations that are both negative and positive, and 'constitutes Self and Other by negative mirror imaging: 'what is good in us is lacking in them,' but it also adds a subordinate reversal: 'What is lacking in us is (still) present in them' (Baumann & Gingrich 2004: x). Thus, this entails 'a possibility of desire for the other and even, sometimes, a potential for self-critical relativism' (ibid.). In sum, Orientalizing involves pointing out differences between your group and another group and it incorporates two seemingly disparate processes; seeing one's own group as superior, yet also romanticizing an aspect of the other group (ibid.).

3.5.6. Genre

Another significant concept that is related to this study is 'genre'. The term is commonly used to mean 'a type of text' (van Leeuwen 2005: 122). Each typical text has its own set of rules, prescriptions and traditions and, according to van Leeuwen (2005: 123), there are three kinds

of ‘typical characteristics’ that depict different genres, which are characteristics of *content*, *form* and *function*. In relation to this, content refers to the ‘what’ of the text and it is this content-oriented approach that is most common in literature and film studies when seeking to characterize genres. Nevertheless, content is very important in any kind of text. For instance, in social semiotics, content is studied under the heading of ‘discourse’ rather than under the heading of ‘genre’ (ibid.). As for the form-oriented approach in characterizing genres, texts are commonly characterized in relation to means of expression or the media they use. This approach is often associated with forms of expression in which representation is not foregrounded or considered important, such as in music (Van Leeuwen 2005). Finally, texts may be typical in terms of their function, or rather, in what they do. For example, newspapers have specific genres that reflect the information providing function of newspapers within society. Conversely, the genre of advertisements is defined by their function of selling products or services. In addition to this, combinations are also possible. For example, in the case of the IKEA catalogue under investigation, a combination is evident as it is defined on the basis of its function (i.e. advertising) as well as its medium (i.e. the catalogue itself). Thus, one may assert that texts are ‘typical’ when they have their own characteristics, which are adopted by the people who produce them (Van Leeuwen 2005: 123). Understanding the characteristics of texts is vital in assessing the discourse of texts in general. This is because it allows the analyst to make pertinent decisions in terms of how a text should be approached. Nonetheless, since this study investigates two specific types of genres (newspapers and advertisements), the next subsections will introduce and elaborate upon them in greater detail.

3.5.6.1. Advertisements as a genre

Since advertisements, for international business, are encountered as a data set within this study, a few remarks concerning the genre of these commercial advertisements are provided, in order to develop an understanding of this type of informational and persuasive text. This is achieved through systematically identifying the main features and structures in this type of functional text. This is followed by examining the relationship between gender-related values of society and gender stereotyping in advertising, as this long-debated issue is relevant to this study. That is, the analysis of advertisements sheds light on the socio-cultural sphere of dominant gender relations and gender inequities. Several definitions of advertisements have been proposed. According to Dyer (1982: 2), an advertisement refers to ‘drawing attention to something, or notifying or informing somebody of something’. A further definition of an advertisement is given by Goddard (1998: 10) who suggests that ‘advertising is not just about the commercial promotion of branded products, but can also encompass the idea of texts whose intention is to

enhance the image of an individual, group or organisation'. For Cook (2001: 219) one of the main features of advertisements is that they 'are multi-modal, and can use pictures, music and language, either singly or in combination, as the medium permits'. Moreover, Tan et al. (2012) distinguish between two types of advertisements: product advertisements and advocacy advertisements. The former usually work by trying to persuade people that they lack something in their lives or need a particular product or service. This is achieved by highlighting the specific benefits of a product or service. The latter, unlike product advertisements, do not sell products or services, instead they promote a certain idea or issue. That is, they champion values and humanitarian causes. For example, they may ask for donations to support certain issues. In this study, product advertisement is the relevant type as the IKEA catalogue aims to persuade the viewer of the benefits of its products, with the intention that they will buy it.

One of the distinguishing features of an advertisement is that it is a mixed genre; hence it draws upon both visual and verbal elements. According to Tan et al. (2012), verbal elements are components that are represented in the form of text. They usually include five parts. First, there is the *headline*, which is the largest and most visually prominent part of the text. The second part is the *slogan*, which is a memorable phrase, such as Nike's 'Just do it'. Third, there is the *product name*, which is the name of the advertised product. The fourth part is the *brand name*, which is the name of the advertised brand, and lastly, the fifth verbal element includes *the main text*, which is where the description of the product is developed and displayed. Moreover, the verbal part of advertisements also often includes a 'call to action', which is a command to do something concrete (i.e. "Buy now"), or a 'call and visit invitation' ("Visit our store", "Call 888 for more information") (Tan et al. 2012: 2). In the current study, for the purpose of analyzing the verbal elements of the IKA catalogue, the linguistic representation of gender will be examined in the Arabic edition to find out whether the catalogue reflects or influences cultural values which are apparent from the traditional roles of males and females in Saudi society.

As for the visual elements of advertisements, they are components that are represented in the form of visual images, such as photographs, drawings, graphics and so forth. These visual elements are selected by sign-makers from a list of distinctive choices about how to assemble and present information and ideas to their audience. For Tan et al. (2012), these may also include a number of parts, such as the following: the *main visual display*, which is the largest and most prominent visual image; *focus of attention*, which is the element that stands out most in the visual display; *logo*, which is a graphic representation of the company or organization;

and *icons/ symbols*, which represent an idea, a concept or an entity (e.g. a flag). In analyzing the visual elements of the IKEA catalogue, the focus is on the human participants represented, how are they depicted in the catalogue and with what gender roles they are associated.

It is important to note that when analyzing the content of advertisements, the process involves looking at both the verbal and visual aspects of an advertisement text, and to regard the pictorial representation as equally important as the written material.

As previously stated, the relationship between gender-related values of society and gender stereotyping in advertising has been the focus of a long debate. There are two opposing arguments: the ‘mirror’ versus the ‘mould’ argument (Landreth Grau & Zotos 2016). The former refers to the view that advertising reflects values that exist and are dominant in a certain society, and hence it acts as a magnified lens that offers a generalized picture of a social phenomenon (Pollay 1987). This view sees that the impact of advertisement is not significant as there are other socioeconomic and political influences that affect the value system of the society. Therefore, the way gender is represented in advertising will follow the dominant concepts of that society regarding gender roles (Zotos & Tsihla 2014). On the other hand, the ‘mould’ view sees advertising as ‘a reflection of society and its prevailing values’ (Pollay 1987). That is, advertising moulds and impacts the values of its target audience. This viewpoint is based on Cultivation theory’s assumption that people’s perception of social reality is shaped by media (Gerbner 1998). They start to incorporate the stereotypes presented by the media into their own system of beliefs and values and ideas (Zotos & Tsihla 2014). This leads them to start creating a new concept of reality that matches the advertised images (Landreth Grau & Zotos 2016). At the end of this process, human behaviour is formulated and shaped by these hybrid ideas to which advertisement contribute. Thus, advertisements’ impact is a crucial factor here. These two opposing concepts are beneficial for this study as they help in demystifying IKEA’s female deletion decision.

3.5.6.2. Newspaper as a genre

The genre of news is defined by ‘its function of providing information about recent events of public interest’ (Van Leeuwen 2005: 123). One may therefore assert that the main purpose of the media is to attract the public’s attention to their reports. However, in order to achieve this goal, newspapers, in particular, will attempt to attract the attention of their readers. Van Dijk (1988) argues that, ideologically, news implicitly promotes the dominant beliefs and opinions of elite groups in society. Therefore, it is argued that representation in newspaper discourse is not neutral; rather, it is a constructed practice. Fowler (1991) further states that events and ideas

are not transmitted in a neutral way as they might appear, which is due to their passing through a medium that has its own ideological ‘filters’. Thus, it is undeniable that most of the information reported by the media has to pass through a set of filters before getting the licence to be distributed and broadcast worldwide. Different institutions such as those associated with politics and education, social groupings, organizations and so on define such filters. As a result, the ‘representation’ of events often carries within it ‘the qualification of representation *from a specific ideological point of view*, that values, or ideology, differ systematically in different forms of expression, as for example in the characteristically different choices of words and grammatical phrasings found in the Press’ (Fowler 1991: 66, emphasis in original). According to Cotter (2010), ‘[t]he news stories we read and hear are the end-product of a series of decisions, practices, and values that are fundamental to the news community yet seldom acknowledged by academics’ (87). Furthermore, Kress and Hodge (1979: 15) state that ‘presenting anything in or through language involves selection’. For example, reporters may witness an event and then are faced with the choice of what to call it. Then, as they write their report, they need to further select the verbs that represent the actions as well as other attending circumstances. All these selections are crucial because they ‘set the limits within which any ensuing debate or thinking or reworking of ‘reality’ takes place’ (ibid.). Taking these points into account when analyzing the news is valuable, particularly when it comes to examining the news articles that are under investigation in this study. This is because it highlights the necessity of questioning why certain attributes of the 2013 IKEA catalogue incident are reported and focused upon, and hence are at the forefront of media attention.

Newspapers exist to provide information to the public, even if it is not necessarily factually accurate; however, subjective decisions affect what information is considered ‘newsworthy’. Moreover, real events are subject to processes of selection; they may not essentially be newsworthy, but subsequently become ‘news’ only when they are selected for inclusion in news reports (Fowler 1991: 11). According to Cotter (2010: 9),

Newsworthiness is determined by a set of simple factors or “news values” that function as guidelines for decision-making at every step of news process. News values are one of the most important ideological factors in understanding the shape of news stories and the decisions of journalists.

Moreover, news values function as ‘guidelines for decision-making and are invoked, unconsciously or explicitly, at every step of the news process’ (Cotter 2010: 67). Newsworthiness is therefore determined by evaluating events in terms of their deviation from

the norm. That is, events are newsworthy if they are unexpected or unusual according to any community's values of normality (ibid.). Although there is no certain formula to determine newsworthiness, some agreed characteristics have been identified when determining what news is: 'it is unusual, timely, local or nearby, surprising, about change, conflict and people, has impact, evokes human interest, and conveys information' (Cotter 2010: 68). Therefore, newsworthiness plays a vital role in shedding light on the reasons for text production and hence, in the context of the current study, the reason for covering such a story is because it is regarded as unusual according to the Western community's values of normality. In turn, the stories compiled within a newspaper often reflect ideological community values of what is seen as normal and abnormal, and what is important and unimportant.

These community specific values determine where information is located within newspaper articles. For example, in van Dijk's *news schemata* that are structured according to a specific narrative pattern as mentioned before, the most important information is expressed first, demonstrating a top-down strategy that assigns a relevance structure to the text. This is in line with the structure of the 'inverted pyramid', which is regarded as the most common way to organize a news story (Aitchison 2007: 106). To elaborate, the essential details of a news story appear at the beginning of the article (top of the pyramid), while the less important details are found towards the end of the article (bottom of the pyramid). In such cases, headlines at the beginning of an article have an important effect on the reader's interpretation of the body of the article (Brown & Yule 1983). Similarly, the lead has an important function as it attracts the reader. Cotter (2010: 151) states, '[t]he lead encapsulates the story, highlighting or *fronting* what is most interesting, relevant, or new' (emphasis in original). Moreover, a key feature of the lead is that news values are embedded in it (ibid.). In light of this, the decision for what information to include in the lead is highly subjective as it depends on news practice values, as well as knowledge of the community for which the newspaper is designed; this decision is indicative of community-shared values and ideologies.

Accordingly, when newspapers belonging to two different communities are compared in terms of their reporting of the same news report, the differences between their reports may also suggest 'how newspapers with different audiences, identities, political commitments and hence editorial policies mediate the information they receive' (Richardson 2007: 106-7). In contrast, if newspapers belonging to different communities are compared in terms of their reporting on the same news report, such as the 2013 IKEA catalogue incident, and if there are similarities in their reports, this is indicative of a shared ideological stance regarding the event being reported.

Being aware of all these features and structures of news reporting is essential to understanding that what ends up in print is ideological.

A final point worth mentioning concerns the value-laden imagery that accompanies news editorials and reports. According to Tan *et al.* (2012), the visual elements of accompanying imagery comprise the main visual display and the focus of attention. The former refers to ‘the largest and most visually prominent visual image’ and the latter refers to ‘the element that stands out most in the visual image’ (Tan *et al.* 2012: 155). Moreover, there are verbal and visual elements in combination, as the news editorial or commentary may include one or more photographs, together with additional verbal elements such as: photo caption, photo attribution and photo dateline. The photo caption either ‘describes what is shown in the image, or explains how the photo editor wants the reader to interpret the image’ (*ibid.*: 156). Photo attribution refers to the source of the photo, whether it is an agency or an archive. The photo dateline refers to the place and time the photo was taken.

To conclude this section, the above information is crucial to understand the verbal-visual relationships in multimodal data. The main purpose is to develop a critical understanding and appreciation of how visual and verbal elements of an advertisement /news photo work together, for the purpose of generating meaning within a text, as well as how they can create an impact and achieve their respective purposes.

3.6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has reviewed the two key theoretical frameworks that the following analyses will be based on. It began by discussing multimodality and showed how several or all of the different semiotic modes (linguistic, language, visual, photographs etc.) could be intertwined to create a unified text or communicative event. It focused on the main assumptions that underlie it, as well as its core concepts. Then, the discussion turned to review the main approaches to multimodality, focusing on the SSMA approach that will be utilized in the analyses. Subsequently, the chapter attempted to provide a brief summary of the theoretical foundation of CDA and outlined the main theoretical concepts from CDA approaches that are relevant to the current study. The chapter also gave some background details on other relevant concepts, such as Othering and genre analysis. A general definition of genre was followed by a review of the two main data sources in this study, newspapers and advertisements. The chapter that follows moves on to consider the methods used in this study.

Chapter 4. Methodology and Procedures

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the multimodal and discourse analytical tools upon which the analyses in the following chapters will be based. It also relates to KhosraviNik's (2010) methodological framework, which is based upon the discussed CDA approaches. This will be adopted in the analysis of news reports in Chapter Seven. The chapter then moves on to review the rationale for data selection and the procedure for data sampling, which will cover both advertisements (the IKEA catalogue) and newspapers (those covering the deletion issue) on both verbal and visual levels. A brief account of the qualitative data analysis software chosen, MAXQDA, and how it is used, is also provided.

4.2. Visual Analytic Tools

In examining how images depict people in this study, van Leeuwen's (2008: 137) visual representation of social actors is adopted as an analytical tool in the analysis in Chapter Six. The analysis focuses on both representational and interactive meanings as I ask the following two questions: 'How are people depicted in the IKEA catalogue?' and 'How do those who are depicted relate to the viewer?' The following subsections provide further details on these questions.

4.2.1. Depicting People

In relation to representational meaning, i.e. depicting social actors in the IKEA catalogue, the focus is on investigating how people within a picture are represented in relation to visual discourse. That is, what choices does the 'language of images' give the reader/ viewer to depict people? According to van Leeuwen (2008), there are different ways of depicting people visually, focusing on two relating types: exclusion and roles. Exclusion refers to the possibility of not including specific people or kinds of people in representations of the groups in which they live and work, and hence to which they belong. Being aware of this type helps in the analysis as it shows that there is a symbolic form of social exclusion due to not acknowledging the existence of certain people who live among the rest. As for roles, according to van Leeuwen (2008), people in pictures may be depicted as involved in some action or not. Further to this, if people are involved, it concerns whether they are the doers of action (i.e. agents; or people to whom the action is done, i.e. patients).

4.2.2. The Image and the Viewer

In terms of analyzing interactional meaning, i.e. how social actors in the IKEA catalogue relate to the viewer, I will focus on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) three key factors that were mentioned in Chapter Three (see section 3.2.3.2): (a) distance, (b) angle (c) and gaze. The aim is to find out IKEA's strategy works in terms of relating social actors to the viewer and hence how that affects the exclusion that occurred.

4.2.2.1. Social Distance

As mentioned in Chapter Three, distance indicates closeness; and in pictures, people who are shown in a 'long shot' are shown as if they are strangers, while those shown in a 'close-up' are shown as if they are one of the *us* group. Bearing this in mind when examining the catalogue data, I will look at whether or not this factor affected the exclusion of females from the catalogue.

4.2.2.2. Social Relation

The focus here is on the angles from which social actors in the catalogue are seen, i.e. vertical and horizontal angle. I will look at whether a horizontal angle realizes symbolic involvement or detachment and accordingly whether or not the angle from which a picture is taken affected the exclusion of females from the catalogue.

4.2.2.3. Social Interaction

The focus here is on whether the people depicted are looking at the camera/ viewer or not. I will examine whether female social actors are represented in images looking at the viewer or not, and whether this affects their exclusion or not.

4.3. Discourse Analytic Tools: CDA Approaches

As previously highlighted, CDA is theoretically and methodologically diverse, which in turn 'equips it with elaborate, eclectic power' (KhosraviNik 2015: 62). Accordingly, the main challenge in CDA is the operationalization of theoretical concepts. In other words, it is crucial to understand how various approaches to CDS are able to 'translate their theoretical claims into instruments and methods of analysis' (Wodak & Meyer 2016: 14). Therefore, this part focuses on the discourse analytical tools that are based on different CDA approaches, and which are utilized to deconstruct the data in Chapter Seven. To start with, one of the main aspects of DHA

is that it identifies common discursive ‘strategies’ that are particularly useful for analyzing prejudiced discourses. Within the DHA framework, the term ‘strategy’ is described as ‘a more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political or linguistic goal’ (Wodak 2016: 33). Thus, strategies are discursive practices aimed at achieving a specific goal that may or may not be conscious. Since I am in the position of investigating the representation of a social group that is an *out*-group, then an approach that is designed to determine prejudiced utterances should be an important analytical tool in revealing any possible biased discourse in the coverage of this incident. These strategies rely on various linguistic devices that are used to achieve the most overarching goal of positive-self and negative-other presentation. According to Wodak (2016: 33), these are often used to construct an US vs THEM discourse and may include:

1. **Referential/Nomination** strategies (naming), which aim to construct a group of people as being part of the in-group, or the ‘other’. Richardson (2007) notes that the way that people are named in news discourse can have a significant impact on the way in which they are viewed. It is incumbent upon journalists to provide names of the people in the events they report, and this naming always involves choices. Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 47) further illustrate that choosing to describe an individual or group as one thing or another ‘can serve many different psychological, social or political purposes [...] on the side of the speakers or writers’.
2. **Mitigation and intensification** strategies, which aim to modify (intensify or mitigate) the illocutionary force,²⁰ and thus the epistemic status, of a proposition (topicalize or de-topicalize a certain point of view) and this is achieved by using (modal) particles (e.g. may, could), tag questions, subjunctives, hyperboles, indirect speech acts (e.g. question instead of assertion), verbs of saying, feeling, thinking etc
3. **Predication** strategies (attribution), which are aimed at labelling a group using linguistic devices that convey (stereotypical) positive/ negative attributes in the form of adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases etc. (e.g. illegal immigrants).
4. **Perspectivization** strategies (framing or discourse representation), which aim to express involvement in or distance from the speaker’s perspective. This is achieved by using deictics, direct or indirect speech, quotation marks, discourse markers or

²⁰ *Illocutionary* force refers to the *act* performed by an utterance such as to promise, request or insult. It refers to what a speech act is trying to do, e.g. to persuade. While *perlocutionary* force refers to the ‘consequential effects [of the act] upon feelings, thoughts, or actions’ in the interlocutor. It refers to the effect of a speech act, e.g. to convince (Austin 1962: 98–101; Van Leeuwen 2005: 119).

metaphors. It may also be achieved through *framing*, which refers to the way a situation is defined based on organizational principles and one's subjective experience of an event (Goffman 1974). For example, a football match could be framed as an episode of 'bad refereeing' by one team, or as a 'sound victory' by the other.

5. **Argumentation strategies** (topoi), which aim to justify a given position, whether positive or negative.

In light of the aforementioned strategies, their relevance will be demonstrated, particularly in relation to the texts under study in the media analysis part of the thesis (Chapter 7). At certain points during the analysis, it will be necessary to step outside the text for additional context, particularly with regard to any claims concerning the KSA and Islam. Such contextualization will also illustrate how the 'historical' aspect of this approach may complement the textual analysis. The historical context is important because the topic of discourse that will be analyzed in this study, which is a representation of the East, is not only complex, but also has a long, rich history. In sum, one may assert that the application of certain analytical tools and strategies from a 'historic' approach is the most appropriate choice when one is confronting apparent misinformation about Saudi Arabia and the ambiguity over IKEA's deletion of women from the Saudi version of their catalogue.

Many of the referential and predication strategies mentioned in the DHA are manifested in the work of van Leeuwen (1996) on the socio-semantic representation of social actors. In van Leeuwen's (1996) operationalization of analytical categories into 'in' and 'out' groups, the socio-semantic aspects are prioritized over linguistic realization. Here, meanings exist within the society in question, while language functions as a tool to carry the meanings and redefine them. Thus, the analysis should begin from 'social encapsulations, and then be linked to linguistic micro-mechanisms' (KhosraviNik 2010: 58), which subsequently aids in realizing such meanings. Moreover, according to van Leeuwen (1996: 67), a socio-semantic approach

...brings together what linguists tend to keep separate; it involves a number of distinct lexico-grammatical and discourse-level linguistic systems, transitivity, reference, and nominal groups ... and so on, because all these systems are involved in [the] realization of [the] representation of social actors.

When exploring out-group and in-group construction, the most obvious parameter is that of social actor representation, as this indicates who belongs to the in-group and out-group, what degree of individuality is accounted for, and in how much detail social actors are represented.

To help researchers to be more systematic when describing referential choices, van Leeuwen (1996) offers ‘a comprehensive inventory of the ways that we can classify people and the ideological effects that these classifications may have’ (Machin and Mayer 2012: 79). This includes certain categories, such as the following:

1. **Specification and genericisation**, which looks at whether participants are represented as specific individuals or a generic type;
2. **Aggregation**, which means that the participants are ‘quantified and treated as ‘statistics’’ (Machin & Mayr 2012: 83);
3. **Individualisation versus collectivisation**, which looks at whether participants are described as individuals or as part of a collectivity (Machin & Mayr 2012: 80);
4. **Inclusion/exclusion**, where exclusion is divided into two types: **suppression**, which stands for what is missing from a text, and **backgrounding**, which refers to what is mentioned somewhere in the text but has to be inferred in one or more places (Fairclough 2003).

Bearing in mind the genre-specific features of the news reports analyzed, it is important to utilize van Dijk’s (1988) news schema. According to Van Dijk (1988), topics in newspapers are organized by an abstract schema called a *superstructure*, which consists of conventional categories that specify the overall function of the topics of texts. News schemata are structured according to a specific narrative pattern that comprises the following aspects:

- **Summary**: headline and lead paragraph, in which themes and topics are realized.
- **Story**: situation consisting of main events and context.
- **Consequences**: final comments and conclusions that determine the ‘newsworthiness’ of events, depending on their severity.

These sections of a news story are sequenced in terms of ‘relevance’, that is, the most important information is expressed first. Such assignment of relevance or importance has ideological implications (van Dijk 1991), and thus the most important information is contained in the headline and lead paragraph.

According to van Dijk (1988: 248), headlines, ‘define the overall coherence or semantic unity of discourse, and also what information readers memorize best from a news report’. He elaborates upon this further, stating:

...the headline and the lead paragraph express the most important information of the cognitive model of journalists, that is, how they see and define the news event. Unless readers have different knowledge and beliefs, they will generally adopt these subjective media definitions of what is important information about an event. (ibid.).

It is important to note that the news schema discussed above only applies to proper news reports, and not to other newspaper genres, such as background articles, features, columns and editorials. While news reports have their own characteristic news schema, other news genres like editorials, which form some of the second data sets in this study, may also have their own typical schematic organization. From this perspective, an examination of editorials shows that they often have a persuasive function, and therefore they usually exhibit various kinds of argumentative structures (van Dijk 1991). According to van Dijk (1991: 121), more than many other kinds of schematic structure, ‘argumentation has an implicit dialogical principle, where the author uses arguments that may implicitly respond to possible objections, or counter-arguments, of a real or imaginary opponent, or simply of the reader’.

4.4. KhosraviNik’s (2010) Analytical Framework

As mentioned in Chapter Three, KhosraviNik (2010) has proposed a three-level analytical framework to investigate the discursive representations of ‘in’ and ‘out’ social groups. These levels are **social actors**, **social actions** and **argumentation**. On each level, two main questions are considered to be the main devices that guide the analysis in Chapter Seven. The ‘what’ question regarding what is/is not actually present in the text, and the ‘how’ question, which is concerned with examining the qualities of such presence through linguistic mechanisms. The following figures show how the two devices are implemented within each level of analysis.

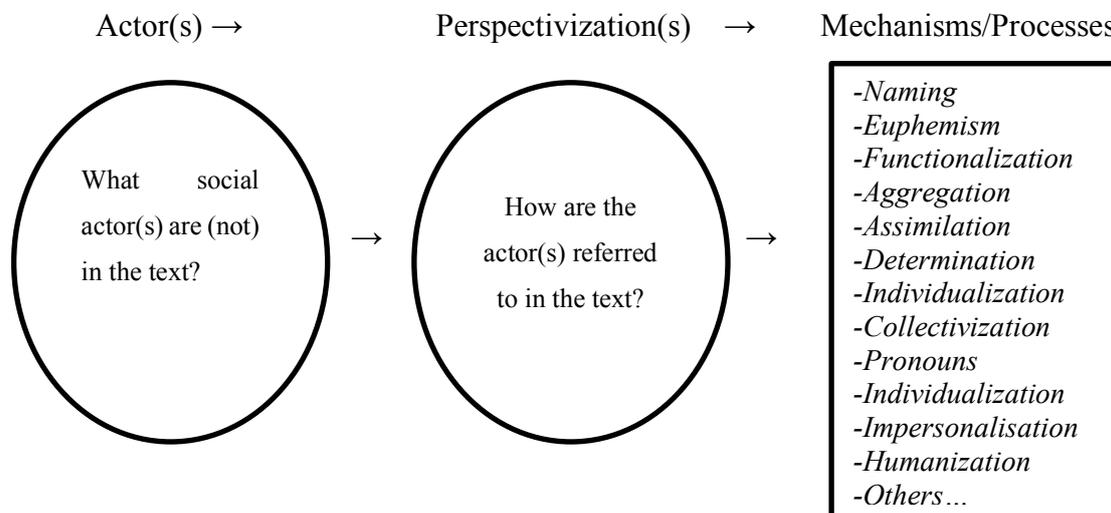


Figure 9: Actor descriptions analysis process (adapted from KhosraviNik 2010)

Figure (9) summarizes the first level of analysis in KhosraviNik's (2010: 65) proposed analytical framework. The mechanisms/processes that are to be examined within the text in the second level of analysis are illustrated in Figure (10), which has been adopted from KhosraviNik (2010:65).

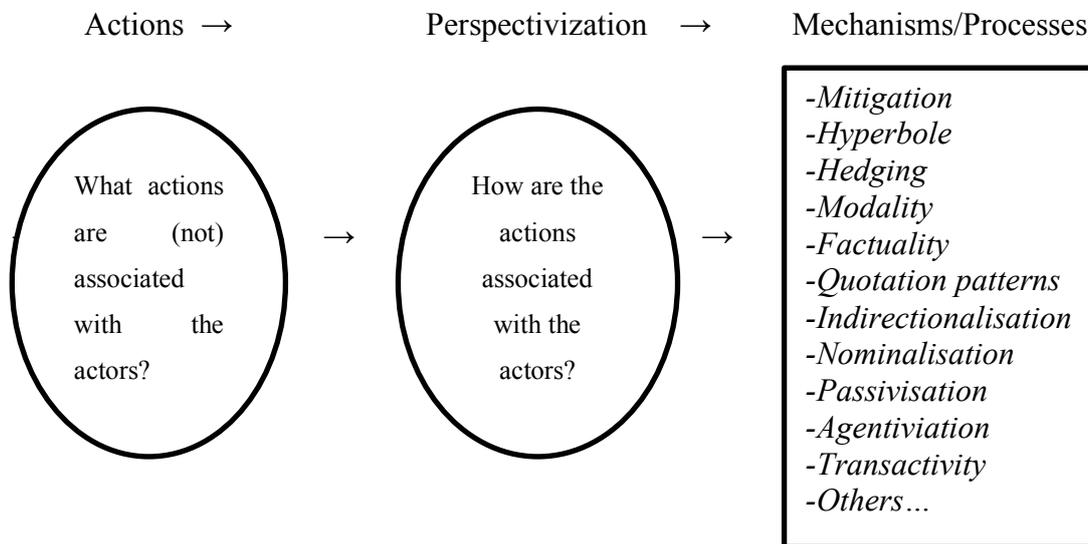


Figure 10: Action Attribution Analysis Process (source: KhosraviNik 2010)

In Figure (11), the mechanisms and processes that are to be examined in the text at the third level of analysis are summarized.

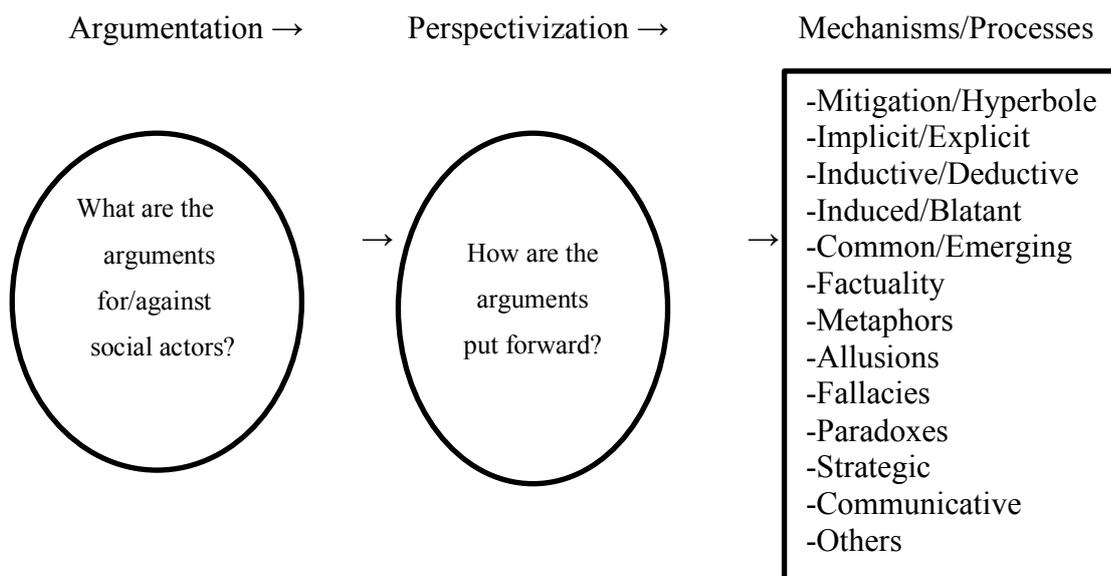


Figure 11: Argumentation Analysis Process (source: KhosraviNik 2010)

4.5. Data: The rationale for data selection

This section introduces and provides a justification for the two types of data that were collected within this study. The first data type is the actual 2013 IKEA catalogue²¹, and the second type consists of various articles from a loosely and broadly defined ‘Western’ printed press that covered the issues around the 2013 IKEA catalogue. The reason for collecting the first type of data is to answer the first research question: *how were females represented in the 2013 catalogue?* since the whole issue under investigation relates to the removal of female images from the catalogue. As for the rationale for collecting the second type of data, it is to answer the second research question: *how is Saudi Arabia represented in the news coverage of the 2013 IKEA catalogue, and does such representation reinforce images of Saudi Muslim society as the cultural, political and moral ‘other’ of the West?*

4.6. Data Sampling procedures

This part details the methods and procedures that were adhered to when collating the two main data sources for this study: the IKEA catalogue and newspaper articles. It further describes the use of the computer-assisted analytical tool MAXQDA, which conducted reliable statistical calculations.

4.6.1. Data (1): IKEA 2013 catalogue

As aforementioned in Chapter Two (2.3.3.3), the main channel for productive communication between IKEA and its customers is through their annual catalogue. In this study, three versions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue are used as the sources examined for the first data type (i.e. advertisements). They are the Saudi edition of the 2013 catalogue, in both English and Arabic, and the 2013 UK edition, which is selected for the purposes of comparison. Both editions target specific social audiences – the Saudi and UK peoples, respectively – and they are very similar in terms of content and products (i.e. products are given the same Scandinavian names). In light of this, two types of investigation are conducted: the first is verbal, the second is visual. What follows is a brief overview of how each of these types will be analyzed.

²¹ All the examined catalogues are available for public distribution as both hard and soft copies, and to the best of my knowledge, are free of copyright restrictions.

4.6.1.1. Verbal Analysis

In conducting a verbal analysis of the catalogue (Chapter Five), I examine how gender is constructed in Arabic by identifying the gender markers through which gender-related messages can be structured and communicated. These markers show whether the audiences addressed comprise males or females, or both. With regard to the verbal level, the *Arabic* version of the Saudi IKEA catalogue is used because it has its own mechanisms of linguistic gender representation. That is, Arabic is a language that makes gender distinctions, with specific grammatical categories that overtly express the feminine gender in contrast to the masculine gender.

4.6.1.2. Visual Analysis

In the visual analysis of the catalogue (Chapter Six), the UK and the Saudi English editions of the 2013 catalogue are compared. The reason for using the Saudi English version as opposed to the Arabic one for this comparison is because of the overall similarity in the layout and design of both catalogues, which makes it easier to compare. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2002: 153) use the term ‘visual directionality’ to refer to differences related to the direction of images. Arabic script is written from right to left, whereas English script is from left to right. This means that the orientation of figures in the UK edition is to the right, whereas in the Saudi edition in Arabic it is to the left. This directional difference in the scripts led to differences in the positions of images in the Saudi Arabic and UK editions. Since the Saudi English edition is in English script, the positions of images are more compatible. And the images that appear in both Saudi editions, Arabic and English, are well matched. Moreover, the pagination of the catalogue in both the Saudi English and UK editions is the same, with the sequence of numbering starting from the left, whereas in the Saudi Arabic edition it starts from the right.

Therefore, the concern here centres on the visual differences that are found between the Saudi English and UK versions in terms of the deletion of female pictures, which is the main issue that generated so much negative media attention and attitudes towards both i) Saudi Arabia, as a country that is the complete Other of the West, and ii) IKEA, as an organization that ‘belongs’ to the West, but does not always adhere to Western anti-gender discrimination practices, as claimed by the newspapers covering the issue.

4.6.2. Data (2): Newspapers

The second type of data, newspaper articles covering the female exclusion incident, were collected through a search on the Google News archive webpage. Google News is a web-based historical archive of major newspapers, magazines and news and legal archives provided by Google Inc. since 2002 (Weaver & Bimber 2008). Its database can be accessed in full-text mode, where users are able to search the news archive using a keyword query and a date range. In addition, the tool provides the ability to rank search results by relevance or date. Thus, this research tool provides users with a potential alternative to traditional archives, such as the LexisNexis service (the most widely used news archive in the social sciences), since reports and studies that have explored the use of this service have shed new light on some of the limitations of traditional archives (Carlson 2007; Murata 2007; Weaver & Bimber 2008). For example, according to Carlson (2007: 1014), the Google News search engine provides a ‘radically expanding access to diverse viewpoints on any issue’, in contrast to journalism’s traditional emphasis on creating filtered, ordered and prioritized news. Furthermore, Google results are unbiased, because a computer program determines the selection and placement of stories on its pages automatically, without any human editorial judgement intervening, and hence it ‘celebrates the lack of a human component in its news selection process’ (ibid.: 1019). As a result, they are better at providing a mixture of views and news reports with no regard for any sort of political or ideological standpoint, which is often the case in many newspapers. This subsequently enables any researcher to see how different news organizations are reporting the same story (ibid.: 1023).

Due to the advantages of utilizing Google News in this research, a decision was made to rely on the results from this search tool. An argument may arise over why this was chosen over the Nexis database; however, aside from what has already been mentioned, another important limitation has also been observed. This is similar to the sentiments expressed by Deacon (2007) and Weaver and Bimber (2008), who explain that the Nexis database typically offers text-only versions of original stories. This can subsequently have a negative effect on the visual dimension of news. Given the nature of this study, images are vital, as the texts that are under investigation need to communicate, not only through word choice, but also through non-linguistic features and elements (i.e. the images accompanying articles). That is, the catalogue pictures that were devoid of women are at the heart of this controversy and led to the emergence of the case under study from the outset. Hence, examining pictures and their effect on coverage of the incident is crucial for this study. This is one clear advantage that Google News has over

the Nexis database, as they may both provide the same news stories, but with the added presence of visual images and pictures.

Furthermore, the reason why this study is also concerned with images as part of the data is not only related to the fact that the IKEA incident caused problems due to the removal of female images, but also because there is emphasis in the literature on their crucial role from different perspectives. For example, according to Wilkins (1995: 51), newspaper photographs are prominent and popular sources of information that convey ‘institutionally produced messages that carry both “news” and “ideological” values’. Furthermore, Hall (1981: 234) explains that newspaper photographs have two levels of meaning. First, the news value of a photograph represents ‘the operational practices which allow editors ... to select, rank, classify and elaborate the photograph in terms of their ‘stock knowledge’ as to what constitutes news’. Accordingly, since news value is embodied in a photograph and the accompanying textual explanation, both photographs and textual descriptions are necessary in addressing this first level of meaning in this study. The second level of meaning is an ideological one that is governed by the newspaper’s policy, political orientation and tradition. On this second level, photographs signify dominant ideological values, as each published frame embodies a certain perspective. Thus, bearing in mind that news photographs do more than reflect events by focusing on images that propagate an ideological discourse, I intend to explore the ideologies underlying the projected images of the incident under investigation.

By utilizing the Google search facility, I have sought to acquire every English language news article written on the incident in the press. To do this, the key words/ phrases that related specifically to the incident were used: ‘IKEA catalogue’, ‘Saudi’, ‘delete’ and ‘women’. The goal was to find a variety of voices relating to the event, by having multiple accounts from a wide range of news outlets. As a result, these key word searches yielded a total of **34** articles from English Language newspapers (see table 2).

Newspaper	Country of Publication
1. <i>The Australian</i>	Australia
2. <i>Newcastle Herald</i>	Australia
3. <i>The Border Mail</i>	Australia
4. <i>National Post</i>	Canada
5. <i>The Calgary Herald</i>	Canada
6. <i>The Toronto Star</i>	Canada
7. <i>Irish Examiner</i>	Ireland
8. <i>The New Zealand Herald</i>	New Zealand
9. <i>Metro</i>	Sweden

10. <i>Metro</i>	Sweden
11. <i>The Local</i>	Sweden
12. <i>The Local</i>	Sweden
13. <i>The Local</i>	Sweden
14. <i>The Guardian</i>	UK
15. <i>The Guardian</i>	UK
16. <i>The Independent</i>	UK
17. <i>The Independent</i>	UK
18. <i>Mail Online</i>	UK
19. <i>Belfast Telegraph</i>	UK
20. <i>The Telegraph</i>	UK
21. <i>The Express</i>	UK
22. <i>Financial Times</i>	UK
23. <i>Metro</i>	USA
24. <i>Boston Globe</i>	USA
25. <i>Boston Globe</i>	USA
26. <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	USA
27. <i>The Palm Beach Post</i>	USA
28. <i>New York Times</i>	USA
29. <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	USA
30. <i>The Washington Post</i>	USA
31. <i>USA Today</i>	USA
32. <i>New York Post</i>	USA
33. <i>New York Daily News</i>	USA
34. <i>The Washington Times</i>	USA
Total	34

Table 2: Distribution of source newspapers by country according to Google News Search

The search shows that this incident attracted broad attention in the media from different ‘Western’ countries, such as the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and Ireland.²² Moreover, the researcher employed a set of criteria in selecting texts and determining relevancy, which are as follows:

1. The subject of the text must deal explicitly with the issue of the 2013 IKEA catalogue in Saudi Arabia.
2. Texts have to be published from the 1 October 2012 onwards when it became an issue after its discovery by the Swedish *Metro* newspaper.

²² The articles are available in the Appendices.

An online search showed that the issue in question was covered in the press during a short time span, mainly during October 2012. Thus, the retrieved articles comprise news reports and editorials or opinion articles, since these were the types of news information detected in the collection of articles. It should be emphasized that, while news reports and editorials may focus on very similar experiential content, their purposes are obviously very different; in the case of a news report, it seeks to inform on a particular topic, while an editorial is used to argue for a particular line of thought on a given situation.

A final note worthy of mention here is that I consulted the NexisLexis database to find out whether the case of IKEA catalogue deletion was newsworthy in different media outlets. The search turned out positive results and proved that many other media outlets and YouTube programs talked about the deletion of female images that took place in the IKEA catalogue.

4.7. MAXQDA Software

It is worth mentioning how the instances of occurrences of detected gender markers and social actors in the catalogues are to be calculated. This is achieved by using a particular type of computer software, MAXQDA, which quantifies results and calculates statistical frequencies accurately. MAXQDA is a high-performance program for professional social science-oriented data analysis (VERBI Software 2018), where it is possible to import and analyze many forms of data, including images. Analyzing data usually involves categorizing them in line with the research method(s). These categories are called “codes” in MAXQDA, and data categorized under a code are called a “coded segment”.

When utilizing the functionality found in MAXQDA, I adhered to the following step-by-step approach, which provides a glimpse of the procedures used in retrieving results from verbal and visual data.

- 1- The first step was to individually scan all 328 pages of the 2013 Saudi IKEA catalogue in Arabic, and all the pages in which participants occur in both the UK edition and Saudi edition in English, and then import and organize all the scanned images into the document system within MAXQDA software.
- 2- Following this, the data were categorized (coded) in the document browser, where all images imported into MAXQDA can be viewed. Each item was labelled in the scanned pictures according to the type of data, whether verbal or visual, setting of its occurrence and page number.

- 3- I organized my codes (categories) in a system, where four categories were formed based on the gender markers detected in the catalogue: feminine, masculine singular, masculine plural and ambiguous. In the visual part, I had seven codes: female adult, female child, male adult, male child, body part adult, body part child, pet.
- 4- I first used the mouse to draw a frame around the part I wanted to code with the cursor on each scanned page and then I entered the name and colour of my code. For example, I selected every word with a feminine gender marker on every page of the catalogue and coded it *feminine*. As for visual data, I selected every occurring participant from every page in the catalogue and coded him/her accordingly (i.e. female adult, male adult etc.) (see Appendix F).
- 5- The coded segments of the data were displayed in the Retrieved Segments window.
- 6- After creating the first few codes, they were then listed and organized according to certain criteria that were formulated. For verbal data, the criteria were gender marker and setting, whereas the criteria used for visual data were mainly the gender and age of participants.
- 7- The most common technique for coding within MAXQDA is the drag and drop facility, which assigns a code to a highlighted segment with the mouse (VERBI Software 2018).
- 8- The results were then retrieved and analyzed according to the assigned criteria.

The fact that MAXQDA supports Unicode makes it possible not only to import and analyze documents in any script (including Japanese and, more specifically, Arabic), but also to create codes and variables in these languages (VERBI Software 2018). Unicode has the goal of standardizing all known languages and characters. This makes it possible to work with various languages in the same document (ibid.). Support for Unicode text is available in every MAXQDA function, and thus is of great benefit to this study, as the verbal data are in Arabic.

Once both verbal and visual elements have been analyzed, a final step is to compare the results for the analysis of texts on the verbal level alongside the results of the analysis of the catalogue on the visual level. This is done, ultimately, to determine whether females are completely 'invisible' within the IKEA catalogue and hence Saudi society, as stated in a number of selected newspaper articles, or whether, despite the catalogue being visually devoid of females, women are still addressed but through verbal means. The results will present noteworthy clarifications to this exclusion issue.

4.8. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has introduced the main multimodal analytical tools that will be utilized in Chapter Six. This was followed by an overview of the CDA methodological approaches upon which KhosraviNik's (2010) three-level analytical framework draws, and which is adopted as the analytical framework within this study to analyse the verbal discourse of newspapers in Chapter Seven. The adoption of this framework includes the motivation to test its effectiveness in preserving the variety and eclecticism that characterize CDA/CDS. Accordingly, among the contributions of this study is to build an understanding of how the implementation of systematized CDA analytical categories/ tools can enrich theory progressively in this field of study, which is characterised by eclecticism. Lastly, a detailed description of the procedures involved in data sampling was provided.

Chapter 5. Feminine presence in the 2013 IKEA Catalogue in *Arabic*: Verbal/Linguistic Analysis

5.1. Introduction

Considering that the entire issue under investigation relates specifically to the removal of female images from the 2013 Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue, this chapter aims to address the first research question (RQ-1): *How were females represented in the IKEA 2013 catalogue that was distributed in Saudi Arabia?* In conducting a verbal analysis of the IKEA catalogue in Arabic, I examine how gender is constructed in the Arabic language by identifying the mechanisms of linguistic gender representation, through which gender-related messages can be structured and communicated. Therefore, the focus here is on how the catalogue addresses Saudi people in general. In light of this, an analysis of the content of the Saudi Arabic catalogue is conducted, where the objective is first to determine whether or not females are addressed within the catalogue on a verbal level. From this, the analysis seeks to identify what (if any) strategies have been adopted by IKEA in addressing/excluding them.

It is also worth noting that the linguistic representation of males and females is a central issue within this part of the study, specifically when analysing Arabic data on the verbal level. It is therefore important to highlight that languages do vary in their gender representations, as a result of their structural peculiarities and the sociocultural environment in which they are embedded (Abudaljuh 2012), and Arabic is no exception. Hellinger and Bubmann (2001) unpack the linguistic representation of men and women in language and identify three universal mechanisms of linguistic gender representation through which gender-related messages can be constructed and communicated. These gendering mechanisms are: grammatical gender, lexical gender and referential gender. These categories are appropriate tools for studying how gender is constructed in a particular language, and they can also be the basis for a cross-linguistic analysis of gender representation (Abudaljuh 2012). Therefore, this analysis addresses how the catalogue perceives Saudi people on the verbal level, with a general focus on the morpho-syntactic features appearing in it.

This chapter is structured as follows: it starts with an overview of the theoretical background of the gender agreement system in Arabic, which is followed by a brief account of Arabic orthography with a special focus on diacritics. Lastly, this is followed by explaining the method

and criteria for collecting verbal data, including the criteria that were adhered to in the collection process, as well as the statistical results that were obtained from the data collection.

5.2. Theoretical background of the gender agreement system in Arabic

In this section, a brief illustration is presented regarding the expression of gender in Arabic (Ryding 2005; Kroeger 2005; Haspelmath & Sims 2013). As we are dealing with written Arabic language, the variety of Arabic that is examined is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), since this is what was used to advertise products in the 2013 Saudi edition catalogue. Accordingly, occurrences of case markers at the end of nouns are expected, as this is a common feature of MSA.

The grammatical gender system of Arabic is the focus here. It is ‘highly systematic’ (Ryding 2005: 44). Theories of word structure, or morphology, usually focus on two essential issues: how words are formed (derivational or lexical morphology) and how they interact with syntax (inflectional morphology – i.e. marking for categories such as gender, number, case, tense) (ibid.). In this study, the focus is on inflectional morphology and specifically on gender-marking categories. In Arabic, there are eight major grammatical categories, which are either marked on verbs (i.e. tense/aspect, person, voice and mood) or on verbs and nouns (i.e. gender and number), as well as those that are marked on nouns, such as case and definiteness. The two grammatical categories that I am focusing on are *person* and *gender*, because of their relevance to verbal data, and hence to this study.

The Arabic grammatical gender system operates with two genders: masculine and feminine. It has no neutral gender. That means that every noun, whether animate or inanimate, is either masculine or feminine, with no neutral pronoun ‘it’. The masculine form is the *unmarked form* in Arabic, while feminine nouns usually have a suffix that marks their gender. It is usually easy to distinguish between these two genders in Arabic, because feminine nouns usually end with a feminine marker. In addition, using feminine markers in Arabic is perceived as exclusion of the masculine gender. For example, using a feminine form for an occupation denotes that the referent is female and not male.

Among the rules for expressing a feminine grammatical class, most feminine nouns are marked by the suffix ‘Taa-marbut’a’ (pronounced *-ah* or *-a* in pause form). Thus, a noun in Arabic can be switched to its feminine form by adding the suffix */-aat/* for a plural and */-a/* for a singular. For example, the masculine noun *kaatib* ‘writer.M.SG’ would be converted to *kaatib-a* ‘writer-

F.SG' when expressing a singular feminine noun. For a plural, the noun *kuttab* 'writer.M.PL' would be converted to *kaatib-aat* 'writer-F.PL'.

Moreover, the occurrence of a noun, whether feminine or masculine, immediately requires agreement from grammatical dependents that appear in the same sentence. Such morphemes are either bound morphemes (i.e. inflections) or free morphemes (i.e. function words). The pronominal free morphemes in Arabic appear in table 3:

Person Number	1st person	2 nd person	3 rd Person	Demonstrative pronouns
Singular		/ʔanaa/ 'I'	/ʔanta/ 'you.M'	/huwa/ 'he'
			/ʔanti/ 'you.F'	/hija/ 'she'
Dual	-	/ʔantumaa/ 'you'	/humaa/ 'they'	/haaḏaa/ 'This.M' /haaḏihi/ 'This.F'
Plural	/naḥnu/ 'we'	/ʔantum/ 'you.M'	/hum/ 'they.M'	/haaʔulaaʔ/ 'they'
		/ʔantuna/ 'you.F'	/hunna/ 'they.F'	
Observation	No gender distinction is expressed	Gender distinction appears in the singular and the plural but not in the dual.	Gender distinction appears in the singular and the plural but not in the dual.	Gender distinction appears in the singular and the plural but not in the dual.

Table 3: Pronominal Free Morphemes in Arabic

In light of this, the search within the catalogue will be for function words that express a gender distinction. The bound morphemes that are of concern in this study appear in tables 4, 5 and 6. Table 4 is concerned with inflections that are attached to nouns (i.e. possessives), whereas Tables 5 and 6 are concerned with inflections that are attached to verbs (i.e. object and subject pronominal suffixes).

Person Number	1st person	2nd person	3rd Person
Singular	/-ii/ ‘-my’	/-k-a/ ‘your.M’ /-k-i/ ‘your.F’	/-h-u/ ‘his’ /-h-aa/ ‘her’
Dual	-	/-kumaa/ ‘your’	/-humaa/ ‘their’
Plural	/naa/ ‘-our’	/-kum/ ‘your.M’ /-kunna/ ‘your.F’	/-hum/ ‘their.M’ /-hunna/ ‘their.F’
Observation	No gender distinction	Gender distinction appears in singular and plural	Gender distinction appears in singular and plural

Table 4: Pronominal Possessives

The highlighted cells in the tables contain the inflections that will be looked for in the verbal language of the catalogue (i.e. 2SG, 2PL, 3SG and 3PL). As can be seen from examining Tables 5 and 6, the same will be applied to pronominal object and subject suffixes.

Person Number	1st person	2nd person	3rd Person
Singular	/-nii/ ‘-me’	/-k-a/ ‘you.M’ /-k-i/ ‘you.F’	/-h-u/ ‘him’ /-h-aa/ ‘her’
Dual	-	/-kumaa/ ‘you’	/-humaa/ ‘them’
Plural	/naa/ ‘-us’	/-kum/ ‘you.M’ /-kunna/ ‘you.F’	/-hum/ ‘them.M’ /-hunna/ ‘them.F’
Observation	No gender distinction	Gender distinction appears in singular and plural	Gender distinction appears in singular and plural

Table 5: Pronominal Object Suffixes

It is worth mentioning that, in Table 6, pronominal subject suffixes may have allomorphs depending on the type of verbs they are attached to. For instance, /-t-i/, which expresses 2SG-F, appears when the verb it is combined with is in the past tense. Conversely, if it is attached to a verb in the imperative mood it surfaces as /-ii/, and when 2SG-F is attached to a present tense verb it may surface as either /-tiin/ or /-tii/.

Person Number	1st person	2nd person	3rd Person
Singular	/-tu/ ‘-I’	/-t-a/ ‘M’ /-t-i/≈ /ii/≈ /iin/ ‘F’	/-a/ ‘he’ /-t/ ‘she’
Dual	-	/-tuma:/≈ /a:/≈ /a:n/ ‘both genders’	/-aa/ ‘both genders’
Plural	/naa/ ‘-we’	/-uun/≈ /-u:/ ‘M’ /-na/≈ /-n/ ‘F’	/-uu/ ‘they.M’ /-na/ ‘they.F’
Observation	No gender distinction	Gender distinction appears in singular and plural	Gender distinction appears in singular and plural

Table 6: Pronominal Subject Suffixes

5.3. Arabic Orthography and Diacritics

Arabic orthography and related diacritical markers are worth considering as they will facilitate our understanding of some noted cases in the verbal language of the catalogue. Arabic has two orthographic versions: a shallow orthography and an ‘unpointed’ orthography (Abu-Leil et al. 2014). In the shallow version, diacritical markers are used to represent short vowels (Maroun & Hanley 2016) and they are regarded as external elements to the structure of the word, as opposed to being part of the word itself. Furthermore, they appear either above or below a letter, indicating a difference in pronunciation from the same letter when unmarked or differently marked, and hence providing a phonetic guide. In contrast, within unpointed orthography, vowel diacritics are omitted, which means there are many words with identical orthography (homographs) that can be read as different lexical items (Abu-Rabia 1997; Abu-Leil et al. 2014). Here, the grapheme-morpheme association is almost entirely one-to-one (Abu-Leil et al. 2014). Thus, in order to successfully read such homographs, the reader relies on both linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge, such as phonology, syntax and semantics, lexical and contextual information.

In fact, diacritics have an important role in reading Arabic accurately and fluently because they are markers that reflect the phonological, morphological and grammatical rules. This means that a lack of diacritics may cause lexical and morphological ambiguity for many Arabic words, because these diacritics have the potential to disambiguate the pronunciation of words with identical orthography (homographs), but which have a number of possible pronunciations

(heterophones). Therefore, when heterophonic-homographs are present in a text, the diacritics may considerably increase the accuracy of semantic decisions on ambiguous words (Abu-Rabia 1997; Maroun & Hanley 2016).

In light of this discussion, written Arabic can be fully diacritized, partially diacritized or entirely undiacritized (Habash 2010). In general, diacritics are omitted from written texts as written MSA usually lacks short vowels. Many words in Arabic texts are written as ‘sequences of consonants or are only partially vowelized’ (Maroun & Hanley 2016: 320). Thus, newspapers, magazines and literary books do not use short vowels in words because this is the norm. However, in terms of written literature, these short vowels are mainly found in the Holy Qur’an, which is fully diacritized to minimize incorrect readings, as well as in educational books for children and in some poetry (Azzam 1993; Abu-Rabia & Taha 2006; Habash 2010; Ibrahim 2013). An example of a fully diacritized sentence is seen in excerpt (2a), while a non-diacritized one can be seen in excerpt (2b), both below:

(2a)	منزله	إلى	الرَّجُلُ	ذَهَبَ
	his house	to	the man	went
(2b)	منزله	إلى	الرجل	ذهب

In terms of the types of diacritics found in Arabic, there are three: vowel, nunation and gemination (shadda). The focus here is on vowel diacritics, as they are the ones that are related to verbal analysis of the catalogue and affect the ability to distinguish between masculine and feminine referents, as will be demonstrated. It is these vowel diacritics that represent Arabic’s three short vowels: /a/ (Fatha), /u/ (d’amma), /i/ (Kasra). Figure 12 illustrates this.

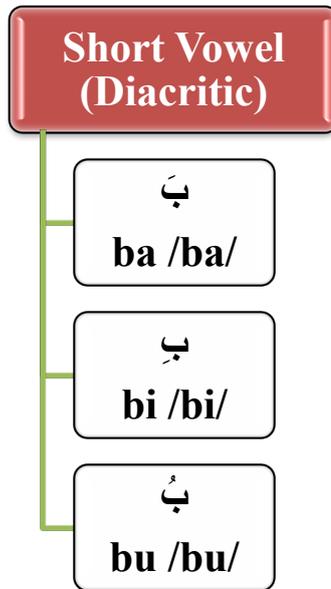


Figure 12: Vowel Diacritics in Arabic

As shown in Figure 12, the short vowel /a/ is a diagonal mark placed above a letter. The short vowel /u/ is a small و w also placed above a letter, and lastly, the short vowel /i/ is a diagonal mark placed below a letter.

Moreover, in Arabic orthography, vowel diacritics provide phonological information that helps to disambiguate homographs and provide word meanings (Abu-Leil et al. 2014). For example, in Arabic shallow orthography (with diacritics), there is an unambiguous grapheme-to-phoneme relation; thus, كَتَبَ 'wrote' has only one reading option. However, in unpointed orthography (no diacritics), in which the grapheme-phoneme relation is ambiguous, words create identical homographs, which may be read in different ways and have different meanings. For example, the undiacritized word كَتَب 'ktb' can have a number of reading options as the diacritic vowel marks can be placed in various ways, such as: كَتَبَ 'wrote', كُتِبَ 'had been written', كُتِبَ 'books'. It is clear, therefore, that the diacritics in the above example have a grammatical function, as well as helping the reader to determine whether the word is a verb 'wrote' or a noun 'book'.

Another important variable that facilitates word recognition in Arabic, aside from diacritics, is the context of the sentence. Thus, in Arabic, a skilled reader can read an Arabic script without vowels; this places great reliance on the context, because each word is based on a three-consonant root word, which can be combined with different vowels, prefixes, suffixes and infixes, in order to produce many words that can be pronounced in various ways (Bu Rabia &

Siegel 1995). A number of studies of Arabic have investigated the influence of diacritics and sentence context on the accuracy of reading and comprehension among skilled adult readers of Arabic (Abu-Rabia 1997; Abu-Rabia 2001; Abu-Leil et al. 2014). These findings have shown that diacritics and the context of the sentence improve reading accuracy, and there is in fact a complementary correlation between diacritics and context, as the context ‘proved particularly helpful when words were presented without diacritics’ (Maroun & Hanley 2016: 321). In this case, skilled readers can look at a sentence or part of it and rely on the context to recognize the right word. In their study, Maroun and Hanley (2016) confirmed that, in the absence of diacritics, one in three words in an Arabic text is likely to have at least two different pronunciations with different meanings. In this case, the context can be helpful to disambiguate the ambiguous word at hand. In other words, a word can be orthographically ambiguous if it has no diacritic marker that expresses gender, but it still denotes a specific gender for an Arabic reader because of its occurrence within a verbal context. That is to say, because of the gender agreement system, it is still possible to know that a word denotes the feminine gender, even though the gender marker is not transcribed in the specified word. This is noted in the verbal language of the catalogue under analysis in this study, as the following data illustrate.

(3) ζ indama	tu- \dot{h} awil-ii-na	tazdeeda	manzili-ki
when	IND.try.PRES-2SG.F	renew	home-2SG.POSS.F
‘When you are about to re-furnish your home’			

In the above example, the noun منزلك *manzilk* ‘your home’ is ambiguous when it is isolated as it has no diacritic gender markers to determine its gender. More specifically, it is not marked for the possessive singular feminine gender by the short vowel /-i/, termed *kasra*, which would remove the ambiguity in an accurate reading of the word. However, when the sentence is read as a whole, the earlier verb *tu \dot{h} awiliina* in the sentence has a feminine gender marker, and therefore, due to the agreement system in Arabic, the remaining components of the sentence must agree with that verb. As a result, *manzilik \ddot{i}* is no longer ambiguous when one considers the morphology of the sentence that it appears in, and subsequently this word is considered as *manzil-i-ki*. In other words, the gender marker /-k-i/ that assigns the feminine gender to a word is assumed to be part of this word structure based on the morphological context where this word appeared, despite it not being transcribed. It should further be noted that any ambiguity of a word that has been resolved, due to morphosyntactic markers occurring in the catalogue, is not restricted to the feminine gender; further examples of the masculine gender have also been deduced.

5.4. Verbal Data Analysis

This section focuses on the verbal language in the Saudi IKEA catalogue in Arabic. The objective is to determine who is the target of this advertisement tool (i.e. what audience is addressed?), and in order to achieve this, the section is divided into the following four sub-sections: the first sub-section introduces the criteria that were followed to examine the verbal language of the catalogue. Second, the method of collecting data from the catalogue is explained; this is then followed by the third sub-section, which examines and displays the gender markers implemented in the catalogue. The final sub-section shows the statistical results obtained using MAXQDA (see Section 4.5.1.3), which quantifies the results of the qualitative content analysis, and calculates the statistical frequencies of instances of occurrence for the variables examined. This is followed by concluding remarks based on the results of verbal data analysis.

5.4.1. The criteria for examining verbal data

In order to ascertain whether females are addressed/visible on the verbal level (linguistic), the first step is to examine the Saudi IKEA catalogue in Arabic. To conduct this investigation effectively, a qualitative content analysis is performed, this determines the presence of males and females in the catalogue based upon specific criteria. As seen above, Arabic explicitly signals whether a linguistic expression is intended to refer to a male or a female being. Hence, the first criterion for examining the verbal data is the gender marking system, whereby the frequencies with which females and males are unambiguously addressed will be measured. This will be achieved by tracing the grammatical categories that refer distinctively to gender, and the inflections that mark gender.

The second criterion that is considered is the *setting*, which refers to the location where those females, males and ambiguous addressees are addressed within the catalogue. This criterion is necessary to reveal where the addressees are addressed, in order to discover any possible relationship between the gender of the addressee (audience) in the catalogue and the type of setting they are addressed in. This subsequently provides an opportunity to discover the relationship between the verbal visibility/invisibility of a gender-type addressee and the setting of the catalogue, and hence what gender roles are ascribed to each gender from IKEA's perspective.

A close look at the catalogue reveals that the settings that are included in the 2013 IKEA catalogue are divided into three sections. The first section is entitled **ʔlhajaa fii ʔlmanzil** 'Life

at Home', where information and ideas on how to furnish one's home are displayed for consumers. This section has a further eight sections, including organizing, sleeping, cooking etc. The second section is entitled **ʔiʔ0aaθ wa ʔImafruuʔaat ʔImanzilija** '**Furniture and Home Furnishings**', which presents furniture and home furnishings that are advertised to suit all tastes. This section has fourteen more sections, including seating furniture, storage furniture etc. Finally, the third section of the catalogue is called **ʔImaʕluumaat** '**Information**', which provides information to consumers on different topics related to the selling process. These settings are identical in all three editions of the catalogue.

5.4.2. Method of collecting verbal data

The grammatical categories that express gender were first traced in each page of the Saudi catalogue in Arabic, which has 328 pages in total. Three grammatical categories were detected based on the grammatical gender that they refer to. This was followed by a calculation step using the MAXQDA analytical software tool, with which the percentages for instances of occurrence of gender markers within the catalogue are obtained (see Appendix E).

5.4.3. Addressing consumers verbally in the 2013 Saudi edition in Arabic

This sub-section focuses on content analysis of the catalogue on a verbal level, which yielded quantifiable information that enabled accurate interpretations. The process of searching the 2013 Saudi edition catalogue in Arabic yielded the following.

5.4.3.1. Free Morphemes

The content analysis of the catalogue showed that there were few free morphemes implemented in the verbal language of the catalogue. As the search went on, it was found that:

1. The free morpheme that refers to a biological female gender is the second person singular feminine pronoun: **انتِ ʔanti** 'you', and the total occurrences of /ʔanti/ in the Saudi Arabic edition of the catalogue is **2**.
2. The free morpheme that appears in the catalogue referring to a biological male gender is the second person plural masculine pronoun: **انتم ʔantum** 'you'. The total number of instances of the functional word /ʔantum/ in the Saudi Arabic edition is **1**. Nevertheless, this free

morpheme addresses both males and females, despite being a plural masculine pronoun, because in Arabic the plural form is used to address both genders.

5.4.3.2. Bound Morphemes

In contrast to free morphemes, many inflectional elements or bound morphemes are used throughout the catalogue. The content analysis of the verbal language of the catalogue showed that there were two types of bound morphemes: feminine and masculine. Furthermore, there is also an ambiguous addressee category. This ambiguity is due to the prevailing unpointed orthography of the catalogue, in which the context does not disambiguate an ambiguous word. For example, when there is no diacritic, the second person pronoun bound morpheme لك 'for you' has two identical homographs, which are read in two different ways and refer to either masculine or feminine. It can be read as لَكَ 'for you.S.M' or as لَكِ 'for you.S.F'.

5.4.3.2.1. Feminine Bound Morphemes

The bound morphemes of the feminine gender that were found are summed up in the following table 7:

Bound morpheme (feminine gender marker)	Type of gender marker
-ii /-ii-n	Second person singular feminine marker 2SG.F
-ti	Second person singular feminine marker 2SG.F
-t /-ḥ 'ṣ'	Morphological marker <i>Taa-marbut'a</i> SG.F
-ki	Second person possessive pronoun feminine marker 2SG.F
/-i/	Short close front vowel (<i>kasra</i>)

Table 7: Feminine marker 'Bound Morphemes' in the IKEA 2013 Saudi edition catalogue in Arabic

1- The first bound morpheme noted in the catalogue, which marks the feminine gender, is *-ii*, which is attached to verbs. In Arabic, verbs inflect for gender, number and person. The subject of the verb determines these three morphological categories as the verb agrees with the subject in all those aspects (Ryding 2005). Arabic verbs are marked for masculine and feminine gender in the second and third persons. The bound morpheme *-ii* is found attached to two types of verbs

in Arabic. The first verb is **Mud'aariḡ**, which is a classification that Ryding (2005) classifies as an imperfect (present) verb. Both a prefix and suffix give the full meaning of the verb. The following examples²³ are extracted from the catalogue.

(4) tu-fakkir-ii-n
2SG-think. IMPF-F-IND
'you think'

(5) ta-xtaar-ii-n
2SG-choose. IMPF-F-IND
'you choose'

(6) tu-ḥaawil-ii-n
2SG-try. IMPF-F-IND
'you try'

The second use of the bound morpheme *-ii* to address females is in the imperative mood. In the catalogue, the bound morpheme *-ii* is attached to an imperative verb. For instance, on the cover of the 2013 Saudi *Arabic* catalogue the following single sentence occurs: /ʔdʕfi.ḥejwɪjjə.zædidə.ʕelə.menzɪlɪk/.

(7) ʔdʕf-ii	ḥajawijj-a	zadid-a	ʕla	manzil-ki
Add.2SG.IMP-F	life-F	new-F	to	home-POSS.F
'bring/add new life to your home'				

In the above example, the use of the feminine gender marker *-ii* 2SGF denotes that the addressee is a female. The following are more examples from the catalogue regarding this form of address.

(8) ḥawil-ii
try.2SG.IMP-F
'try'

(9) ʔinḡur-ii
look.2SG.IMP-F
'look'

²³ The examples in this research are in a special layout that is adapted from *Understanding Syntax* (Tallerman 2015). The first line is from the source language under examination. The second line, called GLOSS, is a literal translation of the original language, where each meaningful part of the original is translated, whether it corresponds exactly to a word in English or not. The third line is a translation from the source language into English.

2- The second type of bound morpheme that marks the feminine gender is *-ti*, which grammatically marks the second person singular female 2SG.F. It is attached to **Mad'ii**, which is a classification that Ryding (2005) classifies as a past (perfect) verb. Suffixing person-markers to the past tense verb stem forms the past tense in Arabic. Person markers in the past tense also denote number and gender (Ryding 2005). The second person feminine singular marker *-ti* is noted in the catalogue. For example:

(10) ʔistʕatʕaʕ-ti
 can.PAST.2SG-F
 'you could'

(11) ʕaʕar-ti
 feel.PAST.2SG-F
 'you felt'

3- The third type of bound morpheme that is used as a marker of feminine gender in the catalogue is *Ta-Marbut'a /-t/* (ت), which occurs at the end of a singular noun/adjective. In pronunciation, it sometimes has an /h/ sound and at other times /t/. It is pronounced as /h/ if the reader/speaker pauses at the word. If it is connected to another word, it is pronounced as /t/. From a morphological point of view, the general rule in Arabic is that the masculine form is the simple basic form, the unmarked form, whereas the feminine form usually has a suffix that marks its gender. Therefore, gender marking is often treated as 'formation of the feminine' from the masculine. Hence, the feminine singular is marked by the presence of *Ta-Marbut'a*. A consistent feature of *Ta-Marbut'a* is that it is always preceded by an /a/ sound, usually a short vowel /a/ termed *fatha*, but sometimes a long /aa/ termed *ʔalif* (Ryding 2005: 22). In most pause situations, the pronunciation of *Ta-Marbut'a* becomes /h/. Because a final /h / sound is hard to hear, it sounds as though the word is pronounced only with a final /a/, i.e. the short vowel that precedes it.

(12) muʒbar-a
 force.ADJ.SG-F
 'forced'

(13) ʒahiz-a
 ready.ADJ.SG-F
 'ready'

4- The fourth bound morpheme that marks the feminine gender is **-ki**, which is either the possessive pronoun suffix *-ki* ‘your’ or the object pronoun suffix in the second person feminine *-ki* ‘you’, which serve as objects of transitive verbs and of prepositions respectively, and hence they are affixed to those word classes. The following are examples from the catalogue:

(14) *ilaj-ki*
 to.PREP.2SG-F
 ‘to you’

(15) *la-ki*
 for.PREP.2SG-F
 ‘for you’

5- The fifth and last feminine gender marker is the ‘diacritic’ short close front vowel /-i/ termed *kasra*, which is represented by a mark that is written underneath the consonant it follows.

(16) *intaq-i*
 choose.2SG.IMP.F
 ‘choose’

5.4.3.2.2. Masculine Bound Morphemes

The bound morphemes of the masculine gender that were found in the catalogue are summed up in the following table 8:

Bound morpheme (masculine gender marker)	Type of gender marker
-ka	Second person, singular, possessive masculine marker 2SG.POSS.M
-hu	Third person, singular, possessive masculine marker 3SG.POSS.M
-kum	Second person, plural, masculine marker 2PL.M
-tum	Second person, plural, masculine agreement marker 2PL.M

-uun	Second person, plural, masculine subject marker whose pronoun is <i>?ntum</i> ‘you’ 2PL.M
-uun	Third person, plural, masculine subject marker, whose pronoun is <i>hum</i> ‘they’ 3PL.M
-uu	Second person, plural, masculine subject marker whose pronoun is <i>?ntum</i> ‘you’ 2PL.M

Table 8: Masculine Marker 'Bound Morphemes' in the IKEA Saudi edition 2013 catalogue in Arabic

1- The first grammatical category that marks the masculine gender in the catalogue is expressed using **zero** morphemes, i.e. there is no inflection marker on the verb to mark the masculine singular gender because the masculine form is the simple basic form. In the following examples, I will present masculine and feminine words to show the difference between them. The masculine ones appear in the catalogue, while I provide feminine ones for the purpose of clarification of what I mean by a zero morpheme. For example,

(17a) tahtaaz-Ø

need.PRES-2SG.M

‘you (M) need’

(17b) tahtaaz-ii

need.PRES-2SG.F

‘you (F) need’

The zero morpheme of the masculine form is noted in the imperative mood as well. This is in contrast to the feminine gender marker bound morpheme /-ii/ that marks the imperative verb. Therefore, the imperative verb is in its basic form, without any added bound morphemes. For example:

(18) faahid-Ø

see.IMP-2SG.M

‘see’

(19) ?xfi-Ø

hide.IMP-2SG.M

‘hide’

(20) ʒarrib-∅
 try.IMP-2SG.M
 ‘try’

The zero morpheme of the masculine form is noted in the adjective as well. Furthermore, in Arabic, adjectives have both masculine and feminine forms. The masculine form is the basic unmarked form, while gender markers mark the feminine form. Moreover, Arabic adjectives always follow the noun they modify. Hence, in the catalogue, the masculine adjective is used only twice:

(21) murtahan-∅
 comfortable.ADJ-2SG.M
 ‘comfortable’

(22) ʒaaffan-∅
 dry.ADJ-2SG.M
 ‘dry’

The above examples show that the verbs are in their basic, unmarked form, which denotes the masculine gender.

Another related point worth mentioning here is agreement affixation, which is ‘where words in a phrase or clause show feature compatibility, that is, they match or conform to each other, one reflecting the other’s features’ (Ryding 2005: 57). For example, a verb is masculine singular if it has a masculine singular subject. A feminine singular noun takes a feminine singular adjective, and so forth. Categories of agreement in Arabic include: gender, number, definiteness, and case for nouns and adjectives, and inflection for gender, number and person for verbs and pronouns (ibid.). In the catalogue, besides the aforementioned imperative verbs, the following sentence is observed :

/ʔd^hhir. ʔw. ʔxfi. ʔʃjaaʔka.ħasaba.ħaazatika/

(23) ʔðhir-∅	ʔw	ʔxfi-∅	ʔʃjaaʔ-ka	ħasaba	ħaazati-ka
show.IMP-2SG.M	or	hide.IMP-2SG.M	things-2SG.M.POSS	according to	need-2SG.M.POSS
‘show or hide your things as you like’					

In the above example, the verb is marked for masculine, so the rest of the sentence should agree with that. All bound morphemes should be in the masculine gender.

2- The second type of bound morpheme that is used as a marker of masculine gender is **-ka** ‘your’ when it is attached to a noun. It expresses the second person, singular and possessive masculine. Note that Arabic suffix personal pronouns show differences in gender, number and person. These personal pronouns are considered possessive but they do not stand alone. They have to be attached to a noun, verb or particle. There are two types of suffix pronouns: possessive pronouns which are suffixed to nouns, and object pronouns which are suffixed to verbs or particles (indicating the object of a verb or the object of a preposition). For example;

(24) haazatu-ka
need-2SG.M.POSS
‘your need’

The above example shows that the noun is suffixed with the bound morpheme **-ka**, denoting the masculine gender.

3- It is also noted that there is a third masculine singular gender marker, which is the possessive bound morpheme **-hu** ‘his’, which is attached to the noun expressing the third person singular. For example:

(25) bat^hnu-hu
stomach-3SG.POSS.M
‘his stomach’

(26) zaanibu-hu
side-3SG.POSS.M
‘his side’

4- The fourth bound morpheme denoting the masculine gender is the second person masculine plural pronoun **-kum** ‘you’, as the object of a preposition. The prepositions *min* ‘of, from, than’ and *maʿa* ‘with’ are attached to it. For example:

(27) min-kum
from.PREP-2PL.M
'from you'

It is worth mentioning that the masculine plural in Arabic is used to address both males and females. It is not gender specific, despite being marked for the masculine gender. Moreover, in the catalogue, the bound morpheme *-kum* is attached to a noun, as well. In this case, it expresses the possessive second person masculine plural. For example:

(28) manzil-kum
home-POSS.2PL.M
'your home'

(29) sajjaarati-kum
car-POSS.2PL.M
'your car'

5- The fifth bound morpheme in the catalogue is *-tum* 'you', which expresses the second person masculine plural (2PL.M). It is attached to a past tense verb, where the verb is in its basic form. For example:

(30) wazad-tum
find.PAST-2PL.M
'(you) found'

6- The sixth type of bound morpheme is attached to a present tense verb, where the verb is suffixed with the *plural waaw*, i.e. the glide /w/, to indicate that the addressee is masculine plural. In this case, there are five recognized forms.

6 (a). The first form is the *present tense of the verb +uun*. The plural suffix *-uun* is added to the present tense of the verb for a third person plural masculine subject, whose pronoun is *hum* 'they'. For example:

(31) janam-uun
sleep.PRES-3PL.M
'(they) sleep'

(32) jufad^ʕil-uun

prefer.PRES-3PL.M

‘(they) prefer’

6 (b). The second form is the *present tense verb +uun*, where the plural suffix *-uun* is added to a present tense verb for a second person plural masculine subject, whose pronoun is *ʔntum* ‘you’. For example:

(33) taʃtar-uun

buy.PRES-2PL.M

‘(you) buy’

(34) taryab-uun

want.PRES-2PL.M

‘(you) want’

6 (c). The third form is the *present tense verb +uu*, where the plural suffix *-uu* is added to a present tense verb for a second person plural masculine subject, whose pronoun is *ʔntum* ‘you’. For example:

(35) taḏakkar-uu

remember.PRES-2PL.M

‘(you) remember’

6 (d). The fourth form is the *future tense of the verb +uun*. In Arabic, the future tense is formed by prefixing either the morpheme *sa-* or the particle *sawfa* to a present tense indicative verb (Ryding 2005: 442). In the catalogue, there is use of the future tense with the plural bound morpheme *-uun*, which is added to the present tense form of the verb for a second person plural masculine subject. For example:

(36) sa-tazid-uun

FUT-find.PRES-2PL.M

‘(you) will find’

6 (e). The fifth form is the *imperative mood +uu*. For that, the verb is in its basic form and the plural masculine bound morpheme *-uu* is added to it. For example:

(37) iḥsul-uu
get.IMP-2PL.M
'get'

(38) tamattaḥ-uu
enjoy.IMP-2PL.M
'enjoy'

5.4.3.3. *Ambiguous Addressee*

Examining the catalogue revealed the existence of some ambiguous words where it was not possible to determine whether the catalogue was addressing male or female consumers. This ambiguity is due to not using the diacritics that express gender markers in Arabic orthography. However, as mentioned earlier in (5.3), ambiguities in terms of the addressed gender can be resolved by observing the relevant context. As a result, a closer look at these ambiguous words made it easy to target the orthographically and contextually ambiguous ones. For example, as it has no orthographic marker denoting its gender and because the context of its appearance is suitable for addressing both genders, the second person pronoun bound morpheme لك 'for you' has two identical homographs, which can be read in two different ways and can refer to either masculine or feminine. Excerpt (39a) is the first possible reading with the bound morpheme *-ka*, while excerpt (39b) is a second possible reading with the bound morpheme *-ki*.

(39a) naḥnu naẓtahid linuqaddim la-ka akṯar mimma sabaq
we want to give for.PREP-you.2SG.M more than before
'We want to give you more than before'

(39b) naḥnu naẓtahid linuqaddim la-ki akṯar mimma sabaq
we want to give for.PREP-you.2SG.F more than before
'We want to give you more than before'

The above two examples show two possible readings of the same sentence used in the catalogue. In the catalogue, the word لك is neither marked for the singular feminine gender by the short vowel /-i/, termed *kasra*, nor marked for the singular masculine gender by the short vowel /-a/, termed *fatha*. There is no diacritic marker written underneath or above the consonant [k] to denote a specific gender. Hence, the ambiguity here is due to the use of unpointed Arabic

orthography, where there are no diacritics and insufficient contextual information that does not give any clue as to who the addressee is. Hence, we have two possible readings of the sentence, where both males and females could be addressed. Thus, I call the bound morpheme, and hence the sentence, ambiguous.

5.4.3. Results

The results based on the MAXQDA analysis tool are arranged according to the two criteria of gender and setting. As for gender, based on the occurrences of the aforementioned grammatical categories in Arabic, a search through the catalogue revealed who were the main addressed audiences within the catalogue, followed by percentages of how often they were addressed. Table 9 and figure 10 summarize these findings.

Addressed Audience	Instances of Occurrences	Pages
Feminine	750	187
Masculine Singular	46	6
Masculine Plural	174	15
Ambiguous	133	63

Table 9: Addressee by gender in the IKEA Saudi edition catalogue in Arabic

Table 9 shows the instances of occurrence of feminine and masculine gender markers, as well as ambiguous occurrences within the catalogue. It is evident that feminine gender markers have the highest instances of occurrence, as 750 out of a total 1,103 instances of occurrence of gender markers are feminine markers.

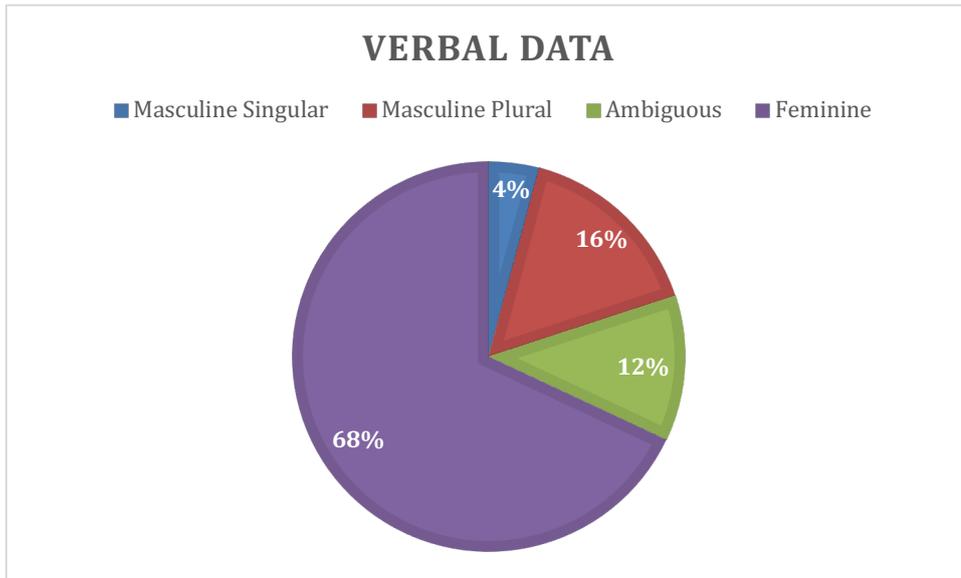


Figure 13: Percentages of addressees in the Saudi edition 2013 catalogue in Arabic

In terms of percentages, figure 13 shows that the highest percentage of instances of occurrence is that for female addressees in the catalogue, at **68%**. The masculine plural gender marker follows this with a percentage of **16%**, it addresses both males and females. After this is ambiguous addressees with a percentage of **12%**. This means that the addressed customers could be females and/or males. Finally, the last instances of occurrence are for the masculine singular gender marker with **4%**.

Moreover, IKEA is mainly addressing the Saudi female as the primary shopper for her household, as the products in the catalogue function as the means by which anything can be purchased by a female. Moreover, the verbal language of the catalogue uses a ‘Call to Action’ strategy to command females to do something concrete. The following sentences extracted from the catalogue illustrate this:

(40) أنتِ تُرِيحِكِ مَرْتَبَةَ اِخْتَارِي
 you-2SG.F comfort-2SG.2.F mattress choose-2SG.F
 ‘Choose the mattress that comforts you’

(41)) بِرِيفَه لِمَنْزِلِكِ اُعْيِدِي
 to life home-2SG.POSS.F bring-2SG.F
 ‘bring your home to life’²⁴

²⁴ The translation is based on the English edition catalogue.

It is also noted that this agentive power attributed to females is a transformative one. This means that the choices of verbs are all positive in the catalogue, denoting constructive, transformative actions: ‘choose’, ‘make’, ‘change’, ‘add’, ‘shape’ etc.; ownership ‘have’; and volition ‘decided’, ‘wanted’, ‘as you like’. In short, females are told that they are unstoppable. They can do or change whatever they desire in a way that suits them through sheer power. For example, females are the ones who are responsible for the changes to both the cover page and the back page overtly expressing that the female has agentive power to make such changes:

BRING NEW LIFE TO YOUR HOME;²⁵ AND BRING YOUR HOME TO LIFE²⁶.

Furthermore, the catalogue also includes a command to females to do something concrete. The ‘Call and Visit Invitation’ to females occurs on almost every page in order to encourage the female reader to get further information about the products and hence initiate the purchase process. For example, on p. 111 of the 2013 Arabic catalogue, we have this sentence in Arabic: ‘for more information about our Kitchen Installation Service, see page 318’. The feminine gender marker is in the verb ‘see.2SG.F’. This is in line with the genre-specific features of this multimodal piece that was discussed earlier (see section 3.4.6.1).

Thus, according to the first criterion of gender, the results reveal that the terminology used by IKEA in their 2013 Saudi catalogue in Arabic shows an awareness of the gender system in Arabic when addressing Saudi consumers, as using feminine gender markers to the female consumers is evident. It is important to note that, here, the use of a feminine gender marker in Arabic completely excludes the masculine gender.

Furthermore, in terms of the second criterion (setting), the investigation revealed the following (see figure 11).

²⁵ Upper case is used in the catalogue.

²⁶ See examples (7) and (41) for gloss and translation of these sentences.

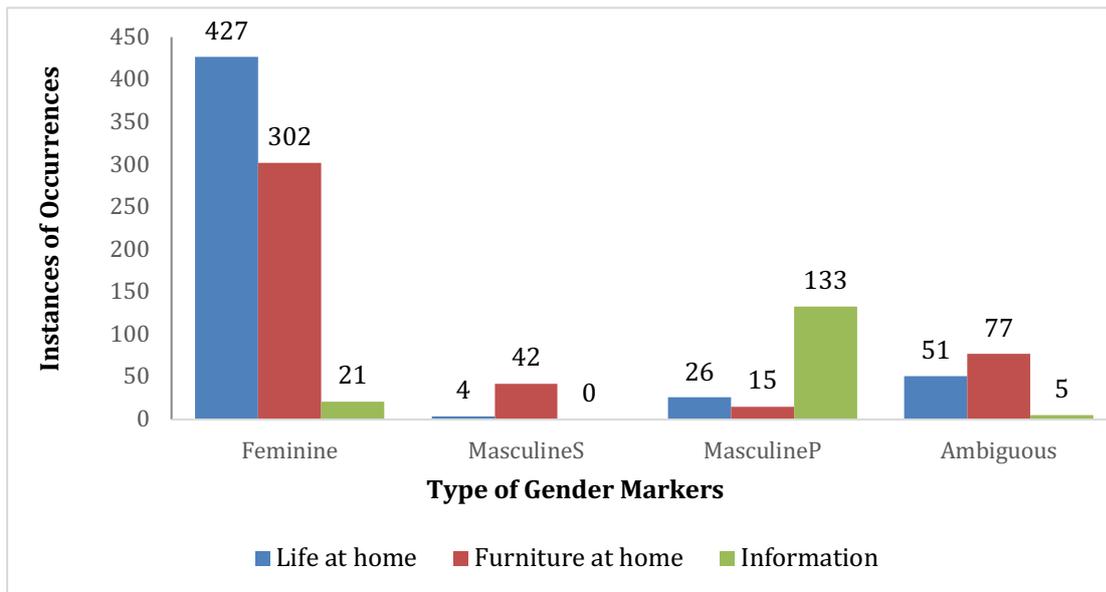


Figure 14: Instances of occurrence of gender markers according to setting

1- In the first and second settings (ʔlhajaa fii ʔlmanzil ‘Life at Home’ and ʔlʔθaaθ wa ʔlmafruufaat ʔlmanzilija ‘Furniture and Home Furnishings’), females are overtly addressed on the verbal level. This means that females are addressed in almost all the domestic zone sections with the lowest occurrences being in the workplace section (see Appendix E). This is in line with the stereotypical traditional gender roles ascribed to males and females. In other words, the verbal language of the IKEA Saudi edition catalogue mainly confines females to their traditional roles as housewives, and non-working roles. This serves as a sociocultural mirror reflecting the way in which the Saudi audience is perceived by IKEA.

Interestingly, there is a clear absence of overt females addressed in the third section of the setting, which is on general ʔlmafluumaat *information* for consumers. This is because, in this section, Saudi people, including males and females, are addressed by using the second person masculine plural form, which is used to address both males and females. Thus, based on the data, one may postulate that IKEA might have the understanding that this setting is not gender-specific, as it targets all consumers who may need some information regarding the store and its products.

2- Males are very minimally addressed on the verbal level throughout the Saudi 2013 catalogue in Arabic. The highest occurrence where singular males are addressed is detected in the second setting of ʔlʔθaaθ wa ʔlmafruufaat ʔlmanzilija ‘Furniture and Home Furnishings’, specifically in the *workspace* sub-section. Males, however, are not addressed at all in the settings of

organizing, cooking, eating and relaxing. Thus, based on how an Arabic reader may perceive this on the verbal level, males are seen as being excluded from such domestic settings.

3- The sections where the greatest ambiguous use of morphemes occurs is in the second setting of *ʔlʔθaaθ wa ʔlmafruufaāt ʔlmanzilija* 'Furniture and Home Furnishings', in the section devoted to *storage furniture*. A possible explanation for the use of ambiguous forms here is that this setting includes TV and media solutions, boxes and storage, which IKEA seems to assume are used by and are relevant to both sexes. It is also noted that ambiguity is only found on one of the five pages allocated to the workspace setting, which mainly addresses male consumers. This indicates that the workspace in the Saudi edition catalogue is a more masculine territory. As for the third section of the catalogue, *ʔlmaʔluumaat information*, the ambiguous use of morphemes occurs in five instances in the whole section. This is because, as previously mentioned, the information section is targeted to give all the information required to all consumers who go to the store, including males and females.

5.5. Concluding remarks

This part aimed to examine the 2013 IKEA catalogue in question, and in light of the press coverage it received, the objective was to determine whether women were actually addressed in it and, if so, how they were addressed. The above sections gave some basic theoretical background about the gender agreement system in Arabic. This was followed by verbal data and the main findings that were reached through examining it. Based on the results, IKEA's understanding of gender roles in Saudi Arabian society can be noted. Verbally, IKEA was in fact centring the focus of its advertisements to attract Saudi female consumers, since feminine markers in Arabic are perceived as excluding the masculine gender. This means that, according to IKEA, the existence of females in Saudi society as purchasers of domestic products is prominent, and therefore they must be considered when marketing goods and products. This is noted because the language shows that females are addressed in the catalogue with a significantly much higher percentage than males. In fact, based on the results, one may argue that IKEA Saudi Arabia does target the whole family, but with a specific focus on females. The discussion chapter describes the synthesis and evaluation of these findings. The next chapter is the second part of the analysis, which also answers RQ-1. The analysis will reveal whether verbal and visual communication reflect the same message or if they are different.

Chapter Six. Female Representation in IKEA Catalogues: Contrastive Visual Social Semiotic Analysis

6.1. Introduction

This chapter is the second analysis chapter, which also aims to address the first research question (RQ-1): *How were women represented in the IKEA 2013 catalogue that was distributed in Saudi Arabia?* In light of this, an analysis of the content of the Saudi and UK editions of the catalogue is conducted, where the first objective is to determine whether or not females are visible in the editions of the catalogues on a visual level. From this, the analysis seeks to identify what (if any) strategies are adopted by IKEA to represent/exclude them. In line with Chapter Five, this chapter focuses on the first data set of the study, the multimodal catalogue. The focus of the analysis is on the visual aspect of the catalogue, i.e. the accompanying pictures, in both the Saudi edition in English and the UK edition of the same catalogue for comparison purposes.

6.2. Visual data

In image analysis, the key question to ask is what people, places and things are represented in the image. And what kinds of contributive or symbolic meanings are associated with that representation. The current investigation conducts a visual social semiotic analysis of the 2013 IKEA catalogue from representational and interactive aspects. The former creates representation and hence is conveyed by the depicted participants, processes (action/reaction), and circumstances (surroundings). The latter creates interaction between the writer and reader and focuses on the relationship between image and viewer. As seen in Chapter Three, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) describe visual syntactic patterns in terms of their function of relating visual participants to each other in meaningful ways. These patterns are narrative representation and conceptual representation (see section 3.2.3.1). These patterns are referred to where relevant in the analysis. Following van Leeuwen's (2008) visual representation of social actors, I ask two important questions: 'how are people in the pictures depicted?' and 'how are the depicted people related to the viewer?' The first question deals with representational meaning, while the second one deals with interactional meaning.

This chapter is structured as follows. It starts with an overview of the social actors occurring in the two editions of the catalogue; analyzing representational meaning by looking at the people depicted in the IKEA 2013 catalogue by comparing the UK and Saudi editions follows this.

Then, the analysis moves on to interactive meaning and focuses on how the people depicted, in both editions, are related to the viewer. Each of the above aspects is further divided into sub-headings to further develop the analysis. That is, representational meaning is further divided into exclusion and roles, while interactive meaning is further divided into social distance, social interaction and social relations. This is then followed by a discussion of the findings and concluding remarks.

6.3. Presence of social actors in the IKEA 2013 catalogue

Before delving into analyzing the IKEA catalogue on a visual level, it is crucial to first look at the physical appearance of the social actors in the catalogue to find out who is or is not there. Thus, I looked at the UK edition catalogue, which is the version used as a benchmark for alterations in the Saudi version and contrasted it with the Saudi *English* edition for easy-going purposes. In other words, the Saudi edition in *Arabic* is not used here because there is a ‘visual directionality’ difference from the UK edition (see 4.5.1.2). This may seem insignificant, but it raises two key points as to why the Saudi English version is more appropriate to use than the Arabic version during this comparative analysis. First, the written script in the Arabic version has a right to left orthographical system, and thus the page numbers and picture placement will be slightly altered. Second, apart from that, the Saudi English version is exactly the same as the Arabic one, even in terms of the deletion of female pictures. Furthermore, the UK edition is presumed to be the unmodified edition, which is devoid of any deletion of the physical participants and hence of any assumed religious/cultural censorship, which might be at work in the Saudi edition. This assumption is based on the fact that the UK media were among those who criticized IKEA for deleting women from the Saudi edition.

A close look at the two catalogues reveals that there are seven types of social actors in the UK and Saudi editions: adult male, child male, adult female, child female, adult part of the body, child part of the body and a pet (cat). It is worth mentioning that females present in the catalogue are sometimes shown in full or just partially, e.g. hands or part of the body at different distances and from different directions. Thus, by adult part of the body, I mean occurrences of female hands, which bear an indexical reference to an adult female, and a child part of the body refers to occurrences of children’s legs.

In order to determine the percentages of such implementation, I imported all the scanned pages of the catalogue from both editions into MAXQDA software, and then I highlighted sections of the pictures of each occurring participant to be coded in the Document Browser (see section

4.7). The selected image segments were coded according to the participants detected (see Appendix F). Then, I dragged the selected image segments and dropped them into the code using a mouse. I followed the same procedure for both editions. The percentages of occurrence of all the participants in each edition were retrieved from MAXQDA and can be seen below.

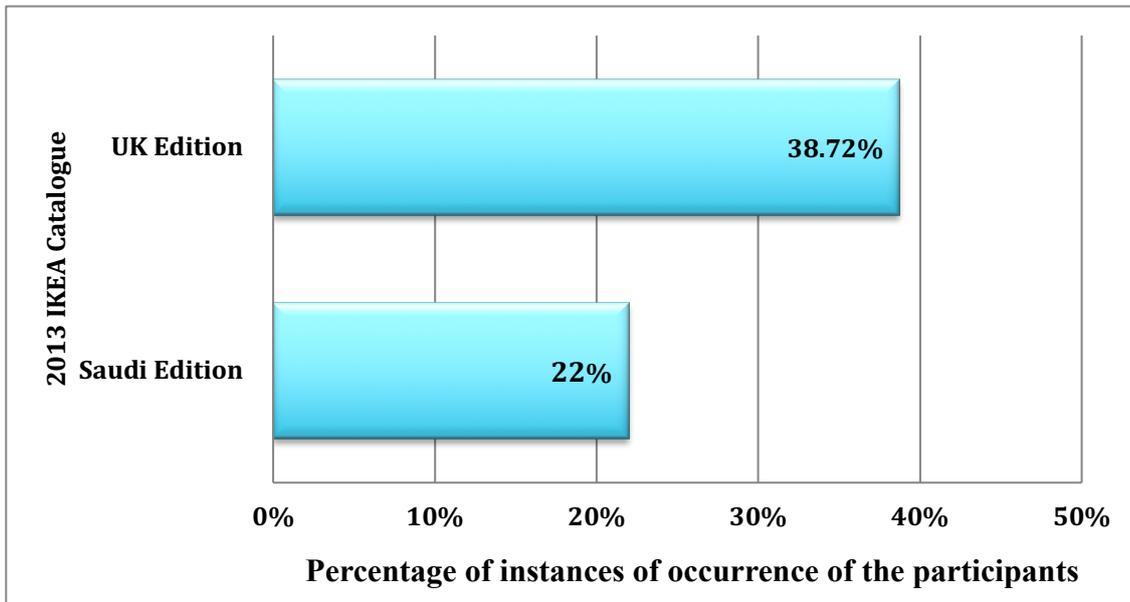


Figure 15: Percentages of all participants occurring in the 2013 IKEA catalogues

Bearing in mind that the two catalogues have **328** pages, the above Figure 12 shows that, in general, there are not many social actors included in the catalogue. The chart shows that the participants occurring in the UK version have a percentage of **38.72%**, whereas in the Saudi version they appear with a percentage of **22%**. Therefore, a comparison between the two editions shows that the UK edition employs more human participants than the Saudi edition. As a general trend, these percentages suggest that IKEA is not relying strongly on the physical appearance of the participants in its product advertisement. Instead, it relies on its products in the first place, which emphasizes the strong reputation IKEA has in the field of home furnishings.

After detecting the social actors that occur in the two IKEA catalogue editions, the following parts focus on analyzing representational aspects in terms of who is (not) there and interactional aspects in terms of the actions (roles) assigned to the social actors. Analyzing interpersonal aspects in terms of the relation between image and viewer follows.

6.4. Depicting People

This part looks at the physical visibility of the social actors in the Saudi edition of the catalogue compared to the UK one, and then moves on to analysis and interpretations based on van Leeuwen's (2008) visual representation of social actors. The focus here is on investigating how people depicted in the catalogue are represented in relation to the visual discourse. That is, what choices does the 'language of images' give the reader to depict people? According to van Leeuwen (2008), there are different ways of depicting people visually. The focus of the analysis here is on two strategies: exclusion and roles. These two strategies are the ones that are closely related to the data at hand, and which answer questions about pictorial references to the people depicted in the catalogue.

6.4.1. Exclusion

According to van Leeuwen (2008: 142), exclusion refers to the possibility of not including certain categories of people in representations of the groups in which they live and work and hence to which they belong. Therefore, as Machin and Mayr (2012) assert, it is revealing to ask who is backgrounded or excluded visually from a text. Being aware of this exclusion helps in the analysis, as it shows that there is a 'symbolic form of social exclusion' because of not 'acknowledging the existence of certain people' who live among the rest (van Leeuwen 2008: 142).

The first step in the visual analysis is to compare between the Saudi edition in *English* and the UK edition in terms of the gender representations of the social actors in both editions. The other aim is to determine the relationship between the presence/removal of social actors, whether males or females, and the types of settings where such physical presence or exclusion occurs. A comparison of the two editions revealed that the exclusion of social actors from the Saudi edition involved excluding both females and males. The tables below illustrate the distribution of all participants in both the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 catalogue.

Social Actors/Participants	Instances of occurrence	Pages out of 328
Adult Female	37	27
Child Female	15	9
Adult Male	41	26
Child Male	17	12
Part of Body-Adult	10	8
Part of Body-Child	4	3
Pet	3	3
Total	127	

Table 10: Instances of occurrence of the participants in the UK edition

Social Actors/Participants	Instances of Occurrence	Pages out of 328
Adult Female	1	1
Child Female	12	6
Adult Male	34	20
Child Male	12	9
Part of Body-Adult	6	5
Part of Body-Child	4	3
Pet	3	3
Total	72	

Table 11: Instances of occurrence of the participants in the Saudi edition

The differences between the instances of occurrence in both editions are evident in Tables 10 & 11. It is apparent that the instances of occurrence of adult females in the UK edition are significantly higher than in the Saudi edition. There is a significant difference (UK= **37**, Saudi = **1**) between the two editions in terms of female visibility. This confirms that IKEA deleted almost all the adult females from the Saudi edition. As for adult male participants, the data in the above tables show that they were also deleted from the Saudi catalogue (UK= **41**, Saudi = **34**). No significant differences were found between the two editions in terms of the occurrences of female children (UK= **15**, Saudi = **12**) or male children (UK= **17**, Saudi = **12**). However, the exclusion of male and female children does occur in the Saudi edition. Turning now to instances of occurrence of parts of the body, e.g. female hands and children's legs, the tables show no significant reduction in instances of occurrence of adult parts of the body in the Saudi edition compared to the UK edition (UK= **10**, Saudi = **6**). In terms of parts of the body of children, no reduction in instances of occurrence is detected (UK= **4**, Saudi = **4**). Rather, both the UK edition

and the Saudi edition display the same instances of occurrence of pets as participants (3 instances). The following charts summarise the percentages of instances of occurrence of social actors in the two editions.

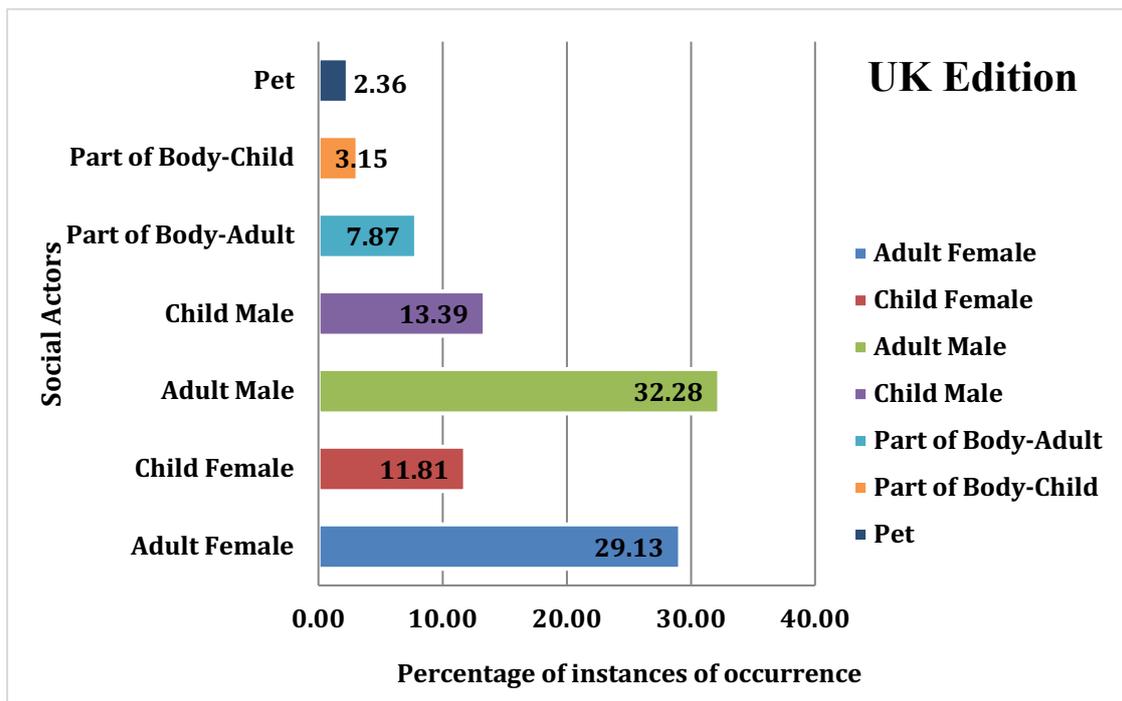


Figure 16: Percentages of instances of occurrence of social actors in the UK edition

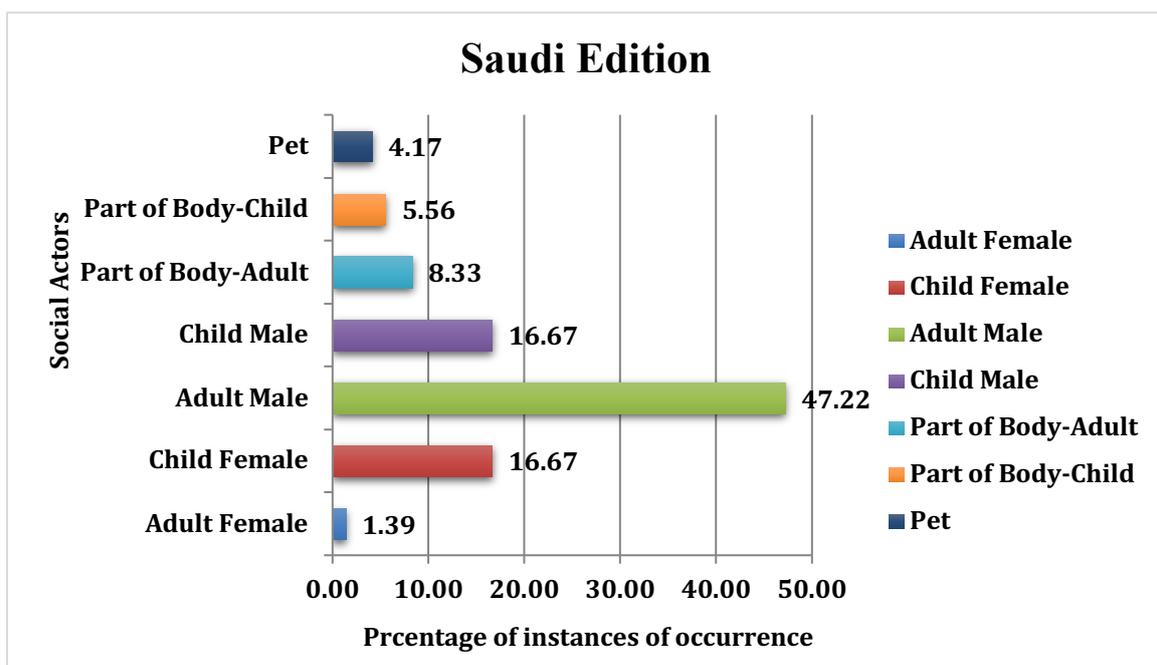


Figure 17: Percentages of instances of occurrence of social actors in the Saudi edition

Together, these results provide important insights into IKEA's exclusion strategy in the Saudi edition. First, the comparison between the two editions shows that the UK edition employs more human participants than the Saudi edition, which means that there is exclusion at play. Second, exclusion in the Saudi edition is governed by the gender and age of the social actors. That is, adult females are totally excluded, with one exception, which will be analyzed in the following parts, whereas female children are minimally excluded. It is worth mentioning that the catalogue also includes four pages that have pictures of female designers in the UK edition. These are all deleted in the Saudi edition, suggesting that the exclusion is not about females but rather anything that signifies overt femininity. Third, adult and child male participants are excluded from some of the pages of the Saudi edition.

The aforementioned observations show that most of the exclusions of females in the Saudi edition are achieved by either deleting females from pages while leaving other accompanying social actors, or deleting all the social actors occurring with them on the pages, even if they are males or children. Therefore, the choice of relevant images for analysis from the catalogue is based on these exclusion strategies. A clear example of the first type of exclusion is seen on page 158 of the UK edition, which corresponds to page 160 of the Saudi edition. It occurs in the first part of the catalogue setting 'Life at Home'. The social actors in the UK edition number are two, a male and a female, whereas in the Saudi edition there is only one social actor, a male, because the female is excluded. The pages are exactly the same, having the same interior and products, with the exception of the female. The following two figures illustrate this. This picture is one of many pictures that received attention in the media coverage reporting the incident of female deletion, as will be seen in the following chapter.

(a) UK Edition



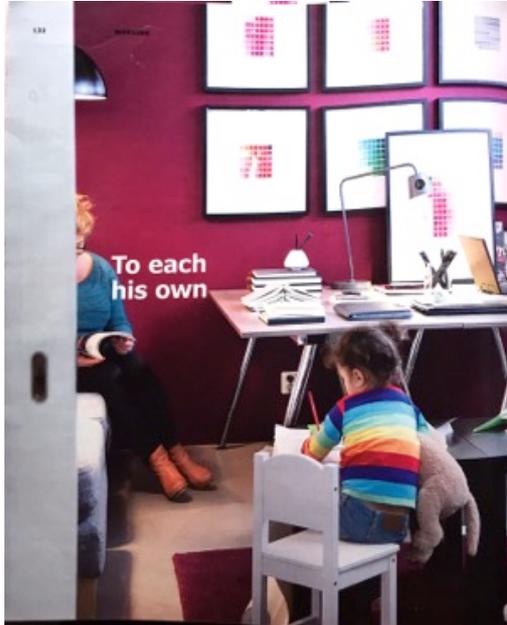
(b) Saudi Edition



Figure 18: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 158/160)

The second type of exclusion is accomplished by deleting all the social actors from the Saudi edition. See figure 19 for further illustration of this.

(a) UK Edition



(b) Saudi Edition



Figure 19: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 132/134)

In figure 19 (a), there are two social actors, a female and a little girl. The setting is labelled as ‘working’ on the catalogue page and the little girl’s back is towards the viewer. She is sitting on a chair and drawing. On the far-left side of the picture there is a female sitting and holding a magazine. Half of her upper part of the body is visible. They are both engaged in their own activities. But the same page in the Saudi edition (figure 19 (b)) has no social actors, as the female and the little girl have both been deleted. Instead, the picture shows traces of the little girl’s activity in the form of her drawing paper and pencils. In semiotics this is called an ‘indexical sign’. Indexes are ‘things that correlate to, or infer, another thing’ (Ledin & Machin 2018: 56). So, the unfolded drawing paper and the chair that is pushed back in 19 (b) index the presence of someone. This means that we are not seeing actual unfolding events but are reading indices of what is taking place (Ledin & Machin 2018).

In addition, it is noted that the *age* of the female participant is an important factor in determining whether to delete her or not, and this is because age is related to femininity. Besides the exclusion of adult females, young girls are sometimes deleted, especially when wearing exposing dresses.

(a) UK Edition

(b) Saudi Edition



Figure 20: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 145/147)

For example, in figure 20 (a), the setting is that of ‘relaxing’ and there is one social actor there, a young girl in her bedroom. She is holding a microphone and singing and dancing in the UK edition. She is wearing a white sleeveless short dress that is above her knees. Her hair is loose, and she is very dynamic and feminine. Meanwhile, figure 20 (b) shows the same interior and products as figure 20 (a), but with differences in the space allocated for furniture. The major difference is that there are no social actors there as the girl is totally removed from the Saudi edition, and this is also about removing the activity as well as removing the feminine body of the girl, which is emphasized by her revealing dress. This exclusion shows that IKEA sees Saudi consumers as serious and practical buyers, who care about the products more, and who at the same time dislike exposing a female’s body.

In addition, a close examination of the catalogue reveals a third type of exclusion in the Saudi edition, which is achieved by means of Photoshop and happens once in the Saudi edition. In Figures 21–22, below, the focus is on the frame related to the detected third type of exclusion.

UK Edition



Figure 21: Social actors in the UK edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 152)

Saudi Edition



Figure 22: Social actors in the Saudi edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 154)

The fourth frame in figure 21 is a vertical one on the right side of the page and it occupies a space from the bottom towards the top. It is a picture of a female sitting on a chair, with her

back towards the viewer. Her hair is extremely short, and her earrings are visible. She is wearing skinny denim trousers and a white top showing her collarbone. But in the Saudi edition, figure 22 shows that this picture is Photoshopped, as the female is transformed into a male figure by covering her bare feet with black socks and adjusting her white top to let it look like a male vest, while covering her exposed shoulder. The earring has been removed, and the picture has been altered to a relaxing male. IKEA has relied on Photoshop, the very short hair of the female participant and the fact that she is not facing the viewer. This has helped IKEA to achieve the desired alteration smoothly and skilfully, because IKEA has deleted the female in the third frame as shown above. What happens here also comes under what van Leeuwen (2008) calls the ‘exclusion’ of a social actor, in this case a female. The exclusion is done by removing the signifiers of femininity, by ‘means of Photoshop image manipulation techniques’ (van Leeuwen 2008: 42). That is, all signifiers of femininity, such as the earring, the exposed female shoulder and the bare foot, are deleted or altered to produce a more masculine look. These two figures show that there are two types of exclusion taking place on the same page: the deletion of all social actors including the male and the female from the Saudi edition, and Photoshopping a female social actor by removing her femininity and hence projecting a masculine figure instead of deleting her, which analytically is still an exclusion.

Likewise, as aforementioned, males and children are also excluded from the Saudi edition. For example, on page 121 in the UK edition, the social actors are a man, a boy and a teenage boy. The following figure illustrates this.



Figure 23: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 121/123)

Figure 23 (a) shows that inside the first frame there are two participants sitting on a dining table. The picture portrays interaction between the male and the boy, where the male is looking at what the boy is drawing. The boy's back is to the viewer and he is busy drawing. The next frame shows a teenager who is looking at his laptop and eating crisps while listening to headphones. But in the Saudi edition, figure 23 (b) shows that this picture is different, it only has one frame and there are no social actors in it. They have all been deleted and traces of what they are holding, such as the paper and cups that contain the colouring brushes of the little boy, and the laptop of the teenage boy with a cup instead of the crisps, are displayed on the table. In fact, figure 23 confirms that males and boys are also deleted from the Saudi edition for unjustified reasons, if we only look at the page in front of us. However, if we look at page 120 in the UK edition, there is a female sitting at the dining table. This could mean that IKEA has deleted all the social actors from the two pages for coherence and balance, as they are in the form of a two-page layout because the catalogue has a landscape format with a horizontal shape, which makes the images more lifelike.

Moreover, the visual absence of the female and male participants necessitates including another criterion in the examination, which is the setting where they are located, which is devoid of female and male social actors. A close look at the UK edition of the IKEA 2013 catalogue shows that the setting is divided into three main parts: life at home, furniture and home furnishings, and information. It is a mixture of domestic indoor and store information sections. In the UK edition, female and male social actors are present in almost all three sections, with varying frequencies of occurrence. The following chart summarizes these settings.

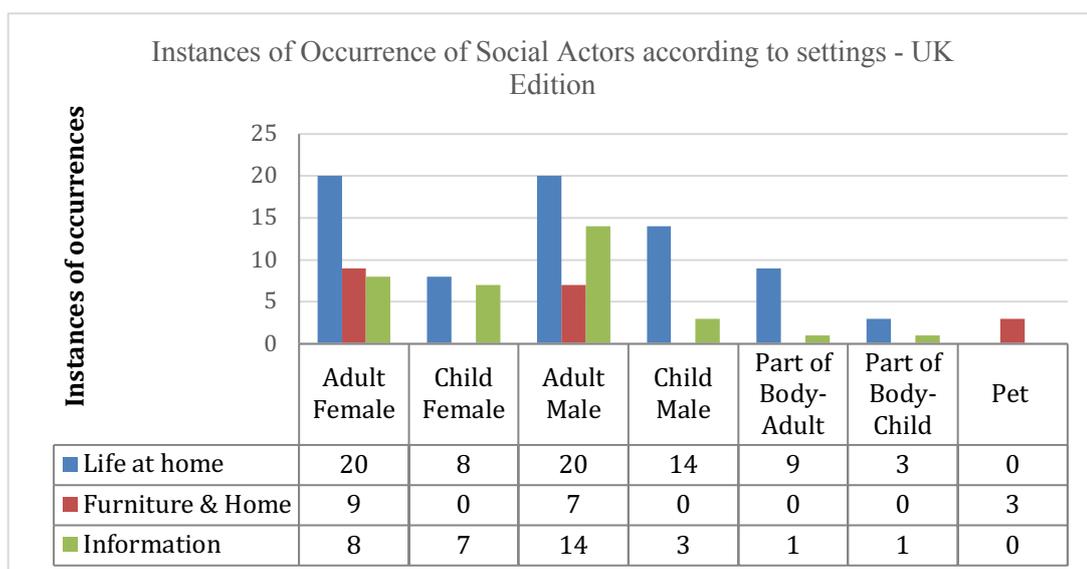


Figure 24: Distribution of social actors in the UK 2013 IKEA catalogue according to setting

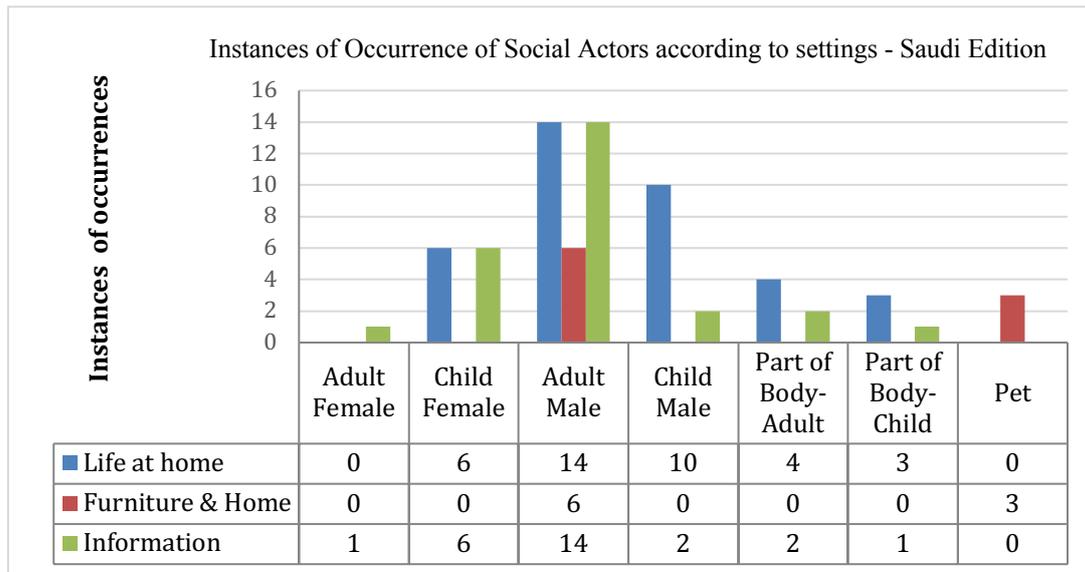


Figure 25: Distribution of social actors in the Saudi 2013 IKEA catalogue according to setting

The above charts show that there are differences in the instances of occurrences of females in the UK edition and the Saudi one according to setting. In the first setting of ‘life at home’, adult females occur in the UK edition while they are completely excluded from the Saudi one (UK = 20, Saudi = 0). It is worth noting that this domestic domain is sensitive in the Saudi culture, as ‘life at home’ is assumed to be very private and invisible to the public domain, especially in terms of the presence of femininity. This could be a reason behind the exclusions occurring in the Saudi edition. This means that there is strict control over such depictions in the Saudi edition in order to comply with the country’s presumed cultural norms and values. Hence, it could be assumed that IKEA is aware that it should conform to the religious and ethical codes of advertisements in the KSA, as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two. The detected exclusions show that IKEA took on the task of designing a very creative marketing strategy in its depiction of femininity in the catalogue. This is in line with what was mentioned in Chapter Two (see 2.3.2) about how companies in the KSA engage in self-compliance in order to satisfy Saudi norms and hence deliver their message with a twist. As for adult male social actors, the highest frequency of occurrences is detected in the first setting (UK= 20, Saudi = 14). This shows that males occur in the same domestic settings as females, which is in accordance with the equal gender roles spotted in the UK edition. However, they are also excluded from the Saudi edition.

In sum, the findings show that in representing different social actors, IKEA makes semiotic choices from the available options. These choices are not neutral but rather based on the stance of the communicator/sign-maker in representing the social actors (see Machin and Mayr (2012)

on this). IKEA’s semiotic choices in the Saudi edition are affected by the genders of the participants. Its strategy for visually representing people in the Saudi edition catalogue is one of exclusion, i.e. not including all social actors together in contexts where, in the reality of the social context of KSA, they are present. Moreover, this strategy of exclusion is achieved by either deleting females from the page while keeping other participants, or deleting all the participants, regardless of their gender. A third strategy is used once in the form of Photoshopping, it is achieved by transforming a female into a more masculine figure, as shown above. The exclusion and its varied types communicate particular attitudes towards female participants. The following figure sums up these three types.

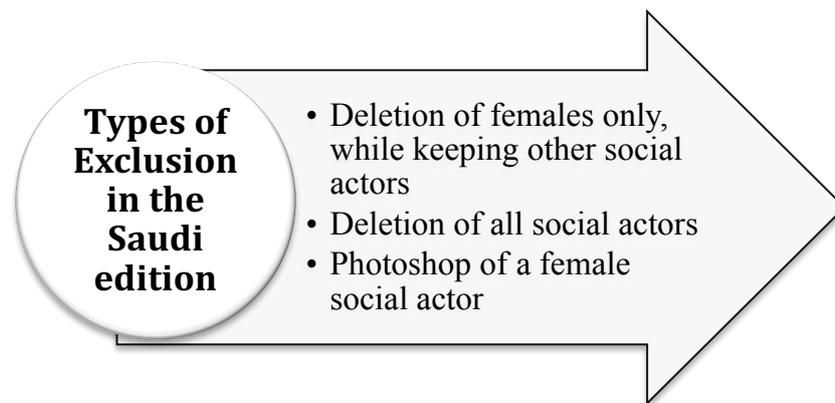


Figure 26: Types of exclusion of social actors in the Saudi edition of the catalogue

6.4.2. Roles

Roles refer to what people do or what is done to them. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 142), people in pictures may be depicted as being involved in some action or not; and if they are involved, they are the doers of the action, i.e. agents, or the people to whom the action is done, i.e. patients. Hence, agency and action are concerned with who does what to whom. Moreover, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) assert that images can represent the world narratively in terms of ‘doing’ and ‘happening’. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) further distinguish two different narrative processes: action processes and reactional processes. As discussed in the theory chapter, these are determined depending on the type of vector and the number and kind of participants. The following analysis aims to reveal which processes apply to each analyzed image.

In the aforementioned figure 23 (a), the whole picture shows the social actors engaged in doing different activities at different times of the day. Therefore, the structure of representation here

is what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 141) call a 'narrative structure', it shows that the participants are connected to one another through invisible lines called *vectors* (see section 3.2.3.1). Vectors represent directions; and because these invisible lines connect the participants, the viewer understands the participants to be interacting with one another. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 46) explain vectors thus: '[w]hat in language is realized by words of the category 'action verbs' is visually realized by elements that can be formally defined as *vectors*' (emphasis in the original). Thus, following Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), in the first frame, the male is the reactor who forms a vector with his eyes. The boy is a phenomenon because he is the one whom the reactor is looking at. This type of reactional process is a transactional one as an eye-line vector connects both reactor and phenomenon. The male is interacting with the boy by simply looking at what he is doing. In the second frame, there is a line (invisible) formed between the teenage boy and the laptop (inanimate object) as he stares at it, and this constitutes a vector and hence focuses the attention of the viewer on the relationship between him and the object. It is also a transactional reaction process.

On the other hand, in figure 23 (b), the representation in the Saudi edition shows what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) call a conceptual one, as the image possesses a static essence. There is no interaction between the elements in the picture, as the picture lacks a vector to create action. It shows the static concept of a dining table. In fact, this picture gives us the impression that a past narrative, a past action, took place there. This is contrary to the sense of the present time we are in (23a). Therefore, both pictures show the same setting (eating), but their visual grammar is quite different.

Moreover, it is noted that in the UK edition of the IKEA catalogue, the social actors are shown carrying out domestic actions. For example, on page **93** of the UK edition, the social actors consist of a male, a female and two little boys. They represent a family in a bathroom setting who are involved in a cleaning process. See the images below.

(a) UK edition



(b) Saudi edition



Figure 27: Comparison between the UK and Saudi editions on the visual level (pages 93/95)

In figure 27 (a), the female (presumably mother) is standing next to her son who is about to brush his teeth and her upper body is reflected in the frame of the mirror in front of her, showing her directed looks at him. The father is seen kneeling on the floor holding his little son. Both adults are shown as agents who are looking after their children and helping them to clean themselves. The little boys are the patients in this image as they are the ones who are being looked after. The whole family is in a very casual domestic atmosphere, wearing pyjamas and either getting ready for a fresh new day or a good night's sleep. The type of representation in this picture is a narrative one as it 'relates the participants in terms of 'doing' and 'happening', of the unfolding actions' (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2002: 141). It has a vector that connects the participants, such as the outstretched arms of the male to hold the little boy and the eye line of the female that is directed at the boy. The vector here expresses a dynamic process of holding and embracing, represented by the male's arm around the boy which directs the viewer towards the child in the case of the male and the little boy; whereas it creates a reaction rather than an action in the case of the female looking at the older boy. Therefore, there are two narrative processes going on in this picture: action and reactional. The former is realized in the case of the male (actor) and the little boy (goal), and the latter in the case of the female (reactor) and the boy (phenomenon). Furthermore, the narrative structure of this page in the UK edition reveals that the male and female are represented as equally active. The nature and the occasion of their action in the image are the same. They are represented in an equal pose doing something

to their children. The two little boys are represented as less active, in this context, as they are shown as receivers rather than actors.

On the other hand, figure 27 (b) shows that there are three social actors instead of four, as the female is not shown in the bathroom with her family, and even her reflection in the mirror has been deleted. There is a strategy of exclusion in the Saudi edition of the catalogue because of not visually representing the female. The male and the boys are represented in the same way as in the UK edition. They are still represented narratively in terms of what they are doing in the picture. The boy is standing on a stool by himself and his hand is stretched to turn on the tap to brush his teeth. This is an action process where the boy is the actor from whom the vector emanates in the form of a stretched hand. When these two versions of the same image are put next to each other, as is the case in the media coverage, the exclusion becomes very apparent.

Another example of the roles assigned to social actors is found on pages **102** and **103** in the UK edition, where the analyzed picture is part of a two-page layout. The two pages present the setting of a kitchen where there are three social actors. There is a female on page **102**, whose left side and back are what the viewer can see. She is represented as engaged in cooking. On page **103**, there is a male and a female. The male is washing vegetables in his hands and looking at the female who is facing him and cutting some food on a cutting board. The male's eye line forms a vector to connect him to the female, who is looking back at him. The viewer sees his upper part of the body. The viewer can also see the side profile of the female's smiling face. They are both equally engaged in the process of food preparation, while interacting with one another. In contrast, the Saudi edition does not display any of the three participants, as can be seen in the pictures below.



Figure 28: Social actors in the UK edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 102)



Figure 29: Social actors in the Saudi edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 104)

In Figure 28, all of the social actors have been removed from both pages. The image represents a static concept rather than participants engaged in some kind of action. There is a focus on the props in the kitchen. Therefore, the representation in Figure 28 is a narrative one as it relates the participants in the terms of what they are doing. It represents cooking in action; it is personal; it is dynamic. On the other hand, the representation in Figure 29 is a conceptual one as it excludes the users who were cooking from the kitchen setting; it is impersonal; it is static.

In a nutshell, the above analysis shows that the social actors are engaged in domestic, familial roles in the catalogue. This is consistent with the type of the multimodal piece at hand and the products advertised in the catalogue under study.

6.5. The Image and the Viewer

This part follows Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) in positioning the viewer in relation to the people depicted in the image. It answers the question of how the depicted people relate to the viewer. As mentioned in Chapter Three (section 3.2.3.2), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) focus on three dimensions: (a) distance, (b) gaze and (c) angle. The aim here is to find out whether these dimensions affected the exclusion of females from the Saudi edition, and if yes how.

6.5.1 Social Distance

In pictures, distance translates as ‘size of frame’ (close shot, medium shot, long shot etc.) (Machin 2007: 116). It simply means how much of the subject is shown in a particular shot, i.e. how close the represented participants are to the viewer. Distance communicates interpersonal

relationships and indicates closeness in the sense that ‘people keep their distance from strangers and keep close to their nearest’ (van Leeuwen 2008: 138). Hence, distance becomes symbolic as people who are shown in a ‘long shot’ look as if they are strangers, while those shown in a ‘close-up’ look as if they are one of the *us* group. According to Machin (2007), a close shot suggests intimacy, while a longer shot is much more impersonal.

Moving on now to consider how the distance dimension is at work, the IKEA catalogue has pictures with a range of shots. The focus is on those that are related to the participants’ exclusion from the Saudi edition. The aim is to find out whether social distance has affected excluding female participants, and if yes, possible causes for those exclusions are examined. The figure below is an example of a close shot in the UK edition versus a medium shot in the Saudi edition of the same page.

(a) UK Edition



(b) Saudi Edition



Figure 30: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (pages 119/121)

In figure 30 (a), the image is a close up of three female social actors. According to Machin and Mayr (2012) close-ups are used when the viewer is meant to imagine the participant in the image as the agent of the feelings expressed there. Here, the three females are depicted as friends who are happily sitting on a dining table and enjoying their meal; this is magnified by a closer viewing position. Two of them are facing the viewer in a frontal view, while the third female’s side back body is seen in a rear view, which gives a limited view of her and could

create interest in her. The image here depicts reality with all the emotions and feelings of the participants who are part of the real life. In contrast, figure 30 (b) has no social actors at all as they are all removed from the picture. Instead, there is a middle-shot view of a dining table, which is suitable in a setting entitled 'eating'. The focus here is on the table and its tableware and hence it gives more details about the advertised products.

Grabbing the attention of the viewer is the main point of both images. However, in figure 30 (a) the attention is directed towards the unfolding action/reaction of the social actors more than the dining table, which is supposed to be the main purpose of the advertisement. Therefore, the attention-getting close up here left out the product that could enhance the ad's call as the viewer is drawn into the participants' personal space and shares their feelings of joy in this image. The female social actors are the primary focus within the shot and are shown in a way that blurs the background around the image. On the other hand, in figure 30 (b) the attention of the viewer is directed towards the advertised product and thus the intention here is to deliver information about the dining table which is the focus of attention within the shot. It also permits room for more space and a bit of the surrounding setting unlike the image in 30(a).

Therefore, because there is an association between physical proximity and intimacy, the female social actors are excluded from the Saudi catalogue as they are considered so close to the viewer in the UK edition. In real life, proximity is generally associated with more attention and more intense involvement. This should hold true for the viewer's reaction to people in images. IKEA's exclusion strategy is guided by the assumption of cultural unsuitability of the females' being close to the Saudi viewers. The close up shot draws the attention of the viewer to the females as individuals and the close up creates a sense of intimacy with those represented, which IKEA assumes not suitable to the Saudi audience and hence excludes the females completely from the page. Thus, Saudi Arabia's culture shapes gender representation in the IKEA catalogue.

Another example of the social distance of the participants' images in the catalogue that affected the exclusion of the social actors is seen in page 314 in the UK edition. The page consists of six frames in each one there is an unfolding action and social actors.

(a) UK Edition

(b) Saudi Edition



Figure 31: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the 2013 IKEA catalogue (page 314)

Figure 31 (a) shows that most of the photos on the page are long shots, as the participants are in the far distance and their full figures are shown. The first frame to the top-left side of the page has three social actors: a male, a female and a little girl. They are walking and the viewer can see a rear view of them. The female is holding the hand of the little girl, while the male is looking at her and walking next to her. His profile is visible to the viewer. The female's and the little girl's faces are not visible from behind. The viewer sees their backs instead of their eyes and faces, which gives the impression of two anonymous strangers walking towards an IKEA store. Likewise, the photos in the Saudi edition, in figure 31 (b), are long shots and the first frame is exactly the same as in the UK edition, despite the presence of a female social actor in it. In fact, this view of the female and the girl from behind may imply exclusion, because in the real-world interactions with others, a view from the back can imply turning away or exclusion. This might be the reason for keeping the female's picture in the Saudi edition. Here, the long shot suggests an impersonal relationship. They are not individuals but represent people in general who are heading to the store, as the page is entitled 'welcome to the store' and this is a general welcome to all potential customers. The picture gives the impression that this is somewhere that the whole family can go together. In fact, the viewer looks at the represented participants and has an attitude towards them, but does not imaginarily engage with them. Thus, for IKEA, this picture of the female does not violate the ethical code of the KSA and therefore no modification is needed.

The second frame in figure 31(a), which is in the middle at the top of the page under a textual space, has two social actors: a male and a teenage girl. The camera for this image uses a long telephoto lens, so it is far from the social actors and the foreshortening effect emphasizes the background, where there is a wide variety of home furnishings and accessories. The viewer can see a rear view of the male who is bending to examine something. The teenage girl is sitting on a sofa touching a folded rug, with her face visible to the viewer. Her clothes are modest as well. This frame is exactly the same in the Saudi edition, as seen in figure 31 (b). The social actors are still there and the teenage girl has not been removed. Although her full body is seen, yet she is in the distance. A long shot is used here to give a general impression of location rather than specific details about the social actors. It is used to orient the viewer by showing the social actors' surroundings and whereabouts. Therefore, the focus is not on them. This could be the reason for not excluding the teenage girl, since depicting people at a distance makes the viewer feel less connected to them.

Figure 31 (a) has two more frames that are worthy of mention here. These are the third frame to the top right of the page, and the fifth frame which is in the middle of the page. Both frames include social actors. The third frame has three social actors: a male, a female and a teenage girl. The photo is a long shot and the female is seen busy looking at something, perhaps a magazine in her hand, while the male, who is an IKEA employee, is looking at the teenage girl. This frame is different in the Saudi edition, as there is only the male in it. The females have been removed, despite the fact it is a long shot. The fifth frame in the UK edition, figure 31 (a), has four social actors: two females and two males. The males are not very distinguishable as they are in the far distance. As for the females, one of them is standing facing the viewer, and the second one is sitting on a bed in the showroom, with her profile but not her face, visible. They have both been removed from the Saudi edition, figure 31 (b), and been replaced by a male who is examining the bed. The fact that the females are seen in a bedroom setting, with one of them is sitting on the bed, is regarded by IKEA as something inconsistent with the Saudi cultural code of sensitivity, and therefore exclusion occurs. Again, IKEA redesigned its catalogue and adapted it to suit Saudi norms.

Therefore, there is no exclusion in the first two frames of the pictures in figure 31 (b), as the catalogue designer did not see a need to do so, and this might be due to the female's rear view in the first frame, which does not show her features and hence does not draw attention to her. As for the second frame, the teenage girl is in the far distance, which again does not attract the attention of the viewer to her, bearing in mind her clothes, which are the opposite of the

revealing dress seen in figure 20 (a). One can conclude from the above that the strategy of distanciation, representing people as ‘not close to us’, as ‘strangers’, was a decisive factor in not excluding the female social actors from the Saudi edition. Hence, the importance of distance as a visual variable is evident in the representation of female social actors in the catalogue. In sum, from the perspective of interpersonal metafunction, the social actors are positioned at either a close social distance or far from the viewer. This affects their visual representation in the catalogue.

6.5.2 Social Interaction

Here, the focus is on whether the depicted people are looking at the viewer or not. Machin (2007: 110) states that this has to do with ‘to what extent we are encouraged to engage with the participants’. As previously mentioned, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out that images can either ‘offer’ or ‘demand’, just like linguistic representations. This is realized by the system of *gaze* (van Leeuwen 2005) (see section 3.2.3.2.3). Gaze creates reaction rather than action. This is seen in the aforementioned Figure 30a, where the female on the right is gazing off-frame, looking at something or someone specific, which is left to the imagination of the viewer. Hence, this image is an ‘offer’. It addresses the viewer indirectly, as no contact is made. The viewer has the role of an ‘invisible onlooker’.

On the other hand, in figure 32a below, the female is looking directly at the viewer, so that, as in real life, there is a symbolic contact between her and the viewer. Thus, in semiotic terms, she is depicted in an image act, where the producer uses the image to do something to the viewer. That is why this kind of image ‘demands’ the viewer enter into an imaginary relation with her.



Figure 32: Social actors in the UK and Saudi editions of the IKEA 2013 catalogue (page 213)

In figure 32 (a), the vector formed by her eyeline connects her to the viewer and hence a strong message is conveyed, as the viewer becomes an active participant in a relationship between image and interpreter. Further meaning can be derived from the image as to what expectations the image has of the viewer. The expression of the female here conveys a meaning of ‘come here’ and see/ look at/ examine the products with me, rather than ‘stay away’. Hence, the image is ‘demand’ where a visual ‘you’ is created and the image demands something from the viewer (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 117).

On the other hand, in figure 32 (b), the female is removed and the focus is only on the advertised products. A possible explanation for this exclusion might be IKEA’s belief that explicit attention to females is not accepted in Saudi Arabia, because the eye gaze in figure 32 (a) is ‘a standard attention-getting device’ (Messaris 1997: 21) that functions to catch the eye of the viewer. Moreover, when comparing the above figures 28 (b) and 32 (a), it is worth mentioning that the rear view of the female in figure 31 (b) is a radical alternative to the direct gaze of the female in Figure 32a, and so it is logical to assume that that is why it was excluded from the Saudi edition, as the rear view denies the viewer a fuller look at the female.

It is noted that these two forms of address (offer, demand) are combined in the catalogue as it is constructed as a progression of ‘demand’ to ‘offer’ pictures in the UK edition. However, in the Saudi edition, whether the gaze is an offer or demand in itself, this does not affect the exclusion of females as they are removed anyway from the pages of the Saudi edition. This could be because the viewer is still expected to look at the females, whether their eyeline is directed towards them or not. That is, there is still a direct (demand) and indirect (offer) social interaction between the viewer and the depicted females.

6.5.3 Social Relation

Here, the focus is on the angle from which a person is seen. This includes a vertical angle, whether a person is seen from above or below; and a horizontal angle, whether a person is seen from the front, the side or somewhere in-between. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 139), these angles express two aspects of the social relation represented between the viewer and the people in the picture: ‘power and involvement’. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) see a vertical angle as related to power differences. On the other hand, a horizontal angle realizes symbolic involvement or detachment (ibid.).

The focus here is on a horizontal angle, where the photographer has situated him/herself in front of the presented participants or photographed them from the side. This angle is the type detected in the IKEA catalogue and related to the exclusion of females from the Saudi edition. The UK edition displays social actors from both frontal and oblique (side-on) angles. For example, a frontal angle is used to present the male and female in figure 18 (a). This is seen in figure 32 (a) as well, where the female is presented from a frontal angle. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 136), this frontal angle says ‘what you see here is part of our world’, and thus it is used to increase the viewer’s identification and involvement with the represented participants. On the other hand, the female in the bathroom in figure 27 (a) is presented in profile, from an oblique angle. This is also observed in figure 30 (a) where the females are again shown from an oblique angle. This oblique angle says that what we see is not part of our world; it is their world, and hence something that we are not involved in.

The important point here is that this social relation was not considered when deciding whether to exclude females from the Saudi edition or not. Females were excluded regardless of from which angle they were photographed. This means that detachment from and involvement of the viewer in the images is not considered by IKEA in its exclusion of depicted females from the Saudi edition of the catalogue. It shows that, for IKEA, a female is still visible no matter from what angle she is photographed, and hence this explicit display should be removed, as it is probably not welcome in Saudi society. The following figure 33 summarizes the results of the relation between interpersonal dimensions and the exclusion of females from the Saudi edition.

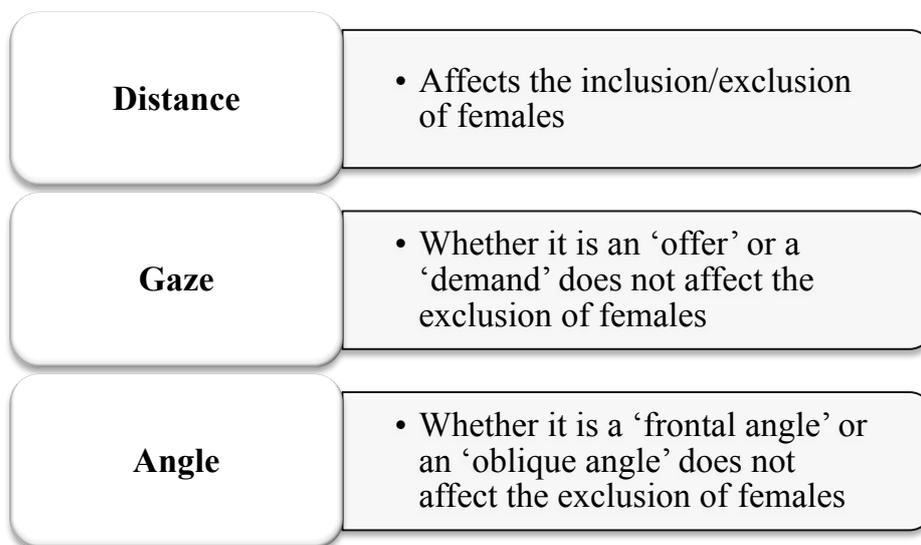


Figure 33: Interpersonal aspects and female exclusion in the Saudi edition

6.6. Multimodality as a combined mode

This part aims to emphasize the usefulness of the investigation of different modes of expression and their combinations to conduct a thorough multimodal analysis of gender stereotypes in commercial product advertising, here the IKEA catalogue. According to Bateman (2014: 6), these combinations are considered in terms of ‘meaning multiplication’. That is, the significance of a combination of different modes of meaning can be worth more than the information that we get from those modes when used in isolation (ibid.). As indicated earlier, IKEA used two modes of communication or semiotic resources in the 2013 catalogue: language as writing and images. Bearing the notion of meaning multiplication in mind, it is not possible to make complete sense of a multimodal text by simply focusing on the linguistic parts alone without examining other visual features that might be contributing to the meaning of the text. Although the visual and verbal elements of the catalogues analyzed in Chapters Five and Six are studied separately, for the sake of clarity, they do work together in showing how IKEA approaches its Saudi customer base, and also displaying gender role representations in their catalogues. Hence, the most striking combined finding that emerged from the verbal and visual data analyses was that females were visible on the verbal level but excluded on the visual level, while males were excluded on the verbal level but visible on the visual level. As indicated previously, feminine linguistic visibility means that IKEA was associating females with domesticity and hence restricting Saudi females to traditional housewife roles. On the other hand, the visual exclusion of females from the Saudi edition was probably done to cope with the perceived social norms of the KSA.

Likewise, the verbal exclusion of males from domestic zones and their visual visibility in the Saudi edition in domestic zones is also remarkable. If we look again at Figure 27b in the Saudi edition of the catalogue, we can see that the image is doing something that is not done in words. We note that there are three social actors in a bathroom setting: a male and two boys. It is easily spotted that the male is left alone in a traditional domestic setting with little children. This is in sharp contrast to the message we get from both the whole catalogue where males are linguistically excluded and from the verbal linguistic mode on the same page, where the caption above the picture addresses females overtly, indicating that this is their zone. This is evident from the use of a female gender marker in the verb *taʔxuḍiihaa* ‘(you) take it’. Thus, meaning multiplication from the verbal and visual modes conveys that males are excluded from domestic zones linguistically, but they are visually visible in those domestic settings. This text, multiplied by imagery, is more than a text simply occurring alongside the image. It sends a paradoxical message to the Saudi audience in two respects. First, Saudi people are not used to seeing a male

in a domestic parental role, let alone by himself, and hence excluding the female from the image resulted in a new image with its own affordances. Second, it does not paint an accurate picture of existing gender roles in the KSA. Unlike Sweden, in the KSA, males do not have a high level of shared parental responsibility for home and children. This paradox in representation could be confusing for the Saudi audience/reader because the reader might not know about the exclusion that took place. He just looks at what is represented in front of him in the catalogue and might wonder why the female is not there, despite being addressed, or why the male is not verbally addressed despite being the only existing social actor with the children in what is clearly a very domestic setting. Furthermore, we can interpret Figure 27b from the perspective of van Leeuwen's (2008: 136) 'division of labor' between words and images, as words provide the facts, the things that need to be said in many words, while images provide interpretations, ideologically coloured angles, and they do so implicitly, by suggestion. That is, the words in Figure 27b overtly provide information about the things a female can do in such a setting, while the image implies that the male is the one who is meant to do those things. Thus, we end up with paradoxical messages in this figure.

In summary, this section shows that it is crucial to understand the effect of all modes of communication that are present in any multimodal text. Besides, in order to have a successful marketing tool, the messages of advertising materials should be very clear and easy to understand, unlike the paradoxical and confusing message that occurred in the Saudi edition of IKEA's 2013 catalogue. In trying to comply with the cultural norms of the KSA, IKEA in fact created a discursive paradox, something quite contrary to Saudi norms.

6.7. Concluding Remarks

The results of the above analysis enable an understanding of how IKEA adapted its advertising marketing tool to suit what it assumes about Saudi society. The study so far has investigated the differences in content of the IKEA catalogues under study in terms of their depiction of social actors from a gender perspective. Basically, the first research question in this study specifically asked to what extent females are shown in the IKEA catalogue and how they are depicted. The analysis shows that the percentage of instances of physical visibility of adult female participants in the UK catalogue is **29.13%**, while in the Saudi catalogue it is **1.39%**. A conclusion that may be drawn from the above is that, based on cultural assumptions, IKEA assumes that Saudi people in general prefer no female presence in advertisements. The issue here is about removing 'Western' culture and lifestyle, with the centrality of female visibility being the main issue. Likewise, the difference between females' occurrence in the UK and

Saudi editions shows that IKEA assumes that such deletion is a true cultural representation of the KSA and it is a form of representation that is sensitive to the cultural norms of the country. Hence, IKEA based its gender representation in the Saudi edition catalogue upon its perception of the social and cultural norms of the KSA.

Moreover, as seen before, the percentage of all social actors occurring in the UK catalogue is **38.72%**, while in the Saudi edition it is **22%**. These low percentages in both editions are significant in informing us that IKEA is solely focusing on its products in its marketing strategy, and so it depicts people to a lesser degree in its marketing tool, i.e. the catalogue. In fact, IKEA does use the physical appearance of mixed-gender participants on some pages in the catalogue to advertise its products. In other words, IKEA does not rely on human social actors to advertise its products everywhere.

Moreover, the exclusion incident probably involving Photoshop in figure 19 suggests that IKEA is very much aware of the deletions made in the Saudi edition catalogue. The fact that the catalogue is realized and constructed in a certain way, i.e. electronic imagery, plays a big role in facilitating such Photoshop use because these images are easily manipulated with computer software, whereas printed images require more work to alter them before they are printed. The IKEA catalogue comprises computer-generated imagery and takes months to create as they have to think about all the details, from initial ideas to print. This Photoshop incident indicates that IKEA thought about how to exclude all feminine signifiers from the Saudi edition carefully and skillfully, and hence it is difficult to treat the exclusions as a simple unintended mistake, as claimed by IKEA in its published apology (see Appendix B). It shows that there may have been explicit discussions about what to include and what to exclude in the Saudi edition, based on common stereotypical perceptions about the KSA. The changes made to the images probably make it more acceptable to the Saudi viewer, where no signifiers of femininity should be put on public display. This again demonstrates that the issue is about excluding all femininity appearances and thus it is both a gender issue and a biological sex one. The 2013 IKEA catalogue sign-maker had already decided what to include and exclude in terms of images based on 'cultural' assumptions about the target audience and the target market, i.e. Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 7. Representation of Saudi Arabia in Newspapers:

Verbal and Visual Analyses

7.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the media coverage of the issue of female deletion from the 2013 IKEA catalogue and the consequent portrayal of the parties involved in the exclusion incident, as represented by different segments of the newspapers in a number of Western countries. Since newspapers integrate texts and images to make meaning, an analysis of textual and visual components is necessary to better understand the meaning. This anchorage, the text-image relationship, is useful for interpreting the relationships between texts and images, since, according to Bateman (2014: 34), ‘the function of the caption-text is precisely to inform the reader of what they are looking at in the picture’. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 136), the ‘division of labor’ between word and image is that words provide the facts, the explanations, the things that need to be said in many words; while images provide interpretations, ideologically coloured angles, and they do so implicitly, e.g. by suggestion, by connotation. Thus, this study focuses on how linguistic and visual representations of the incident were constructed in the press, and whether there are ‘fixed attitudes’ that are coherently shared by these news semiotic resources. Therefore, this chapter answers the second main research question of the study (RQ2): how do the selected newspapers discursively represent the social actors when reporting the exclusion of females occurring in the 2013 IKEA catalogue? This in turn raises another related question: does such representation reinforce the image of the KSA as the cultural, political and moral ‘Other’ of the ‘West’?

This chapter focuses on analyzing newspaper discourse. The representation of social actors is a main theme in this study. Therefore, data analysis will ensue, focusing on the discursive construction of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in the articles under examination. The genre-specific features of the data play an important role in making some linguistic factors more effective than others, and hence these are considered in the analysis. According to Van Dijk (1991a), the general strategy of positive self-presentation and negative-other presentation is evident in discourse on various levels, such as headlines, quotes and local meanings. The analysis is realized by utilizing KhosraviNik’s (2010) analysis framework, whereby various analytical tools from CDS are systematically amalgamated. Consequently, the verbal analysis focuses on three levels: social actors, social action and argumentation (see section 4.2.3). This is followed by a visual analysis of the images accompanying news reports and editorials, focusing on compositional meanings. The main objective is to identify text-image relationships and whether or not the visual images accompanying news stories depict what is in the stories or at least contribute to

some of the meanings conveyed by texts. That is, whether visual-verbal relations complement each other or not.

7.2. Verbal Data

This part is based on an analysis of data from a number of editorials and news reports in different global newspapers that covered the issue of deleting females from the IKEA catalogue. The debate is about IKEA's corporate policy and willingness to conform to gender-biased social standards. In Sweden, questions were raised about IKEA's commitment to gender equality, stressing that IKEA projects an image of Sweden around the world, which prides itself on its gender-equality system. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, the period covered is the peak of the issue, i.e. October 2012 (see section 4.5.1). The data for this study is limited to newspapers that covered the deletion of females from the IKEA catalogue and thus comprise articles culled from 34 different media outlets representing seven different countries that dealt with the issue under study (see table 2 in section 4.6.2). A more detailed account of the genre and type of these newspaper articles is shown below.

Newspaper	Dateline	Country	By-line	Format	Genre
1. The Australian	1-10-2012	Australia	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
2. Newcastle Herald	3-10-2012	Australia	-	Tabloid	News Report
3. The Border Mail	3-10-2012	Australia	-	Tabloid	News Report
4. National Post	1-10-2012	Canada	Associated Press	Quality newspaper	News Report
5. Toronto Star	2-10-2012	Canada	H. Mallick	Quality newspaper	Editorial
6. Calgary Herald	2-10-2012	Canada	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
7. Irish Examiner	1-10-2012	Ireland	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
8. The New Zealand Herald	2-10-2012	New Zealand	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
9. Metro	2-10-2012	Sweden	-	Tabloid	News Report
10. The Local (L ₁)	1-10-2012	Sweden	Peter Lindholm	Digital news publisher	News Report
11. The Local (L ₂)	2-10-2012	Sweden	-	Digital news publisher	News Report
12. The Local (L ₃)	2-10-2012	Sweden	Ruben Brunsveld	Digital news publisher	News Report
13. The Local (L ₄)	25-10-2012	Sweden	-	Digital news publisher	News Report
14. The Guardian (TG ₁)	2-10-2012	UK	Nesrine Malik	Quality newspaper	Opinion Article

15. The Guardian (TG ₂)	1-10-2012	UK	B. Quinn and Agencies	Quality newspaper	News Report
16. The Independent (TI ₁)	2-10-2012	UK	T. Paterson	Quality newspaper	News Report
17. The Independent (TI ₂)	3-10-2012	UK	H. Lais	Quality newspaper	Opinion Article
18. Mail online	1-10-2012	UK	E. Clark	Tabloid	News Report
19. Belfast Telegraph	2-10-2012	UK	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
20. The Telegraph	1-10-2012	UK	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
21. The Express	1-10-2012	UK	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
22. Financial Times	2-10-2012	UK	R. Milne	Quality newspaper	News Report
23. Metro (USA)	1-10-2012	USA	P. Lindholm	Tabloid	News Report
24. Boston Globe (BG ₁)	1-10-2012	USA	J. Kayyem	Quality newspaper	Opinion Article Op-Ed
25. Boston Globe (BG ₂)	2-10-2012	USA	K. Ritter Associated Press	Quality newspaper	News Report
26. The Wall Street Journal	25-10-2012	USA	A. Molin	Quality newspaper	Opinion Article
27. The Palm Beach Post	4-10-2012	USA	Opinion Staff	Quality newspaper	Editorial
28. New York Times	2-10-2012	USA	J. Preston	Quality newspaper	News Report
29. Los Angles Times	1-10-2012	USA	T. Hsu	Quality newspaper	Opinion Article
30. The Washington Post	1-10-2012	USA	O. Khazan	Quality newspaper	News Report
31. USA Today	1-10-2012	USA	-	Quality newspaper	News Report
32. New York Post	1-10-2012	USA	Post Staff Report	Tabloid	News Report
33. New York Daily News	1-10-2012	USA	Associated Press	Tabloid	News Report
34. The Washington Times	1-10-2012	USA	K. Ritter Associated Press	Quality newspaper	News Report

Table 12: Distribution of source newspapers by genre and type

Table 12 shows that the genre of the news covering female exclusion from the IKEA catalogue varies between news reports and opinion articles (editorials). It further shows that they are a mixture of quality newspapers and tabloids.

7.2.1. Discursive construction of US and THEM

In this study, the focal point of the analysis depends on how the out-group and in-group entities are described, and hence represented. In other words, studying how the two groups are referred

to in the news reports is a study of representation. That is, in-/out-groups are given names to identify them on an ideological basis. Therefore, the discursive construction of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ starts with labelling the social actors, proceeds to a generalization of negative attributions and then elaborates arguments to justify the exclusion of many images and the inclusion of some (Reisigl & Wodak 2001). In the analysis, specific textual patterns in the presentation of news are examined to show how specific linguistic structures are employed to construct an ‘Us’ vs ‘Them’ dichotomy. As aforementioned, the analysis here is based on KhosraviNik’s (2010) three levels of analysis, which are based on two devices, the two main questions of *what* and *how*. Notably, these two devices interact with the context levels and the macro-structure in a network.

7.2.1.1. Level One: Social Actor

The first level of analysis is that of the social actors. Here, we ask two questions: What social actor(s) are (not) in the text? And how are the actor(s) referred to in the text? (KhosraviNik 2010). The first question on this analysis level is answered by identifying the social actors within the examined data. They are as follows: IKEA, Sweden, the West, the catalogue, Saudi Arabia, Saudi monarchy and Saudi culture. Following this, I look at the ways in which the authors of the articles under study polarize the representation of the SELF, i.e. ‘Us’, and the OTHER, i.e. ‘Them’. A more careful reading of the articles demonstrates that a dichotomized representation of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ participants can be found throughout the texts. Under ‘Us’, we have: Sweden, IKEA and West; whereas under ‘Them’, we have: Saudi Arabia, the monarchy and the catalogue.

The second device in KhosraviNik’s (2010) framework is the question: how are the social actors referred to in the text? This may be answered by exploring the operationalization of the *naming* mechanism in the same text, which means looking at what kinds of words there are in the text, i.e., analyzing what vocabulary the author chooses to use (see 4.2.3). According to Richardson (2007), the analysis of particular words used in a newspaper text is the first stage of any text or discourse analysis. Words convey both connoted and denoted meanings, and hence they convey an imprint of society, and of value judgements in particular. All types of words, and especially nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, carry connoted and denoted meanings. In the following parts, I will start with the referential strategies used to refer to ‘Us’ (the constructed in-group), and then I will move onto ‘Them’ (the constructed out-group).

7.2.1.1.1. Referential Strategies: US

In terms of references to ‘Us’, this is realized by the use of noun phrases or nouns that denote ‘freedom’, or via the use of pronouns. For example, Sweden is referred to as ‘liberal Sweden’. IKEA is referred to as a ‘furniture retail giant’, focusing on its reputation as a big company. Moreover, a systematic repetition of the pronouns ‘we’ and its possessive form ‘our’ is detected in the articles, specifically in the apology that was issued by IKEA and frequently quoted in most of the articles. The use of these pronouns contributes to the dichotomization of the world into Us/Them, i.e. into the West/Sweden and Saudi Arabia. For example, IKEA’s spokesman’s words to the *Metro* are frequently quoted: ‘We should have reacted and seen that this is in conflict with Ikea’s values’, ‘we understand why people are upset’ (The Metro 2012). Moreover, Sweden’s gender equality ombudsman was also quoted as saying ‘One can say that [Ikea] is supporting a view of women that we in Sweden distance ourselves from.’ The Swedish newspaper *The Local* even stated that ‘To judge this action from our Western perspective is to be just as culturally insensitive as Ikea’s critics accuse it of being’ (The Local 2012a). Therefore, it is clear that the objective of employing discursive referential strategies in representing the in-group ‘Us’ is the construction of a different and better ‘Us’.

7.2.1.1.2. Referential Strategies: THEM

As for the strategies used to refer to the out-group, ‘Them’, the following table summarizes the detected referential strategies found in the articles under study.

Discursive Strategy	Labelled Actor	Lexical reference
Referential/Nomination	Saudi Arabia	Conservative Islamic state
	Saudi Arabia	Conservative Muslim Kingdom
	Saudi Arabia	Evil culture in a dictatorship
	Saudi Arabia	Wild Wahhabi regime of the Saudis
	Saudi Arabia	Medieval
	Saudi Arabia	Muslim country
	Saudi Arabia	Affluent country
	Saudi Arabia	Islamic dollars
	Saudi Arabia	Muslim puritans
	Catalogue	anti-women furniture catalogue
	Catalogue	Arab brochure

Table 13: Referential strategies to refer to the Other

The above table shows that in the data there are four main entities referred to as the out-group, i.e. ‘Them’: Saudi Arabia, Saudi culture, Saudi monarchy and the catalogue itself. Saudi Arabia is defined by its religious identity. Therefore, the KSA is represented as a generic type. The generic category ‘Muslim’ is defined by its cultural and religious ‘Otherness’, thus emphasizing that the KSA is the religious Other of the in-group: the West. Likewise, Saudi Arabia’s culture is defined by a negative attribute, ‘evil’, as the following extract from *The Local* shows:

- (42). ‘evil culture in a dictatorship which made a habit of trampling on women’s rights’.
(*The Local*, 1 October 2012)

The above negative attribute that is accorded to Saudi Arabia enhances the theme of *female oppression* in Saudi Arabia, due to the country’s culture, and hence constructs it as the cultural Other of the in-group: the West. Moreover, the IKEA catalogue is also defined by it being an ‘anti-woman’ catalogue as well as ‘Arab’. In fact, referring to the catalogue as ‘Arab’ represents it as a generic type, as well. As for labelling the catalogue ‘anti-woman’, this defines it in terms of it being against the values of ‘US’, hence it belongs to ‘THEM’. Here, these two attributes, ‘Arab’ and ‘anti-women’, form traits that are opposed to the in-group’s attributes. Additionally, Saudi Arabia is represented as a rich country, as the adjective ‘affluent’ is attributed to the country.

7.2.1.1.3. Predicational Strategies: US

In addition to the referential strategies that are used to refer to social actors, there are other detected predicational strategies that show the characteristics and attributes that are attributed to the social actors. This part analyses the predicational strategies used to refer to the in-group first. Examining occurrences where the in-group ‘Us’ is referred to, it can be seen that the description of this entity is lexically realized through using positive attributive qualifiers of ‘Us’. The following extracts emphasize this point:

- (43) Sweden is one of the more strident champions of women’s rights.
(Malik 2012, *The Guardian*, 2 October 2012).

- (44) Swedish men and women proudly stand in a room having mastered self-assembly. Men and women try to share their lives, at home and at work, which is the great feminist dream.
(Mallick 2012, *Toronto Star*, 2 October 2012).

Moreover, a positive presentation of Sweden is apparent in the following:

- (45). 'Swedes ... pride themselves on egalitarian policies and [a] narrow gender gap.'
(*The Australian*, 1 October 2012)

The positive representation of Sweden, (Us), implies that the other (Saudi) does not share these positive traits. Therefore, in terms of predicational strategies characterizing the in-group, the content of the data constructs a positive 'Us' and characterizes the in-group as a free group that is a proud advocate of gender equality and women's rights. Furthermore, the use of the phrase 'in liberal Sweden' implies that the other party, Saudi Arabia, is not so inclined. In addition, describing Sweden as liberal, and a champion of women's rights, partly helps in the representation of Sweden as such. Positive attributions are overtly articulated and intensified, as seen in the extracts. In fact, all these examples show a positive self-representation and also highlight the differences between the two groups which, in turn, evokes the theme of 'Otherness' with regard to Saudi Arabia, as will be seen in the following parts.

7.2.1.1.4. Predicational Strategies: THEM

On the other hand, in terms of references to 'Them', these are realized by using negative, evaluative attributes. In fact, the detected themes that emerge in relation to Saudi Arabia within the current data can be grouped into three main categories: backwardness, female oppression and religious Otherness. The first group establishes a strong connection between Saudi Arabia and the acts of backwardness regarding the country's way of dealing with females. The following excerpt from the *Toronto Star* article is an example of an evaluative actor description used for Saudi Arabia, showing the quality of its presence:

- (46). 'the true lunacy of that nation of oil, sand and female diminishment'.
(Mallick 2012, *Toronto Star*, 2 October 2012).

Here, the journalist makes use of the ideological device of polarization, which is a semantic strategy for associating negative attributes with 'Them'. One may observe that a negative image of the KSA is realized by using the negative attributive qualifier 'lunacy' when describing the country. Furthermore, the distinguishing characteristics of the KSA are confined within the text and are simply reduced to it being a nation of 'oil', 'sand' and 'female diminishment'. It is apparent that, with the exception of it being defined with 'lunacy' and the existence of 'female diminishment' within it, which is also quite negative as it minimizes women's value, negative attributes ascribed to Saudi Arabia are not stated explicitly, and thus, this is conveyed 'between the lines'. Therefore, when referring to Saudi Arabia, the choice of the words oil and sand do

have significance in adding factuality, as they are all facts characterizing Saudi Arabia. Hence, adding ‘lunacy’ and ‘female diminishment’ may let the reader infer that Saudi Arabia is a weird, anti-women backward society. This is because the word *sand*, in its reference to Saudi Arabia, represents the desert and paints a picture of nomadic people residing in harsh living conditions, which, in turn, may imply backwardness and an uncivilized society. Similarly, oil is a reductionist way of referring to the country. In sum, the predicative strategy employed constructs a negative ‘Them’ and characterizes and connects the ‘Other’ as a social group displaying wealth (because of the oil), backwardness (the desert), gender inequality and hence Otherness. Based on the above analysis, the conclusion that one may draw is that the columnist made her decision concerning this social group and openly verbalizes it in a way that seeks to influence the readers and not give them the opportunity to decide for themselves. Rather, the self-opinions and judgement of the author in relation to this social group are technically imposed upon the readers. This is in line with Reisigl and Wodak’s (2001: 45) opinion that ‘the simplest and most elementary form of linguistic and rhetorical discrimination is that of identifying persons or groups of persons linguistically by naming them derogatorily, debasingly or vituperatively’. This is also in line with van Dijk’s (1991) view that the attitudes towards groups, or the opinions on specific events, may influence the ‘lexical choice’ of certain words for contextual reasons, such as the opinions of the speaker/writer about a group or their actions.

Furthermore, the theme of backwardness is also apparent in the data. As aforementioned, the issue of deleting females from the catalogue originated in Sweden, when *The Metro* (see Appendix H) led a forceful outcry over IKEA’s marketing strategy and its approach to gender inequality. It quoted Ohlsson (Sweden’s minister to the European Union), who commented on IKEA’s act as ‘medieval’ and related the removal of female pictures from the Saudi catalogue edition to an act of backwardness. Remarkably, cultural backwardness is one of the themes associated with Orientalist discourse about the East.

The second theme occurring when referring to the out-group is *female oppression* that leads to gender inequality. This is detected in the following examples.

- (47) What’s even more concerning is whether the future for women’s rights in Saudi Arabia can present any genuine grounds for optimism.
(Lais 2012, *The Independent*, 3 October 2012)
- (48) Saudi women routinely are relegated to a subservient role, i.e. their behavior and appearance are regulated by laws and customs.
(*The Palm Beach Post*, 2 October 2012).
- (49) The Saudi guardianship system continues to treat women as minors.
(Kayyem 2012, *Boston Globe*, 1 October 2012)

(50) [Saudi] [w]omen can't drive, work, or even live in their particleboard-furnished homes, apparently.
(Mallick 2012, *Toronto Star*, 2 October 2012)

(51) In Saudi Arabia, women are not currently allowed to vote, hold high political office or drive.
(*The New York Times*, 2 October 2012)

The lexical choices employed in the above examples accuse Saudi Arabia of denying women visibility and freedom, and hence restricting their movements. This is witnessed in the news reports regarding restrictions on Saudi women driving or their inability to travel without a male guardian or chaperone. Such statements generate many ideological implications due to the various objections towards Saudi Arabia. The underlying implication here represents Saudi Arabia as an anti-woman country, where it is difficult to be a woman.

Moreover, Björling, the Swedish Minister for trade, was also quoted as stating:

(52)
You can't remove or airbrush women out of reality ... If Saudi Arabia does not allow women to be seen or work, they miss out on half their intellectual capital. These images are yet another sad example of the long road to gender equality in Saudi Arabia.
(*The Local*, 1 October 2012)

Here, the reporter used the ideological move of authority (van Dijk 2006), or in Wodak and Meyer's (2016) terms the discursive strategy of perspectivization, as he quotes the words of an authority to support his argument (about the oddity of removing female pictures), thus the news report may appear credible to the reader and at the same time some degree of distancing is achieved. The above quote expresses Saudi Arabia's deviance from the norm, i.e. the visibility of females in society, which is something that goes against the prevailing gender equality in Sweden. The Swedish minister overtly blames Saudi Arabia for deleting females and regards this a problematic gender equality issue, hence emphasizing Saudi Arabia's backwardness regarding gender equality. Furthermore, the *Local* quoted attorney Borgström, who also attacked Ikea's removal of female pictures:

(53). I think the Swedish business community should uphold existing ethical principles. You can't participate in the marketing and selling of goods in a way that discriminates against women in this way.
(*The Local* 1 October 2012)

He further said that:

(54). Ikea would be better off abstaining from the [Saudi] market completely.
(*The Local* 1 October 2012)

Again, his words emphasize a negative criticism of Saudi Arabia's gender discrimination policy and put the blame for the deletion of females on its gender segregation rules. This negativity is what comes to people's minds as the basic news value (Bell 1991: 156). Furthermore, such deviance is regarded by Bell (1991) as a negative characteristic with 'proven news interest'.

In addition, the theme of *female oppression* is also realized by a strategy of aggregation, which quantifies groups of participants, treating them as statistics (van Leeuwen 2008: 37). Aggregation is realized by the presence of a definite quantifier, which functions as the head of a nominal group, as seen in the following claim:

(55) No other Muslim country deprives women of the right to drive, demands that they be covered in public, or requires that a woman have a male guardian for a visit to the doctor.
(Kayyem 2012, in *Boston Globe*, 1 October 2012)

In (55), the journalist employs a rhetorical strategy for argumentation, mainly a numbers game (van Dijk 2006), so that her given information may appear credible to the reader and hence the negative outcome of the removal of pictures is due to Saudi Arabia's gender segregation rules. The noun phrase 'no other Muslim country' may give the reader an idea of a large number of Muslim countries, without Saudi Arabia among them. Hence, this numbers game might emphasize the weirdness and backwardness of Saudi Arabia as a country that oppresses women, even when compared to other Muslim countries, and not just the West.

In a nutshell, the above analysis shows that there is a recurring strategy of implication in the data. When readers see words/phrases such as: 'strict Muslim Law', 'Wild Wahhabi regime', 'conservative Muslim Kingdom' and 'Muslim culture', they may assume that the real underlying cause of the Ikea incident is Islam, as suggested by the newspapers. It is apparent that these stereotypical or ideologically guided naming choices reflect the biases of the writers/speakers. This is directly related to New Orientalism (Altwaiji 2014), which emphasizes the negative properties of the Arabs and Islam, and thus 'Othering' them (see section 8.2). Furthermore, labelling Saudi Arabia as a 'conservative Muslim kingdom'; its monarchy as 'rigid', which has 'gender restrictions' (Kayyem 2012); its culture as an 'evil culture' in a 'dictatorship' (*The Local*, 25 October 2012); as well as describing the removal of female pictures from the Saudi catalogue as a 'medieval' action, further perpetuates the representation of Saudi Arabia as such.

A social-actor analysis reveals that the focus of the reporters is on negative representations or ‘Othering’ by means of which an out-group (the KSA) is represented as being distinct from an in-group ‘they are not like us’. Thus, it is evident that the choices of words used in nomination and characterization of the current social actors are of particular significance in analyzing positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

7.3.2.2. Level Two: Social Action

The second level of the analysis in KhosraviNik’s (2010) framework is that of social actions. This analysis focuses on the qualities of social actions. The two devices that guide the analysis here are the aforementioned ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions, which focus on what actions are (not) attributed to the actors and how the actions are connected to them. In this part, to answer these two questions, I will focus on two relevant mechanisms, transitivity and mitigation.

The first question that guides the analysis on this level is answered by analyzing the headlines of the examined articles. The headlines are analyzed because they function as an initial summary, and thus they define the situation reported in the press and provide preferred reading and interpretation of news texts to readers (Bell 1991; Van Dijk 1988). Therefore, a detailed analysis of the headlines in the articles under study is conducted, in order to determine if they construct the most prominent ideological view of the texts and, more specifically, portray any ideological discourse with Us/Them manifestations. This is achieved by answering this question: what do the two entities (Us/Them) do? The first step in analyzing social actions is to classify the actions in the texts based upon the social actors they are connected to. In order to achieve this, we have to work out which category of verb or process is being used. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, there are three main categories for processes and three minor ones, which are based on Halliday’s Functional Grammar (2014). The former categories include: material, mental and relational processes. The latter include: existential, behavioural and verbal processes (see Figure 8). Therefore, to determine which verb process is used, transitivity analysis is employed. After skimming the headlines, it is noted that they do focus on the action itself, which is presented in the context of women being ‘airbrushed’, ‘erased’, ‘removed’, ‘cut’, ‘deleted’, ‘shelved’, ‘dropped’ and ‘banned’, they also emphasize the fact that this action only occurs in the Saudi catalogue. Hence, casual readers may be left with the impression that IKEA is the agent responsible for the action of removing women’s pictures, when the catalogue that belongs to IKEA (where this action took place) is distributed in Saudi Arabia. It is evident that all the verbs share one particular theme: ‘female invisibility’ (see table 14).

Paper	Date	Country	Headline
1. The Australian	1-10-2012	Australia	Women shelved in Ikea's Saudi catalogue
2. Newcastle Herald	3-10-2012	Australia	Spot the difference: women cut from Ikea's Saudi catalogue
3. The Border Mail	3-10-2012	Australia	Spot the difference: women cut from Ikea's Saudi catalogue
4. National Post	1-10-2012	Canada	Ikea under fire for deleting images of women from Saudi catalogue
5. Toronto Star (TS)	2-10-2012	Canada	Ikea's Saudi catalogue bans women from the house
6. Calgary Herald	2-10-2012	Canada	Ikea regrets Saudi gaffe
7. Irish Examiner	1-10-2012	Ireland	Ikea drops women from Saudi brochure
8. The New Zealand Herald	2-10-2012	New Zealand	Ikea deletes women from Saudi catalogue
9. Metro (M)	2-10-2012	Sweden	Ikea erases women from Saudi catalogue
10. The Local (L ₁)	1-10-2012	Sweden	Ikea 'erases' women from Saudi catalogue
11. The Local (L ₂)	2-10-2012	Sweden	Ikea 'sorry' for erasing women in Saudi book
12. The Local (L ₃)	2-10-2012	Sweden	Ikea lacks credibility on Saudi catalogue uproar
13. The Local (L ₄)	25-10-2012	Sweden	Women stage topless demo at Ikea in Germany
14. The Guardian (TG)	2-10-2012	UK	No women please, we're Saudi Arabian Ikea
15. The Guardian (TG)	1-10-2012	UK	Ikea apologises over removal of women from Saudi Arabia catalogue
16. The Independent (TI ₁)	2-10-2012	UK	Ikea airbrushes women from its Saudi catalogue
17. The Independent (TI ₂)	3-10-2012	UK	Why exactly did Ikea remove pictures of women in its Saudi Arabia catalogue?
18. Mail online (MO)	1-10-2012	UK	No females allowed! Ikea under fire for deleting pictures of women from its Saudi catalogue
19. Belfast Telegraph	2-10-2012	UK	Ikea airbrushes women from its Saudi Arabia catalogue
20. The Telegraph	1-10-2012	UK	Ikea criticized for airbrushing women out of Saudi catalogue
21. The Express	1-10-2012	UK	Ikea drops women from Arab brochure
22. Financial Times	2-10-2012	UK	Saudi Ikea: now you see her; now you don't
23. Metro (USA)	1-10-2012	USA	Ikea airbrushes women out of images in Saudi Arabian catalogue
24. Boston Globe (BG ₁)	1-10-2012	USA	IKEA's Saudi problem
25. Boston Globe (BG ₂)	2-10-2012	USA	Ikea rues altering Saudi version of catalog
26. The Wall Street Journal	25-10-2012	USA	IKEA Regrets Cutting Women From Saudi Ad

27. The Palm Beach Post	4-10-2012	USA	Was Ikea wrong to delete women from Saudi catalog?
28. NYTimes (NYT)	2-10-2012	USA	Ikea Apologizes for Removing Women From Saudi Catalog
29. Los Angeles Times	1-10-2012	USA	Ikea's Saudi Arabia catalog erases women; company expresses regret
30. The Washington Times	1-10-2012	USA	Ikea deleted women from Saudi version of catalogue
31. USA Today	1-10-2012	USA	Ikea airbrushes women out from its Saudi catalog
32. New York Post	1-10-2012	USA	Ikea removes women from Saudi Arabian catalogue
33. New York Daily News	1-10-2012	USA	Ikea under fire for deleting women from Saudi version of furniture catalog
34. The Washington Post	1-10-2012	USA	IKEA comes under fire for removing women from Saudi catalogue

Table 14: Headlines of source newspapers

The above table shows **34** different headlines of different news reports from seven different countries. Moreover, the table shows the social actors to whom the actions are connected: IKEA and IKEA's Saudi catalogue. The following table summarizes the actions that are associated with the social actors.

Lexical element	Frequency
Airbrush	5
Erase	4
Alter	1
Cut	3
Delete	6
Remove	5
(There is/are) No women	1
Not allowed	2
Shelve	1
Drop	2
Ban	1
Don't see	1

Table 15: Distribution of action in headlines

The following example further demonstrates how to apply the analytical devices of KhosraviNik's (2010) framework to the first device of 'what actions' on level two of the social action analysis. I will focus on the headline of the *Toronto Star* editorial. This analysis is

conducted by exploring the operationalization of the transitivity mechanism within the text. The headline of the selected article from *The Toronto Star* reads as follows:

(56). Ikea's Saudi catalogue bans women from the house
(Mallick 2012, in *Toronto Star*, 2 October 2012)

In the above example, within the clause, it is clear who is responsible for the action, as the dominant clause is 'Ikea's Saudi catalogue bans women'. The actor element is the noun phrase 'Ikea's Saudi catalogue' that carries out the material process 'bans', and 'women' are the goal of the action (who have been banned), whereas the prepositional phrase 'from the house' is the circumstance in which the place of action is provided. Furthermore, the columnist uses the verb 'bans', which includes seriousness and formality in a declarative sentence, and hence implies that this 'ban' was imposed by Saudi Arabia since the word 'catalogue' is modified by the word 'Saudi' (i.e. it is Ikea's catalogue but the one that exists is more specific to the Saudi Arabian context). Thus, by looking at how actions are connected to the actors, the observation indicates that the headline focuses on the action itself (i.e. the 'ban'), which is presented in the context of women being 'banned', whilst also emphasizing the fact that this action only took place in the Saudi catalogue.

As for the second question of how the actions are associated with the actors, the focus is also on linguistic analysis of headlines in terms of transitivity patterns, which is part of the set of linguistic tools employed to highlighting the ways social actors are represented in the newspapers. Transitivity analysis shows how the social actors are represented: what they are represented as doing and what is done to them. Moreover, transitivity is utilized in the analysis, as it describes the relationships between 'participants and the roles they play in the processes described in reporting' (Richardson 2007: 54). When reading headlines, it is crucial to consider whom is being described as doing what and to whom, and what impression this quick snapshot may give the reader of the events that the news report goes on to describe. The way transitivity is used in analysing newspaper headlines can be indicative of the ideological viewpoint of the writer and/or publication.

Moreover, there are two constructions in the processes: active and passive constructions. In an active construction, the verb is in its active form because the subject or actor comes before the object. This same process can be transformed into a passive construction, where there is still a transitive action, but the verb takes a passive form and the object comes before the subject. This transformation can be taken further, with the actor being deleted, and thus we have a passivized

verb without an agent. Thus, we end up without knowing who did the action. According to Richardson (2007), this transformation from active to passive construction appears frequently in newspapers. The following table gives a detailed summary of the processes occurring in the headlines.

Headline	Country	Process
1. Women <u>shelved</u> in Ikea's Saudi catalogue	Australia	Material process
2. Spot the difference: women <u>cut</u> from Ikea's Saudi catalogue	Australia	Material process
3. Spot the difference: women <u>cut</u> from Ikea's Saudi catalogue	Australia	Material process
4. Ikea under fire for <u>deleting</u> images of women from Saudi catalogue	Canada	Relational-circumstantial process
5. Ikea's Saudi catalogue <u>bans</u> women from the house	Canada	Material process
6. Ikea <u>regrets</u> Saudi gaffe	Canada	Mental process
7. Ikea <u>drops</u> women from Saudi brochure	Ireland	Material process
8. Ikea <u>deletes</u> women from Saudi catalogue	New Zealand	Material process
9. Ikea <u>erases</u> women from Saudi catalogue	Sweden	Material process
10. Ikea ' <u>erases</u> ' women from Saudi catalogue	Sweden	Material process
11. Ikea ' <u>sorry</u> ' for <u>erasing</u> women in Saudi book	Sweden	Mental process
12. Ikea lacks credibility on Saudi catalogue uproar	Sweden	Relational-attributive process
13. Women <u>stage</u> topless demo at Ikea in Germany	Sweden	Material process
14. <u>No women</u> please, we're Saudi Arabian Ikea	UK	Existential/Relational-identifying process
15. Ikea <u>apologises</u> over removal of women from Saudi Arabia catalogue	UK	Behavioural process
16. Ikea <u>airbrushes</u> women from its Saudi catalogue	UK	Material process
17. Why exactly did Ikea remove pictures of women in its Saudi Arabia catalogue?	UK	Material process
18. No females allowed! Ikea under fire for <u>deleting</u> pictures of women from its Saudi catalogue	UK	Relational process
19. Ikea <u>airbrushes</u> women from its Saudi Arabia catalogue	UK	Material process
20. Ikea criticized for airbrushing women out of Saudi catalogue	UK	Relational process
21. Ikea drops women from Arab brochure	UK	Material process
22. Saudi Ikea: now you see her; now you don't	UK	Mental process/ Relational process
23. Ikea airbrushes women out of images in Saudi Arabian Catalogue	USA	Material process
24. IKEA's Saudi problem	USA	Relational -possessive process
25. Ikea rues altering Saudi version of catalog	USA	Mental process
26. IKEA Regrets Cutting Women From Saudi Ad	USA	Mental process
27. Was Ikea wrong to delete women from Saudi catalog?	USA	Relational-attributive process
28. Ikea Apologizes for Removing Women From Saudi Catalog	USA	Behavioural process
29. Ikea's Saudi Arabia catalog erases women; company expresses regret	USA	Material process/ Verbal process

30. Ikea deleted women from Saudi version of catalogue	USA	Material process
31. Ikea airbrushes women out from its Saudi catalog	USA	Material process
32. Ikea removes women from Saudi Arabian catalogue	USA	Material process
33. Ikea under fire for deleting women from Saudi version of furniture catalog	USA	Relational process
34. IKEA comes under fire for removing women from Saudi catalogue	USA	Relational process

Table 16: Processes in the headlines

Table 16 shows the transitivity patterns that highlight the ways the participants are represented in the headlines: what are they represented as doing and what is done to them. The analysis identified a total of **37** process types associated with the social actors, and they are distributed as shown in table 17 below, which gives the numbers of occurrences of the six processes in the headlines.

Process Type	# of occurrences
Material	18
Relational	10
Mental	5
Behavioral	2
Verbal	1
Existential	1
Total	37

Table 17: Distribution of Halliday's (2014) process types associated with social actors

As seen in the above table, the total number of detected processes in the headlines is **37** and not **34**, and this is because there are three headlines (14, 22, 29) that have two processes in them, because they consist of two clauses. Moreover, table 17 shows the over-dominance of the **material process** over other processes in the headlines, as out of **37** processes in the headlines, **18** are material processes that answer the question: what did the actor do? or what happened? Thus, there is a prevailing process of 'doing' in which the 'actor' does something and brings about a change to another entity called the 'goal', i.e. the one who is affected by the action. Table 16 shows that there are two social actors connected to social actions: IKEA and the catalogue. Starting with active constructions, analyzing headline clauses reveals that there is an agreement between them: almost all mention IKEA as the agent. The headlines assign to IKEA (in-group) the action of 'removing', 'deleting' etc., as IKEA is the *actor* (doer) in **12** material

processes in the headlines, and they assign the role of goal to either women or images of women. While 2 headlines assign to *Ikea's Saudi (Arabian) catalogue* the action of banning and erasing the women.

Regarding the social actor *IKEA*, which belongs to the in-group 'us', the analysis reveals that the material processes found in the data belong to the semantic fields of *exclusion* and *invisibility*, because *IKEA* is the actor, which deletes, drops, erases, airbrushes and removes women from the catalogue. Therefore, an active construction is chosen as the focus is on the agent of the action, implying clear responsibility. Moreover, *IKEA's Saudi (Arabian) catalogue* is also the actor *banning* and *erasing* women from the catalogue. Here, we have a relation of *belonging* between *IKEA* and the Saudi catalogue, i.e. the catalogue that is distributed in Saudi Arabia belongs to *IKEA*. This means that the *actor* here is the Saudi catalogue, which is a nominal compound in which 'catalogue' is the *head* that is modified by the attribute 'Saudi'. Therefore, the action of banning and erasing was done by the catalogue, in Saudi Arabia. This in turn suggests that those in charge of the catalogue in Saudi Arabia are the main actors who banned and erased the from the catalogue, which belongs to *IKEA*. In other words, these two headlines imply that Saudi Arabia is the main agent that banned women. The following table summarizes the actors and goals in the material process in the headlines.

Actor	Material Process (action)	Goal
1. Ikea	drops	women
2. Ikea	deletes	women
3. Ikea	erases	women
4. Ikea	erases	women
5. Ikea	airbrushes	women
6. Ikea	remove	pictures of women
7. Ikea	airbrushes	women
8. Ikea	drops	women
9. Ikea	airbrushes	women
10. Ikea	deleted	women
11. Ikea	airbrushes	women
12. Ikea	removes	women
13. Ikea's Saudi catalogue	bans	women
14. Ikea's Saudi Arabia catalogue	erases	women

Table 18: Material process types found in the headlines

Furthermore, another mechanism is detected in relation to how the actions are associated with the social actors, and that is *passivisation*. Table 16 shows that 3 out of the 18 material processes

do not have any actors. Instead, they have a ‘beneficier’. In the first three headlines in Table 14, we have the participant ‘women’, which is not the actor but the beneficiar, because it is the one to whom something (shelving and cutting) is done. These headlines illustrate a passive transformation and its effect in switching the positions of the left-hand and right-hand noun phrases so that the goal occupies the syntactic subject (left-hand) position, which is associated with an agent. In these three headlines, the actor who did the action (shelved/cut) is backgrounded. This is achieved by employing a passive construction with deletion of the subject/ actor. It is noted that the object participant ‘women’ occurs in the syntactic subject position at the beginning of the sentence. ‘Women’ is the ‘beneficier’, as it is the participant in a material process to whom something is done. Readers are not told who shelved or cut the women from the catalogue. Here, the journalist focuses on the act of cutting women, rather than focusing on those who shelved/ cut the women from the clause. At this initial stage of the news report, the journalist considers the cutting of women from the pages of the catalogue to be a more important aspect of the story than who was actually doing the shelving/ cutting. Thus, the reader has to read on to discover who did that action. The question we have to ask here is: what is the writer doing by using an indirect construal of the process? The removal of the subject/ actor from the clause might be used to remove culpability altogether. Richardson (2007: 55) asserts that the use of a passive construction removes ‘a sense of specificity and precision from the clause’. This shows that the negative action of deletion of females by IKEA is backgrounded, more in line with the ‘in-group’. There is indeed a camouflage of the active role of IKEA in deleting women. This is in line with Fowler’s (1991: 78) assertion that the passive construction ‘reorients the story’ so that it is now about the deleted women, rather than who deleted them. The use of the passive construction in these headlines, where the agent is deleted, leaves the responsibility unspecified, so that the shelving and cutting of women can be foregrounded.

To find out more about how the actions are connected to the actors we look at the **relational processes** detected in the data. Going back to Table 17, it is clear that the second process in terms of occurrences in the headlines is a relational process. It is a process of ‘being’, ‘possessing’ or ‘becoming’. The present data include **10** relational processes in the headlines. Out of the **10** relational processes, **4** processes are manifested as circumstantial types where the relationship between the two terms is ‘one of time, place, manner, cause, accompaniment, role, matter or angle’ (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 290). Therefore, a quick look at the following headlines shows that the circumstantial relation is construed in the form of an Attribute, as in ‘IKEA under fire’, which is realized by the preposition *under*.

(57). Ikea under fire for deleting images of women from Saudi catalogue.

(58). No females allowed! Ikea under fire for deleting pictures of women from its Saudi catalogue.

(59). Ikea under fire for deleting women from Saudi version of furniture catalog.

(60). IKEA comes under fire for removing women from Saudi catalogue.

In the above examples, both IKEA and fire are participants of the circumstantial process, since relational processes require two participants. IKEA is the carrier, ‘(is) under’ and ‘comes under’ is the relational-circumstantial process and *fire* is the attribute. These relational processes belong to the semantic fields of *attack* and *criticism*. ‘IKEA under fire’ is a metaphorical expression in which there is a relation of resemblance between two entities, ‘IKEA’ and ‘fire’. The most prominent perceived resemblance between the target and the source is being under attack (by shooting a weapon), since they are the easiest features to spot in the source (fire) and the target (IKEA) of the conceptual metaphor ‘Ikea under fire’. There is a negative feature in the source and a target, such as destructive power, that can be spotted since ‘fire’ is something related to shooting a weapon and hence not connected to positive feelings. In the context of the issue of female deletion, such deletion has drawn criticism of IKEA and thus IKEA is subject to intense criticism or judgement. That is, IKEA is attacked, criticized and held responsible for deleting women. Nevertheless, who put IKEA under fire is a mystery and unknown to the reader. Therefore, using the prepositional phrase ‘under fire’ in these headlines shows an analogy and resemblance between IKEA’s condition of being under critical attack and being under the attack of weapons. The use of the metaphorical expression ‘fire’ is hyperbolic. Describing how things appear to the senses of the writer requires a metaphor and, in these headlines, the journalist uses the metaphorical expression of IKEA being under fire to denote its being under critical attack. Thus, the qualities of ‘fire’ are carried over to IKEA, so that the reader sees things in a different way. The prepositional phrase ‘under fire’ is a lexicalized idiom denoting something typically negative, i.e. being shot at with a weapon.

Similarly, the following examples show **3** more relational processes in the headlines.

(61). Ikea lacks credibility on Saudi catalogue uproar.

(62). Ikea criticized for airbrushing women out of Saudi catalogue.

(63). Was Ikea wrong to delete women from Saudi catalog?

In example (61), there is a relational-attributive process where IKEA is the carrier, and ‘lacks credibility’ is the attribute. IKEA is accused of not being reliable because of what happened in the Saudi catalogue. Therefore, there is a negative attribute attributed to IKEA because of the deletion of women. In (62), IKEA is the carrier of another relational attributive process. IKEA is the attribute and the relational-attributive process is the deleted ‘is’, which is understood; and the attribute is ‘criticized’. Similarly, in (63), there is a headline that is in the form of a question, coming under the heading of an interrogative headline. The relational-attributive process is ‘was’, the carrier is IKEA and the attribute is ‘wrong’. In fact, in a bid to attract more readers to participate in a discussion of this topic, the *Palm Beach* reporter in (63) pays more attention to the action by asking a question at the very beginning of the article. This headline might motivate the reader to concentrate on the news report in order to find out what has happened to the women because of Saudi Arabia. All three examples above suggest to the reader that IKEA is under critical attack because of deleting women from the Saudi catalogue.

Furthermore, the following three headlines are relational processes as well.

(64). No women please, we’re Saudi Arabian Ikea.

(65). Saudi Ikea: now you see her; now you don’t

(66). IKEA’s Saudi problem

In example (64), the headline consists of two clauses with two different processes. The first clause is the noun phrase ‘no women please’, which is an **existential process** without specifying where this entity (women) is not existing. Hence, it is ambiguous in itself as it could either mean that women do not exist in the catalogue or in Saudi Arabia. Here, the focus of the sentence is placed at the beginning, and hence it is clear that the emphasis is on the fact that women are not there. This strategy is significant as it prepares the reader cognitively to accept the cause after mentioning the effect at the beginning of the sentence. On the other hand, the second part of the sentence shows the place that does not allow such existence and hence completes the meaning. In the second clause we have an **identifying relational process** in which ‘we’ is the *token* that represents or embodies the *value*, which is ‘Saudi Arabia Ikea’.

Likewise, in (65), there is a *relational attributive process*, which has a nominal compound ‘Saudi Ikea’. Saudi modifies IKEA and thus ‘Ikea’ is the carrier of the relational process and ‘Saudi’ is the attribute. It is noteworthy to mention that both (64) and (65) stress the fact that the entity that is under scrutiny is IKEA, and it is described as being the one in Saudi. Moreover, example (66) is a relational-possessive process where IKEA is the ‘possessor’, the one owning

or containing something; and ‘Saudi problem’ is the possessed, which is the thing that is owned or contained. The journalist here is indicating to the reader that IKEA has a problem that is related to Saudi, i.e. there is a problem for IKEA because of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the relational process here tells the reader that Saudi Arabia is a problem for IKEA in the journalist’s view.

In sum, the relational processes in the above headlines stress the fact that IKEA is under critical attack because of the action of deleting females from its Saudi edition catalogue. IKEA is hence represented in a negative way, as being not trustworthy, and this in turn means that it has problems related to Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this relational process in news reports tells what the participant is/is not in the writer’s view.

Another mechanism utilized for revealing how actions are associated with actors is related to the discursive strategy of **mitigation**, i.e. ‘de-emphasizing negative things about us’ or ‘de-emphasizing positive things about them’. De-emphasizing negative actions of the in-group is also detected in this level of analysis. This is manifested in a **mental process**, which is the third process type occurring in the headlines. Analyzing this process shows how the participants perceive the world, if they are represented as the **Senser** (subject of a mental process) or how they are perceived, if they are the **Phenomenon** (object of a mental process). The most important feature of a mental process is that it is ‘endowed with consciousness’ (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 201). Out of the 34 processes in the headlines, **5** are mental processes where IKEA occurs **4** times as the senser that is involved in a process of sensing and being aware of the internal self (sorry). IKEA is the conscious ‘senser’ that is aware of the consequences of the action of deletion that took place in the Saudi edition.

Senser	Mental Process	Type	Phenomenon
1. Ikea	regrets	reaction process	Saudi gaffe
2. Ikea	sorry	reaction process	for erasing women
3. Ikea	rues	reaction process	altering Saudi version of catalog
4. Ikea	regrets	reaction process	Cutting Women
5. You	see	perception process	Her (women)

Table 19: Mental process types found in the headlines

Table 19 also shows that there are two sub-types of the mental process, as 4 of the 5 mental processes are processes of *reaction* that have to do with emotions and affections (regret, sorry, rue) and one is a process of *perception* (see). Reaction mental processes occur in the USA headlines (2 times), Canada (1 time) and Sweden (1 time), while the process of perception occurs in one UK headline (see table 16). Moreover, the mental process belongs to the semantic fields of *remorse* (*regret*) and *condemnation*, because IKEA is the senser that is aware of its own mistake. This marks IKEA positively, as it helps to engender sympathy towards it. The mental processes work to lessen the effect of the material process that portrays IKEA as the agent responsible for the action of deletion. It de-emphasizes IKEA's wrongdoing.

Additionally, another related process, which is on the borderline between material and mental processes, is the **behavioural process** that is detected in 2 headlines, i.e. numbers (15) and (28) in Table 14. It is a hybrid process that combines a material and a mental process. This means that because it is partly mental, the behavioural process involves verbs that are psychological. And because it is partly material, a clause can be probed with 'what did the behavior (IKEA) do? To which the answer is 'apologize'. This process is detected in one UK, *The Guardian*, and one USA, *New York Times*, headline, where IKEA is the 'behavior' that expresses regret for something that has been done wrong. The two headlines represent IKEA as the participant that admits its own mistake, and hence implies that the action of deletion is wrong and not accepted.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the US newspapers also use a mitigation strategy for minimizing Ikea's responsibility for the removal of female images, which is compromising the apology's performative²⁷ verbs, such as using the verbs 'rues', 'regrets', 'wrong' and 'apologizes' in their headlines when talking about Ikea. The impression conveyed to the reader is that of a sympathetic tone from IKEA, hinting that it was not the main cause of what happened. This again de-emphasizes and minimizes IKEA's responsibility for such an error, while simultaneously implying that the fault lies with Saudi Arabia, since the word 'catalogue' is affixed with the word 'Saudi'. This modification again indirectly suggests that Saudi is the group that should be blamed. This is clearly in line with Van Dijk's Ideological Square, where the press mitigates and de-emphasizes the negative action of IKEA, representing the in-group (US), and instead emphasizes Saudi Arabia as the main cause of such action.

²⁷ A verb which explicitly conveys the kind of speech act being performed.

Moreover, the discursive strategy of mitigation is also detected in the **verbal process**, which has the fewest occurrences in the headlines, as the in-group's wrong action is also de-emphasized. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* headline consists of two clauses:

(67). Ikea's Saudi Arabia catalog erases women; company expresses regret

The headline expresses two topics: namely, that females were erased from the catalogue and that (at the same time) the company (IKEA) expresses regret. The *sayer* of the verbal process in the headline 'company expresses regret' is 'the company', which refers to IKEA. This occurrence is significant in stressing the fact that IKEA regrets the deletion that took place and is really sorry for deleting women from the catalogue. This again de-emphasizes IKEA's bad action. Moreover, these two propositions summarize the main information of the text as they are mentioned in the headline, and thereby indicate that they are of equal importance for the *Los Angeles Times*.

Furthermore, besides its occurrence in the headlines, mitigation is also detected in indirect quoting in the articles under examination. For example, *The Palm Beach Post* states in its lead that: 'Ikea says it now regrets the decision to delete images of women from the Saudi version of its catalogue' (The Palm Beach Post 2012). The reporter's stance here implies that they are on Ikea's side, as the verbal choice is subcategorized as both neutral (i.e. says) and sympathizing (regrets.) Here, the reporter is attempting to mitigate the bad action of IKEA by highlighting its apology and regret for what it did. Again, mitigation is at work here, as the bad action of IKEA, belonging to 'US', is de-emphasized by its apology, and further, in an implied way, the blame is put on Saudi Arabia as the reason behind Ikea's committing such a mistake that prompted an apology. Thus, Saudi Arabia is under attack and simultaneously its negativity is emphasized.

Likewise, the *Irish Examiner* indirectly quotes the *Metro* report, stating that: '[t]he report raised questions in Sweden about Ikea's commitment to gender equality' (*Irish Examiner* 2012). In this extract, the reporter's stance can be deemed to be in favour of what is reported by the *Metro*, based on the reporter's verbal choice that is subcategorized as positive (i.e. raise). Once again, the inappropriateness of IKEA's action is evident here. The *Metro* further states that the Swedish trade minister 'did not criticize Ikea directly but told Metro that it was not possible to delete women from society' (ibid.). IKEA's incorrect action is once again mitigated. In fact, IKEA's apology results in an increase of Western sentiments against Saudi Arabia with regard

to gender inequality. The apology means that there was something wrong was done and IKEA admits that what it did is against its beliefs, thus implying that there was an external cause that urged it to do what it did. Such negative opinions about Saudi Arabia have also led to criticism of other issues pertaining to Saudi women's 'oppression' and their 'limited freedom', such as their lacking permission to drive or travel without a male guardian.

It is noteworthy that even when IKEA's wrong action is mentioned in the newspapers, such as *The Metro*, *The Local*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Guardian*, *The NY Times*, it is represented as being forced to do what it did because of Saudi Arabia. The following example from *The Boston Globe* illustrates this, where its columnist believes that IKEA removed women because it was:

(68) a move made to satisfy the Saudi monarchy's gender segregation rules.
(Kayyem 2012, in *Boston Globe*, 1 October 2012)

The columnist further states that:

(69). Ikea's real fault isn't adhering to the government's rules; it's failing to use the furore over the catalogue to expose — and sharply condemn — the singular rigidity of the Saudi monarchy. Ikea should have named and shamed.
(Kayyem 2012, in *Boston Globe*, 1 October 2012)

She openly accuses the Saudi monarchy of being the reason for Ikea's odd removal of women.

She further states that:

(70) The burden of explanation should have been placed on the monarchy. Ikea's shelves may sometimes be difficult to assemble. But it's the Saudi Arabian regime that is truly broken.
(Kayyem 2012, in *Boston Globe*, 1 October 2012)

It is clear that she is led by her ideological perceptions concerning Saudi Arabia, as she is not convinced that Ikea's apology is genuine when their spokesperson admits that Saudi Arabia did not ask for the removal of female pictures:

(71) Instead of taking the hit, Ikea should have forced the Saudi regime to take responsibility for the catalogue, defending its male-only pictures to a wider world where women are frequent shoppers. In no other country, IKEA could remark, are women completely erased.
(Kayyem 2012, in *Boston Globe*, 1 October 2012)

By choosing such strong words that have negative connotations about Saudi Arabia, she emphasizes the responsibility of the Saudi state for this awkward action. In fact, there are other similar views supporting this opinion. For example:

(72) Ikea was bowing to pressure from the conservative Islamic state.
(*The New York Times*, 2 October 2012)

(73) IKEA removed women to ‘satisfy the Saudi monarchy’s gender segregation rules’ and that ‘the burden of explanation should have been placed on the monarchy.’
(*The Boston Globe*, 2 October 2012)

(74) when it comes to Saudi Arabia, it wouldn’t be the first time that a western institution has subordinated women’s rights to business interests.
(Malik 2012, in *The Guardian*, 2 October 2012))

The above extracts indicate that Ikea’s incorrect action is mitigated because there is emphasis on Saudi Arabia as the real agent responsible for such an action.

In sum, the analysis in this section has shown that a negative image of Saudi Arabia is clearly apparent on the second level of social action analysis. The analysis also supports the claim of the study that ‘Othering’ is a constant policy of the in-group towards Saudi Arabia in this incident regarding the IKEA catalogue.

7.3.2.3. Level Three: Argumentation

The third level is argumentation, and it focuses primarily on ‘the presence and qualities of argumentative strategies’ (KhosraviNik 2010: 65). Argumentation simply means to persuade the addressed audience by either solid arguments or fallacies (Reisigl 2014). Thus, argumentation strategies involve attributions and claims and how these are justified. Here, the arguments for or against the social actors are critically analyzed. Within this third level of analysis, two devices also operate. These are in the form of two questions: what are the arguments for/against social actors? How are they put forward and related to the investigated social groups? In terms of what arguments are for/against the social actors, the analysis of the previous two levels has shown that there are three main emerging underlying macro-arguments:

1. If the deletion of females only happened in the Saudi edition, it is possibly because the Saudi government is forcing it.
2. If the deletion of females only occurred in the Saudi edition, it is probably because of the impact of Islam and hence KSA’s Otherness.
3. If the deletion of females has only occurred in the Saudi edition, it is because women are oppressed in the KSA.

The second question of how the above arguments are put forward is illustrated by many examples from the data that confirm these fallacies. In terms of the first argument, if we go back to the aforementioned examples (68, 69, 70, 71), they all emphasize that the Saudi state is responsible for excluding females from the Saudi edition IKEA catalogue, hence verifying the first argument. Another extract from the data indicates this argument as well:

(75) erasing the woman from Ikea's Saudi catalogue was tantamount to bowing down to some evil culture in a dictatorship which made a habit of trampling on women's rights. (*The Local*, 2 October 2012).

Therefore, the 'Us' and 'Them' construction through argumentation is operationalized through using a set of topoi (a topos is the location where the argument goes to). The topos emerging most in the above examples is that of 'their fault', i.e. the out-group: the Saudi state. Furthermore, the first argument that blames the KSA is also shown in the following example. The lead of *The Toronto Star* article provides a great insight for the analysis on this level. It reads as follows:

(76). Ikea has apologized, blaming a zealous Saudi franchiser, but the catalogue remains online.

This means that although IKEA has issued an apology for this incident, the columnist is arguing that the catalogue is still online and implies a hidden force behind such an occurrence. The structure of the argumentation can be explicated as follows:

Argument: IKEA has apologized

Conclusion rule: If IKEA has apologized, the question arises as to why the catalogue is still online.

Truth claim: We have to ask why the catalogue is still online.

This argument is put forward by utilizing the mechanism of implicature. Implicature refers to 'meanings that are evident although they are not explicitly stated' (Bloor & Bloor 2007:23). In other words, one may interpret this as, 'reading between the lines'. Thus, in newspapers, most of the information in a text is not explicitly expressed but left implicit. Journalists may use it in order to avoid expressing directly or explicitly what they mean. Words, clauses, and other textual expressions may imply concepts or propositions, which may be inferred on the basis of the overall background knowledge of the reader. For example, in the above lead, the columnist is criticizing IKEA in an indirect/ implicit way as the apology means something wrong was done and needs to be fixed. Therefore, within the context of this incident, if an apology has

been issued, the catalogue should be removed to fix that wrong; however, it is not. This call for the removal of the catalogue is again repeated in the body of the text, with a stronger emphasis on the abnormality of the post-apology existence of the catalogue online: '[b]ut the catalogue remains online, eerie in the extreme' (Mallick 2012). Furthermore, the use of the verb 'blaming' in the lead implies that Saudi Arabia is the agent responsible for the action of banning women, and hence it is the main reason for the existence of the catalogue being online, despite IKEA's apology. Moreover, the author is still blaming IKEA, since the catalogue is still online and has not been removed.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the recurrence of certain labels could lead to setting up mental concepts in relation to the labelled actor which, over time, may become an inalienable attribute as part of that culture and common-sense knowledge. It seems, therefore, that this is what has happened with Saudi Arabia. The facts remain that IKEA was the blameworthy group that made the mistake, apologized for committing such an error and even announced that the KSA was not to be blamed for the removal of female pictures from the catalogue. However, despite these facts, the data reveal accusatory remarks about the Saudi government. The following examples from the data support this view:

(77) The omissions appeared to be an effort to minimize the risk of upsetting Saudi customers.
(Paterson 2012, in *The Independent*, 2 October 2012))

(78). Although the edited Ikea catalogue was allegedly produced by a third-party franchise, it is highly unlikely no one at Ikea was aware of the requested edits.
(Malik 2012, in *The Guardian*, 2 October 2012))

It is evident that the aforementioned examples represent Saudi Arabia in a way that puts the blame for deleting the females on it, without any accusation directed at IKEA, which is in reality the main doer of the action of female exclusion. In fact, in the examples (70, 74), IKEA is not even mentioned, it is backgrounded, and its action is de-emphasized.

Moreover, another argumentative scheme detected in the data is the argument from correlation to cause. Here, there is a connection between two events. The following example emphasizes the fact that Saudi Arabia is a rich country and bases its argument on the correlation between its wealth and its survival. If we look at the following extract:

(79) As Middle Eastern nations have faced popular demands for greater democratic freedoms, the region's monarchies have scrambled more quickly and effectively than other governments to defuse internal dissatisfaction ... Their survival may be explained by their capacity to dole out money (Saudi Arabia).
(Kayyem 2012, in *Boston Globe*, 1 October 2012)

The editor's point of view is extremely clear and direct, as she accuses Saudi Arabia's monarchy of using money to oppress any voice that demands freedom from its cruel dictatorship rule. The argument scheme here is as follows:

There is a positive correlation between Saudi Arabia's wealth and survival.

Therefore, Saudi's wealth explains its survival.

Moreover, there is a strategy of implication here, as well, as the journalist is implicitly attacking Saudi Arabia, as she implies that Saudi Arabia benefits from being a rich market for any business and utilizes that in the exclusion case. The deletion of females occurred to please rich Saudi Arabia and not lose it as a valuable business opportunity. This is again against IKEA's confirmation that the KSA had nothing to do with the deletion of females from the catalogue.

Furthermore, with regard to the first argument, the data show that when the out-group is referred to, the journalist is only interested in demonstrating and emphasizing the Other's negative/ odd properties; thus, implying the in-group's positive ones. The journalists are using certain argumentation schemes to achieve this. For example:

(80) [...] in the Saudi Ikea universe, the world is populated entirely by single dads, children, and the occasional cat; [the removal of the picture was further] considered a serious enough affront to warrant a condemnation by Sweden's trade minister
(Malik 2012, in *The Guardian*, 2 October 2012)

In the above example, the journalist uses as argument a cause to effect scheme. This means that we have a warning that one type of event (the removal of female pictures) tends to cause another, which is condemnation by the Swedish minister. The argumentation scheme for this type of argument is as follows:

If female exclusion occurs, then condemnation will occur

In this case, exclusion occurred

Therefore, in this case, condemnation occurred

Here, we have a strong attribution of causality as the condemnation occurred because of the deletion of pictures. Therefore, the journalist here is justifying the condemnation of Saudi Arabia.

With regard to the second argument that holds Islam responsible for the exclusion, the data also support this, as we have seen in the above analyses. This ranges from the naming choices that are used to refer to the KSA, which emphasize its religious orientation, such as labelling Saudi Arabia as a ‘conservative Muslim kingdom’ (see Table 13), to more vivid examples as in the aforementioned example (72), where the KSA’s Islamic identity is overtly blamed for causing the female deletion.

In terms of the third argument, it concludes that if the exclusion of females occurs, it must be due to female oppression. There are many examples from the data that confirm this, such as the aforementioned examples (47, 48, 49, 50,51, 53), as they all focus on the restrictions on female movement. Moreover, the data show that the ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ construction is operationalized through using an argumentation scheme of argument from consequences. This means that any positive action is sustained by naming its good consequences, while any negative action is rejected based on the belief that it will have bad consequences. For example,

(81) It’s as if a bomb went off, a special bomb that killed only the women.
(Mallick 2012, in *Toronto Star*, 2 October 2012)

(82) In this catalogue [Saudi version], the men are alone with small girls and boys, which does start to look creepy after 50 pages. Are these children orphans?
(Mallick 2012, in *Toronto Star*, 2 October 2012)

(83) In the Saudi version, the men are alone with their furniture, one Ikea handyman wielding a massive screwdriver. His photo is bigger in the Saudi version because the photo of a female homeowner has been deleted.
(Mallick 2012, in *Toronto Star*, 2 October 2012)

The use of metaphor is apparent in (81), where the deletion of female pictures is related to an activated bomb that has caused the death of females and their disappearance. Excluding females destroys the balance of everything and hence justifies the use of sarcasm, which is apparent in depicting the KSA as a weird country that has no females in it. Thus, in their argument, the journalists cite the consequences of the exclusion of females, inferring the conclusion that this exclusion should not occur as it denotes possible female oppression. Therefore, the argumentation scheme for argument from consequences is the following:

If female exclusion occurs, then bad consequences will result.

Therefore, female exclusion should not occur.

The argument emphasizes Saudi Arabia's negative and odd action, which is in sharp contrast to the implied positive Western action towards women, where both males and females inhabit the Western world. This again equates Saudi Arabia with the Orientalist theme of the oppressed Muslim woman and backwardness.

It is worthy of note that on the argumentation level, the analysis also shows that the main part of in-group legitimization originates from being different to 'Them'. Therefore, all three levels of analysis in KhosraviNik's (2010) framework produce three main prevailing themes: the 'oppression of Muslim woman', 'Otherness' and 'backwardness'. In fact, these themes are employed to function as the ideological underpinning of the construction of Us versus Them.

To conclude, after an extensive three-level analysis of social actors, social actions and argumentation, it is clear that the discursive substantiation of 'Othering' towards Saudi Arabia frames most of the examined Western newspapers covering the deletion incident. The polar structure opposing 'Them' to 'Us' is elaborated through two interrelated aspects: attributes and actions performed by two opposing entities.

7.3. Visual Data

This part focuses on the images accompanying the subsequent news articles that emerged from the deletion of female pictures from the 2013 IKEA catalogue. The main question to answer is: What is the communicative purpose of the photographs? The aim is to examine whether the themes and ideas conveyed by the visual and verbal elements complement each other, or whether they represent different themes. Due to the reliance of the text producers on both verbal and visual modes in their coverage of the issue, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework for the reading of visual images is utilized as an investigative tool. However, the analysis of these images focuses on compositional meaning rather than representational and interactive meanings to avoid repetition, as the images were analyzed in the visual analysis part of the thesis from representational and interactive perspectives (see 6.4, 6.5).

The analysis starts with an overview of the images deleted from the IKEA catalogue, which often accompany news reports, and then moves on to examine the placement of the visual elements in the reports to find out how these affect the comprehension of the reader, and

whether the visual data complement the themes and ideas expressed by the verbal data or not. The following table highlights the manifested photos and captions accompanying news articles.

Newspaper	Country	Photo	Caption
1. <i>The Australian</i>	Australia	Metro Sweden Front Page	Where'd mummy go? Sweden's Metro newspaper shows how Ikea erased a woman from the Saudi version of its catalogue.
2. <i>Newcastle Herald</i>	Australia	No picture	No caption
3. <i>The Border Mail</i>	Australia	No picture	No caption
4. <i>National Post</i>	Canada	Metro Sweden front page	No caption
5. <i>The Calgary Herald</i>	Canada	No picture	No caption
6. <i>The Toronto Star</i>	Canada	The bathroom	Ikea in the West and in Saudi Arabia: where did Mummy go?
7. <i>Irish Examiner</i>	Ireland	IKEA name picture	No caption
8. <i>The New Zealand Herald</i>	New Zealand	No picture	No caption
9. <i>Metro</i>	Sweden	Metro Sweden front page	No caption
10. <i>The Local₁</i>	Sweden	IKEA name picture	No caption
11. <i>The Local₂</i>	Sweden	The bathroom	The Swedish (left) and Saudi (right) versions of the Ikea catalogue (Ikea).
12. <i>The Local₃</i>	Sweden	The bathroom	No caption
13. <i>The Local₄</i>	Sweden	Femen members	No caption
14. <i>The Guardian₁</i>	UK	IKEA name picture	In the Saudi Ikea universe, the world is populated entirely by single dads, children and the occasional cat.
15. <i>The Guardian₂</i>	UK	The bathroom	The original version of the Ikea catalogue and the censored versions circulated in Saudi Arabia.
16. <i>The Independent₁</i>	UK	Metro Sweden front page	The Metro front page showing women removed from Ikea images.
17. <i>The Independent₂</i>	UK	Metro Sweden front page	No caption
18. <i>Mail Online</i>	UK	The bathroom	Something's missing! Women erased from Saudi IKEA catalogue.

19. <i>Belfast Telegraph</i>	UK	The bathroom	No caption
20. <i>The Telegraph</i>	UK	Metro Sweden front page	Pages from the Swedish (left) and the Saudi Arabian edition of next year's Ikea catalogue.
21. <i>The Express</i>	UK	IKEA car photo	Furniture store Ikea has edited out pictures of women from its Saudi Arabian brochure
22. <i>Financial Times</i>	UK	The bathroom	Ikea faced criticism after it emerged it had airbrushed women from its annual furniture catalogue in Saudi Arabia.
23. <i>Metro</i>	USA	No picture	No caption
24. <i>Boston Globe</i> ₁	USA	The bathroom	The women in the Swedish IKEA catalogue for 2013, left, were edited out of the Saudi Arabian version, right.
25. <i>Boston Globe</i> ₂	USA	The bathroom	A woman is seen in an image from Ikea's 2013 Swedish catalog, but not in its Saudi version.
26. <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	USA	The bathroom	A woman photographed in the standard version of the IKEA catalog, left, is missing from pages of the Saudi version, right.
27. <i>The Palm Beach Post</i>	USA	The bathroom	Ikea deleted the pajama-clad woman from the catalog circulated in Saudi Arabia.
28. <i>New York Times</i>	USA	The bathroom	A handout photo from Ikea, the Swedish furniture company, shows two versions of the same photo from its Swedish catalog, left, and its Saudi catalog.
29. <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	USA	Metro Sweden front page	The Oct. 1 2012 issue of daily Metro fronted with two images from Swedish and Saudi Arabian IKEA catalogue for next year.
30. <i>The Washington Post</i>	USA	The bathroom	No caption
31. <i>USA Today</i>	USA	Metro Sweden front page	Today's issue of the Swedish daily Metro shows images from Swedish and Saudi Arabian IKEA catalogs for next year in which women have been deleted from identical photos.
32. <i>New York Post</i>	USA	The bathroom	Side by side comparisons of Ikea's catalogues from Sweden, left, and Saudi Arabia, right.
33. <i>New York Daily News</i>	USA	The bathroom	Ikea is under fire for deleting images of women from the Saudi version of its furniture catalogue. Pictured are the Swedish, left, and

			Saudi, right, versions of the Ikea catalogue.
34. <i>The Washington Times</i>	USA	No picture	No caption

Table 20: The photographs and captions accompanying the news coverage

The above table shows that the most used image in the media coverage of the issue of female deletion is the bathroom scene, where a comparison is made between both Swedish and Saudi versions. This is followed the *Metro* Sweden front-page picture, which compares the same bathroom scene between the Swedish and Saudi versions. Then there is a third type of picture that is detected, which is a picture showing the name of IKEA. The following images show the three most prominent ones in the media data.



Figure 34: The bathroom scene



Figure 35: The *Metro* Sweden front page



Figure 36: IKEA store name

Noticing the visual elements of a multimodal text is an initial step in meaning comprehension. Regarding information zones, which are the positions of visual elements, a close look at the 34 newspapers reveals that, in general, the occurring images are placed in the top sections of the news reports. Furthermore, Figures 34 and 35 show that the visual elements are placed in the left and right halves of the images and this suggests certain meanings. As mentioned in Chapter Three (see 3.2.3.3), according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), if an element is aligned to the left, it represents *Given* information, something that is *common sense*, with which readers can generally agree. They also refer to such elements as ‘a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message’ (ibid.: 181). If, on the other hand, an element is aligned to the right, it represents *New* information, something *contestable* or *problematic*, with which readers do not (yet) agree. It represents *the message* (ibid.: 180). If we look at Figure 34, the left half shows the unedited image that prevails in the standard edition of the catalogue. It is the one that is agreed upon and something that the reader is assumed to know in advance. On the other hand, the right half shows the edited image where the female has been deleted. It suggests *new* and problematic information that is considered a deviation from the norm. It usually presents a message, which the reader is required to pay attention to.

Likewise, Figure 35 focuses on the front page of the *Metro*, and there are again two halves. The left half refers to the unedited Swedish image of the bathroom scene, which shows what is old or already given, while the right half shows what is new. Moreover, in Western culture, people read from left to right and hence they view images from left to right. This means that the left half suggests what is old or given, while the right half suggests what is new. Therefore, as for

the realisation of the elements themselves, both image and text can assume the position of *Given* or *New* information. These structures emphasize that there are two opposing sides, ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Moreover, with regard to visual-verbal relations, a close look at the above images shows that in the first two there is a similarity between the verbal and visual elements, as they are related to one another and represent similar themes and ideas of female invisibility. In Figures 34 & 35, the photo-captions describe what is shown in each image, and hence the image functions as an illustration. These illustrations are in line with the theme of ‘Othering’ that was detected in the verbal analysis, as there are two clearly defined opposing entities, the West and Saudi Arabia (Figure 34), and Swedish and Saudi Arabian editions of the catalogue (Figure 35). It is clear that the themes and ideas expressed in the two images mirror those expressed in the texts, and thus most of the images accompanying the news reports in the data function as repetition that further stresses the difference between the two editions of the catalogue with regard to female visibility.

As for Figure 36, this image, with a focus on the company’s name, was detected in 3 newspapers. A close look at it shows that the visual and verbal elements do not complement each other but represent different ideas. There is displacement in this image as the idea or concept expressed in the image (IKEA store name) is not related to, or does not give a clue to, the ideas expressed in the text or even in the photo-caption below. The photo-caption ironically focuses on Saudi Arabian IKEA, where there are only males, children and a cat. As previously mentioned in Chapter Five, the cat is mentioned as it occurs on the pages of the catalogues without being deleted (see section 5.5). This caption explicitly shows that this world is restricted to Saudi Arabia, unlike anywhere else. This is again in line with the reoccurring argument of the texts regarding the out-group, ‘they are different’.

Another point that is worth mentioning here is the fact that all the newspapers under examination, with the exception of the *Mail Online*, just use one image to accompany the text. On the other hand, the *Mail Online* uses many pictures taken from the unedited and edited catalogues to show the differences between the two opposing entities. These visual-verbal relations express the same ideas that complement each other. If we look at the following images that the *Mail Online* included in its article, we will notice that the captions describe what is shown in the images. Thus, the images function as illustrations.



Figure 37: Now you see her ... the American catalogue, left, depicts a wholesome scene of a family sharing a bathroom, but bosses decided to airbrush all the women out of their pictures for the Saudi edition, right, a decision it says it now regrets.

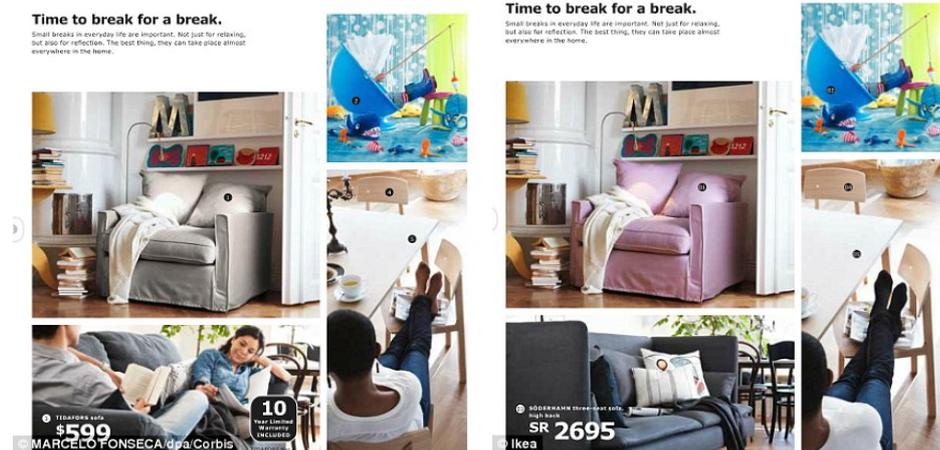


Figure 38: A barefoot woman wearing earrings in the lower right corner, is enjoying a cup of tea at a dining table in the Swedish version of the magazine but in the Saudi edition the woman is morphed into a man with the earrings removed and black socks a fitted t-shirt added. A couple lounging on a couch are removed entirely



Figure 39: The four designers are proudly pictured in the Ikea catalogue and websites with their latest creations.



Figure 40: But on the Saudi website and in the printed edition, the female designer is deleted while her three male colleagues remain



Figure 41: Two young women smile at each other in the versions seen across the world, left, but vanish in the Saudi version, right

The above photos and their captions clearly show that there are two opposing worlds where females exist in one and do not exist in the other. ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ are on full display and thus these images stress the theme of ‘Othering’, ‘female oppression’ and ‘gender inequality’, which were also detected in the verbal analysis of the data.

Therefore, the analysis reveals that, along with the texts, the visual images show that the images function as a repetition of the themes and concepts expressed in the verbal analysis of the texts. The main themes occurring in these pictures are ‘Othering’ and ‘gender inequality’, as they all emphasize the differences between the two opposing entities, Sweden and Saudi Arabia. The producers of these texts are aware that this visualization is capable of provoking deeper feelings in people than written language, as it smoothly directs the reader towards difference occurring without using too many words, and hence it can prompt people to take certain required actions

better than verbal language. In a nutshell, the analysis shows that the press coverage of the 2013 IKEA catalogue issue is an example of text-image relations 'at work'.

7.4. Concluding Remarks

The most obvious finding to emerge from the above analysis is that the primary definition of the exclusion issue is straightforward 'gender inequality' and an 'anti-women' culture in Saudi Arabia. All the newspapers examined reconfigured the removal of images in a catalogue into a gender discrimination story. What happened was a marketing adaptation strategy, which occurred because of IKEA's misconceptions and misunderstanding of women's position in Saudi society and culture. The account of this incident should therefore be viewed as an attempt to emphasize the different negative properties of Saudi Arabia. Despite the range of countries and writers of the analyzed texts, there is a remarkable agreement between them regarding the KSA, since they convey the same message: the removal of female pictures is something not accepted. Most of them did not take issue with IKEA itself and inevitably associated the whole exclusion issue with religion, i.e. Islam. Furthermore, the representation and discourse do not differ in all the examined newspapers, which depict Saudi Arabia as the actor whose actions affect other parties, in this case, IKEA's image of belonging to Sweden which is a supporter of gender equality.

The next chapter describes the synthesis and evaluation of the results obtained from the procedures followed in the analytical chapters.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

This chapter brings together the results of verbal and visual analyses of the two data sets of the study and presents some overall conclusions based on general trends found in the analyses. The aim is to set the findings within wider socio-political and genre-specific contexts. It starts with a discussion of the findings. Then, it moves on to summarise the contribution of the study, its implications and limitations, and possible directions for future research.

8.2. Discussion of findings

The findings of this research are discussed in the following subsections and are divided according to the two main research questions.

8.2.1. Discussion of Findings of Research Question 1

The first research question in this study sought to determine whether females are actually addressed in the 2013 IKEA catalogue and, if so, how they are addressed on both the verbal and visual levels. Chapters Five and Six set out to answer this research question. Therefore, there are three aspects to be discussed about the exclusion taking place in the catalogue. Who is excluded verbally and visually? Why did it happen? What does it mean? What follows answers these questions, guided by the findings of the data analyses and the socio-political context. I will start by discussing the findings of the verbal linguistic analysis of the catalogue first and then move on to discuss the findings of visual analyses. The first set of analyses examined the verbal elements of the catalogue in the Saudi edition in Arabic. The focus was on detecting gender markers in the Arabic catalogue, which show whom is the addressed audience. The findings revealed that females are the main addressees of the Saudi edition of the 2013 IKEA catalogue, with the highest percentage (67%) of instances of occurrences. The ambiguity in the use of second person pronouns found in the English edition was not encountered in the Arabic edition, and hence addressing females is overt and explicit. However, as ambiguous addressees and masculine plural ones also include female addressees, accordingly, the percentage addressing females in the catalogue exceeds 67 per cent, indicating that females are the main audience addressed in the Saudi edition. This in turn shows that females are not verbally excluded, and that IKEA used female gender markers in the Saudi catalogue to refer to something considered appealing to readers of a certain gender. On the other hand, as for male addressees, the analysis proved that they are verbally excluded from the catalogue, as the

percentage overtly addressing them is just 4 per cent (see section 5.4.3). To be more specific, males are overtly addressed in the *workspace* sub-section in the catalogue, hence suggesting a more occupational status.

From a gender point of view, the two aforementioned results reveal that IKEA's approach in its Saudi edition catalogue is sexist, because of its use of feminine gender markers, which automatically excludes males. It is worth mentioning that the term 'sexism' was coined in the 1960s and, as Wodak (2015: 699) observes, it refers to 'discrimination within a social system on the basis of sexual membership'. That is, it refers to linguistic discrimination against women (ibid.). This concept defines women as a suppressed minority who express an interest in being valued and judged in equal terms to men. On the basis of evidence in literature that shows that women are often associated with domestic roles (Wiles *et al.* 1995; Uray & Burnaz 2003; Lazier & Kendrick 1993; Eisend 2010), this study finds that similar patterns of gender stereotyping occur in the discourse of the Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue in Arabic. The verbal analysis revealed that there is clear domestic role stereotyping, with women linguistically addressed in domestic home-based roles and settings. This point deduced from the verbal analysis of the catalogue can be further elucidated by Lazar's (2006: 505) 'power femininity', which refers to 'an empowered and/or powerful feminine identity'. This power is enunciated by the female's 'agentive capacity' in advertisements. In the advertisement discourse of the catalogue, because of the advertising genre, this agentive power is directly tied to consumerism. This means that IKEA is linking femininity to consumerism. Hence, this agentive power is a feature of its advertising discourse and is constructed by it; but in reality, this is rather sexist and stereotypical and such a presence can be criticized in its own right. In other words, the female's ability to act is enabled by her consumption of products and services. This is problematic as it can be considered to be a misogynistic view. The overt use of feminine gender markers in the Arabic catalogue excludes males from the domestic zone and reveals that IKEA thinks of Saudi women consumers as housewives. Therefore, the difficulties in this case study involve IKEA's corporate culture being compromised in an effort to not offend the assumed culture of their Saudi Arabian customer base. Things became more complicated when the Swedish government publicly challenged IKEA's values and expressed their displeasure at the company not living up to the standards of Sweden; this added an uncomfortable political element to the event, since the Swedish government (via Sweden's equality minister at the time), stated that IKEA was 'completely wrong' to '...remove an important part of Sweden's image and an important part of its values in a country that more than any other needs to know about Ikea's principle and values' (Quinn 2012).

In a nutshell, the verbal analysis of the Arabic catalogue indicates that IKEA is guilty of substantiating existing gender role stereotypes for females, which is exacerbated by the type of domestic products that IKEA specializes in, i.e. home furniture etc. IKEA is linguistically assigning domesticity to females, which is in line with research on gender role stereotype advertising. This action is linked to social discrimination. Hence, in placing emphasis on linguistic gender role portrayals, this study extends a growing body of research literature about sexual roles in commercial advertising. It is interesting to see how the linguistic structure of Arabic is connected to the structure of Saudi society and vice versa. According to Wodak (2015: 700), studies on the sexist use of language focus ‘on the possibilities of reference to both genders or their practice that exist in an individual language’. I consider this investigation important as advertising is generally very influential in spreading stereotypical ideas, especially given IKEA catalogue’s high accessibility and wide distribution.

The second set of analyses examined visual elements of the catalogue in both the UK and Saudi editions. The deployment of semiotic materials in the 2013 IKEA catalogue to communicate specific social meanings provided the basis for answering the first research question (RQ-1), which asks to what extent females are shown in the IKEA catalogue. I will focus on discussing the representational meaning analyzed in terms of exclusion and roles. The analysis shows that the percentage of instances of physical visibility of adult female participants in the UK catalogue is 29.13%, while in the Saudi catalogue it is 1.39% (see section 6.4.1). This proves that there is an apparent female visual exclusion from the Saudi edition compared to the unedited UK edition. A possible explanation for this exclusion could hinge on what was mentioned in Chapter Two (see 2.5.5), that IKEA has a tradition of abiding by local norms in the Middle East. For instance, IKEA’s world-renowned meatballs are Halal in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. In fact, there are similarities between IKEA’s adaptation strategy and those of other Western companies who also adapt their practices to the KSA. For example, when the U.S. coffee company Starbucks opened coffee shops in Saudi Arabia in early 2011, it removed the long-haired mermaid from its logo, keeping only her crown (Fox 2011). Also, British retailer Marks & Spencer hired exclusively female sales staff for its female lingerie store in Saudi Arabia (Jones 2012). Spanish clothes brand Zara does not play music in its Saudi stores and also blurs the images of female models on video screens in its stores to abide by Saudi customs (Jones 2015). Industria del Diseño Textil SA, or Inditex, the parent of Spanish fashion retailer Zara, says the Saudi market is important enough to make it worth altering its stores and branding (ibid.).

Therefore, IKEA was trying to address the cultural sensitivities of the Saudi market by means of self-censorship. It is clear that IKEA's way was to find its own solutions, and hence its decision to remove females from the catalogue was neither based on any consultation with the IKEA Saudi franchise group, as mentioned in its formal apology, nor following any Saudi government rules, which do not forbid females' appearance in advertisements or print in the KSA (see section 2.4.2). This is further proved by the fact that the Saudi government did not comment or act against IKEA after it included females' images in its post 2013 edition catalogues in the KSA. IKEA believed that the appeal of female images illustrates the attention-getting process in the catalogue and hence deleted them. The deletion of females was probably made by a single or few individuals in the spirit of finding one's own solution when dealing with a foreign market. As previously stated in Chapter Two (see section 2.4.2), no modification is needed as long as advertisements in the KSA do not violate Saudi rules regarding feminine appearance with a certain modest dress code. Nevertheless, this self-censorship by IKEA is contradicted by its TV advertisement in KSA (see section 2.5.5), which did not delete females but rather adhered to local Saudi culture by displaying females in a certain dress code, i.e. wearing a head scarf and a black abaya. This means that IKEA knew that females can appear in advertisements with a certain dress code that should be followed, and thus their complete deletion from the catalogue was not justified.

Another possible explanation for IKEA's visual exclusion of females comes from the perspective of the interaction between viewer and image, which was analyzed in Chapter Six (see 6.5). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) assert that any visual communication has resources for constituting interaction between sign-maker and viewer. In these types of images with represented participants (see 3.2.3), the ones in the catalogue, there is no immediate involvement between image-producer and viewer, there is only the image itself. Thus, the viewer will never meet the image-producers and, similarly, the producers can never know absent audiences and must therefore create a mental image of the viewers and how they make sense of the image. Therefore, in the case of the catalogue, IKEA as the image-producer, bearing in mind the conservative nature of the KSA and the diverse mentality of its people and how they might interpret Islamic law, might have chosen to play it safe and deleted female images in order to be on the safe side. Putting it in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) terms: the sign-maker's interest at the moment of sign-making settled on 'female exclusion' as a criterial feature of the catalogue. It follows then that these signs are motivated and not arbitrary, and this motivation is formulated in relation to the sign-maker (IKEA) and the context in which the sign is produced (KSA), not in isolation. That is, the images produced are 'bound up with the interests of the

social institutions within which images are produced, circulated and read. They are ideological' (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 47). Again, this explanation is related to the fact that IKEA's perceptions of the KSA, the prevailing stereotypes about the country and its people, and its adherence to the local culture of the target market all contribute to the motivation behind the produced sign, i.e. semiotic resource (catalogue).

Therefore, the visual analytical tools employed show how each design choice communicated quite specific ideas that conveyed certain social meanings. In other words, in line with Ledin and Machin (2018: 9), the visual analysis showed 'how semiotic materials have social meanings built into them'. We have seen that despite the fact that some semiotic materials were used in creative ways, such as the Photoshop instance, they are 'routinely employed for specific purposes' (ibid.), i.e. removing all signifiers of femininity. Kress (2010) takes issue with Saussure's fundamental tenet that language is a system of arbitrary signs governed by rules which serve to 'fix' the inherent variability of language and keep it stable. Instead, he argues that language is inherently fluid and dynamic, because the relationship between the material form of the sign (the signifier) and its meaning (the signified) is not arbitrary but motivated by the sign-maker's interest. He elaborates this as follows: people 'use the resources that are available to them in the specific socio-cultural environments in which they act to create signs' (Jewitt & Kress 2003:10), and as there is never a total 'fit' between the sign and the intended meaning, signs are minutely made and remade with every new use. Thus, the meanings of signs are constantly transformed as sign-makers select the most apt sign from the available resources in any given context according to their interest. IKEA chose to delete feminine signifiers.

Another result that emerged from the visual analysis of the catalogue is in relation to the roles ascribed to the people depicted in the catalogue. The focus here is on the UK edition, as there were no deletions from it. According to Dyer (1982: 97), the analysis of advertisements suggests that gender is 'routinely portrayed according to traditional cultural stereotypes: women are shown as ... housewives, mothers, homemakers; and men in situations of authority and dominance over women'. Nevertheless, the analysis shed light on the fact that the represented female participants assume the same roles as their male counterparts. The analysis showed that females were portrayed as equal to men in the UK edition, as females and males are equal doers/reactors of actions in the IKEA unedited catalogue. When we take a look at the visuals in the IKEA catalogue examined, we are able to identify balanced chores for the two genders in the catalogue as males and females are doing the same things, such as cooking and looking after children, together. A possible explanation for this might be that this reflects the fact that, in

Sweden, from where IKEA hails, gender equality is one of the cornerstones of Swedish society, where everyone enjoys the same rights and obligations in all aspects of life. This is further supported by the fact that Sweden is always in the top of the Gender Gap rankings. For instance, in Figure 25 (see section 6.4.2), a male and a female are looking at each other while preparing food together. They are both represented as ‘doers’ of the action of cooking. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, due to the nature of the multimodal ensemble at hand, i.e. the catalogue, traditional patterns such as family representations prevailed in the UK edition of the catalogue where females and males are depicted in domestic settings as either relaxing or equally engaged in familial activities.

On the other hand, if we conduct a gender diversity test on the Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue, and we take a look at the visuals in this particular catalogue, we can recognize that there are no equal gender roles in the Saudi edition as a result of the exclusion strategy that took place there. There are no females, and hence males are either deleted as well or left alone in the traditional domestic zone with little children. Therefore, despite the fact that IKEA’s action is based on its strategy to adapt its communication to the target market, the deletion of social actors from the Saudi edition reflects IKEA’s perception of the portrayal of gender in Saudi society. IKEA’s depiction of females in the Saudi edition was influenced by the societal norms of the KSA, as perceived by IKEA (see section 2.5.5). A possible explanation for IKEA’s adaptation strategy, that led to the exclusion of female images from the Saudi catalogue, might be in light of the previously explained mirror argument (see section 3.4.6.1), which assumes that advertising reflects values that already exist in society and hence acts as a magnifying lens that offers a generalized picture of a social phenomenon. Furthermore, according to Ledin and Machin (2018: 56), if there are consistent absences we should always identify the ideological motivations for this. The absence of females from the Saudi edition is significant as it reveals IKEA’s perception of Saudi society which is affected by the cultural norms of the KSA. Consequently, this misperception was subjected to media coverage and hence representation of the KSA as the ‘Other’, as seen in the media analysis findings.

In addition, gender segregation is assumed to play a part in the misperception of female visibility in KSA (see section 2.2.7). Thus, it might have affected IKEA’s decision to remove females from the catalogue as this segregation has a great impact on how females are stereotyped. Morris (2008: 94) sums up this stereotypical situation by quoting an article about Saudi women in *The Daily Telegraph*, which highlights Western perceptions:

Saudi Arabia has the worst reputation for the suppression of women in the world. Enveloped in cloaks and veils, segregated into all-women zones, forbidden to drive and unable to vote, required to ask permission of their male guardians to travel or obtain an ID card, their condition is considered as much of an international scandal as many of the human rights abuses against which Amnesty International campaigns.

Thus, the aforementioned points show that the presence of females in the IKEA catalogue was associated with domestic zones, which is a gender role stereotype that exists in advertising everywhere. As previously stated, these gender representation findings reflect those of scholars across different fields who have examined gender portrayals in advertising and generally agree that women are still being depicted in negative and stereotypical ways, despite changes in their societal roles (Mager & Helgeson 2011; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos 2009), although a meta-analysis suggests that gender stereotyping seems to have been decreasing over the years (Eisend 2010). Therefore, after discussing the above general critique of gender from a Western point of view, and the equation of females with domesticity, it now remains to interpret the other side of the issue, that is, why did IKEA remove females visually but address them verbally? There are two possible explanations for this question. First, IKEA may have thought that the main problematic issue in the KSA is the visibility of females, not their existence, as this is not something debatable. This assumption is based on their perception of Saudi society as less tolerant to female visibility in the media in general. Therefore, IKEA probably decided to acknowledge their existence and belonging to the domestic zone by verbally addressing them, utilizing linguistic gender markers that are distinctive features of Arabic compared to English, while at the same time were not too visible in the catalogue in order not to upset Saudi costumers. This view means that IKEA was aware of the Arabic gender system. A second possible explanation is that IKEA simply did not know or think that Arabic could expose gender stereotypes and so it simply focused on deleting females visually, without being aware that while addressing them verbally they were still being sexist. IKEA did not take into consideration the linguistic features of the language used in its marketing tool. Moreover, the possibility of IKEA deleting females' images by mistake, as claimed in its apology, is questionable, because according to Quito (2017), IKEA has ethnographers who conduct field research into the domestic life of different regions through home visits, interviews and panels to help catalogue creators plan the content and styling of local editions. This means that everything is planned carefully and thorough market research is carried out. In other words, the exclusion was intentional and not just a mistake. Erasing females from the catalogue seemed to be a common practice for IKEA Saudi Arabia, even prior to 2012.

Moving on now to summarize the results of both the verbal and visual analyses of the IKEA catalogues, a concluding remark should be made. As indicated earlier, in regard to the visual and verbal elements of the catalogues analyzed in Chapters Five and Six, it should be noted that although these elements are studied separately for the sake of clarity, they do work together in showing how IKEA approaches its Saudi customer base, and also displaying how females are represented in their catalogue. The content analysis that was employed in the verbal analysis in Chapter Five had the advantage of producing quantifiable information of textual elements that enabled strong inferences beyond information yielded by just the catalogue. The visual semiotic analysis in Chapter Six had the advantage of enabling a richer analysis of the catalogue by focusing on what, and how, images mean what they do. Thus, this study demonstrates the usefulness of combining both approaches to conduct an analysis of gender stereotypes in commercial product advertisements, i.e. the IKEA catalogue. Hence, the most striking observation that emerged from the verbal and visual data comparison was that females were visible on the verbal level but excluded on the visual level. As indicated previously, feminine linguistic visibility means that IKEA was associating females with domesticity and hence restricting Saudi females to traditional housewife roles. This might even be the case in the UK edition, but as English is not a gender language, this stereotype, if it exists, can easily be hidden. On the other hand, the visual exclusion of females from the Saudi edition was probably done to cope with the perceived social norms of the KSA. The images in the IKEA catalogue serve as a sociocultural mirror reflecting the degree to which females are visible in Saudi society as perceived by IKEA. This contradiction makes the case examined more interesting.

Moreover, the contrastive analysis of the UK and Saudi catalogues showed the differences in the representations of females and males in advertising. These differences reflect fundamental cultural differences and opposing positions. Miska and Pleskova (2016: 123) summarize this point as follows: on the one hand, there is 'IKEA's Swedish legacy and its core values promoting egalitarianism and equality; on the other hand, Saudi Arabia's cultural traditions, influenced by conservative Islamic values'. They further argue that the main challenge that IKEA faced is that,

...it was seen as adapting to the local Saudi culture, a culture frequently criticized for the way it regards women. By leaning towards local Saudi sensibilities, IKEA challenged several of its own core values and became drawn into human rights controversy.
(ibid)

The KSA is guided by Islamic Sharia law, which is interpreted and applied in the society making everyday life different from a Western lifestyle. In short, these findings add to multimodality research as the relationships across and between modes in multimodal texts and interaction are a central area of multimodal research.

A final point worth mentioning here is the fact that stereotypical female portrayals are still common in the IKEA catalogue in the KSA, while the role of women in Saudi society has progressed (see section 2.3.3). Similar to previous findings from other EU countries like the UK (Mitchell and Taylor 1990; Plakoyiannaki and Zotos 2009), Greece (Zotos and Lysonski 1994), Italy (Zotos, Lysonski and Cirilli 1996), Sweden and the Netherlands (Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund 1995), the evolving social and professional status of Saudi women is not yet mirrored in IKEA catalogue verbal depictions. This too can be interpreted as a sign of sexism. However, considering the KSA's position in terms of equal gender opportunities compared to other Western countries, the above finding is to be expected. IKEA is still addressing female costumers verbally in domestic zones in its post-2013 editions. For example, I have checked the latest Arabic 2018 Saudi edition and found that feminine gender markers prevail in it, which means males are still excluded from all domestic settings. This shows that, even if female images are not deleted, IKEA is still linguistically sexist. However, there is still a possibility that IKEA might not know anything regarding Arabic being a gendered language and that the feminine gender marker excludes males. Thus, the results of this study, which has analysed advertisement language in use, might raise the awareness of MNCs in general and IKEA in particular about the fact that they could be being linguistically sexist when they use a gendered language like Arabic in their advertising multimodal artefacts. The visual deletion of females attracted attention to the sexism occurring as it was easily spotted, while the linguistic deletion of males was not noted, as not everyone in the West knows Arabic and hence the Western media assumed that the KSA was the main actor behind the deletion, while the analysis revealed that IKEA is sexist in assigning the catalogue to females via language. The visual analysis demonstrates that IKEA's semiotic choices in the catalogue are based on a common, taken-for-granted understanding of gendered representations in advertising in the KSA. It proves that IKEA's knowledge of Saudi society is not up to date, bearing in mind the stages of female visibility that were discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.3), and it is evident that IKEA is still dealing with a post-1979 KSA era where female visibility in society was extremely restricted (see section 2.3.2). IKEA is not adapting its gender representation strategy in its catalogue according to recent changes that have occurred in Saudi society. Thus, the stereotype portrayed is old-fashioned, dated and not reflective of current society. This is even highlighted in the view

of few Saudi bloggers and activists who provided their opinions on the matter. For example, IKEA's deletion of female pictures did not disturb blogger Eman Al Nafjan, who is famous for defying a Saudi tradition by driving a car in June 2011. She told CNN that:

We're beyond that right now in Saudi Arabia. With Internet and satellite TV, there's really no such thing anymore as blacking out women or airbrushing out women. I would be upset if something like Google was doing it, but for IKEA to do it, that's just marketing, it's not such a big deal. Images in international magazines had been customarily censored. But times seem to have changed a bit. A year ago, for example, the shoulders and stomachs in the images of women in tube tops would be colored with a marker. They would go through each individual magazine with a black marker and color in any skin that was showing or tear out pages. Now they don't. It's strange – almost like they gave up. I saw a woman wearing a miniskirt on the cover of a magazine when I was at the grocery store.
(Sterling 2012)

She further stated that censored images are not unusual, 'I don't think it's right, but it's the culture.' She later tweeted that people should be more upset at car companies, such as GMC, for marketing their cars in a country where women are not allowed to drive (Eman AlNafjan (@Saudiwoman) 2012). It is clear that this activist is focusing on what is important to her as a Saudi woman. The deletion of female pictures is not of significance because the deletion is something done by IKEA, and hence its effect is on marketing IKEA's goods in the KSA. Her words indicate that IKEA's deletion of females is not something newsworthy. On the other hand, in her tweet about the incident, she redirects the eyes to a Western company, GMC, that runs a car-selling business in the KSA. Bearing in mind that there was not reaction from Saudi people towards the deletion, the target audience of the tweet is probably Western people. In a way, she is condemning all those who blame IKEA for deleting women models from the catalogue while not blaming the car companies who operate in the KSA where women do not drive, which is against Western values just as IKEA is. Thus, she raises awareness of what is really significant for a Saudi woman from her perspective.

8.2.2. Discussion of Findings of Research Question 2

With regard to the second research question pertaining to how Self and Other are constructed in the news coverage of the female exclusion issue, it was found that the representations of social actors display a polar pattern where two entities are put in opposition: 'US' vs 'THEM'. The analysis revealed that the KSA is represented negatively and this is achieved by using various discursive strategies such as referential and predicational strategies. It is constructed as an out-group or a religious and cultural 'Other'. In contrast, the in-group is represented

positively through positive attributes. Moreover, the social actor analysis revealed that the lexical references used in defining the KSA as ‘conservative Islamic country’, ‘Wahhabi’ and ‘Muslim’ imply that its actions stem from its religion. In fact, one of the emerging arguments from the verbal analysis is that, for the West, the removal of female pictures is due to Islam and its strict laws. In other words, the religious characteristics of the country define and dictate how the country is run. This indicates that the theme of ‘religious Otherness’ is marked in the data. This in turn evokes themes associated with a twenty-first century phenomenon called ‘Neo-Orientalism’. Altwaiji (2014: 313) states that it is ‘a style of representation that, while indebted to classical Orientalism, focuses on “othering” the Arab world with the exclusion of some geographic parts, such as India and Turkey, from the classical map of Orientalism’. Neo-Orientalism was successfully indicated on 16 September 2001 when George W. Bush declared the American war on terror to be a crusade. This new norm was soon accepted by other European countries who gave their views on the East and its culture (Altwaiji 2014). In the aftermath of 9/11, gendered and orientalist depictions of the Middle East or Islamic ‘Other’ were highly visible in the Western world (Khalid 2011). The 9/11 attacks brought the Middle East and classic Orientalist discourse, with its binary division of ‘US’ and ‘THEM’, into sharp focus again (Altwaiji 2014). Thus, representations of Arab Muslims prevailed in post-9/11 politics and led to keeping an eye on every Muslim who is considered a threat to the West (ibid.). According to Altwaiji (2014), unlike classic Orientalism that represents different issues of different ethnic groups in the Middle East, Neo-Orientalism is distinguished by the geography it covers which Said defines as “Islamic East v. the West” (Said 1978: xvi). The notion of Neo-Orientalism is thus relevant to this study and to the detected discourse of Othering, because it uncovers the ways in which non-Western cultures, traditions and people are perceived in the ‘West’ through binary oppositions depicting the ‘East’ as irrational, backward, despotic and lazy and the ‘West’ as rational, moral and civilized (Khalid 2011). Moreover, these Orientalist discourses rely on long-held assumptions about the ‘helplessness of ‘Eastern’ women and the misogyny of ‘Eastern’ men’ (ibid.: 21). According to Amin-Khan (2012), Neo-Orientalism is symbolised through attacks on Muslim women, and the ban on niqab and hijab, with the intention of saving them so that they become free. Turning now to the current study, in accordance with the present results, previous studies, especially after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, have demonstrated traces of Orientalism in Western media (e.g. Elgamri 2008; Izadi & Saghaya-Biria 2007; Malcolm et al. 2010; Kumar 2010; Marsden & Savigny 2009; Poole 2009; Richardson 2004; Vultee 2006). These studies show that in the post-9/11 context, key elements of the cultural stereotyping of Islam and Muslims, which are identified in Said’s *Orientalism*, such as irrationality, violence and backwardness, were reproduced. They agree

that today's Western media create an Orientalist world of thought, which has in turn created the concept of Neo-Orientalism inherited from Classical Orientalism. The latter refers to Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), that is about the network of interlocking discourses relating to the "Orient". It was constructed in Western civilization under the assumption that European identity was superior to that of Orient, because it was considered to be more civilized and culturally developed. While, the assumption towards the Orient and the Oriental was one of an uncivilized, backward and despotic society, while Neo-Orientalism represents modern manifestations of Orientalism, wherein the East, and more specifically Islam, is at the forefront of study and critique as the 'Other'. These studies show that, while representing the Arab world, the Western press predominantly emphasizes the fact that its religion is Islam and its populace is Muslim. Subsequently, this type of emphasis and depiction by the Western media 'reinforces the pre-existing negative image of East in the readers' collective memory' (Elgamri 2008: 216). Since the East is defined according to a perception of Islam as a violent and intolerant religion that is full of hatred against everything about the West, its followers and cultures are directly linked in the news with being intolerant, opposing modernism and freedom, uniquely sexist and male-dominant (Elgamri 2008: 214). A similar finding is expressed by Kumar (2010), who states that five discourse frameworks are dominant in discussions of Islam, with Orientalist qualities being used to represent Muslims and the "Muslim World" within the post-9/11 political arena. These are as follows: 1) Islam is a monolithic religion. 2) Islam is a uniquely sexist religion. 3) The "Muslim mind" is incapable of rationality and science. 4) Islam is inherently violent. 5) The West spreads democracy, whereas Islam spawns terrorism. Furthermore, Richardson (2004: 75) suggests that the reporting of Islam and Muslims is characterized by a twin process of 'division and rejection' that leads to the portrayal of 'Their' inferiority, negativity and threat. Richardson cites 'negative references' such as 'cultural backwardness', 'fundamentalism', 'barbarity' and concludes that the similarities with 'Orientalist paternalism are striking' (ibid.).

Moreover, the direct quotes that were analyzed share one theme, that of 'female oppression', as they represent the KSA as being an anti-woman country that suppresses females. Such representations are factual and invulnerable to questioning simply because they come from official sources. It also helps to distance the reporter's voice from the represented event by enabling the reader to witness it for themselves. Thus, the reader might take these opinions as confirmation and authorization to overtly condemn the KSA for being an anti-women society, where the prevailing stereotypes and gender segregation, which is a fact, are the reason behind its oddness and backwardness from a 'Western' perspective. It seems, therefore, that this is a

powerful and indirect method adopted by reporters to exclude their overt opinions concerning Saudi Arabia, which may lead their readers to indirectly legitimize their claims of Saudi Arabia being ‘medieval’. The KSA is pictured as the ‘odd’ and deviant ‘Other’ in regard to gender equality; this in turn presupposes that the West is the opposite, as it is supportive of gender equality. This goes hand in hand with the Orientalist theme of ‘female oppression’. This finding is consistent with that of Ferguson’s (2008: 107) assertion that many Western feminist writers and the mainstream media have focused their attention on the subject of Arab, especially Saudi, women as he ‘oppressed women’. She believes that in representing the Eastern woman, she is stereotypically assumed to be oppressed, inferior, traditional, backward and mysterious. Moreover, these finding reflect those of Mishra (2007: 267), who also found that Saudi women were represented in American newspapers as ‘passive victims of Islamic law’ and were portrayed as having ‘oppressed lives’ due to the restrictions that they endured. The foundation of this idea can be found in Orientalist discourse, as highlighted by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978), which examines the development of Western depictions of the Orient from the eighteenth century to the present day and describes the high proportion of scholarly writing that pits Eastern and Islamic culture against European and ‘Western’ culture.

In sum, the aim of Chapter Seven was to answer Research Question Two and hence analyze the discourse construction strategies of news reports regarding female exclusion from the Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue. The verbal and visual analyses of the press coverage revealed that these arguments correspond to the following Orientalist themes: ‘religious Otherness’, ‘female oppression’ and ‘backwardness’.

It is also worthy of note that the data analysis revealed another important finding. After examining the data, it was noted that all the news reports covering the issue of IKEA’s 2013 catalogue in Saudi Arabia reflect a sharp absence of the voice of Saudi Arabia, including a local merchant, Al Sulaymani, who runs the three IKEA stores in Saudi Arabia. The prevailing voice is that of Western elites: Swedish government officials and Ikea. A surprising finding in the selected data is that none of the articles that handled the topic had any Saudi official sources or reports. One may conclude here that the KSA is always talked about but never talks.

The aforementioned point leads to another related significant issue, and that is of objectivity. In this context, this states that the reporting of such an incident should be fairly represented by the two sides of an issue, and then leave it to the readers to judge for themselves. In this instance, what is found is a representation of only one side of the argument, from the perspective of the

‘West’, as the data did not yield a single reference or voice of Saudi officials or Saudi local franchises in any of the news that covered them. This renders the news coverage of these particular data sets subjective and biased. This study, according to its small data set, suggests that ideology and judgements are at play within these newspapers. Thus, the findings are important in understanding the power of language as an ideological tool in the production and explanation of Us/Them ideologies.

8.3. Concluding Remarks

To conclude this section, this investigation took the form of a case-study of the 2013 IKEA catalogue. This case study enabled me to examine it by combining two approaches: MSSA and CDA. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the linguistic visibility of females in domestic zones meant that IKEA was acting stereotypically and was sexist. This is because it could have used the unmarked male gender marker to address its audience as this includes both males and females, and hence IKEA would not be accused of being sexist. In fact, this finding raises awareness of the existence of linguistic sexism and gender role stereotyping in the IKEA Saudi catalogue, as the linguistic sexism was unnoticed due to the Arabic language barrier. Conversely, the visual exclusion of females also overtly reveals IKEA as being sexist. Therefore, IKEA is sexiest in its Saudi catalogue edition both on the linguistic and visual levels. The linguistic gender representation analysis uncovered this unnoticed sexism.

The second major finding was that all the data sets of the study, catalogues and news reports, complement each other and prove the misperception of IKEA about the KSA, which was based on stereotypical assumptions and led to the visual exclusion of females from the Saudi edition catalogue, which is against gender equality and Swedish values. This exclusion in turn led to the representation of the KSA in the news coverage as the cultural and religious Other of the West. The analyses in Chapters Six and Seven indicate that the KSA was represented as the Other, that is, besides being represented as the cultural Other of the West in the news reports, it was also an ‘odd’ Other that excluded females from the catalogue. Moreover, the Saudi edition catalogue in itself was the ‘Other’ edition compared to the UK edition.

In a nutshell, investigating the current case study, which was related to Saudi Arabia and its gender related rules, enabled us to focus a critical lens on news discourse dealing with any existing misconceptions about Saudi/ Saudi women and to raise awareness of this issue. It was further an opportunity to compare it with existing literature about Islam and Muslims as the

analysis proved that there were hidden agendas underneath the overt neutral coverage of the incident. In fact, this could be a contribution to reporting similarities and differences in how this incident, which is related to Saudi Arabia and how the Saudi woman is covered by ‘Western’ sources.

8.4. Contribution

It is necessary to emphasize how this research may potentially contribute to the existing body of related research. First, in terms of the topic or the investigated case study of the 2013 IKEA catalogue, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no study has examined this topic as this study has. This is the first study to examine the female exclusion that occurred in the 2013 IKEA catalogue on both verbal and visual levels. The object under investigation is in line with the aims and goals of CDS, and this is further noted by Wodak and Meyer (2016: 3), who state that, ‘any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted’. Therefore, the significance of this case is seen in the different reactions that it prompted. It overtly shows that there is a conflict between the values of two different social groups that belong to two different cultures, i.e. IKEA and the KSA. Moreover, the literature relating to this case is scant and is limited to newspaper articles or news reporting about the exclusion, and a few reviews that touch upon female exclusion from a marketing and business perspective (Miska & Pleskova 2016; Ramanna *et al.* 2016), and it is represented in social media, such as Twitter and YouTube, where people commented on the female exclusion that happened. Therefore, this research study represents a way in which this topic can turn into a formal academic publication and thus contribute to knowledge.

Second, the findings of this study are significant for CDA/multimodal studies and international marketing studies. With respect to CDA, the analytical procedures and findings of this study contribute to the field of CDA studies. As pointed out in Chapter 3, CDA theories are sometimes difficult to operationalize due to their grand nature, therefore this study is the first comprehensive application and assessment of KhosraviNik’s (2010) analytical framework that merges the methodologies and linguistic categories used in various CDA studies on the representation of social groups. It provides ‘a methodology of discourse analysis which starts from three main intra-textual elements in terms of representation of Self and Other and shows how these intra-textual elements link with higher-up levels of textual repertoire and then to discourse’ (KhosraviNik 2010: 67). Thus, this study contributes to building an understanding of how the implementation of systematized CDA analytical categories/ tools can enrich theory progressively in this field of study, which is characterised by eclecticism. In reviewing the

literature on CDA, no study was found that structures its analysis based on KhosraviNik's (2010) analytical framework. This study was able to test the feasibility of this framework and to apply it to analyse the representation of a social group (i.e. Saudi Arabia) that is different from those usually represented and examined in CDA studies. This is because, as aforementioned (see 3.4), most of the studies in CDA focus on different social groups, such as immigrants, asylum-seekers and minorities as out-groups. The analysis and findings prove that this framework helped to apply CDA critically in practice and hence contribute towards minimizing the problem of confusion that a CDA researcher may face because of using different analytical tools from various CDA approaches to answer the research questions at hand. The study testifies to the feasibility of applying this framework to the analysis of media discourse, which is investigated here. The analysis proves the usefulness of this framework, as it succeeded in organizing the elements to be analyzed on three systematic levels, which holistically cover the examined data. Moreover, utilizing CDA in the current investigation is useful for this study as it contributes to enhancing people's awareness and enlightens them by showing how the structure of the examined news discourses plays a role in the circulation of ideologies of power and hegemony.

Moreover, this study contributes to the field of CDA-oriented multimodal studies as it increases the awareness of the importance and benefit of merging CDA and MSSA analyses and suggests the feasibility of following a cross-disciplinary approach. This is reinforced by the fact that the approaches in CDA are, to a large extent, confined to the analysis of verbal resources, despite Machin and Mayr (2012) having conducted 'a multimodal introduction' that merged CDA with multimodal analysis. According to Bateman (2014: 48), since the late 1990s, the awareness of multimodality as a research issue has grown considerably and 'the prevalence of artefacts that include both pictures and texts ... has prompted renewed scientific discussion and consideration of the relationship between visually and verbally presented information within many, quite diverse disciplines'. This study has investigated how different semiotic resources are used in specific cultural and institutional contexts, and thus it contributes to the discovery and development of new uses of existing semiotic resources. Therefore, this study, by examining text-image relations in commercial advertisements and media discourse analyses, contributes to this area by developing more systematic and exhaustive repertoires of text-image relations, which helps to explain how recipients understand the different kinds of material being combined. In fact, the increasing prevalence of such multimodal texts highlights the need to develop new literacies that enable the reader to question texts they are exposed to in their daily lives. In addition, there is little doubt that culturally significant artefacts, such as the examined

catalogue, make a substantial appeal to the visual as an object of study. The analysis of image-text combinations is more difficult than linguistic analysis alone, simply because there is much more to do and the task of accounting for the combination of images and texts is an extra burden on the analyst. This provides some support for the need to pay attention to verbal-visual codes. Thus, this study is also about the scale of detailed analysis of multimodal channels for this topic, which has not been done before.

Furthermore, the visual analysis in this study contributes to cross-cultural studies using social semiotics, as the study uses visual social semiotics to explore cultural differences in the realm of advertising images through a comparative analysis of UK and Saudi advertisements in the form of the 2013 IKEA catalogue. The operationalization of Kress and van Leeuwen's method of visual analysis is effective in formulating hypotheses about gender stereotypes in contemporary advertisements.

Additionally, this research contributes to the field of gender, language and feminist linguistics, which is interested in linguistic discrimination against women and the linguistically equal treatment of women and men. The visual deletion of females from the investigated catalogue attracted attention to the sexism occurring, as this was easily spotted, while the linguistic deletion of males was not noted due to the barrier of not knowing Arabic, which accordingly did not draw attention to the linguistic exclusion of males from domestic zones in the catalogue. However, the analysis revealed that IKEA was sexist in assigning stereotypical gender roles in the catalogue to females via language while excluding males linguistically from those domestic zones, thus revealing the impact of grammatical gender language on exposing gender role stereotypes in advertising discourse. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has tackled the linguistic representation of gender in advertisement discourse as this study has. In other words, most studies have examined the gender roles ascribed to males and females and how most of them reinforce the fact that domestic labour is the responsibility of females alone. Moreover, investigations of gender and discourse have mainly focused on 'the identification of differences between female and male speech' (Hellinger & Bubmann 2001a). However, this study has examined the linguistic realization of stereotypes regarding the representation of females in advertising discourse besides the usual visual depiction, which is based on gender roles. This was possible due to the nature of Arabic that facilitates the depiction of the gender of the addressee due to its linguistic mechanisms. The investigation found interesting insights that broaden existing knowledge about male and female advertising representations in the KSA. Moreover, the study shows how the linguistic structure of an individual language (Arabic) is

connected to the structure of society and, as Hellinger and Bubmann observe (2001a: 19), ‘the central function of linguistic gender in the domain of human reference is the communication of gendered messages of various types’.

Turning now to the field of international marketing, this study is one of the first to thoroughly examine gender representation on both the verbal and visual levels of commercial advertising discourse, especially in Arabic as a gendered language. Previous research has looked at gender and advertising in the context of gender stereotyping as the main theme and predominantly focused on the portrayal of females in advertisements. One issue that emerges from this study is that the analysis will hopefully contribute to better regulation and more active work to fight sexist advertising. A key contribution is that the study, based on its findings, invites present and future marketing managers to take a more critical view of gendered representations. The study hopes to raise the awareness of marketing managers so that they can make more informed choices about verbal and visual gendered representations in their marketing tools. This is because the study reveals how multi-national corporations (MNCs) employing advertisement marketing tools in any grammatically gendered language must pay attention to linguistic gender representation in their artefacts, so as to truly adhere to values of gender equality and avoid any type of gender role stereotypes. To achieve an equal society, it is crucial that discrimination and gender stereotypes are counteracted in the advertising marketing tools of international companies. The key role played by the advertising industry in society motivates this type of study, and the conclusion is that eliminating gender-discriminatory and stereotypical portrayals in advertising is a precondition for the realization of true gender equality. MNCs have the power to influence social behaviour and contribute to equality between women and men, and hence construct role models. Thus, the results of this study, which has analysed advertising language in use, might raise the awareness of MNCs like IKEA to the fact that they should revise their linguistic gender representation mechanisms when advertising in any grammatically gendered language, such as Arabic, so as to avoid being sexist in their advertising multimodal artefacts because of not paying attention to the peculiarities of gendered languages. Moreover, the analyses and findings have key implications for MNCs in terms of raising their awareness to text-image relations by paying attention to the diverse modes of expression they use in their multimodal advertising marketing tools and the combined messages of those different modes that may result in different meanings (see 6.6). They have to ensure that they do not create paradoxical messages that confuse their audience.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that the IKEA catalogue case under study is also relevant to the standardization versus adaptation debate mentioned earlier, in Chapter Two (2.3.1). The analysis contributes to this debate by investigating advertising strategies in two opposing markets that are culturally and religiously distant from each other. Specifically, strategies for adapting marketing tools in terms of the depiction of female social actors were examined. The information presented in this case study, focusing on gender representation, may have important implications for multinational firms, particularly those that operate in Saudi Arabia, especially nowadays with the efforts made by the Saudi government to pursue new foreign investments. The analysis shows that global standardization of advertising is not a feasible strategy in Saudi Arabia, as the depiction of females in the Saudi edition catalogue is affected by cultural factors. This is in line with Karande et al.'s (2006: 497) assertion that the depiction of females in advertisements is a 'culturally normative component of ad content'. As mentioned in the context chapter (see 2.3), Saudi Arabia's cultural values and norms are based on Shari'ah. That is, from the cultural perspective of the KSA, public expectations and restrictions on business in the country are influenced by religion. Similarly, Islamic Shari'ah influences public expectations about modesty in the attire of females, who are expected to be visible but appropriately dressed.

Therefore, in order to succeed in the Saudi market, MNCs should not deviate from these public expectations. Luqmani et al. (2015) state that because Islam requires females to cover their bodies, international ads might have to be modified when they depict females in order to represent them in a modest way, one consistent with religious and societal norms. Notwithstanding, IKEA chose an extreme path, and in its adaptation process it decided to delete all adult females from the Saudi catalogue in its efforts to meet Saudi norms. This shows that there is a misconception about the issue of female visibility and that IKEA was acting based on this misconception, which resulted in IKEA's exclusion of females in a way that was more extreme than that actually required. IKEA constructed images in its catalogue to capture the viewer's attention and to positively link its products with the feelings of its target group based on its own understanding of Saudi cultural norms and values. As seen, this misconception resulted in the representation of the KSA in a certain way in media coverage of the incident.

Lastly, my hope is that the analysis of this case of female exclusion and my findings in this research here have extended our knowledge of the KSA and will contribute towards a more nuanced and critical assessment of the ways in which misperceptions of female visibility/representation in Saudi Arabia are covered and represented in advertisement and news discourses, especially in light of the rapid and sweeping changes in the KSA regarding reforms,

specifically in the position of women. Moreover, the privacy within Saudi society makes it difficult to know the KSA, and hence avoid emphasizing negative stereotypes about it. Therefore, I hope that this research and its findings shed some light on this area.

8.5. Limitations

Within these various stages of analysis and research, there are certain limitations that I came across. The first limitation was that, due to space constraints, I only focused on the newspaper genre to investigate the consequence of female exclusion that took place in the 2013 IKEA catalogue, despite the fact that my extensive search on this topic yielded other media outlet coverage as well as YouTube programmes. Thus, with a small sample size of newspapers, caution must be applied, as the findings of the media analysis might not be representative of the whole Western point of view and stance. Moreover, the study depends on one case study to explore the resulting representation of in/out social groups. Hence, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be transferable to a bigger sample with different cases. The examined case study is not very recent. Nevertheless, its findings still link to the way representation is happening even today. This is part of wider research about representation of the Middle East and Islam and Western perceptions about them. Moreover, this study is still important because it lays a solid foundation for understanding how the negative representations of the KSA support the claim of the study that ‘Othering’ is a policy of the Western news outlets examined towards the KSA in reporting this case of the Ikea catalogue. Thus, it is evident that the choice of words used in the nomination and characterization of the current social actors is of particular significance in analyzing positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

8.6. Future Research

Further research is needed to find out whether IKEA is still sexist in its Saudi Arabic catalogue only due to its misperception of the country or if it is sexist in general. This will be judged after examining catalogues that are written in grammatically gendered languages. This shows the importance of linguistic gender representation in advertising in shedding light on the gender representation orientation of MCNs operating in different markets and in exposing any possible existence of linguistic sexism.

Moreover, it is hoped that this social semiotic study can form a valuable resource for future visual research projects, specifically those that echo a similar exclusion problem. For example, another possible area of future research could be to investigate the case of the Israel edition of

the 2017 IKEA catalogue, in which IKEA released a male-only catalogue for Israel's ultra-conservative Orthodox community, which featured no images of women at all. In addition to removing all traces of women from the catalogue, including the clothes hanging in wardrobe images, the orthodox-friendly catalogue focused on items of furniture particularly popular among traditionally large Haredi families. The investigation could cover both the verbal and visual elements of the catalogue as well as any possible consequent media coverage of the issue, which if detected could form an interesting comparative case study with the current case from 2012 when women were erased from the 2013 Saudi edition of the IKEA catalogue. Further studies, which take verbal and visual variables into account, will need to be undertaken as well.

Furthermore, if we think about future research in a broader sense, an interesting further research could be about capturing the nuances of differences of gender representation in various Muslim countries.

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Appendices

Appendix A

”Kvinnor går inte att retuschera bort”

Peter Lindholm

| 01 Oct 2012 | Uppdaterad: 15 Aug 13



I diktaturens Saudiarabien är kvinnorna inte välkomna på Ikea. Företaget har raderat bort varenda kvinna från sina bilder. Handelsminister Ewa Björling (M) om bilderna: Ett bedrövligt exempel.

► [KLICKA HÄR OCH SE EXEMPEL UR KATALOGERNA](#)

Censur i Ryssland

- **Togs bort.** I förra veckan plockade Ikea bort det populäraste tävlingsbidraget i en marknadsföringskampanj på sin ryska hemsida. Läsbilderna med flest röster föreställde Ikeakunder utklädda som de fängslade kvinnorna i punkgruppen Pussy Riot.
- **Oberoende.** ”Ikea är ett kommersiellt företag som är religiöst och politiskt

Appendix B

Inter IKEA Systems B.V. 

1(1)

2 October 2012

Statement from Inter IKEA Systems B.V. regarding the IKEA catalogue in Saudi Arabia

Inter IKEA Systems B.V., the worldwide IKEA franchisor, regrets what has happened and understands that people are upset.

We have been in dialogue with Al Sulaiman, our franchisee operating IKEA stores in Saudi Arabia. It is not the local franchisee that has requested the retouch of the discussed pictures. The mistake happened during the work process occurring before presenting the draft catalogue for IKEA Saudi Arabia. We, Inter IKEA Systems B.V., have the ultimate responsibility and take full responsibility for the mistakes made.

We have reviewed several of the discussed pictures, for example the women in front of the bathroom mirror and the female designer of the PS2012 design collection. Those pictures could very well have been included in the Saudi Arabian catalogue.

We will naturally review our working process and take actions to ensure that this will not happen again. We deeply regret that mistakes have been made in this instance.

Ulrika Englesson Sandman

Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

Press contact Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

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Press contact Inter IKEA Group

Kristian Sjöholm Phone: +32 486 040 963 Email: kristian.sjoholm@Inter-IKEA.com

For more information about Inter IKEA Systems B.V., please see

<http://franchisor.IKEA.com/>

For more information about Inter IKEA Group, please see

www.inter.IKEA.com

Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

Olof Palmestraat 1 NL-2616 LN Delft Tel: +31 (0) 15 215 3815 Fax: +31 (0) 15 215 3838 www.IKEA.com

Appendix E: Instances of occurrences of gender markers – Setting

A	B	C	D	E
Setting	Feminine	MasculineS	MasculineP	Ambiguous
Introduction	62	0	0	12
Life at home-Intro	20	0	0	0
Life at home-Organising	64	0	24	11
Life at home-Sleeping	65	0	1	7
Life at home-Me-Time	42	0	0	10
Life at home-Cooking	69	0	0	6
Life at home- Eating	26	0	0	2
Life at home-Working	20	4	1	3
Life at home- Relaxing	50	0	0	7
Furniture at home- Intro	6	0	0	0
Furniture at home- Seating	59	0	0	4
Furniture at home- Storage	144	16	0	57
Furniture at home- Clothes Stor	49	0	0	9
Furniture at home- Bedroom	26	0	0	5
Furniture at home- Bed & Bath	11	26	15	2
Furniture at home- Baby & Child	7	0	0	0
Information - Intro	11	0	0	0
Information - Gaurantee	0	0	2	4
Information - How To shop	0	0	28	0
Information - Store Location	0	0	12	0
Information - Services	0	0	26	0
Information - Additional Service	0	0	61	0
Information - Gift Card	0	0	4	0
Information - Index	0	0	0	0
Information - Restaurant	4	0	0	1
Information - Ending	4	0	0	0
Back Cover	2	0	0	0

Appendix G: Visual Participants

UK	A. Life at Home – 52 – UK Visual	Adult Male	0	
UK	A. Life at Home – 52 – UK Visual	Adult Female	0	
UK	A. Life at Home – 52 – UK Visual	Adult Male	0	
UK	A. Life at Home – 53 – UK Visual	Adult Male	0	
UK	A. Life at Home – 53 – UK Visual	Adult Male	0	
UK	A. Life at Home – 53 – UK Visual	Adult Male	0	
UK	A. Life at Home – 53 – UK Visual	Adult Male	0	

Ikea erases women from Saudi catalogue

Peter Lindholm/Metro World News
| 02 Oct 2012 | Uppdaterad: 02 Oct 12



Women posing in catalogue has been airbrushed from Saudi version. "Another sad example of gender equality in Saudi Arabia" – Sweden's Minister for Trade Ewa Björling told Metro.

[▶ CLICK HERE FOR EXAMPLES FROM THE CATALOGUE](#)

Swedish furniture retailer Ikea has erased women from the pages of its Saudi Arabian catalogue. The 2013 catalogue, printed in 27 languages for distribution in 38 countries, looks almost alike worldwide, displaying identical interiors of kitchens and bathrooms.

However, in the Saudi version women appear to be removed from the images. Metro Sweden first discovered the inconsistency on Ikea's online catalogues earlier this week. For example, in the Swedish version of the catalogue, a mother can be seen standing

at a sink beside her child in a bathroom. But in the Saudi catalogue, the mother is absent. In another image, a young girl who appears to be doing homework has also been airbrushed.

Under Saudi Arabia's strict Muslim law, women are not allowed to drive, vote or be outside of their home without the guardianship of a male relative. Sweden's Minister for Trade Ewa Björling said the retouched images are a sad example of the oppression of women. "You cannot retouch women from reality," she told Metro. "If Saudi Arabia doesn't allow women to be seen or work they miss out on half their intellectual capital. These images are yet another sad example of the long road to gender equality in Saudi Arabia."

Ikea has since apologized for the catalogue retouching. "As editors of the catalogue, we are sorry about this," Ikea spokesperson Josefin Thorell told Metro. "We should have reacted and seen that this is in conflict with Ikea's values."

The Ikea group will "revise their procedures" to avoid similar situations in the future. It is still unclear whether the Saudi catalogue will be withdrawn or not.

What remains unclear is who is responsible for the decision to airbrush women out of the catalogue – Ikea or a local entity in Saudi Arabia. A spokeswoman for Inter Ikea Systems, a branch of Ikea that oversees franchises, says that the Swedish retailer should take the blame. "What has come out during our contacts with Saudi Arabia during the day is that it isn't the local franchise that has done something wrong. It is our responsibility at Inter Ikea Systems," Ulrika Englesson Sandman told Metro Sweden.

"The franchise owner has been presented with images without women. The image with a woman in the bathroom and the female designer could very well have been featured in the catalogue for Saudi Arabia."

Now Ikea are mulling over on how to proceed. One alternative is to print a new catalogue. "The catalogue has already been distributed, are we going to print it again? Those are options we are looking at," said Sandman.

Saudi Arabia has three Ikea stores, in Jeddah, Riyadh and Dhahran.



Appendix I

Ikea Erases Women from Saudi Arabian Catalogue



Left: Swedish Version. Right: Saudi Arabian version.

Saudi Arabia made history when it sent its first female athletes to the Olympics this year. Furniture giant IKEA, however, has decided to completely erase women from its Saudi Arabian catalogues.

In a comparison between the Swedish and Saudi Arabian 2013 IKEA Catalogues, *Metro* found that women were oddly missing from only the Saudi Arabian version. The company erased a woman from a lounge chair, deleted an entire family from a dining set, and even removed one of IKEA's female designers— but left behind her three male equivalents. Women appear in all 26 other versions of the catalogue.

In Saudi Arabia, women live by strict Islamic law and are not allowed to drive or vote and must be given male permission to move, study, and work. Women can be shown in catalogues, though much of their exposed skin is often covered by censors.

IKEA has released an apology for the extreme editing. A spokesperson told [RT](#) that the Saudi Arabian catalogue was created by an external franchisee.

This is the first instance of women being selectively removed from an IKEA

Appendix J

The Independent

HASNET LAIS

Wednesday 3 October 2012

Why exactly did Ikea remove pictures of women in its Saudi Arabia catalogue?

Commercial considerations led Ikea to omit women from its Saudi catalogue. But why does Saudi Arabia feel the need to "retouch" women from public life in the first place?



There is a crude Arabic expression which roughly translates as, 'A man's honour lies between a woman's legs'. It was this kind of thinking which led to the purging of women from the Saudi edition of Ikea's catalogue.

Westerners, like the Swedish trade minister who denounced the catalogue, see this highly exaggerated concept of honour as detrimental to the rights of Saudi Arabian women. I agree. My parents lived in Saudi Arabia for over a decade, and developed a very dim view of women's rights in the country. My mother told me that nomadic mores presented difficulties for the women of her neighbourhood on every level from personal values to social mobility.

Non-muslims may be familiar with the Islamic buzzword 'Wahabism'. This refers to the highly puritanical theology, endorsed by Saudi Arabia's religious status quo, which claims to be the most authentic and unsullied, living expression of Islam. One of its essential hallmarks is the belief that a woman's presence should remain as *awrah*, or 'closed off from public view'. This is often used interchangeably with the *Salafi* teaching that a woman is not capable of entering a contract, and could only do so with guidance - or interference - from a male (this, despite the fact that the majority of Saudi Arabia's graduates are female).

Of course, such sexist logic thwarts progressive attempts to have women's interests represented in the civic realm. In order to maintain this gender hierarchy, Saudi men go to great lengths to remind their womenfolk that they are ultimately, inactive and dependent beings, incapable of

any upward mobility or creative thinking. If any part of reality does not conform to this idealised trope, it would simply have to be discarded.

As unlikely as it may seem to Western feminists who have long associated domestic servitude with female oppression, Saudi culture objects to pictures of women in Ikea catalogues because of a niggling suspicion that such images would promote a degree of female self-determination. Not only would it contradict a woman's role, which was not to be seen in the first place, but pictures of women, in any print medium, import ideas about reality from non-Wahabi sources, and were therefore rival systems of meaning. That in itself is enough to foster a looming fear of men losing their grip on society. It was not just another catalogue, but an agent of modernity. What's even more concerning is whether the future for women's rights in Saudi Arabia can present any genuine grounds for optimism. Despite the Kingdom's plan to enfranchise women by building a women-only city, the recent commotion over pictures suggest any reasonable measure of autonomy remains a distant fantasy. The problem is not simply that women are denied an unfettered right to divorce, or that their unauthorized exit from the home can lead to harsh reprisals. The problem is that as long as the discourse on Saudi women remains a conversation between Muslim puritans on the one hand, and western secularists on the other, Saudi women won't even be able to debate their own equality, let alone realise it.

The misappropriation of religion is often calculated precisely in order to bar women from access to the resources which could bring about equality. Any attempt, for example, from a Saudi woman's group to engage NGOs and grassroots organisations in a conversation about women's rights, would automatically be stifled by the top-down, clerical hierarchy, and accused of prioritising political reform over the 'authentic' sources of Islam - as unilaterally determined by some elect Sheikhs.

In the wake of the Arab Spring and amidst the ebb and flow of competing currents on women's rights, the Saudis have yet to show a more liberal temperament on the women issue. Instead, they have resorted to flimsy pretexts and protectionist arguments to stifle liberties, which foreclose the possibility of placing discussions on gender on the agenda. This is just the latest episode in the Kingdom's infamous track record of cultural gate-keeping. And it's certainly not the last time we will hear Wahabis argue that their practice is the best guarantor of women's rights.

Appendix K

Was Ikea wrong to delete women from Saudi catalog?

by Opinion Staff

The Palm Beach Post, 2-10-2012

Ikea says it now regrets the decision to delete images of women from the Saudi version of its catalog.



Ikea deleted the pajama-clad woman from the catalog circulated in Saudi Arabia (AP photo)

The Swedish furniture and home products company markets itself as a socially progressive business. The Ikea web site includes a “Voices of Women” page that features quotes such as “I want to decide...what is right or wrong for me! I want to choose when I want to become a mother” and “I want to provide my daughter with a better life. I want to give her options.”

Of course, those quotes are from women in India, not women in the Arab world.

The Associated Press report on Ikea’s catalogs says most editions feature a picture of a family getting ready for bed, with a young boy brushing his teeth in the bathroom. A woman wearing pajamas is standing next to him. But in the Saudi version of the catalog, the woman has been airbrushed out. Women have been removed from other images as well.

Whether the West should refrain from offending Muslim cultures has become a central issue after a YouTube video critical of the Prophet Muhammad was blamed, at least in part, for violent protests that included the murder of four Americans in Libya, including Ambassador Christopher Stevens.

Nobody has suggested Saudis would riot if women appeared in the Ikea catalog. But Saudi women routinely are relegated to subservient role, their behavior and appearance are regulated by laws and customs, and few women appear in Saudi advertisements.

From a purely business perspective, Ikea can defend the decision to alter its catalogs. Why offend potential customers? Does the company have any obligation to advocate for a more progressive Saudi Arabia? And (having it both ways), the company's apology placates Western critics.

What do you think? Was Ikea wrong to delete women from its Saudi catalog? Take our poll and/or leave a comment.

Appendix L



Business

Ikea rues altering Saudi version of catalog



IKEA VIA SCANPIX SWEDEN

A woman is seen in an image from Ikea's 2013 Swedish catalog, but not in its Saudi version.

By **Karl Ritter** | ASSOCIATED PRESS | OCTOBER 02, 2012

STOCKHOLM — Ikea is being criticized for deleting images of women from the Saudi version of its furniture catalog, a move the company says it regrets.

Comparing the Swedish and Saudi versions of the catalog, a free newspaper on Monday showed that women had been airbrushed out of otherwise identical pictures showcasing the company's home furnishings.

The report raised questions in Sweden about Ikea's commitment to gender equality, and the company released a statement expressing "regret" over the issue.

"We should have reacted and realized that excluding women from the Saudi Arabian version of the catalog is in conflict with the Ikea Group values," the company said.

Appendix M

The Washington Post

IKEA comes under fire for removing women from Saudi catalogue

By Olga Khazan October 1, 2012

The Scandinavian furniture company IKEA has apologized for airbrushing nearly all of the women and girls out of the Saudi version of its catalogue, the [Associated Press reported](#) Monday. The catalogue is otherwise nearly identical in all 38 countries in which it's printed.



Screenshot: E2 media

The company also reportedly removed a female IKEA designer from one of the catalogue's corporate images.

Ikea later said, "We should have reacted and realized that excluding women from the Saudi Arabian version of the catalogue is in conflict with the IKEA Group values," the [AP reported](#).

Appendix N



Ikea airbrushes women out of images in Saudi Arabian catalog

Swedish furniture retailer Ikea has erased women from the pages of its Saudi Arabian catalog.

By
Peter Lindholm Published : October 01, 2012

Swedish furniture retailer Ikea has erased women from the pages of its Saudi Arabian catalog.

The 2013 catalog, printed in 27 languages for distribution in 38 countries, looks almost alike worldwide, displaying identical interiors of kitchens and bathrooms. However, in the Saudi version women appear to be removed from the images. Metro Sweden first discovered the inconsistency on Ikea's online catalogs earlier this week.

For example, in the Swedish version of the catalog, a mother can be seen standing at a sink beside her child in a bathroom. But in the Saudi catalog, the mother is absent.

In another image, a young girl who appears to be doing homework has also been airbrushed.

Under Saudi Arabia's strict Muslim law, women are not allowed to drive, vote or be outside of their home without the guardianship of a male relative.

Sweden's Minister for Trade Ewa Björling said the retouched images are a sad example of the oppression of women.

"You cannot retouch women from reality," she told Metro. "If Saudi Arabia doesn't allow women to be seen or work they miss out on half their intellectual capital. These images are yet another sad example of the long road to gender equality in Saudi Arabia."

Appendix O

DAILY NEWS
NYDAILYNEWS.COM

Ikea under fire for deleting women from Saudi version of furniture catalog

By [THE ASSOCIATED PRESS](#)

OCT 01, 2012 | 12:31 PM



Ikea is under fire for deleting images of women from the Saudi version of its furniture catalogue. Pictured are the Swedish, left, and Saudi, right, versions of the Ikea catalogue.

(AP)

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Ikea is being criticized for deleting images of women from the Saudi version of its furniture catalogue, a move the company says it regrets.

Comparing the Swedish and Saudi versions of the catalogue, free newspaper Metro on Monday showed that women had been airbrushed out of otherwise identical pictures showcasing the company's home furnishings.

The report raised questions in Sweden about Ikea's commitment to gender equality, and the company released a statement expressing "regret" over the issue.

"We should have reacted and realized that excluding women from the Saudi Arabian version of the catalogue is in conflict with the IKEA Group values," the company said.

Appendix P

FT FINANCIAL
TIMES

Saudi Ikea: now you see her, now you don't

October 2, 2012



Ikea faced criticism after it emerged it had airbrushed women from its annual furniture catalogue in Saudi Arabia © AP

Ikea faced its latest controversy about its foreign operations after it emerged it had removed images of women from its famous annual furniture catalogue in Saudi Arabia.

The move stoked controversy in Sweden, home to the world's largest furniture retailer by sales, where the country's trade minister, Ewa Björling, complained: "You can't remove or airbrush women from reality."

It also raises further questions about the [Swedish flat-pack-furniture retailer](#)'s ability to keep its culture intact as it expands into ever more markets. Ikea, which has three stores in Saudi Arabia run as a franchise operation, is looking to increase the numbers of its stores worldwide by up to 50 per cent by 2020 from its current 300 shops.

Ikea said it regretted the airbrushing – first reported by Sweden's Metro newspaper, and which included a bathroom scene of a mother, father and child in a bathroom where the woman was removed from the Saudi

Appendix Q



Editorials

JULIETTE KAYYEM

IKEA's Saudi problem



ASSOCIATED PRESS/IKEA VIA SCANPIX SWEDEN

The women in the Swedish IKEA catalogue for 2013, left, were edited out of the Saudi Arabian version, right.

By Juliette Kayyem | GLOBE COLUMNIST OCTOBER 04, 2012

Whenever I buy something from IKEA — a bookshelf for the kids, a storage unit for the basement — the domestic bliss that was promised in the pages of the Swedish company's catalogue gets shattered before too long. "It's broken," my husband will complain as the simple instruction manual mocks us. A few hours later, possibly with glue, the "broken" set is complete, but the stress and annoyance last much longer.

That latent outrage towards IKEA must be shared universally. It's one way to explain why so many global [critics blamed the company](#) for airbrushing out all the women in the Saudi Arabian version of its catalogue, a move made to satisfy the Saudi monarchy's gender segregation rules. The scrubbing of the catalogue gave

Appendix R

Ikea criticised for airbrushing women out of Saudi catalogue

Ikea, the Swedish furniture retailer, has been criticised for deleting images of women from the Saudi version of its catalogue.



Comparing the Swedish and Saudi versions of the Ikea catalogue, Sweden's free newspaper Metro on Monday showed that women had been airbrushed out of otherwise identical pictures showcasing the company's home furnishings.

The report raised questions in Sweden about Ikea's commitment to gender equality.

The country's trade minister Ewa Bjorling did not criticise Ikea directly but told Metro that you can't delete women from society.

Ikea released a statement expressing regret, saying "We should have

Appendix S

Ikea airbrushes women from its Saudi catalogue

Swedish furniture giant criticised for removing images in bid not to upset Arab customers

[Tony Paterson](#)

Tuesday 2 October 2012 11:40



The Metro front page showing women removed from Ikea images (*Reuters*)

The Swedish lifestyle and furniture giant Ikea came under fierce press and government criticism yesterday after it emerged the company had removed all images of women from the Saudi Arabian edition of its catalogue.

Some 200 million copies of the company's forthcoming furniture, kitchen and household goods catalogue are set for distribution in 38 countries worldwide. They will appear in 27 languages.

However, yesterday the Swedish newspaper Metro revealed that Ikea planned to bring out a special edition of its catalogue in Saudi Arabia from which all images of women had been systematically removed.

The omissions appeared to be an effort to minimise the risk of upsetting Saudi customers.

Appendix T

Toronto Star
[Editorial Opinion](#)

Ikea's Saudi catalogue bans women from the house

Ikea has apologized, blaming a zealous Saudi franchiser, but the catalogue remains online.



AFP PHOTO / IKEA

Ikea in the West and in Saudi Arabia: Where did Mommy go?

By: [Heather Mallick](#) Columnist,

Published on Tue Oct 02 2012

If there's one place men and women shouldn't be together, it's Ikea.

Turns out they aren't. The Saudi Arabian version of the Ikea catalogue has erased all images of women whatsoever, the true lunacy of that nation of oil, sand and female-diminishment thus revealing itself. Women should know their place, the Saudis say. But where is it?

Women can't drive, work, or even live in their particleboard-furnished homes, apparently. Perhaps they have little Ikea huts, sold separately.

Every nation has its secret shame. American gun shows display a core of weirdness that a genuine American patriot might not wish the world to see. Canada has seal hunt slaughter, surreptitiously filmed and posted on YouTube. France empties Roma encampments, leaving stunned young Roma mothers and their tiny children looking as if they're about to be sent to Drancy and put on a train.

Ikea, the store that always acts as if it's doing its shoppers a big favour, has apologized, blaming a zealous Saudi franchiser. But the catalogue remains online, eerie in the extreme. It's as if a bomb went off, a special bomb that killed only the women.

While dad dries the baby, a tiny boy brushes his teeth in an Ikea bathroom. In the Canadian catalogue a mother is helping the boy. In the Saudi version, there is an empty space, with even her reflection in the mirror having been deleted. “Mornings are a team sport,” the caption reads. Canadian, or perhaps Swedish, men and women proudly stand in a room having mastered self-assembly. Men and women try to share their lives, at home and at work, which is the great feminist dream.

In the Saudi version, the men are alone with their furniture, one Ikea handyman wielding a massive screwdriver. His photo is bigger in the Saudi version because the photo of a female homeowner has been deleted.

On page 56 of the Canadian version, a slogan hovers over a double bed: “You’ve heard about a bicycle built for two, how about a bed?”

On the same page in the Saudi catalogue, the slogan reads, and I am not making this up: “I love you but you’re making me very uncomfortable.”

The two catalogues are like those Spot the Difference games that you played as a child. The doghouse in this picture has a window. This picture has an extra tree. In this catalogue, the men are alone with small girls and boys, which does start to look creepy after 50 pages. Are these children orphans?

Canadians may not be shocked. We are so used to women-free spaces that we have almost stopped noticing. Entire websites won’t show a woman’s face. Books by women aren’t reviewed. The U.S. Senate is almost entirely male, as are most corporate boards. The U.S. election is a male contest, with the wives of the two candidates allowed a chirpy speech at the conventions, like a paper doll on a stick.

In the House of Commons recently, it was repellent to watch Conservative males stand up, one after the other, to support a male private member’s bill to “study” when the contents of a woman’s uterus can be measured and regulated. Life begins when men says it does, those men were claiming.

The female Conservative MPs standing to vote for a motion against women’s rights were the parliamentary version of the female bits and pieces that remain in the Saudi catalogue. I see a woman’s hand with painted fingernails. I see a fabric-covered plastic torso on a stand. The torso displays necklaces to be worn by the female ghost who can only enter the room after the photographer leaves.

Rona Ambrose, allegedly minister for the status of women — the word “equality” long ago removed from her mandate — claimed she voted yes out of concern for the status of female fetuses. It’s very Saudi of her. She likes girls. But pregnant women? Not so much.

The Saudis make plain what we in Canada hesitate to admit. Women, hiding in plain sight, don't have a full place in the life of the nation. If we are fewer, then we are lesser.

Women don't like this. Men who like women don't like this either.

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Appendix U

The Guardian

No women please, we're Saudi Arabian Ikea

Nesrine Malik

Tuesday 2 October 2012 11.38 BST

Women being airbrushed out of catalogues is par for the course in Saudi Arabia – but what does it say about the Swedish brand?



'In the Saudi Ikea universe, the world is populated entirely by single dads, children and the occasional cat.'

Photograph: Peter Morrison/AP

Ikea, as a global brand, prides itself on providing the same experience and products in all markets. But it appears not all Ikea catalogues are created equal. A Swedish newspaper compared the Swedish and Saudi versions of the manual, and found that in the latter women had been very skilfully airbrushed out.

A scene of a mother, father and their children in the bathroom, was edited to one of only the father and his children. In another scene, a woman was replaced by a man.

In shots where editing out only the woman was problematic, both men and women were dispensed with. I perused the entire Arabic catalogue and in the Saudi Ikea universe, the world is populated entirely by single dads, children, and the occasional cat. This was considered a serious enough affront to warrant a condemnation by Sweden's trade minister.

Ikea is extremely popular in Saudi Arabia, but probably not for the same reasons that it is popular in other parts of the world. In an affluent country, the low-cost aspect isn't the main appeal. Ikea furniture and Ikea-inspired decor is seen as aspirational, to a lifestyle that is modern

and cosmopolitan, and removed from the more traditional furnishing tastes of the Gulf, regarded by some as gauche.

The stereotype of marble halls, crystal chandeliers and gold paraphernalia in Saudi interiors is not an entirely inaccurate one but, as someone who had always thought of Ikea as a place to look for basics after moving into a new flat, I found it strange to hear Saudi women praise someone's taste by saying, "Oh, her new house is so tastefully done, all the furniture is from Ikea!"

Pre-fabricated, self-assembled furniture may not be the average European's definition of luxury, but to a certain class in Saudi the company has a prestige that suggests that not only are you rich, but that you have enough money to confidently eschew the tastes of the traditionalists and the nouveau riche. It suggests both exposure to the outside world and a comfort with wealth.

Naturally, most Saudi Arabian people don't assemble the furniture themselves. A whole sideline in Ikea furniture assembly has mushroomed, adding more cost to the purchases and rendering the cheapness of the goods almost entirely pointless. At the other end of the income spectrum, the brand is sufficiently pricey to also be high-status for white-collar expats who opt for Ikea's wares over the cheaper locally made furniture displayed in the street markets, the usual option for poorer Saudis and blue-collar expat workers.

There is also a more political aspect. In a region sensitive and relatively resistant to foreign influences, Sweden is seen as one of the more innocuous of western countries. When Ikea opened a new store in Jeddah in 2004, the ensuing stampede left three dead. Marks and Spencer's reception in Riyadh around the same time was a much cooler affair. The store was even on a list of companies that consumers were told to boycott due to their perceived associations with imperialism, the US and Israel. McDonald's and Coca-Cola were also on the list.

This is by no means the first incident of "deleting women from society" in the kingdom. As technology has advanced, it has become easier to airbrush offensive images of women in long-sleeved pyjamas cleaning their teeth.

In the early noughties, I was a fan of *Sayidaty*, a popular Cairo-published Arabic beauty and fashion magazine. When I moved to Saudi Arabia I was shocked to see that someone had taken a heavy black marker pen to any photos of women from the neck down – angry broad childlike strokes of black ink above which surreally hovered the face of a smiling actress or singer.

All I could remember thinking was that this was someone's job – to go through every page of every Arabic magazine and deface it this way.

In another incident, while flying Saudi Arabian airlines and enjoying the in-flight movie, my view of the actress (who was obviously wearing, or not wearing, something that the censor

found objectionable) was suddenly obstructed from the neck down by a crude electric blue grid that hovered around her, chasing her around the screen as her disembodied head obliviously delivered the lines.

School books published outside the kingdom were also subjected to the same treatment where unacceptable images were concerned. As authorities were unable to block all print, film and music from entering the country, they had determined to edit as much of it as was possible.

Although the edited Ikea catalogue was allegedly produced by a third-party franchise, it is highly unlikely no one at Ikea was aware of the requested edits. The official statement read: "We should have reacted and realised that excluding women from the Saudi Arabian version of the catalogue is in conflict with the Ikea group values" .

Sweden is one of the more strident champions of women's rights, and in this instance there has clearly been a conflict between values and financial concerns. However, when it comes to Saudi Arabia, it wouldn't be the first time that a western institution has subordinated women's rights to business interests.

Appendix V

THE LOCAL

Ikea 'erases' women from Saudi catalogue



1 October 2012
08:08 CEST+02:00

Swedish furniture retailer [Ikea](#) has removed out all the women from the version of the company's famed catalogue to be distributed in [Saudi Arabia](#), prompting a stern reaction from Sweden's trade minister.

Nearly 200 million copies of [Ikea](#)'s forthcoming catalogue will be printed in 27 languages for distribution in 38 countries.

And the catalogues will be nearly identical, save for those printed for distribution in [Saudi Arabia](#), a country where women don't get to vote, drive cars, or move freely on the streets, the Metro newspaper reported.

In the Saudi version of [Ikea](#)'s annual booklet, all the women who appear in images featured in the catalogue in other countries have been removed via photo retouching.

In the Swedish version of the [Ikea](#) catalogue, for example, a mother can be seen standing at a sink next to her child in a stylized bathroom.

In the Saudi catalogue, however, there is no mother; the child stands at the sink alone.

Ikea Erases Women from Saudi Arabian Catalogue



Left: Swedish Version. Right: Saudi Arabian version.

Saudi Arabia made history when it sent its first female athletes to the Olympics this year. Furniture giant IKEA, however, has decided to completely erase women from its Saudi Arabian catalogues.

In a comparison between the Swedish and Saudi Arabian 2013 IKEA Catalogues, *Metro* found that women were oddly missing from only the Saudi Arabian version. The company erased a woman from a lounge chair, deleted an entire family from a dining set, and even removed one of IKEA's female designers— but left behind her three male equivalents. Women appear in all 26 other versions of the catalogue.

In Saudi Arabia, women live by strict Islamic law and are not allowed to drive or vote and must be given male permission to move, study, and work. Women can be shown in catalogues, though much of their exposed skin is often covered by censors.

IKEA has released an apology for the extreme editing. A spokesperson told [RT](#) that the Saudi Arabian catalogue was created by an external franchisee.

This is the first instance of women being selectively removed from an IKEA

Appendix X

Ikea erases women from Saudi catalogue

Metro, 2 October, 2012

Women posing in catalogue has been airbrushed from Saudi version. "Another sad example of gender equality in Saudi Arabia" – Sweden's Minister for Trade Ewa Björling told *Metro*.



Swedish furniture retailer Ikea has erased women from the pages of its Saudi Arabian catalogue. The 2013 catalogue, printed in 27 languages for distribution in 38 countries, looks almost alike worldwide, displaying identical interiors of kitchens and bathrooms. However, in the Saudi version women appear to be removed from the images. Metro Sweden first discovered the inconsistency on Ikea's online catalogues earlier this week. For example, in the Swedish version of the catalogue, a mother can be seen standing at a sink beside her child in a bathroom. But in the Saudi catalogue, the mother is absent. In another image, a young girl who appears to be doing homework has also been airbrushed. Under Saudi Arabia's strict Muslim law, women are not allowed to drive, vote or be outside of their home without the guardianship of a male relative. Sweden's Minister for Trade Ewa Björling said the retouched images are a sad example of the oppression of women. "You cannot retouch women from reality," she told *Metro*. "If

Saudi Arabia doesn't allow women to be seen or work they miss out on half their intellectual capital. These images are yet another sad example of the long road to gender equality in Saudi Arabia." Ikea has since apologized for the catalogue retouching. "As editors of the catalogue, we are sorry about this," Ikea spokesperson Josefin Thorell told Metro. "We should have reacted and seen that this is in conflict with Ikea's values." The Ikea group will "revise their procedures" to avoid similar situations in the future. It is still unclear whether the Saudi catalogue will be withdrawn or not. What remains unclear is who is responsible for the decision to airbrush women out of the catalogue – Ikea or a local entity in Saudi Arabia. A spokeswoman for Inter Ikea Systems, a branch of Ikea that oversees franchises, says that the Swedish retailer should take the blame. "What has come out during our contacts with Saudi Arabia during the day is that it isn't the local franchise that has done something wrong. It is our responsibility at Inter Ikea Systems," Ulrika Englesson Sandman told Metro Sweden. "The franchise owner has been presented with images without women. The image with a woman in the bathroom and the female designer could very well have been featured in the catalogue for Saudi Arabia." Now Ikea are mulling over on how to proceed. One alternative is to print a new catalogue. "The catalogue has already been distributed, are we going to print it again? Those are options we are looking at," said Sandman. Saudi Arabia has three Ikea stores, in Jeddah, Riyadh and Dhahran.

Appendix Y

Ikea 'erases' women from Saudi catalogue

Published: 01 Oct 2012 08:08 GMT+02:00

Updated: 01 Oct 2012 08:08 GMT+02:00

The Local

Swedish furniture retailer Ikea has removed out all the women from the version of the company's famed catalogue to be distributed in Saudi Arabia, prompting a stern reaction from Sweden's trade minister.

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In the Saudi version of Ikea's annual booklet, all the women who appear in images featured in the catalogue in other countries have been removed via photo retouching.

In the Swedish version of the Ikea catalogue, for example, a mother can be seen standing at a sink next to her child in a stylized bathroom.

In the Saudi catalogue, however, there is no mother; the child stands at the sink alone.

In another image, a woman and a little girl who appear to be studying in the Swedish catalogue have been completely removed from the Saudi version, leaving an empty room.

Ikea has even gone so far as to remove from the Saudi version of the catalogue the image of a female designer who helped design the company's "PS" line of home furnishings.

While refusing to comment on any company specifically, Swedish Minister of Trade Ewa Björling made no secret of how she felt about the images.

"It's impossible to retouch women out of reality," she told Metro.

"These images are yet another regrettable example that shows we have a long road ahead when it comes to gender equality in Saudi Arabia."

Attorney Claes Borgström, who served as Sweden's gender equality ombudsman between 2000 and 2007 also slammed Ikea's decision to remove women from the Saudi catalogue.

"I think the Swedish business community should uphold existing ethical principles. You can't participate in the marketing and selling of goods in a way that discriminates against women in this way," he told the paper.

According to Borgström, Ikea would be better off "abstaining from the [Saudi] market completely".

"One can say that [Ikea] is supporting a view of women that we in Sweden distance ourselves from," Borgström told Metro.

Appendix Z

IKEA CATALOGUE CONTROVERSY



Ikea 'lacks credibility' on Saudi catalogue uproar

Published: 02 Oct 2012 16:05 GMT+02:00

Updated: 02 Oct 2012 16:05 GMT+02:00

The Local

Swedish furniture retailer Ikea made a mistake related to removing women from the version of its catalogue printed in Saudi Arabia, but not the mistake most people think, argues contributor Ruben Brunsveld.

On Monday, Ikea moved from being at the centre of the global furnishing industry to being at the centre of heated discussions on Twitter, Facebook and in the traditional media.

The spark that ignited the fire was an "anti-women" furniture catalogue released by Ikea in Saudi Arabia.

In the catalogue, Ikea decided to airbrush out or otherwise digitally remove the women from images which appeared in versions of the catalogue published in other countries.

The move was widely condemned in Sweden, prompting critical comments from at least two government ministers.

A chorus of angry voices cried out that "erasing" the woman from Ikea's Saudi catalogue was tantamount to bowing down to some "evil culture" in a dictatorship which made a habit of trampling on women's rights.

But was Ikea's move really unacceptable?

Or was it simply an example of savvy marketing?

I would argue that Ikea made a mistake, just not the one most people think.

It's worth recalling that, back in the 1980s, marketing books were full of the case studies and discussions exploring the friction between "globalization" and "localization".

Should companies adhere to universal principles or focus only on local circumstances?

The answer was found in the Japanese concept of "Dochakuka" or, as it would become known in the west "glocalization": the adaptation of a product, service or its marketing to each specific locality or culture where it was sold.

And that seems to be exactly what Ikea has done by adapting its catalogue to stay in line with the local laws, regulations and customs of Saudi Arabia, as well as the other markets in which Ikea operates.

Granted, it may have been more elegant if Ikea had made a new, separate catalogue instead of just airbrushing the old pictures, but the principle applies just the same.

What Ikea did (and has by the way been doing for the last seven or eight years) is to adapt its marketing strategy to fit local customs and regulations. Most people agree that this makes perfect (business) sense.

To judge this action from our Western perspective is to be just as culturally insensitive as Ikea's critics accuse it of being.

Even Saudi Arabian feminists have spoken out in favour of the Saudi Ikea catalogue since they disapprove of the commercialization of the female image in Western marketing.

So what did Ikea do wrong?

In the wake of the controversy unleashed by Monday morning's media reports, Ikea later released a statement that "the mistake happened during the working process occurring before presenting the draft catalogue".

Despite the fact that Ikea HQ "takes full responsibility", the aforementioned explanation leaves ample room for ambiguity as to who is really to blame and is simply not very credible.

The company took a conscious decision to fit in that backfired years later in how it was applied in Saudi Arabia.

And now, by backtracking, apologizing, and recalling the catalogue, Ikea has allowed itself to get drawn into the discussion on what is wrong and what is right.

It would have been easier, more honest, and more credible if Ikea had released a statement along the following lines in response to the catalogue controversy:

"Gender equality and the position of women in society is at the heart of the cultural values in which we believe. We employ XX percent of women at our Saudi Arabian locations under the same conditions as their male counterparts and actively stimulate the participation of women in our Middle East marketing team. However in order to be active on the Saudi Arabian market

we – as all other companies – must adhere to the national rules and legislation and adapt our marketing products accordingly."

These days, credibility is everything and Ikea's post-catalogue story was simply not credible. Standing by its own catalogue and explaining the reasons for its decision might have meant a few days of rough weather for Ikea, but by creating ambiguity the Swedish furniture maker is only prolonging the storm.

So yes, Ikea certainly did commit a mistake. But their slip up wasn't in trying to make adjustments to the local market.

Rather, it was clumsily responding to those who found fault with their efforts.

If only sound communications strategy in a globalized world was as easy to assemble as flat pack furniture.