

**Women and Leadership: A Female Private Institute for Higher  
Education, Al Nour College, In Saudi Arabia.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation looks at the relationship between the role and style of leaders in Al Nour College in relation to the culture of the college. Al Nour College is the first private female college in Saudi Arabia. The first chapter sets the background, by providing a brief history of Al Nour College, its ambitions, mission statement and objectives. The second chapter reviews literature concerning leadership and debates surrounding it. The third chapter looks at leadership and women. It analyzes various factors effecting women in leadership posts. It specifically looks at the issues of women re-defining their roles and their identity, power relations and struggles, and constructed barriers and networking is examined. The interplay of these issues is then brought forth. The fourth chapter looks at women in Saudi operating in leadership posts, their struggles, accomplishments and ambitions. Bearing in mind the fact that Saudi is a segregated society which leads to different patterns of leadership. Chapter five will lay out the methodological framework in which I will adopt a case study to examine specific instances in Al Nour College, in relation to the literature covered.

Chapter six will reveal the findings of my case study, were five individuals in leadership posts (four females and one male) were interviewed. The data is looked at in terms of first, leadership at an individual level, in which personal styles and beliefs of these leaders are analyzed. Second, leadership at an organizational level, in which the culture of Al Nour College is examined. Furthermore, the relationships between these two themes are studied. This chapter also draws upon other findings and discusses cultural differences in analyzing concepts such as the “glass ceiling” and power. Evidence from the case study points to the need for more in depth researches to be undertaken. Researches that include looking at staff, faculty and student’s insight on the culture of the college that they experience. A professional development network for women in leadership posts is a possible solution to the tension found between the styles and roles of the leaders and the culture of the college.

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# Women and Leadership: A Female Private Institute for Higher Education, Al Nour College, In Saudi Arabia.

## **Introduction:**

In this dissertation I set out to explore, through a small-scale illuminative case study some of the key issues which face women playing out leadership roles in general and women in Saudi, in Al Nour College, in particular. In order to gain an insight into leadership in the college I will be interviewing mostly females and some males in leadership posts. The distribution of power and decision making are sensitive matters and some of many influential characteristics which shape the culture of the college. The ultimate aim and hypothesis of this dissertation is to question the relationship between the roles, styles, beliefs, and assumptions about leadership that these leaders, carry as women in the Saudi environment and the unique patterns it may or may not dictate on the culture of Al Nour College.

This dissertation covers seven chapters. The first chapter looks at the history of Al Nour College. It 'sets the scene' in which the culture of the college is later studied and analyzed. It puts forth the motives behind the establishment of this institute, the objectives, mission statement and aspiration of the college.

The second chapter analyzes leadership in terms of how it is intended to be used in this paper in relation to management. An Islamic perspective of leadership or vicegerent or God's representatives on earth is adopted. Viewing every human as possessing some degree of leadership quality. A range of various approaches, frameworks and groupings about leadership is put forth by authors in the field. A problem solving and then an analytical approach are looked at.

The third chapter weighs heavy in comparison to the other chapters. This chapter looks at leadership and women. It considers three main points in relation to women in leadership posts. The point is concerned with women redefining their identities in relation to the abundant stereotype believed about women and their capabilities. The second point

tackles the notion of power, who has it and how is it used to construct knowledge and language in which women either fit into, or not. The third point tackles the issue of constructed barriers in which the 'glass ceiling' and 'networking' are explored.

The fourth chapter explores the current status of women in leadership posts in Saudi in general. It attempts to portray a realistic picture of their role, struggles, tensions, ambitions and achievements women face. Also the fact of Saudi being a segregated society resulting in different patterns of leadership and understandings of certain terms like the 'glass ceiling' is discussed in chapter six.

The fifth chapter looks at the methodological frame work adopted to carry out the case study and the data collection by interviewing. This section looks at the strength and weaknesses of the method chosen to undertake this research. Furthermore it puts forth the environment and method under which the data was collected.

The sixth chapter draws on the findings and discussion of the study. Two main themes have emerged from the study. The first theme is leadership at an individual level. Under this point the following six points are looked into: *Leadership and leadership role, defining leadership roles, leadership styles and qualities, leadership and Identity, achieving a balance and Leadership and women*. The second theme is leadership at an organizational level. Under this theme *the organizational structure and Organization, group and individualistic power* are examined. This brings us to the conclusion chapter, which attempts to bring the entire research together.

# Chapter 1

## Al Nour College

When I see Al Nour College I see the future Muslim women of Saudi Arabia, I see potentials, ambitions, leadership, and entrepreneurialism. I recognize that individuals in senior positions running and supervising this institute play a direct role in its success and learning outcomes. I will attempt to examine leadership roles and insights of various women holding managerial positions in order to understand the implications of their performance on the culture of the College. By means of engaging in the debates put forward in the arena of leadership covered in the literature review I will highlight some points of tension, stagnation and ambiguity, that Al Nour College may be faced with.

My loyalty and faith in Al Nour College stems from me being one of its first graduates. I have lived with the college and experienced its difficulties its joyfulness and distress. Much endeavor, sincere intentions, dedication and strenuous effort has nurtured this college. This college was established when senior individuals in the Saudi society realized the need to offer women, that make up over 50 percent of the Saudi population, high quality education and specializations traditionally not offered to women.

Al Nour College, still in its infancy, has much potential as long as it is open to active and in depth research. In order to carry out this research caution and clear intentions has been a priority in conducting the research in the most effective manner.

To offer further insight into Al Nour College I will provide a brief history of its establishment, aspirations, goals, specializations and mission statement. From this depiction of Al Nour it will be possible to appreciate and recognize the potentials of this college in Saudi Arabia and also its contribution to Muslim women.

### **1.1 History of Al Nour College:**

It is the vision of Al Nour College to be a premiere institution of higher education for women in Saudi Arabia that will serve as a model teaching and learning institution for the Kingdom. Its graduates will be capable of bringing about positive change for the betterment of self, family, society and humanity, with the aim of serving and pleasing the Creator.’

<http://alnoun.edu.sa/ABOUT/mission.asp>, 23/05/04

Along with the rapid and swift changes our world is experiencing today technologically, economically, culturally and intellectually the challenge, across the globe, is keeping up. The question is how can one keep up with these changes and challenges with out losing one’s identity, belief system and faith? When important members of Jeddah community came to this realization and the ‘urgent need for sophisticated higher education for young women, with high quality academic programs enriched by Islamic values and morals’ <http://alnoun.edu.sa/ABOUT/mission.asp>, 23/05/04 they engaged the Texas International Education Consortium to plan and design the colleges curricula. In September, 1999 Al Nour College opened its doors to its first students. The college initially offered bachelor degrees in special education, interior deign, business and information system. Currently it has also commenced specialization in nursing and graphic design.

Al Nour College is a private, non-profit institution of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The college promotes creativity and highlights the important role of women in the society ‘as the first builders of the family and the first educators of the nation’ <http://alnoun.edu.sa/ABOUT/mission.asp>, 23/05/04 and fosters a creative leaning environment for students.

These are ambitious words. However, these could remain merely, commercial endeavors if enough attention is not directed to student’s outcomes and learning (Adler et. al., 1993). Thus strong and focused leadership which adheres to these goals is crucial to the life of Al Nour College. Foskett and Lumby (2003) believe that ‘supporting

learning is the purpose of all leadership and management activities either directly or indirectly' (p. 17). Although education is fundamentally a *human* activity that is culturally bonded, it must be capable of preparing its learners to face the highly materialistic and consumer culture of our world today. Therefore, a wise leader is able to find a solution 'located between [the] two sets of alternatives' of the need to respect culture and religion while keeping up with the world and change (Foskett and Lumby, 2003: 12). Some question the 'simple equation that better heads equals better school [or college]' (Adler et al. 1993: 1) equals better student outcome.

Many consider Saudi to be a highly male dominated society that creates many socially constructed barriers that challenge women in leadership roles. However, the case is different in Al Nour College simply because it is an all-woman's college, therefore an all-woman's environment. Nevertheless, the board members are male and they are frequently assumed to be the main decision makers. However, I believe this assumption to be far too simplistic.



## Chapter 2

### What is Leadership?

I want to begin this study by unpacking the complex notion of leadership. But before I do so I would like to briefly comment on the way in which I will use the expression leadership and management in this work since many times we may find them used interchangeably.

Many authors take a very strong stand on whether they believe that leadership and management are two separate entities or “two sides of the same coin” (Southworth, 1998: 44). Questions are frequently asked as to whether leadership exist apart from management? And, what are the differences between the two and where is the meeting point, if there is one? These are topics that much research (e.g. Southworth, 1998; Gardner, 2000; and Thrupp and Willmott, 2003) has gone into. However, in many ways, I believe, Glatter (1997) has resolved this issue. He states that:

Methods ... [are] as important as knowledge, understanding and value orientations ... Erecting this kind of dichotomy between something pure called ‘leadership’ and something ‘dirty’ called ‘management’, or between values and purposes on the one hand and methods and skills on the other, would be disastrous.

(Glatter, 1997: 189)

Therefore, for the sake of this paper I favor adopting Glatter’s stand point when addressing leadership and management. Although ‘leadership skills are said to be key to successful management and change’ (Maddock, 1999: 33) I will use the term leadership generically to mean the role one in managerial positions assume.

As for the first part of this chapter I will consider the ‘value orientation’, ‘purpose’ and ‘knowledge’ discourse of leadership as more of a human attribute and its nature. I will adopt a problem solving and descriptive approach in unpacking the notion of leadership before looking at it critically.

Many have tackled and analyzed the notion of leadership within various disciplinary perspectives. ‘From history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, politics, psychology, and organizational behaviour,’ (Middlehurst, 1997: 3) hence, adding a rich, complex and unique flavour to the conceptual image of leadership. However, I would like to begin by analyzing it through a spiritual discipline. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran:

*‘And (remember) when your lord said to the angels; “Verily I am going to place **Khalifa** generations after generations on earth.” (1: 30)*

The translation of the Arabic word *Khalifa* in this 1983 translation of the Quran by Dr. Muhammad Al-Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Khan was to mean *humanity*. Unfortunately this is not an accurate translation, as the word *humanity* would in Arabic literally be translated into *Basharriya* or *Aljins albasharriya*. In 2001 another translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali ascribed the word *vicegerent* to the meaning of *Khalifa*, which brings it a shade closer to the meaning of God appointing humans to perform as administrative deputies. Or as *vice* plus the Latin translation of *gerens: governing* [vice-governing], as found in the American Heritage College Dictionary (1997). In this approach to leadership all members of society, assume some degree of governance and leadership over themselves. This role is further elaborated by society as society sees fit then after leadership is assumed by those to whom society gives consent to, or those who take it.

A historical frame of the idea of leadership during the twentieth century provides a dynamic approach to the notion of leadership. These ideas have been grouped into six overlying schools of thought: first, is the trait theory, second, behaviour studies, third, contingency theories, fourth, power and influence theories, fifth, cultural and symbolic theories and sixth, cognitive perspectives on leadership (Middlehurst, 1997). Many authors, aware of the elasticity of this concept, prefer to either brush broad general attributes to leadership, or some prefer not to provide any definitions, such as, Soobrayan,

(1998) who justifies her reason for not putting forth a definition in saying that ‘definitions only acquire meaning within particular contexts’ (p. 37). ‘Leadership is thus as difficult to define in theory as it is elusive to capture in practice, and in both cases the influence of culture and values is strong’ (Middlehurst, 1997: 3).

Fullan (1996) presents four general areas to create yet another conceptual framework in which to view leadership. His conceptual framework looks into the purpose, culture, process and performance and people. Under purpose the notion of expectation, of individuals, institutions, or society as a whole, is unpacked in relation to leadership. Beare et. al., (1997) refer to leaders as ‘entrepreneurs of values’. Process and performance, looks into the purpose of an organization and accordingly the process and aspects of performance that needs to be followed up, that will in turn lead to achievement. And finally, people. Not only the question of how will leadership be dispersed, but also how will it be undertaken, and by whom? Many believe that effective leadership is critical to the success and effectiveness of any educational organisation.

However, when unpacking leadership in a critical context leadership must be viewed ‘in relation to the wider social and political context within which it does its work’ (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003: 161). Issues such as, the struggles of post-welfarist educational reform, the heavy weight of managerialism and the political context of assuming a leadership position (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003) are very real, challenges that need attending to and harmonizing.



## Chapter 3

### Leadership and Gender

Under this broad title come three topics I hope to tackle, re-defining identities, power and constructed barriers. This human obligation, vicegerent, bestowed on humanity by God as stated above, is now put forth to question its nature and neutrality by various authors and researchers. Soobrayan (1998) regards leadership as a gendered concept. However, others believe that 'it was the leader who determined the values associated with the position' (p.11). Davis (1998) argues that less attention should be given to notions such as gender or even women, and more focus should be directed to improving leadership and management systems and the way in which they operate. She questions 'whether existing forms of management are fundamentally "gendered", that is, sexist, or whether management itself is neutral, but just has more men in it' (p. 17).

Although there exists ample evidence on the nature of leadership and the resemblance of women and men leadership styles, nevertheless, leadership roles and managerial posts seems to be stereotypically masculine. Traditionally, leadership was associated with a male figure, and masculine characteristics, such as, dominance and competitiveness. Perhaps this socially constructed stereotype is what causes such misunderstandings in leadership styles as either feminine or masculine. The divine and wholesome nature of leadership has therefore, been polluted with cultural constructs, adding to it disfigured dimensions, such as, gender, creating a more complex and thorny field to explore.

It has also been said that 'women are no less qualified psychologically for positions in management than men' (Marshall, 1986: 15). Furthermore, it has been stated that 'the difference between men and women are not as great as have been implied'. (Adler et. al., 1993) consents with Marshall (1986) on the idea that 'women are very similar to men in their leadership styles' (p. 16). Some go as far as stating that women

'may possess even superior attributes and skills in some areas relating to management effectiveness' (Marshall, 1986: 16). Here, women's psychological qualifications are measured against their male counterpart. The effect of men considered the 'norm' against which women are measured will lead us into the first sub-point.

### **3.1 Re-Defining Identity:**

#### **a. Skewed Identity**

Unfortunately, men have become *the* norm against which women leadership roles and potentials are compared to and judged by. Society has created debilitating stereotypes about women, such as, women do not possess the same motivation as men, other employees may not want to work for a woman and women going out to work puts the family's stability and therefore society at stake. Women began believing these stereotypes and accepting this disfigured picture to be truth about themselves. Companies fostering these stereotypes have therefore become reluctant to employ women for managerial positions, despite studies showing hardly any considerable divergence amongst men and women in job motivation (Marshall, 1986).

Initially much advice was given about how to be a successful women leader and manager, how to "dress for success". Much of this advice has been telling women how to act like men and fit into the preconceived role, how to adopt *the* leadership and management styles for success. Simply said, how to "fit" into the middle aged white man's world. Women's feminine leadership style in terms of dressing and behavior is, consequently, oppressed. Their "relational" caricature currently viewed as a positive expression of communion skill is only now gaining credit, as it used to have negative connotations and associations with "dependency" and weakness. Claremont de Castillejo (1973) since the early seventies recognized that 'women have become so immersed in a masculine world of ideas and principles that they forgot their own basic truths' (p. 75). As a result of women's experiences being neglected and not given any weight, their character and individual feminine identity has been dented.

The balancing of domestic, personal, social, and public life, is the nature of being a woman in this time and age. Accordingly, women, as far as leadership is considered, must define for themselves what is it to be a leader, in a leadership position and what leadership means in relation to their life and experiences. Each must draw their own balance according to their experiences and priorities. Hence, offering their meaningful ways of both, leading and managing, as being authentic, realistic, and valuable. The case should not be that they 'find themselves being prescribed to and proscribed by a male leadership tradition' (Soobrayan, 1998: 40).

Many, notably Ozga (1993), feel that terminologies such as "career", "leadership" and "success" need redefining. In the past these phrases seem to have excluded the richness and diversity of female experiences, roles and styles. The focus should be on structuring a frame work and redefinition of terms in the light of permitting women's experience to mirror these terms, and not in ways in which women's experiences are defined by the likeness, or not, to their male counterpart.

*b. Source of Stereotype:*

Soobrayan (1998) bluntly states that it is profoundly evident that simply inserting women as seniors in positions of power, will not act as a solution in itself in eliminating stereotypes. In order to address this problem of distorted identity reflected by cultural and social expectations

There needs to be a fundamental challenge of the culture which devalues and attempts to submerge women into an all encompassing male omnipotence.

(Soobrayan, 1998: 34)

The challenges to break through stigmas associated with women in leadership positions and bringing down social barriers and patriarchal values dominating many organizations, is the fight women leaders and managers will have to put up if they want to be accepted for who they are. As Morgan (1986) puts it:

As long as organizations are dominated by patriarchal values and structures the roles of women in organizations will always be played out in male terms ... (The real challenge facing women who want to succeed in the organizational world is to change the organizational values in the most fundamental way.

(Morgan, 1986: 212)

Both Morgan and Soobrayan have emphasized the point of “change”. And if change is to come about and women’s identity and leadership role taken seriously by organizations and society at large, a fundamental change in *culture* and *values* of organizations and society at large, in relation to women in senior and head positions, must also come about.

### **3.2 Power:**

Much blood, throughout history, has been spilled and many noble lives lost in the chase of power. It can manifest itself in political, economical, spiritual and social structures. The highly complex notion of power, its distribution, who has it, how is it used, superiority inferiority complex etc. is an inevitable thread which runs through most topics concerning the notion of leadership in general and in relation to women in particular. Unfortunately, many negative characteristics, such as, dominance, oppression, authoritarianism, superiority and control have been attributed to power. Social constructions, such as, class, status, gender and race form social hierarchies has been used to control the movement and distribution of power.

When taking a closer look at power in relation to leadership, we find a common misconception, pointed out by Gardner (2000), suggesting that although leaders always possess some measure of power; rooted in their ability to ‘persuade’, many individuals who possess power do not possess leadership qualities and attributes. Nevertheless, for the sake of this paper, when leadership is mentioned, it is in relation to those in positions of power and control.

The few in places of power are often the ones who select and produce knowledge. Credit for knowledge is given to what is seen to be appropriate and in line of thought.

Language being the most universal medium by which knowledge is transferred could perhaps be seen as a subtle form of power control. Who has been involved in the language construction and thereafter the construction of the knowledge? Whose experiences are regarded and disregarded. These are all questions that are taken under consideration when exploring the grounds of power and knowledge production.

a. Knowledge and Language Formation:

I will begin by constructing a frame work of how power is viewed in relation to knowledge, language formulation and its effects on women. A four dimensional power map, which seems “female friendly” to those in leadership posts is then outlined.

There is an explicit relationship between elite groups and how knowledge is organised. Knowledge is stratified in the sense that the value of knowing one thing rather than another is linked to power structures that determine what is to be known, and what it is worthwhile knowing’

(Young, cited in Gunter, 2001: 8)

Knowledge is not value free or objective, independent of the frame work people bring to it. As early as 1963, Heisenberg, in regards to knowledge, stated that ‘what we observe is not nature itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning’. Male’s questioning has been for some considerable time, seen as almost the single source of valid science in western society. Language, being the medium in which knowledge is transmitted is packed with the value system and culture which upholds society. Language is:

A culture system by which its very shape and nature reveals the culture’s key principles and underlying pattern. That pattern in western society is one of patriarchy – of male authority involving domination of the main sources of social power.

(Marshall, 1986: 47)

An absence of women's voice in the formation of the symbolic and structural thought in language and science is noticed. We find that women and men are placed differently in patriarchal classifications and orders. Concerning, for instance, women's social positions, they have not had equal opportunities in influencing language, introducing new meanings, or even defining events and their experience of the world. Therefore, 'we typically find, men's attempt to speak for and about women' (Marshall, 1986: 51) creating stereotypes of their construct of femininity, *who* and *how* they should be. Hence, the group in power decides how language is used and if emotions and personal referencing is acceptable or not. Furthermore, this suppression and translation of men's framework in which women should fit and the impression they gain when reading business books referring to 'the manager, he....' inevitably leads to a distortion of women's identity and the role they are capable of undertaking (Marshall, 1986).

However, Marshall has written in 1986 and it is possible, in some cases, that these perspectives are now less valid than they once were. We may find that in some settings these views still predominate.

Those who then have access to power are the ones who have constructed the means in which to possess them some refer to "those" as society. But could society be a synonym for men? How can a more female friendly approach to power be achieved in leadership posts in an organization, which includes their 'points of reference, and value women's traditional characteristics' (Marshall, 1986: 107)? How can an appreciative framework and more democratic attitude towards power be adopted?

*b. Maps of Power:*

'Power is competitive, a matter of individual ownership, motivated towards control and expressed through doing' (Marshall, 1986: 107). Traditionally individuals in leadership posts drew a very masculine shade to their roles. Marshall, provides an alternative shade to power as being 'cooperative, based in joint ownership, directed towards influence and expressed in individuals' quality of being' (p. 108). Many, recent and older, literature have attempted to draw out maps, frameworks, and forms in which to

analyze the sources of power and empowerment. How they take shape and are assumed, executed and distributed, notably Gardner (2000), Marshall(1986), Nyberge (1981) and Richman and Farmer (1974).

Nyberg (1981) identifies four forms of power: The most traditional form which is *force*. This is followed by the forms of *fiction* and then *finance*. The final and most effective form, in Nyberg's opinion, is *fealty* or faithfulness also known as a form of love. Richman and Farmer (1974) on the other hand recognize sources of power at an *organizational level*, *group characteristics*, and some more *individualistic or personal*. It is recognized that these are interrelated in different ways and many dependent on situational factors.

Marshall (1986) portrays a four-dimensional map. The first being power over others, secondly, structural factors which contribute to power, thirdly, power generated with or through others, and finally personal power' (Marshall, 1986: 108).

Unpacking these four dimensions we first turn to power over others, which relies on more traditional conceptions of power in relation to *controlling* the environment. Elements which come under this dimension are: coercion, reward, expert, legitimate, referent or "charisma", and individual's ability to carry out organizational punishments or rewards. Although power is regarded by many as something an individual possesses, much too often, the other side of its (power) relational nature is ignored, 'to understand leadership we must also recognize fellowship' (Marshall, 1986: 109).

The second dimension, *structural factors*, is concerned with power and credit gained through assuming novel and different perspectives to be applied. Within the majority of organizations there is not only a need but room for balancing risk-taking and risk-reduction. Characteristics, such as, innovative and the ability to sufficiently provide alternative perspectives to the organization are "brownie points" to ones credibility as a leader.

The third dimension reveals power that is achieved through *relationships*. In contrast to the first dimension that views power as a finite quantity, power here is created through relationships, by empowering others. ‘Members of an informal network which exchange information, make decisions and creates shared meanings is a major source of this sort of power’ (Marshall, 1986: 109).

The fourth and final dimension of power is placed under a broad band of *personal* power, covering a range of individual aspects. This dimension is concerned with the ability of an individual to value and have access ‘to all their characteristics through an aware but not necessarily easily pleased, self-tolerance’ (Marshall, 1986: 110). Skills which are the foundation of independency, driven from self-esteem initiated in self-validation, competence, self-worth and mastery are empowering oneself. Marshall further draws on some of women’s attributes, such as, ‘stamina, resilience, abilities to undergo change and recognition, and intuition based on understanding others as potential sources of personal power’ (p. 110).

### **3.3 A Constructed Barrier and Getting Around it:**

#### **a. The “Glass Ceiling”:**

We have seen the many challenges faced by women in leadership positions, in terms of their gender, their identity being fastened to many stereotypes, being marginalized and their experiences ignored in the formation of knowledge and power being the tools put in use to pave the way for this to happen. Before exploring the various interpretations associated with the so-called glass ceiling I want to explore the nature of its construction. This will be done by first questioning its social construction. Is there some form of glass ceiling with every social construct? Could we term what is being put forth here as a “gender based glass ceiling”, hence if we were debating the notion of status, class, or race, individuals situated under any of these notions would at some point hit a glass ceiling and would be cut off from achieving or reaching the “top”. Does it exist to keep the elite in power and on top? How have some suggested “getting around it”, or “breaking through it”? And what procedures have women undergone to by pass it? These

are questions that are far beyond the scope of this paper. But what I will attempt to do is to explore the dimensions of this concept in order to later be able to reflect on it when examining the Saudi society, and Al Nour's culture.

The concept of the "glass ceiling" is one that has been created and referred to by many authors (i.e. McDougall and Briley, 1994; King, 1997; Davis, 1998) when tackling the topic of women moving up the occupational hierarchy. It has been created to describe an invisible barrier women hit once they have climbed up the social achievement hierarchy and can not move any further. I want to begin by describing this concept according to various authors.

This phenomenon of the 'glass ceiling' is described by Adler et. al., (1995) who views it in relation to being an obstruction to women's achievement, an 'invisible barrier to achievement; the point at which women watch younger men in grey suits gain positions of power' (p. 22-3). Feminists tackling the issue regard the glass ceiling as preventing 'women from reaching top positions' (Davies, 1998: 27). Leach (1998) further tackle the notion of women's abilities being handicapped. She claims that the glass ceiling 'prevents women from making full use of their abilities and reaching senior management positions' (p. 62). King (1997) is more descriptive when tackling the issue at hand. She vividly describes the glass ceiling as follows:

The glass ceiling is a barrier which prevents women from rising, whilst real enough from below is often invisible from above. Men at the top can look down and ask why women are not achieving, and seeing no barrier, can only surmise a lack of talent, commitment or energy.

(King,1997: 94)

Assumed reasons fluctuate from, accusing men of being the cause and constructing this barrier in order to keep women on the bottom side of the barrier whilst they rise above, and men's assumption of their right to advance. On the other hand, some accuse women of a lack of confidence, therefore imposing this barrier on themselves.

Therefore, they become hesitant to progress to leadership positions. Guilt related with childcare, is another feature Coleman (2000) refers to, to describe women's feelings and perhaps the persistency of the glass ceiling. Women's less-aggressive nature is also seen as a probable reason for the existence of the glass ceiling (Davies, 1998: 27). The question then is, if this so called "glass ceiling" exists, how can women by pass it?

*b. Networking:*

Single handed effort to 'break through' this barrier is rarely achievable. King (1997) as well as many feminists argue that networking is the only way to get through the glass ceiling. King explicitly describes her and others effort in the organization of a conference that aimed at beginning at networking 'Through the Glass Ceiling' that was launched in January 1990, involving 40 women in managerial posts in higher education. This call was to discover, the necessity to establish a network like this. The conference, as stated in King's words: 'decided overwhelmingly that a need for a network of senior women managers did exist' (p. 93)

The aim of this network was to identify precisely what the glass ceiling consisted of, and to find ways in which to break through. The ways in which to achieve these aims was to confirm the essentiality of women's networking and encourage them to do so, rather than hard core competition between each other.

Networking could help those who want to rise to positions of leadership, could encourage women to work towards a senior post and could offer support to the pioneers who are already at the top and may still be picking from their bodies the shards of glass ceiling which clung as they came through.

(King, 1997: 94-5)

## Chapter 4

### Leadership and Women in Saudi:

Over two decade ago Al-Hariri in her 1983 article wrote about the shortage of women in leadership and dominant positions in Saudi Arabia. She expressed her anticipation of the progression of females in higher education that would enable them to participate and gain access to more diverse work opportunities. In this chapter I will attempt to portray a realistic picture of women in Saudi and their achievements in the work force and in leadership roles. Saudi, being a segregated society, is usually frowned upon. However, this segregation system could be seen to act as an advancement for women in their sects. In addition this system shapes different patterns of leadership and understanding of concepts such as the “glass ceiling” explored in the findings chapter.

#### 4.1 Saudi Women on the Rise:

This anticipation is currently taking shape as our eyes are becoming accustomed to extraordinary news headlines. Headings such as *‘Saudi Women Challenge Traditional Barriers in Male Dominated Society: First Saudi Women to Hold the Top Hospital Post as Chief Ophthalmologist, in King Faisl Hospital. Dr. Selwa Al-Hazzaa’* threatens traditional male positions in the work force. Further headlines that may seem striking to traditionalists, such as, *‘Sky’s the Limit for Saudi Woman Pilot: First Saudi Woman Pilot’* Captain Hanadi Hindi (George, 2004: 19) dominate an entire page of Saudi news papers. Additional headlines of female advancements in attempting to break out of the social gender slot created by society are: *‘For the first time three Saudi women now serving as advisers to the traditionally all male constulative parliament (Majlis ash Shura)’\**.

\* *Majlis ash Shura: ‘120 [male] members appointed council that studies laws and makes recommendations to the king’ Bowers (2004)*

Bowers (2004) and *'More Saudi women seeking jobs in computer technology, communications and law, even though Saudi courts do not yet recognize women lawyers'*

Baroness Uddin, a Labour peer, was invited to Saudi in order to attend the Jeddah Economic Forum in 2003 in which some 400 Saudi women took part. Baroness Uddin expresses her delight in seeing Saudi women actively involved in the prosperity of their country. Although this has not always been the case, things are rapidly changing for women in Saudi. I will not engage in the dialogue of Women's inherent Islamic rights, but rather I simply would like to illustrate the active changes taking place now in Saudi for women in leadership positions.

Recently - 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004 - London has seen over a dozen Saudi women attending a conference to promote trading ties between London and their homeland. A newspaper article has comprehensively covered struggles and challenges they are faced with, expectations and what the future holds. These women vary from fashion designer, to heads of the women's department in the chamber of commerce in Jeddah and heads of schools. The entire front page of *The Times* is covered by the heading *'Jobs for the Girls: How the Veil is Slowly Lifting for Saudi Women'* (Bennett, 2004).

#### **4.2 Where They Came From and Where They are Going:**

Because of the shortage of literature resources regarding women's leadership in Saudi I will take advantage of one particular (Bennett, 2004) article published in *The Times* on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2004. This article covers the delegation of women from Saudi Arabia who were attending a conference held in London. The article closely analyzes quotes and anecdotes reported by these women. This will give us some insight into the role of women in leadership posts in general.

Thirty years ago Saudi women were seldom seen, never heard and certainly not employed. Now a few high-powered female executives are blazing a trail for their sisters to follow.

(Bennett, 2004: 4)

Unfortunately, as the above quote illustrates, Saudi is many times presented as “the land of the veil” the “land of mystique” or some “Arabian night tale” of slave women whose sole purpose in life is to serve men. Or women rapped up and imprisoned between the four walls of their homes. Perhaps the reason for this peculiar picture is firstly, Westerners struggle to view other cultures threw a Western secular lens. Hence, this peculiar image of a Western understanding is reflected onto the Saudi society and the Saudi women in particular. A very obvious example is Bennett’s exaggerated caption ‘women were seldom seen, never heard and certainly not employed’. Secondly, the lack of literature illustrating and exploring life for women in Saudi, their struggles, their ambitions, success, achievements and their experiences written by Saudis’ themselves, and translated into English, in order for it to be accessible to the West.

Conceivably thirty years ago when life was still very simple in Saudi, before the breakthrough of oil, Saudi Arabia remained cocooned from the outside world. Not many individuals traveled in or out of Saudi. Before Saudi had been exposed to this “modern” and “developed” way of life, and prior to the media being such an influential tool in *telling* societies how they should live, what is it to be successful and what is it to be a free woman, people were more satisfied with a very simple day to day life. However, simply because they lived a different life, does not mean they were deprived of their rights or oppressed. Illustrating this point Bennett (2004) in her article states that ‘other rights that we take for granted in the West – voting, going to the cinema, even listening to music in public places – remain beyond the reach of Saudi women and men alike’ (p. 4). The question then is, are these the standards for basic human rights i.e. listening to music in public places and going to the cinema. In order to begin understanding the Middle East this lens will have to do away with.

The drastic changes, Saudi being the world's largest oil producer, has witnessed in its political, social, economical and educational systems has come about in less than fifty years. Fatin Yusef, who has established the first women's department at the Jeddah chamber, states 'We've come along way in Saudi Arabia. Thirty years ago we had nothing – hardly any hospitals, schools, or incomes. To take a country from basically nonexistent and make it to what it's become today is moving so fast that's it's hard to keep up' (Bennett, 2004: 4). Samia, one of the first women to be employed in Aramco, a major oil company in Saudi, remembers returning to Saudi after receiving a degree at the American University of Cairo – Egypt - in political science and economics to be initially met with rejection. But shortly after, with the upheaval of the oil production, and Saudi realizing its economic muscles money came flowing into the county like never before. With this Samia found herself 'being offered one of the first four jobs for women at the newly nationalized Arabian American Oil Company' (Bannett, 2004, 4).

One generation ago there had been no *formal* schooling for girls (the first girl's school opened in 1962) only to find a generation later female schools everywhere, and more female than male in the universities. In addition, Samia's 22 year-old daughter now works at Aramco and is part of 1000 female employees. But Samia, who began working in Aramco as a translator climbing up to the position as vice-president for public affairs, honestly and wholeheartedly states:

There's a lot of frustration about a lot of things today, especially for women. But what I know is that I work hard, and if I work hard I get rewards. Not everything I want. But enough to relive some of the frustration.

(Bennett, 2004: 4)

Evidently there were limits of just how high these pioneering women could climb. "I felt I'd reached a glass ceiling" (p. 4) Samia says. Saudi being a gender segregated society, posed further unease's for Samia. If she would have moved any higher in her career, for instance, becoming the vice-president, it would involve too frequent interaction and contact with men. Additional, Samia concludes by stating that "it's a very male oriented company, because it's an oil company. I don't think that's unique to Saudi

Arabia” (p.4). A common attitude these women carried was the following statement: “we need as a nation to make changes at our own pace and within our own system of beliefs” (Bennett, 2004: 4). Time and patience is an important factor if these progresses are to continue.

## CHAPTER 5

### METHODOLOGY

In this small-scale illuminative study I set out to explore, through a quantitative research method, women's performance, experience, style and leadership roles in general and in Al Nour College in particular. The individuals in senior positions running and supervising this college play a direct role in its success and learning outcomes. I will attempt to examine leadership roles and insights of various women holding leadership positions in order to understand the implications of their perceptions on the *culture* of the College.

In order to sail out on this expedition and explore the points stated above I chose to use a qualitative research method. This methodology chapter will consist of three main sections. The first section will be concerned with the *methodological approach*. Under this heading will come two sub headings, the first sub heading will explore the dimensions of the case study method and its strengths, and the second sub heading will discuss interviews as the tool used for collecting data, its strengths and weaknesses and different types of interviews and my justifications for my choice of the particular interview method. The second section will be about *sample and access* to the institute. Procedures I have undergone to gain access to Al Nour College is looked at. The final section regards *ethics* of conducting this research. Issues of gaining trust and Al Nour's confidence to carry out this research and the assertion of 'confidentiality, anonymity, non-identifiability, and non-traceability' (Cohen, et. al. 2003: 292) is put forth.

#### 5.1 A Methodological Approach:

Cohen et al. (2000) states that, 'research is concerned with understanding the world and that this is formed by how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purpose of understanding' (p. 3). How these truths are discovered are dependent on the methodological lens put into use according to what is seen to be most

appropriate to the nature of the research. When examining methodological approaches one is addressing a 'range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction' (Cohen, 2000: 44). The aim of methodology as laid out in Kaplan's words is:

To describe and analyze these methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences ...It is to venture generalizations from the success of particular techniques, suggesting new applicants, and to unfold the specific bearings of logical and metaphysical principles on concrete problems, suggesting new formulations.

(Kaplan, 1973: 34)

As illustrated extensive and detailed research has gone into the art and science of research and its methods, however, this chapter will only go into some detail about the method and approaches I have selected to gather data for this particular research. 'The approach adopted and the methods of data collection selected will depend on the nature of the enquiry and the type of information required' (Bell, 1991: 4)

A qualitative perspective has been adopted in conducting this research. This approach, in contrast to the quantitative approach, is concerned with understanding personal perspectives and perceptions (Bell, 1991). I have chosen this particular perspective in order to gain a closer more intimate understanding of the role leadership plays in the development of the culture of the college. This approach will allow me to build relationships based on trust with those in leadership posts to gain insights and information needed to give body to this dissertation. Based on this outlook I have accordingly adopted a case study approach to further pursue this research.

Case study:

I have chosen to adopt this particular approach for my dissertation in order to examine particular aspects of Al Nour College i.e. leadership and the culture, in some depth within

a limited time scale. I will be examining the interaction of various factors, such as, leadership role, leadership styles, women achieving a balance between career and domestic chores, power, decision making and the glass ceiling. How these factors contribute to the relationship construction of leadership roles played out in Al Nour College and its culture will be further examined. Adelman *et. al.* (1977) defines a case study as ‘an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on enquiry around an instance’ (p. 14). The “instance” in this dissertation which I will be questioning, is the association of women’s leaders in Al Nour College and its effect on the culture of the college.

Bell (1991) suggests that the greatest strength of the case study method is ‘that it allows the researcher to concentrate on the specific instance or situation and identify, or attempt to identify, the various interactive processes at work’ (p. 67). These interactive processes, unique to each institution, are important in shaping the case study’s features and displaying how a specific feature – leadership – influences the ways in which Al Nour College functions. The success of this case study will be in providing the reader ‘with a three-dimensional picture and will illustrate relationships, micro political issues and patterns of influences in a particular context’ (Bell, 1991: 7). The method in which data is collected for a case study varies according to the nature of the study at hand. For this particular case study I have found the interview to be the most functional and convenient for data collection.

#### Interview:

Interviewing is amongst the most powerful tool used in research for data collection. The reason for this relates to its flexible nature. Its flexibility permits the researcher to ‘pursue leads that appear fruitful to encourage elaboration of points that the respondent has not made clear or has partially avoided, and to clarify questions the respondents has apparently misunderstood’ (Mouly, 1978: 202). This seems to be one of the greatest advantages of the interview, and the main reason I chose this particular method. However, the interview does carry a weakness which is ‘interview biases’. This weakness stems largely from its flexible nature. Interviewers have a tendency to ‘project [their]

own personality into the situation ... Research has shown that interviewers tend to obtain data that agree with their own personal convictions' (Mouly, 1978: 203). Although there are some who favor questionnaires to interviews for many reasons, such as, it being potentially more objective, providing the researcher with statistical data and less time consuming, however, the flavor and dialogue achieved by an interview I found much more insightful and fitting to the objectives of this small scale case study.

There are several types of interviews. Many authors (Cohen et. al., 2000; Bell, 1991; Mouly, 1978) have grouped interviews in various ways. However, the most basic grouping of interviews is the following: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. For this case study I have selected the semi-structured interview. The structured interview is very similar to a written questionnaire, as this form of interview has been found particularly useful 'when a lot of questions are to be asked which are not particularly contentious or deeply thought provoking' (Jason, 1984: 183). The unstructured interview is used primarily in the area of psychotherapy practice and requires extensive training that could last sometimes for three hours producing intimate and deeply concealed information. The reason for my choice of the semi-structured interview is that it 'allows respondents to express themselves at some length, but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling' (Jason, 1984: 184).

The interviews were conducted in the English Language, two of them were face-to-face and the remaining three were telephonic interviews. Initially I had arranged to interview eight persons. Six females in various positions, such as previous dean, acting dean, vice deans, and programme directors, and two out of the ten board members. However, because of time constraint and their busy schedules Al Nour College was only able to arrange five interviews with the following persons: Previous dean, Dr. Rahima, vice dean: Dr. Alia, two Programme directors, Dr. Iman and Dr. Dalia and one male board member: Mr. Yahya. I believe the study would have provided a more in depth insight if more persons in leadership posts were interviewed.

Al Nour College arranged an Internet telephonic connection between London and Saudi, which allowed the lengthy international on line interview at a minimal cost. Each interview went on for a maximum of forty five minutes. I found the telephonic interviews most convenient because it allowed me to reach very busy people at times convenient for them. It was also useful in collecting quite sensitive data regarding the nature of power structures, and decision making, in the college, which could have other wise been difficult or awkward to acquire.

The questions for the interview that I have drawn up are from the key issues covered in the literature review. However making the questions relevant to the intended population was a point to consider when structuring the questions. There was a slight difference in questions posed to females in leadership posts, such as, balancing domestic chores and career (appendix 2 and 3) and questions to the male board member . Questions that I found irrelevant to the board member were omitted or altered.

### **5.2 Sample and Access to the Institute:**

Gaining access to the college has been quite challenging. Because it is a very new college many procedures and policies remain in the process of development. For reasons of confidentiality and the safeguarding of rights and interests of Al Nour College a *procedure and protocol for the use of Al Nour facilities and services for research purposes* was developed and e-mailed to me. The protocol requested a submission of a formal letter of request to the responsible personal in Al Nour College, a letter of support and verification from my supervisor under whose supervision my dissertation was conducted, a synopsis of my research and its aims (appendix 1) and a list of names of individuals I would need to interview. In addition the name of the college has been altered to safe guard its members and status. Furthermore, the names of the personals interviewed have also been changed.

### **5.3 Ethics:**

It is also important to first point out that I was once a student in Al Nour College and a part time employer which has granted me credentials and a certain degree of openness

from my interviewees. The consent of Al Nour College was obtained orally. One of the board members who provided me with initial consent stated, 'we are happy to let you carry out this research, I am sure that this will also be beneficial to Al Nour College, as you will be able to point out some weaknesses we probably overlook.' The dean of academic affairs also assured me of the college's full cooperation and stated, 'we are here to help you.' The synopsis of my dissertation pointed out the potentials of me tackling some sensitive areas, such as, power struggles and decision making but I assured the college that if the material gained from my research was handled carefully and with truthful intentions, the study would, undoubtedly, be for the betterment of the college, and those in leadership positions. Furthermore, it would provide insight into issues that may have been considered trivial and therefore overlooked, ignored or neglected. As mentioned above 'confidentiality, anonymity, non-identifiability, and non-traceability' (Cohen, et. al. 2003: 292) had been assured.



## CHAPTER 6

### Findings and Discussions

#### 6.1 Findings

This chapter will present the findings of my small-scale investigation into issues of gendered leadership at Al Nour College. The findings were coded and analyzed and a wide range of themes emerged. In what follows I present these themes under two main headings:

1. Leadership at a personal level and
2. Leadership at an organizational level

The first theme of leadership at a personal level examines leadership from a personal and individualistic perspective, the interpretations of respondents in leadership roles in Al Nour College. Out of the first theme the following 6 points are analyzed:

- i. Leadership and leadership role*
- ii. Defining leadership roles*
- iii. Leadership styles and qualities*
- iv. Leadership and Identity*
- v. Achieving a balance*
- vi. Leadership and women*

The second theme examines leadership at an organizational level and its role in shaping the culture of the college. The culture of any organization adopts a particular culture that is suitable for its needs, motives, objectives, policies and procedures. The culture also dictates maps, frameworks, forms or characteristics by which power and decision making are exhibited and executed through those holding leadership roles. The following two points help to analyze the predominant characteristics of the culture and how it operates in Al Nour College:

- i. The organizational structure*
- ii. Organization, group and individualistic power*

## **1. Leadership at a Personal Level:**

By understanding leadership at a personal level, tensions, challenges, barriers, styles and perceptions will feed into understanding the fundamental role of leadership at both the organizational and social level. It is also important to point out that the six points, listed above, mainly illustrate the responses of the four females interviewed in leadership posts, since Al Nour College is, after all, a female institution.

- *1. Leadership and leadership role:*

Respondents made a clear distinction between *leadership* and its inherent nature on one hand and *leadership roles* on the other hand. It was argued that not necessarily every one in a leadership role is a leader. They proposed the idea of those in leadership positions having the ability or not to exert influence. Influence being an important characteristic of leaders. We find this evident in Dr. Rahima's statement:

It is important to differentiate between a leadership role and leadership. Because when you assume a leadership role you may not be a leader your self, ... But when you are a leader you can be just one faculty member but if you have leadership qualities you can have influences over the people around you and sometimes influence over the leadership role itself.

- *2. Defining leadership roles:*

Most respondents interpreted leadership in relation to their subordinates and leading them, providing guidance and inspiration and setting goals. This approach was concerned with *influencing* and motivating subordinates to reach a common goal. One of the many definitions provided by the respondents is Dr. Iman's. she states that:

Leadership is the way we exert effort to use resources you have by inspiring your subordinate, motivating them diverting them in activities that they have to achieve in terms of the goals that are set. In order to be a proper leader first there must be a goal.

Others, notably Dr. Rahima, defined leadership in relation to personal attributes. She discussed whether leadership could be seen as an inherit gift or an acquired expertise or both.

Leadership is a collective attributes that are enhanced and developed or inherit within the characteristics of each being, experience plays a lot with leadership but there are things that are apart of the character that has nothing to do with experience, It is something you inherit and I think it is a combination of both how you develop yourself, how you enhance your capabilities.

I have found that the the *leadership role* these have assumed was dependent the definition of *leadership* they carry.

- 3. *Leadership styles and qualities:*

Although, variety in leadership style seems to be a very important quality of a leader, however, there seems to be two extremes in which to contain these varieties. There is either the hierarchical and autocratic or the democratic. The literature covered, suggests that most women generally have more of a democratic leadership style. This could be characterized as a feminine leadership style. A leadership style that is 'less hierarchal and more democratic' (Ozga, 1993: 11). The particular styles these five leaders adopted appeared dependent on either the *population* and *environment* in which they were leading. This is obvious in the following statements:

I think assertiveness is something that should be avoided, because the type of people you work with in Saudi Arabia especially in a place like Al Nour, you have a lot of multi cultural faculty and staff and to be able to succeed in this environment you should not work through assertiveness style... So a consultative leadership style would be the best leadership style in such an environment, in my opinion. (Dr. Rahima)

Dr. Rahima pointed out the importance of adopting a style that is sensitive to the population and environment one is leading in. therefore a leadership style that is context

and content dependent in her opinion. She pointed out that a leader should consult their subordinates when making decisions; hence, adopting a 'consultative leadership style' for Al Nour's diverse community. Dr. Rahima points out that; however, at times the leader must maintain the final word.'

Or, others suggested that the task at hand is what determines the leadership style. Dr. Alia suggested that:

... generally perhaps [leadership styles is] directly linked to the tasks involved, what is more operational. So a great deal involves on what are you leading? Are you leading a task force? A function that involves thinking, planning, and reflecting. Is your position or the job theory oriented or action oriented? So action oriented position, you would have to use a different technique to lead your group. In theory oriented position you would have to use different approach to leading your group. So, as I have said, you might have to utilize different ways.

Dr. Alia stressed that depending on the nature of the task at hand, it being 'theory oriented or action oriented' the style a leader would assume is determined. The leader would have to be equipped and aware of the various leadership styles. Which style is more operational and functional according to the task?

The leadership styles put forth by respondents was of a feminine character. Dix (1990) states that 'women favor less hierarchical structures ... they prefer to operate at work on a set of people-centered ethics' (p. 10). I have found that leadership styles and qualities adopted by the women interviewed were communal, consultative, people oriented and less hierarchical in nature. Hence, stereotypically, more feminine. This style can also be sensed in the definitions of leadership and leadership roles put forth by respondents in points 1 and 2. However, there seems to be conflict in the cultural organization of the college that is antagonistic to the styles adopted by respondents. I will further address this point when the second theme, leadership at an organizational level, is analyzed.

#### 4. *Leadership and Identity:*

The issue of identity seemed to have stirred up controversy and offense. The assumption put forth by Marshall (1986) that leadership, being stereotypically perceived as a male role, can mean that some women experience an initial identification process, in which, to gain acceptance and credibility was refuted. This disapproval from respondents could be as a result of the segregation found in the Saudi society. Therefore, although these female in leadership position faced difficulties in gaining societies confident, the issue of identity and “fitting” into a male world is irrelevant. The females playing out leadership roles in Al Nour College identify three factors that were sources of tension in relation to the issue of their identity and leadership roles. The first tension stems from the stereotypical view of *Muslim Saudi women in the eyes of the West*. Dr. Dalia strongly stated that:

... Western country feel that we have been in the dark for so long and we still are and we are just flourishing, just raising our heads, just now. I mean they don't know that we have been on management positions for so many years; we have as females made a lot of changes in a lot of sectors in our country.

The second tension is that of *male dominance* that is not limited to the Saudi population. Dr. Rahima pointed out that:

...the male dominant environment in Saudi Arabia, make women leaders not accepted in the society. They still feel that there has to be a male to head even the highest leader and that is not only in Saudi. Even here [London] it is like the odd cases of Margaret Thatcher, or the odd cases of the Philippines head. ...I think they are mixing the male dominant activities, they're assuming that leadership is a male activity ... So leadership is not gendered and it is not confined to men.

The third is that of traditional Saudi *cultural barriers*. Dr. Dalia further states that:

I think there is a cultural barrier that goes in there big time ... But I think the stereotype I can't say that men are more dominant, more controlling, structured, organized, more firm. I can't say that. I think that there are women

who have the same characteristics and have the same styles. I think what differs is the situation you are placed in.

These women were confident of their identities, capabilities and the changes they are able to make and have made. I have further noticed that these leaders being in a gender segregated society did not face the same identity problems face by women in the West in leadership posts that have been pointed out in the literature review. The struggle in the Saudi society seemed to be in paving the road and a professional recognized place for women in leadership posts in society. As illustrated in the literature review in chapter four on 'Leadership and women in Saudi', women sectors in the leadership posts in the field of education, management, business etc. are less than fifty years old. These fields for Saudi women have just begun to mature and are in the process of gaining societies acceptance and confidence. Hence, the nature of the pressures in forming their identities, although there may be some similarities, are different.

- *5. Achieving a balance:*

This topic, of women achieving a balance between both their personal life and professional life raised some unease. It seemed to be a constant struggle and *the* unanswerable question that faced all four of the women leaders who were all mothers. Many important topics were triggered when addressing the issue of women achieving a balance. Some of these topics, mentioned in the literature review, include: family, professional, and religious obligations and the multi gray areas. Also there is the fair and organized distribution of work to lessen the work load on one person i.e. the leader. The issue of society creating certain provisions in terms of providing facilities to lighten this burden. The level of stress and difficulty depending on the stage of the life cycle women are undergoing etc. I will only be able to illustrate the personal feelings and suggestions pointed out by some of the respondents. Dr. Alia admits:

Well that is a question that hunts women around the world. In all societies women have to deal with this issue of maintaining a balance in their personal life and professional life.

Dr. Iman acknowledges the conflict she faces in trying to achieve a balance:

...true, very true my professional life my career life is really to some extent conflicting with my personal life.

Dr. Rahima boldly states the impossibility of the equation:

It's a big lie if some body tells you they were able to balance. There is nothing called a balance between a family life and a working life. One has to pay the price... Always communicate with your family on the goal you are trying to achieve and the price they have to pay as well, in order for you all to achieve this.

I have found that the fact that they are all mothers as well as senior academic managers, illustrates that they are “juggling” successfully to some degree. The fact of them being aware of the conflicts, the difficulties and the demanding position is a challenge that has been recognized which may help them deal with it at a personal level. Perhaps “balance” is not the right word. Because as put forth by all three respondents if balance is what we are looking for it is unachievable. Something or some one must give in. On the other hand whilst one persons state of equilibrium may be more family oriented another's might be more career oriented and more dedicated to their professional development. Conceivably the idea of equilibrium would be more suited.

- *6. Leadership and women:*

All four of the women interviewed consented to the view that women, undoubtedly, make good leaders, and possess intrinsic leadership capabilities. However, they did raise several interesting issues of concern regarding women in leadership roles, if they are to achieve and lead to the achievement of the institution.

These issues can be grouped into two main categories. The first category has to do with women proving their capabilities, their achievement and their professionalism to society and the struggle to gain acceptance of their role. Respondents acknowledged the

struggle they initially encountered, in general, when facing men in superior roles and the effort they had to exert to prove their capabilities as well as maintain respect. Dr. Rahima points out the struggle faced:

...so it is whether you are able to juggle this, at the same time maintain respect to your position, it's that very delicate balance. But the price you pay, because it takes so much from your effort and energy to be able to know. Ultimately you have to fight for your respect, and you have to fight for your dignity...But it takes a lot of effort a lot of patience and a lot of tolerance.

The male board member points out to the struggle women face in trying to establish society's confidence in them. He states:

Well there is no doubt that the ability for leadership exists within the women. It is going to take a little time...I see that it takes several generations to establish this confidence in women, that she is able to lead, and her leadership will be accepted even amongst women.

The second category, which I found to be an interesting avenue that would need more in depth investigation, not possible in this study, had to do with women's professional relationship with one another. Women's taking up professional leadership roles in organizations and institutions in Saudi is novel. Issues of training, professionalism, qualification, professional knowledge and work ethics raise tensions and concern. Dr. Dalia states that:

There is not a struggle of power of women against men, I think it is amongst themselves, who can prove themselves better, I think women are not qualified... so you basically use your personal skills, you use your religious skills, you use your ethical and moral skills, but actual training, not me not any director not any vice-dean and dean had these skills.

Dr. Rahima adds on and states:

...but I can say that women are very good at being leaders, provided they had the training for that ... Saudi women are new to this type, they are more relaxed when it comes to work ethics.

It is noticed here that the technicalities, the managerialism, the methods and the skills that needs training and development is an undeveloped aspect. It is one that all respondents were fully aware of. It was recognized that although a person could inherit leadership qualities or the characteristic of a leader the skill and tools were missing. It could be suggested that this lack of professional training could be a cause of the gap and incoherence found between the individual leadership role and the culture of the college.

## **2. Leadership at an Organizational Level:**

In this section I will attempt to explore the 'culture' of Al Nour College. What shape does the specific form of leadership in Al Nour give to the culture of the college? There are many factors, such as, history, ownership, traditions, power and decision making etc. that influence the 'culture' of an organization or institution. Throughout this research I have come to discover that leadership seems to be a key factor in influencing the 'culture' of Al Nour College. Power distribution and 'how work is structured and controlled' (Dopson and McNay, 1996: 21) are crucial ingredients in carrying out leadership roles. Therefore, to examine Al Nour College's 'culture' I will examine the power structure. In order to explain this I will deploy aspects of Handy's work on organizations.

- *A. The organizational structure:*

Let us begin by looking more closely at the term 'culture'. Many times 'culture' is seen as a static and fixed label. Street (1993) contests the view that 'culture' is a static and fixed term. He reinforces the idea that it is "an active process of meaning making" (p. 25). Furthermore, he adds that when analyzing and examining culture, this doesn't necessitate producing fixed definitions, but in exploring the dimensions of these definitions and the circumstances under which they were created. Street continues by

stating that “there is not much point in trying to say what culture is... What can be done, however, is to say what culture does” (p. 25). Or in Dopson and McNay (1996) words ‘the way things are done around here’ (p. 16).

Charles Handy (1993) identifies four frameworks in which the ‘culture’ of the organization is determined. The frameworks offered are: the *power culture*, the *role culture*, the *task culture* and the *people culture*. Dopson and McNay (1996) put forth that ‘organizations are rarely pure examples of these cultures. Instead, a mixture exists, although Handy claims that there is usually a dominant cultural orientation’ (p. 24). In the light of my observation, the interviews conducted, and my personal experience as an insider - as student and as a member of faculty - in Al Nour College it seems that a mix of Handy’s *role culture* and *task culture* describe Al Nour College most appropriately.

- **The Role Culture:**

In addition to the members of any institute, it is essentially those in leadership roles who carry the college up to success or down to failure. Regardless of how committed, loyal and hard working its members are, if those in leadership positions are not organized and creative the institute will never grow. Al Nour College is describes in light of the *role culture* when looking at features of decision making and the source of power flow. These are all determining issues that play a pivotal role in developing the culture of the college and how it operates.

This culture is frequently stereotyped as a bureaucracy. Hierarchy is very important and individuals know their place in the system. ‘Position power is the major source of power, and personal power is frowned upon’ (Dopson and McNay, 1996: 23). Dr. Dalia point out her place and states that:

There is a structure that goes directors, vice deans, dean, and board members. And that defines my role basically ... Outside of my department I have zero power.

I have found that when it came to decision making the appearance of a hierarchy structure was very strong. Program directors report that although technically they were in decision making positions, in reality they did not possess the full authority to execute decisions. Therefore, they were never fully confident of the authority they had Dr. Iman points out:

However, I have to report them [decisions] back, or unofficially I have to get the approval of my boss before making the decisions ... but still I always don't have the full confidence of making decisions even if it is within the limit of my authority.

Furthermore, decisions were also dependent on accessibility. Who in the hierarchy had closest access to the final decision makers? Dr. Dalia states:

I think the last say would go to the dean and the vice deans of the college. Because these are the people who have more access to the board members, and they expose the board to what ever they want to expose or show.

This culture system seems to take a more masculine character, although the leadership roles played at an individualistic level seemed to be of a feminine characteristic. Here I refer back to the leadership styles being antagonistic to the dominant culture of the college.

- **The Task Culture:**

When looking at features of team work and internal motivation Al Nour College is described in light of the *task culture*. The task culture is also known as the team culture. It is characterized by its 'clearly articulated mission statement that is oriented to making a difference' (Dopson and McNay, 1996: 23). Dr. Rahima, illustrates the reasons behind working as a team:

Because you are the head of department heads of division heads, they have their own say they have their own minds they have their own ways of expressing what they want. So that's why you have to play in a team.

Internal motivation and providing opportunities for the members of the institute to express their creativity and talents are encouraged and highly regarded. This makes team members personally committed.

Not only do you have to listen but you also have to encourage others to talk some are introverted and they are shy of talking and expressing their opinions, you have to have the ability to portray confidence in your group of people you are leading that they can come up and talk to you. Because you will listen and encourage them to do that. (Mr. Yahya)

The strength of the task culture lies in evoking a sense of enthusiasm and commitment in its members. However, the weakness of this culture stems from its strength. The passion its members carry for the institution can make them lose balance. People begin to exploit themselves, their energy, effort and life in service of their institution. Another very subtle yet detrimental factor is that 'this culture can be 'under-organized' relying on high motivation to overcome its deficiencies in structure, system, and managing change' (Dopson and McNay, 1996: 24).

I have found that the *role culture*, in terms of who holds the final decision, how decisions are made and therefore the flow of power is hierarchal in nature which creates an over all culture in which Al Nour College operates. Although, this seems to be the dominant culture, elements of the *task culture* is found on a personal level. As Street (1993) put forth culture is not a fixed label but rather an ongoing process of how things are done. Or in Dopson and McNay (1996) words 'the way things are done around here' (p. 16). On one hand leadership at an individual level seemed to be over all of a feminine character. Although, elements of competition and power struggle are evident, that is attributed to the lack of professionalism. On the other hand leadership and an

organizational level was found to be over all of a masculine character. Although, elements of team work and the encouragement of individual opinions was expressed.

- *B. Organization, group and individualistic power:*

Power, of course when you're talking about leadership is one of the most import ingredients for leadership. (Dr. Iman)

The sources of power one achieves, has access to, or is in a position to execute can come in various forms. Some sources are 'essentially organizational in nature, some related to group characteristics, and some are essentially personal or individualistic. Many of them are interrelated in various ways, and may depend on situational factors' (Chman and Former, 1974: 174). I will briefly explore types of power discussed by my respondents, and the importance in leaders being aware of these the various types of power and when and how to use it. The skillfulness of the leader lies in their knowledge and ability to execute the accurate power in its accurate place and in the accurate situations. This skill, I believe, contributes to the development of the 'culture'.

The first major and very basic source of power lies in formal authority. This includes the leader being decisive, possessing the authority to be able to make decisions and enforce the policies and procedures of the institution. The second source of power lies within the position that demands a high level of responsibility compelling one to be equipped with 'expertise, skill, and knowledge relating to specific kinds of decisions' (Chman and Former, 1974: 174). The third source of power, apart from the group and organizational technicalities, are more subtle individualistic sources of power, such as, charisma, being judged as fair, pleasant and open-minded. Dr. Iman brings all three of these points together pointing out the importance of a leader to be aware of how to put the different power into use. She states that:

There are different types of power or different styles of power that can be active. There is the legitimate power, the reward power, the contradiction of the reward power is the cohesion power, the expert power and the referral

power. I mean being a successful leader first you have to be aware of all these kinds of power. You have a power because of your position and because of the responsibilities that you have. You have the power to punish or reward people definitely. Some times you have the power because of your knowledge because of your expert knowledge. Some times you have power because people like you. You are a friendly person you are a respectful person, this is a power as well, but being a leader you have to know how to use all these connectional sets of power in the right time in the right situation with the right people... This is how I believe it and this is how I use it honestly, I always try to practice it I always try to tell myself to use the different types of power I acquire to the needs of my responsibilities.

The conflict found between the leadership styles of respondents and the culture of the college may be explained by understanding the flow of power at the College. Reflecting on respondent's statements that comply to the *role culture*, as well as tensions and power struggle found between women in leadership posts put forth by some respondents, power at Al Nour appears to be vested in formal authority at the head of the pyramid.

## **6.2 Discussion:**

Gender, being one of the key items swaying the focus of this paper questions the nature of leadership. In the heavily packed arena of debates, that of factual and stereotypical is questioned. Stereotypes seem to have come up time and again when discussing issues of leadership styles, the nature of leadership, tensions between society and the expected role of female as oppose to male, skewed identities etc. These stereotypes come in various levels and usually as a result of ignorance, and an easy way to explain away things that are inconvenient. The idea of what is said to be a female leadership style as a pose to a male leadership style, discrimination of male board members to female dean, vice-deans, and program directors, is questioned. If we wanted to begin understanding and unpeeling the “onion of meaning” of the Saudi culture the idea of gender needs to first be placed in perspective. Dr. Aliya explains:

But again going back to your research issue we should educate people that these are stereotypes, thinking that they [board members] are doing this [disagreeing] because we are women. This is a general explanation. Every body finds it convenient to explain away things with these stereotypes, and in that process we will loose an important understanding of the real reason why we are disagreeing.

As found in the literature and responses by respondents, women are no less capable then men to act out leadership roles. Too often the notions of leadership and gender are defined and measured in light of one another. The notion of leadership should stand strongly on its own. The leader should not be thought of as a man leader or a woman leader. Dr. Iman pointes out:

For me a leadership position, which means a high position, definitely you have acquired it because of your capabilities. It is not because of any other reason. When I am a leader I don't feel that I am a male or female I deal with the brains and I deal with my responsibilities and I use all the skills and managerial capabilities that I have ... it is not a matter of that I try to loose my

identity. I still can have my feminine identity and still be a very successful leader.

Up until this point, regardless of the cultural difference, most comments made by respondents seemed to generically confirm ideas and discussions covered in the literature review. Nonetheless, the concept of the 'glass ceiling' seemed to be a very foreign one to most respondents that needed further explanation. The case being the following: **a.** *Saudi is essentially a gender segregated society.* **b.** *On one hand all major decision making positions in Saudi are held by men* **c.** *and on the other hand women obviously do hold the highest position in their sphere, yet ultimately have to report to a men's wing or superior,* presented a number of variables that did not seem to coincide. All agreed that there was some form of barrier; the disagreement came in when attempting to define the barrier as a 'glass ceiling'. Perhaps the confusion stemmed from the term being derived from societies where men and women work side by side. At some point in their career ladder the women stops' moving up the hierarchy of achievement and in frustration watches her male counter part ascend. The following quote eloquently highlights these main points of differences. Dr. Alia further exchanges the term 'glass ceiling' for 'iron curtain' which she believes has more meaning in the Saudi culture. She further advises us about casually adopting western terms without fully understanding them. Although the quote is lengthy it deserves to be quoted in full.

But coming back to the situation here in this part of the world I don't see the glass ceiling per say working in the same way over here simply because the two spheres for men and women are segregated. We don't work shoulder to shoulder with men doing the same jobs, getting the male colleague promoted and the female colleague is not promoted. So in our relatively segregated environment we are not competing with our male colleague, we are competing with our female colleague. So this concept of glass ceiling in terms with competition with our colleague does not exist. However, that is, in a sense I see more what you may call an *iron curtain* ...So this iron curtain divides us

side ways, you can become the top administrator of a women institution, so where is the glass ceiling? ... The term glass ceiling has a different meaning in the western context and it could have different meanings here in Saudi Arabia. But of course it is known that top positions are not available to women, but that is with most Islamic societies a very controversial issue like can women lead a nation and government. So that is a different issues and a different discussion all together ...Iron curtain more then glass ceiling. It would have much more meaning over here.

Just as this paper began by adopting an Islamic perspective of leadership and humanity as vicegerent or representatives on earth so here regarding the issue of power, respondents have turned to an Islamic perspective. Respondents explained that Islamically, there is no such thing as ultimate power. Ultimate power belongs to God. Even the leader has some one to answer to. This idea brings one to a state of humbleness, humility and provides the holder of power with a sense of their humanity and its limits. Dr. Alia offered a delightful proverb - literally translated from Arabic to English- summing up this point:

A person is not a human being or cultured if in a state of luxury he does not remember God and in a state of power he does not fear God.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

The motivation and desire to undertake this case study resulted from two main factors. Firstly, I have lived with Al Nour College and experienced its difficulties its joyfulness and distress both as a student and as a faculty member and have grown attached to this institute. It is the beginning of change that I aspire to be part of. Secondly, since Al Nour's very beginning it has seen too many changes and inconsistency. Changes in terms of board members, deans, faculty and staffs and policies. I believe that this research could be an initiative to begin active research that would lend some insight into the reasons for such fluctuations. The ultimate aim of the study is to question the relationship between the leadership roles and styles in influencing the culture of the college. Is there a relation? Is there tension in this relation? Is one antagonistic to the other?

Leadership, being such a crucial element, I assumed would be a good place to begin, since it is the main dictator of the college's culture. Two main issues were significant when analyzing leadership:

- Gender: Al Nour College is an all female college. Therefore I had to look at leadership in terms of women, their unique styles, experiences, challenges etc. Hence, the issue of gender dominated the focus of the paper.
- The place: Examining the issue of leadership and women in a Middle Eastern context is somewhat different from examining it in a Western context. Traditions, religion, values etc. all feed into how society view women in leadership posts and how these women view themselves.

This study began by providing a background about Al Nour College including its date of establishment, mission statement, objectives and ambitions. The idea of leadership was then presented. Acknowledging its vastness, a range of authors attempt to better understand leadership. This is done either by adopting a problem solving approach

and creating frame works or a more analytical and critical approach by analyzing it 'in relation to the wider social and political context within which it does its work' (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003: 161).

Once the background has been set leadership and gender is introduced. A range of stresses and stressors are analyzed. The issues of women re-defining their roles and their identity, power relations and struggles, and constructed barrier are examined. The interplay of these issues is brought forth. Language being the medium by which knowledge is transformed seems to have been controlled by those few in places of power. This draws our attention to stereotypes about women being less capable. The existence of an abundant of stereotypes and how to overcome them are questioned. Or the criteria drawn out on who should or should not be in leadership posts or beyond the "glass ceiling".

The Saudi culture is then adopted. The rapid and active changes taking place now in various sectors of the work force for women in leadership positions in Saudi are illustrated. News paper articles about women in Saudi are analyzed. This is done in order that the reader gains a sense of what is real from that which is stereotypical. Furthermore, in this chapter I attempt to adopt a realistic approach on three grounds. Firstly, life in Saudi for women in the past and presently. Secondly, women in the work force are in the process of gaining societies confidence. Thirdly, the fact of Saudi being a segregated society plays an important role in the measure of power women have and can or can not execute. Segregation, many times is frowned upon. However it can act as an advancement for women, leading to different patterns of leadership.

Finally analyzing the data collected from the interviews two key themes have come about. Firstly, leadership at an individual level is examined. Leadership roles and styles according to respondents are put forth. The balance, if there is one, these women strive to achieve between their professional life and personal life and leadership in the gendered context of women is looked at. Secondly, leadership at an organizational level is also examined. In light of my observation, the interviews conducted, and my personal

experience as an insider, data seem to suggest that the interplay of Handy's (1993) *role culture* and *task culture* describes Al Nour College most appropriately. A tension between the two themes has been identified. Reasons for these tensions could be as a result of various factors. For example, should the study have included lower ranking personals in the college to gain more insight on the culture of the college? It is the faculty, staff and students who are usually able to identify the culture experienced in the college more directly. What the leader believe she/he is doing, what they aspire to do and what is being done are three segmented activities. Each having its own consequences and results. Another probable reason for this tension in the relationship between the two that could be put forth is the lack of professional development, training and enhancement of those in leadership posts, as various respondents stated. Hence, the inconsistency and incoherence between the leadership styles and the culture of the college. More than gender that influenced the state of leadership for leaders in Al Nour College seemed to be these women's professionalizim.

Out of the many variables these leaders struggled with, surprisingly enough, gender seemed to be at the bottom of the list, most probably because they are operating in a segregated society. They considered them selves, first intelligent and intellectual women in the field. They wanted to be addressed as so. These women were struggling to bring about change. Change that is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Change that does not contrast the religion and tradition of the place but addresses it with respect. The best way to bring about change, in my opinion, is through developing a professional development network for women in leadership posts in Saudi. Such a network would work to provide these women with the latest knowledge, advancement, strategies, frameworks, skills and methods that is culture sensitive and relevant to their unique environment. As one of the women stated in Bennett's article: "we need as a nation to make changes at our own pace and within our own system of beliefs" (Bennett, 2004: 4).



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[www.alnour.edu.se](http://www.alnour.edu.se) (the name of the web site has been altered for reasons of confidentiality)

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## Appendix 1

The following synopsis was presented upon Al Nour College's request to abide by the protocol of the college to safeguard its members and the information released. The synopsis was to provide the college with the range of ideas I intended to explore.

Date: March 10, 2004  
From: Sharia Walker  
Program: MA in Education Management

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to begin by extending my deepest gratitude to those who have made it possible for me to be in London, doing what I love to do best, research. I have only now learned the value of accurate, objective, and detailed researches, that tackle grave matters that pose *real* problems, and difficulties in our every day lives.

A brief idea of my dissertation is *assessing differences in women's leadership roles and its implication on the culture Al Nour Collee, in Saudi Arabia.*

I am planning to compare various women in leadership senior positions in order to understand the implications of their performance on the culture of the college and the lessons that can be learnt from applying varying styles of management.

To achieve this, I plan to interview board members, acting deans, vice dean of academic affairs, director of general education and heads of department,

In order to do this research I would need Al Nour's full support and assistance. I am aware of the sensitivity of this topic; nevertheless, I am confident in that if the topic is handled with truthful intentions, the study will, undoubtedly, be for the betterment of the college, and its leadership roles. In addition it will give us insight into issues that may have been considered trivial and therefore overlooked, ignored or neglected throughout Al Nour's life. I recall board members comforting student government's criticism, objections and worries about Al Nour's future by stating that "these are growing pains, the college is undergoing." I believe that for us to overcome these "growing pains" more active research must go into Al Nour's to further develop it into a strong University for higher education.

I request of you to provide me with the needed interviews required for carrying out this research. I am prepared to sign papers of confidentiality prior to any interview.

A copy of my dissertation will be submitted to Al Nour College once it is completed.

Sincerely,

Sharia Walker

## Appendix 2

The following questions was the framework of the semi structured interview for the 4 female in leadership posts in Al Nour College I interviewed.

### Interview Question for Female in Leadership Posts

1. How would you in general **define** :
  - “Leadership”
  - In specific as a *women in Saudi* how would define each of the two
  - From your experiences in a management position what do you believe are some **effective management style**
  - What in your opinion are some of the most central **qualities for a leader**
  - Do you see your managerial style as more of a facilitator or a dictator, explain?
  
2. As a women in such a challenging position how do you deal with achieving a **balance** between:
  - Your professional life, career and ambitions
  - Your personal life, in terms of running a home as a mother and wife
  - Do you feel that in any ways heading a college, a department etc. has deprived you from certain aspects of your personal life? Spending time with your children, family and love ones?
  
3. Would you agree that **men and women lead in different** ways (**style difference**)?
  - If so, what would be more of a male style of leading,
  - A female style
  - Do you think there is a style difference between female and male in senior positions?
  - In your opinion is the role of a leadership and senior positions, in general, fundamentally “gendered” or is it neutral but just has more men in it.
  - It is said that women who undertake the role of leaders, traditionally a male dominant role, unconsciously believe it imperative to adopt the masculine ways of leading, and therefore loose their identity, how would you comment to this statement.
  - How does your Identity influence your leadership style
  
4. The situation being that you were/are just one female dean/head of department that had to face 10 male board member:
  - Do you feel that you ever encountered any type of discrimination as a woman
  - Or external socially constructed obstacles

- How understanding/accepting are the board members in allowing you as a female to practice your “feminine” management style
5. How would you comment on :
    - What is commonly referred to as the “glass ceiling”
    - Do you believe in it
    - How could one by-pass it
    - Would you say it is a socially constructed term and that women management may need re-defining
  6. How critical do you believe leadership is to the effectiveness of an educational organization?
  7. **Power** struggle:
    - Who holds final word for decision making
    - How are decisions made in your institution? What is your role?
    - Briefly describe your job, saying what issues of power are in it for you (i.e. your own power / lack of power; structural power. Do you believe you have any real power in your job?)
    - How do you see yourself as able to effect change? How does the structure of the institution affect this? Are there contradiction?
    - What in your opinion are the most crucial elements to keep in mind for someone in a position of power.
  8. Where would you like to go?
    - Where do you see the future
    - How do you see the future
  9. Any thing you would like to add that we have not mentioned?



### Appendix 3

The following questions was the framework of the semi structured interview for the only board member of Al Nour College that I was able to interview.

#### Interview Question for Male Board Members

10. How would you in general **define** :
  - “Leadership”
  - What in your opinion are some of the most central **qualities for a leader**
  - Do you see your managerial style as more of a facilitator or a dictator, explain?
  
11. Would you agree that **men and women lead in different** ways (**style difference**)?
  - If so, what would be more of a male style of leading,
  - A female style
  - Do you think there is a style difference between female and male in senior positions?
  - In your opinion is the role of a leadership and senior positions, in general, fundamentally “gendered” or is it neutral but just has more men in it.
  - It is said that women who undertake the role of leaders, traditionally a male dominant role, unconsciously believe it imperative to adopt the masculine ways of leading, and therefore lose their identity, how would you comment to this statement.
  - How does your Identity influence your leadership style
  
12. How would you comment on :
  - What is commonly referred to as the “glass ceiling”
  - Do you believe in it
  - How could one by-pass it
  - Would you say it is a socially constructed term and that women management may need re-defining
  
13. How critical do you believe leadership is to the effectiveness of an educational organization?
  
14. **Power** struggle:
  - Who holds final word for decision making
  - How are decisions made in your institution? What is your role?

- Briefly describe your job, saying what issues of power are in it for you (i.e. your own power / lack of power; structural power. Do you believe you have any real power in your job?)
- How do you see yourself as able to effect change? How does the structure of the institution affect this? Are there contradiction?
- What in your opinion are the most crucial elements to keep in mind for someone in a position of power.