

Fear, Family, Mobility, and Freedom:  
A Case Study of Saudi Women Entrepreneurs

Sara A. Alshareef

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Fear, Family, Mobility, and Freedom:  
A Case Study of Saudi Women Entrepreneurs

By  
Sara A. Alshareef

ID:100651555

At:  
Royal Holloway University of London;  
School of Management

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## **Abstract**

The social production of ‘Saudi women’ as a particular category makes this study a unique one. This research project enters the world of Saudi women entrepreneurs and explores what they have to consider when operating a business in Saudi Arabia (SA). First of all, this thesis aims to understand women’s perception and experience of the social conditions (e.g. gender and women’s social networks, the need for family permission, and mobility constraints on women) when operating in the context of a patriarchal society. Second, it explores women’s coping strategies with respect to these social conditions. Third, this study considers a sample of Saudi women entrepreneurs operating outside SA to explore how women’s preferences are subject to their geographical locations. In other words, studying both local Saudi women entrepreneurs and transnational Saudi women entrepreneurs provides new empirical and comparative findings about the role of context on women entrepreneurs’ ability to engage in business-related activities.

The current study is exploratory in nature and employs semi-structured interviews with 25 Saudi women entrepreneurs (some with proximity to Saudi social conditions and others at a distance from Saudi social conditions). While drawing on a constructivist-interpretivist philosophical approach, the data is inductively analysed using thematic analysis, individual case analysis and template analysis.

The results of this study suggest that contextual factors such as family, mobility and social networks are complex and interact with one another in particular ways. Therefore, the study contributes to new knowledge in understanding how women do business in the context of an extremely patriarchal society.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

An ongoing question for sociology is how people make sense of the world in which they live. Possible ways of explaining this are through the notion of constraints people face, the choices they make, and the strategies they employ to cope with situations. It should be clear that considering the context within which people reside is crucial. Many studies have focused on women entrepreneurship without focusing on the context including its social, institutional and spatial condition. Most of entrepreneurship studies have been conducted in western contexts, while few studies examined entrepreneurship (and relevant theories) in Middle Eastern context such as Saudi Arabia (hereafter SA). Furthermore, a number of studies have investigated the social constraints entrepreneurs face, but few were found to have considered entrepreneurs' coping strategies and preferences. This study identifies a research gap. Therefore, it aims to provide an understanding of the ways in which Saudi women start a business with respect to their contextual condition (e.g. gender segregation, family permission and mobility conditions). It also seeks to address the factors that influence women's decisions to engage in business-related activities as well as the coping mechanisms they employ to deal with their context. In other words, the current study is interested in women entrepreneurs because they are often operate in line with their social and contextual structures. Therefore, this study is interested in exploring women's decisions, actions and constraints when it comes to mobility for social activities (meeting clients).

The introductory chapter highlights the thesis's general review by addressing the research's conceptual framework, situating the research within the existing

literature; it identifies the research gap by addressing the research rationale, and then highlights the research aims and contributions. The main research question is then outlined; finally, the thesis structure is set out.

### 1.1 Rationale for the current research

A number of previous studies have considered the constraints associated with Saudi women entrepreneurs operating in SA, but these studies were narrow in focus. These studies tend to briefly address women's constraints (e.g. mobility, family and gender segregation), but failed to analyse women's accounts and the ways in which women work around these constraints (Zamberi Ahmad, 2011; Alessa, 2013). Therefore, the current research is crucial because it adopts an interdisciplinary approach that crosses the traditional boundaries between disciplines and thoughts and brings together different literature. In relation to the context of the current research, previous studies shed light on the constraints Saudi women entrepreneurs face (e.g. Zamberi Ahmad, 2011; Basaffar, 2012; Alessa, 2013; Kalafatoglu and Mendoza, 2017), but without focusing on the personal aspect of an entrepreneur (Jennings, Perren and Carter, 2005, p.147). The present study takes a step forward by considering capability approach in the sense that it seeks to examine the context from the perspective of young Saudi women entrepreneurs, because the social production of 'Saudi women' as a category makes SA an extreme and unique context where women are faced with constraints that exist only in SA and are absent in other contexts. Therefore, the current study looks at the regulations which constrain women and explores the intervening factors that moderate these constraints – in particular types of social network, family, and mobility conditions.

It should be clear that capability approach focuses on the individual and what he/she is able to do and be (Sen, 1993). According to Gries and Naude (2011) capability approach enables the conceptualisation of entrepreneurship in development. This approach is useful to the current study as it reveals what women are able/ unable to do in the pursuit of entrepreneurship. For entrepreneurs' capability to be understood within the framework of the CA, it would need to focus on the freedom individuals have when making decision to engage in business activities and the factors that influence their decisions.

Therefore, introducing capability approach to the current study and when studying entrepreneurship will reveal the importance of defining entrepreneurs' freedoms and capabilities in the business domain. It will also explore the role of the social and contextual condition (the context within which entrepreneurs' operate) in defining and conceptualizing entrepreneurs' capability.

In the context of the current study, Saudi women are found to operate in a patriarchal society: therefore, their autonomy is subject to (1) gender segregation that is reinforced in the socio-spatial structure of the society; (2) the policy that places women under a male-guardianship system; and (3) the policy that bans women from having independent mobility (Doumato, 2003; 2007; 2010). With this in mind, the contextual condition is restricted for women in Saudi; therefore, doing this research with respect to this context is a good place to understand how women entrepreneurs manage to start a business in the light of these conditions.

On this note, this study is important because it also explores how women negotiate contextual conditions when starting a business. It should be clear, however, that the current study does not only seek to consider the forces that drive, the constraints that

surround, and the opportunities that emerge from the context within which the entrepreneurs operate, but also gives attention to the ways in which entrepreneurs work around the constraints that exist in their context. This is achieved through including a sample of Saudi women entrepreneurs operating in Saudi (local Saudi entrepreneurs) and Saudi women operating outside SA (transnational Saudi entrepreneurs). In other words, the current research considers exploring individuals' actions and behaviour in relation to proximity to and distance from strict social conditions, because this is largely absent from the research arena and from academic literature.

At a personal level, when I was a child my family moved back from the United States to Saudi, where I was alert to the differences between here and there. Later in life, I start questioning things, but it seemed that norms was the answer as this is how things are, were, and may continue to be. So I found myself to have no choice but to adapt. Based on my personal life experience and my curiosity, I arrived at this topic.

## 1.2 Conceptual framework

Zamberi Ahmad (2011, pp.124) points out that 'Saudi women are not often permitted to move around freely in some families; from early childhood, they are not allowed to go out of their houses or to mix with males independently.' The current research enters the world of women entrepreneurs and explores what they have to consider when operating a business in their society. The argument is that the Saudi context is a unique case when it comes to women in general and women entrepreneurs in particular. Building upon this, the current research uses the capability approach as a framework, which is mainly about individuals' freedom to achieve functioning (Alkire, 2005, p.1). The capability approach is used in the

context of this study to understand the ways in which mobility, family and gender (social conditions for women in Saudi) influence women entrepreneurs' capability to engage in business-related activities. Capabilities are defined as a 'person's ability to achieve a given functioning' (Alkire, 2005, p.1) or 'to achieve various valuable functionings' (Sen, 1993, p.30). According to Nordbakke (2013, p.168), '[t]he distinction between functionings and capabilities can best be illustrated by the difference between *the choices a person has made* and *the opportunities that the person has for making a choice and for taking a specific action*'. In the current study, for entrepreneurs' capability to be understood within the framework of the CA, it would need to focus on the freedom individuals have to making decision to engage in business activities in the context within which they operate.

First, with the capability approach in mind, it is crucial to examine women's perceptions and the decision to engage in business-related activities in a context that bans women from driving. Based on previous work, the term 'mobility' is engendered from geographical studies and focuses on the physical movement of people (Cresswell, 2011). Mobility is crucial, as this study argues that 'the more you move, travel around, meeting others and making sustainable contacts, the more successful you can reasonably hope to become, in both professional and personal terms' (Elliott and Urry, 2010, p.9). When mobility is limited for a particular social group (women), it may result in what Kenyon et al. (2002, p.10) refer to as mobility-social exclusion, which means 'the process by which people are prevented from participating in the economic, political and social life of the community because of reduced accessibility to opportunities, services and social networks, due in whole or in part to insufficient mobility in a society'. It is possible to argue, that the ban on

women to independently drive is considered equivalent to mobility-social exclusion. With this in mind, this study seeks to understand how women entrepreneurs arrange and manage their business-related travel and seeks to explore the factors that constrain their mobility as well as their strategies (opportunities for mobility) in their urban setting (when travelling locally).

Second, although entrepreneurs have many mechanisms to identify opportunities, identifying and bringing opportunities through social networks is often a fruitful one. With respect to the context of the present study, the interaction of women in Saudi tends to be with other women. This could be because gender segregation is grounded in Saudi society (Le Renard, 2014). However, the debate around social networks in entrepreneurship circles around the importance of network ties when starting a business (Hoang and Antoncic, 2003; Evald et al., 2006). Kadushin (2004) claims that social actors are individual persons and their network ties are based on kinship, friendship, conversation, affection or anything that is derived from personal relationships. To this end, the strength of network ties is crucial to understand entrepreneurs' social networks Granovetter (1973, 1983). The current study considers that prior business contacts are considered strong ties, while newly established contacts are considered weak ties (Larson and Starr, 1993). According to Syed and Ozbiligin (2009), the meaning of social networks rests on individuals' contextual situations. With this in mind, it is crucial for this thesis to examine how the strength of network ties influences women entrepreneurs' decisions to engage in business-related activities.

Third, because the context of women entrepreneurs matters, family plays a crucial

role in women's businesses. For instance, Le Renard (2014) found that great obstacles to Saudi women were engendered from the restrictions imposed by the nuclear family. The family aspect is unique in the Saudi context, because women are obliged to obtain a male-guardian's permission/approval in almost every aspect of their lives. Sen (1990; 1999) argues that the institution of the family influences women's capability. Individuals are not atomized when they decide to start a business, but they 'consult and are subtly influenced by significant others in their environment' (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986, p.6). In the realm of entrepreneurship, Aldrich and Cliff (2003) as well as Jennings and McDougald (2007) argue that entrepreneurs' personal lives – that is, the family – are not separate entities but are intertwined with entrepreneurs' business endeavours. Other studies have discussed the implication family has on entrepreneurs' business development (Pavlovskaya, 2004). Loscocco and Leicht (1993, p.886) argue that 'researchers should work to specify how family roles limit or enhance women's [...] small business success'. Aldrich and Cliff (2003, p. 547) suggest 'that researchers need to include family dimensions in their conceptualizing and modelling, their sampling and analyzing, and their interpretations and implications'. Therefore, this study examines women's perception of the family and its impact on their decisions to engage in activities such as mobility and social networks.

It has been argued that entrepreneurship is dependent upon the actions of an individual – that is, structured with respect to an individual's environment (Schoonhoven and Romanelli, 2001). As Welter (2011) states, considering the context can contribute to understanding the opportunities as well as the boundaries for entrepreneurs. Therefore, the final argument the present research puts forward is

that, because entrepreneurship happens in a specific geographical location (Johannisson et al., 2002), the contextual condition of that location can influence women's actions and behaviour. 'Where' entrepreneurs operate reveal aspects that ties to the country's political system and regulations, as well as the social, spatial and institutional environments. It should be clear that social conditions where women are subject to dependent mobility, gender segregation and male-guardian permission are considered strict social and contextual conditions. These conditions are not as strict when Saudi women live abroad (lenient social and cultural conditions). Thornton and Flynn (2003) argue that geography is intertwined with entrepreneurship in a complex way. Therefore, the current study includes a sample of transnational Saudi women entrepreneurs, as they are 'individuals who deal with two different socially embedded environments' (Azmat, 2010, p.3). Transnational entrepreneurs (TEs) demonstrate the social behaviour of individuals when they have to pay close attention to two different institutional environments (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). This study considers the account of Saudi women's actions and behaviour in two different contexts (in SA and outside SA), seeking to explore women's coping strategies and preferences in relation to their geographical location (proximity versus distance). A coping strategy is defined as 'a cognitive response that reduces or removes the negative effects of stress' (Mena et al., 1987, pp.208-9), whereas preferences 'are entities that, together with beliefs, go to explain choices' (Nussbaum, 2001, p.121). Therefore, this study compares Saudi women's actions when in proximity to strict social conditions (home country) with their actions when distance from strict social conditions (host country), in order to understand and conceptualize the role of context in relation to women's preferences.

### 1.3 Research question

The main research question asks: how do the social conditions of mobility, social network and family influence women entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities? This question is divided into sub-questions:

A. Proximity to the home country:

1. How do network ties, family rules and mobility conditions influence entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities?

B. Proximity to and distance from the home country (geographical location):

2. How are network ties, family rules, and mobility conditions conceptualized and influenced by the context within which women entrepreneurs operate?

3. How does entrepreneurs' geographical location to/from the social conditions shape women's coping strategies and preferences?

### 1.4 Thesis aims and contribution to knowledge

This research adopts a sociological approach; it enters the world of Saudi women entrepreneurs to explore what Saudi women have to consider when operating in SA and what they consider when operating outside this context. This thesis seeks to construct a model that explains how the contextual condition influences, defines and constructs entrepreneurs' choices and ability to engage in business-related activities.

The thesis has several aims that have evolved over the course of the research:

1. To elaborate our understanding of women's choices to engage in business-related activities with regard to the contextual condition. In particular:

I. To examine social activities, family rules, and mobility conditions from the perspective of Saudi women entrepreneurs, with an emphasis on the

meaning they give to these aspects with respect to the geographical location within which they are perceived.

- II. To explore and examine the ways in which women's actions and decisions reflect their coping strategies and preferences, which may be subject to their geographical location (e.g. distance from and proximity to contextual and social institutions).

With these aims in mind, this study contributes to the synthesis of conceptual frameworks, offering a new perspective on the sociology of women entrepreneurs through the use of the capability approach. This is with the aim of providing knowledge of the relationship between agency and structure in entrepreneurship research.

### 1.5 Research structure

The current research aims to capture women entrepreneurs' perceptions and experience of the context by looking at four major streams. The first of these is 'the social context', which pertains to women entrepreneurs' gender as a form of social network and network ties when meeting clients and suppliers. The second stream places emphasis on 'the family as a social institution', where family is not separated from but rather integrated with a woman's decision to engage in business-related activities. The third stream is 'the spatial context' that reflects an individual's ability to travel that counts as capability and opportunities for mobility. The fourth stream focuses on conceptualizing 'adaptive preferences' with respect to women's geographical location (home country vs. host country). Building upon this, the structure of the thesis can be briefly summarized as follows:

This introductory chapter, chapter 1, focuses on the rationale, contribution and objectives of the study, and indicates the reason behind the topic chosen with the hope of investigating and arriving at a thorough understanding of women entrepreneurs in the context of patriarchal society.

Chapter 2 explains the context of Saudi Arabia and the social condition of Saudi women. A brief background of the state policy is given, this with the aim to link the context with existing theories and literature.

Chapter 3 provides a literature review on different theories from different disciplines to reflect upon the context of the current research. It highlights the literature on the capability approach and links it with entrepreneurship context. The chapter also addresses the literature on network ties, and then moves to the literature on family-work interference. These theories aim to provide a framework for the current research. The chapter later addresses the geographical context by shedding light on the definition of transnational entrepreneurs (TEs), while addressing the literature on coping strategies and adaptive preferences through the lens of capability approach.

Chapter 4 describes the methodological approach used in this research, and the study participants. The chapter aims to demonstrate the appropriateness and value of using particular methods to answer the research questions. This includes individual case studies and in-depth interviews, involving Saudi women starting a business in SA and Saudi women starting a business outside the country, in order to understand their perceptions and experience of the contextual condition within which they

operate.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 report the research findings. Chapter 5 provides a description of women's social networks when engaging in business-related activities. The participants of the current study perceived fear to be associated with doing business with weak ties, specifically with the opposite sex. An extended description of fear moved from one's internal negotiation of fear to family fear. The chapter highlights the aspects where women exhibit fear and their coping strategies. This leads to chapter 6, which presents women's discussions with family to obtain family permission, bringing in cases where family-to-work conflict emerges as reported by the participants. The chapter also highlights women's approach and coping strategies regarding family permission. Chapter 7 addresses women entrepreneurs' spatial mobility from the perspective of the individual owner-manager, with an emphasis on mobility conditions in the context of a patriarchal society. It also serves as a primary step to explore the factors that influence women's arrangements for mobility as well as women's spatial strategies in order to overcome mobility constraints when proximity to the context (SA). It should be noted that chapter 5, 6, and 7 address women's coping strategies along its discussion. Chapter 8 compares and contrasts women's geographical location in terms of proximity to and distance from strict and tight social conditions of local, transnational and returnee entrepreneurs (emerged from the data) to understand their preferences with respect to their geographical location.

Chapter 9 summarizes and discusses the research findings and highlights the contribution this research has made. It also includes concluding remarks and

discusses the limitations of the research as well as making recommendations for further studies.

## CHAPTER 2. THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: WOMEN'S CONTEXTUAL CONDITION IN SAUDI ARABIA (SA)

This section provides a brief background of the Saudi context, by explaining the state policy on women. It then addresses the environment of Saudi women entrepreneurs, and indicates, to date, the socio-cultural and socio-spatial aspects that influence Saudi women in SA. This chapter is written with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of the main aspects that constitute the context of Saudi women.

### 2.1 Background of Saudi Arabia

The Al-Saud family has ruled SA since 1744. The government is regulated under the religious leader Mohammed Abdul Wahhab, with his strong promotion of Islamic ideas under principles claimed as being found in the Quran (Alshaya, 2005; Lacey, 2010). Under the sector of Sunni Islam, Mohammed Abdul Wahhab was in charge of permeating Saudi culture with the Islamic rules of '*Halal*' – adherence to Islamic law – and '*Haram*' – that which is forbidden. These rules are reinforced by the religious police '*Mutawwa*' who, on behalf of the state, enforce Islamic law (MacFarquhar, 2008, SIGI, n,d). The *Mutawwa* usually implement a number of policies from a religious perspective in the society. SA is considered the most conservative country in the Arab and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (Lobo and Elaluf-Calderwood, 2012), because the constant argument rests on the claim that the Saudi regime is based on Islamic rules. Women as a social group were found to be used as a symbolic gesture to confirm the state's submission to Islamic rules (Yamani, 2000). Such rules become part of the policies and the policies become part of these rules (Lacey, 2010). However, the current research argues that

the problem with Saudi policies is the huge mixture between religion and tradition, where most social norms and traditions are confused with religion. Yamani and Allen (1996, p.19) claim that ‘it is not so much Islam that determines the status of women but other political [...] and social issues that are merged with Islamic interpretation’. With this argument in mind, the issue surrounding women stems from cultural norms and traditions (Basaffar, 2012) and not from Islamic principles. As Dahlan (1990, p.169) states, ‘tradition still plays a major role in restricting and protecting women in the public interest’. Therefore, the basis of this research follows Dahlan’s (1990, p.169) argument, where he asserts:

*At any rate, distinction should be made between religion and tradition. Tradition should be respected when it conforms to religion. If not, as in the case of some societal behavior, then tradition must be evaluated and reconsidered.*

For example, Saudi women were prohibited from participating in the political system; they were not allowed to vote until 2011 when King Abdullah made an announcement and ‘adjusted the rules’ on the right for women to participate in the political sphere. This gave women the first-ever opportunity to vote in municipal elections. This example confirms that religion has been confused with tradition, which alludes to the point that many of the policies regarding women’s position and condition in Saudi society are traditional and cultural ones.

## 2.2 Female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia

To keep the argument focused, it should be clear that this research sheds light on the social conditions of Saudi women entrepreneurs. The phenomenon of Saudi women owning businesses began to appear in the 1980s, when the majority of such businesses served other women, in the fashion industry, beauty salons, sports centres and so on (Al-Rasheed, 2013). This included photography, retail industries, and services such as consulting and event management. Sadi and Al-Ghazali (2010) revealed that in 2005 there were 23,000 women conducting businesses in SA. This study indicated that 72.6 % of registered Saudi female-owned businesses operate outside the home and 92 % have paid employees. One of the challenges for the present research was to find updated statistical data and percentages specifically of Saudi women entrepreneurs and aspects related to their business sectors, business type, size and so on.

With regard to Saudi women's position in SA, there have been advances in the state policy towards women entrepreneurs, in the removal of the '*wakil*' (legal male representative). In the past, women needed a male representative or agent (a *wakil*) to do official paper work inside government departments that were purely patriarchal and which women were prohibited from accessing. This policy was removed as a result of lobbying undertaken by a number of Saudi women entrepreneurs in 'Khadija bint Khuwailid Businesswomen's Centre', where the state removed the need for a '*wakil*' by introducing female sections into these government departments, which allowed women to register a business easily. However, there are a number of contextual constraints that still exist in Saudi and that limit women's day-to-day activities; these constraints and their impact on women entrepreneurs' business practices have not been examined in previous research.

### 2.3 Saudi women and the male-guardianship system

Family ideology tends to strengthen structural constraints. Therefore, families may impose or eliminate societal constraints applied towards women. In relation to the present study, the family in such a context plays a crucial role in women's lives (Doumato, 1992). The family is patriarchal in SA and the male guardian, whether a father, brother, husband or son, has the ultimate power by law (Pharaon, 2004). It is possible to claim that research into women's perceptions of the institution of the family will allow for a better understanding of female entrepreneurship, because the family is important in the current research where Saudi women are trapped within family rules in very particular ways. Le Renard (2014) addresses in her findings the great obstacles to Saudi women engendered by the restrictions imposed by the nuclear family. The definition of the family in such contexts has been shaped by the centralization of the state, the family being similar to the political organization upon which Saudi society is founded (Le Renard, 2014). Until now, SA has supported the idea of the 'nuclear' family where a male guardian is the closest male relative that is responsible for a woman and proves her citizenship.

Le Renard (2008, p. 629) writes of the 'often repeated principle' that 'family is the heart of Saudi society'. This means that the family acts as an intermediary between state institutions and Saudi women. Although the law requires women to have a male guardian when travelling abroad, this law does not apply when it comes to urban mobility. Gaining permission for the latter is informal and part of the household structure and norms, and is similar to the law that demands women should gain written approval when travelling abroad (see table 2). This could leave ample room for understanding the family's role on women's decisions and day-to-day activities.

Table 1: The implication of family on Saudi women entrepreneurs

Family permission (Social norms/ Family policy)	→	Urban mobility	(No law, <i>but</i> subject to family rules and ideology)
	→	Gender segregation	(Implicit law <i>and</i> subject to family rules and ideology)
Male-guardianship system (The state policy)	→	International travel	(Explicit law, <i>therefore</i> , subject to Male-guardian permission)

This makes women subject to family ideology where women should ‘silently accept their fate [or if possible] engage reluctantly in hard bargaining’ (Peter, 2003, p.19). Alexander (2005) claims that the embedded culture tends to strengthen structural constraints, which are usually strengthened by a family’s ideology. For instance, the family raises female members to be shy and obedient (Alshaya, 2005), whereas men are raised to be authoritarian, in power, and to make decisions (Worell, 2001). What makes the present study unique is that it focuses on the obligation for women to obtain a male-guardian permission/approval in almost every aspect of their lives, whether formally or informally. For example, there is an explicit policy that requires women to obtain written permission from their male guardian when travelling abroad, seeking education,<sup>1</sup> starting a job, getting married, or having surgery (Shmuluvitz, 2011). Women ‘are not allowed to travel abroad by airplane without the express permission of a male guardian’ (Doumato, 2007, p.6); therefore, they rely on male-guardian permission to travel (Lobo and Elaluf-Calderwood, 2012). This permission nowadays takes the form of an electronic signature, whereby the

<sup>1</sup> ‘Policy of Teaching:’ article 155<sup>th</sup> ‘Mixing between boys and girls is forbidden at every educational stage, except for day nurseries and kindergartens.’ (Le Renard, 2008, p. 614)

male guardian declares his permission for his female counterpart to travel. Such policy is implicitly practised in the household, when women seek to obtain a verbal permission or consent from the male guardian/parents, especially when going out of the house. This study focuses on the implicit aspect of family permission, which is constructed in the household and subject to family (parents or husband) ideology and belief system. There is a deficit in the literature in terms of studying women in such a context and the way in which family permission (norms) influence and impact women's decisions as to whether to engage in specific business activities. This study treats family permission as part of women's unique social condition where women's businesses can be subject to family members' ideology and rules.

Saudi women contextual condition is in line with the concept of power distance discussed by Hofstede (1984). Power Distance explains the way in which power is distributed in a society and where the less powerful individuals' accept the fact that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1984). Hofstede (1984, p.83) claims that "large power distance societies accepts a hierarchal order in which everybody has a place which needs no further justification." High power distance represents "hierarchy" and low power distance represents "egalitarianism" (Schwartz, 1992). Hofstede (1984) also addresses that in cultures with low power distance, the family encourages independence in their children from an early age onwards. Whereas cultures with high power distance, child-parent relationship is different in the sense that there is devotion to parents from children. Societies with high power distance, there is an expectation of obedience from children that supposed to last for life regardless the child age. It also represents a dependence of children on parents and confirms loyalty and respect that are endorsed by social norms (Hofstede, 1984).

High power distance “hierarchy” is salient when it comes to Saudi women, because women are obliged to obtain family permission regardless their age and marital status. For example, upon women’s mobility and travels (outside of the house activities). Such understanding makes the argument around family permission and women’s mobility overlaps with one another in a particular way in the context of the present research. Zamberi Ahmad (2011, p.124) points out that ‘Saudi women are not often permitted to move around freely in some families; from early childhood, they are not allowed to go out of their houses or to mix with males independently.’ The implication around Saudi women’s mobility outside the house, led this study to look at mobility studies within the framework of capability approach. With this in mind, mobility studies have proved that spatial mobility is strongly related to household arrangements, which can construct individuals’ constraints or opportunities (Kaufmann et al., 2004). Robeyns (2003) and Shin (2011) argue that women are found to be vulnerable members within the household, because family dissolution in some societies can hurt women’s mobility. These lines of arguments demonstrate the necessity for research to understand women’s perceptions and experiences of dealing with family permission in relation to their mobility to engage in business-related activities.

Sen (1990; 1999) argues that the institution of the family influences women’s capability. The family as a fundamental social institution is not separate from but rather linked to the public sphere (Okin 1989), which could be seen as a social constraint (Dyck and Kearns, 2006). In the realm of entrepreneurship research, the family is a crucial component, because individuals are not atomized when they

decide to start a business, but they ‘consult and are subtly influenced by significant others in their environment’ (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986, p. 6). Many studies claim that the family dimension and women entrepreneurs are strongly interrelated (Brush et al., 2009; Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Yamani and Allen, 1996). According to Heck and Trent (1999, p. 209), ‘entrepreneurs are usually family members manoeuvring in concert or disharmony with an array of other family members’. The term ‘family’ usually refers to the nuclear family that comprises a husband, wife, child(ren) (Becker and Becker, 2009; Aldrich and Cliff, 2003) and/or parent(s) and siblings sharing the same household.

Therefore, this study treats the institution of the family and entrepreneurs as integrated rather than separated (e.g. Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Dyer, 2003). This is referred to as the ‘family embeddedness perspective’, which stresses the fact that entrepreneurs’ businesses and families are often intertwined institutions, and cannot be treated as separable entities, because each has an effect on the other (Jennings and McDougald, 2007). Aldrich and Cliff (2003, p.574) note that ‘the family embeddedness perspective on entrepreneurship implies that researchers need to include family dimensions in their conceptualizing and modelling, their sampling and analyzing, and their interpretations and implications’. Previous literature has criticized entrepreneurship research for not considering the influence entrepreneurs’ personal lives have on their business and related endeavours (Allen and Truman, 1992; 1993), including the characteristics of entrepreneurs’ family system (i.e., norms, attitudes, and values) (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). With this in mind, this current study considers entrepreneurs’ personal lives and the impact the family has on entrepreneurs’ engagement in business-related activities.

## 2.4 Women's mobility condition in Saudi Arabia

One of the salient policies in SA consists of the ban on women driving (Basaffar, 2012). Although this study argues that banning women from driving has no evidential backing within the religion of Islam (ibid.), Wahabism with its strict orthodoxy caused this ban (Baki, 2004). This means that women in SA are only able to travel in cars that are driven by a male individual (either a private chauffeur or a male family member). The practice of walking or the use of public transport remains culturally unacceptable (Le Renard, 2014), limited and unavailable. Mobility and travel are constant topics of discussion in SA. The debate on women driving has been taking place since the late 1980s. The justification presented by religious scholars of being against women driving is that it will be a threat to gender roles and a source of dissent (Al Munajjed, 1997). One of the dominant scholars, Inb-Baz, produced the law prohibiting women from driving, justifying his position by stating that driving would decrease 'women's modesty, increase [...] roaming outside the house, rebellion against [women's] families, dissent [and create] freedom to go everywhere for entertainment, great unnecessary expenditure, traffic jams, and increase in road accidents' (Al-Rasheed, 2013, p.130). This justify the fact that 'saudi society is structured in a way that keeps woman within strictly defined limits that make it difficult if not impossible for her to lose her sexual virtue' (Mackey, 2002, p.124). These behaviours are what the state defines as Islamic (Doumato, 1992). This explains the core reason for restricting women's physical movement outside the house. Family honour is directly related to women's chastity, known as *Ird* (Baki, 2004), which makes the restriction on women tight in a way that strongly impacts women's development and advancement on many different levels (ibid.).

Mobility is an argument about possibilities and constraints. Kaufmann et al. (2004) assert that comprehension about the territorial constraints of people's movements, as well as understanding the condition of mobility within a particular regional context, is pivotal. With respect to the context of the present study, Doumato (2010, p.7) stresses that 'freedom of movement for women in SA is limited by overlapping legal constraints and social controls', where women's mobility is not a matter of preference or choice (Dyck and Kearns, 2006), but subject to social norms (Schwanen, 2007).

This can be linked to the work of Cresswell and Uteng (2012) that affirmed that physical mobility could reflect issues of control and restriction of movement. Any deficit in mobility in a context could be a reflection of 'mobility-social exclusion', which means 'the process by which people are prevented from participating in the economic, political and social life of the community because of reduced accessibility to opportunities, services and social networks, due in whole or in part to insufficient mobility in a society' (Kenyon et al., 2002, p.10). The body of literature on social exclusion has focused strongly on mobility in a European setting (Folwell, 1999; Kenyon et al., 2002), where social exclusion has been introduced into transport studies and has been mostly about class, poverty and inequality, reflecting issues of material affluence – the socially excluded are those who lack the material means to participate in society, such as lack of sufficient family expenditure and car ownership (Church et al., 2000). Kenyon et al. (2003) extended this line of work by distinguishing between poverty and inaccessibility to transportation. Poverty is a dimension of social exclusion that reflects material and economic factors (Duffy, 1998) and transportation deficit reflects the lack of access to opportunities and

services (Kenyon et al., 2003). Mobility-social exclusion does not only reflect a lack of income but can be a 'purely non-material deprivation' (Folwell, 1999). This conceptualization of social-mobility exclusion is of interest to the study's context, and yet it shows a unique angle of meaning that alerts us to understand the concept with respect to a different context. Lobo and Elaluf-Calderwood (2012, p. 202) indicate in a study conducted in SA that 'this exploration of a unique context of use is particularly interesting because the majority of Saudis still have large disposable incomes while the rest of the world is largely suffering from weakened economies'. In fact, Saudi women entrepreneurs were reported to be in control of much of the wealth in the country and to have access to informal funding (Parker, 2007), which clearly explains that women's mobility-social exclusion is not necessarily a result of deficit in material means, but could be a result of the policy that bans women from driving, which is the case only in SA.

Le Renard (2014) explains that women in SA are required to protect themselves in many ways when they are moving outside their homes. For example, it is safer to be in a car with tinted windows so other drivers passing by will not be able to see who is sitting behind the driver, allowing women 'to see but not to be seen'. If the car window is not tinted, then a woman is likely to be exposed to other male drivers, which can put her in harm's way. For instance, the beep of a car's horn (by a male youth) notifies the presence of a woman/women in the car. Such a situation can evolve by the male youth driving closer to the woman's car or attracting a number of other drivers to drive around the car a woman is in, which can lead to danger. This shows how the society perceives women's mobility, because it is one of the few chances for young men to meet, see and flirt with women, as a result of the segregation rules imposed on men and women by the state; therefore, women's

experience of mobility can be unpleasant and risky (ibid.). With this in mind, the question of women's mobility may influence women's engagement in business activities.

## 2.5 Gendered places in Saudi Arabia

The argument around women's mobility is related to the socio-spatial structure of the society. The '*place*' of the public sphere is part of the public policy where gender segregation is grounded (Le Renard, 2014). Public places are segregated, blocking women's access to network with potential male contacts (Arebi, 1994; Al-Dabbagh, 2009). There is ongoing debate around gender segregation aimed at avoiding the sexual temptation that may occur in 'mixed-gendered environments' (Basaffar, 2012). The idea of gender segregation stresses the notion of Saudi women being private and 'indoors', while men are considered 'outdoors' and allowed in the public sphere (AlMunajjed, 2009). This makes the society unprepared for dealing with women when they enter the workforce (Thompson, 2017), because Saudi women are seen as introverted and isolated, whereas Saudi men tend to be extroverted and active in the society (AlMunajjed, 2009). This is reinforced by the official policies towards women and the spaces accessible to them, which are structured by members of the religious police, the ministry of labour, the municipality and other entities (Al-Rasheed, 2013). The law written in the 1960s regarding public places stressed the point that mixed spaces are legally forbidden, particularly in employment and education. Furthermore, the spatial structure of restaurants and cafés is divided between the family section (female with male family members) and single section (male only). This shows that the socio-spatial structure

enforces gender-based segregation. The religious police are referred to as ‘the committee for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice’, and their role is to focus on controlling women’s appearance in the public sphere and assuring gender segregation (Basaffar, 2012). This confirms that SA has deeply embedded patriarchal relations that polarize the sexes in ways that conflict with other societies. On the other hand, there are spaces that are designed especially for women, where entry is not allowed to men. On this note, ‘governmental discourses, including laws, measures, and policies, have served to perpetuate and consolidate the principle of sex segregation’ (Le Renard, 2008, p.611). This segregation has led to the production of ‘Saudi women’ as a separate category and a separate social group. Building upon this, the current study seeks to understand women’s perceptions of doing business with a particular gender and to define the meaning of network ties, as the state policy stresses gender segregation in different ways.

## 2.6 Chapter summary

Table 2: The interplay between women's social condition and engagement in business activities

Contextual conditions	Entrepreneurs’ engagement in business-related activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family permission/male-guardian permission</li> <li>- Mobility restriction/the ban on women driving</li> <li>- Gender segregation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility-to-places (urban places, international travel)</li> <li>- Social networks (meeting clients and suppliers)</li> <li>- Doing business with the same sex</li> </ul>

Based on the summary in table 2, this chapter has explained the social condition of women entrepreneurs in SA, which tends to restrict women entrepreneurs on three levels: one is associated with family permission, the second relates to women's mobility, and the third is about women's capacity to interact with the opposite sex in places outside the home. Human Rights Watch, in their 79-page report in 2016 titled 'Boxed In: Women and SA's Male Guardianship System', declares that these aspects are considered the most significant impediment to women's development. Therefore, because the human side interact with the context in which live in, one cannot be free without the other (Hofstede, 1984; 2011). With this in mind, this study seeks to understand women's actions and coping mechanisms with respect to the social and contextual condition described in this chapter.

The next chapter highlights the conceptual framework of the current research.

## CHAPTER 3. A LITERATURE REVIEW ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONTEXT

### 3.1 Introduction

Since the purpose of this research is to expand the knowledge base of women's ways of doing business in a particular context, existing theories will be described as a foundation to shape this research. This thesis uses capability approach as a framework and applies it to the context of Saudi women entrepreneurs. The thesis mainly introduces the literature on entrepreneurship, mobility, social networks and family. The literature is interdisciplinary in the sense that it links different bodies of research with the context and phenomenon being under studied.

### 3.2 Capability approach

The 'capability approach' (hereafter CA) has been generated from Amartya Sen (1973; 1985; 1990) who uses the term to reflect upon human development (well-being). By recognizing human capability, Sen contributed to the development of social societies, with the objective of expanding and promoting individuals' self-efficacy. Capabilities are defined as a 'person's ability to achieve a given functioning' (Alkire, 2005, p.1) or 'to achieve various valuable functionings' (Sen, 1993, p.30). Functionings are the valuable activities embraced by individuals (ibid.) and achieved functions are what people do (Anand et al., 2009, p.1). According to Nordbakke (2013, p.168), 'the distinction between functionings and capabilities can best be illustrated by the difference between *the choices a person has made* and *the opportunities that the person has for making a choice and for taking a specific action*'. With this in mind, CA rests on the objective that aims to expand the individual's freedom to make the choices that matter to them (Alkire, 2005). The

freedom to achieve a functioning varies (such as by gender) and with respect to the context within which the individual resides and is situated (such as the social context, spatial context, the range of social and political restriction). Sen does not draw upon these capabilities, but Nussabum (2000; 2001; 2003) provides a list of ten capabilities: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; sense of imaginative thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; control over one's environment. This is supposed to apply to all human beings. These capabilities can be translated to specific cultures and contexts. This study claims that Saudi women entrepreneurs can be examined through Naussbaum line of work where is calls control over one's environment as capability, where the individual is able/unable to make decisions.

Furthermore, it has been found that examining an individual's autonomy has received much attention in CA (e.g. Sen 1999). CA focuses on the substantive freedom of people as being able to be and do as a form to pursue personal goals (Burchardt and Holder, 2012). Freedom in this sense is 'the real opportunity that we have to accomplish what we value' (Sen, 1992, p. 31). Sen claims that 'greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and to influence the world, and these matters are central to the process of development' (1999, p.18). A number of studies have attempted to analyse individuals' motivation, independence of action and thoughts, in order to understand people's well-being and what constitutes an individual's freedom, because autonomy 'focuses on the act of choosing and deciding' and it also means 'the degree of choice and control a person has in key areas of their lives' (Burchardt and Holder, 2012, pp.1, 5). Burchardt and Holder (2012) highlight two forms of autonomy: delegated role and active role. The

first form is when the individual cannot make decisions for her/himself, which is the case for children, old people, and some disabled people (e.g. those deemed to lack mental health capacity). The second form is related to individuals who may try to take an active role by making independent decisions, but their preferences are ruled and controlled by someone with more power. The latter could be argued to be relevant to the context of this study. Lack of autonomy in this regard is seen as a constraint in itself: ‘perhaps one of the biggest barriers [...] means that it is not possible for the young person to make choices’ (Morris 2001, p.19). It should be clear that the capability approach is employed in the current research as an elaborated sociological approach to explore and understand the relationship between agency and structure (see Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Giddens 1984) and to understand women’s choices and decision when engaging in business-related activities. Therefore, this research asks how the social condition in a context can mediate and shape an individual’s actions.

### 3.3 Entrepreneurship context: a capability approach

The thesis argues that if entrepreneurship is a discipline that focuses on individual context, then it is crucial to look at the characteristics that may influence this, because entrepreneurship cannot be studied nor described by looking at only one dimension (Hornaday, 1992; Erikson, 2001) but rather by linking it with other dimensions (Zahra and Dess, 2001). From the perspective taken in this thesis, the capability approach is introduced because, when looking at the context of entrepreneurship in the current research, there seems to be a deficiency and discrepancy between the existing literature and what is out there in real life (ibid.). Gries and Naudé (2010) examine the relationship between entrepreneurship and

human development. Human development is defined as the process of enlarging people's choices, where entrepreneurship relates to people's doing and being. Linking entrepreneurship with the capability approach, Gries and Naudé (2011, p.3) argue that entrepreneurship is an optional choice that leads to well-being, because for Gries and Naudé entrepreneurship occurs 'when persons can create new firms that will further the kind of lives they desire'. Nonetheless, one should also consider people's desires with respect to the context where an action is made (Sen, 1985). This is of importance because examining the entrepreneur's context allows for a better understanding of the options available to people, the actual choices they make and the formation of their preferences (Sen, 1997). Similarly, Gries and Naudé (2011) argue that the context can play a role in inhabiting human entrepreneurial agency, which relates to entrepreneurs' self-efficacy, confidence and ability. For instance, women as a social group can be affected by cultural norms, beliefs or social exclusion and discrimination, which affect women's self-efficacy when starting a business (Minniti and Naudé, 2010). Self-efficacy is crucial when looking at the agency of women entrepreneurs, which is defined as 'a person's belief in his or her capability to perform a task' (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994, p. 63). The concept of agency of an entrepreneur in CA suggests the promotion of individuals' self-efficacy, ability to search for opportunities (Gries and Naudé, 2011) and engage in business-related activities. On this note, examining the context for entrepreneurship tends to ask who, where and when entrepreneurship happens (Zahra, 2007). The 'who' dimension refers to the role contexts play on entrepreneurs. The 'where' aspect refers to one's location, which has an impact on the 'who'. The 'where' has two aspects associated with it: the distal context and the proximate context (Mowday and Sutton, 1993). The 'where' dimension includes aspects related to countries,

political systems or regulations, as well as the social, spatial and institutional environments. The ‘when’ dimension refers to the temporal and historical context that influences entrepreneurship over time. The current research focuses on ‘who’ – that is, Saudi women; and where – that is, proximity to and distance from SA, which may impact the actions and behaviour of Saudi women.

The literature on entrepreneurship is huge; therefore, the focus in the current research is that entrepreneurship is dependent on the actions of an individual, with respect to the structure of the individual’s environments (Schoonhoven and Romanelli, 2001). Entrepreneurship is associated with business ownership, where the entrepreneur has the responsibility for dealing with day-to-day activities (Hanson, 2009). Many researchers have encouraged the idea of analysing entrepreneurs’ activities within the context of their everyday lives (Lee-Gosselin and Grise, 1990; Brush, 1992; Green and Cohen, 1995). As Welter (2011) states, the context for entrepreneurship is crucial as it contribute to understanding the role of context in providing opportunities as well as setting boundaries for entrepreneurs’ actions. In the last few years, scholars have gone beyond the individual ‘entrepreneurs’ and have considered the context of entrepreneurship. They have asked ‘what context gives rise to entrepreneurs?’ (Schoonhoven and Romanelli, 2001; Jack and Anderson, 2002). The meaning of context reflects the *geographical context* (Thornron and Flynn, 2003). Entrepreneurship studies have affirmed the importance of understanding the entrepreneurial environment (see Anderson, 2000; Solymossy, 1997). This is because entrepreneurs are not isolated, but rather socially embedded in where they and their businesses interact with the context (Solymossy, 1997). The literature on entrepreneurship has used ‘environment’, ‘context’ and

'culture' interchangeably, whereas this thesis uses the term 'context' to reflect the conditions and characteristics exist in a place (Hanson, 2009). It asks: what does entrepreneurial context look like? and how do women entrepreneurs operate in and cope with the context? 'Thus understanding the dynamics between the entrepreneur and the context may be one way to help explain entrepreneurship and recognize how context impacts upon entrepreneurial outcomes' (Jack and Anderson, 2002, p. 37). Birley (1986) asserts that the context affects the entrepreneur's activity, where each situation in a context affects the individual in different ways (Sutcliffe, 1994; Castrogiovanni, 1996). On this note, Church et al. (2000, p.198) state that there are a number of contextual factors that affect an 'individual's ability to access an activity that facilitates participation'.

Therefore, it is crucial to consider the unique attributes of an individual's context, where an entrepreneur's engagement in business activities is contextually embedded and structured in the form of social policies, social norms, and the legal environment (Welter 2011; Welter and Smallbone, 2011). Campbell (2004, p. 1) describes institutions as the foundation of any society, encompassing 'formal and informal rules, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and systems of meaning that define the context within which individuals, corporations, labor unions, nation states and other organizations operate and interact with each other'. In the context of female entrepreneurship, formal and informal regulatory institutions can influence women entrepreneurs' actions. This line of work is crucial to the current research, because considering the institutional framework of a context involves the pivotal role of regulation and norms that endorse/disapprove of entrepreneurial activities (Scott, 2000). It should be clear that the context of SA for Saudi women bans women from driving, obliges women to obtain male-guardian permission, and stresses gender

segregation. With this in mind, the following sections discuss the theoretical debate on mobility, the family and social networks, which will be examined with respect to the context of this study.

### 3.4 Spatial context: mobility as capabilities

Sen's capability approach was employed to understand the range of opportunities for mobility available or unavailable to an individual (Nardakkem, 2013). Sen in this regard illustrates that different functionings may vary from one individual to another; in turn, the current study considers that mobility is an important functioning for entrepreneurs that may vary in condition from one individual to another. Mobility is a term that is engendered from geographical studies and focuses on the geographic and physical movement of people (Cresswell, 2011). Nordbakke (2013, p.166) argues that the common approach to understanding people's mobility is that travel and engagement in activities occur due to one's desire to participate in activities that happen in specific places, which reflects person's mobility conditions (e.g. regulations, access to a car) and are 'modified by the constraints and opportunities in the contextual condition' (e.g. availability of public transport, socio-spatial structure, etc.) (see Naess, 2006). Urry (2004) divides travel 'mobility' into five dimensions that inhabit today's world. To begin with, (1) 'physical movement' requires corporeal travel of people (e.g. for work, leisure, migration and escape); (2) physical movement of objects consists of the flow of objects delivered to customers, producers or retailers; (3) 'imaginative travel' to places via TV or other media; (4) 'virtual travel', which is facilitated by the internet; (5) 'communicative travel' of person-to-person messages via mobile phones, emails and faxes. The proposed study focuses on the physical movement of people rather than on the other sorts of

movement mentioned by Urry, as physical mobility fosters social relations, which are pivotal for entrepreneurs when starting a business. In addition, physical movement creates socialization for entrepreneurs through face-to-face meetings. It has been argued that, with travelling, proximity emerges to attract unique information, opportunities and resources (see Kono et al., 1998). Stuart and Sorenson (2001; 2005) highlight that proximity enables individuals to obtain benefits, and fulfil new and unmet demands. Therefore, the claim is that mobility allows human interaction and opportunities to emerge (Urry, 2007; 2008) and ‘brings social networks into physical space’ (Silva, 2006, p.261). To the current research, mobility reflects the propensity of a body’s movement to travel to social spaces for meeting clients and suppliers, because it has been argued that ‘the more you move, travel around, meeting others and making sustainable contacts, the more successful you can reasonably hope to become, in both professional and personal terms’ (Elliott and Urry, 2010, p.9). Spatial capability tends to have a combination between proximity and choice. Proximity at one point reflects autonomy and progress, but at another point reflects issues of control and restriction of movement (Cresswell and Uteng, 2012). Similarly, choice is surrounded by possibilities and constraints (Alkire, 2002a; 2002b).

Building upon this, Gudmundsson (2001, p.215) states that mobility is ‘a wider concept than transport, as it refers not only to actual movement, but also to the potential to move and thus to the spatial, economic and social context of movement’. This definition suggests a distinction between potential of movement and revealed movement, where the former indicates opportunities for mobility, while the latter reflects the trips actually taken (Sager, 2006). Therefore, it has been argued that

physical movement (mobility) does not only apply to actual physical travel but is also associated with the potential of movement and travel (Shareck et al., 2014; Kronlid, 2008; 2014; Robeyns, 2003; Sager, 2006; Kaufmann, 2017; Gudmundsson, 2001). Uteng (2009) uses the notion of mobility, which is different from transportation. To him 'mobility' means the potential to move. Kaufmann et al. (2004) earlier embraced the same approach of definition, affirming in a later study that examining individuals' experience of the potential of movement revealed new aspects related to the possibilities and constraints of individual manoeuvres. With this in mind, understanding an individual's potential movement can provide knowledge of the mobility condition of individuals as well as the factors that influence their decisions. Building upon this, employing the capability approach in mobility studies mainly reflects the individual's freedom of option and choice to achieve functioning via travelling (Alkire, 2002a; Shin, 2011). Shin (2011) looks at the capability approach from an urban and geographical studies perspective. He explains that geography scholars added the capability approach to the notion of mobility 'by acknowledging the importance of the ultimate goal of human use of space' (Shin, 2011, p. 2358). Similarly, Nussbaum (2005, p.78) considers mobility as a capability by 'being able to move freely from place to place'. Houseman (1979) indicates that freedom and mobility are connected, as mobility presents opportunities to travel, which in turn requires self-decision as to what activity to participate in. To be precise, examining individuals' 'potential travel clarifies the distinction between having rights and exercising them [...] more freedom is sometimes found by staying out (while retaining the possibility of moving), than by actually taking the trip while being controlled' (Sager, 2006, p.483).

Furthermore, mobility studies have examined aspects related to gender, travelling behaviour (Letherby and Reynolds, 2009) and inequality (Kronlid, 2008) and mobility opportunities among particular social groups. Hanson (2010) emphasizes that 'mobility is empowering, and because it is empowering, more mobility, especially for women, is a good thing'. These studies linked mobility with place (Silvey, 2000), because the purpose of mobility is to enable individuals to reach a place of social and economic activities. This argument follows the line of Saraswati Raju (2005) who evaluated women's empowerment through mobility, arguing that when women move outside the home and into public spaces it allows them to attend a variety of activities and to socialize with strangers in places, bringing benefits at a personal and professional level. Nonetheless, women's mobility is constrained. Therefore, further studies have considered the coping mechanisms people employ to overcome mobility constraints. In the current research, spatial strategies are defined as the action considered by the individual to overcome mobility constraints (Nordbakke, 2013). The spatial strategies individuals use widen their spatial mobility or limit it (Secor, 2004; Shin, 2011). Shin (2011, p.2366) indicates that the spatial strategy women apply is a reflection of empowerment. The present study seeks to examine women's spatial strategy with regard to mobility conditions in the context within which they operate. It also seeks to examine the complex relationship between mobility and social networks – in particular, network ties.

### 3.5 Social context: Entrepreneurs' social networks

Networks are bounded by physical proximity (Thornton and Flynn, 2003). Mobility is a result of individual's need to participate in social activities that occur in places (Nordbakke, 2012). On this note, it has been argued that entrepreneurs need to network with clients and suppliers so that it connects them with opportunities that

benefit their business (Bull and Willard, 1993; Ellis, 2000). Therefore, one of the crucial aspects in entrepreneurship research is social network (Welter, 2011). Social network theory emerged from social science in the late 19th century, which reveals that social network is a dynamic concept of interaction that considers the exchange between actors. Social activity is crucial for entrepreneurs as it provide them with opportunities. Weick et al., (2005, p.409) suggest that opportunities are ‘talked into existence’ that happens in a place. Schlinkert and Altmeyden (2009) assert that combining both opportunity and social network research could enlighten our understanding of how opportunity comes into existence, and how opportunity and social networks appear to influence one another at the same time. There is a huge discussion on social network in entrepreneurship studies, which is about the interaction between individuals of both formal and informal ties (De Carolis, et al., 2009). According to Dubini and Aldrich (1991, p.307), ‘networking is a verb, describing entrepreneurial behaviour’. In other words, networking is an activity that based on relationships and ties between people (Kalafatogu and Mendoza, 2017). Therefore, ‘networking’ could be subject to strength of network ties. Social network ties received a great attention in a number of studies (see Granovetter, 1973; Granovetter, 1983; Burt, 1993). Kadushin (2004) claims that social actors are individual persons and their network ties are based on kinship, friendship, conversation, affection or anything that is derived from personal relationships. Strength of ties was introduced by Granovetter (1973, 1983) who distinguishes between different kinds of relationships embodied in ‘strong’ and weak ‘ties’. These ‘ties’ relies on different bonds that exist between two actors. Burt (1993) points out that contacts that are not proximity present is refer to as ‘weak ties’ and ‘strong ties’ associated with proximity. Granovetter (1973) differentiates between friendship and

acquaintance, where the first reflects strong ties and the latter reflects weak ties. In a later study, strong ties involve parents, friends, relatives and spouse, while weak ties includes business partners, former employees, and acquaintances (Krackhardt 1999). A key definition in this thesis follows: (1) Dubini and Aldrich (1991) work where they have appointed that trust and strong emotional relations that entrepreneurs' count on reflect strong ties, while the absence of emotional closeness reflects weak ties. (2) Larson and Starr (1993) work where they separated between prior business contacts to count as strong ties, while newly established contacts to count as weak ties. Aldrich (1999) claims that entrepreneurs tend to maintain old networks with those they know rather than building new networks. This could be because trust exists more between actors of previous relations than new relations.

Different scholars highlighted different arguments regarding weak and strong ties. Some argued that weak ties bring new information (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Burt, 1993, 1997) and bridges between unconnected actors (Granovetter, 1973). In other words, weak ties bridge beyond people 'own social circles' (Granovetter, 1983, p.114). These gaps between the unconnected actors are referred to as structural holes, reflecting the missing ties or indirect ties between actors (Burt, 1993), which are crucial to entrepreneurs. Other scholars have an opposing view, supporting the influence strong ties have on entrepreneurs. The claim among scholars is that entrepreneurs tend to maintain old networks with those they know, rather than building new networks, especially in the phase of venture creation (Aldrich, 1999). Old networks provide tacit knowledge and trusted feedback (Anderson et al., 2005; Aldrich et al., 2002; Samuelsson, 2001). This also counts as a 'shortcut' process to opportunities (Elfring and Hulsink, 2003). Alternatively, there is the neutral argument of 'balance network theory' that considers the importance of network ties

diversity (Marsden, 1987; Uzzi, 1996). Hills and his colleagues (1997) state that ‘entrepreneurs who have extended networks identify significantly more opportunities’ compared to those with limited networks.

It should be clear that gender differences might occur in the networking quality of women’s networks (Ahl et al., 2010). Previous studies have shown that women structure their social networks differently from men, in the sense that they are less diverse (Aldrich et al., 1989, Renzulli et al., 2000), as they negotiate the cultural, social, and gendered constraints that exist in their context (Wilson and Little, 2008). With this in mind, this study seeks to explore how the strength of network ties is conceptualized by the context within which women entrepreneurs reside. It also seeks to understand how the strength of network ties influence women entrepreneurs’ decisions regarding mobility

### 3.6 Institutional context: family as capability

Individuals’ capabilities can be interpreted based on other capabilities. Robeyn (2003, p.76) states that ‘belonging to a supportive [...] family is a valuable state of being in itself’. A number of studies examined women’s capability in relation to the household structure (Robeyn, 2003; Nussbaum, 2000; Kabeer, 1999; Folbre, 1986). Many studies criticized capability approach because it is individualistic in the sense that it focuses on individuals rather than on the individual in a group. This argument has been linked to two examples that relates to the extended family. Alkire and Deneulin (2009) gave one example of a harmonious indigenous household that function on the basis of discussion and consensus and takes into account women’s needs and desires. The second example relates to a hierarchical traditional household where the older man makes decisions that favour his interest (ideology), and where

women have been socialized to accept it. By considering the family as a 'group', one can argue that the two households have equal assets, access to opportunities (e.g. health, education, work etc.) and assume that women's capability in the household is roughly equal. However, Alkire and Deneulin (2009) argued back that considering the individual by going inside the hierarchal family or the harmonious family, one can discover the capability of an individual within a household. Therefore, this study gives attention to the capability of women entrepreneurs in the household by understanding their perception on the family including family rules and ideology.

With the context of the present research, it aims to capture entrepreneurs' perspective on the family as a social institution and its impact on their decision to engage in business-related activities (social network and mobility). Therefore, the current research takes into account Loscocco and Leicht's (1993, p.886) suggestion where 'researchers should work to specify how family roles limit or enhance women's [...] small business success'.

On this note, a growing number of entrepreneurship researchers introduced a family perspective and incorporate the family as a context for entrepreneurial activities. Aldrich and Cliff (2003) as well as Jennings and McDougald (2007) introduce family embeddedness perspective, where they argue that entrepreneurs' personal lives – that is the family, intertwined with entrepreneurs' business endeavours. Some studies discussed the family and its implication for entrepreneurs to access opportunities that are needed for business development (Pavlovskaya, 2004). Aldrich and Cliff (2003) point out the influence a wider family have on the decision of an entrepreneur to set up a new venture. Because the context of the current study

imposes on women the need to obtain family permission, in turn, family permission is linked to the debate around work-family interference 'family-to-work conflict'.

According to Aldrich and Cliff (2003), the concept of "work-family conflict" takes two forms: one, work-to-family conflict (work-family interface) which occur when demand of work affect and make it difficult to perform family responsibilities, causing poor family-role performances and dissatisfaction in the household. Therefore, the basis of work demand can create work-to-family conflict (Galinsky and Swanberg, 2000). Two, is family-to-work conflict (family-work interference), which occur when family demand limits and constrains the performance of the entrepreneur particularly his/her work duties, resulting in poor job performances (see Frone et al., 1997; Ohlott et al., 2004). Frone et al., (1997) distinguish between work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Where the former question the extent to which work interferes with family life while the latter question the extent to which family life interfere with work. Family is not a separate social institution from one's work. A great number of studies focused on work-to-family conflict (Jennings and McDougald, 2007), but few studies focused on examining family-to-work conflict in general (Parasuraman et al., 1996; Netemeyer et al., 1997). These studies examined work-family conflict in western context, which prompted this research to apply these concepts to the study of Saudi women entrepreneurs in order to understand how family domain and women's work domain is contextualized. With this in mind, Frone et al. (1997) argue that, when examining work-family conflict, it is crucial to separate between the extent to which work domain interferes with family domain (work-to-family conflict) and the extent to which family domain interferes with work (family-to-work conflict). In this sense, it has been argued that

family-to-work conflict can lead to a high level of work demands due to family demand, where the individual may perceive family demand as a barrier to accomplish work goals (Boyar et al., 2003). As a result, family demands were found to lead to family-to-work conflict (Frone et al., 1997). Voydanoff (2005, p.714) claims that ‘the perception that work interferes with family life is associated with family problems and difficulties that, in turn, create the perception of family-to-work conflict’. Therefore, the current study aims to examine the aspects in which family interfere with women’s work from women’s perspective. To this end, family-work interference (FWI) is employed as a framework to examine the implication of family on women entrepreneurs in general and on their engagement in business activities in particular. The reason to introduce family-to-work conflict into the present research is because family is a crucial unit for Saudi women businesses, due to the policy that stresses the male-guardian system, which plays a crucial role in women’s lives (Al-Rasheed, 2010).

Furthermore, boundary theory can be linked to the argument above. The argument around boundary theory falls with a continuum from integration to segmentation of work and nonwork roles (Kossek et al., 1999). According to Rothbard et al. (2005), boundary theory aims to understand how individuals manage multiple roles and apply certain boundaries between work and family, where they focus on individuals’ behaviour of integration and/or separation of work and home. While Kossek et al. (1999) examine gender and family status to understand individual choice of segmentation or integration, in that women were found to be different from men because women are found to be in charge of childcare and other family responsibilities. To this end, this study seeks to understand women’s accounts with regard to their segmentation and integration of family and work in the context within

which they operate. Linking boundary theory argument with family-to-work conflict argument both points towards strategies that individuals enacts (Nippert-Eng, 1995), which Zerubavel (1991) referred to it as 'mental fences'. The ways the boundaries are enacted are subject to the temporal and spatial boundaries between roles (Nippert-Eng, 1995). Ashforth et al. (2000) and Edwards and Rothbard (2000) argue that people vary in the way they enact boundaries, some people tend to separate between work and family, while other allow them to intermingle.

Nonetheless, the bases of individuals' choice could be subject to the context within which they reside. According to Ashforth et al. (2000), integration or segmentation aims to minimize the difficulty of satisfying both the family and work domains. As stated earlier, integration and segmentation have their respective advantages and disadvantages, where one's choice of how to manage boundaries is a way of informing us why people desire more integration than segmentation or vice versa (Rothbard et al., 2005) or to inform us how people desire is subject to their context and social conditioning.

Building upon this, Edwards and Rothbard's (2000) argument is that work-family conflict can be associated with negative emotions, which, in turn, stimulate individuals to engage in coping strategies to restore well-being. Coping strategies are referred to as 'a cognitive response that reduces or removes the negative effects of stress' (Mena et al., 1987, p, 208-209). Therefore, studies that focus on work-family conflict investigate the strategies people employ to cope with family and work demand, which are found to be examined at an individual level as a unit of analysis (see Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). It has been argued that enhancement in family domain can improve individuals' job performance (Ohlott et al., 2004) and lead to work-life balance (Jennings and McDougald, 2007). Individuals' coping

tactics could include *segmentation* ‘where individuals actively separate the two realms through the deliberate suppression of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours associated with the out-of-role domain; *compensation*, where individuals become highly involved in one domain in order to make up for dissatisfaction in the other; and *accommodation*, where individuals limit their psychological and/or behavioural involvement in one sphere to satisfy the demands of the other’ (Jennings and McDougald, 2007, p. 749). Therefore, the current research seeks to explore the ways in which women deal with the family-work relation, the choices they have the cases that leads to family-to-work conflict, and the coping strategies women employ.

Because entrepreneurs’ context matters, it is crucial when examining entrepreneur’s family-work relation to shed light on entrepreneurs’ geographical location that consists of entrepreneurs operating in the home country (proximity) versus those operating in a host country (distance).

### 3.7 Geography of transnational entrepreneurs

Thornton and Flynn (2003, p. 427) argue that ‘network, geography and entrepreneurship are inter-twined in a complex way’. The meaning of context ties with the *geographical context*, where the context influences entrepreneurs’ engagement in activities (Thornton and Flynn, 2003). Drori et al. (2009, p.1001) defines transnational entrepreneurs as ‘individuals that migrate from one country to another, concurrently maintaining business-related linkages with their former country of origin and currently adopted countries and communities’. According to Azmat (2010, p.3) TEs ‘refers to individuals who deal with two different socially embedded environment’. A number of studies provided different perspectives to

issues associated with TEs. For instance, sociologists view transnational entrepreneurs as immigrants and examine their integration and adaptation (Morawska, 2005) in relation to the social structure (Light and Gold, 2000). While economic geographers view the role of TEs on the creation of opportunities and knowledge transfer (Saxenian, 2002; and Saxenian and Hsu, 2001). The objective of this section follows sociologist view by investigating TEs experiences and perceptions of the contextual condition with regard to TEs' geographical location. In addition, TEs travel physically to engage in two or more socially embedded environment to maximize opportunities and resources (Drori et al., 2009). Swell (1992, p.20) states that 'TEs are able to apply and adapt their social structures to changing circumstances and context'. On this note, TEs appear to have a distinctive characteristics, such as being able to operate in two contexts, achieving a degree of mix embeddedness, taking advantage of the condition and opportunity stem from their geographical location (Aldrich et al., 1989). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) highlight that TEs embeddedness in two societies signify individuals' social behaviour where they pay close attention to two different institutional environments. Furthermore, the dual environments, in particular, require TEs to consider the diverse cultural schemes (Giddens, 1984) including policies, traditions, norms etc. Furthermore, it has been argued that TEs are in charge to overcome the institutional constraints that exist in two localities (Yeung, 2002). Therefore, this study chooses to include TEs, because their geographical location can allow them to explain the constraints/facility (contextual conditions) they exhibit in different context. This with the aim to widen the debate of the role contextual condition has on women entrepreneurs' behaviour and actions.

Drori et al. (2009) note that linking TE within a domain of international business (IB) is a common misunderstanding, because IB and International entrepreneurship concerned with the firm as a unit of analysis and focuses on the inception of the firm's operation (e.g. Oviatt and McDougall, 1994). However, they neglect the discussion of the individual entrepreneur and her/his engagement in international business practices and activities (Wright et al., 2008). Yeung (2002) points out that TEs tend to adapt to the institutional environment that exist in the home and the host country including social, cultural practices as well as the political system. In this since, he maps out the differences between IB and TE. The former suggests that IB activities pose challenges on the venture in terms of adapting to the host country's social and political system and rules, thus requiring 'exceptional qualities in the process of creating and sustaining particular business ventures across national boundaries' (p.31). While the latter addresses the fact that institutional structure influence TEs agency in terms of decision-making. With this regard, this study considers the individual as unite of analysis, therefore, uses TE instead of IB.

Building upon this, TE is treated as a transnational-related social phenomenon, which point out to the importance of mechanism of adaptation both in the home and host society spheres, which shows that TEs employ different coping strategies within two or more different social structure (Drori et al., 2009). Swidler (1986) claims that the use of culture (context) as a concept and in conjunction with TE can be understood by looking at entrepreneurs' coping strategies and that through their actions (culture symbols identification). In fact, the culture of entrepreneurial action is not static or fixed to cultural codes, because codes to TEs means 'having the ability to elaborate, to modify, or adapt its rule to novel circumstances' (Swell, 1992, p.51). Drori et al., (2009) suggest that entrepreneurial action and activities are not

tied to, or restricted by, cultures ‘there are not simply different cultures: there are different ways of mobilizing and using culture, different ways of thinking culture to action’ (Swidler, 2001, p.23). In many studies, culture is simply linked to structuration discussion, where culture resources manifest itself in the form of entrepreneurial activities. However, Drori et al. (2009) shift the direction of enquiry from one that stresses the role of structures, where the individual entrepreneur is dependent on structural patterns, towards focusing on individual choices. They argue that focusing on structure, could run the risk of judging the culture of entrepreneurship regardless of the contextual and individual realm, in turn, they suggest a better analysis of individual’s perception and use of culture for reconstruction entrepreneurial action. Drori et al. (2009, p.1009) assert ‘we refer to the ways actors use their cultural toolkit which is embedded in certain contextual setting [...] that facilitate strategic actions’. To this end, linking the geographical context with the perception of entrepreneurs is relatively undeveloped. A complementary line of argument is that the conceptualizing of TEs is appropriate when examining entrepreneurs’ perception of the host country and the home country as well. In other words, this research questions the differences in women’s behaviour when operating in two different contexts to understand the relationship of context to women’s preferences.

### 3.8 Preferences: a capability approach

Paul Samuelson indicates that the concept of preferences is similar to that of action, a preference ‘is taken to be revealed by the action that in fact chosen’ (quoted in Nussbaum, 2001, p.119). Nussbaum (2001) criticizes this sort of definition, where she argues preferences should not be constructed in actions, because action is not a

statement but rather a layer of objects and values that require interpretation. However, she supports Amartya Sen's approach to the idea of preferences, where preferences lies behind individual's 'actual choices' that reflects 'psychological reality'. According to Nussbaum (2001, p.121), preferences 'are entities that, together with beliefs, go to explain choices'.

Closely linked to this line of work is the argument that preferences focus on the idea of adaptation, which occur in the case in which people adjust their preferences 'to the way of life they know' (Nussbaum, 2000, p.136). This definition is a result of Jon Elster's classic description of adaptive preference formation, which engendered from the following example 'a fox, after finding that he can no longer reach some grapes, decides that he does not want the grapes after all. The fox adapts his preferences to what he perceives to be the options available to him' (quoted in Stoljar, 2013. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Therefore, for him, adaptive preference formation is when the fox decides to not want the grapes, because he is unable to reach the grape. With this in mind, Elster defines adaptive preferences as 'an unconscious process in which an agent turns away from a preference to avoid unpleasant cognitive dissonance that is associated with holding on to it' (Stoljar, 2013). However, a number of scholars claim that this account of adaptation is too narrow, in the sense that the fox thought of the grape as a delicious option and consciously adjust his preference by choosing that he does not want the grape and calling them sour, because it is inaccessible to him (Khader, 2011). Kahder (2011) argues that Elster's understanding of adaptive preferences does not fit with the human development debate discussed in Sen and Nussbaum work. For example, Sen's highlighted cases in which individual's consciously adjust their preferences, where he states 'groups deciding that it is silly to bemoan one's lack

political freedom and using heroic efforts to be happy despite caste or race oppression with coming to terms with adversities' (Sen, 2004, p.634). Nussbaum calls up for cases in which poor women accept poor sanitation and domestic abuse, 'because they knew no other way' as a form of adaptation (adaptive preferences). She argues that one should distinguish between one's choice as a result of considering different options and one's choice that is a result of ignorance of other options. Kahber (2011, p.46) supports these lines of work and objects to Elster's definition of adaptive preferences presented in the fox-and-grape example, because her claim is that 'the fox has to have thought of the grape as delicious before in order to downgrade them by calling them sour'.

The current research treats Elster's definition as incomplete, in the sense that it has failed to consider the context that defines the relationship between the fox and the grape. This is pivotal because examining the individual with respect to the context as previously discussed can allow for a better understanding of the options available to these individuals, the actual choices they make and the formation of their preferences (Sen, 1997). John Rawls (1993, p. 296) stresses the fact that 'the institutional form of society affects its members and determine in large part the thinking of persons they want to be as well as the kind of persons they are'.

Another critique is to question whether adaptive preferences is an accurate term to apply in the examples mentioned in Khader work, where she discussed Sen and Nussbaum's work (mainly relate to women). For instance, Martha Nussbaum explicitly states that adaptive preference occurs when one does not complain about the wage structure, or accepts being abused in a marriage relationship as one

believes it is a destiny. Sen (2004) also describe adaptive preferences in cases where a person would not consider himself to have health issue when other indicators suggest otherwise, or not rebelling against one's political system, or being happy with the limitation imposed on a person. While Kabeer (1999, p.442) explains that women with adaptive preferences are those 'having lacked the capacity to imagine themselves otherwise'. Nonetheless, this study disagree that the above examples fit accurately with the term adaptive preferences, because to adapt require alternation in persona's behaviour due to the change in one's environment, which does not apply to Sen, Nussbaum nor Kabeer examples. Because in their example individuals' environments are fixed, meaning that individuals were born in context that operate the way it does, and have no other way of living or there's no other way of living (unconscious about other ways of living). These sorts of preferences are not adaptive, in the sense that individuals' preferences were not modified nor were subject to alteration to one's true preferences. The argument is that because they 'knew no other way', therefore, we would hardly describe that these individual's adjust their preferences to cultural surroundings. Instead, their preferences are fixed with respect to the context within which they reside. In other words, it is possible to think that the cultural and contextual surroundings contribute to shaping people's preferences in the examples above and that people's preference is a result of contextual conditions (e.g. policy, power, authority etc.). Therefore, the present study claim that it is not accurate to think of one's preferences that engendered from one's condition as adaptive. These preferences should be referred to as fixed preferences, context-related preferences, or context-dependent preferences, as it strongly tie with one's contextual condition within which they live in. With this in mind, this study suggests to take this argument further by introducing it into the

context of women entrepreneurs through examining how the geographical location of entrepreneurs' influences defines and construct our understanding of preferences.

### 3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has adopted an interdisciplinary approach that crosses the traditional boundaries between disciplines and thoughts to produce a new topic. This was achieved by integrating different bodies of literature, which had been defined and explained. Entrepreneurship relates to owning a business that is dependent upon the actions of an individual, with respect to the structure of individual's environments (Schoonhoven and Romanelli, 2001). This chapter signifies context-related aspects from a theoretical perspective with the aim to understand women's perceptions of mobility, network ties and family and the ways these aspects influence women's coping strategies and preferences the following aspects are considered:

1. To investigate the interplay between mobility, family social interaction
2. To understand women entrepreneurs' coping strategies.
3. To understand female entrepreneurs' preferences in relation to women's geographical location (proximity to or distance from the social condition).

The capability approach is used in the context of this study to understand the ways in which mobility, family, and gender (as social conditions for women in SA) influence women entrepreneurs' capability to engage in business-related activities. Mobility is crucial as this study argues 'the more you move, travel around, meeting others and making sustainable contacts, the more successful you can reasonably hope to become, in both professional and personal terms'. (Elliott and Urry, 2010,

p.9). Therefore, the claim is that mobility allow for human interaction and opportunities to emerge (Urry, 2007; 2008) and ‘brings social networks into physical space’ (Silva, 2006, p.261). Social network is about the interaction between individuals of both formal and informal ties (De Carolis et al., 2009). With this in mind, it is crucial for this thesis to explore the meaning women entrepreneurs give to social relations and explore the link between women’s decisions regarding mobility with respect to women’s strength of network ties. In addition, entrepreneurs’ personal lives – that is the family, intertwined with their business endeavours (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Jennings and McDougald, 2007). Loscocco and Leicht argue ‘researchers should work to specify how family roles limit or enhance women’s [...] small business success’. Because in the context of the current study family permission is a necessity for women, such permission is subject to family ideology, which interferes with women’s decision of mobility for social network. The argument is that the Saudi context is a unique case when it comes to women. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the complex relationship between mobility, social network and family of women entrepreneurs.

In addition, Thornton and Flynn (2003, p. 427) argue that ‘geography and entrepreneurship are inter-twined in a complex way’. Proximity at one point reflects autonomy and progress, but at another point reflects issues of control and restriction of movement (Cresswell and Uteng, 2012). On this note, because TEs are ‘individuals who deal with two different socially embedded environment’ (Azmat, 2010, p.3) TEs signify individuals’ social behaviour, social varies with respect to the context within which they operate. Therefore, the geography of entrepreneurs is examined to explore women’s coping strategies and preferences.

This study understands capabilities for women entrepreneur's mobility and social interaction to be subject to family permission, and reflects individuals' social conditions, including individual strategies and preferences that influence individual's decision and actions as to whether to engage in an activity or not. In the current research a 'constraint' is perceived as the absent of capabilities, whereas 'options', 'choices', and 'strategies' are understood as capabilities. The following chapter highlights the research methods and methodology that enable the current research to achieve its aims and objectives.

## CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 highlighted the social condition associated with the context of women in SA. Chapter 3 reviewed the literature on capability approach, mobility as a capability, strength of network ties, family-work conflict, and entrepreneurship context literature. This chapter moves further to explain the methods employed in the current research to answer the research question and research sub-questions.

The objective of this chapter is to mainly justify the selection of the research method used, which consists of gaining a more subjective and intimate account of the topic under study and building valid arguments (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This chapter starts with addressing the research aims and objectives, followed by an explanation of the philosophical approach adopted and highlight the research paradigms. It then explains the rationale of using qualitative research and case studies. It also explains the data collection process, the approach for data analysis as well as the reflexivity activities that emerged. This chapter is written with the aim to convince the reader that an effective method has been employed to investigate the phenomenon being studied.

### 4.2. The research aim and objectives: adapting a methodological approach

The focus of this research is to capture the conception of contextual condition and the way it influences women entrepreneurship. To achieve this, this study looks at (1) women entrepreneurs' network ties (weak ties and strong ties); (2) women's perception of family permission; (3) women entrepreneurs' account and experience of opportunities for mobility; and (4) the preferences of entrepreneurs and their

coping strategies in the context within which they operate (geographical location). The question of interest is how women perceive their social condition (social interaction norms, mobility condition, family power in giving permission) when engaging in business-related activities in a specific geographical location. What coping mechanisms do they employ? And how does women entrepreneurs' geographical location influence and shape the understanding of preferences?

Therefore, this thesis uses qualitative research to gather as much information as possible from participants account and allow the individual to tell a story of becoming entrepreneurs (Steyaert, 1997). In addition, the reason for choosing qualitative research is that qualitative research reveals individual's experience and gives insight into their everyday practices. With this in mind, the study considers two groups: (1) Saudi women operating in SA (proximity to strict social condition); (2) Saudi women operating in a host country (distance from strict social condition, therefore, operating in a loose context) to explore the regulations which constrain women and the intervening factors that moderate these constraints – in particular types of family, types of social networks, and types of mobility condition.

#### 4.2.1 Research paradigms and approaches

A research paradigm has been defined as the 'basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.105). This section considers (1) the aim of the inquiry, (2) the type of data generated by the inquiry, (3) the nature of the ontology and epistemology in supporting the inquiry, and (4) the role of the inquirer.

The appropriate research paradigms that serves the main aim of the current study is positioned within constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998), where the aim of inquiry is *understating* rather than critiquing or predicting. The ‘understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.211). It should be clear that both constructivists and interpretivists hold relativist ontology (opposite to realist), but they take different views regarding subjectivist epistemology (Schwandt, 1994). In terms of epistemology, interpretivist objectivity relates to understanding. According to Dilthey (1937, p.24), ‘only his actions, his fixed expression of life and their effects on others teach man about himself; thus he comes to know himself only by the detour of Verstehen’ – mean understanding. Where constructivist embraces more fully the subjective nature of experience. It should be clear that the epistemological stance of the current research is positioned in the interpretivism research paradigm more than in the constructivism. The interpretivism is based on the phenomenology approach that was generated by Alfred Schutz. He was interested in the way people tend to structure their social world. ‘The world and the objects we perceive exist to us through the meanings we give to them and through an act of interpretation’ (Berglund, 2007, p, 77). Schwandt (2000, p.193) highlights ‘interpretivists argue that it is possible to understand the subjective meaning of action (grasping the actor’s beliefs, desires, and so on) yet do so in an objective manner’. Adding ‘interpretivists aim to reconstruct the self-understandings of actors engaged in particular actions’. Therefore, the inquirer is in charge to understand the different constructed meanings placed by people, which

explain ‘what is happening’ (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991) and develop ideas through induction from data. The inquirer, therefore, is not engaged to search for external causes of a phenomenon, but rather to understand and explain different experiences exhibited by individuals (Jack, 2005). Whereas constructivism, the truth and knowledge are ‘created, not discovered by the mind’ (Schwandt, 1994, p. 236). Furthermore, social constructivism has become an influential approach lately, given the fact that it considers people’s perception, background and culture (See Creswell, 2012). Constructivism is based on the subjectivist, where individuals’ construct their world in a unique way. It focuses on how people construct and make sense of the world they live in (Saunders, 2003).

Finally, with the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm adapted in this research the data generated take the form of constructions, where ‘the inquirer’s constructions of other people’s constructions’ (Greertz, 1973, cited in Doern, 2008, p.125). With this in mind, the researcher is a passionate participant in the sense that his/her perception and background may influence the way he/she understands the phenomenon (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The current research examines this in section 4.5 – Reflexivity.

#### 4.2.2 Interpretivist approach to the study of women entrepreneurs’ perception of social condition

The phenomenological approach allows an understanding of the individual experience (Merleau-Ponty, 2013). This goes beyond merely measuring external causality between variables, but consider speaking with individuals that have direct experience of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). With the current research focus, entrepreneurship borrows methods from other disciplines and studies (Davies and Brown, 1988). As mentioned earlier, there’s a number of paradigms available for

researchers to choose from and that direct the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, philosophical assumptions are crucial to consider as the foundation of a researcher's work. Researchers that have an assumption on how to acquire knowledge for their inquiry, defines the meaning of paradigm (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). This includes questioning what is knowledge (ontology) and how do people know what they know (epistemology) (Neuman, 2000). As mentioned earlier, this research employs interpretivist as a philosophical assumption because it seeks to understand the person and the world they reside in, which contribute to the subjective meaning of their actions, perceptions and experiences. With this in mind, entrepreneurship is 'a socially constructed phenomenon which possesses different layers of meaning' (Smith and Anderson, 2007, p.1). Such assumption influence how we come to understand the context of entrepreneurship. Many scholars studied entrepreneurship with the aim to understand the aspects that influence the individual entrepreneur and how the entrepreneur perceive these aspects with the social environment within which they operate (Chell, 2000). This also involves how entrepreneurs develop new concepts and meaning as a result of social construction (Aldrich, 1994). This line of work has an ontological view in the sense that individuals construct reality.

Since this research focused of the reality of the individual – that is Saudi women entrepreneurs in SA (proximity) and outside SA (distance), and consider their perceptions of their social conditions, which reflect the subjective experience. First, in taking an interpretative approach the investigator is able to emphasize how Saudi women entrepreneurs give meaning to the social condition in the context within which they operate in; how they perceive, experience and cope with the

phenomenon. Second, prior research on Saudi women entrepreneurs has aimed to identify the social constraints that affect Saudi women entrepreneurs. The limitation of this line of work was highlighted in chapter 2. An interpretivist stance shifts the focus of inquiry from identifying to understanding. Third, the current study aims to interview women with an experience of starting a business for the first time, therefore, focusing on a group of participant with relevant experience. Fourth, the current study considers the context as key foundation for interpretation, locating ‘the phenomenon in the personal biographies and social environments of the persons being studied’ (Denzin, 2002, p.23). On this note, the study takes into account the unique context of SA. Fifth, in terms of epistemological view, it is crucial to the current study that the researcher interacts with the subject while being a female Saudi, where the investigator understood the context but seeks to gain insight of Saudi women entrepreneurs’ perception and experience of the context in shaping and influencing their engagement in business activities. Such interaction creates knowledge that is internally constructed, which led to the outcome of this research (see Plano Clark, 2005).

#### 4.3 Research design

The research design was shaped in a way that enable answering the research question and to achieve the research aim. The current research considers the cases of Saudi women entrepreneurs as a research strategy (explained in section 4.3.3). A description of the research sample is explained along with the appropriate data collection method employed is also highlighted.

#### 4.3.1 Sampling

In order to participate in the study, a number of criteria had to be met. Because the focus of the present research was on Saudi women entrepreneurs' perceptions and experience of the social condition, it was crucial to interview women entrepreneurs who had started a business. Below is a list of characteristics of the target population with specific criteria:

##### A. Business specifications

- Start-up stage (not growth stage)
- The business was independently owned

##### B. Individual specifications

- The selected respondents were Saudi nationals (living/lived in SA, which means are/were subject to the ban to drive, subject to gender segregation and obliged to obtain family permission).
- The selected participants were chosen on the bases of two groups (1) Saudi individuals started a business inside SA (local entrepreneurs that were proximity to the social condition of SA); (2) Saudi individuals started a business outside SA (transnational entrepreneurs that were distant and lived in a host country).
- The participant started a business, was the only owner of the business and responsible of the day-to-day activities.
- The chosen participants were young women entrepreneurs who had started their first business and were aged between 25 and 35 years old.

Since the study unit of analysis is the individual, an entrepreneur was classified as a single-person operating a business and responsible for its day-to-day activities. The sample considered individuals who started a business. This was for the reason that these entrepreneurs undertook activities, actions and made business decision in aspects related to starting and sustaining a business for the first time, and where they had managerial responsibilities. With this in mind, this is an exploratory research, because there no enough evidence and studies that investigate the experience of starting a business for Saudi women entrepreneurs. It should be clear that the current study considered variety of business types, such as, business consultants, photographers and fashion designers, event planners and designers. This was with the aim to have a general understanding of the business types women start, to capture similarities and differences in their patterns.

This followed by considering the study population. The study population defines a set of units that the research sample is derived from. Here the research selected Saudi nationals, who are subject to the same political and social constraints in SA and when it comes to interacting with the opposite sex, being banned from mobility and being obliged to obtain family permission. This sample represents other Saudi women who are subject to these constraining regulations and rules. With the research design ascribed earlier, it is worth mentioning that the phenomenon being studied is meant to target theoretical sampling, by contextualizing the research. This allowed linking theory with research objectives (Zahra, 2007, p.445). This is crucial to the study of entrepreneurship, as Zahra (2007, p.443) claimed ‘future studies (entrepreneurship) can achieve greater rigor and relevance by paying more attention to the context of their investigations’. With this in mind, the study focused on the

individual Saudi women entrepreneurs operating in SA (proximity) and those operating outside SA (distance) as case studies, to compare and contrast the patterns that emerged in the discussion of each group. It should be clear that the latter group were selected on the bases of living is Saudi at some point in their lives, which make them familiar with and contextual condition.

The chosen participants were young entrepreneurs aged between 25-35 years old. According to Turner and Nguyen (2005), young adult entrepreneurs are those under the age of 35 years old. This age category was chosen because it makes up more than half of the Saudi population and in which argued to contribute to the Saudi economy. We should not neglect that the experience of people at such age tied to family ideology due to a lack of experience and confidence (Turner and Nguyen, 2005) and their choices and decision are sensitive and solidified. Therefore, this study considered this sample of young women to explore the constraints they face when starting a business.

This study has employed a retrospective data by considering participants accounts of past experiences. Although there were some issues with retrospective accounts, especially when participants describe prior experiences and events that could display self-justification bias (Carter et al., 2003), the study asked participants who started a business in the last three years to explain their experience of the initial stage of the business with the aim to allow participants to remember and recall their prior experiences. In other words, the collected data were information and findings that based on already lived experiences that had become part of a story that these individual told the researcher about.

#### 4.3.2 Research methods

Qualitative research has different approach than quantitative research. Qualitative research allow for exploration to ‘find out’ about an unexplored area, and second allow for generating ideas for future research (Robson, 2002, p.59). With this in mind, semi-structured interview is an appropriate technique to the current research, It should be noted, however, that some researchers criticized the use of interviews as a qualitative method (Potter and Hepburn, 2005), because it require the interviewer to question whether the interviewees are willing to interact and share their stories and experiences, and persuade participants to share sensitive issues and personal matters. This also includes whether the participant has the ability to hold a position of power and hierarchy when being interviewed, which could affect the prospects of research (Sinding and Aronson, 2003).

However, the present research used qualitative research, because it offered explanations that legitimize participants’ accounts. In addition, qualitative research focuses on subjectivity and aim to answer questions related to how one’s interpretation of the world is socially constructive and has its own meaning (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Interviews can be an appropriate technique for obtaining coherent information. This study follows the light of conducting interviews as a qualitative research for a number of reasons: to explore hidden issues, to obtain a clearer insight of personal aspects and gains more knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Sinding and Aronson, 2003). Using interviews is an efficient approach for accumulating qualitative data (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) and for facilitating the process of learning about the individual’s perspectives

on the phenomenon being studied and allow to get deep understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Silverman, 2005). Such a method relies heavily on the research questions and the research perspective. With this principle of employing interviews as a research method, relationships appear to be established between the investigator and the participants, allowing the researcher to gather in-depth information on a situation or a phenomenon (Knox and Burkard, 2009; Roulston, 2010). On this note, this study conducted interviews to widen the knowledge of the subject rather than going deep in a subject that is unknown and unexplored in the literature (inductive approach). For instance, the current research asked variety of open questions asking about women's experience of starting a business. 'What kind of activities do you engage in?' and if these activities require mobility and, if so, 'how do you arrange mobility?' There were also questions related to social networks, such as 'Who are your clients? How do you know them?' It also asks questions about their mobility condition: 'do you have a driver?' and 'do you share the driver with other family members?' These questions were asked to understand women's perception of the social condition and its influence on their business endeavours. However, follow-up questions, along with probing questions, had been pointed out when something new or interesting was said and was relevant to the research interest. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to access the world of Saudi female entrepreneurs and investigate deeply their own understanding of the social condition through exploring the differences and similarities in their discussions of these conditions.

It is worth mentioning that the current study ran a pilot study by conducting interviews of two face-to-face interviews in London, and two virtual interviews with participants from SA (via Skype), which allowed the researcher to check the

reliability of the interview methods (face-to-face interviews versus virtual interviews) and check the follow of the interview questions and participants reaction to it and to make adjustment if necessarily (see Silverman, 2005). Pilot interviews alerted the researcher to a number of things, such as reframing some questions, asking questions in different ways and using techniques that stimulate an interactive dialogue. One of the things leant from pilot interviews was to apply probing questions when interviewing participants to overcome issues of resistance and vagueness (Smith and Elger, 2014). The researcher in this case was in charge to carefully pose leading questions to clarify some of participants' claims (ibid.). The current research agrees that pilot interviews allowed the researcher to encounter possible problems before conducting interviews (Bragason, n.d.).

Furthermore, taking notes and recording observations were important features to consider during the interview, as they allowed recording an on-going stream-of-consciousness about what was happening and whatever impression occurred while collecting data. Such technique stimulates the researcher mind to ask: what is learned by this? How does this data differ from other data? (See Burgelman, 1983). To this end, Hans Eysenck (1976, p.9) argued 'sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases—not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something'.

Research Focus	Saudi female entrepreneurs, social condition (social networks, family, mobility).
Philosophical Assumption	Interpretivism
Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Saudi women entrepreneurs who started a business in SA (local entrepreneurs)</li> <li>– Saudi women entrepreneurs who started a business outside SA (transnational entrepreneurs)</li> </ul> <p>-25-35 years old.</p> <p>-Starting a business for the first time.</p>
Unit of Analysis	The individual – Saudi women entrepreneurs
Coding	NVivo as a starting point then Manual
Aim of Research	<p>Understanding women’s perception of the social condition</p> <p>Understanding the social condition that constrains women and the intervening factor that moderate these constraints.</p> <p>Understanding women’s preferences and coping strategies.</p>
Analysis Strategy	Exploratory
Format of Questions	Semi-structured
Selection Process	Snowballing
Location of Sample	<p>Proximity to SA (living in SA)</p> <p>Distance from SA (living abroad, outside SA)</p>
Method Adapted	Face-to-face interviews and virtual interviews
Type of Analysis	<p>Individual Cases</p> <p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Template analysis</p>

Table 3: The process used in qualitative research

#### 4.3.3 Case study research

Case study was formulated in the current thesis as a research strategy, where interviews were employed as a method for data collection. The cases in this study are individuals who fall into the category of women who engage in business activities in strict social conditions (proximity to home country) and women who engage in business activities in loose social conditions (host country – distance from home country). With this in mind, case studies offered rich, more authentic contextualized interpretations of the phenomenon being under study. On this note, case studies were employed in an interpretive manner and centred on being mindful. Case study was employed as a research strategy using inductive technique, where the construct of interest emerged from data and while the research was in progress and allowed concepts and patterns to emerge with the intention to understand the phenomenon.

This is meant to help the reader to follow up; to judge the strength of the research; and to clearly present the cases chosen that lead to filling a gap in the literature and contributed in the concepts proposed. The integrative literature review revealed existing concepts and theories that addressed the possible link between entrepreneurs' capability in a context and their condition in terms of spatial mobility, network ties, and family interference. On this note, the argument is that whatever entrepreneurs do is based on context-specific issues (Naffziger et al., 1994). Entrepreneurship studies seem to ignore the issue of spatial mobility and capability, both of which matter to the cases examined in the present research. On this note, proposing and linking previous set of concepts added new perspectives to this study.

Moreover, a well-defined research question is crucial in case studies (Mintzberg, 1979). Nonetheless, it should be noted that the research question shifted several times, especially when thinking about factors that might influence the case study, such as the individual's personal background, education history, marital status, family background, geographical location and so forth. These aspects matter, because they influence and shape women's view of the social condition (the experience of living abroad or never lived abroad) and experience of engaging in business-related activities. The potential research question has been addressed after reviewing the literature and asked: How entrepreneurs' spatial capability influences entrepreneurial opportunities in the process of venture creation? The literature review helped in identifying research gaps and helped in shaping an insightful research question related to the topic of interest (Yin, 2003). However, the research question was modified in this process, this modification is referred to as an 'iterative approach' and took place after the process of data analysis. With this in mind, it is possible to state that the final research question asks: how the social condition (mobility, family, and social interaction) influences women entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities? Such a shift was part of the research process that corresponds to the current research framework and research aims and objectives.

#### *4.3.3.1 Case selection*

Case study research is considered relevant to exploratory research as it enables 'the researcher to investigate a phenomenon in depth, getting close to the phenomenon, enabling a rich description and revealing its deep structure' (Cavaye, 1996, p.236). The individual of Saudi female entrepreneurs was the main focus in this research

and the unit of analysis. Saudi women entrepreneurs and the Saudi context were selected as case studies. This choice enabled the study to controlling environmental variations (by focusing on Saudi rather than on non-Saudi women), which made the research narrow in focus. It should be clear that SA was the reference point in the current research, which meant that the term local settings is an indication of Saudi Arabia (since this study focuses on Saudi Arabian women) and the term living abroad is an indication of Saudi women living/ operating outside the Saudi border. It is also crucial to state that the discussion made in the current research evolve around the idea of proximity to home country, which meant entrepreneurs' operating in Saudi , where there is a sense of *proximity to* the social conditions exist in SA. This term ties mostly with local entrepreneurs and applies to transnational and returnee entrepreneurs when operating in Saudi. Nonetheless distance from home country meant entrepreneurs' *distance from* the social condition in SA. Distance was more relevant to transnational entrepreneurs and applies in some cases to returnee entrepreneurs. The latter was a group that emerged from the data. Returnee entrepreneurs experiences distance-proximity, which meant that they lived abroad (Distance from Saudi) then they lived in Saudi upon their return (proximity to Saudi).

On this note, because qualitative methodologies contribute to enhancing the researcher's understanding of the subject (Perren and Ram, 2004), the current research conducted face-to-face interviews and virtual interviews. It interviewed women entrepreneurs individually over a considerable amount of time (40–90 minutes). In fact, the selection of sampling is crucial for data analysis. Patton (1999) stated that there are no rules regarding the number of samples in data analysis, but it

is rather 'to the point of redundancy' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.81). Therefore, the current research conducted 25 interviews with Saudi women.

#### 4.3.4 Data collection process

The data collection process took place after obtaining the ethical approval from Royal Holloway University of London. The present research's main assumption was that entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities was constrained due to the state policy that stresses the ban on women driving and the obligation to obtain family permission for mobility and travel; therefore, it aimed to interview Saudi local entrepreneurs and Saudi transnational entrepreneurs (TEs) to understand the influence these social constraints have on women's actions, decisions and behaviour. Twenty-seven women entrepreneurs were interviewed, eighteen local Saudi entrepreneurs operating in SA, and seven transnational Saudi entrepreneurs operating outside SA. It should be clear that a third sub-group emerged from the data and when interviewing 'local entrepreneurs'- that is returnee individuals who revealed their educational history of studying abroad. Therefore, this study grouped them as returnee entrepreneurs. This left the study with a sample of 8 local entrepreneurs, 10 returnee entrepreneurs, and 7 transnational entrepreneurs (see table 4). However, during the interview process it has occurred that there were two participants that do not fit the sampling criteria, in the sense that they were not solo owner of the business, but had business parents. These participants were excluded because the purpose of this study is to capture entrepreneurs' day-to-day activities and decision regarding their businesses. However, having a business partner showed that these participants delegated some business activities to their business partners (e.g. the activities they could not engage in), which may not reveal the full story. This could also mean that the participant interviewed may partially be responsible for some

activities and not another. With this in mind, this left the study with a sample of 25 entrepreneurs.

Table 4: Types of interview

No.	Participant Name	Age	Marital statuses	Industry category	Entrepreneur's lived location	Types of interview
LE	Local entrepreneurs: Saudi entrepreneurs lived and started a business in SA (proximity to home country)					
1.	Noran	24	Single	E-commerce, online store	Riyadh	Virtual interview via Skype
2.	Ahdab	25	Married	E-commerce, online store	Makah	Virtual interview via Skype
3.	Israa	24	Single	E-commerce, online store	Ta'if	Virtual interview via Skype
4.	Nada	29	Married	Event planner	Jeddah	Face-to-face interview. Saudi Arabia
5.	Marwa	29	Married	Education (well-being and healthcare)	Jeddah	Face-to-face interview. Saudi Arabia
6.	Reham	28	Single	Jewellery designer	Jeddah	Face-to-face interview. Saudi Arabia
7.	Haya	30's	Married	Content development	Jeddah	Virtual interview via Skype
8.	Sereen	30's	Married	Coach	Jeddah	Virtual interview via Skype
RE	Returnee entrepreneurs: Saudi women who lived abroad but started a business upon their return to the home country (distance-proximity)					
9.	Lana	29	Married	Photographer	Canada-Riyadh	Virtual interview via Skype
10	Alanoud	27	Single	Fashion concept store	London-Riyadh	Virtual interview via Skype
11.	Ina'am	30's	Single	Fashion	London-Jeddah	Virtual interview via Skype
12.	Fahda	28	Single	Concierge and travel agency	Japan-Riyadh	Virtual interview via Skype
13.	Hanoof	29	Married	Photography	USA-Riyadh	Virtual interview via FaceTime
14.	Shahad	29	Single	Fashion	Italy-Jeddah	Face-to-face interview. London

15.	Samar	26	Single	Graphic designer	London-Jeddah	Virtual interview via Skype
16.	Yasmeen	26	Single	Graphic and fashion	Switzerland-Jeddah	Face-to-face interview. London
17.	Lulua	27	Single	Fashion	Beirut-Riyadh	Virtual interview via Skype
18.	So'ad	30's	Married	Education Centre	USA- Jeddah	Virtual interview via Skype
TE	Transnational entrepreneurs: Saudi women who started a business in a host country (distance from home country)					
19.	Dunia	26	Single	Graphic designer	UK	Virtual interview via Skype (was in SA by the time the researcher was in London)
20.	Aisha	30's	Single	Consultant	Dubai	Face-to-face interview. London
21.	Salma	30's	Married	Education	Dubai	Virtual interview via Skype
22.	Afnan	30's	Single mother	Food	Dubai	Virtual interview via FaceTime
23.	Anwar	29	Single	Web designer	UK	Face-to-face interview. London
24.	Hadeed	30's	Single	Investor	UK	Face-to-face interview. London
25.	Lubna	30	Single	Graphic Designer	UK	Face-to-face interview. London

The data was collected based on the researcher personal networks. The first attempt was writing down a list of acquaintances, friends and colleagues being defined as Saudi women who started a business. Since the researcher lived and grew up in SA she had a good connections of people she already knew in which they counted as participants. Building upon this, snowballing was another technique used to collect data and through asking participants to put her in touch with people they knew and would be able to participate in the study. It is also important to mention that the data collection was based on referral, which is important in the Saudi culture. Therefore, attempts to arrange interviews based on the idea of referrals met with anticipated success.

There was an awareness of the importance of attending social events that is subject related (especially when looking for Saudi entrepreneurs who started a business abroad). Therefore, the researcher attended a number of social events in the UK related to Saudi society where the researcher was able to obtain contacts with Saudi women entrepreneurs and with people who knew of Saudi women entrepreneurs and managed to put the researcher in touch with Saudi women (e.g., the Arab British Chamber of Commerce, Middle East Association, Saudi-British Joint Business Council, The Saudi-British Society etc.). These events were crucial and a key route to reaching potential participants. When attending a number of conferences, networking events and workshops the researcher tend to speak about her research in an open manner with other people and casually asks ‘do you know of any Saudi business owner that you can put me in touch with?’ Such an approach opened up the chance for increasing the amount of data as well as reaching a diverse sample, which contributed to the research findings.

With respect to time limitation, the researcher had to follow up few times to remind prior participants to introduce her to potential participants, where she then had to contact the potential participant few times to arrange a time and a date for an interview. To this end, the use of participants name was a reference point needed when reaching out to potential participants. This was crucial, because it made potential participants feel comfortable to respond and participate in the study. For instance, one of the participants asked at the beginning of the interview ‘can I ask you, who told you about me?’ When the researcher referred to the person name (someone she know), the participant sounded excited and interested to participate in the interview.

Part of the data collection process was that the researcher sent a letter (Appendix 1) and contacted participants to request an interview for research purposes. However, it is worth mentioning that questions nor the research focus was included in the letter/email sent to participants for many reasons. One was that it was semi-structured unstructured interview. Two was that the research aimed to avoid that the participants have in mind prepared answers to give during the interview.

Furthermore, when contacting participants the researcher did not mention the approximate time and length of the interview to avoid negative reaction from potential participants. For instance, when the researcher stated to a participant that the interview might take proximity of 30-60 minutes the following respond was given ‘unfortunately I can't commit that long.’ Therefore, it was crucially important for the researcher to be sensible regarding what information to include and exclude when contacting potential participants. However, contacting participants was not always formal and via email. Using phone text messaging, LinkedIn and Facebook were additional techniques to reach participants.

Prior to contacting participants, the researcher looked for some information about the participants through using Google, LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, with the aim to gain personal information, such as participants education background, work experience, as well as information of the business such as business type, location, activities and so on. This approach was a starting point that allowed the researcher to accumulate general information of the participant before conducting the interview.

Table 5: Data collection process

Techniques	Observation in limitation	Researcher's action
Using different means to contact potential participants for scheduling interviews.	In terms of contacting potential participants, at the beginning of the data collection process the researcher used to contact participant via email. The introductory email included a brief description of the subject being under study along with a consent form for participants to sign. However, the researcher experienced a delay in respond, as it seemed an insufficient mean for communication in the context being under study.	Such observation allow the researcher's to adjust the way she contacted the participants, changing from emails to WhatsApp, seemed more efficient for communicating and for arranging and scheduling interviews.
Using different terms to comfort participants when contacting them.	The researcher noticed that participants were uncomfortable when they were (1) asked to be interviewed (as they feel that they are subject to investigation) and (2) when the researcher indicates the research topic.	Therefore, (1) the researcher starts to use informal language and ask participants for a chat/talk rather than asking for an interview so that they can feel relaxed to open up and share their experiences. (2) The researcher started to give general view of the research topic rather than being specific.

Testing different methods when collecting data.	The data collection process was slow when arranging face-to-face interviews with Saudi women in SA (due to mobility and social constraints).	Applying virtual interviewing was beneficial.
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In each interview the researcher tended to spend a few minutes at the beginning of the interview to disclose information relates to the aim of collecting data. This included a brief explanation of the current research, asking for permission to record the interview (only one participant object and her objection was considered), confirming the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' personal information (name and business name), informed the participants that they have the right to read the thesis once completed. This includes giving a general view of the research topic rather than confusing participants by being too specific. To this end, the researcher started each interview with general questions before asking specific ones.

These aspects were considered with the hope to build a trusted relationship with the participants. As mentioned earlier, some of the interviews were conducted through physical meeting of face-to-face interviews and most interviews were collected through virtual interviews (using Skype and FaceTime) (see table 4). Each interview lasted between 40 minutes to 1.5 hours. This study notes that participants were more open and relax in their discussion when they spoke through using virtual mean rather than face-to-face interviews. This gives an indication of the culture of Saudi women, where physical meetings could be a reflection of intimacy, which tend to take place with strong ties. The commitment of face-to-face meeting entails being locked physically in a place to talk, which eliminate the chance for the participant to run away or end the interview. This could be because the society and the way people behave between each other are subject to courtesy in which creates a high level of pressure. Whereas with virtual mobility the intimacy is less, therefore, the ability to talk is

more relaxed and encouraging. Also face-to-face interview requires mobility where virtual interviews do not, which will be explained shortly.

It is worth mentioning that the researcher's own feelings and observations were recorded when conducting interviews. This includes how the researcher felt towards participant's answers, and reaction to some questions particularly the way they handled personal questions. For examples, when the researcher asked questions related to family matter an interviewee interrupted and asked 'how long the interview will takes?' It was noted that the participant answered each question carefully and as briefly as possible. On this note, the researcher felt disappointed after the interview and tried to take notes of what had been mentioned in the interview as much as possible. However, during taking notes and when rethinking about the participant answers, the researcher noticed that privacy was part of the interviewee's personal style. For instance, the participant mentioned in her interview regarding meeting clients that 'I'm a type of person who doesn't let anyone come to my house, I'm a private person'. This was the same participant who refused for her interview to be recorded. Incidents such as this confirms personal attribute, which was acknowledged by the researcher.

Furthermore, during each interview the researcher recorded certain statements and keywords mentioned by the interviewee. This was used as a reference point for the researcher to go back to when asking more questions or follow-up probes, 'which enables the researcher to probe aptly, and the interviewee to 'hook' their account' (Chell, 2004, p.47). For example, in many incidents the researcher wanted to focus on specific statements mentioned by the interviewees, to do so she asked 'you said..., what do you mean?' or 'what do you mean by this?'

Some interviews were conducted in English and some in Arabic. The researcher translated the interviews from Arabic to English and then transcribed the interviews in English to

facilitate coding and data analysis. The language of the conducted interviews was heavily depending on the interviewee's background. Meaning, the interview process was conducted in English with those who studied or lived/living abroad, where they took the initiative to speak in English. The researcher observed that they had the preference to start the discussion in English, which assured the researcher to carry the interview in English. However, it was crucial to pay close attention to the way participant's respond to the questions and in terms of ability to articulate themselves in English. It was rarely the case where the researcher sensed that a participant was uncomfortable in English (e.g. fluency and expression). However, in some cases the researcher asked 'would you like to speak in Arabic?' to collect information as accurate as possible given the fact that Arabic was their mother tongue.

When transcribing the recorded interview, the researcher came back and forth to the translated documents to check the quality of the translation. To improve that quality of the translated script the searcher consulted translator specialist. With this in mind, Peräkylä (2004) stressed the importance of the 'quality' when recording and transcribing interviews, in the sense that it enables establishing reliable findings. It should be noted that the transcribing process included the original transcript, along with the researcher comments and views that was added in the same document along with highlighting common patterns and using different font size and colour (as part of manual analysis). This enabled the researcher to compare and contrast participants' discussion. It is worth mentioning that transcribing the recorded interviews helped the researcher to reflect on a number of aspects including, the level of engagement in the discussion with participants and the way the questions were asked, which lead to the consideration of adapting different approaches to stimulate participants to give coherent and transparent answers as much as possible (discussed in reflexivity section – 4.5). The researcher transcribed the whole interview to make links when possible and to avoid missing crucial information that might add new perspective or confirm some of the

claims made. However, the researcher was aware of unneeded information, for instance, when a participant addressed issues related to the experience of naming the company. This was not transcribed because it was out of the current research focus and interest.

Culturally speaking, when the researcher started to contact participants to ask for an interview, a set of emails was sent to participants. However, the research noted that no responses were obtained from most participants. This was time consuming. Reflecting upon this, the researcher had to find another approach, which was through contacting participants by sending text messages via WhatsApp. This was an efficient approach, because SA is ranked as the 14th in the world in terms of WhatsApp usage, and 67% of Saudi society use smart phones (Saudi social media users ranked 7th in world, 2015) which explains why using WhatsApp is a sufficient mean for communication, because its less formal than emails. It was surprising to experience that the communication via email was time consuming and participants took it less seriously compared to contacting them via WhatsApp. This reflects the societal behaviour and preference to engage in quick and shallow communication rather than well-thought-out and more formal email communication. The researcher noticed the quick response in using WhatsApp in scheduling and planning interviews with participants. This was also pointed out in the interview and when one of the participants commented 'if my client wants to contact me, it's through WhatsApp, everything is here' pointing towards her phone. Another participant added 'they are with me on WhatsApp' referring to her clients. These references are an indication of how a certain context can effectively uses some communication mean over another. This awareness influenced the data collection process of the current research, in the sense that it alerts the researcher to reconsider the type of communication method that suits the context of the study.

Follow up this line of action, it was noticeable that participants were not comfortable when they were asked to be 'interviewed' they showed a concern by responding 'can you send me the questions in advance to prepare myself' or 'what would you ask me'. It was clear that the word 'interview' sounds as an investigation rather than a discussion of their personal experience. One participant said, 'just to be ready, what are you going to ask me?' another person commented, 'I'm concerned that I wouldn't know the answers to your questions.' Therefore, when contacting participants, the researcher would stress the point that 'I'm interested to know more about you and your business' with the aim of creating a comfortable and relaxing conversation with participants, in order to engage in the discussion.

#### 4.4 Data analysis

This process of data analysis lies at the crux of any research or study. The transcripts were the main body of analysis and each individual interview was treated as an individual case, analysed and coded independently to establish patterns in each case and to compare them across other cases.

Applying quotes was another a way to categorize the data in a way that supports that data analysis process. This tactic was crucial as it select significant categories and dimensions of cross-cases that considered within-group similarities, as well as intergroup differences. To this end, collected data were analysed through using three types of analysis: individual case analysis, thematic analysis and template analysis to insure the reliability of the research findings. The term 'majority of women', 'most women' indicates that more than half of the women interviewed expressed a certain experience or specific action.

##### 4.4.1 Analytical approach

#### *4.4.1.1 Individual case analysis*

Instead of looking for similarities across cases (obtained from thematic analysis), here it considered individual case analysis as a first stage. Individual case analysis is crucial to analyse different transcripts to bring out in-depth illustration of unique aspects around the individual context and accounts. King (2012) mentioned the importance to look at the ‘heart of a participant’s story’ that can be obtained through individual case analysis. Illustration from cases were constructed in examples in the present study. Where the study asks: what is the participant trying to say about their contextual condition within which they operate? Which aspects of their context are constraining, and why? How can this be explained by the experience of the informant? Achieving answers from these questions provided description of the context and individual experience of that context (Holliday 2005). See table (6)

#### *The Participants – A brief description*

The cases presented in this section are descriptive, and focused on identifying and describing the account of 25 participants during the semi-structured interviews. These interviews took place between July 2015 and February 2016. The table below gives a brief description of each Saudi woman entrepreneur interviewed in terms of her education, background, business type, business location, family size, position in the household, and her use of transportation means. This is with the aim to draw upon personal and contextual matters which of relevance to the current research interest and framework.

The table below focuses on the following points: (1) personal aspects, such as marital status, education background. For example, the location of women’s education allowed the study to distinguish between local entrepreneurs and returnee entrepreneurs who studied abroad and allowed the study to understand how Saudi entrepreneurs became transnational at the first

place; (2) business type and location, it then addresses (3) family matters, such as women's position in the family and family ideology, it then gives a brief description of (4) women's mobility condition and travel activities, with respect to women's geographical location (proximity versus distance).

Table 6: Participants description – Individual case analysis

No.	Participant	Description	Features
Local entrepreneurs (proximity to home country social condition)			
1	Nouran	<p>Nouran is 24 years old, single, and lives in Riyadh with her family (parents and two older brothers). Has a BA degree from a Saudi university. In 2014 she started her online store, where she sells customized gifts and cards. She started from home and has recently moved to an office, which is geographically close from where she lives.</p> <p>She does not have family private chauffeur, but depends on a male family member to move (father or brothers), meaning the she us is being accompany by a family member upon her mobility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Geographical proximity to family (parents)</li> <li>- Fear of meeting the opposite sex</li> <li>- Family interference: family-to-work conflict occurs when mobility to meet the opposite sex (strict ideology)</li> <li>- Lacks availability and accessibility of the car and the driver, therefore, depends on a male family member for mobility (limited mobility)</li> <li>- Local travels to meet clients and suppliers</li> </ul>

		to meet with suppliers.	
2	Ahdab	<p>Ahdab is 25 years old, married and have 2 kids, and lives in Makkah. She had a BA from one of the Saudi Universities. She started an online store from home.</p> <p>She lacks means of transportation and is completely dependent on her husband for mobility who is entitled to a full-time job in the city of Jeddah (one hour drive from Jeddah). Her family-in-law live in the same building, but they also lack transportation (car and a driver).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business Geographical proximity to family (husband)</li> <li>- Geographical proximity to family (husband)</li> <li>- Fear and protection stems from family, which leads to family interference: family-to-work conflict occurs when mobility to meet the opposite sex (strict ideology)</li> <li>- Lacks availability and accessibility of the car and the driver, therefore, depends on a male family member for mobility (limited mobility)</li> <li>- Local travels to meet clients and suppliers</li> </ul>
3	Israa	<p>Israa is 24 years old, single and lives with her mother in a small village called Ta'if. She did her BA in Jeddah. She runs her online store business where she sells customized traditional products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Geographical proximity to mother</li> <li>- Internal negotiation of the safety to participate in (go to) social activities</li> </ul>

		<p>She started in 2014. She is an orphan and lives with her mother. Her mother is an employee, and the one she asks permission from. They do have a driver and she depends on her driver and sometimes she uses Uber and Careem, when she lacks the availability and accessibility of the driver. (With her business she travels alone locally but with her mother permission, but when it comes to regional or international travel her mother accompanies her.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family interference: family-to-work conflict occurs upon mobility for engaging in business-related activities. (Strict family ideology)</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients and suppliers.</li> </ul> <p>Mobility condition (opportunities for mobility):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have a driver (shared mobility with the mother)</li> <li>- Delegate task to the driver when delivering orders to customers</li> <li>- The use of Uber and Careem as alternatives (e.g. when the driver with the mother, or doing domestic-related mobility)</li> </ul>
4	Nada	<p>Nada is 29 years old, married, and has no kids. She did her BA in Jeddah. In 2012 she started a business related to event management. She depends on her driver when she travels locally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Proximity to family (husband)</li> <li>- Fear to go unfamiliar and far places and when meeting clients of the opposite sex. She fears going to private places to meet clients of weak ties</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict regarding mobility time,</li> </ul>

			<p>mobility to private places of weak ties, meeting the opposite sex. (Strict family ideology)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local mobility to meet customers, suppliers and to go places of events</li> </ul> <p>Mobility condition (opportunities for mobility):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solo use of the driver but mixing the driver's role between domestic-related mobility and business-related mobility</li> <li>- Delegate business-related tasks to the driver (trust)</li> <li>- The use of family in-law driver as an alternatives (proximity)</li> </ul>
5	Marwa	<p>Marwa is 29 years old, married, with 3 kids. She did her BA in Jeddah. She runs a business, related to coaching and well-being that started in 2014. She has a studio that is located in the same building she lives in and she sometimes meets clients in a specific centres. She depends on her driver when</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Proximity to family (Husband and kids)</li> <li>- Concern about interacting with the opposite sex</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict regarding doing business with the opposite sex (strict family ideology)</li> <li>- Local mobility to meet customers</li> </ul>

		<p>she travels locally.</p> <p>With her business her local mobility varies, and she follows family rules regarding meeting the opposite sex</p>	<p>Mobility condition (opportunities for mobility):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having a driver but it shared mobility</li> <li>- The use of family in-law driver as an alternative (proximity)</li> </ul>
6	Reham	<p>Reham is 28 years old, single, and lives with her big family (10-12 members) in Jeddah. She studied BA in Jeddah. She started a home-based business in designing accessories in 2012. She takes orders via phone (including WhatsApp) or social media, and then she delivers the products to clients via her family driver or hiring a driver.</p> <p>Her local travels involves, buying material, sending orders to clients and sometimes participating at events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Physical proximity to family (parents)</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict regarding mobility time and mobility to places (strict family ideology)</li> <li>- Local mobility to meet clients and suppliers.</li> </ul> <p>Mobility condition (opportunities for mobility):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mobility</li> <li>- Delegating mobility to deliver products</li> <li>- Hiring a driver to deliver products</li> <li>- Use of Uber and Careem as alternatives for her mobility</li> </ul>
7	Haya	<p>Haya is 35 years old. She is married and has a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> </ul>

		<p>daughter. Done her BA and Master's in SA (Jeddah). She started a business related to media (developing content), late 2015. Her travel activity is to meet clients. She uses Uber or Careem when her daughter uses the private chauffeur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proximity to family (husband and daughter)</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict (husband rules around time, way she dresses, mobility to places, meeting the opposite sex) (strict family ideology)</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients</li> </ul> <p>Mobility condition (opportunities for mobility):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mobility</li> <li>- She uses Uber and Careem as alternatives.</li> </ul>
8	Sereen	<p>Sereen is 35 years old, married, and has 3 kids. She is a family counsellor and a life coach. Her business is home-based business and started 2013. She travels locally to attend workshops and events and to meet clients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Proximity to family</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict (husband rules around time and interacting with the opposite sex) (strict family ideology)</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients and social networking events</li> </ul> <p>Mobility condition (opportunities for mobility):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mobility with other family members.</li> </ul>

Returnee Entrepreneurs (Distance-proximity to home country)			
9	Lana	<p>Lana is 33 years old, married and have two kids. Her BA was completed in SA. She then travelled with her husband on a scholarship, where she got the chance to do her Master's, followed by a diploma course in photography. She started her business in photography when she lived abroad (Canada), then she moved back to SA (Riyadh) upon her husband's return. She continued with her business as a photographer in Riyadh. She heighted that the main struggle upon her return was mobility where she has a car but did not have a driver. She relied on company car services, until she had her own driver.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office based business</li> <li>- Physical proximity to family in SA and abroad</li> <li>- Fear to go to unfamiliar and far places and she is cautious when meeting clients of the opposite sex</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients</li> <li>- Independent mobility when living abroad</li> </ul> <p>Mobility condition when living in the home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unstable mobility condition (due to the unavailability of the driver).</li> <li>- Shared mobility.</li> <li>- The use of Uber as an alternative.</li> </ul>

10	Fahda	<p>Fahda is 28 years old, single, and lives with her family in Riyadh. Studied in French school until 14 years old, then moved to an American international school. She went to Jeddah to do her BA, she then travelled to the United States for an internship job. She returned to Jeddah while her family lives in Riyadh and worked there. She decided to do her Master in Japan, where she decided to start her business. Her business provides a number of services including: a travel agency, and a concierge service.</p> <p>In 2015 she moved from Japan to Riyadh to run her business from there. She started from home and now she has her own office.</p> <p>When looking at her mobility it's a mix of local and international travels.</p> <p>She used to share family driver but then she hired a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office-based business</li> <li>- Proximity to family (in SA). Distance from family when studying and working abroad</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict (demand conflict – use of family driver and international travel is not completely relaxed)</li> <li>- Local mobility to meet clients and international travel to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Independent mobility when living abroad</li> </ul> <p>Mobility condition when living in the home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mobility</li> <li>- A company driver</li> <li>- The use of Uber as an alternative</li> <li>- Delegate tasks to the driver</li> </ul>
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		car and a driver for her business (to avoid family complains and conflicts).	
11	Hanoof	<p>Hanoof is 29 years old, married with a child. She did her BA in Jeddah, got married, and travelled with her husband to the USA. She done diploma in photography and graphic design, she worked as a freelancer there, while serving Saudi clients in USA and SA.</p> <p>In 2012 She moved back to Riyadh with her husband, and she continued running her business.</p> <p>She used to drive in her own car in the state, while she depends on her husband's family's driver when she is in SA.</p> <p>Her business is home-based, and when she travels it is mainly for meeting/photographing clients at their requested location.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Physical proximity to family (husband)</li> <li>- Fear in SA of meeting people of weak ties in private places and opposite sex</li> <li>- Feeling safe to meet people of weak ties and the opposite sex abroad</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients</li> <li>- Independent mobility when living abroad</li> <li>- Shared mobility when living in the home country</li> </ul>
12	Alanoud	Alanoud is 27 years old, single, and lives with her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office based business (retail shop)</li> </ul>

		<p>family. She studied her BA in Riyadh and took some courses in London straight after her graduation. When she returned she started a concept store (fashion, design and furniture) in Riyadh, which is sells international fashion brands for women. There are two drivers in the family house where she uses one for business-related mobility. She travels locally to go to events and meet suppliers (artist) as well as internationally to meet suppliers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proximity to family (in SA). Distance from family when studying abroad</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict (international mobility not completely relaxed)</li> <li>- Mobility to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Mobility condition when living in the home country (opportunities for mobility)</li> <li>- Use of one of family drivers to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Delegate tasks to the driver, when it comes to collecting orders and picking up deliveries</li> </ul>
13	Ina'm	<p>Ina'am is 34 years old, she is single, and lives with her big family in the city of Jeddah. She studied her BA in Jeddah then completed her Master's in London. She runs a business in design and fashion, as a home-based business. She shares mobility with other family members. She travels locally to buy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Proximity to family when living in SA. Distance from family when studying abroad</li> <li>- Fear of mobility to male-dominated area</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict (international mobility not completely relaxed)</li> </ul>

		materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mobility when living in the home country</li> </ul>
14	Lulua	<p>Lulua is 26 years old, single, and lives with her family (parents, a sister, and two brothers). She studied her BA in Beirut. In 2013 she started a concept store business in Riyadh based on selling variety of products. She shares family driver with other family members. She is responsible for travelling and meeting suppliers. She usually travels internationally to get inspired and buy products to sell them in her store. Her family accepts travel only if it's for education or business reasons (not allowed to travel with friends). Her mobility is a mix of local and international travel, where the former had to be planned with other family members (sister and a mother), while the latter require family permission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office based business (retail shop)</li> <li>- Proximity to family when living in SA. Distance from family when studying abroad</li> <li>- The use of family driver for local mobility</li> <li>- Local and international travel to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict (international travel not completely relaxed)</li> <li>- Shared mobility when living in the home country</li> </ul>
15	Shahad	Shahad is 29 years old, single, and lives with her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> </ul>

		<p>family. She studied in Italy then completed her Master's degree in London. She started building her business in London then moved it to SA (Jeddah) in 2011/2012.</p> <p>Her business is a home-based business, and mobility includes local travel, to buy material, meet clients and participant in exhibitions, where she uses her family driver. She also travels internationally to buy material and meet suppliers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proximity to family when living in SA. Distance from family when studying abroad</li> <li>- Local and international travel to meet clients and suppliers</li> <li>- Independent mobility when living abroad</li> <li>- Shared mobility when living in the home country</li> </ul>
16	Samar	<p>Samar is 26 years old, single, and lives with her family in SA (parents and two brothers). She studied for her BA in SA then completed her Master's in London. In 2013 she started her graphic design company as a home-based business. She uses her family driver, and her father is strict about dealing with the opposite sex or travelling abroad, even when she travelled abroad alone to do her</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based business</li> <li>- Proximity to family when living in SA. Distance from family when studying abroad</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict; local mobility to interact with the opposite sex, regional and international. (strict family ideology)</li> <li>- Local travels to meet clients</li> <li>- Using public transportation when living abroad</li> </ul>

		Master's.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mobility when living in the home country</li> </ul>
17	Yasmeen	<p>Yasmeen is 26 years old, single, and lives with her family in SA. She studied for her BA in Switzerland. In 2015 she started her business, which is relates to graphic design and photography. She travels locally by using a shared family driver (mother, young brother, and a sister). Her travels consist of meeting clients and attending events. She uses Uber and Careem as alternatives and when lacking family driver.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An office-based business</li> <li>- Proximity to family when living in SA. Distance from family when studying abroad</li> <li>- Local travels to meet clients</li> <li>- Using public transportation when living abroad</li> <li>- Shared mobility when living in the home country</li> </ul>
18	So'ad	<p>Sara is 35. She is married and has one child. She did her BA in SA and completed her Master's in the USA. In 2013 she started her business in education.</p> <p>She travels locally and to other cities in SA to meet clients. She also travels internationally to attend</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operates her business from an office</li> <li>- Geographical proximity to family (husband and kids)</li> <li>- Family-to-work conflict (international and regional travel 'duration')</li> <li>- Local travels to meet clients</li> </ul>

		conferences and build networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independent when living abroad</li> <li>- Dependent mobility when living in the home country</li> </ul>
<p>Transnational Entrepreneurs (distance from the home country)</p> <p>(In some cases they were proximate to home country to engage in business activities)</p>			
19	Dunia	Dunia is 26 years old, single, and lives independently in London. She has been running her interior design business in London since 2013. She grew up in SA but then studied abroad since the age of 11, did her BA and Master's in the UK. She serves clients from Europe and the Middle East including SA. Her mobility is based on public transportation, when meeting clients, attending exhibitions and trade shows. She freely travels internationally including SA, EU and USA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical distance from family (parents)</li> <li>- Autonomous mobility</li> <li>- Having options and making independent decision (no need for family permission)</li> <li>- Independent decision when starting a business, and when engaging in business activities including travel</li> <li>- Separate family from work by avoiding to inform them of her travels</li> </ul> <p>When proximity to home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fear of doing business with the opposite sex</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proximity to family, therefore, family-to-work interference</li> <li>- Mobility constraints</li> </ul>
20	Aisha	<p>Aisha is in her 33, single, and lives independently in Dubai. She grew up in Riyadh where her family is based, studied her BA in Jeddah, then completed her Master's in London. She then worked in London before starting her business in Dubai. In 2012 she started her consultant business.</p> <p>She drives independently, has her own office, and her travel includes meeting clients and attending events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical distance from family (parents)</li> <li>- Autonomous mobility</li> <li>- Having options and making independent decision (no need for family permission)</li> <li>- Independent decision when starting a business, and when engaging in business activities including travel</li> </ul> <p>When proximity to home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility constraints</li> </ul>
21	Salma	<p>Salma is 35 years old. She grew up in SA, did her higher education including her PhD in the UK. She worked in SA and then Dubai. In 2010 she started her business in Dubai that is related to education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical distance from family (parents)</li> <li>- Autonomous mobility (independent driving)</li> <li>- Independent decision when starting a business, and engaging in business activities</li> </ul>

		<p>She drives independently and own her own car.</p> <p>Her mobility includes local travel as well as international travel to SA and UK to meet clients and build relations through attending events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having options and making independent decision (no need for family permission)</li> <li>- Fear of doing business with the opposite sex</li> </ul> <p>When proximity to home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility constraints</li> <li>- Family interference</li> <li>- Uses Uber and Careem as alternatives</li> </ul>
22	Afnan	<p>Afnan is in her late 35, single mother, and has 3 children. Her parents are based in SA (Jeddah), where she grew up. She studied in the USA. Prior to starting her business she worked in Dubai. She started her business in Dubai in 2015. She owns a restaurant and she is the head chef of her restaurant. She drives independently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical distance from family (parents)</li> <li>- Autonomous mobility (independent driving)</li> <li>- Independent decision when starting a business, and engaging in business activities.</li> </ul> <p>When proximity to home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility constraints</li> <li>- Family interference</li> </ul>
23	Anwar	<p>Anwar is 29 years old, single, and lives in London independently. She grew up in SA, done her BA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical distance from family (parents)</li> <li>- Autonomous mobility</li> </ul>

		<p>there, then done her Master's in London. She worked in both SA and London. In 2013 she decided to start her business in the area of creative industry (web development and graphic design). She uses public transportation to meet clients and when going to networking events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having options and making independent decision (no need for family permission).</li> </ul> <p>When proximity to home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility constraints</li> <li>- Fear of doing business with the opposite sex</li> <li>- Family interference and need for family permission</li> </ul>
24	Hadeel	<p>Hadeel is 33 years old, single, and lives in London. Her parents are based in SA. In 2012 she started an investment and property management company in London.</p> <p>She uses public transportation and private car.</p> <p>She moves to meet investors and clients and to see properties on behalf of her clients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical distance from family (parents)</li> <li>- Autonomous mobility</li> <li>- Having options and making independent decision (no need for family permission).</li> </ul> <p>When proximity to home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility constraints</li> <li>- Family interference</li> </ul>
25	Lubna	<p>Lina is in her 30 years old, single, and lives independently in London. Her family is based in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Geographical distance from family (parents)</li> <li>- Autonomous mobility</li> </ul>

	<p>Saudi (Jeddah). She grew up in Saudi, then travelled to do her Master's and PhD in London. She started her business in 2012 related to website design and graphic design. She travels to meet clients, to build networks. She uses public transportation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having options and making independent decision (no need for family permission).</li> </ul> <p>When proximity to home country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility constraints</li> <li>- Fear of doing business with the opposite sex</li> <li>- Family interference and need for family permission</li> </ul>
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The main points that stands out from the participant description in the table above, was first, collectively, participants were well-educated with degrees in higher education. Second, all participants were raised in SA, which made them all familiar with the context including the socio-spatial structure of mobility, gender and family role. However, diversity was obviously seen in the selected sample, such as, their contextual conditions and coping strategies. This is explained in detail in the empirical chapters of this thesis (chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8).

#### *4.4.1.2 Thematic analysis*

There are different ways to reach primary set of themes (Tesch 2013). The current research applied thematic analysis to the data using NVIVO software as a starting point and as a way to organize the data. The study later analysed each interview manually and then reflect on the study's prior literature review to achieve a comprehensive thematic analysis. This analytical approach allowed the study to obtain a general thematic identification that worked well with rich and complex narratives (Ryan and Bernard, 2003).

The themes emerged from the interview data were based on the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon being under study (Ryan and Bernard 2003). Prior themes came as a result of personal experiences with the subject matter (Strauss, 1987). The current study began to generate themes based on the questions being asked as part of the interview protocol (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). However, this research employed the following techniques to discover the study main themes. It began by (1) analysing repeated words and phrases – this, according to Ryan and Bernard (2003), included key-words-in-contexts; (2) analysing similarities and differences by comparing and contrasting, and searching for missing information in the data, which occurred through careful reading of the text; (3) Analysing linguistic

features such as metaphors, transitions and connectors (ibid.), see table 7 below. It is worth mentioning that these techniques were often combined and applied in most stages of the data analysis process.

Table 7: Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis techniques	Themes that emerged from the interview data	What does this tell us?	Themes
Words/phrases repetition	<p>1.E.g. the idea of <i>Fear</i> through the use of the following phrases ‘I’m concerned’ ‘I’m scared’ ‘I fear’</p> <p>2.<i>Women’s discussion and negotiation with the family to seek family permission</i> ‘I told my father ...’</p>	<p>Internal self-discourse of aspects that ties with one’s perception of fear and safety.</p> <p>The role of family in women’s decision.</p>	<p>Fear</p> <p>Family-to-work conflict</p>
Comparing and contrasting	E.g. comparing two experiences ‘Here its ... there it is ...’	<p>Entrepreneurs’ geographical location: geographical proximity vs. geographical distance.</p>	<p>-Freedom and control.</p> <p>-Preferences</p>
Missing information in the data	Male family member rule in facilitating women’s mobility	Contextual and social condition.	<p>-Mobility condition</p> <p>-Gendered mobility</p> <p>-Opportunities for mobility</p>

Connectors	E.g. Time-oriented relationships 'it <i>used</i> to be ...' Casual relations 'because still, I'm a woman' 'I want, but ...' Spatial orientation 'it's <i>far so ...</i> ' Comparison 'my situation is different <i>from</i> my friends'	Contextual factors	Sub-themes: -Coping strategies.  -Choice, options and preferences
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Looking for themes in interview transcripts required poring through close analysis of the texts, commenting and highlighting emerging themes. Identifying themes began with (1) transcribing the recorded 24 interviews (as one interview was not recorded, but notes were included) (2) proofreading the written material then underlining and highlight key phrases (Sandelowski 1995). This includes, capitalizing and making bold vital phrases to capture the researcher's eye when reading the text at a later time, because, the written documents were read more than twice (Bogdan and Biklen 1982). According to table 7, the following aspects are applied to analyse the data:

1. Words/phrases repetition

To make sense of the data, the study looked at the common ideas and words mentioned by participants. The words that occurred many times by participants (through individual case analysis) and across respondents were seen as being salient. In this sense, they were 'topics that occur and reoccur' (Bogdan and Taylor 1975, p.83) and were 'recurring regularities' (Guba 1978, p.53). With this in mind, the current research found words repetition as an easy approach when reading and coding interview texts, as it was salient and explicit.

In the process of data analysis, the study highlighted words and synonyms that were repeatedly used by participants. For instance, while conducting interviews with participants, the study found that respondents repeatedly used the word fear by saying 'I'm scared', 'I'm concerned'. This led the study to apply fear as a theme, because their emotion and feeling were mentioned when discussing their decision of mobility for social activities (chapter 5). This was highlighted and marked in the text and include cutting out quotes that used similar ideas or words, pasting these quotes in a table with participants' names (nicknames were added later), while maintaining the context in which the words/ideas occurred. This, however, alluded to the point on Key-words-in-context (KWIC). Key-words-in-context, according to Ryan and Bernard (2003), is based on observation; they argue that, in order to understand a concept, we need to look at how it was used in that context.

## 2. Compare and contrast of similarities and differences

This idea of comparing and contrasting occurred when the text hold similarities and differences across units of data. Charmaz (1990) addressed that such approach allows the researcher to stay focused on the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) encouraged the researcher to ask the following questions 'what is this sentence about?' and 'How does it differ from the preceding or following statements?' (p.84-95). To this research the comparing and contrasting technique were adopted by asking 'what does this remind me of?' (Bogdan and Biklen 1982)p.153) and how it is similar to or different from the same interviewee or from other interviewees. Looking at the present study, it asks what similarity do local entrepreneurs have with one another and what similarity do they have with transnational as well as returnee entrepreneur? (Proximity to strict social condition exists in the home country). And

what are the differences between them? (Proximity versus distance question allowed comparative themes to emerge (see chapter 8).

### 3. Missing information in the data

Missing information is about being 'alert to topics that your subjects either intentionally or unintentionally avoid' (Bogdan and Taylor 1975)(p.82). It is about asking what is missing in the data (Ryan and Bernard 2003). In the present study, it was obvious that participants neglected discussing the role of male family member in facilitating women's mobility (as an alternatives when lacking mobility). In contrast, participants were more likely to give out information about their use of Uber and Careem as alternatives for their mobility. This highlights Uber and Careem as an alternatives and dismiss male family member role in this regard. This reason of missing information from the data, may have something to do with how thing are in such context that not worth mentioning in their discussion (see chapter 7).

Building upon this, it was obvious that participants justified some of their answers that related to personal matters by leaving out information, indicating, 'you know how it is' or 'you know'. This, according to Spradley (1979), is called abbreviation. This, however, requires cultural understanding, because participants seemed to assume that the investigator already knows about the context and the way it operates, which lead participant to discard discussing interesting matters.

### 4. Connector

Connector is another aspect to draw themes out of texts. This is achieved by making implicit connector, transitions and metaphors more explicit (Ryan and Bernard 2003). With respect to the current study, it was possible to identify a number of connectors such as Time-oriented relationships 'it used to..' or 'when I was ... but now', which

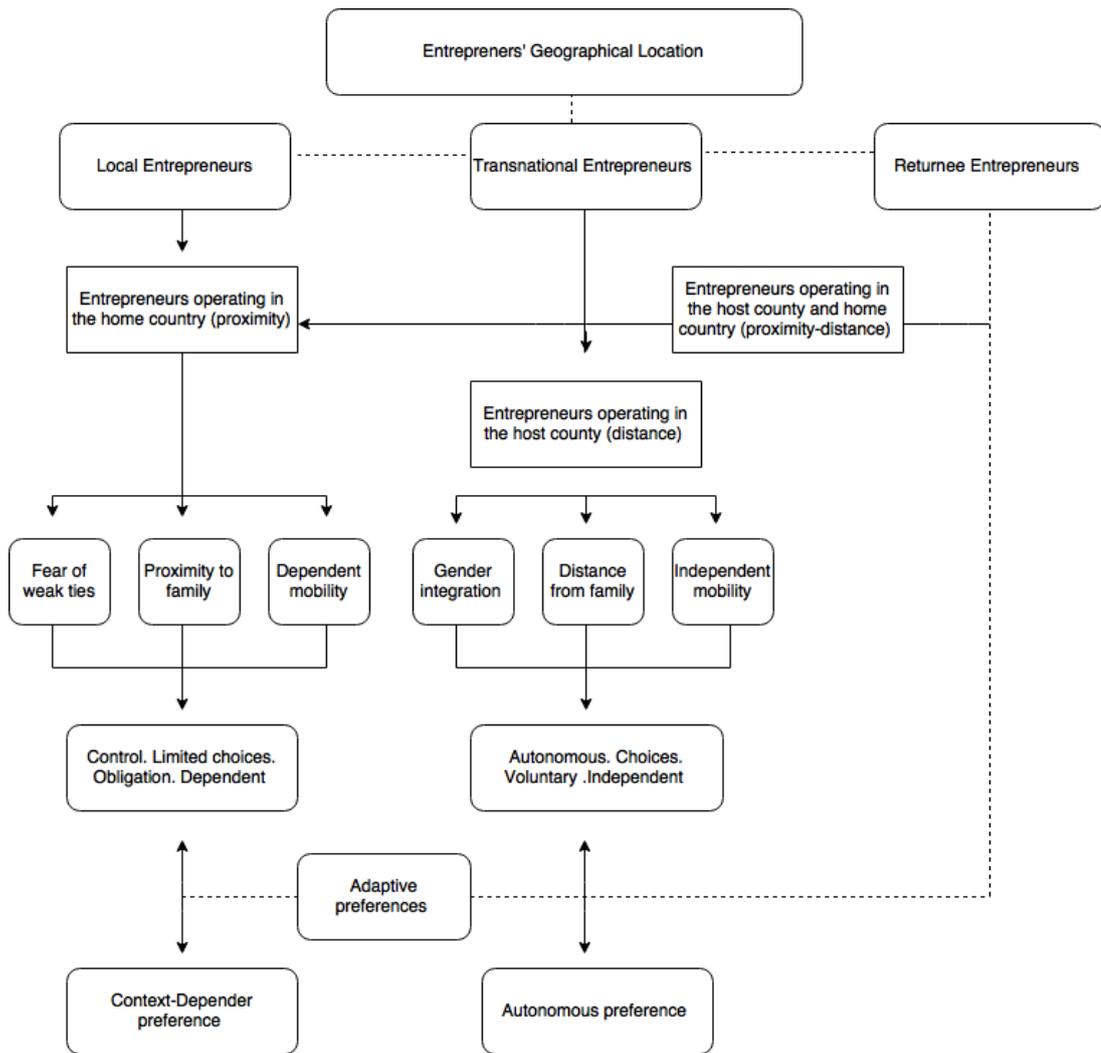
showed the participants past experiences, choice, options, and preferences with respect to their contextual condition (geographical location). Investigating the connector in the text sharpens the capacity to find themes and sub-themes for the phenomenon being under study (chapter 5, 6, 7, &8).

#### *4.4.1.3 Template analysis*

After individual case analysis and thematic analysis the current study followed the guidelines of coding through template analysis (Crabtree and Miller, 1999; King 2012). Template analysis is ‘group of techniques for thematically organizing and analysing textual data’ (King 2012, p.256). Template analysis is flexible in terms of data gathering and analysing procedures that allows incorporating predefined concepts or codes (King 2012). Template analysis was employed to organize the themes emerged from thematic analysis. Robson (1993) and Doern (2008) clearly explained that a template is a coding scheme, where codes are organized and arranged in a hierarchical fashion showing relationships between broadest themes and sub-themes. Although the pervious analytical approach of thematic analysis begins by identifying prior themes that exist in the literature review and research question (Robson, 1993). Thematic analysis is seen as ‘provisional’ and ‘open to modification’ to fit the text (King, 2012). Therefore, the current study used template analysis to go back and forth between the template and the transcripts to make coding and connections and most importantly present the findings in an organized manner (Crabtree and Miller 1999) (See figure 1). For example, the code ‘constraints’ was used for factors was associated with negative impact on women’s engagement in business activities and in relation to mobility, network or family. These factors were classified and structured in relation to individual family (tight ideology), mobility condition (e.g. private transport, shared mobility, solo use of

mobility, fear, family rules etc.) while considering the contextual condition (e.g. constraints from family, or constraints in independent mobility versus options in dependent mobility). The other code was 'strategies', which encompasses any 'cognitive response that reduces or removes the negative effects of stress' (Mena et al., 1987, p, 208-209). The term spatial strategy was employed with respect to addressing women's coping mechanism of mobility condition. In other words, the term spatial strategy was employed to explore the decision made and the action considered by the individual to overcome mobility constraints (Nordbakke, 2013). These themes that had emerged are discussed in the following chapters and in great details (see chapter 8).

Figure 1 Template analysis



Based on figure 1 and when comparing and contrasting research findings. The sample of the current study shared similarities as well as differences. (1) Local entrepreneurs as well as transnational and returnee entrepreneurs who experienced *proximity* to the Saudi context confirms the rule family ideology had on their decision to engage in business-related activities, because women were obliged to follow family rules. Fear occurred in this case, mobility condition and gender-based ideology limited women’s engagement in business-related activities. (2) Returnee entrepreneurs (distance-proximity) emerged as a sub-group from the data as they

were found to be experienced a sense of loose social condition when distance from the home country by living abroad (similar experience to transnational), then experienced constraints upon their return (similar experience to local). Such group had to adjust to the changes in their social condition from being autonomous in their mobility to being controlled and limited. It should be clear that transnational entrepreneurs and returnee entrepreneurs shared similar traits to local entrepreneurs when operating in Saudi (proximity). Therefore, the data presented in the three first findings (chapter 5, 6 & 7) of this thesis included quotes from these three groups of entrepreneurs as their discussions were in reference to the context of Saudi (proximity to Saudi). Chapter 8 then focuses on transnational entrepreneurs and addresses the differences between each group and with respect to their geographical location.

Women's marital status was crucial here and revealed an interesting aspect regarding the women-family relation. In this sense, married women were always proximate to their family (husband and/or kids) whether living in SA or living abroad, whereas single women had proximity to family when in SA, and were therefore obliged to follow family rules, but then when they were abroad they were at a distance from family. Mulder (1993) states that single individuals have more opportunities for moving to far distance than couples or families with children. Building upon this, single women were found to be geographically distant from family (parental pressure: rules and ideology) and distance from strict contextual and social condition. In the context of the current research, women's distance from parents reveals aspects that are relevant to their sense of agency – ability to make independent decisions and without family interference. (3) Transnational

entrepreneurs (distance) highlighted experiences of autonomous mobility, having sets of option to choose from, and the ability to make independent decision under loos social conditions (similar to returnee experience when living abroad). With this in mind, it is worth mentioning that, due to the rigid social condition on women in SA, the norm is that Saudi women tend to be proximate to the social condition (living in the home country and following regulations and social norms) as well as being proximity to family (regardless marital status) finding Saudi transnational women entrepreneurs is considered a new phenomenon in Saudi society.

With this in mind, it is crucial to explain how the participants of this study came to be TE in the sense that they are geographically distant from their country of origin? Seeking higher education was one of the main reasons behind the creation of Saudi transnational entrepreneurs. This was a stepping stone for Saudi women to live abroad. This phenomenon is new in Saudi society. The phenomenon of women studying abroad has significantly occurred in Saudi society across different social class and when the Saudi government supported Saudi citizen's education through the launch of King Abdullah's Scholarship programme in 2005 (Hall, 2013). The programme was broad enough to allow both males and females to apply to study a variety of subjects, at different levels of degrees in different countries around the world. This led the society to accept the idea (because it was being supported by the government) of sponsoring students of both genders to study abroad. This led conservative families to accept the idea of sending their daughters abroad to pursue their education. In other words, such an initiative from the Saudi government changed family perspectives on women's travel for education. Nonetheless, as a masculine state, one of the conditions for women to take up a scholarship is to be accompanied by a *Mahram* – that is a close male relative. A woman's marital status

influences this line of argument, where a single woman was found to have her father or brother as *Mahram* (not always the case as it is a matter that relates to family rules rather than government policies).

Women's travel is never completely free. Samar, a returnee entrepreneur, claims: 'My father was against me studying abroad, but I tried so hard to convince him.' This reveals family's rules and ideology as well as family's desire for protection and control when it comes to women's mobility. Salma who started a business in Dubai stated family rules regarding studying in the UK 'when I had gone to do my PhD, my father had made sure my mother accompany me'. Although the mother is not considered a *Mahram* according to the state policy (due to her gender), family rules and desire for protection regarding women's travel consist of having a family member, regardless of gender. This could be because being alone can put women in harm. Women's mobility to study abroad is a sensitive topic in the household, which could be because families consider women to be vulnerable. Similarly, Dunia highlights that 'to him [my father] it was important that I'm protected, surrounded by family and people who are responsible for me'. Women's mobility was conditioned by family need for protection experienced, which seems to be challenging. However, later these women were found to live abroad alone at a distance from family, Hadeel, who lives in the UK, notes that 'I then managed a lot of things, drove the car, ran the errands on my own.' While married women tend to travel with their husband. Hanoof and many others state: 'I went with my husband to the USA because he had a scholarship.'

On this note, it is possible to claim that Saudi women became transnational entrepreneurs primarily as a result of educational purposes. In other words, Saudi women did not engage in the search process to move abroad to start a business.

Lubna notes ‘I was studying here [London] so I started here.’ Nouran explains ‘So the plan was to come here for 10 months do my Master and then move back to Saudi the day I finish.’ Also Dunia claims: ‘I’ve studied in London UK. I finished last summer, and as soon as I finished I decided to start my business.’ Whereas, Afnan reaffirms that ‘it was Dubai because I was working in Dubai, it’s not that I moved to Dubai to open my business’. Similarly Salma highlights ‘I had a job when I moved to Dubai, and that when I started to do my project and I thought of starting my business.’ Although these women studied in different countries, working abroad was another way for starting a business. This shows that women’s decision to start a business in a geographical context came after living abroad (through studying or working) and being familiar with the context rules and policies, which shows how Saudi women became transnational entrepreneurs at the first place.

#### 4.5 Reflexivity

Reflexivity relies heavily on the researcher’s awareness of his/her involvement in shaping the research. It mainly requires careful interpretation and reflection (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000). The researcher’s awareness of theoretical assumptions and pre-understanding of the context and language influence her/his interpretation. Although it is easy to address the reflexivity activities the researcher was involved in throughout the research, it is more challenging to propose ways in which each clearly enhanced the researcher’s understanding of the process. Nonetheless, the aim of this section is to shed light on the researcher experience when approaching participants, and in the process of data collection that led to reflection that had, or likely had, improved the researcher performance in some area. This section elaborates on the reflexive activities undertaken throughout the data

collection process, which was partially adapted from King, (2004, p. 20) and closes with an evaluation of the quality of data interpretation.

#### 4.5.1 Reflexive activities in the current study

Ways to be reflexive in research	Data collection process and activities in the current study	Reflexivity
A. Before the process of data collection		
Documenting presuppositions at the start of the research process	<p>The research presumptions were as follow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When a context lacks women (as social group) from independent mobility it may constrain women's engagement in business-related activities when starting a business, this is unlike a context, where women's mobility is relaxed.</li> <li>2. Women's perception and understanding of family permission is likely to constrain and limit their engagement in business-related activities (social process and mobility).</li> <li>3. The strength of network ties may influence women's business-related mobility.</li> </ol>	Compared presupposition with research findings.
B. During the data collection process		
Recoding and taking notes during the interview process and after the interview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Besides audio recording, the researcher recorded certain statements and keywords mentioned by the interviewees during each interview.</li> <li>2. After each interview the researcher recorded feelings, observation as well as interviewee's reaction to some questions.</li> <li>3. The researcher translated and</li> </ol>	This helped the researcher to improve the quality of the potential interviews.

	transcribed the full interview in a document along with writing comments, which highlighting repeated/contradicted patterns in each interview.	
Meeting with others to reflect on the interview experience whether they know about the research (supervisors) or do not know about the research focus (academics, friends and journalist)	Throughout the process, the researcher met with colleagues, both academics and practitioners, to discuss and reflect on the interview experience and considered the perspectives that came out of participants' discussion.	This helped the researcher to check interpretation and to rethink and reconsider other's assumption.
Thinking about the researcher performance when listening to recorded interviews	After each interview the researcher listened to the recorded interviews.	This helped enhance the way the researcher conduct further interviews and ways to encourage participants to engage in the interview discussion.

Partially Adapted from King (2004, p. 20)

Before the process of collecting data took place and in relation to the advice given by King (2004) and Hycner (1985), they recorded and documented presuppositions at the start of the research process with reference to the subject being under study. On this note, Hycner (1985) claimed that it is crucial to suspend or bracket the researcher's interpretations and meaning before entering into the world of the individual being interviewed. At the same time, he acknowledged that the researcher does not separately operate within 'presuppositionless space', where a 'complete and

absolute phenomenological reduction' would be 'impossible' (Hycner 1985, p. 281). In his view, presuppositions could influence the research, which the current study upheld.

Four presumptions were identified in the current study: (1) when the context bans women from driving, it may affect the way entrepreneurship is conducted, unlike a context where women's mobility practice is relaxed; (2) women's perception of family permission is likely to constrain women's activities (network and movements); (3) the strength of network ties (e.g. weak ties and strong ties) may affect women's potential for movement; (4) women's contextual condition may shape women's options, decisions and regarding their engagement in business-related activities and travels. These presuppositions alluded to the point that woman's mobility constrains women's engagement in social networks as a business activity. However, in reflecting on these presumptions throughout the collection period, the researcher noted the participants' reaction regarding these aspects (local entrepreneurs). Interestingly, they did not bring mobility into their discussion until the researcher explicitly asked. Indeed, it seemed challenging even when prompting with this group to respond when asked about the nature of their mobility or when asked to elaborate whether lack access to means and independent mobility influences their entrepreneurial activities when starting a business. They did not object to issue of dependent mobility, but rather addressed the opportunities associated with dependent mobility (as well as spatial strategy). The same observation occurred when women talked about the institution of the family and family permission. Furthermore, they showed a clear correlation between their potential for movement in relation to the strength of network ties. This is explained in the findings section,

but the point here is that these presuppositions changed with respect to the research findings, which reminds the researcher to be open about participants' views and claims (see findings chapters).

Throughout the process the researcher met with colleagues, both academics and practitioners, to discuss, communicate and reflect on the interview experience. This aspect helped the researcher to reflect on her perception from the data being collected, which opened new and unexpected debate on the subject under study. These meetings involved the researcher's expression of feelings, experiences and reactions when conducting interviews. This also enabled the researcher to reconsider the emerging themes from the data rather than giving descriptive lists. A close friend who completed a study in psychology, constantly reviewed the researcher views and highlighting some aspects that was not considered by the research before, which alert the research mind of considering different views.

Thinking about the researcher performances during the interview was part of the reflexive activities undertaken in the current research. This was achieved, when the researcher listened to the recorded interviews after each interview to judge the way the questions were asked, including the way the researcher engaged and interacted with participants. This was done with the aim to improve potential interviews. One aspect that was reconsidered was the researcher's voice tone when asking questions, and adding follow-up probes this was considered to comfort the interviewee and to allow them to speak and reveal personal matters and experiences more openly rather than making them feel that they are being investigated.

#### 4.5.2 Contextualisation

Although the researcher was familiar with the context under study, it was possible to get the impression that participants who were based and started a business in SA were reluctant about revealing personal information when the participants were asked about it. This can be explained by three possible reasons: one is related to participants' ego about being private and keeping face. Since SA is a tribal society, people tend to know each other, or know someone who knows someone. The social behaviour of gossiping and talking about others could be one of the reasons that make them reserved in talking about personal matters. Therefore, the implication in conducting the research with Saudi women was that the researcher and participants were from the same country, which meant that the participants were hesitant to share personal matter with the researcher (the researcher is considered a stranger with whom they have weak ties with). Although there was little that could be done to convince some participants to speak about their personal experience and family matters, the researcher continued asking general questions until a point was made by participants that left room for the interviewer to ask further personal questions. Another approach to overcome this is the researcher ability to build trusted relationship. For instance the researcher would share personal information with the participant and constantly assured and remind participants 'what is said in the interview will remain confidential, and anonymous and will be used for the research purposes only'.

In addition, as mentioned earlier it was noticeable how participants relied on the researcher knowledge and understanding of the context. Most of the interviewees commented 'you know how it is' or 'as you know' which lead the researcher to

indicate ‘yes I know! But can you tell me your opinion’ or ‘I want to hear your own experience’.

Furthermore, and the beginning of the interview, some participants start to allude to ‘*others*’ when asked questions related to their mobility condition and family rules and ideology. For example, when the researcher asked ‘do you face issues when it comes to transportation?’ One of the participants responded ‘not in my case, but I know people that face issues with mobility’. Similarly, when asked about family rules in terms of what they are allowed and not allowed to do. Most of the participants would claim ‘my family are not that bad when I compare them with ...’ One entrepreneur argued: ‘I know of entrepreneurs who are founders, and their fathers prevented them from even meeting with male investors, my friends said, “we want to grow the business, but we can’t”, because their fathers told them to stop and to close down the business, as it’s not important. So my family won’t do that.’ Other interviewee mentioned ‘but my case is different, because my family is different, I mean they are ‘open-minded’ compared to other people I know’. One possible reason could be wariness about the researcher judgement, it could also be due to cultural sensitivity to the issues being covered and the safety in hiding behind a ‘third person’. This line of work align with Boyd and Vozikis (1994, p. 67) work that argues ‘people form judgments of their own capabilities by comparing themselves to others’. However, the researcher sought to ask further questions related to participants experience and account to bring the focus to the individual own story.

In the process of data collection, discussing mobility and its influence on entrepreneurs’ engagement in business-related activities varied in discussion

between participants who operate in SA and those who lived outside SA. It was noticeable that participants who were based in SA did not subscribe to issues around mobility during the process of the interview, this led the researcher to direct the interview towards its objective, by generally asking questions such as ‘what activities do engage in?’ ‘Where do you go? How?’ then asking whether these activities requires any local, regional or international travel. Furthermore, when investigating mobility, initial questions such as the way women schedule mobility, their position in the household, and the size of household were asked, to reveal a general understanding of women’s mobility condition. Therefore, due to the researcher pre-awareness of different mobility conditions in different context (in SA and outside SA) the questions where framed with that aspect in mind. For instance, when interviewing women entrepreneurs in SA the question of ‘do you have a driver?’ was more appropriate than asking ‘do you use public transportation?’ This is because there are no options for women in SA when it comes to public transportation. The latter question was more of a question to be asked to Saudi women operating businesses outside SA where transportation means are available and accessible. It is worth mentioning that some participants were confused as to why the researcher was asking such ‘obvious’ questions, when the researcher herself is from that context. The expectation was that the researcher knows the answer to such a question. With this in mind, the researcher became aware to phrase some questions in different ways with respect to the participant’s geographical location as well as contextual condition.

#### 4.6 Evaluating the quality of data interpretation

Since the methodology and methods employed in this study have been addressed and discussed, it is crucial to evaluate the quality of data interpretation by examining the reliability and validity of the research findings. It is also worth mentioning the extent to which the research findings in qualitative study should be considered as reliable and valid. It was well noted in Silverman's (2001) view that qualitative research should be treated like quantitative research in terms of having a 'credible' base. It should be clear that the current study does not make theoretical generalizability of the research findings, because the findings are not statistically generalizable.

#### 4.6.1 Reliability and validity

Reliability is about the 'consistency of the research findings' (Kvale, 2009, p.235). Considering reliability was crucial in strengthening the current study in several ways, most of which were discussed and addressed in earlier sections.

At first, the interview guide was pre-tested as suggested by Silverman (2001). The importance of pre-testing allows the researcher to be alert to the possible problems that might occur during the interviews (Bragason, n.d). Therefore, pre-testing involved carrying out pilot interviews prior to the main data collection period. In addition, the research sought to ask similar questions from different angles to assure that the data being collected was transparent and true from participant account. This was achieved through creating a sense of 'trustworthiness' between the researcher and the participant that developed gradually in the interview process.

In addition, Patton (2002) alludes to the point that reliability is a 'consequence' of validity. Validity has been defined as 'the extent to which an account accurately

represents the social phenomena to which it refers' (Hammersley, 1990, p.57). The validity of this research is flagged up below. First, the researcher attempts to establish a 'descriptive validity' of participant account. This mainly considers 'what the researcher report of having seen or heard' (Maxwell, 2004, p.45). To achieve this, it does not only require recording interviews but also transcribing interviews along, questioning the meaning of what was being said by participants during the interviews, probing and repeating back crucial statements/responses made by participants. Second, the current study improved its 'interpretive validity' of accounts, which is concerned with 'what object, events and behaviours mean to people engaged in and with them' (Maxwell, 2004, p.48). This research took participants words, concepts and mood as part of their own accounts (Maxwell, 2004; Miles and Huberman, 1994). It was crucial to observe and to take notes of participants' reaction in relation to their responses. Third, respondent validation, which means going back to participants with the research findings to question whether or not the findings align with the experience of participants (Silverman, 2001). This line of work was not employed in the current study for a number of reasons. First mainly stems from participants lack of time. It was inapplicable to contact participants to validate the research findings. Second, researcher concern that contacting participant may add new insights into the data and change the direction of the research focus where participants are not the best to validate it (Fielding and Fielding, 1986; Mason, 2002). Fourth, at the beginning of the process of collecting data, the researcher spoke to different stakeholders, including men who managed and owned institution that support start-ups of both genders, to discuss their views on Saudi women's barriers to entrepreneurship. This also includes speaking with women who made it to entrepreneurship a long time ago to reflect the changes in

policy and to understand their views on Saudi women's barriers in comparison to young start-ups. Accounts and inputs from these individuals gave an insight and understating of the subject being under studied. For more validation, the researcher discussed aspect of the research with academics, practitioners and politicians from SA and international, to bring new ideas, insights, and explanation (talking with other people about family interference showed that it is was not only the case for Saudi women but also other women around the world).

It should be stated that the current research was largely dependent on the theoretical saturation, and the researcher stopped collecting data once the theoretical saturation was reached (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). With respect to the current research, theoretical saturation was achieved when common patterns continuously emerged from the data and no new information has occurred.

#### 4.7 Chapter summary

The core focus of this section was to understand what research methods and research approaches were appropriate to answer the research question. Therefore, the aim of this section was to set out what the thesis judge to be an appropriate research method to efficiently answer the proposed research questions. With this in mind, conducting qualitative research served the research aim.

To recap, since the research aim is to gain a deep understanding of the perception and experience of entrepreneurs' contextual condition and it influence on their business endeavour, the study was positioned within the constructivist-interpretivist approach. Data collection relied on qualitative interviews, which allowed for unexpected themes to emerge. Interviews were held with 25 Saudi female

entrepreneurs in SA and outside SA. On this note, the sampling strategy of this study includes young solo women entrepreneurs and examined aspects related to their education background, family ideology and mobility condition that allowed for a better understanding of the social condition. The data revealed the similarities but also the differences among local entrepreneurs (proximity), returnee entrepreneurs (distance-proximity) and transnational entrepreneurs (distance), which the finding chapters discussed in greater details.

## EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### CHAPTER 5. WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' FEAR

#### 5.1 introduction

When the current study sought to explore women's decision to engage in businesses-related activities and by asking "which activities you engaged in? Which activities you avoid engaging in? And why?" The common pattern that has emerged from the data is women entrepreneurs' conceptualization of fear. It should be clear that one of the difficulties in the current research was finding a precise term that matches participants' expression of fear in the interview (conducted in Arabic). This appeared as an issue in the translation process, because ambiguity in matching Arabic meaning with English meaning was challenging. For example, the word 'Akhaḥ', used by participants to refer to their emotions and feelings about travelling to engage in out-of-home activity, when going to certain places, when interacting with people, and the temporal aspect of these activities. The participants articulated their feelings of being either afraid of something, concerned/worried about something, or scared of something. Participants used such word to indicate feeling unsafe and vulnerable. Therefore, going back to the some literature and pervious work led the current study to apply the term '*fear*' as it aligns with the research finding. This study follows Wilson and Little (2008, p.169) description of fear, which is an 'emotion caused by imminent danger, dread, apprehension and tied with the desire to avoid risk'. Fear could be anticipated and mean being afraid, reluctant and anxious as one expects that something unpleasant is going to occur or happen. In addition, the term fear was constantly used in studies that discussed individuals' emotion and feeling around mobility and movement (Koskela and Pain, 2000; Wilson and Little, 2008). In this

sense, Church et al. (2000) introduce the term, 'fear-based exclusion' that discusses how fear, worry and terror influence the way individuals use places, transportation and interact with people. Furthermore, it reveals the coping strategies women entrepreneurs employ to deal with fear in relation to their business endeavours. Since fear appeared as one of the findings in the current research, the question of interest is how fear had been conceptualized in women entrepreneurs' discussion and the cases in which women reveal their feeling of danger and fear.

## 5.2 Women entrepreneurs' fear and network ties

This study found how the strength of network ties influence women entrepreneur's decision to engage in business-related activities. The term 'fear' occurs in women's discussion and as an expression of weak ties.

It is crucial to note that network relations are considered as a proxy of personal trust (safety versus fear), where trust support social relations and fear undermine it. In the case of the current study, fear played a role in the way women entrepreneurs exploit and construct business opportunities and establish viable business relations. Saudi women were found to feel safe (trust) when dealing with people of strong ties. The claim made by the participants of the current study confirms the definition highlighted in the literature review, where prior contacts count as strong ties and newly established contacts count as weak ties. Lubna notes, 'it's important to know the people'. Similarly, Shahad states 'I know her'. Nada claims, 'because I already know them, they are people related to family'. Strength of network ties seem to be crucial for women when starting a business in the context of SA. In addition, Yasmeen stresses 'they [the clients] always tell me who referred them to me, or they would tell me they've seen my work through someone. There is always a link with

someone I know. I never went to a meeting that is totally blind.’ Strong ties to Saudi women entail doing business with (1) people they previously knew such as acquaintances, friends, or relatives, and (2) people that are familiar, meaning social actors that are known to the entrepreneur’s own social circle. With this in mind, this study argues that women’s networks seems less business-oriented, as it is based on previous contacts rather than new contacts.

### 5.3 The interplay between network ties, mobility and places

Based on the data being collected, women’s own perceptions of safety and danger played a crucial role in their decision when it came to weak ties. Women seemed to employ a self-help discourse regarding engaging in mobility for business activities. Although they evaluate the benefit of meeting client or supplier, they internally negotiate the contextual condition within which they operate as to whether it is safe or not. Shahad revealed: ‘I have to evaluate and think, not only about the value of the meeting, but whether it’s safe for me or not.’ Similarly, Israa states: ‘first, I have to think about it’. Internal negotiation seemed the first step women go through to decide whether to engage in a business activity or not. Fear within business relations (fear-based relationships) leads women to calculate risk. Entrepreneurs do not only calculate the cost, time and benefit of meeting clients, but also calculate their safety and/or danger especially when they lack confidence and trust (weak ties). Noran stresses that ‘I’ll do evaluation, if it’s worth going then yes I’ll sure go.’ Similarly Luba indicates ‘you have to calculate’. These statements agrees with March and Olsen’s (1996, p.27) line of work that state ‘when trust is justified by expectation of reciprocal consequences, it is simply another version of economic exchange’. This is

relevant to the case where women exhibit a strong sense of fear that limits economic exchange between business parties of weak ties.

In order to link this research finding of fear with the research objective that aimed to understand how the strength of network ties influence/ and influenced by entrepreneurs' mobility for business-related activities. In this sense, when the present research sought to examine the ways in which women entrepreneurs' process urban mobility for business endeavours, Noaf points out: 'I'm scared to go', which shows that fear was one of the overriding themes that emerged in women's discussion of mobility. This aspect of fear overlapped among the three sample of women entrepreneurs (local, returnee and transnational) when operating in SA, which reveal an interesting aspect of the socio-spatial structure of SA as a context. When the study asked participants about their im/mobility of people and places women go to and that they avoid going to, a number of factors seems to influence women's decisions regarding im/mobility for business-related activities. Generally speaking, the participants express internal fear when it comes to going outside the house and engaging in spatial mobility. This chapter argues that examining women's perceptions and experience of im/mobility is crucial to the understanding of the factors that influence a woman's decision to engage in business activities that requires physical interaction and face-to-face meeting.

Most of the literature ignored to take mobility as a concept to understand its implication on female entrepreneurs in general and on their engagement in business activities in particular, in turn, the current study explores this in this chapter. Yet this study investigates a unique and extreme patriarchal context, it was found that fear occurs in different aspects of women's mobility.

Furthermore, mobility to meet people of weak ties was conceptualized and influenced by the location of the meeting, where women operating in SA feared travelling to far locations and unfamiliar places. Lana confirms ‘I don’t know the area because I’ve never been there, I don’t like discovering [new places]... I’m scared.’ The perception of fear persists to be prevalent for women when it comes to travel to unfamiliar areas. Based on this, women entrepreneurs stress avoiding travelling to unfamiliar places/areas, due to their fear of potential harm. For instance, women avoided going to ‘far places’, ‘never been to’, or ‘never heard off’ as it caused fear.. In this research, areas that were unfamiliar to participants and not previously visited (places of weak ties) created a sense of fear and lack of safety, this fear could be because places are shared with people of weak ties ‘who aren’t our relatives, friends, or work associates’ (Walterz, 1986, cited in Valentine, 1989, p.386).

In addition, travelling at certain times seem to be of concern when it comes to entrepreneur’s mobility to weak ties. Meeting times seemed to be part of women’s calculation for determining whether they should venture to a meeting or not. The women interviewed in this study regarded travelling at night and in the dark as unsafe. Many women similarly indicate ‘I’ll go when the sun is out’ (Lana); ‘usually I go during the daylight’ (Shahad) and ‘I avoid going in the evening/night.’ (Ina’am). This could be because nights are attributed as dark, hidden and difficult to be seen, while the vision is clearer in the daylight. A clear example for this is Lubna’s story ‘the client postponed the meeting time, which means that the meeting time will be after 8:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. I didn’t feel comfortable about it and I was

like you know what I'll cancel it and I did cancel it at the end.' Therefore, the temporal dimension can be linked with women's feeling of fear and safety regarding when to meet people of weak ties.

With weak ties, feeling fearful and unsafe came out in women's discussion about travelling to private places (e.g. someone's house). This was highlighted in the cases where women ran a business in the sector of design, photography, event management, coaching etc. that required physical proximity to private places to interact with new people. Women repeatedly showed that they fear harm and violence that could occur in private settings. Nada notes, 'I was scared to go to people's houses, especially one I don't know.' Going to people's private houses seems to promote a sense of fear, because in private places doors are shut, leaving no chance for a woman to escape once she is inside. On this note, Koskela (1997) argued that majority of violent incidents do not only happen in the public spheres but also in private places, especially the home. Hanouf, a family photographer, states: 'it's dangerous for me to go, you never know what's inside these houses ...' Therefore, it is obvious that it is likely for the woman entrepreneur to pay a close attention to the spatial and social settings (sense of place and strength of network ties), especially when women's businesses rely on meeting new clients in a private setting. These findings follow the sociologist David Hummon (1992, p.258) who explained: 'sense of place involves a personal *orientation* toward place, in which ones' understanding of place and one's feelings about place become fused in the context of environmental meaning'. Prior to embarking upon mobility to go places, these women perceive that accessing certain places is associated with fear due to the patriarchy of a place. The perceptions of masculine places influence the

entrepreneur's mobility to that place. Inaam stresses 'I don't go there. I'm scared, because it's an industrial area and it's a male-dominated area. They don't accept the idea of a woman going there.' This perception of masculine dominance in some places influence women's feeling of safety to travel to these places. In many incidents women felt fearful in relation to the socio-spatial structure and meeting the opposite sex due to socio-political structure of SA that stresses gender segregation. Lina mentioned that 'I wasn't comfortable about it [meeting a man in a public place]...' this statement was shared by other women, who tend to be concern about meeting a man in public places as it socially and culturally discouraged. Lina justifies her sense of discomfort by claiming, 'it's really inappropriate to meet a man in a hotel lobby here in Saudi'. It is possible to claim that women's travel to meet clients can be associated with certain images of a place (e.g. hotels) that are perceived as inappropriate in such a society. It seems that women entrepreneurs' use of spaces and places is still structured and governed by social control, a patriarchal system and power relations. Certain places hold certain negative images (perceived as negative in the society) where women feel unsafe about, lead women to discard travelling there.

This could reveal the cases where women embark upon mobility and turned potential mobility into actual mobility (e.g. in the case where ear occurred while being in a place and as a result of actual mobility). For example, a transnational entrepreneurs reported her experience of doing a business in Saudi and when being in a place that 'when I went to meet him, he made me feel uncomfortable ... I didn't know what his motives were, I didn't know if he wanted to do business or he wanted something else.' (Dunia). A woman entrepreneur expects the client to act within a business/work boundaries, the interpretation of unwanted attitude leave women with

the option to limit their businesses to a particular gender and exclude the other. Alanoud highlights: 'My business targets women and not men; as a woman I think this is much easier for me.' These women seem to articulate that the thought of having men as clients is a challenging one. In a similar vein, Lulua said, 'because I'm targeting women so I think this is much easier in Saudi, if the customers were men, maybe ... it would be a little more difficult and challenging'. It is possible to say that women's preference to do business with women rather than men has something to do with their perception of danger to do business with the opposite sex. To this end, it is possible to argue that these women seem to consciously conduct a business while pay close attention to gender implication. It is possible to argue that women operating in SA tend to minimize their interaction with men, because discomfort and fear continue to suggest that doing business with the opposite sex can still be challenging in a patriarchal society.

Gender and place play a crucial role in this regard, because the participants of the current study repeatedly claimed 'still, I'm a woman' when discussing their decision regarding social network. Women seem to be aware of their gender and the possible consequences their gender have on their business endeavours. Therefore, gender can influence the meaning of network ties in the context of the current study. Samar mentions 'we are females, we are always anxious and concerned about where we go and who we meet'. This line of work can be linked to previous studies that argued that place and gender is conceived in a way that influences the understanding of entrepreneurship. Gunnerud (1997) notes that studying gendered individuals in gendered places is an integral part in entrepreneurship research. In turn, mobility could also be gendered (Uteng and Cresswell, 2008; 2012). It should be clear that the term mobility is a mix of social and spatial arguments. Nada states 'I'm a bit afraid,

I'm scared to go ...' It is found that women's relationship with fear bonds with weak ties – that is, mobility to meet the opposite sex. Therefore, fear has the tendency to be unintentionally essentialist in the discussion of women's social interaction and women's mobility to places to foster social relation with the opposite sex.

In relation to this, the majority of the women interviewed felt fearful when it comes to doing business with the opposite sex. The finding of this research align with previous literatures that argued that women's networks usually consist of other women (Hanson and Pratt, 1991). As entrepreneurs, women are more likely to socialize and exchange information with other women (Hanson and Blake, 2009), but in this current study fear of the opposite sex was the reason for women entrepreneurs to interact with other women (strong ties of the same sex).

#### 5.4 Fear and society

Based on the findings highlighted previously it is possible to state that there is a collective consciousness of fear and safety in the society. Social messages that stems from the stories the society produces affect people's perception of fear. Marwa highlights 'because *I hear* other people's stories ... which scares me'. Social contacts can spread information about danger and crime that may affect the internal perception of safety for women. This can be linked to Valentine's work, who puts forward that 'mental maps of feared environments are elaborated by images gained from hearing frightening experiences and advice of others' (Valentine 1989, p. 386, cited in Wilson and Little, 2008). The participants of the present study tend to discuss their concerns about other's people perception about what is appropriate for a woman to do/go and what is inappropriate. As a result, one female perceived that the society disapproved of her activities (e.g. mobility to private houses). Hanoof who is

a photographer anticipates ‘if I went to their houses [clients’ private homes] it will make me look cheap and low. They wouldn’t look at me in a respectful way.’ Considering society’s perception can cause uncomfortable feeling for the entrepreneur in a way that limits her business endeavours. Lana highlights ‘they [people] feel sorry for me that I’m working as a photographer’. Furthermore, these statements shows that cultural norms reflect the general value that the society attribute to the activities an entrepreneurs engage in. In addition, by addressing these matters these women seem to care about the intangible aspects which exist in the society, like reputation ‘we all care about what other people say’ (Lana) or ‘what would people say about us?’ (Hanoof). These women seem to care about doing the right thing (that has a specific cultural meaning in the society) – ‘It’s inappropriate in our society.’ (Nada) – more than caring about the desire to do business itself. Depending on the application in question, these statements confirm that individual behaviours are not just based on self-interest but more likely consider the social interest.

Mainly, these women discussed anticipatory danger rather than actual ones. They did not mention direct personal incidents of attacks, crimes or harassments but rather linked their feeling of fear to the stories the society produced and societal reaction. Lana anticipated social attitude and reaction if something bad happened to a woman ‘the one to blame is the woman’ arguing that if women got harassed, society will react by saying ‘no one told her to go out of the house’. This statement shows women’s image and expectation from society, which weakens women’s trust in society. Drawing on the constructed messages of fear, women entrepreneurs felt responsible for making appropriate choices that would protect them from harm when doing business (being cautious and alert). This could count as a problem for women

entrepreneurs, because fear they feel restricted in choice of where they can and cannot go, and who to do business with and who to avoid. Therefore, it is possible to argue that women entrepreneurs' choices are restricted for patriarchal reasons. Building upon this, beside women's internal negotiation, they were alert to the fact that they would blame themselves if they made poor decisions. Reham admits, 'I'm afraid to go there, then hate myself for it.' This shows that women not only feel responsible for their actions and the actions of others, but also confirms their need for protection when making these actions, such as family protection.

#### 5.5 Women's perception of family fear

The data reveals that fear is not only subject to women's internal negotiation of what is considered safe by the society and what is not, but family fear contribute to this. Nada confirms this by highlighting 'not only me, even my husband worries ...' women's fear is not always based on internal views about the society, but also derives from family fear, especially when the woman is frequently given a specific warnings by family members to 'be careful'. Screen claims: 'he [my husband] tells me be careful, the most important thing is to be careful and to be cautious'. This statement shows that although men reacted from a genuine concern, they reinforce the danger women might encounter when going out-of-home for business activities, particularly, when they are venturing alone (considered alone even when driven by a chauffeur). Women's experience and perception are that the family (parents or husband) tend to be concerned about protecting them mainly from other men. These women demonstrate that this created a sense of concern, leading them to rationalize potential harm and risk when intending to venture for business-related activities.

Samar highlights ‘he [fiancé] would tell me ‘be careful; don’t do this and don’t do that’’, when families constantly ask women to be cautious of potential risks/harm, then women’s fear could be a result of family concern and fear. On this note, the findings of the current study agree with previous research that argues, women’s feeling of fear and safety is linked to family’s fear (Westwood et al., 2000; Wilson & Little, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, the stories the society produces regarding women’s safety can affect the family, Lana points out, ‘my husband sees a lot of cases, because of the nature of his job in the hospital and of course it affects him’. Alanoud adds ‘my father when he used to work, and when he goes to gatherings, he used to hear a lot of stories’. These statements reveal that the origin of family fear could be a result of the messages portrayed through the society. This shows the complexity between women’s engagement in business-related activities (social network, mobility to places) and family fear (could count as an interference). In this sense, the conversations that happen in and outside the household seem to shape women’s perception of safety versus danger.

This study found that women justified the fact that, due to family fear and the need for protection, they were not given permission to engage in specific business activities (the implications of family permission are discussed in detail in chapter 6). These women considered the family’s objection as the family’s right, as it indicates a sense of protectiveness. Alanoud explains: ‘because my father is very protective ...’. This statement can tell us that women’s perception of the family’s protectiveness is a form of family fear of the society and lack of trust in the society. Family male members can react to the activities women entrepreneurs are involved

in through the desire to protect them by restraining them. Many participants state a similar claim to what Shahad claims: 'because it's normal to have a protective family ...' or, as Haya views it, 'because my husband is concerned that something may happen to me'. This shows the multiple levels of constraints associated with women operating in a patriarchal society, where family lack of trust has been stressed as being a result of the society structure. Nouran states 'he [father] says, I trust you but I don't trust the people around you'. Also Nada addresses 'but he's [husband] always concerned and protective. He's a bit... He doesn't trust people.' To these women, family's fear is perceived as a reflection of lack of intuitional trust (social). Ahdab notes, 'I think he's right to be concerned about me working and dealing with the opposite sex.' Therefore, in the context of a patriarchal society, it is possible to argue that the family's protectiveness towards women seems to be no different from the family's protectiveness towards children. According to Skelton and Gough (2013, p.202), children 'may have mobility but are unable to translate this into mobility because of parental controls of their movement based upon fear and/or to offer protection', which this study found to be applied to women who are limited in translating potential mobility into actual mobility, due to family fear.

#### 5.6 Women entrepreneurs' coping strategies regarding fear

Constraints and opportunities exist in the environment of patriarchal society, however, most studies give more attention to entrepreneurs' challenges than entrepreneurs' coping mechanism to deal with the contextual conditions. Coping strategies are people's mechanism to reduce and minimize challenges (Moen and Yu, 2000; Jennings and McDougald, 2007). In this sense, coping strategies are the ways

in which entrepreneurs' maneuver to overcome barriers and constraints. In these cases, women were found to discuss their coping strategies with the constraints they faced as a way to deal with anticipated fear regarding their engagement in out-of-home activities.

As mentioned earlier, women exhibit fear in their discussion of mobility to places to meet people of weak ties. In the case of this study, women entrepreneurs varied in their coping strategies regarding fear, which in turn, either limits or enlarges their engagement in business-related activities.

#### 5.6.1 Women's coping strategies when doing business with the opposite sex

The strategies adopted by the women interviewed aimed to reduce fear associated with doing business with the opposite sex. Women employed avoidance strategies in 'uncomfortable situations'. Because the society is based on gender segregation, the interaction of both sexes creates a sense of fear to do things that are against the social norms. Dunia points out that her avoidance to meet men clients is a result of fear 'there's one particular client that made me feel uncomfortable, and then I decided I don't want to have this again...I stopped going to male clients meetings. I don't want to deal with men directly.' Anticipated fear is based on Dunia's physical presence in a semi-private place (office) with a male client, which led her to decide that she will avoid meeting a man alone in the future mainly to remove uncomfortable feelings of potential harm. Nonetheless, Dunia continues 'I decided to have all communication with a man client through a man. I just felt it was safer for me.' Hiring a male employee to communicate with men clients seems a coping mechanism for women's businesses in the sense that it scales back women's fear, because in such a society it

is safer for a man to work with another man and a woman to work with women (same sex). Avoidance strategies can limit women's direct engagement with a client, while applying a defensive strategy (aim to protect themselves), such as having a male representative to meet with male clients can enlarge women's business. One may argue that when a woman has a male representative then fear of the opposite sex may occur. However, this study argues that the power relation between a woman and a male employee is different from the power relation that exists between a woman and male clients, which influences women's emotions of fear and safety.

In addition, the women who participated in the current study were found to apply variety of strategies in different situations. Haya's strategy when meeting a male client in public places was stated as follows: 'I have to take my husband, or the client brings his wife, to avoid having problems.' This statement shows that when meeting the opposite sex family involvement and participation (to meet the same sex) in business meetings could count as a strategy to reduce fear associated with a woman meeting men. Similarly Fahda recommends 'you have to inform the family where you are going'. In addition, Lana states when going to a semi-private place to meet male clients 'I take precautions with me, I take a pepper spray and I even have an electric shock.' These women seem to be aware of how to operate in a patriarchal context where they use strategies aimed at self-protection.

#### 5.6.2 Women's coping strategies in relation to places

This study found that, beside the implications associated with doing business with the opposite sex, women entrepreneurs' feelings of fear and discomfort were

associated with places (sense of place: private, public, semi-private), which can be extracted from the previous arguments. However, Lina states that:

‘I decide on a location that is suitable [for me to meet a man]. It can be in a public place. For example, I used to meet people in Andalusia [coffee shop]. Because it has a working framework, and most of the people you see there, they gather to work on projects, charity work, businesses, so I like the place and I feel comfortable going there to meet people [male client].’

There is a complexity between meeting the opposite sex and the places in which the meeting take place, which makes women selective as to where to meet clients. As stated in the in chapter 3 that solo meetings between a man and a woman is against the social norms, therefore, women tend to be careful and aware of the type of places in which the meeting take place. Many of the participants had a similar response to Lubna’s indication of meeting men in semi-private places ‘It’s OK [to meet a man in their office], but it has to be in a familiar well-known location, not in a backstreet area. ..., you know, it has to be in a familiar location.’ Unfamiliar places and side alleys can be perceived as dangerous locations for women to venture to, to meet the opposite sex. These women had a general perception regarding gender and the location of a place, in the sense that they are restricted to travel to meet men in areas that are not located in the city centre or familiar business districts. These women used selection as a strategy as to where to venture and where they should not venture. Based on this, women try to travel where they feel safe, otherwise, they would avoid engaging in a business activities. Shahad confirms ‘I simply don’t go [to a place]. If something happened to me who will come and rescue me?’ Hanoof notes ‘I’m scared, I don’t want to go there [an area]. I don’t want to face a problem [by getting attacked] one day’. Due to fear women applied avoidance strategies even

if constraining their business-related activities. Nada an event planner highlights ‘when it comes to weddings I have to ask [the client] where the wedding is, because I don’t want to go to any venue. I’m scared.’ As part of the fear argument, Nada was selective when it doing business. She would accept doing a business when the venue is familiar and well known in the society and reject doing a business in an unknown venue. Such selectiveness determines women’s perception of *dangerous places* as well as *safe places*. Inaam clearly asserted: ‘I refuse to consider, or take on board the things that I know will stress me out and concern me.’ Women tend to stress what they avoid in relation to business activities, such as avoiding travelling to certain locations and places to meet people at certain times of day. By adopting such tactics, women entrepreneurs may avoid engaging in a place due to their perception of fear, while engaging in other places due to their perception of safety.

### 5.6.3 Women’s coping strategies regarding mobility

There have been a number of studies that examined the geography of women’s travel fear in western societies where women expressed fear when using public transportation and walking at certain times (Koskela and Pain, 2000; Wilson and Little, 2011). Although these options of travel (like public transportation and walking) are not available for women in the Saudi context, however, Saudi women experience fear when accompanied by a male driver while using private travel means. Participants in this study considered themselves sole travellers even when escorted by a male driver, because in some cases women perceived that being in the car with the driver (stranger) does not protect them from other societal harm. ‘I’m afraid to get lost’ (Ahadab). In other words, mobility is not only about the physical movement of a woman’s body to places, but it is also about constructing a woman’s

feelings in regard to her mobility. The reason for women's fear while being accompanied by a male driver could be because that driver was a non-Saudi, which makes their status weak (man's ability to protect women), because they are migrants, not locals, and therefore this can create different emotional responses: (1) superiority – the racist attitude of being the dominant group and the driver as the outside minority; (2) difference – they are culturally different or neutral; (3) strangers – they do not know Saudi society as well and therefore this explains the sense of being a sole traveller – the driver is invisible, powerless or ignorant of the threat of outside, as male Saudis would not see the driver as a barrier to harassing the woman – they too would discount the foreigner because of 1 and 2 (C. Smith, 2017, personal communication, 12 July). Lana says, 'I'm afraid to go alone ... and with my stupid driver it is like, there's no way.' Lana lacks the feeling of safety to venture with the driver to places that are subject to fear not only because of the place itself but because she perceives her driver to lack the ability to protect her if she needed a man's protection. This highlights the inherent racism or dominance and internal hierarchy in the car – the driver, although male and therefore a potential threat in the ideology of patriarchy in SA, which is neutralized, marginalized and disempowered (almost emasculated) because of his outside, servant, minority status. Building upon this, as mentioned earlier, this analysis of the male driver/female passenger situation not only confirms the contradictions existing in other areas of Saudi women's lives (women and men are separated in places to ensure that there is no transgression of local norms, while women are found to share intimate space with the driver in the car), but stresses the emotional implications this contradiction has on women entrepreneurs. In other words, although women reported discomfort in meeting a client of the opposite sex, it was also found that the female passenger did not feel

safe when being accompanied by a male driver. This could be explained by the fact of the driver being a non-Saudi national, therefore perceived as neutralized and emasculated, giving superiority and differences consideration (mentioned above) which leads to feeling unsafe. In these cases, women applied a strategy where they request a family member/friends to accompany them while venturing out, due to anticipated fear when travelling to places of weak ties (e.g. new, unfamiliar places). While some women employ avoidance strategies, some of the women highlight other coping strategies. For instance, Lana explains, ‘when I need to go places where I can’t reach it alone, and on my own, I take my husband, I need a man with me, or sometimes my friend, my real strong friend’. This shows that being accompanied by a close male relative or a strong friend would be a defensive strategy (means that protect women from harm) for women to reduce fear associated with mobility (with a stranger driver), which could count as a strategy that facilitate women’s engagement in business activities.

## 5.7 Chapter summary

This chapter reveals women entrepreneurs’ account of fear, where fear impact their engagement in business-related activities. This was evident in female entrepreneurs operating in SA (proximity to Saudi) including local, transnational and returnee entrepreneurs.

It should be clear that when women decided upon urban mobility they tended to link the physical aspect of a place with strength of network ties and gender. Women addressed their fear in the form of internal negotiation, which reflected societal views and family fear. With this in mind, women’s fear occurred with regard

travelling with the driver (solo travel), interacting with people of weak ties (opposite sex), gendered places (male dominated areas), unfamiliar location (far and never been there), travelling time (night and dark), and the sense of place (type of places: private, public, semi-private).

Women entrepreneurs in such contexts applied a coping strategy to deal with fear. Fear contributed to relatively high levels of concern and stress, which led women to apply avoidance strategy by avoid engaging in activities, such as meeting the opposite sex due to fear, which could limit women's businesses. In other case, it was found that when entrepreneurs employed a defensive strategy in order to engage in a meeting with weak ties, which seems a strategy that enlarge women's business. Here, women were engaging in coping efforts to facilitate their business endeavours. Instead of engaging in an avoidance coping strategies they act in a protective manner, as a way to minimize fear and maximize their business-related travel – such as accepting to travel to meet new clients while taking precautions. It was also found that women were selective as to what/when and where to engage in activities and when not.

To sum up, patriarchal societies serve to instil fear in women. The data revealed that female entrepreneurs in such a context seemed to place fear and safety as a pivotal determinant in their decision to engage in business activities. Since this chapter addresses the patterns that emerged in women's discussion of self-help discourse regarding the social condition within which they operate, this study found that patriarchy keeps women dependent and limits women's engagement in business-related activities. As a result, the coping strategies women employed is means to accommodate women's sense of fear even if it restricts the growth prospects of their business.

Beside internal negotiation, women engage in family discussion. These discussions are ways to gain family permission to engage in business activities, which is explained and analysed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 6. WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF FAMILY PERMISSION

### 6.1 Introduction

It should be clear that speaking of 'the family' with the participants of this study tended to be a mixture of a straightforward attack upon (where the family is perceived to limit one's ability to engage in business activities), and defence of the family (where the family is perceived to enlarge/facilitate women's engagement in business activities). Therefore, it is crucial for this study to acknowledge women's discussion of the family role, to address the perceptual context of such debates themselves.

Women's perception of family permission was incorporated in the research design to understand how this perception shapes and influences women's decisions in the pursuit of entrepreneurship. It should be clear that when women were proximate to family in the Saudi context then they were trapped to follow family rules in a particular way. Proximity to family refers to as the nuclear family that shares a household. This includes a husband, children(s), which is the case for married women, while single women's nuclear families include parent(s) and siblings. Since the focus of this study is on the activities of women entrepreneurs, family is a crucial dimension when studying people's decisions on being and becoming entrepreneurs, because individuals are not atomized when they decide to start a business, but they 'consult and are subtly influenced by significant others in their environment' (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986, p. 6). This study follows other literatures that consider the institution of family and entrepreneurs to be inseparably intertwined rather than treating them as separate institutions (e.g. Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Dyer, 2003). For example, many of the women interviewed had a similar argument to Aisha's

comment ‘because it’s [family domain] sensitive, they raised you that way... we come from a collectivist culture they don’t raise you as an individual, they raise you to remember that you are an honour to your family whatever you do it’s going to be shameful if you don’t do what your asked. What you do does not reflect one person but the whole family.’ This clearly shows the importance of considering family interest in almost every aspect of a woman’s life, including her career as an entrepreneur. Ahdab said, ‘because we are attached to our family we are not isolated, we grew up with this in our DNA’. Therefore, considering the family is part of the social structure. This finding of the present research supports Hofstede (2011, p.11) argument that indicates that collectivism is culturally valued in some societies, which reflects “the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups”. This is shown in women’s discussion and understanding of their roles within the family, which tend to be integrated rather than separated when making entrepreneurial decision.

In addition, with the argument around fear addressed in the previous chapter, family plays a crucial role, where women seek permission from the family to gain protection if something happened to them (as the society stresses family protection towards women). In other words, women’s discussions/negotiations with the family over potential mobility seem to be a form of gaining family protection once permission is obtained. For example, Lubna notes, ‘I went with their permission, which is important at the end in case something happened to me.’ Similarly Reham claims, ‘if something happened to me they know’. It is possible to claim that women unconsciously rationalize the importance of gaining family permission and count it as a mean of protection, which could be linked to the argument made in the previous chapter.

This study argues that women's proximity to family require integrating the family by informing the family of their intention to start a business. Lulua states 'I was saying [to my father] I want to start a business and I want to have a shop.' The statement shows that women deliberately inform the family of their desire and intention to start a business not as a form of choice but rather a form of obligation to do so. From women's perspective, informing the family *before* starting a business seemed as to be related to temporal and moral obligation for women to consider. Reham argues, 'you have to tell them and inform them about what's going on in your head before you do anything'. This shows that informing one's family is part of the social structure within which women operate. Women's obligation to inform significant members of their intention seem to be natural as well as inevitable in a context that stresses family permission. The term family permission occurs when women inform, discuss, and negotiate the potential to engage in an activity with an influential family member(s) (a husband or parents) in order to gain approval and consent. It should be clear that the term family permission is used in this research instead of male-guardianship system, because the latter tend to be patriarchal, however, this study found that although married women seek permission from their husbands (as a male guardian), single women are found to seek permission not only from the father but also from the mother (the mother can be a key player in the household). The single women interviewed state in their discussion statements similar to 'I have to inform them [both parents]' or 'I have to tell them [both parents]', which led the current study to use the term family permission to stress both parents' roles in a woman's decision to engage in business activities. Israa notes: 'I have to, because we are a family.' This shows that women make their decision with the family – as a collectively rather than individually.

The current chapter presents women's account of family-to-work conflict by bringing in the discussion reported by women entrepreneurs and highlights women's approach and coping strategies regarding family and work.

## 6.2 Women's discussion with family: family permission

Women's negotiation with the family over business-related activities was considered a new discussion (the first time for women to start a business and the first time to discuss aspects of their business with the family). Nada states 'it was a new thing to discuss with my husband'. It is possible to argue that starting a business brought a new discussion in the household that has not discussed previously. Alanoud claims: 'it [family negotiation] was just hard at the beginning'. Discussing new aspects in the household is perceived as difficult, as women start to understand family ideology, rules and belief system. Women were obliged to convince the family of the importance of what they desire to do to obtain family permission. It is crucial to define in the current research what is meant by family ideology, rules and belief system. A belief system or ideology is defined in this study as the things that is 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' to do according to the corresponding belief system. Alanoud argues 'the first time I had to discuss it [travelling], it wasn't like 'yes you can go'. It wasn't that easy.' This shows how family discussion can be challenging especially when seeking permission is for doing something for the first time. Again, women, as argued in this research, are subject to family permission, which strongly ties with family beliefs and family rules. By engaging in these discussion (aimed at seeking permission) women start to understand family ideology and to comprehend what is allowed and not allowed for women to do with respect to family ideology.

Israa notes ‘I had to clearly explain that I have to do 1, 2, 3 and I will need to go places and meet people, and people will order stuff from me and so on.’ This shows the detailed information women engage the family in. Israa explains ‘I tried to make sure that I gain approval from the beginning’. Women are unintentionally conscious of their responsibilities to gain family permission before embarking upon any business-related activities especially the ones that socially and culturally sensible (mobility, meeting the opposite sex) as part of their need for approval and acceptance.

In addition, women observed and noted family reaction in these discussions. Noran notes ‘my dad was *concerned*... It was new for him the idea that his young daughter who had just graduated to have her own business.’ Similarly, Israa addresses ‘she [my mother] was *in doubt* because it’s the first time I do such thing’. Reham points out that ‘he [my father] didn’t reject the idea [of starting a business] but *he seemed unsure*’. These observations made women perceive the family as reluctant rather than enthusiastic about women’s intention to start a business. This can be justified by arguing that when women intend to start a business the family as a social institution may react in an unassertive way due to patriarchal context. Fahda notes ‘she [my mother] is an academic and sometimes we have arguments, she doesn’t know what it means to be a business woman ... she believes in having a job and a salary’. This shows that family doubt could impose what a career should look like for women and could challenge women entrepreneurs. The data revealed that women as agents also challenged the assumption of family doubt. Ahdab stresses, ‘I had to prove to him that I’m trustworthy and I can do everything ... because I knew my capabilities and I know I can do it.’ Noran indicated, ‘there were a lot of issues [when establishing the business] but I proved it [my ability] to them [my parents] that I can do it [business]

and they saw how well I'm doing it'. In addition, Anwar noted 'I could prove to him [my father] that I believed in it [the business] and I believed in myself.' It seemed that proving oneself to one own family is part of women's agency that seeks to challenge the assumption of 'women can't'. This line of arguments can be linked to Gries and Naudé (2011) work that highlighted that the agency in CA can be related to entrepreneurs' self-efficacy, confidence and ability. For instance, females as a social group can be affected due to cultural norms, beliefs, which affect their self-efficacy in new firm start-ups (Minniti and Naudé, 2010). With this in mind, the agency of women entrepreneurs, which is defined 'as a person's belief in his or her capability to perform a task' (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994, p. 63) ties with women's need for self-approval through family approval. Noran addressed:

'I worked hard to get the trust through my life, I followed the role super good. So when I was a teenager and my friends go out from the house at 9:00 p.m. to the mall or to have a dinner and my dad's rule was to be home at 10:00 p.m., so even if they left their homes at 9:00 p.m. I would go for half an hour and come back home just to be home by 10:00 p.m., because I needed to gain that trust.'

Most of the women interviewed revealed incidences of past behaviours and linked it with the fact that they are worthy of trust when given the permission to act. This also shows that, although the male-guardianship system is embedded in the society and is viewed as controlling and limiting women, what it actually does is leave women with a sense of urgency to perform well to prove their ability to their family. Because gaining family permission is the basis for women to perform a task, where the family reinforces culture of patriarchy, therefore, women act and behave in line with family

rules. With this in mind, these women stressed the importance of following family rules when they were given the permission (to do something), as they understood that their capability depended on family permission, and therefore it was in their interest to obey and follow the family rule.

Later when women start to gain confidence, they observed a shift in family reaction towards their engagement in further activities. Nouran notes 'he [my dad] started to trust me and let me go and do whatever'. Lubna states 'it's easier now, I just say: 'by the way I'm going next Thursday to a meeting' while we are having tea in the afternoon'. Alanoud confirms 'It was just at the beginning where he did not understand the idea ... now he just knows that I have to go...' When women pass this stage of doing things for the first time it becomes less of a pressure for women and family become relaxed to give further permissions. Yasmeen stresses, 'they [parents] know about my travels now, it's part of the equation' which means that women expect their family to be familiar with discussions related to travel and mobility, as it happened previously. This shows that female entrepreneurship could change family dynamic and discussion and this changes in different phases of the business, which seems to expand women's capability to engage in previously exhibited business activities. Fahda clarifies 'he knows that I have to travel twice a year'. Therefore, it is possible to argue that women's business-related activities could possibly become familiar discussions in the household, especially when business-related activities (e.g. mobility, travel, social interaction with weak ties) was previously new and challenging to discuss with family. However, the following section discusses the cases of disagreement that leads to family-to-work conflict.

### 6.3 Women's perspective on the family: family ideology

Family-to-work conflict (family-work interference) emerges when family demand limits and constrains the performance of the entrepreneur and his/her work duties, resulting in poor job performances (see Frone et al., 1997 Ohlott et al., 2004). Family-to-work conflict in this research questions the cases where the family interferes with women's decision to engage in business activities. The current study found that women face ideology-based conflict, which emerges when business-related activities contradict with family ideology. Based on the data, the current study found that family-to-work conflict occurs in relation to (1) urban mobility and consist of issues around (a) mobility time and (b) social interaction with weak ties; and (2) overseas travel.

When it comes to women's mobility, family rules consist of the allowed/not allowed mobility time for women play a pivotal role in women's capability to engage in out-of-home business-related activities. It has been argued earlier, that mobility is crucial because entrepreneurs need to build social network, which leads to coordination, creating interpersonal relationships, building trust, and negotiating agreements between social actors (suppliers/clients). However, a woman's family plays a crucial rule in this regard. Nada reveals, 'he [my husband] told me 'being out until 10:00–11:00 at night is something I don't want'. The basis of this statement shows that women's mobility time has to be in line with family rules regarding 'allowed mobility'. Therefore, women are obliged to work within a time frame to reduce family-to-work conflict. In this sense, Sreen stresses that 'he told me that 'the latest appointment you take is 8:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m. After that you don't meet clients... this is not acceptable by me'. The time of women's mobility can create conflict in the household. Such conflict between women's doing and what is acceptable/not

acceptable to family members made women entrepreneurs alert to family ideology and act in line with it. Ina'am states, 'it is unacceptable [to my family] to come back home after 10:00 p.m.' This lines of work shows the influence family rules has on women's business endeavours. This stems from family rules, which lead women to be cautious and ware regarding the time in which they want to be out and venture. The argument around time-based conflict to this study is different from that of Netemeyer et al. (1996, p. 401) who state that time-based conflict in family domain 'occurs when the amount of time devoted to the work role interferes with performing family related responsibilities'. Time-based conflict in the context of the current research occurs when the time devoted to work domain conflict with family rules, such as the time of women's mobility. In other words, time-based conflict with respect to the context of the present study indicates that women's engagement in business-related activities have to fall within family rules (e.g. allowed mobility). Samar pointes out 'I started to think of the time. I know my father would not accept it, because I'm not allowed to stay out of the house after 10:00 P.M.' According to Gustafson's study (2006), work-related travel could be a source of conflict between work obligation and family obligation. From Capability approach perspective Shelley Phipps, Peter Burton, and Lars Osberg (2001) have shown that 'time stress tends to increase because they [women] have to cope with different sets of responsibilities and are subject to social norms that lay more responsibilities on them for the way the household is run or family members are publicly presented' (quoted in Robeyn, 2011, p.83). Nada said, 'I still have curfew', such statement reveals the aspects that contribute to family-to-work conflict, which seems to limit women's opportunity to engage in activities.

Furthermore, women entrepreneurs revealed that some tension emerges when women seek permission to travel to meet the opposite sex (gender-based conflict). Ahdab mentioned that her husband ‘refuses anything that requires mingling ... you know the culture here...it’s always an issue to work in a mixed environment and to mingle with the opposite sex.’ These lines of work are judged as family-to-work conflict, where family ideology interferes with women’s work. Similarly, Marwa comments, ‘he has this thing where it’s like don’t cross the line, don’t breach the limits of having males as clients.’ This shows women are limited to doing business with same sex rather than opposite sex due to family rules. Screen explains, ‘my husband does not allow me to have men as clients’. Since Saudi society is based on the idea of gender segregation, family do play a crucial role in reinforcing the patriarchy exist in the context, by objecting to the idea of a woman interacting with a man. Therefore, these women deliberately exclude men from their business activities (having men as clients) to minimize family-to-work conflict. Hamsa stresses ‘of course there is a lot of rules in the way you dress, time limits that you can’t go beyond, who to meet, you know, there is an investigation that you go through.’ Building upon this, the above arguments are ideology-based conflict, which occurs when business-related activities contradict with family ideology (of mobility time and business interaction). The evidence throughout the data was found to be similar to what Samar claims: ‘I can’t do it because my father is against it...’ Women’s perception of family ideology could play a role in the choices they make when starting a business. Therefore, it is possible to claim that women’s engagement in activities is not a reflection of their actual preferences and desire, but rather a reflection of family preference (part of family belief system, rules and ideology).

Furthermore, the data showed that family rules are tight when it comes to women's international travel for business-related activities. Alanoud illustrates 'my father was like 'you have to travel twice a year?' he was a little bit surprised. And I was yes! And he goes like you can do it online! He was discussing it: 'you can do it online! You can Skype them or whatever!' this shows that women's travel could possible reflects social norms and gender role expectation. Samar notes 'he [my father] told me ... forget about doing something outside the city'. Beside the perception of women's mobility in the society, family objection to women's travel could be because travel evokes a sense of independence and freedom for travellers. Samar adds 'He didn't allow me... He thinks, you know how, umm, he wants to take control over me, he does not want me to get so comfortable in just exposing myself everywhere.' This line of work confirms family power and authority over women's international travel, because when it comes travel women are subject to the male-guardianship system, and without it women cannot travel (state policy). This confirms that family can be a reinforcement of strict policies imposed on women in this patriarchal context.

Therefore, it is possible to claim that if family ideology is open in allowing women to make actions then the openness in family ideology count as supportive tool that enlarge women's capabilities, whereas strict ideology of significant family members counts to limit and constrains women's capabilities (see figure 2). For instance, in some cases it was found that women perceived their family to prioritize their mobility, which counted as an instrumental support that is – assuring the availability and accessibility of the car and driver for entrepreneurs use. Yasmeen notes 'they [family members] would ask me do you need the driver that time or shall we use it?'

This shows that family support can take the form of prioritizing women's mobility for business-related activities. In a similar vein, Alanoud points out 'because my family know I'm working and I'm always out so they make sure that this driver is actually always there for me'. Facilitating women entrepreneurs' mobility in this sense can lead to the argument that family ideology regarding the importance of entrepreneurs' mobility can influence our understanding of women's mobility condition. It should be that argument occurs here when women entrepreneurs are proximate to family (whether transnational, local or returnee entrepreneurs) and operate in the Saudi context. On this note, women expressed their coping strategies to deal with the constraining ideology of their family, and they are illustrated below.

#### 6.4 Women's coping strategies in family discussion

When women (single and married) are proximate to family, they tend to adapt their business-related activities to family ideology. However, the need for family permission seems to allow for less boundary separation between women's careers and the family. In other words, the obligation associated with a woman's need for family permission leads to crossing border between the business domain and family domain. Saudi women experience lower boundary separation between business and family domain due to the women's obligation and need for family permission. This means less segregation (autonomy) and more integration (control) of family-related thoughts and opinion. Lana states, 'I always make sure to involve him [husband] with my work'. The integration of family and work persists from the time women intend to start a business and continues in the practices women intent to do.

Since women had to discuss work matters with family, they were found to employ different strategies in their discussion. Women employ convincing reasoning in their

discussion by stressing on the importance of engaging in an activity. Alanoud explains that she convinced her father by telling him ‘I have to travel, *you have to know that this is important* for the business ...’ This statement shows that women confront and engage in hard bargaining during their discussion with the family. Similarly, Israa notes ‘I told her [my mom] ‘NO I do want to go, this is so important to me and I have to go there. It’s a good opportunity for the business’. Women found themselves employing a sense of urgency in their discussion as a way to convince the family of the importance of engaging in an activity that crucial to their business. For example, Nada states ‘I told him. ‘Mazen I will go’.’ These sorts of discussion revealed women’s strategy to stress on their desire. Nonetheless, these discussions were aimed at reaching an agreement that would satisfy both sides (women and the family) rather than challenging or going against family desire.

Besides applying convincing reasoning, this study found that the way women ask for permission influences family reaction and response. Based on the data, when women explicitly ask for family permission ‘can I go...?’, it made the family reluctant to give permission (loud/spoken permission). Noran points out that ‘I’ve noticed the hesitant in response whenever I asked for permission.’ Similarly, Reham explains ‘they were always concern to say yes’ These observations lead women to change the way they ask family for approval. These women start to seek permission in an implicit way, rather than asking for it in an explicit manner. For example, Israa highlights ‘I start to inform her and tell her ‘I’ll go and attend something somewhere.’ ‘, Although this sounds as a statement to inform one’s family, it is in fact women’s approach to obtain family permission in an implicit and indirect way. With this in mind, Reham notes ‘I’ve noticed that I’m getting a quick response and approval, when I just inform them by saying ‘I have a meeting tomorrow at 13:00’.’ This

approach seems to change family dynamic (power) and influence family reaction and, therefore, response. Lubna articulates her approach ‘ I start to say: ‘by the way I’m going’, it’s not like I’m asking ‘ can I go?’, so *the way I say it* is like ‘ I’m going’ so I leave no chance to have a no as an answer.’ This shows that women do apply different techniques to eliminate family power (rejection) and to do what they desire. Lana admits, ‘I just inform them by saying “I’ll go on this particular day to this event to do the following things”’. These women sound as if they are informing the family of a decision they have already made for themselves, which sound as if they are not waiting for family approval, but in fact they are (silent permission). As result, women did so to leave less room for family objection (reduce family-to-work conflict). It is possible to argue that women’s strong desire to engage in an activity is formed in the way women manage family discussion in order to obtain permission.

In other cases, women were found to accept family conditional permission. Haya: ‘there are a lot of rules ... *I’m accepting it ...*’. Another example was mentioned by Lubna when she wanted to travel for work: ‘He [my father] told me: “if you don’t want to miss this opportunity, then you have to take your mother with you”.’ The family may impose certain rules on women, leaving them with limited choices, as Lubna later adds: ‘He sent mom with me. *I was OK. I didn’t have another option.*’ This shows accepting family rules counts as a strategy for women to engage in business-related activities, as accepting the family rules can be the only option for a woman, because it is in her interest to accept it and act upon it rather than objecting to it. This shows that these women did not jeopardize family relations to pursue entrepreneurship, but what they did is adjusting their businesses and its activities with respect to family belief system (as a powerful social institution).

Building upon this, it is possible to argue that women entrepreneurs seem to prioritize their family/spouse's rules over their own desires when it comes to engaging in business-related activities. This could be due to gender-based expectations and gender roles embedded in the society in general and in the household in particular. Nada points out that her husband reminded her 'you are working for fun'. For these women, the business and its activities should not be a priority, because the priority should be given to the family. This shows that the coping strategy for these women is to follow and accept family rules. Kossek et al. (1999) noted that women tend to make more sacrifices within their career to accommodate that of their partner. With the realm of entrepreneurship, this study found that the best option for Saudi women entrepreneurs is to operate with respect to family structure. The data did not find any examples where participants prioritize their business over family, but they would jeopardize the business for the family. This study argues that although prioritizing the spouse belief system can contribute to hindering women's businesses, it could be a strategy for women to reduce family-to-work conflict, which seems crucial in a patriarchal society. To this end, the argument this study seek to make suggest that family power in the context of SA led entrepreneurs to choose family rules over their career. Furthermore, the participants of this study were found to prioritize family mobility over theirs, where they tend to make sacrifices within their business-related-mobility. Ina'am clarifies 'I have to arrange my mobility activities with other family members if they needed the car I don't use it, I use it when no one wants the car.' This shows that since shared mobility in the household is mainly for domestic scarifies their business-related mobility. One possible reason could be to avoid family-to-work conflict. Fahda

admits 'I hired a company driver [...] My parents were getting annoyed because the driver with me all the time.'

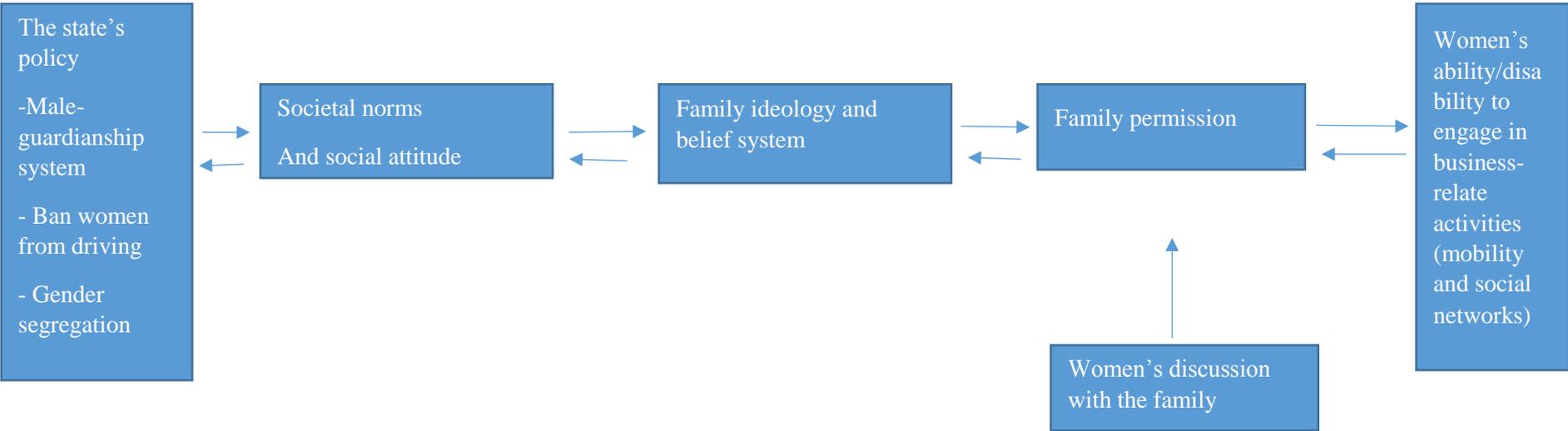
Interestingly, based on the data it appears that mothers were the central actor in single women's discussion when obtaining family permission. Lubna indicates 'I called my mom first because she has a stronger opinion than my dad.' Shahad claims: 'my mom is the boss here'. Participants perceived their mother to have power to give permission more than the father. Lubna points out to the fact that 'when my mother knows that I want to use the car, she comes up with something to use the car as well'. On this note, this statement reveals mother power in the household could limit women's engagement in business-related mobility and other activities. This also confirms that family permission is associated with power and is not always patriarchal in nature and women may approach the mother to gain permission due to the mother's strong position in the household. Fahda stresses 'my mom practises her control over me'. Where the mother can influence the decision of the household. Therefore, the mother is perceived as key players in the household from the perspective of women entrepreneurs. Interestingly, mothers have power in the household even when they are under the male-guardianship system (seeking permission from the husband), their power is presented in the way entrepreneurs approach their mothers. With this in mind, it seems that women's perception of power relations in the household tend to influence women's strategy as to whom to approach to gain permission. Family power relations in this study context consist of the idea that a member of the family (husband or parents) has the power to enable or disable women from performing a task.

On the other hand, some of the women who participated in this study discussed approaching the mother, because the mother is considered as a mediator to ease the implication associated with obtaining permission from a patriarch (daughter-father). Samar points out 'she [my mother] called dad, and I don't know how he got convinced. I'm sure she convinced him and amplified the story.' Women obviously approach the mother not to seek permission from the mother but to emancipate the constraints associated with seeking permission from the father. Here, the father is the one who have a strong power in the household, and obtaining family permission from him is inevitable, therefore, a woman reach the mother so the mother acts as a mediator between the entrepreneur and the father to give permission that enable the entrepreneur to engage in a business activity.

Moreover, some of the women perceive the mother to be softer, more understanding and more supportive than the father. Samar states 'it's my mother who's really supportive' which leads women to approach the mother in a relaxed manner. In other cases, women showed that they tend to involve the mother in aspect related to the business by informing her while excluding the father. In this sense, Samar said, 'my mom is the only one that knows [about me meeting men]'. This shows that approaching the mother could be a strategy for women to emancipate the social pressure of what is allowed and what is not, by informing a family member with an open mind-set. Similarly, Anwar asserts 'mom was so supportive, because I'm so close to my mom, she's more understanding. So we have more trust relationship with her.' It should be clear that family ideology varies with respect to women's activity. For example, when it comes to urban mobility or meeting the opposite sex in an urban setting, women have the opportunity to inform one family member, and engage in an activity without the need of obtain consent from both parents, giving

the geography of the activity great attention. However, this is not applicable when it comes to women's international travel (borders) where family permission from both parents is crucial, but critical to be obtained from the father due to the policy that stresses male-guardianship permission upon women's international travel.

Figure 2 Women's discussion and family permission



## 6.5 Chapter summary

Based on Figure 3. To obtain family permission women had to engage the family with work through discussion and negotiation, which stresses women's responsibility to inform the family *prior* to their engagement in business-related activities (potential functioning). The account women made regarding family reflect family ideology that ties with social norms. Women's sense of obligation in this regard may be a critical feature of their proximity to family, particularly among single women. Furthermore, it was found that women's perception of family permission was pivotal in alerting women to the ways in which they handle family discussion. This was evidence when it came to women entrepreneurs' engagement in out-of-home activities (urban/international travel) to meet people for business purposes. This is of importance to the context of this study, because informing the family of one's intention to engage in activity is an obligation and not an option.

This section revealed women's perception of family permission and it found that women articulated the family power relationship to obtain permission and approval. These women were aware of family ideology in the household and its implication for their business endeavours. These women explained that family discussion tend to be challenging, particularly when discussing things for the first time, and especially when it came to activities such as travelling and meeting the opposite sex as it considered a new discussion in the household.

The chapter revealed aspects that count as constraining to women's businesses and contribute to the discussion on family-to-work conflict. Based on the data, the study found that activities such as 'being out late' (time-based conflict), 'meeting men' (gender-based conflict), and

‘travelling abroad’ (travel-based conflict) are aspects that could be subject to family-to-work conflict.

Last but not least, this chapter showed women’s coping strategies to overcome the limitation associated with family. It was found that when women engaged in discussion they employed convincing reasoning, and engaged in hard bargaining. They shift the dynamic of family discussion from asking for permission explicitly to informing the family of their potential activities that aimed to obtain family permission in an implicit manner. Nonetheless, these women were found to prioritize the family by accepting family rules over their interest to engage in business activities. With this in mind, this chapter confirmed that Saudi women entrepreneurs do prioritize family over work, which is one of the attributions of operating in a context of patriarchal society. In other words, these women did not show argumentative dialogues in family discussion, but rather appropriate discourses that aimed to minimize family-to-work conflict. Women operating in such context do not care about their business (interest), but the interest of their family, for whom they are ready to make considerable sacrifices.

Furthermore, women’s approach to family negotiation varied in the present research as in some cases women approached the mother as a way to gain direct approval due to mother’s position and power in the household. In other cases the mother were a moderator between women’s desire and the father power in giving permission. In addition, women approached the mother to get empathy and support. Women’s deliberate approach towards a family member and not another shows the strategic side of Saudi women when they desire to perform a task that subject to family permission.

Nonetheless, if women obtain family permission that is based on family consent, then they take a step to arrange mobility with family members as well as with the driver in order to turn potential mobility into an actual one and engage in business-related activities.

## CHAPTER 7. WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' URBAN MOBILITY CONDITION

### 7.1 Introduction

The theoretical foundation of this chapter is that women's mobility condition (opportunities and constraints) is analysed in relation to a capability approach. Women were found to discuss the process of arranging mobility with family as well as the driver enable to venture outside the house. The results highlighted here are based on 25 interviews that investigated Saudi women's perception and experience of mobility in the urban setting of SA. The findings here emerged from the three groups of women entrepreneurs' local, transnational and returnee entrepreneurs that happened to be operating in a context (proximity to home country's conditions). The argument around proximity to the home country is that it makes transnational entrepreneurs who engage in business activities in SA face the same constraints (of dependent driving) as other Saudi local entrepreneurs. All of the interviews were banned from independent driving. During the interview, participants articulated the process they go through to turn potential mobility into an actual one, as well as their opportunities from limited mobility. Mobility is defined here as entrepreneurs' urban travel practices that enable entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities. With this in mind, this chapter explores contextual factors that influence women's arrangements for mobility, and the coping strategies for overcoming mobility constraints. With this in mind, this study seeks to understand how women entrepreneurs arrange and manage their business-related mobility and seeks to explore the factors that constrain their mobility as well as their opportunities for mobility in their urban setting (when operating in SA).

## 7.2 Mobility as business-related activity

Mobility for an entrepreneur seems to be crucial when starting a business. This was evident in the data where Lana notes 'being outside the home is better in terms of your chance to meet other people, you can communicate and interact'. Similarly Fahdah states 'you have to go out and actually meet and sit with the people'. These statements confirm that mobility is an entrepreneurial activity in the sense that it leads to face-to-face interaction and allow for building social relations with clients and suppliers. This align with Elliott and Urry (2010, p.9) views that confirm 'the more you move, travel around, meeting others and making sustainable contacts, the more successful you can reasonably hope to become, in both professional and personal terms'. Physical mobility where found to be crucial to entrepreneurs, especially when starting a business, as Lulua puts it 'I have to see them and they have to see me' referring to the importance of physical meeting between the entrepreneurs and the suppliers/clients. For that reason, the current research sheds light on women's physical mobility where the contextual condition limits women's mobility due to regulations and law. Alanoud notes it 'I have to go and meet them.' To this end, the current study believes that social relations are crucial to women entrepreneurs, therefore, requires physical mobility. Nora F states, 'it's so important to be physically there to prove my present to know what's out there, to feel things by yourself. And there's something different about being physically there.' This signifies the importance of women entrepreneurs' physical mobility in their business endeavours.

On this note, it should be clear that one may argue that women might have a greater propensity to set up businesses online or home-based business due to restricted mobility, however, this study found cases where women demand physical mobility in online business or home-based businesses (see table 8). Ahdab who run an online business notes 'of course mobility is important as I need to go out and bring the products and the basic stuff'. Spatial

mobility for entrepreneurs is important in the sense that it enables sustaining some aspect within the business.

It should be clear that women's explanations of actual mobility tend to be unsettled and unstable. The participants of this study stated something similar to what Ahdab said: 'today I can't go, tomorrow might be different and I can go'. By being dependent on a male driver, women faced uncertainty and instability in their mobility. Mobility conditions varied from one participant to another (based on a number of factors such as familial, social, spatial and economic factors), varied during participants' lifetime (e.g. having a driver after starting a business, not having a driver at some point in the process of starting a business) and varied in experiences (e.g. good driver versus bad driver). Lana was referring to her experience with different drivers 'the driver told me: 'Madam I can't work for you' so he left, and I had to hire another one, but I fired him later because he was stupid.' Similarly Dunia highlights 'he start working for us in the past 5 months, but before we had a terrible experiences with drivers'. Building upon this, it is possible to claim that the instability in women's mobility condition tends to occur regularly, which seemed to hurt women's engagement in business social activities. The instability of mobility condition has its implication on women and their businesses. Nada said, 'so imagine, I had to teach him [new driver] everything from scratch and to go with him everywhere and explain to him'. So'ad similarly confirms, 'with the new driver I was wasting my time, instead of working on my things I had to go with him to teach him and show him the places.' These statements show that instability in women's mobility condition may affect women's progress in the business domain and confirms that the notion of mobility is unfixed. In addition, only two participants were found to completely depend on male family members for their mobility at the time when the interview was conducted (e.g. father, brother or husband). Ahdab explains her condition 'today I wanted to go to meet a

supplier I couldn't go because I have no driver and my husband is not available'. Adding 'even his family [live in the same building] they don't have a driver, so he's the one I'm depending on when I want to go out'. Lack of private transport (family driver and car) leaves women to depend on a male family member, which constrains women's freedom to move. This study acknowledges that women's mobility condition could be related to socio-economic aspects, but this was not the focus of the current research. On this note, women's discussion of mobility revealed that family member played a minimum role to facilitate women's mobility. This study found that women intentionally avoid approaching a male family member to facilitate their mobility. Lana said, 'when I didn't have a driver... I had to go through the hassle of using private taxis and so on ... My husband is at work and he's always busy.' This shows why women excluded family male members when the driver is absent. Ahadab explicitly stated 'I had a meeting to go to, I couldn't go ... because I don't have a driver and my husband is always not available.' It seemed that in some cases women are left without the help of male family members to facilitate their mobility. In a similar caveat, Marwa points out 'my husband is not a type of a husband that would take me out to do some business errands.' This could be a result of cultural understanding of gender mobility in the household, where men's (family male member) mobility is perceived more important than women's mobility because the man is culturally considered the breadwinner, therefore, his mobility should not be disturbed by women's mobility. Therefore, it seems that approaching a male family member is not employed as coping mechanism among women due to contextual and cultural condition. As a result, women entrepreneurs seemed to sacrifice business-related travel if the driver is not available as mobility with a male family member is a limited option (depending on his availability). Reham addressed 'and forget about the idea that my dad will take me there.' Women diminish mobility when it comes to travelling with a male family member. This line of work contributes to the definition of gendered mobility

where women's mobility is considered less important than men's mobility. The patriarchal nature of this context is reflected upon the legal system that gives men the right to drive and to be out of the house, which apparently result in having the perception that women's mobility is not important. Therefore, these women gave up their business-related travel in incidents where the driver is not available rather than travelling with a family member. With this in mind, it is evident that with those who have a family private car and a driver available, have greater opportunities for mobility for those who have not and/or rely on a male family member.

To take this argument further, it would be pivotal to highlight how the options and constraints highlighted by women entrepreneurs, the factors that affect mobility arrangements for women's business-related travel, as well as women's spatial strategies (opportunities for mobility).

Table 8: Entrepreneurs' mobility condition in the home country (proximity to strict mobility condition)

No.	Participant Name	Industry category	Entrepreneurs' business location	Entrepreneurs' mobility	Mobility condition in Saudi
Local entrepreneurs' mobility					
1.	Noran	E-commerce, online store	Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients</li> </ul>	Through family (brother or father) only
2.	Ahdab	E-commerce, online store	Home-based business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mobility to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients in exhibitions to expand her business and let people know about it</li> </ul>	Through her husband only
3.	Israa	E-commerce, online store	Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobility to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family driver (shared with the mother)</li> <li>-Use of Uber and Careem</li> </ul>
4.	Nada	Event planner	Home-base business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mobility to meet suppliers</li> <li>- Mobility to meet clients</li> <li>-Mobility to events locations</li> </ul>	Family driver, solo use of the driver

5.	Marwa	Education (well-being and healthcare)	Office-part of the home	-Mobility to meet clients	Family driver (shared with kids)
6.	Reham	Jewellery designer	Home-based business	-Mobility to meet suppliers -Mobility to meet clients	- Family driver (shared with Mother and siblings) -Use Uber and Careem
7.	Haya	Content development	Home-based business	-Mobility to meet clients	- Family driver (shared with a daughter) -Use Uber and Careem
8.	Sereen	Coach	Office-part of the home	-Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to attend events	- Family driver, solo use. -Use Uber, Careem
Returnee entrepreneurs' mobility in the home country					
9.	Lana	Photographer	Office	-Mobility to meet clients	- Family driver (shared with kids) -Use Uber, Careem
10	Alanoud	Retail- Fashion concept store	Offices	-Mobility to meet suppliers	-Two family driver -Family driver only
11.	Ina'am	Fashion designer	Home-based	-Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to meet suppliers	- Family driver (shared with Mother and siblings) -Family driver only
12.	Fahda	Concierge and travel	Office	-Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to meet suppliers	Company driver.

13.	Hanoof	Photography	Home-based	-Mobility to meet clients	Family driver, solo use of the driver
14.	Shahad	Fashion designer	Office-part of the home	-Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to meet suppliers	- Family driver (shared with Mother and siblings) -Uber and Careem
15.	Samar	Graphic design	Home-based	-Mobility to meet clients	-Family driver (shared with Mother) -Uber and Careem
16.	Yasmeen	Graphic and fashion	Office	Mobility to meet clients Mobility to meet suppliers	- Family driver (shared with Mother and siblings)  -Uber and Careem
17.	Lulua	Retail- Fashion store	Office	-Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to meet suppliers	Family driver (shared with Mother and siblings).
18.	So'ad	Education	Office	-Mobility to meet clients	Family driver (shared with Mother and siblings)
Transnational entrepreneurs' mobility when engaging in business activities in the home country					
19.	Dunia	Graphic design Food and health	Home- base	-Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to meet suppliers	- Family diver (shared mobility)

20.	Aisha	Consultant	Office	-Mobility to meet clients	Family driver (shared mobility)
21.	Salma	Education	Office	-Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to meet suppliers	- Family driver -Urban and Careem
22.	Afnan	Food	Office	-Mobility to restaurant -Mobility to meet suppliers	- Family driver (shared mobility)
23.	Anwar	Web designer	Home-base	- Mobility to meet clients	- Family driver (shared mobility)
24.	Hadeel	Investor	Office	Mobility to meet clients -Mobility to meet suppliers	Family driver
25.	Lubna	Graphic Design	Home-base	-Mobility to meet clients	Family driver

### 7.3 Mobility conditions: choices, opportunities and constraints

#### 7.3.1 Private transports

It is possible to claim that, because all women in SA are banned from driving, it was found that mobility condition varied among the women interviewed. Most women (more than half of the women interviewed) used a private family car and private chauffeur for their mobility, which was found to be arranged by one's family (e.g. the father or husband's role to buy a car and hire a driver for female family members' mobility). Therefore, it is possible to claim that the availability of car and male driver in the household are seen as crucial means for women's mobility in SA. Nonetheless, woman's ability is subject to the availability and accessibility of both the car and the driver, because the availability of one means without the other constrains women's mobility. Lana explains, 'I had the car but I didn't have a driver, so the car was useless, I couldn't use it.' This statement indicates that the availability of the car without a driver create a deficit in women's mobility, due to the absence of a male driver. This deficit in women's mobility is a result of contextual conditions (e.g. regulations and laws) that ban women from driving and oblige women (have no choice) to depend on a male driver in order to venture outside the house. Therefore, the contextual condition hurts women's mobility and results in immobility if transport means are deficient (unavailable or inaccessible). Lana adds, 'in this city even if you have a car, you can't use it because you're a female'. This shows that mobility is gendered in the sense that it is applicable/inapplicable to one's own gender. Therefore, this study is unique when it comes to examining women's mobility condition.

#### 7.3.2 Public transport

It is crucial to address the cultural and contextual aspect that attributes women's mobility in SA. This research found that women have not reported any use of public transport, because

such option is not available, such as trains, metros, buses etc. However, the only public transport available is cabs, which are available for public use. Nonetheless, the women interviewed reported their avoidance of using public cabs and the concept of public in transport mode use plays a major role in women's mobility condition. Salma confirms, 'using public cabs is an issue, because it was like a stigma in the sense that you were in a car that is marked "taxi"'. The statement reveals the issue of using public cabs, where women's mobility becomes explicit. In other words, the society is in favour of private transportation when it came to women's mobility to avoid attracting attention while being on the move. Another reason for not using public cabs is the fact that it requires women to step out of the house/building and stand (in public) and wait in the street until she finds a cap. Screen states 'it's inappropriate because you have to go out in the street and wait until you find a taxi. It would not look nice to be honest.' The idea of mobility associated with being exposed to the public and the use of public means seemed inconvenient for women in such a society. So'ad stresses, 'I would rather cancel the meeting than using public caps.' Culturally speaking, these sorts of cabs seemed to discourage women from going out and engaging in business-related travel even when it is available and accessible.

### 7.3.3 Semi-public transport

The concept of privatization in transport mode use influences mobility condition for women. In this sense, Salma compared the use of public cabs verses the use of private cabs 'in Careem and Uber you are in a car that does not even say taxi. So it looks like it's your own private car with your private driver so there is nothing wrong with it nobody knows.' This statement shows that the social norms around women's mobility encourage the idea of privacy that also appeared private to others. Screen adds ' using Uber give me privacy' This study shows that these women avoided using public cabs when lacking mobility, as it had

negative connotation in the culture, while used semi- public caps when lacking mobility, as it appear as private that has a positive meaning in the culture. Therefore, semi-private transport counts as opportunities for women's mobility. Therefore, the question further research should consider is whether Saudi women would use public transportation (e.g. bus and train) and with respect to their culture would count as opportunity for Saudi women's mobility.

#### 7.4 Shared mobility: women entrepreneurs' opportunities for business-related mobility

Based on the data, most of the women interviewed (more than half) shared mobility with other family members (see table 8), which shows that mobility for women entrepreneurs requires arrangement with family members. It should be clear that the argument on family here (arranging mobility with family members) is somewhat separate from the discussion on family in the previous chapter (women's approach to seek family permission). Arranging mobility with other family members is a result of shared mobility. Shared mobility where found to be subject to (1) familial demand for mobility versus entrepreneurs demand (2) driver multiple roles (domestic-related mobility versus business-related mobility).

First, the analysis shows that women were entitled to carefully plan, arrange and organize a trip with other family members. Yasmeen admits 'of course there's a lot of cooperation with the family when I plan to go out, and it has to be taken into consideration'. Similarly Reham points out 'you can't open the door and leave the house, you have to arrange and plan with your family, what time you want to go out, who wants to go out with you [other family members] and where you want to go. It's part of the process.' Such arrangement shows the implication associated with shared mobility, and shows that women's mobility depends on other factors that beyond the argument of having a family private car and a private chauffeur.

From table 8, it is clear that the majority of the women interviewed shared transportation mean (family driver and car) with other family members. So'ad highlighted 'I do have a driver but he's part of the family use as well.' Therefore, women entrepreneurs' mobility is not separated but overlaps with family members' mobility. Salma states, 'I had an issue because I didn't have my own driver ... I was sharing him with my mother and other two sisters.' Similarly, Nada explains, 'I was using my family-in-law's driver, it was difficult because they had their own errands.' Sharing mobility with other family members possibly limits women entrepreneurs' opportunities for mobility.

Most of the literature argues that car ownership increases with respect to the number of adults in the household (Dargay and Hanly, 2007). However, in a patriarchal context car ownership does not increase with the number of female family members, but increase with respect to the number of male adults in the household. Female family members tend to share a car and a driver regardless the number of female adults in the household. Ina'am highlights 'when five family members use the car with me, then I have to arrange my mobility with them'. Based on this statement it is possible to say that size family could mean high demand on mobility, therefore, limits women entrepreneurs' mobility. Yasmeen claims: 'we are only a family of two ... so we don't have much of a problem [with mobility]'. This shows that small family size means less demand on mobility and give more woman chance and opportunity to travel. Therefore, this study argues that opportunities for mobility is greater for women entrepreneurs who shared mobility with family that has less demand on mobility and small in size.

Shared mobility also allude to the fact the driver plays a multiple rule in the household, where he engages in activities that requires domestic-related mobility (family demand: including buying grocery shopping, taking kids to school, taking female family members to work,

household-related activities and leisure) and engage in activities that requires business-related mobility that relates to the entrepreneur (entrepreneur's demand: collecting parcels, delivering orders to clients, take the entrepreneurs to a business meeting). Marwa claimed 'I didn't want to load the driver with work.....it would be too much work for the driver to come back and forth, and wait for me and pick up the kids from school.' It is possible to say that women tend to calculate mobility activities on the driver and prioritize driver domestic-related mobility (as it serve collective interest rather than individual interest) over business-related interest (as it serve individual interest). In other words, when women start a business it counts as an additional activity on the driver, which means that women entrepreneurs have to evaluate the importance of business-related mobility due to shared mobility (domestic versus home use).

It was evident that women accommodate the driver role by scaling back business-related mobility. Lana highlights 'if he [driver] gets tired then that affect the family [family mobility].' Therefore, women may sacrifice business travels in order to secure family travel with the driver. These lines of work shows that mobility for women entrepreneurs in SA depends on much more than having a family driver and car.

Nonetheless, the argument of women's experience of shared mobility differs than women experienced of solo mobility. In the later Alanoud reported having more than one driver working in the household, Nada's mobility take the form of solo use for the driver, Fahda have a company driver. Women's mobility condition contributes to defining women's opportunities for mobility. Alanoud notes 'we do have another driver so it wouldn't create a conflict [within the family].' This shows that the having a number of drivers in the house can contribute to facilitating women's engagement in business-related travel. Further, Nada who's a married woman with no children claims: 'It's so comfortable to have my own

driver.’ Which means that the solo use of the driver facilitates women’s mobility even when the driver manoeuvres between domestic mobility and business mobility, where the demand emerged from one person – that is, the wife and the entrepreneur. This is similar to the case when an entrepreneur has a driver that acts separately from domestic-related travel (family demand). Fahad notes ‘I just employed a driver for the company.’ Separating business-related mobility from family domain (domestic-related travel) by having a company driver seemed to provide great autonomy for women entrepreneurs. Therefore, this study claims that the opportunities for mobility for women who have more than one driver in the household, use the driver independently as a solo use, or have a separate driver for business use only are conditions that are greater than shared mobility.

#### 7.5 Women entrepreneurs’ dependent mobility: arrangements with the driver

A curious finding was uniquely related to women’s condition of dependent mobility, which was evident in women’s discussion of businesses-related mobility in terms of: (1) depending on the driver for their own travel and mobility (as discussed above); and (2) delegating mobility to the driver. The former indicates woman’s actual movement by going out of the house with the driver. The latter is about delegating business-related mobility to the driver and on behalf of the entrepreneurs.

When it comes to women’s mobility with the driver, it was found that women had the tendency to engage in an advance arrangement of mobility with the driver – meaning that for women to facilitate mobility, they arrange, plan and organize mobility in advance with the driver. So’ad addresses ‘I always say I’m leaving this time, I’m going this time, so he knows my schedule.’ Similarly, Hanoof addresses ‘if I want to go out of the house, then I have to inform the driver in advance’. Informing the driver of potential travel is part of women’s

arrangement for mobility. Last-minute arrangement may limit women's chance and opportunities for mobility, Fahda stats 'it is a hassle sometimes with the driver, sometime I call him he's taking a shower, or he's not at home, or something like that'. Because women's mobility is subject to the driver's availability, arranging mobility with the driver in advance can influence women's business-related travel. Building upon this, women noted the privileges associated with being driven by a driver where it reduced additional tasks that tie with mobility, such as filling the car with petrol, parking the car, the need to focus on the road and not being able to do other things while driving etc. Women stressed the benefit of dependent mobility where it allowed them to do other tasks while on the move, such as making phone calls, preparing for a meeting, reading meeting minutes etc. This could be why the participant objects to their preference for independent mobility, which has been discussed in chapter 8. For instance, women's preference regarding mobility might not be what we would expect, because when asking local entrepreneurs about their mobility condition even when interfering with their business endeavours, it seems that these women state a lack of interest in independent driving, where one would imagine otherwise. Regardless of whether these women see themselves as capable of driving or able to manage the implications associated with independent mobility, the social condition context (being banned from driving along with the chances of being harassed) led women to have a preference of 'I don't want to drive'. Israa, like many others, highlighted: 'in my city I would prefer having a driver than driving'. Nada also highlights: 'even if they allowed women to drive I don't think I will'. Therefore, the reasons for such preference could also be because these women were born with tight social condition (dependent mobility), where their preference is subject to how things are, were and would be. Expecting no other ways of doing things. This could also be because women acknowledge that the act of driving require one to concentrate on driving, whereas being driven by a driver may give the passenger (as the case of Saudi women

operating in SA) a sense of freedom to pursue some work while venturing to places (e.g. making a phone call, arrange and prepare for a meeting, checking and responding to emails etc.). Israa claims: 'when you're in the back seat of the car you can prepare for the meeting, make phone call, etc.'. This shows the privilege side of being driven by a driver for women entrepreneurs. This argument is in line with Urry (2009, p. 31) work that argue 'the driver's body is disciplined to the machine, with eyes, ears, hands and feet all trained to respond instantaneously and consistently, while desires even to stretch, to change position, to doze, or to look around are being suppressed'. Nada states 'it [having a driver] doesn't require you to put an effort, you don't have to think about parking'. Therefore, it is crucial to mention that being driven by a driver reduces the tasks associated with independent mobility (e.g. car parking, filling the car with petrol). These women favoured being driven by a driver when venturing for business meetings as it allowed them to do business-related activities. It should be noted that the participants of this study explicitly confirmed their preference of having a driver over independent driving. Lubna indicated 'I have a driver who opens the door for me, helps me carry the stuff.' For these women, the conception of preference regarding dependent driving seemed to give women comfort rather than constraints once mobility means are available and accessible. Many of this study's participants similarly commented to what Lana stated: 'so for me having a driver is so useful'. Most of the women interviewed were reluctant and preferred not to drive if they had the opportunity to do so. Soad highlighted: 'Even if they allowed women to drive, I don't think I will.' This could be related to the fact that independent mobility would likely take the comfort of dependent mobility.

Furthermore, the study found that besides travelling with the driver, women in some cases discussed delegating mobility to the driver. Nada addresses 'I would send my driver instead

of me going with him. My driver would go and I would be working on other important things.’ Reham similarly stressed ‘I can do some work while he [the driver] goes to bring some stuff.’ Women entrepreneurs tend to delegate business-related mobility to the driver where the driver acts on women’s behalf. Hanoof addresses ‘I sit with my driver and explain to him what I want.’ This delegation occurs when the activities are considered secondary and does not necessitate the entrepreneur’s mobility. As Yasmeen explained: ‘such as collecting cards from the printing company to the clients, buying some stuff for the office’. Similarly, Alanoud highlights: ‘I have to send my driver to the warehouse all the time, like just now I just sent him out to the warehouse, somewhere far away. So absolutely if I did not have a driver to do this, it would have created a lot of problems.’ Delegating business-related mobility to the driver reduces the amount of unnecessary task for the entrepreneur to engage in, but rather gives entrepreneurs that advantage of having a driver (due to dependent mobility). Nonetheless, this delegation depends heavily on the driver knowledge and competence about the places (urban spatial structure) in which he’s asked to go to and the things he’s asked to do. Nada highlights ‘he understands, I mean he understands well and speaks well’. Therefore, the driver ability to understand what has been communicated to him plays a crucial role in the extent to which an entrepreneur relies on the driver. It should be clear, that most of the drivers in Saudi are from Asian countries, so that language knowledge and competencies can be a barrier to delegating mobility to the driver. Lana explained: ‘I can’t send the driver on his own. The problem is that my driver does not understand’, while Nada indicates: ‘he understands where I want him to go’. In a similar vein, Hanoof notes, ‘he knows the area’. Therefore, the driver’s ability to understand, and his knowledge of the infrastructure of the urban setting are factors that could facilitate the delegation of mobility to the driver, which count as an opportunity for business-related mobility rather than an opportunity for women’s mobility.

Because women's mobility is dependent in the context of the current study, it was found that women used spatial strategies, as addressed in the following section.

#### 7.6 Women's spatial strategies

Because the participants of the present study mentioned their search for other mobility alternatives, spatial strategies are 'the action women took to overcome the [constraints] that they face' (Nordbakke, 2013, p.169) regarding mobility. The analysis of this study shows that the accessibility and availability of private car and the private chauffeur is pivotal to women's mobility in SA. However, shared mobility influences the availability of the car and the driver, therefore, affects entrepreneurs' mobility to engage in out-of-home activities. With this in mind, women addressed the alternatives available that count as a coping mechanism to overcome mobility issue. Shahad claims that 'there is Uber and Careem now, if my driver was not around, I won't be caged'. Uber and Careem are a transportation network company. Uber had stated that 80% of its Saudi Arabian users are women as a result of the ban on women to drive as well as the lack of public transportation (Why women are Uber annoyed in Saudi, 2016). Some of the women interviewed note their use of these ride-hailing companies as a coping mechanism and spatial strategies when lacking family private transport means. Samar highlights 'when I didn't have a driver I used Uber to attend the meeting'. In a similar vein, Isra'a notes 'one day I wanted to go to an event but my driver was busy with my mother .... So I used Careem.' Without stating the actual words, Uber and Careem seems to give women further options for mobility that facilitate women's engagement in business-related activities. Women mainly used Uber and Careem as an alternative when the driver/car is

inaccessible/unavailable. As mentioned earlier, in some cases shared mobility limited women entrepreneurs' mobility to engage in business-related activities.

In addition, part of women's arrangements for mobility with the family is looking for alternatives, Haya indicates, 'I have a daughter and when she needs the driver I use Uber or Careem.' It is possible to argue here that the alternatives for mobility contributed to minimizing family-to-mobility conflict (as discussed in the previous chapter), where the demand for mobility from the family and the demand of mobility from the entrepreneur are incompatible. On this note, a number of participants perceived Uber and Careem to solve the issues regarding women's mobility. Nada argues 'with Uber and Careem travelling is becoming easier nowadays'. Yasmeen also points out 'we started to depend on Careem as plan B in case the driver was not available'. These women seem to rationalize that being banned from driving and lacking other means of transportation are not an indication of being static, because nowadays alternatives are available to women, which enable them to be mobile and on the move. Israa notes, 'Yes, we don't have public transportation but things are opening now, especially with Uber and Careem.'

To sum up, this study found that women's actual mobility had expanded beyond family's private chauffeur/car to include private taxi companies (Uber and Careem), which seem to enlarge the options women have regarding business-related mobility. These taxi services are used for overcoming different barrier related to women's businesses-related mobility (e.g. shared mobility, driver absenteeism, lack independent mobility, and lack the availability of public transports). This shows an interesting side of Saudi women entrepreneurs, where they look for alternatives to resolve mobility issues.

## 7.7 Chapter summary

It should be clear here that mobility is an activity that facilitates women's engagement in business-related activities (e.g. meeting client, meeting suppliers). When it came to women's dependent mobility, mobility conditions vary beyond family private car and chauffeur. Since the aim of the current was to draw upon participants' own narratives regarding urban im/mobilities, and their discussion of the ways they consume and produce urban mobility for business endeavours. With this in mind, the current study sought to capture the implication women entrepreneurs addressed regarding business-related mobility, outline women's mobility arrangement with the family as well as the driver, and capture women's coping strategies to overcome mobility constraints.

This chapter has stated that women's engagement in business-related travel in SA is dependent on a male driver (due to the state policy that bans women from driving) and has addressed different mobility conditions. The analysis of this chapter has shown that the availability and accessibility of the car and the driver are prerequisite for engaging in business-related activities for women in SA. In these situations, it was evident that for those who have a company driver, solo use of family private transport, or have more than one driver in the house, their opportunities for business-related travel is greater than those who are without a driver or share a driver with family members with high mobility demand.

One of the surprising findings women entrepreneurs draw upon was the advantage associated with dependent driving that encompasses being driven by a male driver and being able to appoint the driver to engage in business-related travel, which counted as opportunities for women's mobility.

In addition, this chapter illustrates that transport services such as Uber and Careem contributed in expanding the opportunity for women's mobility, which seems to fit with the cultural emphases upon private mobility. These transport services are used as a coping mechanism to overcome different barriers to women's mobility.

To conclude, this study claims that the ways in which women took an active part in arranging and organizing mobility with the family and the driver and by developing spatial strategy to overcome issues related to limited mobility all in turn became part of women's opportunity for mobility – or capabilities for mobility.

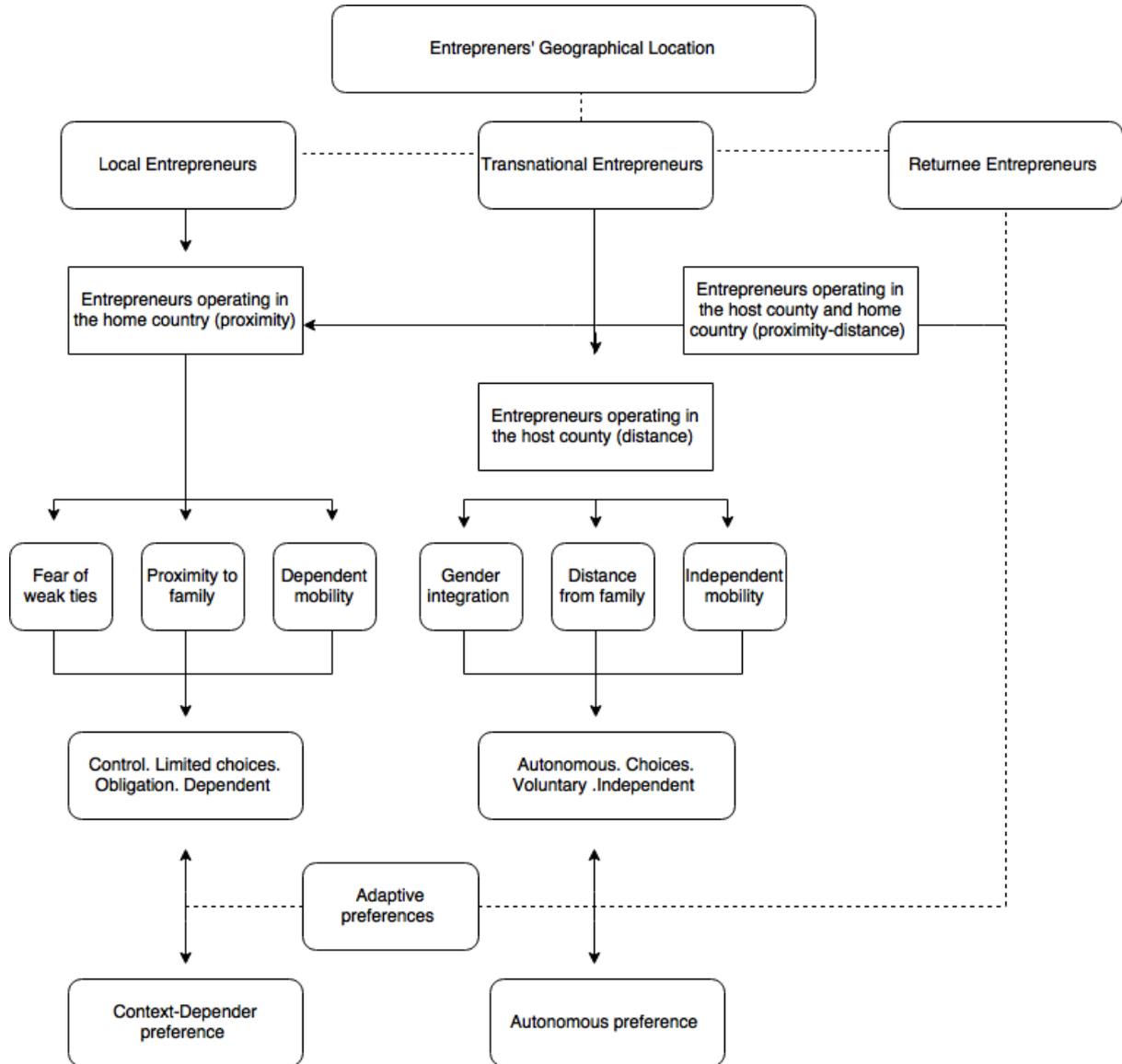
The following chapter expands its focus by moving from examining Saudi women operating in an urban setting (in SA) to examining Saudi women operating in an urban setting of a host country (outside SA). Therefore, transnational Saudi women entrepreneurs were selected as a separate group to understand how the geographical location of entrepreneurs influences their discussion of the home country versus host country. Later, the chapter compares and contrasts the geographical location of local, returnee and transnational entrepreneurs in order to contextualize the meaning of entrepreneurs' preferences.

## CHAPTER 8. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION, SOCIAL CONDITION AND ENTREPRENEURS' PREFERENCES

### 8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters discussed women's entrepreneurs account (local, transnational, returnee) when proximity to Saudi social and contextual conditions. This chapter reports entrepreneurs' account when operating in the home country (proximity to their country of origins) and compare it with women's account when operating in a host country (distance from their country of origin) with the aim to conceptualize entrepreneurs' preferences (local, transnational, returnee entrepreneurs). By combining and analysing these groups, this study signals some aspects that was defined with respect to women's geographical location (distance, proximity, and distance-proximity), which concern the question of what makes one group of entrepreneurs (transnational- distance) different than the other (local-proximity) and similar to another (returnee- distance-proximity) see figure 3 & table 9.

Figure 3: Entrepreneurs' geographical location, capabilities and preferences



This thesis defines (1) proximity to be associated with (A) local entrepreneurs as they operate a business in a patriarchal context, (B) TE when engaging in business activities in patriarchal society (C) RE when they return back to operate a business in strict and tight context. In addition, (2) distance has been found to be associated with (A) TEs where they enact business practices in a new context that is less patriarchal (B) RE when they lived abroad. Furthermore,

(3) distance-proximity is associated with (A) RE when they return home (B) TE when they go to the home country to engage in business activities, which take us to 1 & 2 argument. According to the data, married women were found in almost all cases close to family (proximity in location with the husband) regardless their geographical location (in SA or outside SA). Whereas single women were found proximate to family (parents) when living in SA and distance from family when living abroad (living alone), therefore, their action's is different than married women. On this note, most of the argument made here with regard to women's action towards the family is relevant to single women. The significant aspect of transnational women entrepreneurs' actions and behaviour was in reflecting upon the institution of family.

An observation that occurred from the data is that transnational women entrepreneurs explicitly addressed the implication associated with the institution of family, where local entrepreneurs were dismissive and private to discuss it. One justification to this could be that women protect the family (accepting family ideology) when proximity to family, while attack the family (rejecting family ideology) when distance from family.

This chapter aims to discuss the role geographical location has in defining the meaning of preferences. Preference is a key term in capability approach, where Paul Samuelson indicates that the concept of preferences is similar to that of action. A preference 'is just something that is taken to be revealed by the action that in fact chosen' (quoted in Nussbaum, 2000, p.119). The present study main argument is that the preferences presented in the choices women make and the coping strategy they employ. This study follows Khader (2011, p.76) that states 'questioning people's [...] preferences becomes a way of making sure [women] have choices rather than steering them to choose in a particular way'. In addition, it is possible to argue that individual's preference could be a reflection of the context within which individual's

operate. With this in mind, Sen's (1985) work considers people's context where an action is made. This is of importance because examining individuals with respect to the context can allow for a better understanding of the options available to people, the actual choices they make and the formation of their preferences (Sen, 1997). To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the nature of entrepreneurs' preferences, one should consider the context, because the law, social norms, traditions and institution under which entrepreneurs reside shape entrepreneurs' preferences. Rawls (1993, p. 296) stresses that 'the institutional form of society affects its members and determined in large part the thinking of persons they want to be as well as the kind of persons they are'.

Table 9: Entrepreneurs' geographical location

No.	Participant Name	Country Lived in	Geographical location to family	Entrepreneurs' activities (social network and mobility)
Local entrepreneurs: Saudi women who live and operate a business in the home country				
1.	Noran	SA (Riyadh)	Proximity to Parents	Proximity to the social condition of the home country
2.	Ahdab	SA (Makah)	Proximity to Husbands	Proximity to the social condition of the home country
3.	Israa	SA (Ta'if)	Proximity to Mother	Proximity to the social condition of the home country
4.	Nada	SA (Jeddah)	Proximity to Husband	Proximity to the social condition of the home country
5.	Marwa	SA (Jeddah)	Proximity to Husband	Proximity to the social condition of the home country
6.	Reham	SA (Jeddah)	Proximity to Parents	Proximity to the social condition to the home country
7.	Haya	SA (Jeddah)	Proximity to Husband	Proximity to the social condition of the home country
8.	Sreen	SA (Jeddah)	Proximity to Husband	Proximity to the social condition of the home country
Returnee entrepreneurs: Saudi women who lived abroad but started a business upon their return to the home country				
9.	Lana	SA-Canada-SA	Proximity to Husband	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country

10	Alanoud	SA-UK-SA	Proximity to Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
11.	Ina'am	SA-UK-SA	Proximity to Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
12.	Fahda	SA-Japan-SA	Proximity to Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
13.	Hanoof	SA-USA-SA	Proximity to Husband	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
14.	Shahad	SA-Italy-UK-SA	Proximity to Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country)
15.	Samar	SA-UK-SA	Proximity to Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
16.	Yasmeen	SA-Switzerland-SA	Proximity to Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
17.	Lulua	SA-Beirut-SA	Proximity to Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
18.	So'ad	SA-USA-SA	Proximity to Husband	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
<b>Transnational entrepreneurs: Saudi women who started a business in a host country</b>				
19.	Dunia	SA-UK	Distance from Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
20.	Aisha	SA-UK-Dubai	Distance from Mother	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
21.	Salma	SA-UK-Dubai	Distance from parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
22.	Afnan	SA-USA-Dubai	Distance from parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country

23.	Anwar	SA-UK	Distance from Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
24.	Hadeed	SA-UK	Distance from Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country
25.	Lubna	SA-UK	Distance from Parents	Proximity – Distance to the social condition of the home country

The argument of this chapter calls up cases where (1) individuals' preferences is shaped by a context of tight social condition (proximity: context-dependent preferences); (2) Individuals' preferences is shaped by a context of loose social condition (distance: autonomous preferences). (3) Individuals' preferences is shaped by moving from loose to tight social condition (distance-proximity: adaptive preferences). Therefore, the main aim of this chapter is to illustrate how the context and its social condition contribute to shaping women entrepreneurs' preferences.

## 8.2 Proximity to tight social condition: context-dependent preferences

It should be clear that the three groups of local, returnee and transnational entrepreneurs experienced a sense of proximity to the tight condition existing in Saudi society (mobility, social interaction, and family), where their preferences is dependent on the rule, regulation and social norms of the home country. It should be clear, however, that local entrepreneurs are unlike transnational and returnee entrepreneurs, in the sense that they did not experience operating in loose social condition.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that people's choices and preferences could be a result of constraints exist in their context. An entrepreneur's choice is related to his/her own

background, personality, values and preferences. The following examples reveal women's underlying preferences in the family domain through their actual choices and courses of actions, which is a result of a tight social condition (family permission for mobility and social interaction):

- Haya: she deals with her husband's rules as to where she is going, whom she is meeting, what time she is meeting clients, the way she dresses and in her own words, she said, 'I have to accept it.' Therefore, her preferences are not autonomous.
- Nada: she confirms her preferences with respect to her husband's preferences 'even my husband does not prefer...' This statement occurs when discussing meeting clients of weak ties and going to male dominated areas.
- Israa: She finds herself adjusting her travels according to her mother's availability, as the rule encompasses that she cannot travel alone. 'I couldn't go because my mom was not available that time I wanted to travel.' Therefore, her preference is not autonomous.
- Noran: she lives in a patriarchal family and rely on her father for mobility, she had not experienced another way 'it's normal'. Therefore, her preferences are not autonomous.
- Ahdab: her husband is against the idea of mingling with the opposite sex and she believes she has no other ways but to accept this rule. Therefore, her preference is not autonomous.
- Reham: She lives in a patriarchal family where her mobility is restricted by her *father's permission*, because he does not like her to be out of the house alone and at certain times. Therefore, her preference is not autonomous.

- Marwa: she is aware of her limits in doing business with the opposite sex, due to *husband's rule*. She considers doing business with other women only.
- Sereen: She does not have men as clients due to *her husband's rules*. Therefore, her preference is not autonomous.

These explanation of local entrepreneurs' choices is based on reasons reflecting women's preferences – that is, obeying and following family rules. Therefore, women's actions are context-dependent preferences, where the context requires women to obtain family permission in almost every aspect of their lives. It seems that there is interplay between a context that impose strict rules and the nature of individual's preferences, which is constructed in individual's action. These actions are made with respect to a strict context. Therefore, this study judges that women's actions here are context-dependent preferences, which appear as unconscious preferences women have, which derive from a being embedded in particular context with a particular social and contextual condition. The current research judges that these women did not express themselves in the choices they made (e.g. unable to distinguish between family preferences and their own preferences), this could be because this is the only way they know how to function. As shown in pervious chapter, a significant family member could enable/disable women from engaging in business activities. The current study reveals that due to strict institutional context the choices women made were dependent on the family rules, ideology and preferences. For example, although these women state that they do not prefer to go to male dominated areas and/or avoid doing business with opposite sex, they seem to confirm their preferences, which are based on family preferences. Nada states 'even my husband doesn't like ...' Similarly, Marwa notes 'I don't, because even my husband disapproves of me having male clients.' Reham highlights 'I don't like being out late, because both of my parents are against it.' It

seems possible to argue that women's preferences here are usually affirmed by family preferences but not in contrast with it. The choices they made was justified as a result of family opinion and preferences (family-to-work interference). This group of women had a tendency to suggest that there is nothing wrong with their contextual condition, as it is the way things had have been and this is the only way things work in the context within which they operate. Therefore, this study argues that entrepreneurs' preferences are formed without women's awareness or control, but derived from being controlled by a tight social condition.

On this note, we argue that women's preferences are context-dependent preferences in the sense that it is not formed through adjustment in changing environment, but shaped by one's fixed environment in which one born in. Therefore, context-dependent preference is in contrast with autonomous preferences and adaptive preference, which is discussed in the following sections.

### 8.3 Distance from tight social condition: autonomous preferences

Geographical proximity to the social condition (operating in the home country) was not only the approach this study used to understand the factors that influence women's engagement in business-related activities, the present study includes a sample of women who experienced a distance from the home country's strict social condition and operate in loose social condition (host country). With this in mind, this section takes the argument around entrepreneurs' geographical location further by considering Saudi women entrepreneurs operating in a host country (loose social condition). In this sense, transnational entrepreneurs are found to operate in contexts where the social condition on women is diluted.

This study found that autonomous preference occurred in transnational and returnee

entrepreneurs discussion and when being distance from the home country. TEs are actors who are embedded in at least two contexts and became socially embedded in the environment they travel to (Drori et al., 2009). They occupy two geographical locations that gives them different preferences than local entrepreneurs. True preferences are preferences that an individual would have if he/she had options, justified with reasoning and were close to rational choice (Harsanyi, 1992). Autonomous preference is defined by Nussbaum (2000, p. 137) to 'have in some manner been the object of reflection and have been deliberately chosen or at least endorsed by the agent'. These preferences are based on learning and experience. Living in a new context creates a consciousness-raising experience, which clearly influenced the nature and meaning of preferences. In other words, this study argues that autonomous preferences is formed as a result of operating in a tight social condition where one's preferences is context-dependent. The examples here illustrate autonomous preferences highlighted in transnational entrepreneurs' discussion:

Dunia: her sense of agency as well as her ability to be out (access to transportation and meeting the opposite sex) is relaxed in the host country than in SA. 'Here you don't have the complication where you need a man to do this and that for you, if you need something you just get up and do it.' This shows her preference is in accordance with a loose contextual condition. Therefore, her preferences is autonomous

Salma: she has preferences of independent mobility and independent access to places without facing restriction due to her gender. Such preferences contradicts with the one exist in home country. Therefore, her preference is based on the choices available in the host country.

Afnan: she prefers a life style where she can do what she desires. This was mentioned in relation to a context that allowed her to be a chef and a restaurant owner at the same time. This autonomous is perceived as inapplicable in the country of origin.

Anwar: She prefers making independent decisions and being free in her mobility and travel. Her preference is autonomous.

Lubna: she appreciates being able to travel without the need to obtain family permission, given the loose context she lives in, which does not stress women's need to obtain family permission.

Translational entrepreneurs' preferences seem to closely tie with a lenient context (in comparison to the home country) that gives individuals a variety of options to choose from. The statement above shows that these women are categorized as being at a distance from the home country condition, meaning that the Saudi social condition does not necessarily follow them, but rather they adapt their social behaviour with respect to the new context. Therefore, this study judges that transnational entrepreneurs experience autonomous preferences when engaging in business-related activities, due to the loose policy in the host country. Living in a lenient context made women conscious and aware of other ways of living, which is significant in three aspects: (loose mobility, interaction with the opposite sex, distance from family authority).

Based on the collected data, it should be clear that women entrepreneurs' geographical location to/from family has no significant outcome on women's starting a business, but influence women's sense of agency regarding making decision to engage in business-related activities. Proximity to/distance from family has affected women in terms of starting a business, which could be because of the bias in the study sample where it

interviewed women who had started a business rather than those with the intention to start a business. Nonetheless, women's geographical location to/from family has significant outcome on women's engagement in business-related travel. As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter proximity to family left women with no option to choose from but obliged to inform the family of *the potential* to engage in business-related activities (See chapter 6). However, this shaper reveals that single women behave differently when distance from family due to the loose social condition they operate in. These actions took the form of (1) informing the family of starting a business *after* starting a business; (2) *avoid* informing the family of business-related activities. This shows women's desire to eliminate family authority. This separate the argument between women's being under control at the former and women's sense of agency and autonomy in the latter. Therefore, women's strategy seems to tell us something about women's preferences that tie with their geographical location.

In that transnational entrepreneurs' discussion of preference was found to be in constant comparison between their country of settlement and country of origin. Such preference confirms the interplay between agency and structure (context), where the context of settlement is described as lenient compared to the country of origin, which was described as strict. Distance allowed TEs to recognize the differences of the contextual condition in different environment that influence and shape the nature of their preferences. Women entrepreneurs were deliberative (as implied in preference theory) took advantage of the situation they found themselves in while living overseas. Therefore, it appears that being exposed to a new environment made women equipped with a broader understanding of their sense of agency. Therefore, their preferences are autonomous.

### 8.3.1 Distance and gender implications for Saudi women transnational entrepreneurs

Transnational Saudi women entrepreneurs discussed the differences in the way they perceived gender in the host country by reflecting of the condition in the home country. Salma said that, ‘when it comes to starting the business [in SA] ... it’s a mystery for women’. This confirms the earliest finding that gender in the context of SA plays a crucial role in women’s perception of what they can/cannot do, due to ‘being a woman’, where in the new context TEs experience an ease in being women. These women constantly argue that the home country ‘it is not easy’ in comparison to their country of settlement. Noran puts it ‘when it comes to dealing with men here it’s very different from Saudi’. Gender-based culture is of significant to the awareness of transnational Saudi women, given the fact that gender is strongly reinforced in the home country, which made them acknowledge the ease in dealing with the opposite sex in the host country. Furthermore, Dunia states ‘where *there* [in SA] you need a man to do this and that for you’. This confirms that one of the implication of patriarchal society women acknowledge is the obligation to depend on a man/men to ease business procedures (e.g. mobility), which to these women becomes an obvious issue, in the sense that it limits their freedom to engage in activities. Lana claims, ‘a woman cannot do her work by herself in Saudi’. Anwar similarly highlights: ‘here [in London] I do everything by myself’. This comparison may reflect the way that transnational women entrepreneurs conceive gender both in the home country and the host country. Based on participants’ accounts, distance from the regulations and norms exist in the home country made women aware of the implications of gender on their businesses. Hadeel claims, ‘I knew how difficult it would be, if I was in Saudi.’ The difficulties these women encounter were made based on their experience of extreme gender segregation in the home country as well as their later experience of gender integration in the country of

settlement. Except that in the former, women have no option but to work around the constraints and accept the limitation it imposes on their businesses, while the latter gives women options, which they perceived as facilitating and enlarging their activities.

Aisha said, 'this is a big reason why Dubai, as a woman, it's better'. Similarly, Lubna highlights: 'because in the UK it was just easier for me, especially that I'm a woman'.

These statements seem to highlight the fact that women's preference links with how the context treats women. Based on previous chapters, these findings confirm that, when women operated in the home country, women's engagement in business activities fell into the category of allowed/not allowed to do, due to their gender (e.g. driving, interacting with the opposite sex, and travel without male-guardianship approval). This was not the case for entrepreneurs operating in a host country, where mobility, interaction and permission were not of concern to Saudi women. The host country contributed in emancipate the implication associated with 'being a woman'. As mentioned earlier, when the home country imposes constraints on women, it does not mean that women cannot start a business, but it just make pursuing entrepreneurship less feasible and less persuasive. Therefore, the point here is that women engage in business activities *in the home country* while considering the social context as *constraining*; where the same women engage in businesses activities *outside the home country* recognizing the host country social condition as an *opportunistic*.

### 8.3.2 Distance and opportunities for mobility

The women who participated in this study explicitly encountered the limited mobility which exists in their home country, and perceived their country of settlement as enlarging their mobility due to mobility opportunities. Mobility has been defined by entrepreneurs who experienced living abroad as the ability to choose from a set of options as to when, how and where to travel for business purposes without the need to

depend on a male driver. The data shows that all the women interviewed expressed satisfaction not only with independent driving but with having set of safe options to choose from for their mobility. This allowed for a better understanding of women's mobility in SA. Many of the women interviewed affirmed what Afnan said: 'but in Saudi [...] the struggle is that a woman cannot drive. A woman cannot go anywhere she wants.' This shows that being an entrepreneur with the strict mobility condition of being depended on others to move limits entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities that requires mobility. Therefore, it is possible to claim that living abroad for SA rearranged their understating of the role of mobility on their businesses. In particular, it allowed women to use different kinds of transportation means. For example, participants who lived in Dubai owned vehicles and independently drive, while participants living in the UK were using public transportation (buses, underground, trains, etc.). This clearly shows that women assimilate to a new mobility system that was constraining in the home county (inaccessible/unavailable/not allowed and associated with fear), where the new system in the host country seemed to enlarge women's mobility (accessible/available/allowed and safe) Aisha 'Here (in Dubai) when I started the business I've managed to go everywhere I want to go to.' This understanding of mobility condition in the new context was crucial to these women especially that they lack it previously. Salma confirms 'the fact that I can get into my car and go at a few minutes' notice made the process of starting a business easier'. These women's new context facilitated their mobility when it came to engagement in business activities. The previous chapters stated that women operating locally (SA) placed fear and safety when deciding upon mobility, where fear occurred while being driven by a private chauffeur). This was not what TEs reported when venturing in a foreign country, where women used public transportation or drove alone. This could be because the socio-spatial structure view women's mobility (being outside the house) as

acceptable and normal (there are other women) and would not threaten women's safety. It can also be because these women knew if they get harassed then they are able to report to the police, which could increase the feeling of safety to venture out.

When these women operate in the host country they reported the transition in their mobility experience, therefore, mobility condition – home country that bans women from independent driving to a context that allow independent mobility and provide options and choices with regard mobility. The group of transnational women interviewed in this study constantly stressed the value of autonomous mobility in the host country (Hadel: 'but here if you need something you just get up, go, and do it'). These women seem to appreciate the freedom associated with physical mobility, which encompasses making an independent decision of where, when and which activity to engage in. Therefore, based on the statements above, independent mobility do contribute to facilitating entrepreneur's activities; as Lubna puts it 'I need as an entrepreneur to constantly be moving that's why in London it is much easier in terms of being out.' The women find mobility important in pursuing entrepreneurship and find it hard to imagine conducting a business in a context where mobility is constrained. Afnan highlights: 'It's an easy normal life [here in Dubai], I wake up in the morning, *get into my car* ... Having my own choice basically.' It seemed obvious that these women should stress the relationship between mobility and freedom.

Moreover, the characteristics of the transport system varied with respect to entrepreneurs' geographical location. For example, the characteristics of the Dubai transport system, which attracts independent driving, played a crucial role in women's spatial capability for business activities. Salma notes 'it's easy. Even if I want to get to official banks or offices it's easy *I get into my car and go.*' This experience of ease in mobility facilitates women's engagement in business-related activities. Anwar highlights 'obviously over here there is individuality, like the transport on its own, I can

open the door, I can ride the bus, I can ride the tube, I can ride the taxi I can drive my car if I had a car'. For these women, any sort of independent mobility is considered an opportunity for mobility as they can attend any activity because transportation are yet accessible and available, and there is also a lack of stigma and fear when venturing. However, it could be clear that multiple means of transportation may vary from one context. The entrepreneurs lived in London (e.g. Luban, Anwar, Dunia and Hadeel) mentioned walking and using public transportation, but none of them drove nor own a car, for the reason that 'there is no need, you have many convenient alternatives of transportation'. (Hadeel). The rest of the entrepreneurs who lived in Dubai, USA and Canada drove their own cars. This study argues that these means of transportation is a source for women's mobility and therefore considered to enlarge entrepreneurs' engagement in business activities.

### 8.3.3 Distance and family authority

It should be clear that this study found that married women are proximate to family when starting a business abroad but distant from the social condition in the home country (e.g. mobility condition and gender segregation), while single women are found to be at a distance from the social condition and family when starting a business when living abroad (sense of agency). As shown in previous chapters, family played a crucial role in women's decisions and activities. Therefore, this section shed light on single women living abroad, because they were found to be geographically distant from parents (parents live in home country and women in a host country). Entrepreneurs' geographical distance from family refers to individual living in another country from where their family live (they tend to live in SA). While entrepreneurs' geographical proximity to family refers to individuals operating in the same country where their family reside and live with the family. With this in mind, this section to address the

ways in which women negotiate family power and authority when distant from family. It should be clear that this section gives more attention to single women than married ones, because (1) married women are found to be proximate to family (husband, kids) even when distance from the Saudi context, therefore, family power exists and follows married women; (2) the attribution of Saudi single women and their relation to family is unique in the home country. Therefore, this section argues that considering single women entrepreneurs could add a new understanding to the ways women react to family power. This was highlighted with respect to the flow of information when women had the intention to start a business and when intending to engage in business-related activities.

#### *8.3.3.1 Geographical distance: women's approach to informing the family of starting a business*

Based on the data, women operating abroad employed different strategies and coping mechanism that revealed aspects related to the women-family relation. This sample of women were found to deliberately separate family from work, by choosing not to inform the family of their intentions to start a business, nor informing the family of the process of starting a business. Anwar admits 'yes I avoided telling him [my father]'. Fahda, who started a business abroad before moving to SA, states: 'I did not discuss it with them [parents], I just did it.' Similarly, Aisha said, 'I never consulted my family.' This study refers to this group of women as *the hidlers*, because they intentionally choose to avoid informing the family of the process of starting a business. This choice 'not to inform the family' is a woman's decision that represents a sense of agency and autonomy. The decision of choosing not to inform one's family seem to intentionally separate family from interfering with a woman's desire to start a business.

However, women cannot keep away the information of running a business, but this was a matter of choosing the right time to inform the family and that after achieved functioning. Nouran claims that ‘I told him [my father] *after* the business was successful.’ With this in mind, these women reported the fact of establishing an *actual business*. Haddel notes ‘I started the business then I told them [my parents].’ This behaviour could be for a number of reasons. For instance, Salma justifies her choice of not informing her parents of her plan to start a business ‘because they would want to be in control and to direct me by saying – do this, do that’. It is possible to argue that women’s avoidance strategy – that is, the avoidance of informing the family – could be with the aim of reducing family interference and, therefore, family-to-work conflict. This shows women’s preference to be emancipated from family control. In a similar vein, Anwar suspects that by informing her father before starting a business that ‘he [father] would tell me ‘why are you building a company?’... He will think I’m crazy.’ This line of work confirms that women perceive their family to conflict with their desire. This shows that women’s assumption about their family could be true because when the women informed their family as seen in the previous chapters (due to proximity to family), women start a business while experiencing family doubt about starting a business. Therefore, this group of women (distance from family) chose starting a business without informing the family, as they anticipated family inferior and poor judgement that is unwanted by these women. This confirms women’s desire for independence, make decision and act upon their capabilities. Nonetheless, the point is that women start businesses in home country knowing that they have to confront the family; where women outside the home country were able to start businesses without being obliged to deal with family implication, but rather hide from informing the family. This stresses the fact that women’s independence from family enhances women’s sense

of agency. Consequently, it is possible to claim that these discourses show the ways in which women expressed the meaning of autonomy in their own term.

#### *8.3.3.2 Geographical distance: women's approach to informing the family of business activities engagement*

Although these women had frequent contacts with their parents to maintain the family relation, their discussions regarding what they do and where they travel were kept to minimal. These women handle the discussion with their parents carefully and consciously, paying close attention to familial ideology. On this note, the women-family bond is crucial, which is evident in a number of studies that reveal the differences between families in western and non-western societies, where it tend to be stronger in the latter than the former (Michielin and Mulder, 2008). Family relations are core aspect in the Saudi family structure.

However, the data reveals that geographical distance from parents allowed transnational entrepreneurs to have the option to inform or not to inform the family of business-related activities (such as urban and international travels). For instance, Anwar who lives in London and travelled to the Netherlands for business purposes explicitly said, 'so I did not tell my dad [about travelling]. He just assumed that I was in London this whole time.' This shows that women avoid informing the family of travel activities. Dunia confirms 'I just go.' Given the fact that the context within which these women operate does not require male-guardian permission, these women can independently decide without interference. Lubna indicates 'when I'm in London I don't have to inform them... The difference is that they are not living with me.' As mentioned earlier, these women attribute to be hidiers and avoid informing the family as they seek to

minimize family-to-work conflict and interference regarding business activities. It is possible to point out that geographical distance freed women from the obligation to seek permission from the family (parents), which was another expression of autonomy in Saudi women's accounts.

This autonomy TEs experience is not completely free. Dunia states 'I mean obviously they want me to be close to them.' Anwar mentioned that her father argues 'but you can't be away forever'. Similarly Hadeel adds 'my father keeps telling me you have to come back'. Family pressure seems to chase single women when living abroad, one reason for this could be for women to get married. Hadeel, who lives in London, claims: 'Maybe the only problem with my family is "who would you marry when you live abroad until this age?" This is challenging for them [my family].' This shows that within the context of the current study, women's geographical location (abroad) influences a woman's chance of getting married, and with the fact that transnational Saudi entrepreneurs are physically distant from the home country then their chances to get married are fewer. Traditional marriage in SA happens through attending social events where the son's mother looks for a bride for her son, with the absence of the son (segregated spaces). This reveals an interesting aspect of the limitation within the family mind-set, where they expect marriage to happen in a traditional manner and in specific Saudi setting and neglect the fact that women can meet men when living abroad. Similarly, Aisha explains the conversation that went between her and her mother when deciding to move to Dubai 'she was concerned 'are you sure? You don't want to get married?' This what she used to ask me! She kept telling me 'it's better to get married and to have your own house'.'. Based on these statements, it seems that the common perception is that women's travel and women location (transnational entrepreneurs) affect women's possibility of getting married. Therefore, women's travel and mobility

are negatively viewed in Saudi society, because it affects her potential to get married (being free rather than being under the control of family and society). Fahda mentions: ‘My mom thinks ... that it (travelling) might affect my future of having a husband.’ Therefore, these statements are a reflection of the implications associated with Saudi women’s travel and living abroad. On this note, the family act as a pressure to convince women to return back home (if operating abroad) or to travel less (if operating in the home country and travel for business purposes).

Therefore, transnational entrepreneurs’ geographical distance from family reveal a sense of agency for women in terms of making independent decision of starting a business and when engaging in business-related activities. To take this argument further, this study found that preferences can change when entrepreneurs relocate themselves from a loose context to a strict or tight context and vice versa. This case was associated with returnee entrepreneurs (a group that emerged from the data) and found to relate to transnational entrepreneurs (when engaging in business activities in the home country), where their preferences were found to shift from autonomy to context-dependent, as explained below.

#### 8.4 Distance-proximity: adaptive preferences

The argument made above was applicable to transnational and returnee entrepreneurs, where they adjust their preferences with respect to home country context, which confirms the argument made regarding women’s context-dependent preferences. This clearly shows that TEs and returnee entrepreneurs could not affect or change social practices in the home county – but rather the social practices and condition in the home country affect the way they behave and do businesses, which confirms the rigidity of Saudi society, that no such dilution is possible.

Adaptive preference is where an individual adapts and adjust their autonomous preferences to context-dependent preferences. This study agrees with Khader (2011) point where she claims that in some circumstances when certain options are unavailable then adaptive preferences is formed by either accepting to a small range of options unavailable or conforming to a given situation.

According to the current study findings, entrepreneurs who experience living or operating abroad (returnee or in some cases transnational entrepreneurs) were found to adapt their preferences upon their return due to the change in the context and its social condition. Adaptive preference is argued to be a result of moving from autonomous preference (host county loose social condition) to context-dependent-preference (home county light social context). Adaptive preferences for returnee entrepreneurs could be considered as the only option for women to apply, because it would be inapplicable to apply their autonomous preferences (gained from living in a lenient context) to a context that impose specific rules on women. Therefore, In the case of the current study, the following examples show returnee women entrepreneurs' adaptive preferences:

Lana: She identifies adjusting her preferences due to contextual condition 'when I returned back to Saudi [...] I've experienced adjustment disorder'. That is found in mobility 'when I returned to Saudi I struggled with mobility as I didn't have a driver'. Therefore, her preferences is adaptive in the sense that she accepted the range of option unavailable.

Hanoof: She highlights that her preferences is subject to the context within which she operates 'the conditions in USA helped me unlike in Saudi'. She adapts her business

activities when it comes to meeting the opposite sex upon her return to SA, therefore her action was revealed by ‘try[ing] hard not to deal with men’.

Fahda: She addresses the way she adapts to her mobility condition ‘compared to Japan it [SA] is annoying but I feel like I just got used to it. I try to work around it and not make a big deal out of it because I would rather put my energy on other stuff rather than this [mobility constraints].’ Although they perceived the local structure as problematic, but they consciously choose to not waste mental energy with the issues exist in their context since this is the only way things work. Therefore, this study judges that due to mobility condition, Saudi women in SA apply adaptive preferences by accepting the mobility condition.

Alanoud: she states her preferences to travel to many locations for business purposes, but ‘he [father] would never let me.’ Therefore she adapts her preferences by accepting to the limited option align with family rules.

Samar: she prefers to engage in certain business activities but she applies adaptive preferences due to contextual conditions tie with family rules. ‘Even when I tell my day in an exciting voice ‘dad I’m going to a workshop’ the first thing he would ask: ‘is there men?’ I would go like ‘dad I’ve done my Masters in London and in an environment that was filled with men’.

Shahad: she claims ‘I used to drive my own car’ when living abroad. She adjusts her preferences by accepting to a small range of options unavailable (e.g. women’s access to independent mobility as well as public transportation). Therefore, her preference is adaptive.

Drori et al. (2009) revealed that returning entrepreneurs (REs) tend to bring back unique assets of knowledge and advantages that not applicable to domestic entrepreneur, because ‘REs can fill an entrepreneurship deficit in the home country.’ (P. 1005). Although these returnees may return with no business interest from the host country from which they have returned, the international exposure they experienced can contribute to starting a new business upon their return in the home country. This study argues that returnee entrepreneurs may share viewpoints similar with that of transnational entrepreneurs and well as local entrepreneurs. Based on evidence from the current research, Res. Experienced being ‘distance’ at some point when living abroad and being ‘proximity’ when returning back to the home country (strict context). Returnee entrepreneurs as well as transnational entrepreneurs (who engage in business activities in the home country) perceived their action and behaviour in the home country as ‘this is the best and only way to do things’.

Therefore, the data reveals that Saudi women adapt their preferences by accepting to the small range of options whether available or unavailable rather than conforming to the contextual situation. These women adjust their preferences due to the change in their geographical location, and were able to acknowledge the differences between their autonomous preferences (when living in a lenient context) and their context-dependent preference (when moving to strict context). In this sense, they address how their preferences required adjustment and alteration with respect to the context regulation, norms and culture that pushed away their autonomous preference.

## 8.5 Chapter summary

The current research indicated three types of preferences, which is based on women’s

geographical location (1) Context-dependent preferences: coming to see that the preferences local entrepreneurs had is dependent on being embedded in a contextual condition; (2) Autonomous preferences: coming to see transnational entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs who had true preferences due to autonomy exist in their context; (3) Adaptive preferences: coming to see that returnee entrepreneurs adjust their autonomous preferences to context-dependent preferences.

It was found that context-dependent preference ties with entrepreneurs' proximity to strict context. Where for local entrepreneurs context-dependent preference was subject to how things are, were and would be. They seemed to not know of other way of having preferences. Therefor it is possible to argue that individual preferences where agents are born with could be just as preferences that reject these norms of someone who is not born with it. With respect to this, the current research judges that context-dependent preferences is in contrast with autonomous preferences and adaptive preferences,

When women move from a strict environment to a lenient one (the case of returnee and transnational entrepreneurs) their actions and preferences were likely to be influenced by the new social structure (the options it gives to the individual).

Due to distance from the home country, women expressed their autonomy in reference to their gender, mobility condition and family relation, which seemed to facilitate and enlarge their engagement in business activities. For example, transnational entrepreneurs understood how gender is subject to context, where the home country patriarchal. Entrepreneurs operating in a host country also conceptualized mobility in terms of having the option to independently drive or use public transportation. Because of the contexts-specific features (Dubai, US, London), mobility condition varied with respect to the context within which they reside. Due to the restriction of women's

mobility in the home county, women did not report difficulties in adjusting to mobility condition in the host country.

Before this study was conducted, we knew very little about single women's relationship with the family and the consequences it has on information flow with significant family members. This chapter showed that women who were distant from family had a set of options in this regard, where their choices entail (1) not informing the family of travel activities or (2) informing the family of *activities* after achieving it (e.g. starting a business). This study found that women's strategy to separate family from work was with the aim to eliminate family interference, which seems to tell us something about women's preference for autonomy to make *independent decisions*. It was found that the time span regarding when women inform the family was defined in two fixed points. One is informing the family of the potential to engage in an activity *prior* to actual engagement (conformist-when proximity to family). Two, is informing the family of actual engagement and after engaging in an activity (hidiers – when distance from family). The latter was associated with TEs whom were found to make less sacrifice in the business domain and more sacrifices in family domain. In addition, based on the account of this study participants, women's expression of 'I told my family', took the form of *informing the family* which this study refers to as the obligation to integrate family with work (**control**), while their expression of 'I didn't tell my family', took the form of *not informing the family* which this thesis conceptualizes as the option to separate family from work (**autonomy**), all of which in reference with women's strategy in a context within which they operate.

In other words, entrepreneurs operating in SA found ways around the domestic pressures to act, but the pressures were multiple – the family, the fear of outside, the policing of separation between the sexes etc.– reduced women's autonomy and made them plan business within constraints. Outside of SA, the external pressures are reduced,

and the independent living means women have more autonomy – but this is only achieved by being duplicitous, and managing information flow to significant family members. Controls are there, but weakened (weakening of institutional power away from the Saudi context, such as the family). Women are controlled – but in one context controls are weak and in the other they are stronger at multiple levels (C smith 2017, personal communication, 21 July).

In addition, distance-proximity allowed entrepreneurs distinguished between autonomous preferences (when living in a lenient context) and context-dependent preference (when moving to the country of origin), then their preferences were referred adaptive preferences. This study found that with returnee entrepreneurs certain options were unavailable upon their return, therefore, adaptive preferences is formed by accepting to a small range of options unavailable rather than conforming to a given situation.

Like the findings addressed in previous chapters confirms that rational choice theory is not just based on self-interest but also consider the social, institutional and political interest, as a sense of obligation, which overrides self-interest. However, this theory consider preferences where the current study finding contribute in providing two crucial insights – first, that women have preferences for certain aspects more than other (e.g. following family rules, considering reputation, doing the right thing etc.); and second, that women select an option available to them as best to achieve the outcome they prefer (e.g. less family-to-work conflict). This depends on their contextual condition of what matter more or what is more important at the time they make the decision. For instance, women's preference to obtain family approval outweighs women's desire to engage in an activity (e.g. meeting the opposite sex, travelling abroad etc.), which is the case of

women who experience proximity to family. In this sense it seems that individuals' choices and coping strategies were found to satisfy their preferences.

To sum up, it is possible to define entrepreneurs' preferences in relation to the contextual and institutional structure within which they operate in. The data shows that the social condition of SA does not necessarily follow women overseas, or those with international and transnational experience affect or change the practices in SA (because the practices are rooted in the state policy and regulations). However, the social condition in SA is strong and rigid towards women (whether local, returnee or transnational) where dilution of strict condition is not possible (C. Smith 2017, personal communication 12 July). This chapter revealed new light on the effect of entrepreneurs' geographical location on contextual preferences, and therefore, on their practices as entrepreneurs. In other words, based on figure 3 the suggestion is that it is only the samples of transnational and returnees who gained autonomy, because they experienced living abroad. Locals were controlled, because of the experience of living in the home country. This suggests the host country is necessary to develop practices that allow for autonomy as a capacity to be developed within the entrepreneurs. In SA (home country) there is no such space, only control. This puts the institutional weight on shaping entrepreneurial action in the society. Therefore, it is possible to claim that the real autonomous group, are the sample of transnational, suggesting that any contact with the home country is controlling for women. It is not a space that is changing. It is not a space that can be changed by women in conventional ways – such as gaining employment or setting up business outside the home. Patriarchal conditions and social forces are too strong within the state and shape or socialize women into traditional conformist and controlled behaviour (C Smith 2017, personal communication, 12 July).



## CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 9.1 Introduction

This final chapter link together the research findings with the research objectives and aims. The main objective of this research is to understand the perception and experience of women in the context within which they operate. Part of the research process is an examination of pertinent literature, in conjunction with an examination of studies on Saudi women entrepreneurs, which showed that research on understating the context and the rule it plays on the entrepreneur's decision and action was underdeveloped conceptually and empirically, from this realization, two aims has been achieved:

**Aim one:** To examine network ties, family rules, and mobility condition from the perspective of Saudi women entrepreneurs in SA (proximity), with an emphasis on the meaning they give to these aspects and the cases where they apply coping strategies that either enlarges or limits their engagement in business activities.

**Aim two:** To explore and examines the ways in which the geographical location (social condition) within which women operate, shape women's preferences (e.g. proximity to the home country social condition and distance from the home country social condition).

This chapter is structured into two main sections. The first section addresses the research findings in relation to the two sub-aims. The following section concludes the research by highlighting the research contribution. It also provides an overview of the implications of the policy, practices and research on Saudi women entrepreneurs'

development. It then considers the limitations of the research and addresses recommendations for future research.

## 9.2 Discussion of the findings

### 9.2.1 Finding 1: Fear: weak ties, place, and mobility

This finding leads the current research to shed light on the emotional journey of entrepreneurs, because considering entrepreneurial emotions is crucial (Cardon et al. 2012; Morris et al. 2012) in the sense that emotion such as fear, concern and doubt can work against entrepreneurs' interest (Foo, 2011; Shepherd, 2003; Welpe et al. 2012). According to Lupton and Tulloch (1999, p. 511), 'to be fearful... is to approach and interpret the world in particular ways'. Fear reflects individual's appraisal of the external context (Cacciotti and Hayton, 2015). Women mainly feared verbal and/or physical assault that stems from men.

Linking the current research finding with the literature review, fear occurred in women's discussion of weak ties with people, places, and the driver. With regard to social network ties, trust and strong emotional relations such as 'feeling safe' entrepreneurs count on reflect strong ties, while weak emotional relation such as 'feeling fearful' entrepreneurs count on reflect weak ties. For the current study, strong ties meant that women felt safe while weak ties meant that women felt unsafe (fearful). This confirms that women entrepreneur's network is the extent of the people they know (strong ties) rather than people they do not know (weak ties). In other words, the fear factor constrains the possibilities of having weak ties in women's business.

This line of work allowed this study to understand the relationship between mobility and network ties. Because spatial mobility is about proximity to people and places, it fostered emotion of fear or safety. This was reflected in participants' discussion of

im/mobility in SA. The finding of the current study showed that emotion play a role with regard women's decision of mobility, which was subject to the strength of network ties. In other words, the strength of network ties influences women entrepreneurs' decision to travel to meet clients and have face-to-face interaction, because strong ties tend to bind entrepreneurs with a sense of trust, whereas weak ties brought a sense of fear when making decision. Because fear dominates women's discussions, doing business with weak ties signals danger while strong ties signal legitimacy. . Therefore, women have felt responsible to protect themselves from harm. In this study fear occurred with respect to women's travel to places to meet clients and suppliers of weak ties

One of the main arguments of this research is that physical mobility is a crucial activity for an entrepreneur starting a business, where it entails meeting clients and suppliers to sustain a business. Therefore, the current study demonstrated that network ties embed in a place influence women's decision of mobility to to place. In fact, women entrepreneurs' decision of mobility to a place to meet people manifests through negotiating safety and fear. Fear occurred in cases that were beyond the strength of network ties. The spatial dimension of mobility and place played a crucial role in entrepreneurs' interpretation of safety and fear. For instance because social relations happen in places (subject to location and sense of places), and upon their travel (with a stranger male driver), these aspects construct women's feeling of safety and danger. As a result, fear was found to determine women's decision to engage in/ or avoid engaging in business-related socio-spatial activities.

On this note, participants of the current study varied in their discussion of fear, where they employed different strategies when making decision, such as (a) avoidance strategies; (b) defensive strategy. With this in mind, women developed patterns, where in some cases were found to be concern, alert and cautious of the context within which

they operate and address their fear (anticipated fear) prior to travelling and before translating potential mobility into an actual one. Two, is when women expressed their fear while in transit and on the move (while driven by a stranger chauffeur). Three, when the meeting take place in a physical place (unfamiliar locations and type of places). The overriding theme that emerged from this study was the coping strategies women employed to deal with fear.

In this context, women entrepreneurs with high level of fear applied avoidance strategy prior to mobility, which made it less likely to engage in coping efforts that facilitate their engagement in business-related activities. Although avoidance strategy limits women's engagement in business practices but considered the best strategy to deal with fear. Kaufmann et al. (2004) suggest that examining individuals' experience of the potential of movement revealed new aspects related to the possibilities and constraints of individual manoeuvres. With respect to the current research, due to fear, women employed avoidance strategies where they avoided travelling to meet a client of the opposite sex at night and in an unfamiliar location (over doing business with them), which revealed the constraints associated with women's mobility. For these reasons, this study viewed women's avoidance strategy limit entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities. Collectively, such tactic seemed to constrain women's businesses. Most of the statement women made, tend to be a spatial expression of patriarchy. Because many women were reluctant to participate in activities that required meeting and interacting with the opposite sex, they paid close attention to the familiarity of the meeting location as well as the time of these meetings. On this note, this study follows Wilson and Little (2001, p.182) point where they argued that women's travel is 'governed to some degree by a structure of patriarchal social control'. This means women entrepreneurs' fear manifests itself through internal perception and negotiation of what is appropriate in the society and what is not.

Furthermore, in other cases, women were found to experience fear in actual travel and when with the driver. It was surprising to find that, although these women used private transportation and were driven by a male driver, their fear of travelling was not reduced. This line of work could contribute to previous studies that examined geography of women's travel fear in a different context (western), where women's fear emerged in cases such as, using public transportation and/or walking in specific areas at specific times (Deem, 1986). But since this study is claimed to be a unique case given the fact that Saudi women had a tendency to use private transportation and depend on a male driver (stranger). In addition, women perceived themselves as solo travellers and sense fear when being with a driver. Valentine's (1989, p.385) concept of 'geography of women's fear' occurred among solo women travelling abroad (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Westwood et al., 2000). However, this study found that fear occurred in women's urban mobility. To this end, fear seemed to have an impact on women entrepreneurs' mobility, as much as mobility have an impact on women's fear. With this in mind, women employed a defensive strategy by travelling with a male family member or a friend to reduce mobility fear. The current study considers defensive strategy to enlarge women's engagement in business-related activities. In addition, some of the women interviewed were found to turn potential mobility into an actual one by meeting social actors in a place while employing defensive strategies, such as taking precautions tools, taking a friend, informing family member etc. This behaviour made it more likely for women to engage in coping efforts that facilitate their engagement in business-related activities rather than limits it. This shows that when entrepreneurs had the desire to engage in an activities, the coping effort they employ aim to facilitate such engagement. In other words, instead of applying avoidance strategy to meeting male clients they acted in a protective manner by being careful and precocious while their participation in an

activity. Therefore, this study argues that defensive strategy is a way to minimize fear and enlarge women's engagement in business-related activities.

This research claims that examining women entrepreneurs' socio-spatial context led to exploring geography of women's urban mobility fear. The findings highlighted in the current research supported 'geography of women's fear' concept introduced by Valentine (1989). This concept was extended by Wilson and Little (2008), where they focused on fear when it comes to women's solo travelling. Valentine (1989) argued that people feel confident to deal with unfamiliar location in areas in which they reside, because they know where to ask for help, similarly Wilson and Little (2008) confirmed that fear continues when women travel to unknown and unfamiliar landscapes. However, the present study found that women's fear occurred in an urban setting and in a context in which they reside. Therefore, fear is not subject to the familiarity of a place but subject to perception of safety in that place (how women is perceived in a place including the level of law and regulations to protect women from sexual harassment). Surprisingly, this study found that women's business-related travel at home (urban mobility) was not perceived as safe, where women travel to unknown and unfamiliar landscape (and *in* a foreign country) was not perceived as dangerous. This was obvious when fear was not mentioned when Saudi women travelled abroad (as a solo travellers) nor was it mentioned by Saudi transnational entrepreneurs who engaged in different sorts of activities in a host county. This line of work confirms Wilson and Little (2008, p. 182) request to move beyond deterministic assumption which link fear with unfamiliar, because 'home is not always safe, and foreign country is not always dangerous'. Lubna states 'I was concerned when I was travelling to Riyadh, maybe if I was travelling to London I wouldn't be as concerned.' This discourse confirm that fear ties with the social, political and spatial structure of the society. A London based entrepreneur compared her experience, arguing 'at the end of the day it's [doing

business in SA] more intimidating than doing a business aboard'. This shows that the embodied geography of fear in doing business activities in SA was present in women's discussions and absent when doing business activities in a host country. The present research argues that 'geography of women's fear' is not evident in Saudi women travelling and operating outside SA (host country), but more evident among Saudi women entrepreneurs travelling with the driver inside SA (home country). Although Valentine's (1989) thesis argues from the perspective of solo women's international travel and confirms that women's experience are governed by patriarchal social control in the new context, this study argues from the perspective of Saudi women's urban travel, where patriarchal social control exists in the home country.

Therefore, fear reflected a social reality that instilled through social messages, which lead to the development of cognitive maps regarding safety/danger (Caesar, 1999; Valentine, 1989). Fear was translated in women's discussions where they felt that the society would blame them if they got harassed. This shows that fear is not separated from but overlapped with institutional trust. This is part of the narratives the society produces, which encompasses on the idea that it is a woman's fault if she got harassed as she chooses to put herself in such situation (outside the house). This shows that people's reaction in particular context is a reflection of the social and political structure (Koskela, 1997; Valentine, 1989). In the context of this study the policies stresses that women should dress in a modest way, avoid being out of the house, avoid mixing with men and so on. Therefore, it is possible to argue that when the state lack comprehensive written law that aim to protect women from harassment (Le Renard, 2014), then fear interfere in women's decision regarding engaging in an activity.

Welter and Smallbone (2006) state that trust should be interpreted and viewed in its specific context, and it is clear that fear in the current study context leads women entrepreneurs to calculate risk, which is a result of making sense of the context within which they operate. Moreover, this shows the complex interaction between fear and other mechanism, such as power and control (opposite sex). In this sense the relationship between fear and control was revealed by examining entrepreneurs' social relationships in a patriarchal society, where social control as well as lack of institutional trust influences women's engagement in business activities.

To sum up, this chapter has showed how fear and perception of safety were closely embedded in the socio-spatial structure and was reflected in the coping strategies women employed in the business domain. After women's internal negotiation of fear, women addressed the role the family played in their decision of activity engagement.

#### 9.2.2 Finding 2: Family permission as a Family-to-work conflict

Based on the findings of the present research, women's perception of the family is linked to the power families have to give women the permission they need to engage in business-related activities. In this study, family permission contributes to understanding family-to-work conflict in the context of SA, in that we have argued that family permission in the current research consists of family ideology of what is appropriate or inappropriate for women to do, which could cause women to dismiss work demand (engagement in business activities). This study confirms that in a patriarchal context that stresses on family permission (male-guardianship system) seems to control women over her interest and desire.

Because the current study questioned the ways in which women experienced family interference with work, it was found that although women entrepreneurs brought a new discussions in the household, they were found to experience family-to-work conflict when engage in business-related activities that entail mobility at certain times, mobility to in meet a client of the opposite sex and international travel. These aspects frame our understating in family role in women's options and choices in the business domain.

The findings of the current study showed that women seek to attain work-life balance when starting a business (Boden, 1999; DeMartino and Barbato, 2003), through prioritizing family opinions and thoughts (satisfaction in the family domain. Prioritizing the family was conceptualized by the ways in which women employed coping strategies where it aligned with family interest rather than business interest. On this note, the present research linked individuals' tactics with respect to Jennings and McDougald (2007 p. 749) work. The women who participated in this current study reported integration of family behaviours, thoughts and feelings associated with the work domain (as out-of-role domain), as it is the only choice available for women. It should be clear that women's coping strategies aimed to restore family relation. This shows the role family plays in shaping the agency of women in general and entrepreneurs in particular (capability). Having a family with a strict ideology that does not give women the permission 'to do and be' is interpreted as limiting women's capability (women's ability to engage in business activities).

It is possible to claim that women entrepreneurs' engagement in business-related activities is subject to women's family ideology and belief system. Because when women obtain family permission, then there's a possibility to translate potential activities into actual ones. This study captures the complexity of the interrelationship of the state policy, family permission, family-to-work conflict, in influencing women's

engagement in business-related activities. The evidence revealed in this study lead us to conclude that the family contribute to understating female entrepreneurship, a large part of which was seen in the way women prioritize family domain over business domain. Maintaining family structure matters more to women than following their desire to engage in particular activities. This exercise of choosing between work and family serves to limit women's choices. In other words, women's choices are informed to be in line with family permission, where women's action is not simply about their preference, but family preferences. This study argues that family can be a source for enlarging women's activities as well as a constraint.

After presenting the findings and linking it with literature review, one can later ask, which has a stronger influence on women entrepreneurs' ability and decision to engage in business activities, is it mobility condition (the ban on women driving) or family ideology (the obligation to seek family permission)? Based on the data and findings, this study strongly claim that seeking family permission is the foundation of women's limitation, because if we assumed that women were able to drive, family approval 'allowing' or 'not allowing' shapes women's im/mobility.

### 9.2.3 Finding 3: Women entrepreneurs' perception of urban mobility condition

This study agreed with the claim made in the literature review (chapter 3), where Kenyon et al. (2003) distinguish the poverty that leads to inaccessibility to transportation (mobility-social exclusion) and transportation deficit that reflects lack of access to opportunities and services. The conceptualization of social-mobility exclusion is of interest to this study, as it reveal a unique angle of meaning that alerts us to understand the concept of mobility (opportunities and constants for mobility) with respect to the regulation exist in a context. With this in mid, this study judged due to the ban on women to driving, women in Saudi do experience mobility-social exclusion.

The process of arranging mobility for women took the form of discussion and negotiation with the family members as well as considering the driver role. As stated in the literature review, the potential of movements that individual's experience reveal the possibilities and the constraints associated with individual manoeuvres (Kaufmann et al., 2004). On this note, the current study provided an insight on 'everyday transportation and spatial relations of mobility and immobility' (Sheller and Urry, 2006, p.212).

Table 10: Mobility condition: constraints and opportunities for women entrepreneurs' mobility

Conditions v	Constraints on mobility	Opportunities for mobility
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mobility:</li> <li>- High family demand on mobility</li> <li>- Strict family ideology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low family demand on mobility</li> <li>- Lenient family ideology</li> </ul>
Driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of accessibility and availability of private transport mean (family car and driver).</li> <li>-Driver multiple roles, domestic-related mobility and business-related mobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Availability and accessibility of the car and the driver</li> <li>-Independent/ solo use of the driver:</li> <li>- Many drivers working in the household</li> <li>- Driver single role (company driver, driver for business-related mobility)</li> <li>-Ability to delegate mobility to the driver</li> </ul>

Applying mobility from the perspective of capability approach showed the choices women had the constraints they face, and the opportunities they had. This study understood the condition of entrepreneurs' mobility for business activities, which results from their desire to travel to places to meet people. Based on table (10) the findings of the current research conceptualized the constraints and opportunities for women's mobility in SA. Mobility is not a fixed structure, because when women discussed aspects related to arranging mobility with the family, shared mobility could limit women's mobility if there is over demand of mobility across family members. Shared mobility in this regard entails the driver to play multiple roles (domestic-related mobility and business-related mobility). On the other hand, it was found that solo use of mobility (through having multiple drivers in the house, or having a company driver, etc.) provides greater opportunities for women's mobility, meaning enlarge women's ability to engage in business-related activities.

In addition, when women discussed their arrangements for mobility with the driver they first highlighted issues around the driver availability/unavailability as facilitating/limiting their movements. Therefore, Saudi women's mobility condition is limited in terms of choices and options. Women's mobility in SA is defined by the availability and accessibility of both the car and a male driver, where the availability of one mean (car), without the other (driver) results in immobility. This confirms Robeyns' (2005, p.99) claim that state 'if a government or the dominant societal culture imposes a social or legal norm that women are not allowed to cycle without being accompanied by

a male family member [or accompanied by a male driver], then it becomes much more difficult or even impossible to use the good to enable the functioning’.

In these discussions, the women interviewed highlighted their opportunities for mobility (mobility capability). They stated the opportunities associated with (1) depending on the driver to facilitate women’s travel for business activities; (2) delegating business-related activities to the driver. The former indicates women’s actual travel with the driver to meet clients that of importance the business. Here women noted the privileges associated with being driven by a driver where it reduced additional tasks that tie with mobility, such as filling the car with petrol, parking the car, the need to focus on the road and not being able to do other things while driving etc. Women stressed the benefit of dependent mobility where it allowed them to do other tasks while on the move, such as making phone calls, preparing for a meeting, reading meeting minutes etc. furthermore, delegating mobility to the driver allowed women to disengage from (secondary mobility tasks) while assigning the driver to do the business-related tasks on women’s behalf. In this case, women claimed their ability to engage in primarily and important business activities when delegating other business-related activities to the driver, such as delivering and picking up products etc. Delegating mobility task to the driver was considered an opportunity for entrepreneurs (enlarge) to engage in business-related activities.

On this note, capability approach allowed this study to understand the role mobility has on entrepreneurs (e.g. having a company driver provide a greater opportunity than using family driver). Building upon this, with the constraints women encounter upon their travel, it was found that Saudi women’s mobility had expanded beyond the family’s private chauffeur to include ride-hailing companies (such as Uber and Careem), which created an opportunity for women’s mobility. The present study showed that transport services such as Uber and Careem contributed in expanding the opportunity for

women's mobility, playing a crucial role with respect to the culture that tends to value ownership and privacy through the use of family private car and chauffeur. These strategies became part of women's capabilities for mobility. It also allowed them to conceptualized opportunities for mobility differently and with respect to being banned from independent driving.

It should be clear that the arguments mentioned above was related to Saudi women entrepreneurs' engaging in business-related activities in the context of SA. Therefore, moving away from local settings (strict) to international settings (lenient) was crucial to the present study, because Saudi women's experience of mobility in a context that bans women from driving is not necessarily similar to a context that gives women the option to drive or to use safely use public transportation (more options for mobility). On this note, beside considering entrepreneurs perspectives in a context where they experience dependence and limits in mobility, it was crucial to reveal the experience of Saudi transnational women entrepreneurs in contexts where it less patriarchy.

#### 9.2.4 Finding 4: Entrepreneurs geographical location and preferences

This study distinguishes the geographical location and preferences of three groups of: (1) 'proximity' is where Saudi entrepreneurs operate is SA, and are judged to operate in strict social condition. This group perceive the contextual condition 'this is the way things are'. Therefore, their preference is referred to as *context-dependent preferences*; (2) 'Distance' is where Saudi entrepreneurs operate in a new context (host country), where the social condition is judged to be lenient and loose. This group viewed the contextual condition in the host county as 'there are options and other ways of doing

things'. Therefore, their preference is referred to as *autonomous preferences* (3) 'Distance-proximity' is where Saudi entrepreneurs operated between a context of loose social conditions and a context of tight and strict social condition. This group viewed the contextual condition in the former context as 'there are options and other ways of doing things' and in the latter context as 'limited options of doing things'. Because this group preference seems a continuum between autonomous preferences and context-dependent preferences, therefore, their preference is referred to as *adaptive preferences*.

It should be clear that the change in women's geographical location (strict to loose or visa versa) influences entrepreneurs' preferences, which is due to the change in the contextual condition. From comparing local entrepreneurs, transnational entrepreneurs and returnee entrepreneurs, the current research found that the decision, actions and behaviours of entrepreneurs varied with respect to their proximity to or distance from patriarchal society.

When entrepreneurs were found to be operating in the home country (proximity and distance-proximity), they were found to apply coping strategies with respect to the strict context. Women here tend to respect on the context's rules, regulation and obligations. Therefore, the claim the current study makes is that the preferences of entrepreneurs operating in a strict context is context-dependent preferences, due to the fact that the activities women engaged in and did not engage in is in line with the social condition (social norms, regulations, etc.). Entrepreneurs' preferences are context-dependence preferences rather than autonomous ones. This could be the case when the person in question makes decision that is dependent on the society expectation, family ideology (what the society value or what the family value) where the individual *prefers* that someone else or something external decide for him/her (Burchardt and Holder, 2012). Martha Nussbaum and Serene Khadeer argued that a person who does not make independent decision regarding what he or she values does not necessarily represent a

person without agency. Where the current study argues that a person who does not make independent decision regarding what he or she values and let someone decide for him/her it may confirms and reflects rigid and strict contextual condition.

Table 11: Women's preferences with respect to women's geographical location and contextual condition (women-family relation).

Women's geographical location and entrepreneurship	Local entrepreneurs: Proximity to family	Transnational entrepreneurs: Distance from family
Decision to Start a business  Entrepreneurs' option  Entrepreneurs' coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform <i>before</i> starting a business (potential functioning)</li> <li>• Obligatory. Obligated to inform the family (control)</li> <li>• Integration (blurring) inevitable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform <i>after</i> starting a business (Achieved actual functioning)</li> <li>• Have options to choose form (autonomy)</li> <li>• Segmentation (separation): evitable.</li> </ul>
Engaging in business activities  Entrepreneurs contextual conditions  Entrepreneurs' strategy  The agency of women entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the family <i>before</i> engaging in an activity (potential functioning)</li> <li>• Obligatory. Sense of obligation to inform the family</li> <li>• Integration of family and work, therefore, prioritizing family over work</li> <li>• Family permission is crucial</li> <li>• Integrator/confirmer (those who inform the family of work matters)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose not to inform the family or</li> <li>• Choosing to inform the family inform <i>after</i> engaging in an activity (actual functioning)</li> <li>• Optional: sense of option whether to inform the family or not and choosing when to inform the family</li> <li>• Separation between family and work, therefore, prioritizing work over family</li> <li>• Family permission is not needed.</li> <li>• Separator/hider (those who avoid informing the family of work matters)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom</li> </ul>
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When it comes to women's coping strategies regarding informing the family (see table 11), according to Rothbard et al. (2005), boundary theory aims to understand how individuals manage multiple roles and apply certain boundaries between work and family. This study contributes to boundary theory by arguing that the context within which an entrepreneur operates plays a role in defining boundary theory. With accordance to this study context, it revealed whether women are able to choose between integration or separation of work and family. With regard to this, this study found that women operating in the context of SA (whether single or married women) integrate family and work, as they have no other option. In other words, the context rather obliges women to integrate family and work (because they are obliged to obtain family permission regarding what they do). Therefore, it is possible to claim that women's desire/obligation to separate/integrate family and work is a reflection of the context social condition. Therefore, the context influences the understanding of boundary theory. For example, when women are proximate (meaning operating in it) then the context imposes the idea of integration rather than giving women options to integrate or separate family and work, which in fact influence our understanding of boundary theory as well as family-to-work conflict. With this in mind, Hofstede (1984; 2011) refers to this as a collective society, where family domain cannot be separated from the domain of work. For instance, local entrepreneurs operating in SA are close to family (proximity to family and social condition) women's choices are informed by their family circumstances and in that case action is not simply about individual choice. Considering the context and the obligation on women to obtain family permission leave women with no option but to integrate the family domain with the work domain by

informing the family of potential functions. Such integration led women to *prioritize the contextual condition – family preferences* when making decision. While, TEs operating in distance from family choose (as a desire) to segment family and work as they had the option to do so due to their distance and the contextual condition that give them the option to do so (see table 11).

Linking this with Elster definition of preference where he stated that when ‘the fox stops wanting the grapes because he cannot have them’ (quoted in Khaber, 2012, p.46), we argue that the way to think of preferences in this line of work is puzzling, and unsuitable to the case of women who were born in a context that happened to ban women from driving, treat them as secondary citizens, marginalize them etc. These women knew only this way but no other way of living and being (unaware). Therefore, this could be a reason to argue that Elster's account of the fox and grape does not account in cases where women entrepreneurs are embed in a patriarchal context, because the reason why the fox has not considered the grape could be because of the context structure that imposes specific rules on him (what he’s allowed and what he’s not allowed to have). Meaning, the context could impose on the fox rules that lead him to discard options (having the grape), because it’s inaccessible to him (not allowed to have a grape). The contextual condition is something crucial to add in Elester’s argument, because understanding the context would define the relationship between the fox and the grape. With this in mind, the present study judge’s entrepreneurs’ preferences here to be far from self-interest, as they are not chosen upon autonomous (due to strict rules exist in their context) but rather chosen with respect the social condition. This line of work confirms previous work that argues collectivists tend to put collective interest above self-interest (Hofstede, 1980).

In contrast, distance that occurred in TEs expressed that their strategy in the host country is different from operating in the home country. Here women had the tendency to compare the context of settlement with that of origin and addressed matters that was not available in the home country, which shows autonomous in action 'here' and restriction in action 'there'. They learnt to negotiate new environments and understood that there is other ways of doing thing, due to the options available. Such distance seems to provide women entrepreneurs with autonomy that reflected upon the set of choices available to choose from (awareness). TEs autonomous preference was highlighted in relation to their experiences of ease regarding gender interaction, freedom and options in mobility, and lack of obligation to seek family permission. Autonomous preference is defined by Nussbaum (2000, p. 137) as options that 'have in some manner been the object of reflection and have been deliberately chosen or at least endorsed by the agent'. In the case of the current research, it is possible to argue that when women moved from a strict environment to a lenient one, their preferences became autonomous. We called their preferences to be autonomous, because these women applied a comparative perspective of the contextual condition of the host country with that of the home country 'here versus there', by addressing contextual conditions regarding (1) gender integration versus gender segregation; (2) opportunities for mobility versus constraints on mobility (3) the choice between family-work segregation and family-work integration, which emancipated them from family authority. These tacit comparisons of the host country condition and the home country condition affect the way these women perceived and experienced matters related to autonomous versus control.

For instance, gender-based ideology was implicitly highlighted by TEs in the sense that they did not address fear when it came to interacting with people of weak ties, precisely the opposite sex. Nonetheless, they addressed fear when doing business with the

opposite sex in SA (see chapter 5). Furthermore, TEs explicitly addressed the experience of autonomous mobility, where they conceptualized urban mobility in the host country of having options and access to transportation (independent driving) or having a wide range of opportunities for mobility to choose from (e.g. public transportation) depending on the infrastructure of the society within which they live in. Nonetheless, these women highlighted the importance of autonomous mobility by confirming the consequences of limited mobility (depending on a male driver and lack of public transportation) in the home country (See chapter 7). In the home country, women highlighted the lack of capability vis-à-vis men. When women compared their capability with men, their capabilities were perceived as limiting and constraining, particularly in mobility and travel. Israa states ‘a man [...] would be able to come and go without a problem this [mobility] would not be an issue for him to think about as much as I do’. In a similar vein, Dunia points out ‘things are much easier for men and things move a lot faster compared to us’. This statement reveals that women entrepreneurs’ perception of lack of capability appeared when comparing themselves with the opposite sex and that comparison is mainly about spatial mobility and capability to move and venture for business-related activities where the variance of capability between men and women becomes obvious. Shahad states: ‘if it’s a man, he can just do and get everything done, you know, he can get everything done and no fuss’. With this in mind, women strongly believed that gender and mobility overlap in a way that influence one’s ability of doing businesses, where women in a patriarchal society fundamentally experienced challenges when doing businesses compared to men. This shows that women clearly note the opportunities/constraints associated with one’s gender when operating in SA, feeling that if they were men then their capabilities as entrepreneurs would have been greater. In contrast, women expressed that mobility in the host country was not gendered, and was not an expression of patriarchy.

Furthermore, besides the meaning women gave to gender and mobility it was revealed that women entrepreneurs' behaviour and actions manifested themselves with respect to women's distance from family (see table 11). As repeatedly mentioned throughout this thesis that women's perception of the family reflects power relations in the household due to the strict and controlling context that stresses family permission. TEs believed that the ideology behind family permission is an act of suppression and control. Therefore, when transnational single women were geographically distant from family and their strategies, they were found to take the form of *choosing* (1) when to integrate family and/or (2) when to segment/separate family. For example, based on the account of the current study participants, women's expression of 'I didn't tell my family' took the form of *not informing the family or avoiding informing the family*, which this thesis conceptualizes as 'hiding' in the sense that women separated family from work by hiding information, whereas women's expression of 'I told my family after ...', took the form of *informing the family of achieved functioning* which this study refers to as temporal integration of family and work, where informing the family occurred after engaging in an activity. Both show that women sought to weaken the institutional power of the family at different levels to enlarge their capabilities (achieved functionings).

These strategies confirm women's ability to make choices that serve their interests and desires. On this note, women's choices are reflections of options. Therefore, women's choices when operating abroad reveal women's perception of family (as authoritarian and control), which could be women's reaction of the policies that stress women's need for male-guardianship approval to travel as well as the norms in the household that require women to obtain family permission and before she engage in an activity. With this in mind, this study argues that women exercised their freedom by choosing to

separate family from work. This confirms women's desire to be independent in making decision without family interference, which seems to foster their sense of agency as well. With this in mind, the current study argues that Saudi women TEs' expression of autonomy was constantly constructed and confirmed through comparing the home country contextual condition with that of the host country. It is possible to claim that the host country contributes to widen Saudi women's experience of autonomy. This seems in line with Burchardt and Holder (2012) argument that states autonomy is the act of choosing and deciding independently. In addition, this could also mean that relocating in a new context made women realize other ways of doing things, which is special to Saudi women where any host country is perceived 'normal' and 'easy' and counts as an expression of freedom and autonomy. To this end, although many studies documented the difficulties transnational face when settling in the host environment, this study found that Saudi women transnational entrepreneurs did not encounter difficulties in the host country, but addressed the ease in contextual condition (e.g. gender, family, mobility). On this note, it is possible to claim that examining entrepreneurs of same nationality but in different geographical location (local vs. abroad) allowed this study to grasp the meaning of autonomy to each group. To this end, such understanding allowed the study to understand the interplay between entrepreneurs' geographical location and the nature of women's preferences.

Furthermore, women entrepreneurs' experience of distance-proximity was found to be a matter of adaptation of the few and limited options available upon their return (to country of origin). In this case, they had to learn to negotiate the previous environment (home country) upon their return (from the host country). Therefore, when returning to the country of origin (strict) women adapt to the contextual condition by accepting to the small range of options available rather than objecting to the options unavailable (as they explored other ways of living). However, upon their return they have no other

option but to adapt to the strict social condition. Since returnee and transnational entrepreneurs distinguished between autonomous preferences (when living in a lenient context) and context-dependent preference (when moving to the country of origin), this study claim that their preferences is considered as adaptive preferences. This suggests that women are trapped by society.

The data confirms that women operating in SA do operate in an ‘authoritarian state’ and depend on the authority of a man (Al-Rasheed, 2013, p. 137). Therefore, adaptive preferences is employed to ‘extract’ their power and rights from male individuals, who can protect them against excessive restrictions, and promote their actions in the society’ (Al-Rasheed, 2013, p. 137). Furthermore, these women do not hold ‘confrontational’ positions within society, they were found to adopt a consensual approach in a creative manner. These findings are in line with the work of Le Renard (2014) who stated that Saudi women find discourses that can push the constraints surrounding family rules in different ways, such as women’s engagement in discourses that take the form of convincing the family of one’s desire to engage in an activity that is deviant from social norms (e.g. meeting the opposite sex, travelling abroad etc.) (See chapter 6).

In this sense, it is possible to argue that Elster's account of adaptation fits this category as it has the fox-and-grape structure, because as expressed earlier ‘a fox, after finding that he can no longer reach some grapes, decides that he does not want the grapes after all. The fox adapts his preferences to what he perceives to be the options available to him’ (Stoljar, 2015). With this in mind, because adaptive preferences are formed by eliminating options that are inaccessible to the agent, the distance-proximity aspect associated with returnee entrepreneurs seems to have the criteria of adjustment, meaning adjusting their preferences to the social condition they previously knew. In this regard,

women's adaptation is in accordance with different strict and tight rules that they were familiar with before (prior to living abroad and living in the home country).

The argument on the adaptive preference shows that 'people might adapt to certain unfavorable circumstances' (Teschl and Comim, 2005, p. 229). Building upon this, the current research agrees with Khader's (2011) argument where she stresses the need to reject the concept of adaptive preferences as 'autonomy deficit' by 'totally undermining agent's self-worth'. She claims that the term adaptive preference is not a result of 'preferences people did not choose to have' or an outcome of individual's lack of ability to choose. However, applying adaptive preferences could be in the individual interest to adapt their preferences with respect to cultural surroundings (going back to the context-dependent preference argument). In other words and in the case of the present research, when proximity to the context, women pay close attention to the contextual condition, especially when their capability depends on it. Adapting to social condition preferences could be in individual's interest subjectively to retain a good relationship with it (family rules, social norms etc.). It is possible to argue that preferences are created by the interaction between the agency and structure. Therefore, this study argues that it is unfair to impose a culturally specific conception of how women should live or do business, because it is crucial to understand that there are different views of the world and this has to be with respect to the cultural, social institutional and religion domain. This means the best approach is not to impose anything at all, but to respect these women's reasoning. Therefore, we claim that entrepreneurs engaging in business activities remain autonomous agents in regard to what matters to them when doing business, because adherence to social norms and condition could increase their ability to enlarge their engagement in further business activities. It would be unfair to describe a woman who follows, for example, family rules and social norms as incapable.

To conclude, this study agrees with Shafir et al. (1993, p. 141) who argue that 'preferences are sensitive to the ways in which options are described'. Therefore, women's geographical location defines the options available. With this in mind, social and contextual conditions such as 'dependence', 'autonomous' and 'adaptive' were interpreted with respect to the entrepreneurs' geographical location and social condition within which they operate.

### 9.3 Contributions of this research

The current research enters the world of women entrepreneurs and explores what they have to consider when operating in the context of SA and when operating outside the context of SA. This exploratory research focused on one group – that is, Saudi women nationals who are familiar with the way things work in this patriarchal context. On this note, this study uses entrepreneurship as a context to explain the main study contribution. The findings of this thesis adapt different disciplines, link it and explain it with respect to a context that emphasizes gender segregation, stresses the male-guardianship system, and bans women from driving. Therefore, the current research is country and context specific; therefore, it contributes to the understanding of how women entrepreneurs operate in a context of patriarchal society. These contributions are more empirical in nature than conceptual or theoretical.

One of the contributions this study makes is that it expands the limited conceptualization of constraints by revealing the relationship between perceived contextual and social conditions and the decisions women entrepreneurs make to engage/avoid engaging in business-related activities.

In the broader sense, this research contribute to the literature on social network theories, which is achieved by exploring the influence gender play in defining the strength of

network ties. In this sense, Saudi women seem to consider the opposite sex to be falling under the category of weak ties. This was reinforced by the way women have expressed their emotions of fear and lack of trust to travel to do business with the opposite sex. Therefore, weak ties influence women's mobility, as it was associated fear. This contribution is contextual, meaning it is unique to the context of SA, where it stresses gender segregation. This line of work is consistent with the work of Shinnar et al. (2012) that states that the constraints entrepreneurs face are linked to the individual's culture and gender. To this end, it is possible to claim that gender is structured in the context of the current study in a particular way, which influences women's decisions regarding mobility. For instance, the emotion of fear (geography of women's urban mobility fear) to travel with the driver to interact with the opposite sex was considered to hinder women's engagement in business-related activities. In this sense, women's emotion and fear seems to tell us something about women's socio-spatial context, therefore, at one hand this study contributes to the understanding of the interplay between context and women's urban travel fear and the role both have on women's business endeavours. On the other hand, this research contributes to another field of research, where a number of studies in feminist geography found that fear is related to women's solo travel to new and unfamiliar contexts (e.g. travelling to a new country), while this study found that women's fear occurred in urban travel and in their country of origin within which they reside. In addition, studies in transport geography found that fear appeared when women used public transportation and when walking in unfamiliar neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, this thesis found that fear occurred when women used private transportation besides being driven by a private chauffeur in the home country. Therefore, these findings expand the discussion on 'geography of women's travel fear' as discussed by Wilson and Little (2011).

Furthermore, since family permission is one of the salient aspects in the context of Saudi women entrepreneurs, women's interpretations of family permission contribute to expanding the debate on family-to-work conflict (allowing family-work interference). In the sense that women's obligation to obtain family permission (subject to family ideology) left ample room for family-to-work conflict, which means less segregation and more integration of family-related thoughts and opinion that can limit women's engagement in entrepreneurial activities. This line of argument is in harmony with Loscocco and Leicht's (1993, p. 886) point that suggest, researchers should work to specify how family roles facilitate and hinder women's entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, the current study confirms that the aspect around women's need for family permission could hinder and limit their entrepreneurial activities, because they require family permission in almost every aspect of starting and sustain a business.

It is worth mentioning that before this study was conducted, we knew very little about the implication associated with single women entrepreneurs in terms of their relation to family and the consequences it has on their business endeavours. The current study contributed to a gap in the literature on family-to-work conflict by understanding single women-family relation. This contribution is important because (1) a great number of studies focused on married women entrepreneurs when discussing family-to-work relation, where single women were excluded in most of these studies (e.g. Moen and Yu, 1999; Huang et al., 2004; Jennings and McDougald, 2007). (2) Single women's relation to the family is unique in the context of this research. Therefore, it was argued that although single women's responsibilities to the family are different from those of married women (e.g. husband, care giving responsibilities), but single women had the responsibility to follow family ideology in a particular way that has its implications on personal and professional development.

Further, this study also contributes to the argument that considers mobility as a capability by looking at a context that bans women from driving. On this note, the contribution this study make is that with the ban on women driving, women take an active part in arranging and organizing mobility as well as delegating mobility to the driver and using Uber and Careem as alternatives, in turn, become part of women's opportunities for mobility or capabilities for mobility.

In addition, since the current study found that women's coping strategies and preferences varied with respect to their geographical location. This was based on accounts of Saudi national entrepreneurs operating in a geographical location that tend to be loose compared to the home country. Until now, the approach used in previous research tend to examine individuals located in the Saudi context, where this study contributed to the use of new approach and that by considering the role of context in defining people's preferences. With this in mind, this study contributes to redefining adaptive preference formation when it comes to women who are born with strict social conditions.

Furthermore, the current study considers 'mobility of people in geographical space' (Sager, 2006, p. 466), where one's mobility in context (home country) differ than mobility in another context (host country). A contribution emerged from the nature of qualitative research. This evidence occurred in the data collection process and when conducting virtual interviews. On one the interviews happened to be that the participant was in the car venturing with her driver for a business meeting in SA (independent mobility). The other interview happened to be arranged by the same time the participant was driving to work in Dubai (dependent mobility). At this point, the participant who was in SA and venturing with the driver was able to do the interview via phone and to answer the interview questions. What was observed was her ability to engage in the interview while venturing. In contrast, the other participant who was driving herself

(Dubai) could not do the interview while driving claiming that ‘Sara I’m driving now, I’ll call you when I’m at the office’. Without stating the actual words the participant in the latter case was expressing the consequences of independent mobility – that is being unable to engage in other activities while on the move. The former revealed the advantage associated with depended mobility. This contributes to qualitative research in the sense that doing virtual interviews can capture the rear experience of people’s mobility.

To sum up, this study borrowed theories from different disciplines and applied to a specific context. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the contextual condition for Saudi women is a complex one in the way it influences entrepreneurs in a unique way.

#### 9.4 Reflections on method and additional contributions

An essential contribution of the present study to our understanding of entrepreneurs’ context is that it considers the uniqueness of individual’s perception and experience of the social conditions when doing businesses. This was achieved by interviewing women who started a business in different geographical location (inside SA and outside SA), while using theme analysis, individual cases, and template analysis when analysing the data. With this in mind, this study claim that this may be the first study which has employed such sample to understand the role the context plays in facilitating/constraining women’s engagement in business-related activities.

#### 9.5 Implications for Saudi women: recent issues and policies

Many changes took place in SA after conducting this research that worth addressing. Gries and Naudé (2011, p. 222) argued that entrepreneurship can be a policy objective

‘through for instance policies that promote economic growth and hence the range of business opportunities available. The causality between economic growth and entrepreneurship thus could run as much from the former to the latter as the other way around.’ After the death of King Abdullah early 2015, King Salman has taken over, assigning his 29 years old son prince Mohammed recently as a Crown prince. In April 2016 the young deputy prince announced Saudi Vision 2030 that seek to diversify the country economy. Saudi Vision 2030 came as a result of the fail in oil price from US\$110 per barrel to below US\$30 per barrel (Bowler, 2015). Part of the 2030 vision, is to focus on entrepreneurship in order to drive a new economy. The vision aims to ‘continue to develop [women’s] talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to... contribute to the development of [the] society and economy’ (Saudi Arabia: Male Guardianship Boxes Women In, 2016). However, based on the present research finding, it argues that removing the restrictions on women, especially when it comes to the male-guardianship system, is crucial, because it is likely to lead to women’s prosperity that will contribute to economic improvement and development (according to 2030 vision). Therefore, it is possible to conduct further research by looking at the extent to which Saudi women are participating in Saudi 2030 Vision and with respect to the existence of the male-guardianship system in the society and other constraints?

Although in an interview with Prince Mohammed in January 2016 by the economist, he argued:

‘When you’re talking about permission, you’re talking about women who do not reach a certain age. Not a woman who’s responsible for herself’ (Transcript: Interview with Muhammad bin Salman, 2016).

Nonetheless, this statement contradicts the actual reality of Saudi women, where in fact all women from all age groups are subject to obtaining permission from a male guardian (a father, husband, a brother or even a son). On this note, a trend among Saudi people emerged in using the hashtag #TogetherToEndMaleGuardianship in Twitter as a campaign to end the male-guardianship system on women. According to Khan (2016), the hashtag is on its 101<sup>st</sup> day of tweets and is still continuing, in the hope of changing this policy to include women from all age group.

A remarkable change in policy took place in the state was in April 2016 where a new law was issued by the Saudi authorities removing the power from the religious police and giving them less authority (e.g. to rest a woman when is found with a man in public spaces). Meaning, the religion police are no longer permitted to chase suspects or arrest them. Instead, their role now is to only report suspicious incident to the regular police, who will decide whether to take the claim further or not (Saudi Arabia's religious police ordered to be 'gentle', 2016). Since the data collection of this study was conducted before this announcement, it would be crucial to investigate women's perceptions and experience of such reforms and its implications on their decision to engage and meet the opposite sex for business activities in public places and whether it has influenced their feelings of institutional trust. Especially that one of the participants highlighted 'you have to take your husband or the client brings his wife, to avoid having problems'. Therefore, this study assumes that such announcement is believed to emancipate the restriction imposed on gender segregation (as discussed in the chapter 5) where women can start meeting the opposite sex for business purposes in public places in a relaxed manner.

Furthermore, when it came to Saudi women's mobility condition they were found recently to be profitable target for 'ride-hailing companies' like Uber and Careem. In this sense, SA is considered as one of the lucrative markets in the Middle East for these ride-hailing companies and accounting for four-fifths of their customers are women.

*'Both firms [Uber and Careem] are directly backed by the Saudi state. In response to falling oil revenues, the government's 'Vision 2030' programme seeks to diversify its sources of income. In June last year its sovereign-wealth fund ploughed \$3.5bn into Uber; and in December Saudi Telecom, which is controlled by the same fund, took a 10% stake in Careem ... The state ensures that women are dependent on men to get around ... and is now profiting from that dependence*

(Saudi women are a captive market for Uber and Careem, 2017).

With this in mind, it would be crucial to investigate Saudi women's opinions and experience of roaming around with Saudi national drivers in an intimate space (car), in which they were segregated from and limited to meet in public places. This would be an interesting area for further research, because the contradiction in such a society seems confusing.

#### 9.6 Implications for Saudi women entrepreneurs' policy, practice and research

This study concludes by discussing the findings and implications and notifying policy maker of the identified constraints imposed on women and calling for emancipation in the policy that hinder women from starting and sustaining a business. It also shed light on the importance of emancipating constraints on women in general and in the pursuit of entrepreneurship in particular.

It seems that perception of safety of dealing with the opposite sex (gender-related ideology), family permission as a powerful institution, and mobility condition, contribute to the understanding of the deficit in context of the development of women's careers. Based on participants' accounts, coping strategies to deal with each condition necessitate improvement to social conditions. Women's strategies that limited their engagement to business-related activities seem to be related to (1) doing business with the opposite sex (as weak ties) because it makes women subject to harm; (2) family permission is subject to obedience regardless of controlling ideology; (3) mobility condition is dependent on a male individual therefore, it could hurt women's mobility (when inaccessible, unavailable).

It was evident in this study that women's perception of safety is a product of the stories the society produces due to the lack of laws that protect women; for this reason, improving sexual harassment law may be a promising route for women's development for the Saudi economy. According to Welter (2012, p.205), 'trust also stems from emotions, experiences and characteristics as well as from codified norms and rules; institutional and personal trust, as well as trust and control, co-evolve and coexist, sometimes substituting for each other, sometimes complementing each other'. Therefore, as a starting point the state should strengthen safety in the society by providing regulations that aim at protecting women, in order to improve 'institutional trust'. This study recalls Dunia's claims where she states 'I didn't know what his motives were, I didn't know if he wanted to do business or he wanted something else.' Therefore, for entrepreneurship policies to be in line with economic development, it requires the state to increase the level of safety (ties with trust) for women by providing a coherent and transparent law to protect women from harassment and to address the punishment/charges entailed by men who try to exploit women through their business practices.

Taking this discussion further, although this study argued that women's perception of family permission (oblige women to integrate family with work) stems from the state policy that stresses the necessity to gain male-guardian approval in almost every aspect in women's lives (e.g. international travel). It requires policy maker to give women entrepreneurs the option to make independent decision, especially those single women who are constrained by the decision of someone else (e.g. male guardian or a family member's ideology). In other words, women should be encouraged to separate between family and work, rather than being obliged to integrate family (rules and ideology) with work. This study argues that this should be applied particularly to single rather than married women, because individuals in the latter category are expected to agree compromise (e.g. work domain) when entering the institution of marriage (following spouse rules and preferences). In other words, single women's responsibilities to the family/ household tends to be loose and less compared to married women. Therefore, removing the policy on women to obtain family permission (the formal and informal male-guardianship system) will could give women a sense of agency to make independent business decisions. Optional separation rather that obligatory integration to involve family with work could stimulate women's ability to sustain a business as well as growing and expanding the business (cross regions and borders). This was what women demand (when interviewing Saudi transitional entrepreneurs) when living abroad. These women chose to separate the family when it comes to making decisions regarding their business activities, because this gave them a sense of independence and autonomy. For the state to achieve this, changes should take place primarily in the narratives produced in the education system as well as the society (disobedience links with God's punishment if a woman did not obey her parents). Education plays a significant role in shaping the society's value and beliefs (Abdullahi and Zainol 2016) of what is important and what is not. Building upon this, according to the Saudi

teaching which is based on Islam, the fundamentalist interpretation of the Qur'an demand of all women to obey and be devoted to the family (parents of husband), because if women (stress on women due to their gender) are found to be rebellious against family rules then they are subject to God's punishment (Qutb, 1977). Therefore, this study argues that amendments in the narratives that stress the family's right to control and women's obligation to follow family rules should be less promoted in the society and education system (austere religious teaching). This could begin by taking a softer approach though educating the family of their roles and their boundaries as parents (parents' desire versus family member's desire). Second, women should be educated to have the option and right to do what they desire with respect to norms and tradition and to be confident to make independent decisions without feeling guilty or ashamed of what they desired, even if that desire contradict with family opinion.

On this note, this study suggests that restructuring family power and authority through the removal of the male-guardianship system should be considered prior to giving women the opportunity to drive and before even providing alternatives for women's mobility. Therefore, the argument is that it is not mobility that hinder women's development but its family interference (associated with power and control that could be subject to austere ideology) that hinder women's progress and development in the society. However, alternatives of transportation (if not independent driving) should be available and accessible, which suits Saudi women's culture in Saudi society. To sum up, the aspects mentioned above reflects the doing of gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

## 9.7 Limitations and adjustment of research

### 9.7.1 Culture and research's effects

Because the researcher conducted 25 interviews independently by herself, while she is a Saudi national, speaks the language and understands the culture, it is possible to claim that this may have an effect on (1) the research process including data collection and data analysis; (2) the rapport between the researcher and participants; (3) the researcher own biases, therefore, effect interpreting the data in a way that limits the researcher form investigating further matters (despite steps to minimize this, as highlighted in chapter 4). On the other hand, participants tend to expect that the researcher knew the answer and the reasons behind the claim they made (e.g. mobility constraints, family protection and control, etc.), which could cause participants to dismiss addressing some matters in depth.

#### 9.7.2 Time limitation

Time was another limitation in this study in terms of data collection and the presentation of this thesis. This research was subject to completion within a specific period of time, which obliged the researcher to follow a cohort over time. Time limitation prevented the researcher from conducting longitudinal research and expands on the findings of the current research. Since the period of this thesis was subject to completion in 3-4 years, investigating further matters or expanding the research sample would not have been possible.

#### 9.7.3 The study context and data collection

Another limitation was found in arranging and scheduling face-to-face interviews in a context where potential participants lacked the availability and accessibility of independent mobility to meet the researcher for an interview. At the very beginning of the process of conducting interviews, the researcher travelled to SA during the summer of 2015 to conduct face-to-face interviews with participants. In this process one of the

main salient obstacles exhibited by the researcher was related to mobility. Conducting face-to-face interviews required physical proximity from both the interviewer and interviewee sides to meet in a specific place and at a specific time. Such aspect is crucial to be addressed, especially that the conducted interviews took place in a context that excludes women from autonomous mobility. Both the interviewee and the interviewer face the same obstacles of not being able to plan a mutually agreed time and location to meet due to mobility constraints. With respect to this, the researcher had to first schedule a time for an interview that suits the participant along with agreeing on a location (meeting place). Second, the researcher had to schedule and plan her mobility activities with other family members about when, why and where she is going. This includes, constant thinking of both ways of the journey (back and forth). What complicate this process was that there was no family driver working in the household at that time. Therefore, approaching a male family member was an alternative available, but not the best. However, the researcher was aware that although a brother and a father were able to assist in the researcher's mobility, it will not be as smooth or as comfortable as having a driver, where the driver can wait until the interview is done. For the driver to wait, is privilege especially that it is difficult to estimate the duration of the interview. However, this privilege was not available, meaning a family male member would drop the researcher and when she finishes she had to call to ask for a pickup, which takes half an hour to an hour wait. The researcher had no option but to depend heavily on a male family member (the researcher's brother), who was visiting the family at that time. The researcher had to discuss, arrange and plan with her brother her meeting schedule (interview time, location and duration). Moreover, the size of the household and mobility demand in the household affected the researcher's mobility. In the sense, the researcher had to organize her mobility with other family members (those who demand mobility as well). This need for arrangement led to family discussion, such

as informing the family where the researcher is going, with whom the researcher is meeting, what is the purpose of the meeting, and what time the researcher expect to finish etc. Although these questions seem to be a norm in the household, the researcher felt intimidated by the whole process. The research used ride-hailing companies, such as Uber or Careem, when household demand on mobility limited her mobility.

With respect to meeting locations the in one case the researcher travelled to a participant's house. In this case, it was the researcher who experienced mobility when the interview was located at the participant house. The implication was noticeable when movement entailed the researcher and the participant. In some cases some participants asked to reschedule the interviews due to unavailability of transportation means 'my driver is not available today, can we do the interview another day?' This left the researcher with disappointment and concern regarding the data collection process and the research progress.

In addition, the researcher noticed that participants lacked interest in giving some time to physically meet to take part in the interview. Such assumption was build when a number of six participants stated 'can we speak on the phone rather than meeting up?' Therefore, the researcher decided to fly back to the UK and to conduct the interviews through virtual means. Although the researcher managed to conduct virtual interviews, it limited the advantages associated with physical meeting and interactions and also reduced the chance for the researcher to observe and record participants' body language during the interview. Nonetheless, virtual interviews allowed the researcher to conduct interviews with different people, in different locations and different times request. It gave the researcher more flexibility to arrange interview's time. For example, a few participants were in favour to talk with the researcher at 2:00 a.m. or 6:00 a.m., which made the virtual meeting more obtainable regardless of the time and the location of both the participant and the researcher.

Furthermore, one of the advantages of collecting data via virtual means was related to doing the interview while participants on the move. One of most interesting cases happened when a virtual interview took place while the participant happened to be in a car and driven by a driver to go to a business meeting. The researcher was able to hear the dialogue between the participant and the driver, which lead to further discussion on mobility that added further insight into women's experience of mobility, which would not be obtained through face-to-face interviews.

Moreover, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews in the UK, where the researcher's experienced autonomy in mobility compared to when conducting interview in SA. Scheduling face-to-face interviews with participants in the UK (living or visiting) were relaxed, due to the availability of public transportation (relaxed mobility condition).

#### 9.7.4 Generalizability of research findings

Furthermore, this study does not make claims of generalizability, because there's no statistical generalizability of findings. However, one could argue that other research with similar parameters of this study may find some of the current study findings relevant and useful (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). With this in mind, the current research aligns itself with 'theoretical generalization' (Yin, 2003) or what Coffey and Atkinson (1996) referred to as 'abductive reasoning' as a way to create and define concepts. Concepts in abductive reasoning are achieved by positioning concepts in existing framework. Kelle (1995) states that concepts can be created through (1) acknowledging previous knowledge. Although this thesis explained how the contextual condition of women entrepreneurs have been traditionally defined and studied empirically, this study extended this concept- to include coping strategies and

preferences. (2) Avoid reducing qualitative reasoning by avoiding ‘mere generalization of observed facts’ (Kelle, 1995, p.48), through the use of appropriate methods, which was considered in the current study. (3) Showing the ‘rational and methodological aspects of discovery’ (Kelle, 1995, p.48). (4) Documenting how women’s perception of contextual condition was analysed and how themes emerged. On this note, since this study does not claim to be making any generalizability, particularly statistical one, however, based on the argument above it does make a theoretical generalization.

### 9.8 Recommendations for future research

Because it was not possible for the current research to conduct a longitudinal study, this thesis identifies avenue for further research, given the fact that it. As mentioned earlier the understanding of women’s perception of the recent social condition (Vision 2030) could add a new insight regarding women’s development over time. Possible research directions are outlined.

Because the current study focused on the starting phase of women doing business for the first time, there is an ample room for future studied to take this study framework and examine social condition effect on women’s engagement in business activities for business growth. Extra work can be done to examine how coping strategies regarding women’s businesses are distributed in the household and among family members, such as who copes with what and why? This study suggests interviewing women’s families (father, mother brother, or husband) to understand family ideology regarding specific matters and the reasoning they give to ‘allowing’ or ‘not allowing’ women’s engagement in specific activities. Further studies can investigate further aspects related to the driver (personality, behaviour, attitude, skills etc.) and its impact on women’s business-related mobility. This discussion can expand to examine the constraints and

challenges the driver faces by having multiple rules in play (home-domestic activities and business-related activities) and the issues the driver faces when business activities are delegated to him. This study recommends future research to investigate in detail the role of ride-hailing companies, such as Uber and Careem, in women's options for mobility, including challenges and opportunities as well as implications.

Furthermore, there's an ample room for further research to examine the role of virtual mobility in emancipating women's physical mobility constraints and to explore the advantages and disadvantages associated with replacing the virtual over the physical in a context that limits women's physical mobility.

#### 9.9 Concluding remarks

The literature shows that entrepreneurship research encourages the idea of considering the structure of entrepreneurs' environments (Schoonhoven and Romanelli, 2001). The current study has shown that understanding entrepreneurs' environment is crucial as it enables examining a theory/ theories in a context. However, it captures such complexity by introducing specific concepts and frameworks that relevant to the context investigated. Therefore, the current research looked at strength of network ties in relation to gender segregation; it looked at family-work conflict in relation to family permission; and it looked at mobility as capability in relation to the ban on women driving. In addition, the current research illustrated the coping mechanism women employees use to deal with these constraints, which enabled the current research to define preferences with respect to women's geographical location and contextual conditions. The findings revealed that women's perception of social condition contributed to their decision of engaging in business-related activities. In other words, to overcome the constraints it was found that the coping strategies women entrepreneurs

employed link with their contextual condition (proximity, distance, and distance-proximity).

To sum up, one may ask whether the social constraints existing in SA limit Saudi women's engagement in business-related activities. Perhaps before answering this question, we should ask: 'Does the strength of network ties matter?'; 'Does the family domain hinder women entrepreneurs' engagement in business related activities?; and 'Does the condition on women's mobility constrain Saudi women entrepreneurs?'. As shown in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, the best answer is 'well, yes! – and no!' Considering the social and contextual conditions on women. The answer is 'Yes!' since the state policy strictly stresses on gender segregation, dependent mobility, and the male-guardianship system. The answer is also 'No!' when other social institutions contribute in a way that emancipates the tight and strict conditions imposed on women, such as family, society etc. When it came to gender segregation, the answer is 'yes' – since in many cases, women were concerned about social implications as well as their fear and lack of trust in doing businesses with weak ties, including potential harassment by the opposite sex. As presented in chapter 5, the answer is also 'No!' – When women employ coping strategies to meeting people of weak ties (e.g. taking precautions, being accompanied by a family member or a friend, informing a family member etc.). The same is true for the family as it's a fundamental social institution for Saudi women. As discussed in chapter 6, the answer is 'yes' – when family ideology and rules are tight and strict causing women to discard engaging in business activities that family object to (family permission is not given). The answer is also 'no' – when family ideology is lenient that give the woman the permission to engage in business-related activities (whether in urban mobility, international travel or meeting the opposite sex). Furthermore, this is also applied to women's mobility condition where the answer is 'yes' when women lack a good mobility condition, such as the absence of a private

driver or sharing mobility with family member(s) who have high mobility demands. However, the answer is 'no' when women have both, accessibility and availability to mobility- the driver and a car (e.g. solo use of mobility, having a driver for the business). Mobility condition can enlarge women's engagement in business activities, especially when women are able to delegate business activities to the driver. In addition, mobility condition on women is enhanced with the use of car hailing companies such as Uber and Careem.

This study suggested some changes in the policies to enhance women entrepreneurs' condition, because these changes will influence other social institutions in which will lead to women's development and participation in the society as well as with economy (vision 2030). On this note, the scope for further research is huge, therefore, it is hoped that more studies will be conducted on this subject.

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## **Appendix**

### Appendix 1 Letter to participants – Saudi nascent women entrepreneurs

Dear -----

My name is Sara Alshareef and I'm a PhD candidate at Royal Holloway University of London. My research is examining women's experience when starting a business with respect to their context within which they operate. I'm planning to conduct interviews and I'm keen to talk to Saudi women entrepreneurs who are solo entrepreneurs, between 25 and 35 years old, started a business in the last 3 years. Please note that all the questions asked are based on theories and the answers given will be used for this research only.

Please note that the interview will be recorded, however, the participant name and the name of the business will remain anonymous and will not be disclosed. For confidentiality purposes the interview is administrated by myself.

If you would like to participate in this research kindly sign the consent form.

Once the research is completed, a copy of the research findings can be provided upon request

If you are happy to participate kindly contact me on:

Email: Sara.alshareef.2013@live.rhul.ac.uk

Mobile: +4467581589782

Your participation will add so much value to the research.

I look forward to hearing from you.