

AUTHORITARIAN PARENTAL ATTITUDES  
AMONG SAUDI MOTHERS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country developing at a rapid rate. The government and its people are committed to maintaining Moslem traditions but also to improving the standard of living and education level of the population. Islamic tradition and law permeates every aspect of life in Saudi Arabia. The country is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the site of the annual Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca. The Quran and other sacred Islamic writings serve as the constitution of the country. Saudi Arabia's king holds paramount authority as malik, or head of government, and also is imam, the religious leader of the people.

Because of its newfound wealth from oil production and the resulting ties with western countries, Saudi Arabia also is increasingly influenced by modern culture and technology. Western newspapers, magazines, and television programs are becoming available in Saudi Arabia, and more Saudis are travelling and studying abroad. The government attempts to protect its citizens from western influences it finds contradictory to Islamic law; however,

it is increasingly relaxing in its acceptance of western achievements in the areas of technology and education.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine parental attitudes of literate Saudi mothers who have had some contact with western influences. The study will focus on the level of authoritarian attitudes of mothers toward their children as measured by a modification of the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI). Authoritarianism was chosen because it has been the subject of much research in western countries.

#### Significance of the Study

Numerous studies in the United States have demonstrated that authoritarian attitudes among parents are correlated with reduced academic achievement and emotional disturbances in their children (Hess and Shipman, 1965; Caldwell, 1964; and Nuttall, 1976). Recent research also indicates that poorly educated, blue-collar parents tend to be more authoritarian in parental attitudes than better educated, white-collar parents (Gecas and Nye, 1974; and De Boeck, 1976). The benefits of democratic parental practices have been widely popularized in the United States through newspapers, magazines, and child care books. A recent study by Clarke-Stewart (1978) found that many

parents in the United States read at least one book of child-care advice, and a substantial proportion read at least five such books. Parents who read the most in this area tend to be relatively young, worried about being parents, and isolated from family sources of child-care advice.

In contrast, Saudi culture offers mothers a very well defined role. The religion is an important influence in their lives and western ideas about child-rearing are not widely disseminated. As more western-educated Saudi students return to their homes and as western media become more available to Saudis, it seems likely that democratic vs. authoritarian parental attitudes will become an issue among Saudi parents and educators. Debate on this issue may be complicated by the sometimes opposing forces of traditional roles and values in family life and the national push for higher educational achievement.

For example, in Saudi culture girls are encouraged to marry at a very young age and have children. Moslem women are not allowed to travel unless accompanied by a male relative or to work in the same area as men who are not relatives. The seclusion of women in the home prevents many from obtaining a secondary or college education.

Research gives rise to the following questions:

1. Are Saudi mothers more authoritarian toward their children because of their religion?

2. Does the education of Saudi parents make a difference in their child-rearing practices?

In order to answer these questions, the following hypotheses were formulated.

#### Null Hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated for each of the five scales included in the questionnaire. The sixth hypothesis concerns the relationship between educational level and authoritarianism.

1. Saudi mothers will not show authoritarian tendencies in the fostering dependency scale, using a hypothetical mean of 2.5.

2. Saudi mothers will not show authoritarian tendencies in the suppression of sexuality scale, using a hypothetical mean of 2.5.

3. Saudi mothers will not show authoritarian tendencies in the seclusion of mother scale, using a hypothetical mean of 2.5.

4. Saudi mothers will not show authoritarian tendencies in the exclusion of outside influences scale, using a hypothetical mean of 2.5.

5. Saudi mothers will not show authoritarian tendencies in the suppression of aggression scale, using a hypothetical scale of 2.5.

6. There will be no significant relationship between mothers' educational levels and childrearing attitudes as measured by the modified PARI.

#### Limitations

1. The survey will be limited to literate Saudi mothers living in the Western province who have either preschool or primary age children. The questionnaires were distributed randomly to mothers attending two Saudi universities. One-third of the questionnaires were distributed to friends and family of the author.
2. Several of the mothers had extremely high family incomes; therefore, the mean for family income was higher than representative of the Saudi population.

#### Definition of Terms

Authoritarianism--A factor found by Zuckerman, Ribback, Monashkin, and Norton (1958) to be highly correlated with the following PARI scales:

1. Fostering dependency--An attitude of the mother that children should be protected from problems and frustrations.
2. Seclusion of the mother--The mother perceives her role as restricted to the home and family affairs.

3. Suppression of sexuality--The mother has a negative attitude toward children's awareness of their sexuality.
4. Excluding outside influences--The mother feels it is important that children learn values from parents only and be protected from sources of influence from outside the home.
5. Suppression of aggression--The mother discourages children from ever expressing aggression.

Appendix A categorizes the modified PARI statement items according to the five subscales defined above.

#### Instrumentation

A questionnaire was developed consisting of two sections. The first section obtained demographic information concerning number, sex, and age of children; age of mother and educational level of both parents; and family income. The second section consisted of twenty-five statements that express an attitude toward child-rearing practices. Subjects responded to each statement by marking either strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

The twenty-five statements used in the questionnaire were drawn from a version of the Parental Attitude Research Instrument formulated by Emmerich (1969). Emmerich's

modified PARI is considered an improvement of the original instrument, which was designed by Schaefer and Bell (1958), because it phrases statements in such a way as to lessen the effect of acquiescence response sets. The twenty-five statements used in the questionnaire measured the following five PARI scales: fostering dependency, excluding outside influences, seclusiveness of the mother, suppression of sexuality, and suppression of aggression.

The PARI was developed by Schaefer and Bell as an economical first approach to measuring parental attitudes in a population. The instrument is made up of twenty-three five-item scales. Each item expresses a general opinion about child-rearing attitudes in the form of a rationalization, truism, or cliché.

Zuckerman, Ribback, Monashkin, and Norton (1958) conducted a factor analysis of PARI scores using data from 413 mothers. They identified three factors--authoritarian control, hostility-rejection, and democratic attitudes. Scales associated with authoritarian control were fostering dependency, seclusiveness of mother, suppression of sexuality, excluding outside influences, and suppression of aggression. Correlations also were done between the scales and the education, age, and number of children of the mother. The education level was most significantly related to scores on the scale. In a later study,

Zuckerman and Oltean (1959) also tested a group of mothers to determine correlations between the PARI and several instruments designed to measure personality traits. Data showed high correlations between PARI authoritarian control scores and general authoritarian personality tendencies. Education again showed high negative correlations with authoritarian control. The researchers concluded that "the authoritarian-control factor seems to be closely related to general authoritarian tendencies which in turn are related to educational level of the mother."

The relationship between educational level and authoritarian control has been demonstrated in several cross-cultural studies. De Boeck (1976) found high negative correlations between educational level and authoritarian control in a study of 533 Belgian mothers. Kitano (1961) found similar correlations in a study of 59 first and second generation Japanese in the United States. Bond (1973) administered the PARI to 50 Mexican-American and 50 Black mothers and arrived at the same conclusions. Education was the most significant demographic variable.

Becker and Krug (1965) have questioned the reliability of the PARI in measuring authoritarian control and other factors. Much of their criticism has to do with the acquiescence response, i.e. the tendency of some subjects to agree with most items, even if the items conflict. They



feel this acquiescence response set distorts data.

Zuckerman, Ribback, Monashkin, and Norton (1958) estimated that in one study 18 per cent of the variance on the authoritarian control factor could be attributed to acquiescence response sets. Emmerich (1969) modified the PARI so that items were stated in such a way that a general tendency to agree irrespective of content would result in nonextreme total scores on each of the factors. For authoritarian control, thirteen items were stated so that agreement signified the presence of an attribute and twelve items were stated so agreement indicated its absence.

#### Sample and Procedure

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic, and one hundred copies were equally distributed to the following groups: (1) to friends and family; (2) to students at the University of Jeddah, a broad curriculum school in the city of Jeddah; and (3) to students at the University of Mecca, a school specializing in Islamic education in the city of Mecca. Subjects either completed the survey at the time of distribution or completed it later and returned it by mail. A letter accompanied the questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study and notifying subjects that data were kept confidential (Appendix B).

### Analysis of Data

Questionnaires were scored, and means and standard deviations determined. Pearson correlations were conducted to determine relationships between subscale means and a hypothesized mean of 2.5. Scores also were correlated with educational levels of mothers to determine if a relationship existed between the educational level and authoritarian attitudes.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to examine parental attitudes of Saudi mothers who have had some contact with western influences. Focus will be directed on the level of authoritarian attitudes of mothers toward their children.

A review of published research revealed no studies about parental attitudes in Saudi Arabia. However, numerous studies have been conducted that are of indirect relevance to the subject. This chapter will first give a description of the cultural and historical background of women and their role in Saudi Arabia. Islamic prescriptions for parents will be reviewed in this section. The second section will review literature on authoritarian vs. democratic parental attitudes in the United States.

#### Women's Role in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies about four-fifths of the Arabian peninsula and is bounded by Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait to the north; the Persian Gulf to the east; Yemen, Oman, and the Arabian Sea to the south; and the Red Sea to the west. The country is made up of arid and largely desert land and has been sparsely populated

since ancient times by Semitic Arabs, mostly nomadic Bedouin camel herders and seminomadic sheepherders and goatherders (Walpole, 1971). Oil was first discovered in Saudi Arabia in the 1930s and since that time economic development has progressed rapidly. In 1980 the country produced approximately \$1.2 billion in gross domestic product, and about 60 percent was contributed by the oil sector (Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Planning, 1980). The new domestic wealth has dramatically increased the standard of living for the population as a whole. As a result, social values are changing, particularly as they relate to the role of women.

In Saudi Arabia, the current social values are the result of a mixing of ancient tribal customs, Islamic law, and modern influences. From ancient times until this century, Arabia was populated by tribal groups that often fought for the small resources to be found in the desert. Before the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the tribal family held female children in low regard, often leaving them outside to die of exposure. When female children became of childbearing age, they became an important symbol of the family's honor, and their chastity and social movement were closely guarded by male family members (Gadi, 1979).

Islam was born in Saudi Arabia through the Prophet Muhammad, who lived from 570 to 632 A.D. Muhammad received the revelations of God, or Allah, in the form of the Moslem holy book, the Quran. Islam considers Muhammad to be the last of a line of prophets that includes Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. The Quran, the Hadith, or Traditions, and a few other sacred writings combine to form the Shari'ah, or Islamic law. The Shari'ah can be defined as "an infallible doctrine regulating the individual's relationship to God and his interactions with his fellow human beings. It comprises the whole of the spiritual, political, economic, social, domestic, and private life of the adherents of Islam" (Abdul-Rauf, 1977, p. 19). In Saudi Arabia, the Shari'ah serves as the constitution of the country; there is no written law other than what is found in or based on the Shari'ah. The King, who is head of government, also is the religious leader of the people. The government holds as its first goal "to maintain the religious values of Islam, by applying, propagating, and fostering God's Shari'ah" (Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Planning, 1980, p. 1).

Islam provides women with many rights. The Prophet Muhammad found men and women absolutely equal before God. In the seventh century, Islam emancipated women in all Islam countries (which included most of the civilized world including the Middle East, southern Europe, Africa, and

India) by forbidding many of the common discriminatory and abusive treatments of women practiced since ancient times. Muhammad granted women many legal rights in the areas of marriage, property, inheritance, and many other areas. On the other hand, the Prophet also instructed both men and women to be modest in appearance and manner. For women, the need for modesty found expression in the wearing of a veil and segregation or seclusion from men (Gadi, 1979). Segregation of sexes and veiling continue as customs in Saudi Arabia. Men and women attend separate schools, and women are not usually allowed to work in the same areas as men. The custom of segregation remains as a barrier to women who wish to work in occupations that are now all-male.

In Saudi Arabia, changing social values concerning the role of women are shown by the great increase in schools and the number of girls attending schools. Before 1956, women received no formal education other than what they received in religious schools called "Kuttab." The first school for girls was privately opened in the city of Jiddah, and in 1960 the government opened many schools in the major cities of Jiddah and Riyadh. At first, conservative religious leaders were against the new schools, but gradually acceptance for formal education for women increased. By 1970 schools had been established in more than 500

villages and towns. Secondary schools and a university were also opened for women (Walpole, 1971).

From 1975 to 1980, enrollment of girls in elementary schools increased from 214,641 to 308,092. Government plans call for 4,305 new classrooms for women to be built in the next five years and for enrollment of females at all levels to increase to more than 675,000 (Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Planning, 1980). This effort may be one of the greatest movements in history to provide education for the women of a country.

However, illiteracy remains widespread in Saudi Arabia, particularly among older rural women. A 1979 study put the Saudi illiteracy rate at 52 percent for males and 81 percent for females (Almana, 1981). Women also are limited in the range of subjects they can study. A 1978 policy statement of the government says the

. . . objective of woman's education is to bring her up in a sound Islamic way so that she can fulfill her role in life as a successful housewife, ideal wife, and good mother, and to prepare her for other activities that suit her nature such as teaching, nursing, and medicine.

The state takes interest in teaching girls, providing necessary and possible facilities to accommodate all those who reach school age and give them the opportunity to fill teaching posts that suit their nature and meet the needs of the country (Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Education, 1978, p. 174).

The Saudi woman's role as a housewife, wife, and mother is the result of many centuries of cultural and

religious forces. In Saudi Arabia, most marriages are arranged by the father. However, girls in Saudi Arabia, like those in the United States, have many romantic notions about marriage. Islamic law says a woman must approve of her marriage partner and also can specify conditions to be included in the marriage contract. Upon marriage, the woman becomes a member of her husband's family and may live in the father-in-law's home if the couple is unable to afford to live on its own. Women marry very early in Saudi Arabia, although there is a trend toward later marriages. A study completed in 1981 found that of 100 women interviewed, 37 percent had married when between 10 and 12 years of age. For rural women, this figure rose to 75 percent. Of all the women interviewed, 85 percent reported they were married by the time they were 18 years of age (Almana, 1981).

Saudi women's role as wife and mother is firmly established in Islamic law and governmental policy. Government officials want to provide all women with formal education but at the same time encourage most women to remain in the home, even though the country has great need for more workers from the native population. One explanation for this policy is the need for the country to retain a high birth rate to enlarge the work force in future years. It is an accepted fact that working women have lower fertility rates (Gadi, 1979). Saudi Arabia has a high fertility



rate of 49.5 per 1,000 in 1975, compared to only 14.6 per 1,000 in the United States in 1976. However, the infant mortality rate in Saudi Arabia is over 110 per 1,000 births, compared to the U.S. rate of 15 per 1,000. According to 1979 figures, the Saudi death rate was 50 per 1,000 compared to 9 per 1,000 in the U.S. The life expectancy was only 45 years, compared to 73 years in the U.S. In the area of medical resources, Saudi Arabia had 897 inhabitants for each hospital bed, and 4,995 inhabitants for each physician. In the U.S., there were 130 inhabitants for each hospital bed and 621 inhabitants per physician (Time: The 1979 Hammond Almanac). There is clearly some basis for argument that in a developing country with a relatively small population (Saudi Arabia has approximately 7.9 million), human resources can be enlarged only by maintaining a high birth-rate and improving medical care.

Since Saudi Arabia is more cohesive and tradition-bound than the United States, Saudi mothers have a more well defined role as parents. Islam is moderate in its description of the ideal family, prescribing mutual respect among family members. One Islamic authority on marriage and the family distinguishes between the roles of mother and father in the following manner:

The wife-mother's role in exuding charm, a delightful loving air, close and warm gentle care . . . complements the husband's role as the loving attentive

firm shield, the main wellspring of provision of the domestic needs and protection from the external world, and the ever-present image of discipline, hard work, and self-control (Abdul-Rauf, 1977, p. 81).

The same writer recommends that children be raised to be respectful of authority, modest, and self-controlled, but also confident, self reliant, and assertive.

A light punishment may be applied to a child in case of disobedience, but it should never be harsh. Parents should be neither too authoritarian nor too harsh, but reasonably disciplinary, in order to give the children a sense of the limits and boundaries and a feeling of protection and security. Overly indulgent parents give the child an impression of indifference and make him insecure of himself. On the other hand, authoritarian parents may strangle the child's personality. A moderate course is always wiser (p. 91).

Bashur (1973), writing about Moslem education, presents an image of the ideal Moslem child that emphasizes the importance of compliant, passive forms of behavior. He reports that Moslem parents want "an obedient child, one who listens, shows deference to his elders, does not meddle in things that he is repeatedly told are not his concern, (and) keeps away from politics" (p. 33). A good student is one who "listens, does his assignments well, who passes the exams with ease, comes on time, sits quietly in class, and, again, one who keeps away from politics" (p. 34).

A review of literature revealed no previous empirical research on the parent-child relationship in Saudi Arabia. The research of Almana (1981) and Gadi (1979) on the economic conditions of Saudi women confirms that both

Islamic law and government policy encourage women to see their principal roles as those of wife, mother, and housewife. In a study of education in Moslem countries, Bashur found that Moslem children have well-defined standards to follow. As Moslems, Saudi parents may expect more compliant and passive forms of behavior from their children than do American parents. Saudi mothers as a group have received less formal education than American mothers (Almana, 1981). Studies of American parents have shown a relationship between low educational levels and use of authoritatarian control by parents (Zuckerman and Oltean, 1959; De Boeck, 1976; Kitano, 1961; and Bond, 1973). If this pattern holds up in Saudi culture, use of authoritarian control may be widespread since overall education levels are low. The next section of this chapter reviews literature concerning American parental attitudes toward child discipline.

#### Authoritarian vs. Permissive Parental Attitudes in the United States

Attitudes of American parents have been the subject of much research and a tremendous amount of articles in the mass media (Clarke-Stewart, 1978). The development of the Parental Attitude Research Instrument and subsequent studies using it were discussed in Chapter I; they reflect the widespread interest in parental attitudes as a research topic. Becker and Krug (1965) reviewed research on

parental attitudes using the PARI and found that many researchers had focused on the use of authoritarian control by parents.

The term authoritarian has developed a negative connotation in the U.S. as an approach to child discipline. The trend in child-rearing practices of the U.S. has generally moved away from punitive forms of control and toward a "democratic" form of parental interaction with the child.

Caldwell (1964) reviewed trends in infant care and found that at the turn of the century, American parents were advised to be strict in such areas as feeding schedules, toilet training, and discipline. Rigid and authoritarian discipline were said to be necessary to teach children to control impulses and develop good habits. In the 1930's and 1940's, there was a shift in concern with moral and character development to personality development, reflecting the popularization of Freudian theory and other psychological theories that emphasized the role of home environment in the child's personality development. Children were seen as innocent creatures whose natural explorations and needs should be encouraged and gratified. By the 1950's, experts began to advise that excessive permissiveness could produce tyrannical children and that some limits are necessary.

Baumrind (1966) identified three prototypes of parental control: the permissive, the authoritarian, and the authoritative. The permissive parent is defined as one who

attempts to behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner toward the child's impulses, desires, and actions. She consults with him about policy decisions and gives explanations for family rules. She makes few demands for household responsibility and orderly behavior. She presents herself to the child as a resource for him to use as he wishes, not as an ideal for him to emulate, not as an active agent responsible for shaping or altering his ongoing or future behavior (p. 889).

In contrast to the permissive parent, the authoritarian parent

attempts to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority. She values obedience as a virtue and favors punitive, forceful measures to curb self-will at points where the child's actions or beliefs conflict with what she thinks is right conduct. She believes in keeping the child in his place, in restricting his autonomy, and in assigning household responsibilities in order to inculcate respect for work. She regards the preservation of order and traditional structure as a highly valued end in itself. She does not encourage verbal give and take, believing that the child should accept her word for what is right (p. 890).

Baumrind also identified a prototype called the "authoritative" parent who has many of the obvious strengths and avoids many of the obvious weaknesses of both the authoritarian and the permissive parental styles. The authoritative parent

attempts to direct the child's activities in a rational, issue-oriented manner. She encourages verbal give and take, shares with the child the reasoning for her policy, and solicits his objections when he refuses to conform. Both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity are valued by the authoritative parent (p. 891).

The authoritative parent rejects authoritarian styles of control. According to Baumrind,

Punitive, hostile, disaffiliated, self-righteous, and nonemphathetic disciplinary practices are associated clearly in studies reviewed with cognitive and emotional disturbance in the child, including hostile withdrawal, hostile acting out, dependency, personality problems, nervousness, and reduced schoolroom efficiency (p. 892).

Hess and Shipman (1965) studied the relationship between the educational level of parents and the performance in school of their children. Built into the study was an analysis of the manner in which mothers communicated with their children. The research group was composed of 160 Negro mothers and their 4-year-old children selected from four different social status levels. In several tasks in which mothers worked with their children, the researchers measured the communication style of the mother by scoring variables such as mean sentence length, complex verb preference, and use of abstract words and concepts.

The more highly educated mothers consistently used a "more highly elaborated code with which to manipulate the environment symbolically" (p. 872). They encouraged the children to reflect on the reasons for and consequences of

actions and treated the child on an individualized, personalized basis. In contrast, mothers with lower educational levels tended to behave in an impulsive manner and to encourage impulsive behavior in the child. The communication style was overly simplified. The children were expected to behave in stereotyped, restricted ways and to comply with instructions without understanding who or what the consequences would be.

their Hess and Shipman concluded that

are the structure of the social system and the structure of the family shape communication and language and that language shapes thought and cognitive styles of problem solving. In the deprived-family context this means that the nature of the control system which relates parent to child restricts the number and kind of alternatives for action and thought that are opened to the child; such constriction precludes a tendency for the child to reflect, to consider and choose among alternatives for speech and action. It develops modes for dealing with stimuli and with problems which are impulsive rather than reflective, which deal with the immediate rather than the future, and which are disconnected rather than sequential (p. 870).

discon Kohn (1969) found that parents of different social classes use different styles in disciplining children. Parents from higher social classes as measured by educational level, income, and occupation, tend to discipline children by reasoning with them or withdrawing rewards or privileges. In contrast, parents from lower social classes rely more heavily on physical punishment. Kohn theorizes that middle class parents value the development of internal

standards in children while lower class, or blue-collar, parents value conformity to external standards. This difference is explained by differences in the nature of the occupations of the two types. White-collar workers deal frequently with the manipulation of symbols; their work is complex requiring high flexibility and judgment, and they work under low levels of supervision. In contrast, blue-collar workers deal with physical objects more than ideas; their work is often standardized and repetitive, and they are closely supervised.

Gecas and Nye (1974) tested Kohn's theories in an experiment involving 210 couples. The parents were classified as either blue- or white-collar on the basis of occupational status, income, and education. They were asked to predict how they would respond to various kinds of misbehavior by their children. The data showed that white-collar parents were more discriminating in their responses to misbehavior depending on whether the behavior was intentional or unintentional. They were therefore more concerned with the child's motives. Blue-collar parents were limited in the range of their responses and were more likely to use physical punishment. The differences were more significant between the two groups when only the educational level of parents was considered.



Nuttall (1976) studied the relationship between child-rearing practices and academic motivation of children. A total of 533 teenagers were measured using two instruments--the Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory and the Test of Effective Academic Motivation. The academic motivation test contains measures of the following personality factors related to academic achievement: feels valued, obedient and law abiding, works hard and effectively, feels capable, confident academically, self sufficient, likes school and intellectual activities, and ambitious.

Results showed that use of hostile psychological control by parents was correlated with low levels of academic achievement in their children. Nuttall also tested the hypotheses that the child's relationship to the same-sex parent would be more important than to the opposite-sex parent, but found no significant differences. She concluded that there may be "a fairly large degree of substitutability between parents" (p. 133).

### Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature regarding the culture of Saudi Arabia, focusing on the role of women as wives and mothers. Two cultural factors found to affect the role of Saudi women were the pervasiveness of the religion and the lack of formal education among a large

proportion of the population. Several studies concerning parental attitudes of mothers in the United States also were reviewed. Use of authoritarian control was shown to be related to low educational levels in parents. These findings were corroborated in studies using the PARI as the testing instrument reviewed in Chapter I.

### CHAPTER III

#### ANALYSIS OF DATA, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine parental attitudes of Saudi mothers who have had some contact with western influences.

##### Analysis of Data

A total of 84 out of 100 questionnaires were returned. All questionnaires were filled out properly, although some subjects failed to answer some questions. Each questionnaire was scored by rating each item with a score of four for strongly agree, three for mildly agree, two for mildly disagree, and one for strongly disagree.

##### Subjects

Means for demographic variables for subjects were determined. The variables were number of children, mother's age, mother's educational level, father's educational level, and family income. Table I shows the results of the analysis.

Table I shows the average mother who participated in the study to have 2.17 children, to be 27.3 years of age, and to have completed 14.09 years of school. It is

TABLE I  
MEANS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

	Number of Responses	Range	Mean
Number of children	84	1- 6	2.17
Mother's age	82	20-24	27.3
Mother's educational level	84	2-21	14.09
Father's educational level	84	7-28	16.57
Income	78	\$16,000-\$625,000 (Mode: \$37,500)	\$67,612

significant that the overall educational level of subjects was relatively high. Nearly all had finished high school, and the average mother had completed two years of college. The educational level of fathers also was high; the mean was 16.57. The average income per family also was high at \$67,612. This statistic is somewhat misleading, however, since several families with incomes over \$600,000 skewed the data.

#### PARI DATA

Data were analyzed with regard to the six null hypotheses proposed. Hypotheses 1-5 predicted that the Saudi mothers will not show authoritarian tendencies on any of the five PARI scales used in the questionnaire.

Hypothesis 6 was that the educational level of Saudi mothers will not affect their child-rearing practices as measured by the modified PARI.

#### Hypothesis 1-5

A hypothesized mean of 2.5 was established for scores on each of the five scales measured in the instrument. Means under 2.5 placed the sample on the permissive side of the scales, and means over 2.5 placed the sample on the authoritarian side. Table II compares means against the hypothesized mean.

TABLE II  
COMPARISON OF SAMPLE MEANS AGAINST  
HYPOTHESIZED MEAN OF 2.50

	Mean	Standard Error	<u>t</u>	Sig.
Fostering dependency	2.44	.054	-1.11	n.s.
Suppression of sexuality	2.83	.057	+5.79	.001
Seclusion of mother	2.54	.048	+ .83	n.s.
Exclusion of outside influences	2.11	.047	-8.30	.001
Suppression of aggression	2.26	.042	-5.71	.001
Total	2.44	.026	-2.31	.05

Hypothesis 1, that there is no relationship between the fostering dependency mean and the hypothesized mean, is retained. The correlation is not significant.

Hypothesis 2, concerning suppression of sexuality, is rejected. Mothers were authoritarian at the .001 level of significance.

Hypothesis 3, concerning seclusion of mother, is retained. The correlation is not significant.

Hypothesis 4, concerning exclusion of outside influences, is retained. Mothers were permissive at the .001 level of significance.

Hypothesis 5, concerning suppression of aggression, is retained. Mothers were permissive at the .001 level of significance.

The total mean of 2.44 is significant at the .05 level, and places mothers on the permissive side of the scale.

#### Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 predicted no relationship between educational level and the authoritarianism of mothers. Pearson correlations were determined between PARI scores and each of the demographic variables. Table III shows results of the analysis.

Table III reveals only one correlation that is significant at the .05 level. Hypothesis 6 is retained because no relationship was found between mother's educational level and authoritarianism.

Statistical analyses revealed an unexpected factor. In analyzing the differences between the Jeddah and Mecca university samples, the Jeddah group had an average of three years less education and were statistically more authoritarian in suppressing aggression in their children. The researcher feels this is an important finding that should be explored further.

#### Discussion

Analyses of data failed to demonstrate the predicted tendency of Saudi mothers to be authoritarian in child-rearing attitudes and for mother's educational level to be negatively correlated with authoritarianism. Total scores on the PARI scales showed mothers to be slightly on the permissive side in tendencies. Only on the suppression of sexuality scale were mothers authoritarian. This tendency could be expected, since the Moslem religion places severe sanctions against extramarital sexual conduct.

It appears that Saudi mothers approach childrearing from a balanced perspective. They are highly permissive in the areas of secluding outside influences and suppression

TABLE III  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES  
AND PARI SCALES

	Depend	Sexual	Seclude	Exclude	Aggress	Total
Number of children	0.0061 ( 84) P= .478	-0.0716 ( 84) P= .259	0.0581 ( 84) P= .300	0.1204 ( 84) P= .138	0.0125 ( 84) P= .455	0.0408 ( 84) P= .356
Mother's age	-0.0047 ( 82) P= .483	0.0425 ( 82) P= .352	0.1410 ( 82) P= .103	0.1472 ( 82) P= .094	0.0161 ( 82) P= .443	0.1281 ( 82) P= .126
Mother's education	-0.0412 ( 84) P= .355	0.1129 ( 84) P= .153	-0.1333 ( 84) P= .113	0.0207 ( 84) P= .426	0.0423 ( 84) P= .351	0.0044 ( 84) P= .484
Father's education	-0.1263 ( 84) P= .126	-0.1042 ( 84) P= .173	-0.1023 ( 84) P= .177	0.1616 ( 84) P= .071	-0.0913 ( 84) P= .204	-0.1093 ( 84) P= .161
Family income	-0.0656 ( 78) P= .284	-0.2140 ( 78) P= .030*	-0.0417 ( 78) P= .358	0.0088 ( 78) P= .469	-0.0610 ( 78) P= .298	-0.1530 ( 78) P= .091

\*Significant at above the .05 level.



of aggression. They fail to show significant levels of authoritarianism in the areas of fostering dependency of children and secluding themselves. An important factor in these findings may be that the sample was relatively well educated and had relatively high incomes. This class of Saudi families often travel and educate their children abroad. They have access to western media and are familiar with many of the popularized western theories of childrearing. The influence of the Moslem faith may also be a factor in the overall rejection of authoritarianism. As was stated in the review of literature, Islam recommends a balanced approach to childrearing. Analysis of the data, however, reveals a tendency for Saudi mothers to be more permissive than authoritarianism. This may be explained by the principles of their religion.

Analyses of data also revealed no significant demographic predictors of PARI scales except for a negative correlation between income and suppression of sexuality. This finding contradicts findings of previous studies that found a relationship between maternal educational levels and authoritarian PARI scales. These studies had been conducted not only among white Americans but also among Belgians, Japanese-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Black Americans. The Saudi mothers as a group had a high educational mean, but ranged from only two years of school

up to twenty-one years of school. Perhaps cultural factors have a bearing on the lack of relationship between low educational levels and authoritarian parental attitudes. The religious and moral climate of Saudi Arabia may dampen authoritarian tendencies.

### Conclusions

Cultural factors may explain the findings that the sample of Saudi mothers tended to be more permissive than authoritarian in parental attitudes and that educational levels of mothers were not correlated with authoritarian attitudes. The Saudi mothers live in a society that is profoundly influenced by Islam. Islamic teachings encourage a balanced approach to childrearing. In addition, most of the mothers come from a social class that has access to western media and that has become familiar with emerging western theories about effective childrearing techniques. It appears that this new generation of Saudi mothers may be concerned about carrying on religious traditions and also insuring the healthy psychological development of their children.

The Moslem holy book, the Quran, serves as a guide to most Saudi mothers about all aspects of their daily lives. The Quran also instructs children on how to treat parents, as shown in the following verses:

Thy Lord hath decreed  
 That ye worship none but Him,  
 And that ye be kind  
 To parents. Whether one  
 Or both of them attain  
 Old age in thy life,  
 Say not to them a word  
 Of contempt, nor repel them  
 In terms of honor.  
 And out of kindness,  
 Lower to them the wing  
 Of humility, and say:  
 "My Lord! bestow on them  
 Thy mercy even as they  
 Cherished me in childhood." S. XVII, 23.

Ad we have enjoined on man  
 (To be good) to his parents:  
 In travail upon travail  
 Did his mother bear him,  
 And in years twain  
 Was his weaning: (hear  
 The command), "Show gratitude  
 To Me and to thy parents:  
 To Me is (thy final) Goal." S. XXXI, 14.

Children are directed, however, to disobey their  
 parents if their parents' will conflicts with the childrens'  
 duty to God.

"But if they strive  
 To make thee join  
 In worship with Me  
 Things of which thou hast  
 No knowledge, obey them not;  
 Yet bear them company  
 In this life with justice  
 (And consideration) and follow  
 The way of those who  
 Turn to Me (in love)." X. XXXI, 15.

The Quran instructs parents to cherish and provide  
 sustenance to their children and prohibits as a great sin  
 the practice of killing female infants.

Kill not your children  
 For fear of want: We shall  
 Provide sustenance for them  
 As well as for you.  
 Verily the killing of them  
 Is a great sin. X. XVII, 31.

The Quran also gives regulations for marriage that define the roles of mother and father and prohibit each partner from treating the other unfairly:

The mothers shall give suck  
 To their offspring  
 For two whole years,  
 If the father desires  
 To complete the term.  
 But he shall bear the cost  
 Of their food and clothing  
 On equitable terms.  
 No soul shall have  
 A burden laid on it  
 Greater than it can bear.  
 No mother shall be  
 Treated unfairly  
 On account of her child.  
 Nor father  
 On account of his child. S. II, 233.

Parents also are instructed to guard not only their own conduct but also that of their family members, because disobedience to the will of God can be terrible.

Oh ye who believe!  
 Save yourself and your  
 Families from a Fire  
 Whose fuel is Men  
 And Stones, over which  
 Are (appointed) angels  
 Stern (and) severe,  
 Who flinch not (from  
 Executing) the Commands  
 They receive from God. S. LXVI, 6.

The Quran and related writings and interpretations are taught to all school children in Saudi Arabia. The religion permeates the society. It is strict about wrongdoing, but it is also a gentle religion that encourages kindness and mutual respect among people. It is open to new ideas and techniques as long as they do not conflict with the basic precepts of the religion.

More and more Saudi mothers are coming into contact with modern theories about childrearing. The educational level of Saudi women is increasing at a rapid rate. It seems likely that this study has revealed a trend in Saudi parental attitudes. As the country increases the standard of living and educational standards, the Saudi family may become even more democratic in its approach to childrearing. Parents will become more sensitive to their role in guiding the psychological development of their children.

### Recommendations

The Parental Attitude Research Instrument is considered to be an economical first approach to measuring childrearing attitudes. It is limited in scope, and its validity can be confirmed only with additional research, especially when used in cross-cultural settings. The following recommendations are made for further research of Saudi parental attitudes.

1. The PARI should be administered to a larger sample group that includes a sample of low income and educated mothers in proportion to national averages.
2. Other instruments, such as the California F Scale and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, could be used to validate findings of the PARI.
3. Personal observations of Saudi mother-child relationships may be the most effective method of measuring parental behavior. Observational techniques such as those used by Hess and Shipman (1965) could be used to measure the style and quality of interaction between Saudi mothers and children.
4. Personal interviews with Saudi mothers also might reveal how they obtain information and form attitudes about childrearing. How much knowledge do Saudi mothers have about western theories of childrearing? How significant a role do Moslem prescriptions about childrearing play in the attitudes of Saudi parents?
5. Several factors such as educational level, religious commitment and access to western influence

may be influencing Saudi mother's parental attitude. Further study is suggested here.

There is a great need for more research in the area of Saudi parental attitudes. The educational system is in a period of rapid development. The country has a great need to develop its human resources. More knowledge about the role the Saudi family plays in the development of children can benefit teachers and policy-makers in the push for national development.

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### MODIFIED PARI SUBSCALES AND RESPECTIVE STATEMENT ITEMS

#### Subscale 1. Fostering Dependency.

- (01) A good mother should shelter her child from life's little difficulties.
- (06) A child should learn that he has to be disappointed sometimes.
- (11) A child should be protected from jobs that might be too tiring or hard for him.
- (16) Children have to face difficult situations on their own.
- (21) Children should be kept away from all hard jobs that might be discouraging.

#### Subscale 2. Suppression of sexuality.

- (02) Children should be taught about sex as soon as possible.
- (07) It is very important that young boys and girls not be allowed to see each other completely undressed.
- (12) Sex play is a normal thing in children.
- (17) Sex is one of the greatest problems to be contended with in children.
- (22) Children are normally curious about sex.

#### Subscale 3. Seclusion of mother.

- (03) The women who want lots of parties seldom make good mothers.

- (08) A good mother should develop interests outside the home.
- (13) Too many mothers forget that a mother's place is in the home.
- (18) A mother can keep a nice home and still have plenty of time left over to visit with friends and relatives.
- (23) A good mother will find enough social life within the family.

Subscale 4. Excluding outside influences.

- (04) If a parent is wrong he should admit it to his child.
- (09) It's best for the child if he never gets started wondering whether his mother's views are right.
- (14) A child should be encouraged to look for answers to his questions from other people even if the answers contradict his parents.

Subscale 5. Suppression of aggression.

- (05) A child should be taught to avoid fighting no matter what.
- (10) A child should be taught to fight his own battles.
- (15) Children should not be encouraged to box or wrestle because it often leads to trouble or injury.
- (20) It's quite natural for children to hit one another.
- (25) Most parents prefer a quiet child to a "scrappy" one.

## APPENDIX B

Dear Friend,

I am a graduate student at Texas Woman's University and have chosen as my graduate research the parental attitudes of Saudi women. I am requesting your assistance in furnishing information for my research.

If you will take a few minutes of your time and complete this questionnaire, I will be most appreciative.

The information you give will be an important part of my study. In compliance with the regulations of both the University and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, I am required to include the following statements:

No medical service or compensation is provided to subjects by the University as a result of injury from participation in research.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE RETURN OF MY QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTITUTES MY INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A SUBJECT IN THIS RESEARCH.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and for any information you contribute to my study.

Yours sincerely,

## PARENTAL ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

2. List each child's sex and age below.

Age	Sex	Age	Sex
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many years of school have you completed? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many years of school has your husband completed?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your family's approximate annual income? \_\_\_\_\_

## EMMERICH'S MODIFIED PARI

A--Strong Agreement  
 a--Mild Agreement  
 D--Strong Disagreement  
 d--Mild Disagreement

	Agree/Disagree			
1. A good mother should shelter her child from life's little difficulties.	A	a	D	d
2. Children should be taught about sex as soon as possible.	A	a	D	d
3. The women who want lots of parties seldom make good mothers.	A	a	D	d
4. If a parent is wrong, he should admit it to his child.	A	a	D	d
5. A child should be taught to avoid fighting no matter what happens.	A	a	D	d
6. A child should learn that he has to be disappointed sometimes.	A	a	D	d
7. It is very important that young boys and girls not be allowed to see each other completely undressed.	A	a	D	d
8. A good mother should develop interests outside the home.	A	a	D	d
9. It's best for the child if he never gets started wondering whether his mother's views are right.	A	a	D	d
10. A child should be taught to fight his own battles.	A	a	D	d
11. A child should be protected from jobs that might be too tiring or hard for him.	A	a	D	d

## Agree/Disagree

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Sex play is a normal thing in children.   | A | a | D | d |
| 13. Too many mothers forget that a mother's place is in the home.   | A | a | D | d |
| 14. A child should be encouraged to look for answers to his questions from other people even if the answers contradict his parents. | A | a | D | d |
| 15. Children should not be encouraged to box or wrestle because it often leads to trouble or injury.                                | A | a | D | d |
| 16. Children have to face difficult situations on their own.  | A | a | D | d |
| 17. Sex is one of the greatest problems to be contended with in children.   | A | a | D | d |
| 18. A mother can keep a nice home and still have plenty of time left over to visit with friends and relatives.                      | A | a | D | d |
| 19. The child should not question the thinking of his parents.  | A | a | D | d |
| 20. It's quite natural for children to hit one another.   | A | a | D | d |
| 21. Children should be kept away from all hard jobs that might be discouraging.   | A | a | D | d |
| 22. Children are normally curious about sex.  | A | a | D | d |
| 23. A good mother will find enough social life within the family.   | A | a | D | d |
| 24. A good mother can tolerate criticism of herself, even when the children are around.   | A | a | D | d |
| 25. Most parents prefer a quiet child to a "scrappy" one.   | A | a | D | d |

عزيزتى الأم : -

أنا طالبة في سنة التخرج في جامعة المرأة في تكساس ،وقد اخترت  
( موقف الام السعودية من تربية ابناءها ) كعنوان لبحث التخرج الذى أعده .

أرجو أن تتكرموا باعطائى بضع دقائق من وقتكم لتعبئة هذا الاستفتاء  
وسوف اكون مقدرة جدا تعاونكم .

وتعتبر المعلومات التى ستزودونى بها جزءا مهما من دراستى .  
وطبقا لتنظيمات الجامعة ودائرة الصحة والتعليم والرفاهية ،يطلب منى  
كتابة هذه العبارة : -

لا تمنح الجامعة اى خدمة طبية أو تعويض للمعرضين للادى نتيجة المشاركة  
في هذا البحث .

استنتج ان الاجابة على اسئلتى هذه تعطى معلومات مقبولة لدى لتكون  
موضوع مناسب في هذا البحث .

وشكرا . . .

اختكم

رجاء محمد بن لادن





موافقة قوية	موافقة معتدلة	معارضة معتدلة	معارضة قوية
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د
أ	ب	ج	د

- ١- يجب على الأم الجيدة حماية أطفالها من مصاعب الحياة البسيطة .
- ٢- يجب تعليم الأطفال عن مواضيع الجنس بأسرع وقت ممكن .
- ٣- النساء اللواتي يرغبن في حفلات كثيرة نادرا ما يكن امهات جيدات .
- ٤- اذا كان الوالد على خطأ، يجب ان يعترف به لطفله .
- ٥- يجب ارشاد الطفل لتجنب الشجار مهما كان الداعي لذلك .
- ٦- يجب اشعار الأطفال بأن آمالهم ستخيب احيانا .
- ٧- من المهم عدم السماح للولاد والبنات اليافعين بروئية بعضهم البعض وهم عراة تماما .
- ٨- الأم الجيدة هي التي توجد اهتمامات لها خارج البيت .
- ٩- من الافضل للطفل الا يبدأ التفكير في صحة آراء أمه .
- ١٠- يجب ان يتعلم الطفل مكافحة مصاعبه بنفسه .
- ١١- يجب حماية الطفل من القيام بالاعمال المرهقة والصعبة بالنسبة له .
- ١٢- الألعاب الجنسية شيء طبيعي بالنسبة للطفل .
- ١٣- تنسى الكثير من الامهات ان مكان المرأة هو البيت .

أوافق — لا أوافق

موافقة قوية موافقة معتدلة معارضة معتدلة معارضة قوية

أ ب ج د

١٤- يجب تشجيع الطفل على البحث عن أجوبة الآخرين على استفساراته حتى لو كانت تتعارض آراء والديه .

أ ب ج د

١٥- يجب عدم تشجيع الاطفال على الملاكمة والمصارعة لأنها تتسبب في الاذى والمشاكل .

أ ب ج د

١٦- يجب على الاطفال مجابهة المواقف الصعبة بأنفسهم .

أ ب ج د

١٧- الجنس هو أحد أعظم المشاكل التي يناقشها الاطفال .

أ ب ج د

١٨- يمكن للمرأة أن تحافظ على بيتها نظيفاً ولطيفاً ويتوفر لها وقت كبير لزيارة الاصدقاء والاقارب .

أ ب ج د

١٩- يجب على الطفل عدم المراجعة في رأى والديه .

أ ب ج د

٢٠- من الأمور الطبيعية بالنسبة للاطفال مقاتلة بعضهم البعض .

أ ب ج د

٢١- يجب ابقاء الاطفال بعيد عن الأعمال الصعبة التي تسبب في تشييط عزائهم .

أ ب ج د

٢٢- الاطفال يستفسرون دائماً عن الجنس .

أ ب ج د

٢٣- الأم الجيدة تجد حياة اجتماعية كافية داخل العائلة .

أ ب ج د

٢٤- الأم الجيدة هي التي تتحمل النقد الموجه لها حتى في وجود اطفالها .

أ ب ج د

٢٥- معظم الآباء والأمهات يفضلون الطفل الهادئ على الطفل المشاغب .

أ - تعنى موافقة قوية .

ب - تعنى موافقة معتدلة .

ج - تعنى معارضة معتدلة .

د - تعنى معارضة قوية .

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