

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY: THE CASE OF STUDENTS FROM SAUDI
ARABIA COMING TO THE UNITED STATES

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

International Student Mobility: The Case of Students From Saudi Arabia Coming to
the United States

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Students seeking higher education outside their country of origin is a growing phenomenon. The United States is the largest host nation but has been losing market share as other countries increase their efforts to recruit international students. Surprisingly, after several years of decline, the rate of growth in students from Saudi Arabia has surpassed the rate of growth for all foreign students choosing higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States since 2006. The history of international education in the United States and the current state of education in the Middle East provided background for an analysis of the political factors that resulted in the change. This dissertation also assessed the mechanisms of choice and motivations of Saudis students that led to attending an HEI in the United States. Student choice theory, expectancy theory, economic theories including human capital theory and comparative advantage, students as consumers, and social constructs such as intergroup contact and diffusion of innovation theory were used to design semi-structured interviews among various stakeholder and an online survey of Saudi students to learn how and why they chose the HEI they currently

attended. Saudi students were influenced in their decision to study in the United States by the availability of scholarships from the Saudi government and by the implementation of the SEVIP visa system that facilitated their choice of country. In addition, Saudi students were asked about their experiences at HEIs in the United States and their attitudes toward the United States, western social and political norms and possible modernization of Saudi society. These results were compared to survey data from students who remained in Saudi Arabia for higher education. The comparison shows that Saudi students in the U.S. have a more favorable opinion of the United States than before studying here, increased approval for greater gender equality and western values such as respect for human rights and women's education and employment. This research contains recommendations for HEIs that want to recruit Saudi students and improve their integration into the campus community.

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Chapter One: Introduction

There has been a long tradition of people traveling far from their homes in search of knowledge. The wandering scholar and the privileged elites who took the Grand Tour were among the steady but relatively small stream of students from South to North in pursuit of informal education (deWit, 2002). What has changed in recent decades is the fast growth in the number of degree seeking students traveling abroad for education. Students choose where to study based on a myriad of factors. Often, foreign students are seeking educations in schools that have English language programming and offer the best quality courses based on international reputations and rankings.

As a matter of foreign policy, higher education and international student mobility are closely related. Educational and cultural exchanges are a frequent tool of public diplomacy. The United States has a history of welcoming international students and scholars to the country in order to promote American culture and values (Lord, 1998). Today students travel to an increasing number of countries and in greater number than ever. Figure 1 illustrates that global international student enrollment more than tripled from 1.3 million in 1990 to 4.5 million in 2012.

Until recently, the United States enjoyed the largest share of international students. According to IIE.org (Fast Facts 2015) the number of international students in the U.S. fell slightly from 2001 to 2007 but has grown steadily since then, reaching 974,926 students in 2014. The United States continues to host the greatest number

of international students but its share of the total global number of international students declined from twenty eight percent in 2001 to nineteen percent in 2012. Table 1 shows the changes in market share of international students since 2001.

Figure 1: Growth in Global Student Enrolment from 1975 to 2012

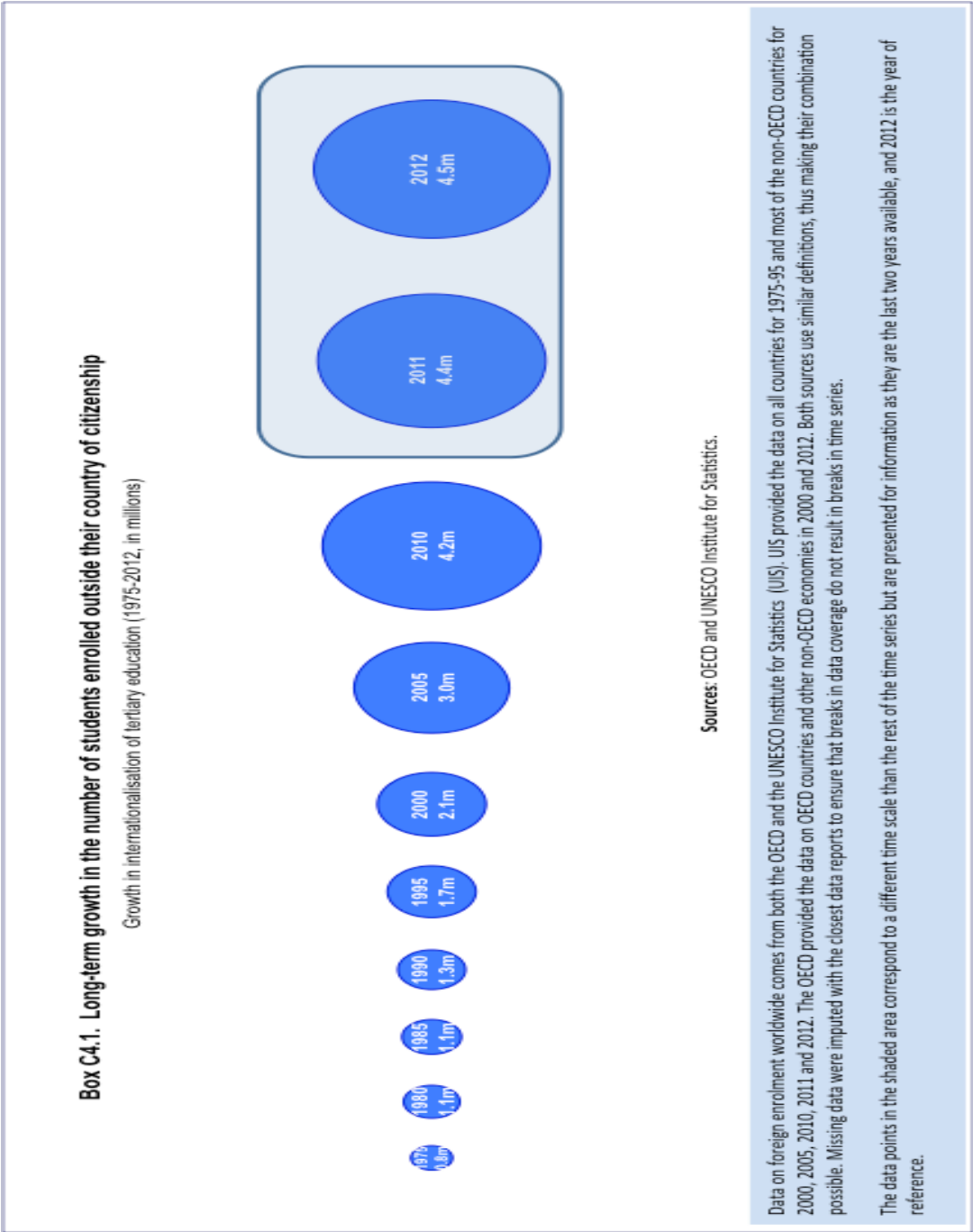


Table 1: Top 8 Host Countries of Globally Mobile Students**2001 Worldwide: 2.1 million**

United States 28 %
 United Kingdom 11 %
 Germany 9 %
 France 7 %
 Australia 4 %
 Japan 3 %
 Spain 2 %
 Belgium 2 %
 All Other 34 %

2012 Worldwide: 4.3 million

United States 19 %
 United Kingdom 11 %
 China 8 %
 France 7 %
 Germany 6 %
 Australia 6 %
 Canada 5 %
 Japan 3 %
 All Other 35 %

Source: Project Atlas and UNESCO, 2012

The competition for international students has increased as other countries have improved their educational systems and built state of the art campuses and research facilities. The U.S. higher education institutions continue to see growth in students from China, India, and South Korea. Saudi Arabia is now also a top sending country to the U.S. In the last five years, from 2006/07 to 2012/13 the top four sending countries have increased the number of students coming to the United States as per Table 2:

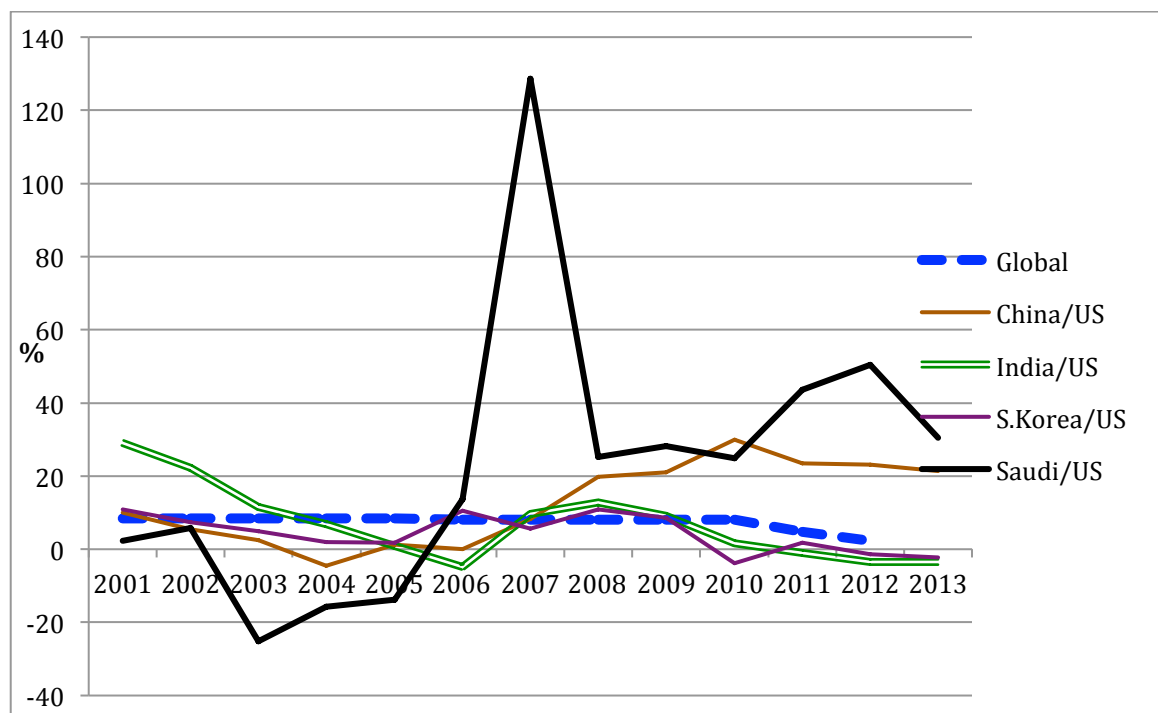
Table 2: Increase in Foreign Student Populations in the U.S. from 2006 to 2013

Saudi Arabia	465.1 %
China	247.9 %
India	15.4 %
S. Korea	13.2 %
All Countries	40.6 %

Data source: Open Door Survey 2013

Since 2006 the rate of increase in students from Saudi Arabia has far outpaced the rate of growth from any other sending country. Students from Saudi Arabia are coming to the United States at an even greater rate than Chinese students, the largest sending country for foreign students globally. Figure 2 is an illustration of this change.

Figure 2: International Student Mobility Rates of Change, Global and To U.S.



Data source: Open Door Survey 2013

Table 3 shows the list of countries that send students to the U.S. ranked in order of size. China, India, and South Korea have been the top three sending countries since 2005. The data show that there are only slight variations in placement from year to year. Movements in the rankings such as Saudi Arabia's are unusual.

Table 3: Ranking of Places of Origin for Foreign Students coming to the U.S.

2012/13 Rank	11/12	10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08	06/07	05/06
1 China	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
2 India	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
3 South Korea	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4 Saudi Arabia	4	6	7	9	9	12	N/A
5 Canada	5	4	4	4	5	6	5
6 Taiwan	6	5	5	6	6	5	6
7 Japan	7	7	6	5	4	4	4
8 Vietnam	8	8	9	8	13	20	N/A
9 Mexico	9	9	9	7	7	7	7
10 Turkey	10	10	10	10	8	8	8

Note: some rankings data do not extend beyond 20 places. Source: IIE Fast Facts.

In addition, students from Saudi Arabia are choosing the United States over any other country, including the United Kingdom, which remains the second most popular destination country for international students. As shown in Table 4, there has been a decline in the number of Saudi students attending schools in the U.K.

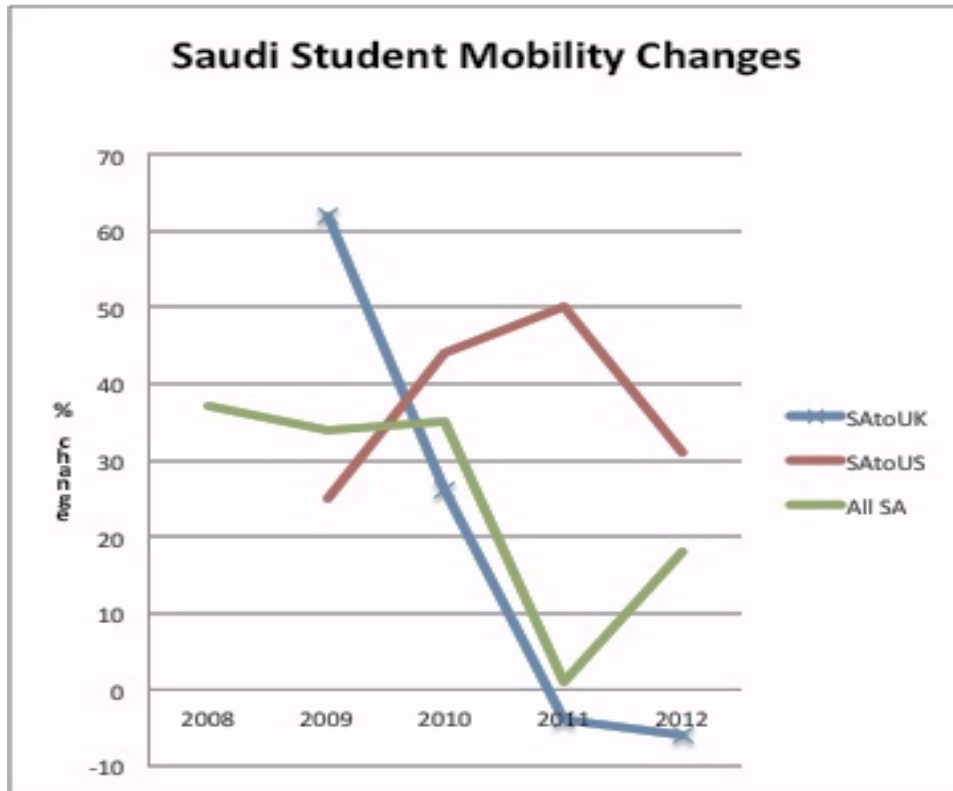
Table 4: Saudi Students Attending HEIs in the UK vs. the US

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Saudis to UK	3405	6975	8765	8400	7930
Growth		62%	26%	-4%	-6%
Saudis in-US	12661	15810	22704	34139	44566
Growth %		25%	44%	50%	31%
All Saudi	58710	78826	106095	107065	126000est
Growth %	37%	34%	35%	1%	18%

Source: iie.org and hesa.ac.uk

Figure 3 is a graphical representation that highlights how large this shift has been.

Figure 3: Changes in Saudi Student Attendance at Foreign HEIs



Note: All Saudi data from mohe.gov.sa Study Abroad Scholarships. Other Data: iie.org and hesa.ac.uk Higher Education Statistic Agency Table 6: Top 10 non-EU countries of domicile for 2012/13. 2012/13 All Saudi extrapolated from mohe.gov

Figure 3 illustrates that the growth rate for Saudi students coming to the United States is faster than the overall growth rate for Saudi students seeking higher education outside of the country. Saudi students attendance at schools in the United Kingdom began to slow by 2010 and has declined since 2011.

There was a decline in visa approvals for all students applying to come to the United States in the years immediately after September 11, 2001. F-1 non-immigrant visas are given to over seventy eight percent of foreign students attending higher education institutions as full time students. Table 5 illustrates that after 2001 Saudi student visa approvals fell faster than all student visa approvals. That trend began reversing in 2005. Saudi students today make up a growing percentage of all F-1 visas approved.

Table 5: Nonimmigrant F-1 Visas Issued, Totals Issued and Saudi Issued

Year	Total F-1	Saudi F-1	Saudi % of Total	Saudi % change	Total % change
1997	266,483	3,529	1.30%	n/a	n/a
1998	251,565	3,796	1.50%	7.00%	-5.60%
1999	262,542	3,893	1.48%	2.60%	4.40%
2000	284,053	4,038	1.40%	3.70%	8.20%
2001	293,357	4,359	1.49%	7.70%	3.30%
2002	234,322	1,515	0.65%	-65.20%	-20.10%
2003	215,695	1,158	0.54%	-23.40%	-7.90%
2004	218,898	1,008	0.46%	-13%	1.50%
2005	237,890	2,166	0.95%	114.90%	8.70%
2006	273,870	9,240	3.40%	312.20%	15.10%
2007	298,393	5,776	1.94%	-37.50%	9.00%
2008	340,711	8,038	2.40%	39.20%	14.20%
2009	331,208	11,193	3.40%	39.30%	-2.80%
2010	385,210	21,101	5.50%	88.50%	16.30%
2011	447,410	27,738	6.20%	31.50%	16.10%
2012	486,900	27,932	5.70%	0.70%	8.80%
2013	534,320	28,597	5.40%	2.40%	9.80%

note: data is fiscal year Oct-Sep

% Change is year over

year

www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/non-immigrants-visas.html

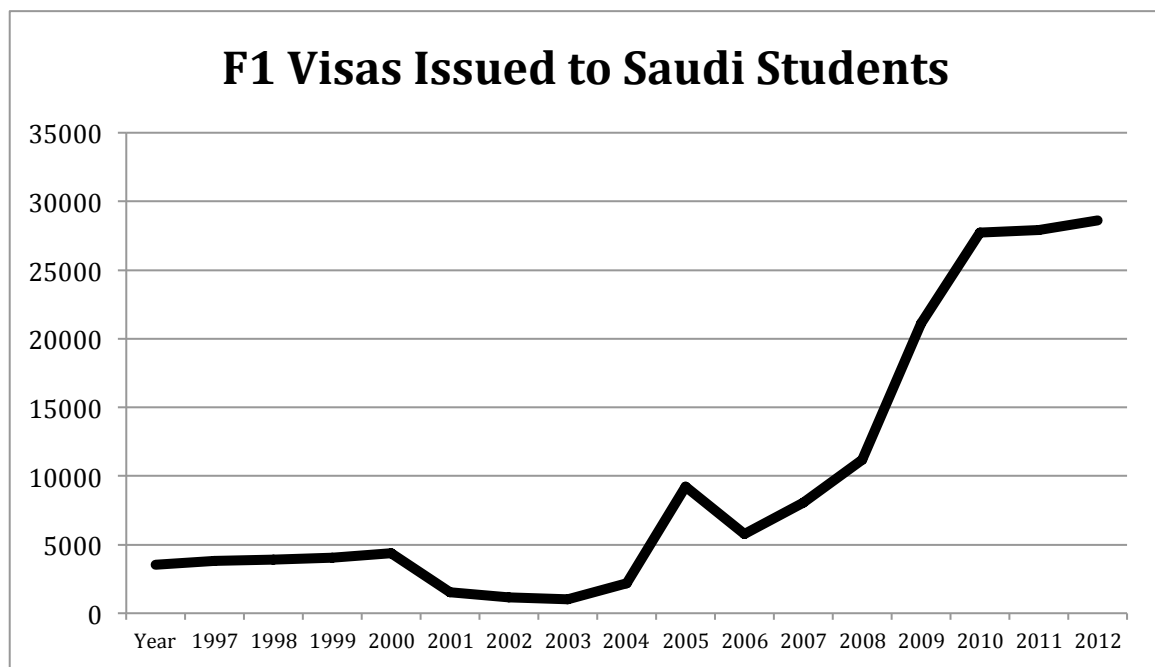
The Puzzle

Some questions arise from these facts. How can the outsized growth in the number of students from Saudi Arabia attending higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the

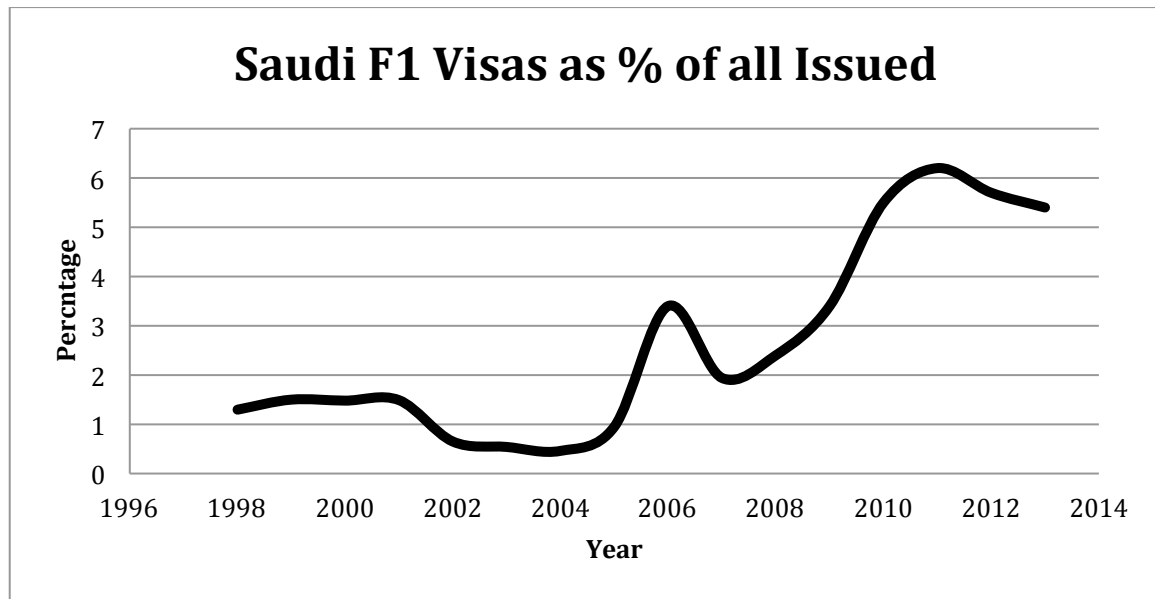
United States be explained? In a post 9/11 world, with extensive public and governmental focus on national security in the United States, this is unexpected.

Figure 4 is a graphical representation that shows the rapid rise in the number of F-1 visas issues to Saudi students. Figure 5 identifies how many Saudi students are being issued visas compared to all F1 visas being issues. The rebound in the number of students from Saudi Arabia is puzzling given the geopolitical realities of the Unites States' intense focus on national security and the "War on Terror" that resulted in the highest levels of scrutiny given to young people of Middle Eastern origin coming into the country (Congress 2004).

Figure 4: F1 Visas Issued to Saudi Students



Source: www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/non-immigrant-visas.html

Figure 5: Saudi Student F1 Visas as a Percent of All Visas Issued

Source: www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/statistics/non-immigrant-visas.html

The rapid growth in Saudi students coming to the U.S. is also unexpected in light of growing competition in the market for international students and the probability that Saudi students would attend higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. Today students have more choices for higher education. Many developing countries have invested heavily in building university campuses and improving the quality of their programs, including offering full degrees taught in English. For example, in addition to the growth in the educational system in China, the other Gulf States have been recruiting premier name western universities to build entire campuses or partner with local schools to offer full degrees. Saudi students have many geographically closer options that they can choose from. Yet, as Table 6 shows, Saudi students are choosing the U.S. in far greater number than other

countries. This is particularly interesting given the extreme cultural and political differences between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. In contrast, the British were politically active in the region since the eighteenth century and the Saudi people have had centuries-long familiarity with the culture and customs of people from the United Kingdom. The U.K. is also geographically much closer to Saudi Arabia than the United States is. It would, therefore, be expected that Saudi students would show a strong preference for continuing their attendance at schools in the U.K.

Table 6: Where Do Saudi Students Go To Study, UNESCO, 2013

United States	42,651
United Kingdom	9,344
Australia	4,946
Canada	4,587
Jordan	3,295
UAE	1,686
Malaysia	887
New Zealand	994
France	478
Poland	466

Source: uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/International-student-flows-viz.aspx.

Note: slight variations exist in the data compared to iie.org and NAFSA reports due to definitional differences.

Given this large increase in Saudi students coming to the U.S. it is puzzling to know if government policies in the U.S. and in Saudi Arabia have an impact on why they choose the U.S. over other destinations. The choice of school is a matter of interest,

as well. Saudi students are clustering in certain regions. Why do they choose the institution they attend and how do they fare once they come? Do they experience any changes in their attitudes and opinions due to their time in the United States?

Key Question One: How can this increase in the number of Saudi students coming to the U.S. for higher education be explained?

The worldwide demand for higher education is increasing. Since education plays an important role for building human capital, it is a primary input for economic development and growth. In addition to macroeconomic outcomes, human capital creation can also result in benefits on the individual level. Education may enhance a person's professional abilities and help create informed citizens that contribute to a better society. The new economy today is a global, knowledge economy that is transnational and deeply integrated. This economy is dynamic and competitive and requires a workforce with analytical skills and the ability to innovate and adapt in order to succeed. The needs and rewards of participating in the global economy can explain what motivates an individual to pursue higher education.

In addition to human capital creation, international education itself has become a tradable commodity, one that fits into many models of international trade and market analysis. The global market for education is growing as more students travel abroad for higher education and schools and universities compete to attract them. Foreign students provide revenue, help diversify the student population, and provide the universities with valued research credentials that enhance their

prestige and international reputations. These may be among the reasons that universities and students increasingly seek each other out, in order to satisfy their perceived needs that have shaped the global trade in educational services.

While it is often difficult to separate politics from economics, ideology and market philosophy, there are some overlapping and yet some very different goals among the Saudis and the Americans that may be behind the current trends of both sending and receiving students in such great concentration. The U.S. government has made great strides in accommodating Saudi students applying for visas since the attacks of Sept 11 (Wildavsky 2012). The government of Saudi Arabia supports students through initiatives that include the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP). The structure of the program may, by design, influence both the decision to study abroad and where the students choose to go. The connection between the KASP and Saudi students may be relevant to understanding the actions of both the government and the students, who are increasingly opting to study abroad in a non-Muslim country.

In order to address this question, the actors involved must be identified and their main motivations evaluated. There are main actors on the U.S. side as well as the Saudi side.

Who are the actors involved?

A review of international higher education suggests a focus on several main actors.

The role that each of these actors play individually and in concert with each other explain much of the behavior of foreign students who choose to study in the U.S.

In the United States they are the U.S. Government through various agencies, higher education institutes that range from language training schools to degree granting research universities, and a collection of private interest groups that support international education. The U.S. government sets policies and implements programs that relate to international students. The higher education institutions (HEIs) in the U.S. are involved in recruiting and serving foreign students. Once foreign students are granted a visa the HEI is the primary site for foreign students' experiences in the U.S. The HEIs are supported by private organizations that work in conjunction with each other to promote international education. These private actors promote study abroad for both U.S. and foreign students and liaise with Congress to address practical and legal challenges facing the higher education industry.

The case of students from Saudi Arabia choosing to study in the U.S. requires a more specific analysis. In addition to the young Saudis, the primary actor supporting international education in Saudi Arabia is the Saudi government through the Ministry of Higher Education. The government of Saudi Arabia is investing in education at all levels inside the country. It also offers citizens the financial support

to study abroad. Many students who leave Saudi Arabia for higher education are funded under the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP). The Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for implementing the KASP. The Saudi government also provides material support for international students who are privately or self-funded. Focusing on the various ministries of the government of Saudi Arabia can help explain the phenomenon of the large number of Saudi students attending HEIs in the United States.

What are the main motivations of the actors?

For the U.S. Government, we may assume that international higher education is a tool of economic development and foreign policy. This suggests several motivations that should be analyzed. For example, the benefit of spreading U.S. culture and values through international education was one of the major imperatives for re-establishing the non-immigrant student visa program after the events of Sept. 11. Additionally, international education is increasingly seen as a valuable economic sector that provides jobs and income at home. Exposure to international students, along with the personal relationships forged, is believed to help U.S. students develop intercultural skills and competencies needed to manage in the global economy (Hausheer, 2014).

Universities and HEIs may be understood to have their own motivations, although there is some overlap with the U.S. government. Universities and colleges (HEIs) support student mobility to encourage the internationalization of American schools

and students. Internationalization endeavors to create graduates who are global thinkers and is a primary goal of HEIs today. Also, HEIs increasingly rely on the revenue generated from foreign students. Finally, HEIs seek to attract foreign students to fill seats available in critical disciplines, especially in the sciences and research programs. Many HEIs actively compete for the best students in order to maintain their international rankings and reputations. These motivations, some idealistic, some more pragmatic, should be analyzed in order to better understand the role HEIs play in international student mobility.

The main motivations of the Saudi government point to a combination of domestic drivers as well as international concerns. The Saudi government is using education as a way to build human capital in order to diversify the economy beyond the energy sector. The government is motivated by the need to reduce unemployment by having a workforce of capable Saudis that can replace the international expatriates who currently hold many of the middle and upper management positions in the private sector. Also, the Saudi government is endeavoring to change the perception of Saudis abroad since the events of September 11, 2001, when many of the hijackers were Saudi nationals. Another factor motivating the Saudi government is a recognition that it needs to modernize society and encourage a shift away from Islamic extremism. This drive to soften the influence of Wahhabism, the conservative form of Islam practiced in the country, has both domestic and regional implications.

There is no doubt that Saudi students are choosing to study abroad in greater numbers than ever. The primary assumption is that they anticipate economic rewards through enhanced job prospects when they return. The analysis should include whether Saudi students perceive the education in the U.S. to be better at preparing them for jobs in the private sector, where analytical and critical thinking skills are required to succeed. Saudi student motivations may relate to building human capital and be informed by social and cultural capital factors. The focus on social and cultural capital might explain how they make their choices and what individual attributes contribute to the decision to study in the U.S.

Key Question Two: What are the expected outcomes of this research?

In trying to understand this increase in the number of Saudi students coming the U.S. for higher education several issues will be made clearer or present areas for future research. The outcomes found could have important political and economic implications for both countries. Also, higher education institutions may address shortcomings in the services they offer Saudi students in light of the results of this research. Studying this phenomenon has provided explanations that:

1. Establish why Saudi students choose to study abroad, why they come to the U.S. and identifies their decision-making mechanisms.
2. Highlight the issues that Saudi students face, academically and socially. Higher education institutions in the United States need to act to successfully integrate these students and ensure they have a positive experience by addressing these concerns.
3. Identify how Saudi students feel about the United States. Will there be a long-term change in the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia as more of their young people absorb American culture and values? This could present the basis for future research.
4. Reveal what Saudi students in the United States report about changes in their tolerance of others, issues related to family and gender equality, how they feel about laws preventing discrimination and their opinion of the United States. Saudi students who return to their country may be the impetus for economic and cultural changes that take place in the coming years. Changes in these attitudes may form the basis for greater change in Saudi society in the future.

Chapter Two: Historical Background

This chapter will provide background for understanding the behavior of the various stakeholders. Education serves many purposes, both public and private. This research concerns a series of complex interlinking perspectives and motivations that relate to economic, political, social, and cultural drivers. The perspectives of each stakeholder were analyzed to show where they fit into this puzzle of Saudi students coming to the U.S. The parameters of this research dictated that the historical uses of higher education and the political motives of key actors be reviewed.

Section One discusses the history of international students in the United States and government policies and attitudes toward them. The U.S. government has used higher education as the means for economic development. It has also used education and cultural exchanges as tools for public diplomacy and soft power. U.S. government policy toward international education is closely entwined with its international relations policies and they are reviewed in the context of each other.

Section Two concerns the government of Saudi Arabia and the current state of education in the country and the Arab Gulf States. Historical background and a review of current political imperatives shed light onto the impetus behind its current education policy. The section includes a discussion of the nature of monarchism and patrimonialism in order to provide contextual understanding of the country and the relationship between the government and its citizens. This

relationship is radically different from Western styles of liberal, democratic, participatory government. It reflects a mindset and realm of expectation that is in stark contrast to those of citizens in the U.S. and their government.

Section One: History of International Education in the U.S.

For centuries, international student flows were directed toward the centers of higher learning in Greece, Rome, and universities throughout Medieval Europe, continuing until the nineteenth century when the Grand Tour was considered the capstone of a liberal education. Even American students went abroad to study at Europe's most prestigious schools. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson studied European models of higher education and brought back ideas they used to develop the American system. Relatively few foreign students came to the U.S. until the twentieth century. In 1784, the Venezuelan revolutionary figure Francisco de Miranda was the first foreign student at Yale University. Fernando Bolivar, the nephew of Simon Bolivar, was the University of Virginia's first Latin American student in the 1827. Many Latin American students who came to study in the United States became politically prominent in their home countries and maintained close relations with the U.S. (Bevis & Lucas, 2007).

Christian missionaries in China brought Western educational methods that spread throughout the region. By the nineteenth century Chinese were the first sizable cohort of foreign students in the U.S. Once the Japanese government lifted its ban on

Christianity in the 1870s, missionaries there were able to support students coming to the U.S. to study. Many Asian students returned home to have successful careers as educators, technicians, and engineers with strong views about modernizing their countries. Immigration laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and increasingly complex and restrictive rules later impacted the flow of international students, especially from Asian countries (Bevis & Lucas, 2007).

Much, if not all, of the early support for foreign students in the United States came from private groups, mainly campus based cosmopolitan and international clubs. These informal organizations were student run and occasionally aided by a volunteer faculty member who served as a “foreign student advisor.” In time, the function of foreign student advisor became incorporated into the colleges’ administrations and served the important role of providing academic counsel to foreign students and steering them around complicated rules and visa requirements, preventing many deportations. Another private initiative was the establishment of international houses, formal community centers that brought together students from all nations in an effort to promote greater tolerance and understanding. The first one was established in New York City in 1928 with funds from John D. Rockefeller, Sr. and the Cleveland H. Dodge Family, who also helped found the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students. International House Berkeley was opened in 1930. It was a coed housing complex that soon attracted students from around the world. A third center was opened in Chicago in 1932 and today they continue to provide the models for centers of international

education and cultural exchanges. By 1935, the number of private groups involved with international education reached over one hundred (Bevis and Lucas 2007).

The U.S. attitudes and policies regarding foreign students

The U.S. government has been directly and indirectly involved in bringing foreign students to the country since the early twentieth century to serve national interest. Theodore Roosevelt's presidency and the Progressive Era was a time of renewed interest in public education in the United States. It also coincided with more students coming from Latin America and a return of Chinese students in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion in 1898. President Roosevelt was eager to support the changes brought on by the rebellion, encompassing both political and educational reforms, and by 1912 the U.S. government specifically supported Chinese students being given safe passage to America and enrolled in American colleges. Most of these students held important positions after returning to China (Bevis & Lucas, 2007).

Early efforts to support international study abroad by Americans came after World War I. Foreign students were still the responsibility of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services but private organizations were most active in promoting international education. The Institute of International Education (IIE) was established in 1919 to support two-way exchange of students and began a long history of providing data and conducting policy related research on foreign students and trends in international education. According to their website, iie.org, it was

established by Nobel Peace Prize winners Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, and Elihu Root, former Secretary of State, and Stephen Duggan, Sr., Professor of Political Science at the College of the City of New York and IIE's first President, to promote understanding between nations through international education.

During the 1930s the IIE was instrumental in bringing European scholars identified as “at risk” to the U.S. to lecture at American universities and arranged for many displaced foreign scholars to come to the United States. The IIE founded the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, NAFSA, in 1948 to further develop the capabilities of university administrators in assisting the growing number of foreign students arriving in the country after World War II. The IIE remains a private, not-for-profit organization but it administers the Fulbright Program and Gilman Scholarship Program on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. Additionally, the IIE and NAFSA promote legislation to enable greater educational and cultural exchanges and promote immigration reform that will allow foreign students to remain in the U.S. after completing their studies and contribute to the U.S. economy.

Since the end of World War II, the university has been an informal tool of public diplomacy and economic development influenced by U.S. government policy (Critchlow 2004; The Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt n.d.). Successive administrations have focused on differing initiatives but the virtuous circle of academic excellence and growing foreign student attendance

at top tier universities in the country resulted in strong economic growth here and a preference for American style education abroad. The U.S. government played an essential role in the types of programs offered by universities, financing majors such as area studies and scientific research that educated U.S. students in subjects deemed of national interest (Wildavsky, 2012). These programs attracted top tier international scholars who, in turn, helped build the reputation for excellence enjoyed by many U.S. HEIs.

By supporting student exchange programs the U.S. government used the universities as tools of public diplomacy. Educational exchanges were one of several programs instituted to intentionally expose the world to American culture and values during World War II. The United States Information Agency (USIA), Voice of America Radio (VOA), Radio Free Europe, and the Fulbright Program are the better known of these efforts. The programs were established to promote the 'American values' of fostering protection for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, and advancement of economic systems that best serve the interests of the United States today. This was managed through broad campaigns to influence political outcomes, promote democracy, and other means to advertise to the world the virtues and superiority of American culture and business practices. Providing access to American music, films, and other forms of popular entertainment seemed innocent and non-threatening. Inviting foreigners to study and teach in the United States seemed generous and welcoming, often a gesture of good will to foreign students facing difficult circumstances. Yet, for the United States, this was part of a wider

agenda of public diplomacy to create a favorable view of the country beyond its physical borders, spread the ideals of free market capitalism, and dispel negative stereotypes about the country (O'Mara 2012).

Many of these programs still function today, albeit with less government support. Still, this is a continuation of the same ideology informing U.S. public diplomacy after World War II, when international information programs became a permanent tool of American foreign policy (Lord, 1998). Voice of America has been broadcasting in English and other languages continuously since 1942. It was originally used for propaganda and psychologically targeted programs but now broadcasts general news as an independent news agency. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were CIA-run services created in the early 1950s and directed toward the Soviet controlled Eastern bloc nations.

The Fulbright Educational Exchange Program grew directly out of the experiences of World War II, when Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright proposed a plan for the rebuilding of European-American university exchange programs. Based on his own experiences at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, Fulbright believed sharing knowledge and cultural understanding was the best way to prevent future wars. Today, the program funds students from the United States and sixty other countries, establishing a broad swath of American influence on foreign students from every region in the world (Bevis and Lucas 2007). The number of foreign students coming to the U.S. continues to increase every year.

During the 1950's and 1960's many of these USIA programs were part of a larger campaign of disinformation and manipulation. The education programs served a different purpose; they were the tools for U.S. diplomacy. These programs included educational exchanges, cultural and artistic exhibits and tours, foreign speakers, and building libraries. Some of these informal programs began as early as the 1930s in response to German activities in Latin America. A major exchange agreement was entered into between the U.S. and the Soviet Union with the signing of the "Agreement between the United States of American and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Exchanges in the Cultural, Technical, and Educational Fields" on January 27, 1958 (Critchlow 2004). These exchanges comprised more than just popular culture and tourism. Also include were programs encompassing science and technology, agriculture, medicine and public health, and scholarly research, giving each side the opportunity to show how advanced it was and promote their successes to the other. While there were opponents of this agreement on both the American and Soviet sides, the general reception to the American visitors and exhibitors in Soviet countries was extremely beneficial to the U.S. The American exhibits garnered a great amount of public interest and attracted large crowds of people interested in the American way of life.

Critchlow (2004) and Lord (1998) provide an excellent history of the early and post Cold War years of the United States Information Agency (USIA). Their work, along with Kelley (2005), details how the Cold War was shaped and possibly ended due to

the effects of these programs. Many scholars see a connection between the work of the USIA during the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and dismantling of the Soviet Union shortly thereafter (Kelley, 2005). Yet, the U.S. government's attitude towards these cultural exchange and information programs grew more dismissive after World War II and they were slowly defunded as they fell out of favor by the 1970s. Lord (1998) points out that the Nixon Administration, in particular, had a less ideological view of foreign policy than previous administrations, preferring treaties and improved commercial ties to public diplomacy, the new term for what used to be called propaganda.

Right after World War II, with the onset of the Cold War, government support for the USIA and its programs began to wane but the Fulbright Programs were the exception. They came to be valued as an antidote to the Cold War and an effective tool against anti-American propaganda coming from the Soviets. By the 1950s, the value of foreign students for diplomatic purposes was fully recognized. "Dwight D. Eisenhower (1957), under whose leadership Cold War propaganda programs reached their highest point, reminded a group of foreign student visitors to the White House that "when you go home you have a certain responsibility to make known, as widely as you can, what are your impressions of another country in which you have been privileged to live for this time." "(O'Mara 2012, p. 592).

The 1970s were a time of dramatic change in the United States. The economy was in deep disarray, with both high unemployment and rampant inflation. The

demographics in America were also changing. Immigration reform in the 1960s led to the country becoming much less white and European and increasingly Asian and brown-skinned. Foreign students, increasingly coming from Asian countries, were viewed with suspicion since many took advantage of the new quotas and stayed on after completing their educations. In addition, according to O'Mara (2012), by the 1970s, universities had started to look toward foreign student to fill seats in science and engineering programs that were no longer sought after by American students. Much of the universities' research from this time was later commercialized through public-private partnerships and formed the basis of the modern knowledge economy. It was also the path to success and wealth for many foreign students. This, in turn, created political concerns that U.S. students were falling behind. Other foreign students returned to their countries and transformed their home countries' economies into competitive industrial producers. By the 1980s, many of these developing countries were participants in the global economic growth of the latter part of the twentieth century.

Under Ronald Reagan, the USIA was revived by his choice of leaders, Hollywood impresario Charles Wick, and Frank Shakespeare, a broadcasting industry executive. Together they helped disseminate Reagan's message to audiences behind the Iron Curtain that fed into the discontent of the people there about the lack of legitimacy of the ruling communist elites. Reagan helped restore the USIA to its former luster and reengage the war of anti-Soviet propaganda. As Lord (1998) points out, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how much impact this had but, by using modern

methods of research and polling techniques to assess their effectiveness, it seems that these programs did have real world effects. Kelley (2005) suggests that the cultural and educational exchanges with influential people inside the Soviet system over the years also played a part in the fall of the Communists, by exposing them to ideas and alternative tools of statecraft. Their time with Westerners showed them plausible ways to eliminate a failing leadership that was responsible for the moribund state of the nation's economy and society. Reagan believed that governments founded on the respect for individual liberty would be more peaceful and less aggressive in their foreign policy than authoritarian states (Doyle, 1986). His announcement before the British Parliament in June of 1982 of a "campaign for democratic development" (Doyle 1986, p. 1151) was in keeping with the restoration of the USIA and efforts to use propaganda and other forms of political diplomacy against the Soviets.

Few programs are used for such obvious propaganda today. The USIA was subsequently absorbed into the State Department, and its commitment to public diplomacy is now a core function of the State Department's role in U.S. foreign relations. The VOA still exists as an independent, non-commercial enterprise that provides news in forty-five languages around the world. Director of the VOA, David Ensor, suggests that the ability to function outside the commercial realm is what allows it to provide the most important, most widely read news. Globally, its audiences are much larger than CNN or ABC news. VOA's markets are not chosen based on profitability; they are based on places they want to reach. The VOA is not

an American equivalent of the BBC, it is the “international state broadcaster of the United States” that attempts to tell people all over the world what Washington thinks about events (Ensor, 2014).

The American public is largely unaware of U.S. diplomatic efforts abroad. Yet, they are aware of international public opinion polls that have turned negative since the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent “war on terror” that continues today (Fullerton, 2005). By 2003, several major international polls, Pew, Gallop, and Zogby all showed global attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy turning sharply negative, only a few short years after Sept. 11, when the U.S. was seen in a significantly more favorable light. The particular irony of these negative views is they came from the same polls that also showed how people overwhelming reported that they liked American cultural offerings but not America. The ability to disconnect American foreign policy from American culture is one that many security analysts consider a positive for the country and is enhanced by international educational programs (Fullerton, 2005).

The shift in U.S. economic policy toward greater deregulation and the rising importance of basic education globally led to another shift for foreign students. According to O’Mara (2012), this was the impetus for more foreign students choosing to study business over engineering and science. By 2009, business administration was the most popular area of study. Political concerns about foreign students taking opportunities away from Americans, and potentially harming U.S.

companies as they took their knowledge home with them, receded as global economic growth provided U.S. producers with greater market share and increasing economic power. Also, science and engineering programs at U.S. HEIs still relied heavily on foreign students, as did much of Silicon Valley and other high technology industries.

The current “war on terror” places the United States in a difficult situation, one unlike previous conflicts. According to Critchlow (2004) “The Cold War adversary was an ideology that had been hijacked by a state. Today’s adversary is an ideology hijacked from a religion by political and religious extremists. In both cases the United States, as the leading Western democracy, has had to face hostility enhanced by the adversary’s manipulation of other people’s cultural and ethnic differences.” (p. 75). With the perceived success of using soft diplomacy to end the Cold War there are calls to restore the use of public diplomacy as a way to engage people culturally in the fight against this new threat.

The events of September 11, 2001 had an immediate impact on international student mobility, especially for students coming from Saudi Arabia. Fifteen of the nineteen hijackers responsible for the attacks on 9/11 came from Saudi Arabia, some reportedly on student visas. Visa approvals immediately fell the next year, 2002, by twenty percent for all applicants but visa approvals for students from Saudi Arabia fell by sixty five percent and continued to decline until 2005. A large-scale reversal began after 2005. Beginning in 2006, approvals for students from

Saudi Arabia outpaced the approval rate for all students being issued F-1 non-immigrant student visas (IIE.org). This turnaround was the result of a visit in April 2005 by King Abdullah to the United States. A lengthy joint statement was issued between the King and President George W. Bush reaffirming the importance of the two countries' relationship and specifically including improved educational exchanges as one of the shared interests to build upon. The statement reiterated the list of geopolitical imperatives that both countries were in agreement on, particularly related to the growing threat that a nuclear Iran would mean for the region (Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 2005). The need for the US to maintain a good relationship with Saudi Arabia opened the door for Saudi students to again enter the U.S. and pursue degrees at U.S. colleges and universities.

In the years since 9/11, the Congress moved forward on the issue of student visas, attempting to address a growing backlog of applications that was harming the higher education industry in the U.S. The result was the establishment of the electronic monitoring systems, SEVIS and new protocols that established clear inter-agency coordination policies, something that was lacking in the days before 9/11. Congressional testimony pointed frequently to the long held notion that education and cultural exchanges were important tools of public diplomacy (U.S. Congress 2001; U.S. Congress 2003; U.S. Congress 2004; U.S. Congress 2008). The testimony reiterated again and again that these exchanges had been the ideological means of spreading American culture and values since World War II and were identified as

successful uses of America's soft power, the intangible value associated with the U.S. status in the world as free and democratic.

Soft power may be more effective than military might in defeating an ideological threat but it may be hard to make up for years of neglect. Critchlow (2004) says there was cause for concern about the severe cuts in funding for public diplomacy after the Cold War to countries in the Islamic world, especially the poorest ones like Indonesia. Data from the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy showed that from 1995 to 2001 the number of academic and cultural exchanges fell from 45,000 to 29,000. Critchlow (2004) believes that reminding the Arabs of their history as the most technologically advanced, multicultural, intellectually free, tolerant nations only a few centuries ago would open the door for more discussion of American values. He noted that using these exchange programs was an approach that worked well against the Soviets. He suggests that it would work in this part of the world, too.

The slowdown in the rate of growth for visa approvals was also related to the heavy investments in education made by many developing countries. Students had a greater number of educational opportunities in their own country in nearby countries. Yet, O'Mara (2012) noted that a degree from a U.S. school was still the most highly valued. U.S. schools began to aggressively recruit foreign students and some have established full branch campuses in other countries or global partnerships with existing schools. Some national governments have actively

sought out foreign universities to create programs for them. Many Gulf State countries have done this but neither India nor Saudi Arabia has chosen to import foreign education into their countries. The branch campus model is less than a decade old and the long-term impact is still to be determined (Walters, 2012).

International studies programs are valued for the broader long-term benefits they provide the country. While it may not be politically correct to openly admire the U.S., many foreign leaders educated here were changed because of their time in the country. President Obama concluded his 2010 National Security Strategy paper by saying that we must welcome more foreign exchange students to the U.S. because of the deep ties that are forged with them and their homelands, and because of the benefits of increased understanding and appreciation of American culture abroad. This will strengthen education and build the nation's human capital. His words echo those of a wide coalition of people, including dozens of members of Congress, top-level practitioners from the higher education industry, and U.S. business leaders (Nye 2005; Obama 2010; Reimers 2013).

Section Two: Background on Saudi Arabia, Monarchism, and Education in the Arab Gulf States

Background on Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a hereditary monarchy with a population of nearly 29 million people (data.worldbank.org). According to CIA World Factbook, nearly half the population is under the age of 25. The ruler of the country is King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud, who ascended to the throne on the death of his half-brother, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Saud in January, 2015. Saudi Arabia has been described as a family-corporatist monarchy that is supported by a group of national elites who provide the primary base of support for the king. It is the only country today that is named after its founder, Abdulaziz Al Saud (Lockhard, 2005). As the birthplace of Islam it is the center of the Muslim world. The king is both a religious leader and a temporal ruler. According to protocol, the religious title of Guardian of the Two Holy Shrines takes precedence over his royal title and appears on all official government documents (Whitaker, 2011). Outside of the establishment in 1992 of the Consultative Council, or Majlis al-Shura, a 150 member body appointed by the King to serve four year terms, there is no other formal political participation in the country (Nolan 2011). Elections announced by the Council of Ministers in October 2003 for one third of the seats on the Majlis have not yet been held. Women were granted the right to vote in 2011 but the first elections they were eligible to vote in

did not occur until late in 2015.

Saudi Arabia was officially formed in 1932 when Abdul-Aziz Al Saud conquered the various tribes in the Arabian Peninsula, including the two holy sites, Mecca and Medina. The country was named the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, an Islamic state with Arabic as its national language and the Holy Qur'an as its constitution. The population consists of a majority of Sunni Muslims, estimated between 85-95% of the country. The remainder is the Shi'ite minority, estimated between 5-15% of the country. The Shia are socially and geographically isolated from the larger Sunni society and are a source of growing unrest in the Eastern Province, the center of the country's oil production (Nolan 2011).

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest producer of oil and the most powerful member of OPEC. It has between one fifth and one quarter of the known oil reserves and the sixth largest known reserves of natural gas (Central Intelligence Agency). In addition to exporting oil, the Saudis are also known for exporting Islam. They observe an ultra orthodox interpretation known as Wahhabism and since the 1980s have funded education and charitable institutions throughout the larger Muslim world, encouraging this "most correct" version of the faith (Whitaker 2011). Its origins in Saudi Arabia date to the alliance in the early 18th century between Mohammad bin Saud and a Muslim scholar, Mohammad bin Abdul Wahhab, in an effort to return to a purer form of Islam (History of Saudi Arabia, 2015). The *ulama*, or religious scholars, have enjoyed outsized influence since then. This historical

alliance exists today and is associated by many people outside of the country with spreading Islamic extremism and the lack of social modernization within Saudi Arabia.

Against the backdrop of the Arab Spring and the global war on terror, the Saudi government has had to meet security challenges both near and within its borders. Many of the calls to jihad in the region traced their roots to Saudi exports of Wahhabism. Saudi jihadists who fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan returned home only to “reinterpret Wahhabi religious traditions and brand the Saudi regime as kafir, or blasphemous, thus igniting the flames of jihad in their own homeland.” (Al-Rasheed 2010, p. 276). Saudi King Abdullah recognized the need to enlist the help of society in order to fight extremism, hoping to modernize the country without posing any real challenges to the leadership. Education policy was one of the targets for reform, including the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP), which now sends over 185,000 young Saudis abroad for higher education (Saudi American Business Council, 2014).

The Saudi monarch has emerged relatively unscathed from the Arab Spring and turmoil in the region. Political analysts say that the system of monarchy in Saudi, with a large family with deeply vested interests, remains antagonistic to democratic reform and provides a deep base of support for preserving the status quo. One obvious reason for the current stability in the country comes from the large increase in public spending, especially in previously underserved districts, that is quelling

dissent (Menaldo, 2012). In much of the region, the monarchs have survived because of the alignment of the elites, in this case mainly members of the Saudi royal family and their cohorts, with the monarchic political culture. This fosters both legitimacy and generates a level of support from the majority of the citizenry (Menaldo 2012). The new king, Salman, gave cash payments and grants to all Saudi citizens and public organizations in honor of his coronation totalling \$32 billion. "Saudi rulers have long used the wealth that comes from being the world's top oil exporter to lavish benefits on their people, and many Saudis describe royal largess as part of a family-like social contract between rulers and loyal citizens." (Hubbard, 2015). The monarchy remains popular in the country and will as long as jobs and largess continue to flow.

The king is taking risky steps in trying to reform education. The KASP is providing funding for nearly two hundred thousand students to attend college outside of the country. Inside the country the Ministry of Higher Education is using peripheral institutions to set up academic cities, international partnerships and other means that allow them to enact controversial education reforms. In addition, the Saudi regime is participating in international standards assessments to provide a rationale for reforms. Saudi students have performed poorly compared to other developing nations on these tests, allowing the government to institute curricular reforms despite the objections of the religious establishment (Nolan 2011; Clary and Karlin 2011). In what may prove to be the biggest gamble, the KASP is seen a way to transform young Saudis into Western educated entrepreneurs who are culturally

more moderate. "Saudi education officials have made clear that the scholarship programme is not designed to simply educate, but to transform the Saudi populace." (Clary and Karlin 2011, p. 17). The ramifications of this may not be fully understood for a generation or more.

Can the Saudi government resolve the issues of the country by changing the culture of its youth? Culture is not immutable and there is ready evidence that cultures, as a constituent part of a civilization, do change in the face of political and economic developments. The finding of two separate values surveys among the youth of Saudi Arabia in 2003 and 2005 confirm this. In the wake of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq there was a decline from 33% to 23% in the attitude that democracy is a better form of government than others (Moaddel, 2010). In recent years, attitudes toward gender equality have shifted forward, with more respondents agreeing that higher education should be made available for women. Also, the surveys show that Saudis have lower average mosque attendance than other countries and have low rates of reporting that religious faith is a highly important quality for children. This may be a reaction to the strict authoritarianism of the religious establishment but it points to state of readiness to accept more secular reform and less adherence to Wahhabist religious doctrine (Moaddel, 2010). It may turn out that the KASP and the Saudi government's attempts to reform education as a way to deal with social and economic problems faced by the country are well timed.

Monarchism or Patrimonialism in Saudi Arabia

In order to better understand Saudi Arabia, its government and its people, it is necessary to understand the fundamental mindset of the country and the region.

Why most of the world's hereditary, non-constitutional monarchies exist in the Arab world could be better understood by examining the nature of patrimonialism. It is a term introduced by Max Weber to explain the how this form of despotism occurred more frequently in the Orient. Weber, while not well known for his concepts of patrimonialism, wrote about the social factors that resulted in a different mindset that led to accepting this type of governing system. Weber, to his credit, did not offer simple explanations to this historically complicated phenomena. Yet, his observations about the social and historical variables at play can be synthesized into a framework for better understanding how the East and West realized very different rationalizations of life. According to Weber, the Orient was more highly attuned with religious and mystical sensibilities than their Western counterparts. The West was more empirically driven and took a more scientific approach to life. This difference is evidenced in the art, scientific inquiry, politics, and laws that Weber considered the representative features of a civilization's culture.

Weber believed that Oriental societies were so fundamentally different from Western societies that they lacked the mindset needed for development, modernity and capitalism (Curtis, 2009). Factors that were present in Western traditions, some identified as protestantism and puritanism, were absent in the Orient. Weber

believed this was the explanation for the difference in social and economic outcomes between the two worlds. The Orient had a different religion, psychological attitudes, belief systems that included ancestor worship and filial piety, social systems including castes, no organized judiciary, and dictatorial, despotic, and patrimonial political systems (Curtis 2009, p. 268). These different underlying features and traditions led to patrimonialism in the Orient versus states based on constitutions, rule of law, the separation of powers, and legitimacy in the use of force with limitations on the exercise of power. The Oriental despot demanded unconditional loyalty and compliance from his officials, much like the Saudi king today relies on the loyalty of the family to maintain control. In return the interests of that group are served.

The stability of the Saudi monarchy depends, in large degree, on this system of loyalty and patrimony, which is supported by the religious credentials that come from the monarchy's pact with the ulama, the Wahhabi scholars (Whitaker, 2011). According to Weber, the patrimonial ruler cared about maintaining the goodwill of the people. "He appeared in the guise of the protector of the people against privileged status groups and the guardian of the welfare of his subject; he claimed to be not the warrior king but the good king, "the father of his people."" (Curtis 2009, p.281). The benevolence of the Saudi king is enhanced by country's oil wealth, which allows for government spending without commensurate taxation. This, and the monarchy's religious credentials, provide the Saudi king with a large measure of legitimacy (Whitaker, 2011).

Still, the system of government in Saudi Arabia is manipulated by archaic interpretations of religion and may soon prove unsustainable if the demographic challenges they face do not get adequately addressed. In explaining the high unemployment rate in the country where Saudis make up eighty percent of the public sector but have few jobs in the private sector, the education system is identified as one of the main culprits. The Saudi government faces the daunting challenge of political and social resistance to transforming education. Until it shifts from lax standards, rote learning, and heavy emphasis on religious subjects, the country will remain dependent on expatriate workers and Saudis will remain either unemployed or employed in subsidized jobs (Niblock and Malik 2007).

The notion of legitimacy as the source of monarchic resilience is a recurring theme in much of the current literature on the Middle East North African countries with hereditary rulers. In countries with authoritarian rule, often the state security apparatus functions to maintain political control. In contrast, many traditional hereditary rulers maintain their power based on the respect and perceived legitimacy of their rule. "Among the fundamental lessons to be learned from the struggle of monarchic survival elsewhere would be the need to turn the monarchy from a rule of fear into a symbol of respect and national unity." (Kuhnhardt 2012, p. 61). King Abdullah, until his death in January 2015, was held in high esteem by the people. While viewed as a reformer, he enjoyed widespread popular support of his efforts to reduce extremism at home and establish Saudi Arabia as an influential

leader in the region. His best legacy may be that he was able to maintain both social and political stability during these turbulent times (Muftah.org 2012).

Contemporary monarchs' authority is based on traditional acceptance and the ability to project themselves as benevolent symbols of national unity (Kuhnhardt, 2012). The Saudi king not only has popular political support, he also enjoys religious authority throughout the Muslim world and is a source of cultural pride for all Saudis.

Education in the Arab Gulf States

The events of 9/11 brought extensive world focus on the educational systems in Gulf States, critiquing their institutions as archaic, academically inadequate, ideologically driven to encourage intolerance for the West and feeding anti-US terrorist sentiment. This description does not recognize the nature of the discussions taking place on the local level at that time, when educational reform was already identified as an internal matter of high level concern (Rugh 2002). Most countries in the Gulf had already recognized the need to expand their systems. By 2001 there had been significant national progress in access to education as measured by school enrollment and literacy rates among both males and females. The problems were now of a more sophisticated nature. Business leaders expressed their concern that university graduates were unprepared for work in the private sector and the primary education system relied extensively on rote learning in

schools that had no objective assessment criteria and little supervision over curriculum (Davidson & Smith, 2008).

UN data shows that the Gulf States have been more successful than other countries in the region in achieving improvements in literacy rates and mean educational levels of years of schooling. The World Bank reviewed the last four decades of investment in education in the MENA region and acknowledged the significant gains, which were impressive since most national educational systems were only implemented during the 1950s and 1960s. The following chart is a comparison of Gulf States education spending and outcomes to OECD countries.

Table 7: Outcomes and Spending For Education in Arab Gulf States

% Adult Literacy age 15&above	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bahrain								91.4		
Kuwait	67.5			93.3	93.4	94.5	93.9			
Qatar						93.1	94	94.7		
Saudi			79.4					86.1		
UAE				90						
OECD	78.5	84.2	90.5	92	90.3	92.7	94.9	95.7		
Year School (adults over 25)	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bahrain	4.1	6	8.3	9	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.4
Kuwait	4.3	5.5	6.1	6	6	6	6	6.1	6.1	6.1
Qatar	4.4	5.4	6.4	7	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.3
Saudi	4.2	5.5	6.6	7.2	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8
UAE	3.1	4.3	6.9	8.4	8.6	8.7	8.9	9.1	9.3	9.3
OECD	8.2	9.2	10.3	10.7	10.7	10.8	10.8	10.9	11	10.9
Public Spending on Ed % Govt Spending	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bahrain	9.4				12.8	11.6	11.7			
Kuwait	8.3			12.7	12.9					
Qatar	6.5			19.6						
Saudi	10.2		22.7	19.3	21.2	19.8	19.3			
UAE			22.2	28.3	26.1	24.8	27.2	23.4		
OECD	13.9		11.7	12.6	12.3	12.5	12.4			

Source: arab-hdr.org Human Development Data for the Arab States

OECD data included for comparison.

The OECD Arab HDR data of education measures showed improvements for both men and women and there were other positive economic outcomes associated with education. The region experienced periods of rapid economic growth, measurable improvements in productivity and human capital, lower fertility rates, and other social indicators that showed improvement as education expenditures grew. Despite

the outsized commitment to spending for educational reform in the last decades, many of the concerns from 2001 remain. The measure of years of educational attainment remain low relative to developed countries and the gap between educational attainment and outcomes continues to manifest itself in low scores on international tests. Tables 8 through 10 identify current outcomes in the Gulf States.

Table 8: Arab World Learning Barometer, 2014 Competency

	Primary Learning % Of Children Who Are Not Learning in Primary School	Secondary Learning % Of Children Who Are Not Learning in Secondary School
Region	56%	48%
Saudi Arabia	40%	53%
Kuwait	70%	N/A
Bahrain	33%	47%
Qatar	42.5%	51.6%
UAE	36%	31.3%

Source: brookings.edu 2014 Arab World Learning Barometer

Table 8 presents test results based on minimum competency thresholds for reading and math. The poor showings indicate that access and attendance are not enough to improve performance and knowledge acquisition. The Region comprises

13 Arab countries with available data. Notwithstanding areas of conflict such as Syria, Iraq and the Palestinian Territories, the test scores imply that even the more stable countries, where spending on education as a percentage of total government spending is both large and growing, many students are not receiving the foundational knowledge required to meet the goal of building a knowledge society.

Table 9: PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) 2010

Scores

US – 556	Saudi Arabia – 430	UAE – 439
Finland – 568	Qatar – 425	Oman – 391

Source: timssandpirls.bc.edu PIRLS 2011 International Results in Reading

The PIRLS is an international literacy test given to children with 4 years of schooling. The score range is 0-1000. PIRLS center-point is 500. Forty-nine countries participated. 2010 was the first year for Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries. All the Arab participants were well below the mean and the country averages were significantly lower than the center-point of the PIRLS scale.

Table 10 shows TIMSS test data. TIMSS is Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. Like PIRLS, it was developed and is implemented by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and published by the National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (nces.ed.gov.) The test scores indicate a mixed picture of achievement in those Gulf States that participate in the program. There is improvement in the scores, especially for Saudi Arabia and Qatar but all scores remain significantly

below those for the U.S. and Singapore, as representative advanced countries.

Singapore scored the highest and data is included for comparison purposes

Table 10: TIMSS Mean Scores in Math by Gender, Grade, and Year

	2003	2003	2007	2007	2007	2007	2011	2011	2011	2011
	Gr 8		Gr 4		Gr 8		Gr 4		Gr 8	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Saudi	326	336			341	319	418	402	401	387
Oman	417	385			399	344	398	372	397	334
Qatar			307	285	325	288	420	407	414	404
UAE			452	438	461	461	438	430	464	447
Bahrain					414	382	440	432	431	388
Kuwait		297	333	297	364	342	358	323		
US	502	507	526	532	507	510	536	545	508	511
Singap	611	601	596	603	600	586	608	604	615	607

Source: TIMSS International Student Achievement in Mathematics Reports (2003, 2007, 2011)

Timmssandgirls.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/T11_IR_M_Chapter1.pdf

The 2008 World Bank report, *The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa*, was an economic analysis of the investments these nations have made in education. One issue the report highlighted was the failure to coordinate education with the needs of the economy, thereby not producing a workforce prepared for the new, globalized economy. The entire region remains economically underdeveloped and educational reforms need to be more comprehensive if the gap is to close. In particular, alignment between the labor

markets and the private sector remained insufficient. Also, the educational system has yet to produce measurable results in terms of higher international rankings on the World Bank's Knowledge Economy Index (KEI) (Davidson and Smith 2008).

Table 11: World Bank Knowledge Economy Index (KEI)

Country	2012 Rank	2012 KEI	2000 Rank	2000 KEI	1995 Rank	1995 KEI
Sweden	1	9.43	1	9.65	4	9.45
US	12	8.77	4	9.28	1	9.53
UAE	42	6.94	48	6.05	46	6.39
Bahrain	43	6.94	41	6.85	36	6.97
Oman	47	6.14	65	5.28	65	5.34
Saudi	50	5.96	76	4.6	78	5.02
Qatar	54	5.84	49	6.01	54	5.86
Kuwait	64	5.33	46	6.16	57	5.71

Source: info.worldbank.org/etools/kam2/KAM_page5.asp

(KEI and KI Indexes)

The KEI assesses economic performance, governance and rule of law, innovation systems, education, labor markets, and Internet connectivity, using over 83 variables to create four sub-indexes. Rankings are on a scale of 1(lowest) through 10(highest.) These sub-indexes represent the four pillars of the knowledge economy: the economic incentives regime (EIR), the innovations regime which looks specifically at journal articles published and patents granted, the education pillar which includes enrollment data and test scores, and the information and communication technology pillar (ICT) that measures internet use and telephone

and computer penetration. Only Bahrain scores in the top ten of any of these pillars, ranking number one globally for internet usage of 820 computers per 1000 people. The following table provides the specific breakdowns for the MENA region.

Table 12: KEI Breakdowns for MENA Countries, 2012

Country	KEI	KEI	EIR	EIR	Innov	Innov	Educ	Educ	ICT	ICT
	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000
UAE	6.94	6.05	6.5	7.51	6.6	4.32	5.8	4.44	8.88	7.92
Bahrain	6.9	6.85	6.69	7.45	4.61	6.37	6.78	6.34	9.54	7.26
Oman	6.14	5.28	6.96	7.51	5.88	4.25	5.23	4.22	6.49	5.12
Saudi										
Arabia	5.96	4.6	5.68	4.4	4.14	4.24	5.65	4.28	8.37	5.49
Qatar	5.84	6.01	6.87	6.64	6.42	5.51	3.41	4.85	6.65	7.05
Kuwait	5.33	6.16	5.86	7	5.22	5.38	3.7	5.17	6.53	7.09
MENA										
Region	4.74	5.16	5.41	5.41	6.14	6.44	3.48	3.8	3.92	4.97

Source: info.worldbank.org/etools/kam2/KAM_page5.asp

A brief analysis of the chart identifies some noteworthy trends. While both Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. saw improvements in the KEI, this reflects overall improved national outcomes. A detailed review shows important differences. Both nations improved in EIR, economic incentives regime and institutional regime, yet the Saudis lagged considerably in innovation, the measure of patents issues, royalties, and scientific and technical journal articles published. This is the truest international measure of advanced innovative activity and represents output of knowledge production. The ability to integrate existing knowledge and make meaningful contributions is a fundamental requirement for succeeding in the

advanced global economy. It is the basis for most entrepreneurial activity today, especially in the fields of science and technology where the Saudi government has placed so much emphasis. The concerns voiced by Arab business leaders a full decade ago that the Arab education system was not producing graduates with the skills needed to work in the private sector, a sector today that competes in an increasingly entrepreneurial global economy, remain unresolved today (Rugh 2002).

Changing Availability of Higher Education in the Gulf

The earliest efforts to develop an education system were predicated on the needs of the pre-petroleum economy and were shaped by Islam and exposure to foreign expatriates. British political interests in the region date back to the 1820s when their concern over access to trade routes to India led them to force the various sheikdoms to sign agreements of understanding, giving the British de facto control over much of the region. This lasted until 1971, when formal independence was fully granted to the last countries under British protection, and the U.A.E. was formed (Davidson 2008).

The education system in place today is considered a hybrid of native and international approaches. Once the British formally withdrew, the first ministries of education were established in Bahrain, Qatar, and the newly created U.A.E. The first

problem identified by the ministries was the need to educate local citizens to become teachers in local schools. A later source of demand came from the oil industry, where private sector jobs growth at all levels presented both opportunities and challenges for the Gulf States. Not only was it important to create enough schools to enroll both male and female children, the low levels of adult literacy had to be addressed. The previously erratic attempts at national public education were replaced by systems of increasingly secular schools across most of the Gulf, notably including access for girls. While some countries had previously included girls in the primary education system it eventually became the norm across the entire Gulf. Bahrain first opened schools for girls in 1919 but Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Sharjah did not until the 1950s (Ridge 2014). Access to higher education for women was also delayed in many Arab Gulf States.

Today, the Gulf States are all attempting to broaden their economic base by building a knowledge economy, one that extends the energy sector beyond resource extraction to the development of a downstream industrial, higher value added energy sector. They are also trying to create a more sophisticated service sector and capitalize on the existing regional wealth to better develop their own financial sector (Walters, 2012). Not all of the Gulf States have oil wealth to support their economies. Bahrain and Dubai, for example, have had to take different approaches to education in order to create a workforce that functioned outside the petroleum industry. Education reform is a key step in advancing this process and each of the

Gulf countries has taken a different approach in its efforts to improve the higher education system.

There have been schools of higher education in the Gulf for nearly 50 years. The University of Bahrain was established in 1968, Qatar University in 1973, and Oman's Sultan Qaboos University was established in 1968. Originally opened to men only, these schools now accept women students. King Saud University was opened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1975. The region includes both private and government established colleges and universities. Today, many schools follow the American semester and credit hour system and use English as the main language of instruction. The American University of Sharjah, the Dubai American University, and Zayid University of Abu Dhabi all follow the American system (Ridge, 2014).

The options for higher education study for students in the Gulf have broadened considerable in the last two decades. Prominent brand name universities have established full branch campuses in some countries. Local schools are partnering with foreign universities to create joint degree programs, sometimes using the foreign school's name in the program, such as UOWD, University of Wollongong in Dubai. These cross border endeavors are a type of foreign outpost that encompass a wide range of offerings, from full degree granting programs within an existing local university to post graduate research centers in specialized fields (Kinser 2012).

The vast majority of these international programs began enrolling student in the past few years, to varying success. They are not without controversy at home, where concern has been raised about quality, funding sources, academic freedom, and maintaining brand integrity. Not all have been successful and in some cases only extensive funding by the host national government has convinced the biggest name schools to take the risk and invest the time and expertise needed to develop a successful academic institution that meets global standards in such a foreign environment (ICEF Monitor 2013, Jaschik 2009).

The list of international schools now offering some type of hands-on program that leads to a degree or an academic credential awarded by a foreign provider is constantly changing (Cross-Border Education Research Team, 2015). A review of the list shows the different approaches taken by each of the Gulf States, some in response to the financial ability of the governments to endow them but others as a reflection of the individual country's own needs and cultural and political issues. Bahrain currently has only two foreign schools, the outcome of the recent turmoil there. NYIT recently relocated its campus to Doha from Manama and the president of the Edinburgh based Royal College of Surgeons has resigned in protest, leaving the school's future in Bahrain uncertain. Kuwait has only two foreign schools, one an Australian liberal arts college and the other the Kuwait Maastrich Business School. Dubai, Qatar and the U.A.E. have taken a different approach, working with foreign schools to use outside expertise to improve their domestic offerings.

Today, the U.A.E. is the largest host of branch campuses of any nation in the world, hosting thirty-three as of January 2015, including France's INSEAD and Sorbonne University and New York University (Cross-Border Education Research Team, 2015). The U.A.E. includes Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and Ras al Khaima. Not all of the foreign school operators in the region are big brand names. The government of the U.A.E. licenses international institutions through the Commission for Academic Accreditation, the CAA. The purpose is to monitor quality of instruction and operations for both publicly funded and private schools and programs, whether domestic or international. Problems in the past have shown that the opportunity to sell educational services has not always brought in capable providers.

Dubai has taken a different approach than Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by establishing two academic free zones. The Dubai Knowledge Village was established in 2003 as a tax-free, 100% foreign owned educational and business facility for professional training and learning support services. The Dubai Academic City is touted as the only free zone for higher education in the world. It guarantees first class facilities in its advertisements and easy visa access for those entering with the purpose of working at or attending programs there. Both academic zones include universities that have been licensed by the CAA and accredited by the KHDA, the Knowledge Human Development Authority, a Dubai based regulatory agency dedicated to higher education.

Schools in both zones can operate without any government intervention on condition that they apply the same standards in Dubai as they do in their home country and they use the same syllabi. Both zones are host to some of the world's premier universities, including Australian University of Wollongong, City University of London's Cass Business School, London School of Business, Manchester Business School, and U.S. Rochester Institute of Technology. Edinburgh based Heriot-Watt University has over 3,500 students at its Dubai campus studying business, construction management, and engineering. Together the zones host twenty international universities from a dozen countries.

Education City in Doha, Qatar is a similar idea to the Dubai free zones, where branch campuses are located and operate in cooperation with research organizations and private business. There are six American universities inside Education City, each offering different specializations for undergraduate to post-graduate study. Texas A&M University focuses on engineering, particularly in petroleum related fields. Virginia Commonwealth offers study in fine arts, Weill-Cornell Medical College offers a full Doctor of Medicine degree, and Carnegie Mellon offers business degrees. Georgetown University School of Foreign Service offers a bachelor's degree in Foreign Service and Northwestern University offers degrees in journalism and communications. HEC Paris offers executive level business training and University College London provides study in arts conservation and archaeology. Within Education City, as part of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Sciences, and

Community Development, there are science centers and research facilities, a media center, and newly opened teaching hospital.

There is no doubt that this branch campus system is experiencing growing pains. Some schools failed to meet enrollment targets and closed their doors. Other schools saw students opting to study at the school's home campus rather than paying the same tuition and fees in their own country. Yet, by 2009, it was reported that foreign universities in the Gulf had enrolled over 30,000 students. Also, the cost of building these facilities is high. Education City in Doha was built at a cost of US\$1 billion with an additional US\$8 billion spent on building the teaching hospital, a central library, and the Qatar Science and Technology Park (Lord 2008).

Qatar faces a similar dilemma as the other Gulf States, the need to diversify its economy and educate its own population to replace the large professional expatriate class that it still relies on to run the country. The foreign schools in Education City are expected to enroll explicit numbers of Qataris but only after the Qataris meet the academic qualifications and other requirements of the school. The Qatari government recognized the need to supplement lower school education in order to meet the enrollment targets of the incoming institutions. In 2001, the Academic Bridge Program was established to prepare students to qualify for admission to foreign schools. Some schools inside Education City have developed their own, similar initiatives in order to get enough qualifying Qataris enrolled (Witte 2010).

The international branch campus model implemented across the Gulf has not been replicated in Saudi Arabia. According to C-BERT's 2015 list, there is currently only one foreign school branch campus in the entire country, Algonquin College, a Canadian school offering two-year degrees in electrical or mechanical engineering. As of late 2013 the MOHE was considering applications from dozens of foreign institutions to open branches but the conditions that the Saudi government is imposing might ultimately keep many schools from choosing to operate inside the country. The Saudi government is requiring that, not only must the schools have top qualified faculty staffing the schools, they must also teach Islamic Studies and the Arabic language. These conditions, plus the requirement that a Saudi national be appointed as dean mean few, if any, Western universities will be willing or able to satisfy the MOHE (Jawhar 2013).

The international branch campus system in the UAE and Qatar is still too new to produce meaningful results. A look back at the KEI data does show some improvement from 2000 to 2012 in the innovation pillar, the measure of output for patents and published scientific journal articles, where both countries score above the regional average. Yet, the "importing of education" is not a universally admired model for educational reform. Critics charge that equating education with job training comes at the expense of valuing education for its broader social value and is doomed to fail. In other words, simply importing schools and their curriculum will not create a knowledge economy or address the cultural factors that need to be

changed or acknowledged in order to support or promote entrepreneurial impulses and motivate people to become innovators. Some critics compare the entire endeavor to buying an outdated product based on what is already known and only proven to work elsewhere. They contend that a country will remain both subservient to the West and ultimately left behind if it doesn't take the steps necessary to develop its own indigenous knowledge (Donn 2010).

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The previous chapter provided historical background on the uses of education for political purposes, the policies pursued by the governments, and the current state of education in the Gulf States. It serves as a prelude to this literature review, which begins with a theoretical analysis of the role of education in public policy. In addition to evaluating public actors, there is extensive literature on private actors, including students and higher education institutions. Many theoretical approaches have been used to explore student choice in attending college. This field of study has evolved in recent years, reflecting the acknowledged complexity of the issue. It offered useful methodological insight into how best to research the questions that relate to the large increase in Saudi students attending schools in the U.S.

Section One reviews the theoretical approaches to understanding the societal uses for higher education. In certain cases, such as building human capital, there are also private, individual motivations for attaining education. This section includes the literature on human capital theory, intergroup contact theory, and diffusion theory as motivations for government policies toward higher education and the internationalization of education. Human capital theory also applies to individuals as they attempt to improve their skills and productivity in the labor force.

Section Two is a brief review of political theory that can be applied to the U.S. government and the Saudi government's actions in relation to education policy. For

the United States, different administrations have viewed international education through various lenses, ultimately recognizing its contribution to achieving long-term policy goals. The Saudi government is also using higher education for broader political purposes, not just to improve domestic outcomes. It is noteworthy that even a country with such a radically different political system from the West could share perspectives and use the internationalization of education to meet the goals of greater global integration.

Section Three is a review of the literature about the international market for higher education and student choice to attend college. Most of the research conducted relates to the choice to attend college but recent scholarship concerns the choice to study abroad. Expectancy theory was most widely used to understand the economic and sociological variables associated with student choice to attend college. Recent studies now also use integrated theoretical approaches to evaluating student choice to attend college. Many of these models are applicable to students who choose to study abroad and can be adapted to the population of Saudi students who choose to study in the U.S. This section also reviewed the available studies that examine students from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States.

Beyond the primary decision whether or not to attend college, attention has been paid to evaluating higher education as a service sector product where student are consumers and universities are service providers in a competitive market that relies on psychographic variables to explain student choice. While there is a small body of

this literature available, the notion of branding and image have gained in relevance as more schools are acting to increase global name recognition and pursue accreditations that provide perceptions of quality and enhanced international standing. These efforts have the potential to significantly impact student choice and represent a new approach by many HEIs toward student recruitment.

Section One: Theoretical Approaches - Human Capital, Intergroup Contact, and Diffusion Theory

Human Capital Theory

Human capital is defined as the knowledge and skills possessed by the workforce. It drives the productive capacity of an economy (Schiller and Hill 2014; M. Paulsen 2001). Human capital theory predicts that individuals will invest in education because they rationally anticipate that the lifetime benefits will be greater than the expected costs. In economic terms, the opportunity costs include loss of leisure time, foregone earnings, and financial outlays for education. The benefits of higher education go beyond higher lifetime earnings. They also include enriched intellectual life and career experiences, greater social status, better health outcomes, and reduced risk of unemployment (Becker, 1962).

Higher education has been credited with improving life outcomes for individuals and their communities. Aristotle and Plato believed that education was critical to the well being of society (Villoutreix, 2013). Today, it is viewed as a public good that spills over to generate social and economic benefits for the community and beyond.

Economically, an educated workforce is more productive, entrepreneurial, and generates higher income. Research continues to support the notion that education improves societal outcomes in terms of higher earnings and increased economic activity (Perna, 2006). In addition to jobs and taxes, the personal investment in higher education is associated with lower levels of crime, reduced costs for taxpayer funded welfare programs, greater levels of civic engagement and involvement, and improvements in knowledge creation and technology (Bowen 1997; Carnevale and Desrochers 2003; Fatima and Paulsen 2004; Leslie and Brinkman 1988). Also, intergenerational benefits exist that identify improved outcomes for future generations related to higher education (Baum & Payea, 2004). Even improved life expectancy and better overall health outcomes are associated with increased education (Villoutreix, 2013).

Becker (1993) identified the long-term benefits of education on wealth accumulation. Using census data and applying a formula for discounting the sum of the future earnings stream based on income earned, Becker created age-wealth profiles for 1939 male college, high school, and elementary school graduates. He showed how the wealth profiles of skilled workers rose at a far greater rate and for longer than those of lesser-educated workers. Wealth peaked at approximately age 39 for the entire group, at which time the college graduate had more than twice the wealth of the elementary school graduate. Becker attributed this to investment in human capital. Interestingly, the wealth profiles in the nineteenth century peaked at age 20. Becker suggested that the reason for this extension was because people

with educations tended to work in safer professions and the investments made in education and training brought down the mortality rate for the entire workforce, both skilled and unskilled. This is another benefit of investing in human capital, one that is relevant to developing countries that do not have a workforce endowed with the accumulated knowledge that comes with experience.

The wealth effect may be even greater today. The pay gap in the U.S. between people with bachelor's degrees and those without a degree, even if they have attended college is wider than ever. Hourly earnings in 2013 for those with a degree were 98% higher than those without one, up from 89% higher in 2008. The pay gap was 85% higher in 2003 and only 64% higher in the 1980s. One economist shows that the actual cost of not getting a college degree is a loss of over \$500,000 in lifetime earnings (Leonhardt 2014). David Leonhardt, an analytical journalist who writes about government policy and economics, points to a 2001 study that showed how a college degree was beneficial even in jobs that did not require one.

“Construction workers, police officers, plumbers, retail salespeople and secretaries, among others, make significantly more with a degree than without one. Why? Education helps people do higher-skilled work, get jobs with better-paying companies or open their own businesses.” (Leonhardt 2011).

The impact on unemployment is also significant. The Bureau of Labor Statistics breaks down the employment status of the civilian population 25 years and over by

educational attainment. Table 13 shows the difference in unemployment levels for various levels of education.

Table 13: U.S. Unemployment by Education Level

Unemployment Rates	December 2013	December 2014
Overall Rate	6.7%	5.6%
High School Only	7.0%	5.3%
Some College/Associates	6.1%	4.9%
Bachelor's Degree	3.4%	2.9%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table A-4. Employment status of the civilian population 25 years and over by educational attainment

Unemployment relating to the Great Recession peaked at 10.1% in October 2009. The correlation between education level and unemployment became increasingly apparent from that time. People with bachelor's degrees had consistently lower unemployment rate than those with less education. In particular, the problem of long term unemployment was exacerbated by both labor mobility and skill level. The data revealed that workers with less education and lower skills experienced more acute and persistent unemployment (Reich, 2010).

Human capital theory would predict better employment outcomes for individuals who invest in higher education. As economic actors, students from Saudi Arabia are

consumers of higher education and are the beneficiaries of their government's investment in them as agents of human capital. This investment is based on the starkly higher unemployment rate of Saudis in their own country. As mentioned earlier, the theoretical literature on human capital posits that the creation of human capital influences future national income through the investing of resources in people (Becker, 1962). The government investment complements individuals use of education as a personal investment to improve their own employment opportunities and income potential.

Related studies using human capital theory show that education and training have a positive impact on growth and national prosperity (Autor 2014; Baum and Payea 2004; Bowen 1997; Perna 2006). Yet, this analysis is too simplistic. The Becker studies (1962) do not privilege school based acquisition of knowledge over skills acquired and perfected while on the job, in a manner similar to an intern further developing the skills learned while in medical school. Human capital acquisition can occur in settings that are not wholly academic and may have as much efficacy in creating a knowledgeable, skilled workforce.

There are multiple types of human capital which interconnect to create competitive advantage that is sector or industry specific (Ployhart, Van Iddekinge and Mackenzie Jr. 2011.) Generic human capital refers to personal behavior(effort) and cognitive ability, or learning that provides the foundation for creating unit specific human capital. Unit specific human capital is formed through advanced training and

experience and is crucial to creating sustained competitive advantage. Both types interconnect in a causal sequence that lead to economic growth. Yet, under-employment is as significant a problem in Gulf State economies, as is high unemployment of college graduates. One study analyzed the under-utilization of human capital in Saudi Arabia and Oman. It found that the lack of effective human resources practices and poor organizational design resulted in ineffective utilization mechanisms, meaning that internal hierarchies and inflexible management styles led to wasting the abilities of educated workers. Quantitative increases in employee qualifications have not been met by equal improvements in productivity because of low levels of power-influence sharing in decision making, little compatibility between areas of expertise and job requirements and the reliance on seniority rather than competence as the basis for advancement (Al-Yahya 2010.) With many Saudi students studying business administration in the U.S. it is possible that these problems will be better addressed as they implement advanced management techniques. It is also important to recognize that workplace learning may be as valid a source of skills acquisition as a classroom (Becker 1962). As more Saudi students return home and enter the workforce, the combination of formal learning and workplace experience may result in a measurable impact on productivity as they rise to management level positions within the private sector.

Human capital is also fostered by the creative interconnectivity developed by studying the liberal arts. The fundamental difference between the U.S. system of higher education and others is the focus on the liberal arts as the foundation to

develop critical thinking skills. It is notable that even students who attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point will read Shakespeare and study literature as a core requirement before graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree. According to the website, usma.edu, "West Point's Academic Program serves as a foundation for the development of critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. It includes a substantive set of fully integrated core courses that, together, provide an appropriate balance between technical topics and the humanities."

Innovation and entrepreneurship are associated with the ability to take the basic economic factors of production and organize them in a way to create new goods and services, or improve on existing ones. It is the engine of economic growth and development. Non-linear thinking is how this occurs. Even in industries that one would associate with a specific field of expertise the value of the liberal arts is recognized. According to Lazlo Block, the head of hiring at the technology firm Google, in response to the question about whether the liberal arts were necessary for undergraduate education, his answer was unequivocal.

"They are "phenomenally important," he said, especially when you combine them with other disciplines. Ten years ago behavioral economics was rarely referenced. But [then] you apply social science to economics and suddenly there's this whole new field. I think a lot about how the most interesting things are happening at the intersection of two fields. To pursue that, you need expertise in both fields. You have to understand economics and psychology or statistics and physics [and] bring them together. You need some people who are holistic thinkers and have liberal arts backgrounds and some who are deep functional experts. Building that balance is hard, but that's where you end up building great societies, great organizations." (Freidman, 2014).

Higher education has many outcomes for the individual and for society. For the individual, Keniston and Gerzon (1972) observe that:

“The college experience has a demonstrably liberalizing effect on most students: college attendance tends to increase open mindedness, a perspectival view of truth, the individualization of moral judgments, psychological autonomy, and independence; it decreases dogmatism, authoritarianism, intolerance, conformity, conventionalism, dependency, and so on...It deliberately challenges students to reexamine assumptions, convictions, and world views that they previously took for granted...In the last decade, American higher education has visibly helped produce millions of student who do not accept their society without question. (p. 66)”

In addition to imparting traits and skills that will enable students to function effectively on a practical level, or with some degree of competency, Bowen (1997) identified personal self-discovery as one of the less appreciated functions of higher education. This process is as valuable to society as it is to the student, revealing the best place for a person's interest and talents to be utilized by the community and for them to have a meaningful life.

Intergroup Contact Theory

Bowen (1997) also points to evidence that clearly suggests how much college increases tolerance and the ability of people to understand and communicate with others. Gordon Allport was the first to propose intergroup contact as an effective way to reduce racial prejudice in the U.S. (Allport, 1954). Allport believed that prejudice and intergroup conflict could be reduced and social relations improved through contact among members of different ethnic groups. It is the basis for much

of the operational activity in global governance organizations such as UNESCO (Everett, 2013). It is found to be effective even at low levels of contact, regardless of the target group, age group, or contact setting. Increased contacts between ethnic groups are negatively correlated with prejudice (Crisp, Stathi, Turner, & Husnu, 2008). "Indeed, the role of contact in reducing prejudice is now so well documented that it justifies being referred to as intergroup contact theory." (Everett 2013, p.2).

In a seminal work, Pettigrew et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis with 515 studies to identify more specifically the impact of intergroup contact on groups of people defined as different from each other. The contact effects such as greater levels of trust, forgiveness, and empathy were generalizable among more than just ethnic groups. They were found to also apply to diverse populations including homosexuals, disabled persons and the mentally ill, and across nationalities, genders, and age groups. This positive impact remained even in cases of indirect contact through mass media and secondary contact through friends and social networks (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). This is a follow up work to Pettigrew (1998), where he addressed the concern that Allport's hypotheses failed to provide the mechanism, or causal sequence for how this contact should occur and lacked an explanation for generalizing the impact of contact beyond immediate groups. Pettigrew's results suggested that optimal intergroup contact required time and opportunity for group participants to interact meaningfully before the benefits were generalized to out of group members and the opportunity to interact in a positive manner was critical to successful outcomes.

Contact theory is useful in explaining how people lose their fear and intolerance of others as they have more positive interactions among themselves. Fulbright saw sharing knowledge and cultural understanding as the best way to prevent future wars. This practical application of contact theory was implemented a full decade before Allport's hypothesis were published but it reflects the same fundamental belief in creating cultural competence and tolerance through shared experiences (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew, Tropp, et al. 2011). Denman and Hilal (2011) believe that Saudi Arabia is increasing its student mobility in order improve its image and to undo the fearful perceptions of Saudi Arabia and its people because of Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of 9/11, and Western distrust of anything Middle Eastern.

Intergroup contact shouldn't be taken to mean that it is the solution to all conflicts. Not all intergroup contact reduces prejudice, especially, for example, in the case of threats or uninvited contact (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). This should not be a major concern for Saudi and U.S. students in a college campus environment, where students willingly attend after applying and being accepted by the institution. Nearly 75 percent of all Saudi students are studying to obtain a bachelor's degree and 95 percent begin with a full year of English language training. Some of these students will spend five years or longer as part of an academic community, one that will, hopefully, act to support them and welcome them as members of the student body.

One last discussion about the application of contact theory to higher education relates to citizenship in the global public sphere. The accelerated pace of virtually every activity among people across borders has created an increasingly interdependent world. There is concern that the U.S. is lagging in creating the global skills in college graduates compared to other nations (Reimers, 2013). Student diversity has been shown to be a valuable tool for developing intercultural skills. Caruana (2014) showed that intercultural sensitivity was developed and heightened from international travel, study or work. It was prerequisite for global citizenship and fundamental to participating fully in the world beyond your own borders. “The diversity of the student body on university campuses provides a rich source of lived experience in cultural boundary-crossing that could be harnessed as a resource in promoting intercultural understanding, and, in turn, developing graduates as global citizens.” (Caruana 2014, p. 86). Foreign students in the U.S. currently comprise only four percent of the total student body. Their value as agents of growing global competency for U.S. students is well established and is an important benefit for U.S. HEIs and the economy.

Diffusion Theory

Diffusion is the spreading of innovation, and in this case, the spreading of values and ideas. It is defined by Everett Rogers as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social

system. It's a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas." (Rogers 1995, p. 5). Rogers identifies the channels or mechanisms by which these messages are conveyed and ideas are adopted. Diffusion theory has been applied to studies about how best to adopt Western-style educational models in the Arabian Gulf (G-Mrabet, 2012). The findings of the studies implied that using Roger's guiding principles for disseminating new ideas showed there was a qualitative improvement in educational outcomes and there were social changes that were the direct result of extensive exposure to Western lifestyles and culture.

While contact theory is useful in explaining how people lose their fear and intolerance of others as they have more positive interactions among themselves, diffusion theory is useful in explaining how Saudi students would absorb the culture and values of the U.S. from their time here. Experts agree that the near universal adoption of U.S. business school curriculum has contributed to the dominance of the global capitalist market system. As predicted by diffusion theory, not only were American cultural values imparted and business methods taught to foreign students here and abroad, the other economic gains of foreign students for the U.S. were also significant, as the commercialization of much university research they helped produce became the basis for the U.S.'s leading position in the knowledge economy today (O'Mara, 2012).

Section Two: Political Theories

The political use of international education by the U.S. has already been described but the theoretical approaches to viewing the policies of the U.S. government and the Saudi government are explored here.

Normative Theory

In the 1960s, President Kennedy extended the outreach of the Fulbright Programs beyond Europe and Asia to specifically target students and scholars from countries newly emerging from colonial rule and those identified as most at risk of falling under Soviet influence. International education was being used to help build democratic societies in places where there was none, or there was little experience of democratic self rule (Bevis and Lucas 2007).

Transnational actors can be influenced by norms that exist in the international community. Scholars of international relations theory as far back as Aristotle and Plato understood that normative issues have been central to the study of politics (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Norms are standards of behavior deemed appropriate for an actor based on their identity. Norms refer to behaviors that regulate, order or constrain behavior. International norms play a role in political change, often beginning as a national or domestic concern that builds and transcends national borders to become influential in other countries. In time, the norm becomes internalized so that it seems natural and unquestioned. The norm of women's suffrage is often cited as a global norm that grew out of a domestic

imperative, an ironic example in this case, given the lack of legal rights for women in Saudi Arabia. Finnemore and Sikkink developed a three stage life cycle to explain how a norm's evolution depended on the actors involved and their attitudes toward enhancing their international legitimation and improving their diplomatic status.

By inviting students and scholars from countries that had little exposure to democratic institutions and market economies, Kennedy was offering more than academic training. He was exposing them to Western values and institutions that might be replicated in their own countries, particularly once they were aware of their normative value in the international arena. Students from Saudi Arabia may absorb the normative values of the U.S. and other westernized cultures because of their time studying there. The Saudis face a challenge of trying to become more at one with the global community, one where institutions are largely based on Western norms, while preserving their own cultural identity. Yet, these cultural barriers need to be moderated if the country is to overcome its own economic and political problems (Denman, 2011).

Realism

In the 1970s, the Nixon administration had moved away from the policy of winning hearts and minds, even though the Vietnam War damaged the country's image abroad. Soft diplomacy was dismissed in favor of the hardcore realism of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the military establishment. Realism came to the U.S. in the 1930s with Hans Morgenthau, one of the most influential scholars in international relations. Realism posits that the global system is one of anarchy,

where states act solely to pursue their own interests. In a world that is brutish, competitive, and hostile, power over others is the only way to survive and to best serve the interest of the state. Power was viewed as military might even though in Morgenthau's view it could mean more than just military power; it could also be in the form of other types of influence, or soft power. (Morgenthau 1948; Thompson 1951; Baldwin 1979). Morgenthau's contention was that the material aspect of power is military might but it was actually less significant than the more subtle psychological power to influence others based on national character, morale, and quality of governance (Pashakhanlou, 2009).

In the 1970s, in addition to fighting the war in Vietnam, the U.S. government was in the process of a major economic transformation away from the gold standard toward a deregulated, free market economy. Détente with China was a vital step for the Nixon Administration in opening the world economy to trade. More importantly, Nixon saw ending the embargo with China and normalizing relations as the way to reshape the balance of power in the Cold War (Cohen, 2007). Nixon and Kissinger viewed education as a valuable tool for exposing the Chinese to how an open market economy worked and produced high standards of living. The belief in the link between democracy and free market capitalism dominated U.S. foreign policy since the end of World War II. Chinese students learned American style business practices and, still today, an M.B.A. from a U.S. university is highly prized in China. Détente with China served the interest of U.S. companies who yearned for access to foreign

markets and the U.S. government who saw free market capitalism as a strong weapon against the Soviets and the spread of communism.

Neoliberalism

Robert Keohane is a prominent neoliberal who posits that cooperative behavior between governments and institutions can result in jointly profitable arrangements and compromise (Keohane 1984; Keohane and Nye 1977). Neoliberals see a wide range of interests that can be served by cooperation between states, from the sharing of norms to the formation of liberal regimes and other institutions that inspire peaceful coexistence. As the Nixon Administration used diplomacy to build the relationship with China, the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia has been strengthened by the current openness in education (Nye, 2005). It has required some skillful compromise on the part of the U.S. government in the wake of the September 11 attacks and the never ending “War on Terror” but it has served the larger interests of the nation and may have a positive impact for the U.S. in the entire region.

Liberal Pluralism

Liberal pluralism may be the objective of the King and other reform minded people inside the country. While not looking to fully overturn the political system and culture values within the country there is a need for a new conception of how Saudi

Arabia fits into the world body politic. Liberal pluralism as described by Raymond Aron is the ability of people to live meaningful lives based on their own understanding of value within a system of institutions that enable society to function (Galston 2002.) In Aron's view society can be open and tolerant without privileging one set of values over another (Muller, 2006). Aron was classified as a realist but saw states' behavior as reflecting many factors, none of which should be deemed more important than the other (Echikson, 1983). "In the absence of a simple formula to predict state goals, the best one could do as a thinker, diplomat or strategist is to attempt an understanding of state aims and motives on the best available evidence." (Griffiths, Roach, & Solomon, 2009).

The shifting U.S. government policy regarding international education from the end of World War I to the present can be viewed as responses to changing historical and economic factors and evolving moral considerations and attitudes. Educational and cultural exchanges allowed both sides to gain a better understanding of other people's values and national psyche. It also gave outsiders a look into the American way of life, the product of a free market, democratic system that offered a better alternative than communism and Soviet-style authoritarianism. The Saudi government may be seeking the same thing, a broader-minded society that tolerates other people's values and cultures in a less orthodox manner, away from one that often leads to extremist rhetoric and behavior that places the country outside the realm of influential actors on the world stage. In a country that still beheads people in public for what other nations view as minor offences, the global view that Saudi

Arabia as barbaric and ideologically extreme interferes with the Saudi government's efforts to assert their role in maintaining stability and security in the region (Obaid 2013; Drennan 2015).

Section Three: Literature on the International Market for Higher Education and Student Choice- Expectancy Theory, Theoretical Models of Student Choice, Students as Consumers, and Recent Studies

The International Market for Higher Education

Higher education has become an international commodity in recent years. Nearly 4.5 million students are studying in a foreign country during the 2013/14 academic year. The U.S. is the largest host of globally mobile college and university students. It hosts nearly twice as many as the United Kingdom, the second most popular host destination (IIE Open Doors 2014). International education is one of the United States' largest exports. NAFSA reported that international students contributed \$26.8 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2013/14 school years. This is an 8.5 percent increase from last year and associated with the creation of over 340,000 jobs. The education sector is very important to many small communities and is a matter of concern for politicians and communities that see job growth directly related to foreign students (Brookings Interactive, 2014).

The U.S. enjoys a large percentage of the overall Saudi student population that studies outside of the country. This growing contingent of Saudi students is in contrast to the global trend for international students in the last ten years. NAFSA identified several pressures facing American schools in February, 2012 that are making it less likely that the U.S. will see the type of growth in international students it has seen in the past. While the global number of students travelling from their home country for higher education continues to increase, the number of countries now establishing programs is growing and schools around the world are actively recruiting foreign students. Other countries are providing English language programs and have invested heavily in tech centers and facilities, thus drawing a greater share of students from nearby countries. The U.S. National Science Board tracks research capacity around the world and notes that global capacity and quality have increased, as has the competition for the best students and scholars. This increase in the supply of higher education led to the U.S. share of the market falling from twenty eight percent in 2000 to nineteen percent by 2012, a situation that may not change soon.

Many countries are forming cross-border partnerships to become regional providers of higher education, especially in research-oriented programs. The Saudis and other Gulf States have spent billions of dollars on their own universities and research facilities, including offering incentives to businesses to enter partnerships with these research labs. Several Gulf States have imported full branch campuses and brought in partner schools from other countries to improve the local capacity to

educate students for the new highly technical, increasingly integrated global economy. Currently China, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Brazil are each actively trying to recruit students and scholars to help them improve their own education systems.

The growth in the number of international students and the destinations they choose is tracked closely by many affiliated organizations. This information is used by HEIs to understand international student choice and help them market their schools in the most effective manner. Today, foreign students are seeking educations in places that have English language programming and offer the best quality courses based on international reputation and rankings. English language programs and business are the most common areas of study but many students attend advanced-level graduate programs in the STEM subjects. In the U.S. international students are crucial to filling these research-oriented programs because there are currently not enough American students pursuing degrees in these fields. American schools also prize international students because they expose domestic students to other cultures and better prepare them to succeed in the global economy.

China's recent effort to develop its own higher educational system has resulted in it becoming a supplier of international education, not just a country that sends its surplus students abroad. This is shaping demand in the Asia Pacific region. The Wall Street Journal Asia (Kwaak 2013) reports that South Korean students are

increasingly choosing to study in China nearly as often as they choose the U.S. While learning in English is still highly valued by students, businesses in South Korea are interested in hiring students with Chinese language skills and direct experience in China. The growing competition for international students makes it imperative that the U.S. schools do more to understand what brings students to this country and to capitalize on their strengths and weaknesses.

Expectancy Theory

The literature on students' intent to study abroad falls into several theoretical categories: economic explanations, sociological predictors, and cultural theories. Much of the recent scholarship uses multidisciplinary theoretical approaches and mixed methodologies to try to understand what motivates students to study abroad and how they choose where to go. Earlier research used student choice and expectancy theories to explain why students choose to attend college. More recent usages of these theories have been extended to research student's willingness to study abroad.

Expectancy theory states that a person will expend effort toward something that may be risky or difficult if the rewards have value for them (Vroom V. , 1964).

Brooks and Betz (1990) used Vroom's expectancy theory to explain the motivational component of career preferences for college students. Vroom's theory explained that career choice was a function of both how attractive a career was and how likely they were to attain it.

Sanchez, Fornerino and Zhang (2006) used expectancy theory to evaluate the relationship between motivations to study abroad and intent in three different groups. They surveyed business students in France, China, and the U.S. about their motivations and intentions to study abroad. The results showed interesting variations that they attributed to national cultural perceptions of the value of study abroad. For example, Chinese students showed a much stronger intention to study abroad than the French or U.S. students. The authors suggested that the lack of availability of quality higher education in China and the career opportunities that are afforded to those with a foreign degree differed from the reason of U.S. students, which was to have new experiences or because it was a requirement of their school. Both French and U.S. students felt they had sufficient access to quality education and career opportunities in their home country. Hackney, Boggs, and Borozan (2012) also conducted research using expectancy theory on business students to identify the willingness to study abroad. The willingness to study abroad served as a precursor to going and is associated with perceived personal and professional benefits. They identified certain personality traits such as confidence and language abilities that gave clues to how successful a student believed they would be, in keeping with Vroom's ideas about attainment.

Relyea, Cocciara and Studdard (2008) found that the perceived valence, or value, was an important motivating factor for students to engage in an international experience. Many researchers agree on a set of universal values shared by people across most nationalities. What differs is the relative importance that people place on these values. Scholars such as Hofstede (2001), Rokeach (1999), Schwartz

(1999), and Zhang (2001) studied the way national culture dictated how a society organized itself to solve problems and meet its needs. Value systems informed these responses and resulted in the creation of institutions that gave a community its particular character. Zhang (2001), for example, found that Chinese women's purchasing behavior was significantly more influenced by Chinese values than by western values. According to Schwartz (1999), national values were reflected in socially approved goals, as realized in local ideas of success, justice, freedom, social order or status, and tradition. Students sought education for personal enrichment but also in accordance with socially constructed notions of value. Many students confirmed they studied abroad in expectation of improved career options, as an opportunity to learn a foreign language, to engage in university sponsored internship programs, to experience life in another country, curiosity, or for personal enjoyment. All of the reasons reflect values and expectations that are informed by local and national views.

Findlow (2007) applied expectancy theory to explain how women in Arab Gulf countries were using higher education to attain social status and economic autonomy and to bring on larger, more pervasive social transformation. In contrast to many countries in the Middle East and North Africa and even to other Gulf States, women in Saudi Arabia face extensive legal and cultural barriers to employment. This is a subtle reminder that the Middle East is a sizeable region with no one set of rules that apply to women and one where the forces of globalization are pushing against deeply held cultural patterns and belief systems. "In no area has the force of tradition been felt more strongly and the effect of globalization been more apparent

that that of the status and roles of women. The position of women in the Arab world, in particular, is neither uniform nor static.” (Kirdar 2007, p. 39).

The shift to global integration within Saudi Arabia is taking place in small steps but is encouraged by the government’s views toward economic development, changing social attitudes among the people and practical necessity. Most westerners see Saudi attitudes towards women as archaic and based on patriarchic systems that hold no relevance in a modern world. The treatment of women is a popular barometer for measuring change in Saudi Arabia and the international perceptions remain negative. Yet, there is evidence that attitudes in Saudi are shifting and there are new opportunities for women to experience personal and professional fulfillment according to modern standards. Today women in Saudi Arabia are able to attend co-ed classes at the King Abdullah University for Science and Technology outside of Jeddah. Nearly one quarter of all KASP students are women, many traveling on their own, without a male family member as a chaperone (LeBaron, 2013). The high cost of housing means a second income is a necessity and a working spouse acceptable in the current economic climate. “More than anything, change is coming through economics. “Fewer men are happy to come home to their wife with her feet up,” says Khalid al-Khudair, founder of Glowork, a company that runs a website to connect women and employers.” (The Economist, 2014).

Models of Student Choice Theory

Early studies used sociological factors to predict student choice to attend college.

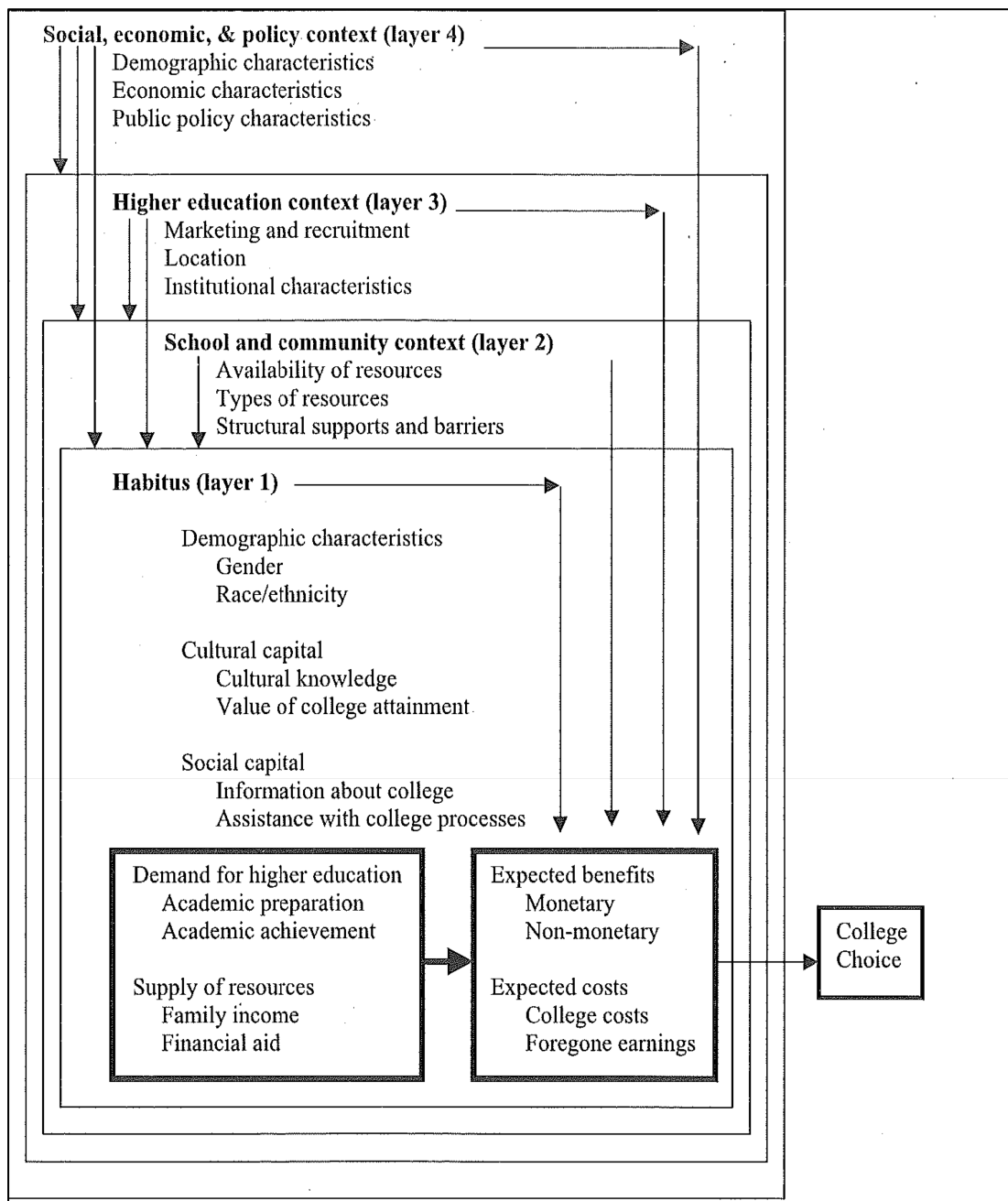
Hearn (1984) used 1975 survey data from a large, nationally representative sample of college freshman to evaluate which socioeconomic factors influence college choice. The analysis identified racial and other income related factors as determinants of choice of college destination. It also identified the importance of students' perceptions, parental influence and reputation of schools as significant determinants of choice of college. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) evaluated a three phase model of college choice beginning with the predisposition or willingness to attend college, particularly as it related to SES variables and then considered the method for choosing a school based on how they get their information. The final phase was the choice, often facilitated by outreach, or 'courtship' (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987), on the part of the institution. The policy implications of the study identified the search phase as the best way for institutions to reach students and increase attendance at college.

The theoretical foundations of the research of college access and choice have changed since the 1990s. Previous literature reviews showed a focus on sociological or economic approaches (Paulsen, 1990) while the more recent research now includes social and cultural capital as drivers for student choice. As the number of students traveling abroad for education has increased, so too has the body of literature that examines the factors that influence the decision to study abroad and

the mechanisms of choice for where students go. Perna (2006) provided an update to the older literature reviews to identify the new scholarship that has emerged in the last two decades.

Increasingly, the literature on student choice relies on conceptual models that draw on multiple theoretical perspectives and methodologies (Toncar, Reid and Anderson 2006; Hackney, Boggs and Borozan 2012). Perna (2006) proposed a conceptual model using student choice theory that incorporated both economic variables and sociological approaches because neither approach alone provided sufficient understanding for student choice across different groups. The Perna (2006) model of college choice incorporated elements of human capital theory, expectancy theory, and cultural and social capital theory to explain student choice in attending college. These elements were later integrated into the proposed conceptual model of student choice that future researchers relied on. Figure 6 is the Perna (2006) model. It represents a comprehensive approach to evaluating influence on a student's choice to attend college.

Figure 6: Perna (2006) Proposed Conceptual Model of Student Choice



The Perna (2006) model of student college choice was developed in an attempt to explain the enrollment gap between low and high income students, even after the passage of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 led to large increases in financial aid to lower income families. The model proposes four layers, or contexts,

each reflecting the impacts of the major stakeholders on each other. The model begins with an outermost or fourth layer that measures demographic variables, economic characteristics, and public policy characteristics. This level uses SES data that would not be available for Saudi students but there are public policies in place in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia that are influencing student choice to attend college.

Layer three evaluates the impact of schools marketing and recruitment practices, location, and institutional characteristics. QS Top Universities (2014) reported that websites and social media were increasingly important sources of information for international students. They cited a study that showed there were global differences in how important the Internet was and how students used it. The importance of social media differed by age group and region but prospective students frequently reported that social media was a primary information source to compare and choose between universities.

The second layer of the Perna (2006) model identifies the features and services that local communities provide to students and the barriers imposed that interfere with enrolling in college. There has been a significant increase in the availability of higher education in Saudi Arabia. The government has invested heavily in education at all levels throughout the country, including previously underserved provinces. It is possible that Saudi students' choice to study abroad relates to the quality of the education in the country. The U.S. is a disproportionately frequent destination for Saudis. Access to funding from the KASP program is the major source of material

support and a deeper look into qualifications for candidacy will identify barriers Saudi students face at the individual level.

The central or innermost layer of the Perna (2006) model concerns the individual's habitus. Habitus refers to a person's internalized system of thoughts and beliefs that can only be understood in the context of their social environment. Habitus is closely identified with the earliest conceptions of social and cultural capital as developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's ethnographic fieldwork in Algeria in the 1950s led him to see how social and economic relationships were based on power, domination, class, and social inequalities. These relationships led to the unequal distribution of all kinds of goods and services, some material, some in the forms of capital or social power. Salisbury, et al (2009) expanded on the notion of habitus as the internal mindset that dictates the expectations, tastes, and preferences that came from lived experience. This lived experience was the manifestation of social interactions as determined by gender, race, class, and power relations and served as much to inform choice as it did to constrain it. Schultheis (2009) defined the habitus as a set of dispositions and tendencies that led a person to act in ways they deemed possible or preferable for them based on their attitudes and aspirations. In the context of the Perna (2006) model, the habitus informed student choice to attend college and can be analyzed as an influence on foreign students who choose to study in the U.S.

Within the realm of understanding habitus are expectancy theory, human capital investment theory, and social and cultural capital theory. Social and cultural capital theory outline the importance of social networks and connections and personal attributes that include language skills, cultural knowledge and mannerisms in deciding whether or not to enroll in college (Portes 1998; Granovetter 1973). Social capital is especially valid when it provides non-material assistance with the college choice process. Social capital can also be understood in terms of parental involvement in college enrollment (Perna and Titus 2005). Maternal influence plays a particularly strong role in female participation in higher education in Arab Gulf States. For example, mothers in the U.A.E., even ones with low levels of education see “a degree as a form of insurance – against having to marry, against not finding a husband, against divorce, or husbands getting new wives.” (Findlow 2007, p. 68). Social capital theory has been applied to immigration decisions and the role that social networks can play in successful integration into a community (Putnam 2001; 2007). This role of facilitating integration into a community is important for foreign students when deciding whether or not to study abroad.

The use of cultural capital parameters relates to earlier research on its validity in informing student choice. McDonough (1997) showed that cultural capital was positively associated with SES factors. Cultural capital refers to language skills and cultural knowledge that allow a person to proceed along a chosen path. Perna and Titus (2004) and Hossler (1999) used parents’ educational attainment as a proxy for cultural capital to show it was a positive predictor of student choice outcomes.

Several elements of the Perna (2006) model have been used to study why international students choose to study abroad. Waters (2006) focused on the market for international education and the preference especially among Chinese students to study abroad to acquire a Western education. Student choice theory was used to explain how local cultural interpretations about the social status attained by going to an overseas schools were implicated in the choice of where to study. The overseas 'credential' was more than just fashionable, it related to employer preference and alumni connections for students from East and Southeast Asian countries. Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2009) used student choice theory and the Perna (2006) conceptual model to further explore human capital theory as an economic explanation for college choice. They combined it with sociological features that explored how information was gathered to try and identify the mechanisms of college choice. Salisbury, et al. used portions of student choice theory to identify how different SES variables interacted with social capital to predict whether a student would study abroad.

Students as Consumers

Beyond models of student choice that evaluate the economic and sociological factors that inform the decision to attend college, there is recent literature that frames the issues involving *where* individuals choose to attend college and how they select a major course of study which uses the language of market liberalization to treat students as consumers of higher education. Not only have universities begun to

look at students as customers, even government entities are using the rationale of the free market to consider students, as the beneficiaries of public sector spending, clients who behave as rational consumers when choosing to attend a given HEI (Sung and Yang 2008, Tavares and Cardoso 2013.) The norms and values of the free market are being used to evaluate public spending on higher education, even more so in recent years when economic uncertainty has left many questioning the economic relevance of higher education. Metrics of efficiency, accountability, and quality assessments, more usually associated with private sector initiatives, are being applied to public education. In that regard, students have become customers and universities are now service providers (Tavares and Cardoso 2013.)

The melding of notions about personal freedom and rational choice are converging with the view that HEIs need to be entrepreneurial and business-like if they hope to survive. The conceptions of the purpose of higher education have changed it both politically and administratively from a mere public good to an industry that functions to meet the demands of the labor markets while generating its own revenues through the creation and privatisation of knowledge (Olssen and Peters 2005.) Examining students as consumers of a service being provided in a competitive market opens up the field of student choice to now evaluate them in other ways. The need to understand how to best attract and retain students in the increasingly competitive higher education market has brought new efforts to determine the consumer behavior aspects of students. Theoretical approaches based on social psychology are being used to better understand attitudes,

perceptions, and mechanisms of choice for students today (Kumar and Kumar 2013.)

Much of this literature builds on classical economics and theories of human capital as posited by Becker (1962, 1993) and utility maximizing behavior that considered personal preferences (Hossler and Gallagher 1987; Paulsen 1990) but these previous approaches have fallen short in answering deeper questions about individual choice beyond the primary decision to attend college. For example, recent work has challenged the idea that students act in a fully rational manner when choosing a school and choosing a college major (Menon, Saiti and Socratous 2007.) In many cases students do not fit the description of information seekers, a prerequisite for behaving as a rational consumer in the neoclassical conception of the free market. The propensity to seek information or make objective decisions about where to attend college or what to study is surprisingly low (Tavares and Cardoso 2013; Menon, Saiti and Socratous 2007.) For example, in examining what factors influence students to choose business majors, it was shown that social image and family, schools counselors, and professors were significant factors in student choice (Kumar and Kumar 2013.) Studies have shown that the decisions made by college students are not purely based on cost/benefit analysis and utility maximization. Often, preferences are shaped by socialisation processes and evaluations of quality (Tavares and Cardoso 2013.) This is a small sample of the issues emerging in response to the changing perceptions about higher education and a movement away from purely economic rationalizations for student choice.

One of the most difficult things to reconcile in the current literature is the variation in terminology and abstract nature of the studied psychological influences that make evaluation difficult to measure. “The different perspectives adopted in these approaches have not allowed for the operationalization and measurement of the concept, which has in turn resulted in the absence of relevant empirical work.”

(Menon, Saiti and Socratous 2007, p. 712.) What most of this research has in common is the use of established theoretical approaches within the discipline of social psychology as the basis for understanding human behavior for the purposes of marketing goods and services. Gordon Allport, the psychologist known for his work on contact theory, defines social psychology as a discipline that applies scientific methods to evaluate social influences, attitudes, and perceptions (Kendra) These ideas are now being applied to the choices made in higher education (Kumar and Kumar 2013; Menon, Saiti and Socratous 2007; Sung and Yang 2008.)

One theme that recurs in varying discussions is the relationship between student commitment and institutional image. Ghosh et al. (2001) found a strong link between student trust, defined as “the degree to which a student is willing to rely on or have faith and confidence in the college to take appropriate steps that benefit him and help him achieve his learning and career objectives” (p. 324), and enhanced institutional prestige. This enhanced prestige, in turn, was associated with increased enrolment, greater student retention, and stronger levels of alumni donations. Trust, as it is linked to student commitment, is based on a student’s

personal experience as well as their incoming perceptions about the school. While the results may not be immediately apparent, greater spending in areas that promote trust are increasingly important as the market for students becomes more competitive. "While trust builds incrementally and requires a long-term strategic plan, distrust in a college is likely to have a more dramatic "catastrophic" effect by reducing quality perceptions and by increasing marketing costs significantly." (Ghosh, Whippie and Bryan 2001, p. 323.) According to Ghosh et al., ignoring the trust needs of students will have long term negative repercussions.

A comprehensive model of university image as it relates to students' supportive attitudes, a near relation to students' commitment and identification with an institution, builds on the notion of corporate image (Sung and Yang 2008.) In the field of public relations the importance of corporate image and reputation is well studied. A favorable image is shown to be a competitive advantage. As a public relations construct, Sung (2008) attempted to evaluate this in the realm of the service sector, universities in particular. Today, universities are spending heavily to create a brand image, both to improve their prestige and general perceptions of quality. The value of the brand is seen as relating to greater student commitment, building long term relationships with students, and greater word of mouth effects. Studies have shown that image matters even more when you have little or no direct experience with a school. As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of consistency in existing studies in terms of which variables are studied and how they are measured,

yet, based on the existing literature, Sung and Yang identified four key areas to analyze students as consumers in the competitive arena of higher education.

Image, the first key area they identified, sometimes referred to as reputation or corporate identity, refers to the view that a particular person holds about something. It is further complicated by the personal nature of these views, thus organizations must evaluate their image for every target group they hope to serve. It is a difficult variable to measure because service images lack clearly measurable attributes and because it is impacted by the emotional experiences of those attending a particular school. This emotional attachment is built when students feel valued, or connected to the institution and is strategic tool that HEIs can use to attract students, recruit faculty, and attract donations and grants (Sung and Yang 2008, p. 361.) In addition to image, the Sung (2008) model included brand personality, the human characteristics associated with a brand, and perceived external prestige, most commonly the result of third party evaluations to examine students' supportive attitudes.

Rather than calling it trust, Sung and Yang treated students' support as loyalty. Consumer loyalty is associated with satisfaction of service quality. For students this is measured as perceptions of oneness, security and belonging, trust, a belief in the values of the organization and a sense of community both during their time at the university and after. The findings of the study showed a significant relationship between the three main constructs but the strongest factor, particularly for

freshman, was external prestige. For new students, the perception of how other's viewed the university they were attending was the most significant determinant of their level of commitment to the school. The findings suggest that improving perceived external prestige through spending to increase visibility and brand image and, in particular, working to improve international rankings, may be the best way an HEI can market itself today, both at home and abroad.

In conclusion, the limited literature that applies the concepts of corporate branding and imaging to universities as service providers points to students' preentry image of a particular institution and perceived external prestige as being significant determinants in their choice to attend and form an attachment or become committed to an institution. Preentry images are formed through contact with school officials, recruiters, websites, and other sources, most likely friends, family, and other acquaintances that provide word of mouth channels of information. University image changes in response to a person's emotional experience with that institution, post-entry. It, like perceived external prestige, is an individual-level variable based on a person's own value system and assessment of how other's view the school (Sung and Yang 2008, p. 366.) The research points to the correlation between institutional image, students' trust in the institution, and the resulting commitment students have toward an institution as an interlinked set of factors that both engender and reinforce the rationale of consumer choice in higher education.

Recent Studies

There are previous studies that examine students from Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf States. “Bridging the Gap – But How: Young Voices from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” was conducted by Edit Schlaffer from Women without Borders, with Ulrich Kropiunigg, and Fawziah al-Bakr. Published in January 2010, the study surveyed 4,500 male and female students in Saudi Arabia from 2006 to 2008. The researchers undertook the project with the explicit understanding that education will be a driving force for social change within the country. The survey covered attitudes in fourteen areas, highlighting agreement among respondents that education was a prerequisite to having a career and both men and women had the right to education under Islamic law. Not surprisingly, given the high rate of unemployment among college graduates, both genders expressed uncertainty about finding jobs after graduation. Questions about the perceived quality of education and preparedness for work in the private sector revealed deep concerns students had about entering the workforce and establishing themselves in their careers.

On social issues students were very conservative, confirming that Islamic values remained important and supporting the view among students that Saudi culture was superior to all others in the world but should change to incorporate more modern views. The survey showed that while there was majority approval for greater equality for women, 67% of women and 85% of men approved of the statement that a woman’s priority should be caring for the family. Yet, 85% of all

survey respondents wanted both a family and a career. The survey reviewed attitudes toward engagement with the West, concerns about how Saudi culture was perceived abroad, interest in political participation within Saudi Arabia, and expectations about the evolution of women's rights. Many aspects of this survey are directly applicable to research on Saudi students attending schools in the U.S. It was possible to ask some of these same questions and use this study as a control to compare students who study abroad with ones who stay at home.

"Willingness to Study Abroad: An Examination of Kuwaiti Students" by Kaylee Hackney, David Boggs, Yunus Kathawala and John Hayes is from a 2014 paper that surveyed Kuwaiti students in their home country to identify the personal skills and perceived benefits associated with willingness to study abroad. Demand for higher education in Kuwait has exceeded available placements at Kuwait University since 1990, resulting in a sizeable increase in study abroad by Kuwaitis. The authors used expectancy theory and student choice theory to create a survey of students at one private Kuwaiti university in 2011. There were 135 usable responses, mostly from business majors and across all classes, from freshman to graduate students. Results identified the willingness to study abroad if a person had a friend or family member with international experience, the importance of foreign language ability, the preferences for an urban location, and strong preference to study abroad with others, rather than alone. The political and cultural similarity between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait make this study relevant to this research.

“Experiences of Male Saudi Arabian International Students in the United States” is a study conducted by Molly Elizabeth Heyn in a dissertation submitted to Western Michigan University in June 2013. This is a qualitative study of nine male students from Saudi Arabia in the U.S. for two years or longer. It assessed the participants’ before and after perceptions of the U.S., problems they encountered in their daily lives, barriers to social integration, and changes to their personal values and beliefs. This is a very recent study. It is based on interviews and it identifies personal concerns of Saudi males studying in the U.S. that are relevant to this research. The limitations are the male only population and small group but this study provides a useful starting point to learn about some of the intimate concerns that Saudi students face.

None of these studies asked students about the impact that government policies had on their decisions relating study abroad. The Heyn dissertation details earlier research on Saudi international students that identified the sources of academic difficulty they encountered, adjustment problems, values-conflicts, and their satisfaction with their educational and social experiences at college. It is useful to see previous studies about this population but the canon is small and outdated. There is no research about the evolution of Saudi student’s attitudes, especially for students who study abroad. The Women Without Borders survey asked questions about shifting attitudes but only of students in Saudi schools. Saudi students in the U.S. are even more likely to moderate their views about religious and cultural norms and accelerate the rate of social and economic change when they return home.

Conclusion

Reviewing the literature on the historical narrative of the U.S. government's use of higher education for political purposes, including its use as a tool for international diplomacy helps explain why the government worked to reopen the doors to foreign students, including Saudis, after Sept. 11. The available literature on the government of Saudi Arabia's plans to improve both economic outcomes and reduce political tensions inside the country show why they are spending heavily on education and have made internationalization a new priority. There are limitations on the availability of data for Saudi Arabia. The literature available is based on information provided by the government and not subject to external review. There is no free press in the country and politically sensitive topics are not sanctioned for review by the government. Still, some independent sources are available and it is possible to develop an understanding of the broader motivations of the Saudi government. There is no literature showing a clear link between the policies of the Saudi government and Saudi students' choice to study in the U.S. In addition, there is no literature confirming that the prerogatives of the Saudi government are being met through their policies regarding internationalization of higher education.

The literature on student choice provides useful contributions to evaluating why a person decides to pursue higher education and, by extension, why they opt to study abroad. Much of the theoretical work done earlier can be modified to study the population of Saudi students attending HEIs in the U.S. There was no current

research on Saudi students who choose to study abroad. In particular, there was no research on why they are choosing to study in the U.S. and what is behind the large increase since 2006. The three recent studies on students from the Middle East provide some insight into the values and expectations for obtaining higher education. They provided a useful starting point to further explore why Saudi students are choosing to study in the U.S. and what impact that is having on them. For example, none of these studies asked students about the influence that government policies had on their decisions relating study abroad.

The Heyn dissertation provides some insight into the life experiences of a small number of Saudi men studying in the U.S. The limitations of this study are obvious: the small number of subjects, males only, and the experience of students at only one school. It tells nothing about how and why they chose to study in the U.S. or at that school. It provides very limited research about the evolution of attitudes of students who study abroad. The Women Without Borders survey offers a fleeting glance at the levels of discontent within the Saudi education system. It provides only a few clues as to why Saudis may choose to study abroad. In addition, it shows a willingness to modernize society without overturning the cultural order by taking steps toward meaningful gender equality and enacting social reforms that will likely play out in the economy first. Building upon this research has shown how study abroad impacts students' attitudes.

The previous literature did not review expectations of Saudi students for obtaining an education outside of the country. Models of student choice based on expectancy theory have strong validity in explaining Saudi students' attendance at U.S. HEIs. Expectancy theory, at its heart, is an economic analysis of the rationale for attaining education. It views students as rational actors who seek education based on the perceived value or benefits. This was a useful approach to evaluating Saudi students' behavior. It contributed to explanations about why they choose to study in the U.S. based on the expected valence of an education from an American HEI compared to another HEI. Saudi women who study in the U.S. may represent an acute example of expectancy and risk taking. Many are getting educations in advance of opportunities to find meaningful employment at home. Little was known about Saudi women attending foreign HEIs.

Applying contact theory, it could be suggested that Saudi students, if well integrated into a campus community, will have both the time and appropriate environment to interact meaningfully with their U.S. counterparts, resulting in a reduction of bias and prejudice on both sides. Human capital theory and diffusion theory also offer notions of the impact that study abroad could have on an individual and others. Together these three theories could be applied to studying the phenomenon of such a large increase in students from a country that is so different from the U.S.

Research that evaluates the likelihood of attending college or studying abroad has identified a range of predictors and the more recent work reflects the complex interplay of social, political, and cultural factors, as well as economic motivations. In

many cases, the research only partially applies to Saudi students choosing to come to the U.S. For example, studies using human capital theory propose that financial resources and family income will correlate with a student's likelihood of choosing to attend college. These variables do not relate to Saudi students in the U.S. since they are either KASP students or have proven sufficient personal wealth to receive a visa to study in the U.S. However, Cabrere and La Nasa (2001) and Plank and Jordan (2001) show a positive relationship between parents' education and occupation and attendance at four-year schools and choosing to study for a bachelor's degree rather than an associate's degree. Parental education is often used as a substitute for SES variables (McDonough 1997; Perna and Titus 2004) and is applicable to Saudi student choice in studying abroad. Parental and family influence are expected to play a significant role in Saudi students' choices.

Also, human capital theory extends beyond parental influence to include extended social networks that provide other kinds of support implicated in migration decisions. It is a relevant comparison to Saudi students choosing to spend several years at a U.S. HEI, albeit with the intention to return to their home country upon completing their studies. Understanding the impact that social networks have on Saudi student choice is important for HEIs that want to increase their Saudi student populations and monitor their experiences in order to ensure future enrolment.

Perna (2006) identified literature that used expected financial costs for tuition and foregone earnings, gender, and race as independent variables. These variables are less applicable to this population for several reasons. Most Saudi students coming to

the U.S. are financially supported by the KASP or other government programs. Also, while gender is not unimportant, in a country where the legal and social rights of women are so unlike those in the U.S., the discussion of this issue and research protocols are not applicable to the more general questions being asked. The KASP is available to both males and females and currently twenty-five percent of all scholarships recipients are women. Race is also not an applicable variable because the KASP is available to all Saudis, whether Sunni or Shi'a. There are limited demographic data available on the religious breakdown within the country. The Saudi government does not publish specific census data on Sunni and Shi'a populations within the country.

The expected non-monetary benefits of higher education have rarely been considered in research on student choice. This presents an interesting opportunity for this research project. This is theoretically related to cultural capital and the acquisition of social capital. For women the benefit of higher education was identified as improved social status (Findlow 2007). Non-monetary benefits can represent clearly identifiable improvements for quality of life such as having health insurance, less likelihood of smoking, or greater likelihood of voting. For Saudi students the time they spend in the U.S. could result in changes to measurements that constitute good citizenship or personal fulfillment. For example, attitudes about health, social welfare, human rights, and the role of government could be measured to show changes. A student could simply be asked about how these attitudes have changed during their time in the U.S. without placing value

judgements on them. Interview data may provided insight into operationalizing this aspect of higher education. Other non-monetary benefits are increased tolerance, better communication abilities with people from other cultures, and personal benefits related to self discovery and happiness (Allport 1954; Bowen 1997; Keniston and Gerzon 1972).

In summary, many aspects of the previous research were applied to studying the population of Saudi students attending HEIs in the U.S. The Perna (2006) model is the most comprehensive theoretical approach to evaluating student choice. A new model that was an adjusted version of the Perna (2006) model provided a theoretical framework for evaluating the impact that the different key actors have on Saudi student choice to study abroad and particularly, to study in the U.S. Under this framework the expected non-monetary benefits were evaluated. In the future, these may prove to be the more important outcomes of this social experiment on the part of the U.S. and Saudi governments.

Chapter Four: Research Method and Design

Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand the factors that influence Saudi students' choice to study at higher education institutions (HEIs) in the U.S., identify the issues they face, and assess what impact the experience had on their attitudes and values. Saudis are an understudied population of foreign students coming to the U.S. There is little specific understanding of why they choose to study abroad, how they choose the schools they attend, what their longer-term aspirations are, and how they feel their experiences have changed them. This is particularly interesting for female students who comprise twenty-five percent of the total KASP recipients and have fewer career opportunities than males due to restrictions on the types of jobs women may legally hold. Also, the U.S. and Saudi governments both publicly state that they hope to encourage greater understanding between the countries and foster deeper ties. The general assumption is that the exposure would have positive results but there is no data confirming attitudinal shifts in either country's population.

This study is based on mixed methodological components. Interviews and analysis of public discourse are a useful first stage because of the exploratory nature of this project. A survey instrument was used to gather data about the Saudi student population in the U.S. The research component was facilitated by identifying sources of information and interview and survey subjects, and then applying a theoretical framework to explore the key research questions and formulate the research hypotheses. A model of student choice that integrates economics and sociological constructs provided a more complete understanding of Saudi students choices and their experiences in the U.S.

This study used a mixed methods approach to better understand the reason for the large increase in the number of students coming to the United States from Saudi Arabia, and how these students have changed due to their time here. While the notion of combining quantitative and qualitative methods in study is no longer considered novel, a proper definition offers substance and credibility to its use.

“Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.” (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, p.5)

This definition has the advantage of highlighting the value of using methods that collect words in combination with methods that collect data in numerical form

within one theoretical framework to provide a more generalized understanding of certain questions (Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* 2011.) The reason for using a mixed methodology to study this question can be identified according to the typology developed by Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) as development, initiation, and triangulation. In this research, the use of interviews as a qualitative approach was in aid of developing the survey instrument. The qualitative elements were used to initiate or discover perspectives of stakeholders and formulate questions. Triangulation seeks to allow corroboration of findings from one method to another (Greene, Caracelli and Graham 1989.)

Research Questions, Hypothesis, Conceptual Model

The present research attempts to answer key questions that explain the increase in the number of students from Saudi Arabia studying in the United States, how those students make their choices, and how they are impacted by their experiences in the United States. The roles of governments, Saudi students, and HEIs were studied to generate the following hypotheses.

Research Question One asks how can the increase in the number of Saudi students coming to the U.S. for higher education be explained? The following hypothesis were predicted and tested:

H1: Saudi students are influenced in their choice to study in the United States by the availability of scholarships from the Saudi government and by the accessibility of student visas to the United States.

H2: Saudi students perceive that higher education in the United States is better than in other countries.

H3: Saudi students perceive that a degree from a U.S. school will enhance their employment prospects better than a degree from a school in Saudi Arabia.

Research Question Two asks about expected outcomes of this study. This study identified motivations of Saudi students to study in the U.S. and their mechanisms of choice. Hypothesis 4 and 5 consider these statements:

H4: Saudi students' primary source of information about where to study in the U.S. is family and social networks.

H5: Saudi students are influenced in their choice by a school's reputation, rankings, or how well known it is in Saudi Arabia.

This study reviewed attitudes of Saudi students toward the United States and how Saudi students have changed since coming to the U.S. in terms of personal tolerance, family and gender issues, and openness to cultural change. Saudi students experience little interaction with non-Muslims or people from other races before coming to the United States. There are strictly enforced rules and deeply held social views regarding family and gender relations in Saudi Arabia in stark contrast to those held by people in the United States. This contrast presents a challenge to Saudi students who must reconcile their own belief system with the social norms that

prevail in the United States. The following hypotheses predict that Saudi students will change after living in the United States.

H6: Saudi students have a more favorable opinion of the U.S. than when they lived in Saudi Arabia.

H7: Saudi students in the U.S. are more tolerant of people from other cultures and religions after living in the United States.

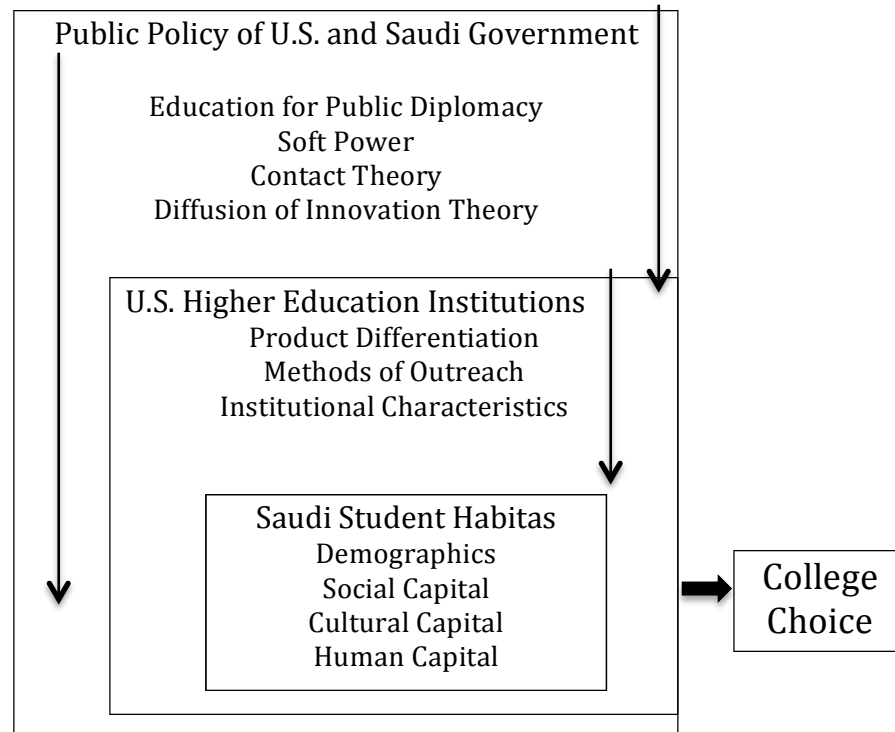
H8: Saudi students in the U.S. agree that changing gender roles of men and women in Saudi Arabia are part of a positive global trend toward increased gender equality.

Conceptual Model

Based on the literature review on student choice and in order to address the parameters of the research questions it was appropriate to identify a theoretical framework that considered the influence of each of the primary actors on Saudi students as an organizing principle for this research. Perna (2006) noted that quantitative studies of student choice to attend college are more common than qualitative research. The most complex work used multilevel modeling to include the state, students, and parental involvement along with other forms of social and cultural capital. Yet, qualitative studies have proved useful for gaining deeper insight about particular groups or understanding how specific context informs student choice. Perna (2006) suggested that qualitative studies of student choice are better designed when based on quantitative research, often because so much of it used national data and increased the external validity of the work. Yet, in the case of a population with so little previous study, the use of both techniques is appropriate.

Figure 7 is the conceptual model for evaluating the type and degree of influence each of the stakeholders has on Saudi students in the U.S. It is a modification of the Perna (2006) proposed conceptual model of student choice (see p. 64) used to explain the enrollment gap between low and higher income students. Several elements of that model are not applicable to Saudi students who have already made the choice to attend college but other elements were used to create a theoretical framework to further explain Saudi student choices.

Figure 7: Conceptual Model for Saudi Student Choice to Study in the U.S.



This conceptual model for Saudi student choice to study in the U.S. comprises three levels, each one relating to a specific type of contextual influence on student choice.

Level one considers U.S and Saudi government public policy. The U.S. government has adopted new rules and measures that make it easier for Saudi students to get student visas to come to the U.S. The Saudi government is funding study at preapproved schools and for certain areas of study. The Saudi government is also limiting the number of students it will provide scholarships to at any one school in an attempt to have them integrate into the larger population, in keeping with both contact theory and diffusion theory. This model allowed for assessment of the impact that government policy had on Saudi students' choice of where to study,

including providing Saudi students a manageable process for obtaining a visa to study in the United States.

Level two concerns the impact the U.S. HEIs have in determining choice of Saudi students. Studies show that students choose HEIs in the U.S. because they offer a different education than other countries, especially Saudi Arabia. This research questioned the motivations of Saudi students and what mechanisms Saudi students use in choosing where to study. The responses were derived from students' expectations about how a U.S. education will impact their career and future opportunities. Also, HEIs reach students through various marketing channels, including online sources, print media, and foreign student advisors. This research explored the impact these methods had on student choice. Existing studies show that the way students obtain their information is important and has radically changed in recent years (QS Top Universities 2014.) Anecdotal evidence suggests that factors impacting student's experiences, including how well their religious needs are met, may be important (Perez-Pena 2012.) Data from the IIE and Brookings show preferences for schools in metropolitan areas and certain states but that may be on the basis of having a family member or friend already in attendance at that HEI. This research confirms the role that social networks play in where Saudi students choose to study in the United States.

The third level is the most individual. This research explored student's access to forms of social capital and cultural capital that correlate with college choice as they

relate to habitus, the values and expectations that are common to a particular social group. Variables associated with expectancy theory, human capital investment theory, and social and cultural capital theories were used to understand how factors related to the individual's life predict school choice. Social capital refers to the influence that parents and wider social networks play in choosing to study abroad and where to go. Social and cultural capital theory outline the importance of social networks and connections and personal attributes that include cultural knowledge and mannerisms in deciding whether or not to enroll in college (Portes 1998; Granovetter 1973.) Many studies about social capital and student choice identify SES variables as significant predictors. SES data for Saudi Arabia is not widely available so there would be no ability to place such information into meaningful context for analysis. In keeping with previous research that used parental involvement as a proxy for SES data, demographic data collected included parental attitudes and education levels.

Cultural capital is the most personal assessment of influences on student choice. It views personal tools that include language abilities, belief in the likelihood of accomplishing something, openness to ideas, and exposure to foreigners through travel or interaction with expatriates as predictors in college choice and choice to study abroad (Hackney, et al. 2014.) Saudi students were asked about previous travel outside the country as a proxy for cultural capital.

Research Design

Qualitative and quantitative research is often conducted as a cycle when researching new social problems or those where an initial phase of exploration is necessary to determine key variables and construct other research instruments (Remler and Van Ryzin 2011.) This was a first study to examine this population of students in the United States. Using mixed methods allowed the researcher to carefully identify which factors were important to stakeholders and assess how best to organize the research and apply a comprehensive theoretical framework. Qualitative interviews allowed for the exploration of the population of Saudi students in the United States and the preparation of a survey instrument that was administered online to Saudi students across the entire U.S.

Interviews

Nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with eleven Saudi students and eight administrators at HEIs in the local New York/New Jersey area. There are many HEIs in the immediate area that operate in diverse settings, such as urban, suburban, public or private schools, therefore, a representative sampling of HEI experience was possible. The administrators interviewed worked with international students in a variety of capacities, from academic advisement to visa compliance and living arrangements. They represented a broad sampling of the efforts put forth by schools to provide necessary supports for growing international student

populations. Many worked directly with students from Middle Eastern countries and had familiarity with students from Saudi Arabia. Chain sampling of Saudi students offered an range of student interviews based on gender, level of study, and geographical dispersion that facilitated the develop of the survey instrument. Several interviews with students were conducted in public meeting places including cafes and coffee shops. Others were conducted over the telephone. All interviews with school administrators were conducted in their offices at their respective school.

All participants were informed that their names, the name of their school and any personal information and answers would remain confidential. Participants were provided an interview consent form with audio recording approved by the Rutgers University IRB to sign and one to keep for their personal records. The consent form identified that the interviews were confidential, all personal information would be removed upon transcription and a coded number assigned to the interview that would be stored separately in a password-protected computer. Furthermore, no personal identifiers would be used in the dissertation including their name, school or any other information that would reasonably lead to identification. Contact information for the primary researcher and faculty advisor was provided. The interviews ranged from twenty minutes to longer than ninety minutes in several cases. All interviews were conducted in English. While many Saudi students have strong English language skills, some of those interviewed were newly arrived and

only beginning their language studies before moving on to their academic studies. In one case a student was interviewed through an interpreter.

Interview questions of administrators at HEIs were prepared based on analysis of current literature published by industry advocates and journals dedicated to international higher education. These publications focused on marketing efforts, problems and concerns, financial benefits associated with international students, and ongoing efforts to integrate and monitor international students' experiences on campus.

Interview questions prepared for Saudi students were designed in accordance with Figure 7, the conceptual model for Saudi student choice to study in the U.S. In addition to demographic questions, students were directed to answer questions that relate to government influence, mechanisms of choice, social and cultural capital, human capital development, and the impact of studying in the U.S. on their attitudes and values. The Rutgers University Internal Review Board approved all questions shown in Appendix A.

The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and then coded using Nvivo qualitative analysis software. According to Remler and Van Ryzin (2011) coding is the process of tagging or sorting text, in this case interview conversations, into a series of variables or other strands that facilitate its interpretation. Coding software such as Nvivo offer the opportunity to apply quantitative methods to qualitative

data but in this case the software was used to organize the interview responses and identify overlapping areas of concern among students and school administrators. For example, new areas of concern emerged from the interviews, including problems with academic preparation and plagiarism. Also, school officials report a lack of available assessment tools that allows them to understand if students' personal and non-academic needs were met through existing programs. Many expressed uncertainty about how to integrate students from Saudi Arabia into the campus community.

The coding also highlighted several linguistic and rhetorical patterns specific to Saudi students that were used when preparing the online survey. For example, most literature on higher education in the United States refers to the liberal arts core requirements as the foundation of the educational system. Saudi students universally used the term "general education courses" to refer to the classes they were required to take in order to satisfy the requirements of their degree, no matter what their major. This language mirrors the discourse in the literature provided to Saudi students from SACM as the administrator of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program but is not commonly used by students or administrators in the United States. The common reference in the U.S. is liberal arts courses. The interviews and analysis using Nvivo provided valuable insight into the issues that Saudi students faced and the associated patterns of speech that they would recognize when taking the survey.

Survey Design and Administration

This research is a descriptive exploration about the population of students from Saudi Arabia who chose to study in the United States. The use of an online survey provided the opportunity to reach students at all levels of study across the entire country. There were no prior surveys on this topic but portions of the survey attempted to replicate questions asked of Saudi students attending university in Saudi Arabia and questions used for the World Values Survey. Those surveys were administered in Arabic and were done in person. Not all respondents to those surveys have a counterpart in the population of Saudi students attending schools in the U.S., which includes students studying English in preparation of pursuing an academic degree. Still, it is useful to use questions from these published surveys to provide benchmarks comparing students' attitudes in different settings.

The survey was prepared using Qualtrics Survey Software. The survey consisted of 24 closed ended questions. The first two questions ask students to confirm they consent to participate in the survey and that they are Saudi students currently living and studying in the U.S. Applying survey logic allowed for negative responders to these question to automatically exit the survey and reduce the number of non-usable surveys. Questions three and four provided lists of choices of information sources and school features that attracted students. These lists were derived from interview results and discourse analysis from all stakeholders and organized into individual questions for simplicity and organizational clarity. Choices were

randomized to provide a different order for each respondent and prevent over-responses for the first few choices. Questions five through ten ask students to evaluate their perceptions about efforts their current school makes to address their needs. Many Saudi students come to the U.S. as English language learners and attend a series of other schools before returning to Saudi Arabia. Specific care was taken when wording these questions to highlight that only the current school the student is attending is being evaluated. Students were provided three simple choices indicating they think it is enough, they wish the school would offer more, or no opinion.

Questions eleven through fifteen ask students to respond to statements about their experiences, their future expectations, and opinions about tolerance, the United States, and changing the culture in Saudi Arabia. Question fifteen is a composite of several questions asked in the “Bridging the Gap” survey and the World Values Survey Saudi Arabia 2003. In consideration that this survey was given in English to a population that speaks Arabic as its primary language, respondents were offered choices that reflected agreement as follows: strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The remaining questions asked about individual characteristics including gender, degree being sought, amount of previous travel outside of Saudi Arabia and parental educational attainment. Care was taken to offer an equal number of positive and negative responses and not to overburden the survey respondents with complicated language or an excessive number of questions. Overall question design was improved with the help of Fowler

(1995) and Remler and Van Ryzin (2011) in order to improve question clarity, avoid ambiguity, and improve the efficiency of the survey. Pretesting of the survey was done among Saudi students who were interviewed to confirm the questions were clear, the language was unambiguous, and the length of the survey was not an imposition. Student comments were incorporated and final adjustments made.

The survey was launched in December 2015. (Appendix B) Student groups at universities across the United States were sent emails asking Saudi student members to participate in the survey. The emails contained an explanation of the study, the consent form approved by the Rutgers University IRB and an anonymous survey link that could be shared with other Saudi students. Over 450 emails were sent and approximately 25 Saudi Student Organizations listed on the SACM website were approached through Facebook and 175 Saudi student organizations were contacted on Twitter. The survey was closed on February 15, 2016 with 262 completed surveys.

Strengths and Limitations

Research into any topic is impacted by the availability and reliability of information. This research has been helped by the availability of public records and peer reviewed papers in published journals. There are extensive public materials concerning U.S. government attitudes about foreign students that offer insight into the political and economic motivations of the U.S. government. They consist of

congressional testimony, U.S. government policy papers, interviews, etc. Published studies by independent research organizations often included data obtained through Freedom of Information Act applications. The availability of primary source documents as well as extensive secondary sources have contributed to this research by allowing for the development of the historical narrative that informs the present case of Saudi students in the United States.

The Saudi government is more challenging because of the lack of transparency and limitations on journalists writing about the country. The government of Saudi Arabia publishes information on official government websites and data is available from institutional organizations such as UNESCO and the CIA. In addition, the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission (SACM) in Washington, D.C. is a source of insight about their role in supporting Saudi students in the U.S. SACM monitors students once they arrive in the U.S. and constitutes the formal link between the students and their home country while living abroad. Many publications from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Higher Education are in Arabic and are available in English translation. Other sources of information, including surveys of students and citizens in Saudi Arabia were done in Arabic and later translated to English for publication. Research on any topic concerning Saudi Arabia is limited by the lack of public information and the lack of independent policy analysis from a country with an authoritarian system of government that allows for limited public dissent.

Validity and Uses

Some of the findings are comparable with published data from NAFSA about broad categorizations to show validity, including how students gather information and respond to outreach efforts by HEIs. Other results are comparable to the large in-country study of Saudi student attitudes conducted by Women without Borders published in 2011. The more finely detailed information provided from this research is a valuable component of the study. For example, some findings are useful for HEIs who hope to recruit more Saudi students. Other findings may indicate if the intentions of the KASP program are being met. This aspect of the research may not be immediately apparent since Saudi students are only beginning to return to the country and enter the workforce. Also, any moderation in social attitudes will be borne out over decades, if at all. This research presents an early stage in assessing if the Saudi government's economic and social goals are successfully met.

Chapter Five: Findings on Institutional Actors

This chapter will focus on the institutional actors involved in foreign student mobility in the United States. The explanatory dimensions of this research will include the key actors' main motivations, examined as economic, political, and ideological. Their goals and the means by which they carry them out will also be reviewed. Interview results uncovered specific areas of concern that shaped the actions of higher education institutions. These institutional actors are the U.S. government, the government of Saudi Arabia as the specific institution promoting study abroad to the U.S. by their students, and U. S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the supporting industry, which consists of organizations such as IIE, NAFSA, OBHE, and Brookings Institute.

U.S Government

U.S. government departments and agencies involved in this discussion are the U.S. Congress, the Department of State which includes the consular offices abroad, SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System as part of SEVIP, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE), and the U.S. Border and Customs Service which coordinates with the Department of State at the point of entry into the country. The President of the United States and Congress have been participants in shaping U.S. laws and programs for foreign students coming to the U.S. and how they are supervised. Each of these actors is responsible for protecting

national security and fighting terrorism while keeping the doors open to international students and promoting international education as a policy tool.

U.S. Government Motivations

The U.S. government actively supports foreign students coming to the country for higher education. Economically, higher education is one of the country's largest exports. NAFSA (2014) reported that international students contributed \$26.8 billion to the U.S. economy in the 2013/2014 school year. This was an 8.5 percent increase from last year and, according to the Brookings Institute, resulted in the creation of over 340,000 jobs. In 2015, NAFSA reported the amount rose to \$30.5 billion and international students supported more than 373,000 jobs in the 2014-15 school year (NAFSA: Association of International Educators 2015.) The economic contribution of foreign students is surprisingly large. As a comparison, the movie industry in the U.S. grossed \$11.1 billion in domestic ticket sales in 2015 (Yearly Box Office Results), underscoring the economic significance of the industry.

The U.S. government uses higher education for ideological reasons. Since the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War the U.S. has used education both here and abroad as a way to spread American values and culture. Many foreign leaders today cite their time studying abroad as shaping their values and influencing their policy decisions. Congress identified this as one of the imperatives for re-establishing the non-immigrant student visa program after 9/11.

The other motivation for U.S. government actions toward Saudi students is political. Saudi Arabia is the U.S.'s most significant ally in the Arabian Gulf. Saudi Arabia's oil wealth and position as the largest producer in OPEC is the basis for the U.S.-Saudi relationship, one of the most important relationships for the U.S. in the Middle East. In recognition of the importance of this relationship the U.S. government adjusted its visa policy at the request of King Abdullah in 2005.

U.S. Government Goals and Means

For the U.S. Government, the goal of supporting foreign students coming to the U.S. serves an economic purpose; it further enhances our own human capital development. Long-term exposure to international students helps U.S. students develop the intercultural skills needed to successfully operate in the global economy. It provides the basis for many international exchanges and improved trade relations. The personal relationships that foreign students build serve as the basis for increased future commercial and political exchanges. Another goal relates to the current anti-American sentiment caused by the U.S. war on terror. After 9/11 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the U.S. lost much of its good reputation in the region. Rebuilding trust and goodwill in the Middle East is a step towards reestablishing the United States' cultural, political, and economic influence in world affairs.

The means for accomplishing these goals was the easing of visa restrictions in 2005 to clear the backlog of students, particularly from Saudi Arabia. This is part of a larger vision for maintaining strong ties with other countries but students from Saudi Arabia have become an increasingly large segment of the population of

foreign students coming to the U.S. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security implemented and oversees the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVIP) that provided a mechanism for issuing and tracking nonimmigrant visas to students and their dependents who come to the U.S. This system was implemented in the wake of the realizations of the origins of fifteen of the nineteen perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks that were in the U.S. on student visas. SEVIS, the computerized system that schools and students must now use, was implemented beginning in 2005 to “track and monitor schools; exchange visitor programs; and F, M and J nonimmigrants while they visit the United States and participate in the U.S. education system.” (U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, 2016) SEVIS is used by the U.S. government to ensure that foreign students are here for educational purposes and are complying fully with the terms of their visas.

The events of 9/11 and their impact on U.S. government policy and practices

The initial report that two of the identified hijackers were in the United States on student visa immediately caused widespread condemnation of the program that allowed them entry into the country. Reading the testimony from those first hearings is informative and somewhat shocking. It would be many months before the visa status of the various hijackers was known. It is difficult to believe that there was such a lack of capacity to monitor incoming students and then learn that many previously proposed systems for monitoring student visa holders were never implemented. In addition, the testimony showed there was no cooperation among agencies about people who remained unaccounted for.

These early hearings also focused on the fact that fifteen of the nineteen alleged perpetrators were of Saudi Arabian origin. The Saudi student population came under severe scrutiny in the following years, and all international students faced increased screening. The lack of accurate or finely detailed information in the early days after the attacks put a spotlight on a system that was easily manipulated and had few, if any, credible controls. One of the Saudi hijackers was immediately identified as in the United States on a student visa. He had overstayed and was not attending classes. This would have been found if the SEVIS notification system that was authorized but never funded or implemented had been operational. This was the case of a lesson not learned; one of the convicted terrorists from the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center came in on a student visa. He, too, had dropped out of school and was never tracked by the government for deportation.

The initial hearings highlighted that little was known about the criteria used for visa approvals. Only three percent of Saudi visa applications were turned down by U.S. consular officers in that country in 2000 and 2001, an extremely low number. Yet, at that time, nearly twenty five percent of all U.S. visa seekers worldwide were denied visas by other countries. The State Department officials maintained that Saudi Arabia was a low fraud country, thus, documentation presented was assumed legitimate. Also, most students were able to provide evidence of personal financial resources so they were not likely to seek work while here in violation of their visas. No additional scrutiny was applied. Students from poorer countries were more regularly denied visas (U.S. Congress, 2008).

The conclusion among the members of Congress was unequivocal that national security was the singular priority, paramount to educational and cultural exchange. Since there was no system to track students and deport them, they would be kept out of the country. A six-month moratorium on the issuance of visas was proposed, which could be extended if needed. Additional action was proposed to coordinate the implementation of SEVIS, the computerized student database, with INS and other State Department officials. There was concern about the moratorium from Congressional members whose states had large populations of foreign students, in particular California. The loss of revenue from international students was mentioned at that time but not widely discussed.

A reading of the congressional records from October 2001 to the present shows a similar group of themes and concerns expressed among the stakeholders. The testimonies presented and the bills put forward initially had to do with the huge backlog of student visas and the problems higher education institutions (HEIs) had in implementing SEVIS, the database they were responsible for regularly updating with every accepted foreign student's status. By September 2002 the restrictions on student visas was causing widespread concern at those schools with large numbers of international students in the middle of their studies there. Many foreign students were unable to reenter the country after 9/11 to finish their degrees (U.S. Congress, 2004).

More importantly, the fall off in international students created other real problems, such as the lack of masters and doctoral level candidates in many advanced programs in the STEM subjects, and the loss of revenue to destination schools and their communities from international students. The visa delays were encouraging the best students and scholars to choose programs in other countries. These concerns were frequently voiced by members of Congress and members of the HEI community, but often delivered as part of a wider conversation on the national importance of educational exchanges with foreign students and the long-term impact on foreign students who return home imbued with deep knowledge about America and its values. As one university president after the other testified, the list of names of foreign leaders and their advisors who attended schools in the U.S. is long. These relationships are vital to the U.S. national interests in the long run. Even Colin Powell was frequently referenced as a strong advocate for international education as a way to disseminate the values of democracy and promote long-term links between institutions and people here and abroad (U.S. Congress, 2004).

Other concerns about the visa backlog related to the increasingly competitive market for international education. Capturing foreign hearts and minds through cross cultural exchange is important but so is enticing the best engineering students to choose HEIs in the United States over China, Canada, and a growing list of countries offering programs in English and with state of the art research facilities. There were calls to concretely address the visa backlog, which had reached a critical stage by 2005 (Wildavsky 2010). Today, the most recent challenge facing HEIs

relates to general immigration issues in the U.S., where the top science, math, and engineering students can only stay for short periods after graduating, therefore not contributing to the long term growth of the U.S. economy. In addition, the opportunity to remain in the U.S. upon graduation and have long-term resident status might serve as strong incentive for the best students to choose the U.S. over another country. This, along with increasing competition from other countries, has reduced the U.S. share of international students from twenty three percent in 2000 to sixteen percent by 2012 (Choudaha, 2014).

The Student Visa Backlog

In March 2003, at a congressional hearing entitled “Dealing with foreign students and scholars in a age of terrorism: visa backlogs,” Representative Nick Smith of Michigan noted that in the days since 9/11 we learned that the nineteen terrorists received a total of twenty three visas at five different posts, including student visas. According to Smith, “Even more telling, six months after the terrorist attacks, approval notices for student visas were issued for two of the hijackers, Mohammed Atta and Marwan Al-Shehhi.” In other words, how could this still be happening? Smith’s comments highlighted the realities that creating a system to prevent terrorists from coming in as students was a daunting challenge that the nation had not yet met. In addition, it was clear that students from Saudi Arabia remained a serious concern.

The number of students approved for visas to enter the U.S. coming from Saudi Arabia fell to a trickle. There is no available data for the number of Saudi student

visa denials but the number of approvals for all students worldwide fell and approvals for Saudi students coming to the U.S. fell most acutely.

This problem was addressed directly by the King of Saudi Arabia during his April, 2005 visit to Washington, D.C. (Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 2005). President Bush released a joint statement with Saudi King Abdullah. In addition to the very long list of strategic interests the U.S. shares with Saudi Arabia, including oil, Iraq, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region, the Palestinian issue, and U.S. support for Saudi membership in the WTO, there was specific mention of the need to expand cultural and educational exchanges. Within months of this meeting a second consular office was opened in Saudi Arabia to enable potential visa applicants to have their newly required interviews in a more timely fashion and by early 2006 the backlog was being addressed. The current rate of growth for Saudi students being granted F-1 visas is faster than the rate of growth for all students being granted visas. Today, nearly half of all Saudis who attend schools outside of the country choose to study in the United States.

The Saudi government was not the only group pressing the U.S. for some visa relief. According to Bloomberg News the indiscriminant application of the new security rules was hurting schools all over the country, especially those with programs in technology that relied heavily on foreign students. By 2006 the State department had created five hundred and fifteen more consular jobs, trained staffed, and automated many of its systems to better coordinate with other government agencies

(Bloomberg Businessweek Technology, 2006). The results were evident in the reduction of the backlog and increase in the number of foreign students studying in the U.S.

Saudi Arabian Government

King Salman, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) which was established in 1975 to oversee matters regarding higher education, and the various SACM, Saudi Arabian Cultural Ministries around the world are directly involved in the movement and supervision of students abroad. The Deputy Ministry for Scholarship Affairs manages the KASP, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program. The General Administration of Planning under the MOHE is currently implementing the government's plans to expand the number of schools and update the country's curriculum. It also publishes comprehensive reports on the status of the programs, including higher education inside Saudi Arabia and the KASP.

The Government of Saudi Arabia's Motivations

The government of Saudi Arabia faces a long list of challenges, some due to domestic social conditions, others relating to the political turmoil in the region. The death of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, on January 23, 2015, adds to these challenges. A main motivation of the Saudi government is economic. Saudi Arabia has a youth bulge with more than sixty percent of the population under the age of thirty. Unemployment is a considerable problem, even among college graduates.

The data in Table 14 shows continued underemployment of Saudis in their own country. The IMF anticipates continued economic growth in the country related to the energy sector but confirms that there is a need to improve the competitiveness of workers in the private sector and reform the labor markets. Job creation in the private sector remains a significant challenge.

Table 14: Unemployment in Saudi Arabia

	Overall Rate	Saudi Citizen Rate
1999	4 percent	8 percent
2001	4 percent	8 percent
2003	5 percent	10 percent
2005	6 percent	12 percent
2007	5 percent	11 percent
2009	5 percent	10 percent
2011	5 percent	12 percent
2013	6 percent	12 percent
2014	5.5 percent	11.5 percent

Source: IMF Country Report No. 13/229 July 2013 and IMF Country Report No. 14/292 September 2014

The economic concerns of high unemployment and rising living costs are fueling political problems. There is growing discontent inside the country over the lack of economic opportunities and there is pressure to address the restrictions that limit

access to jobs for women, who are increasingly seen as a necessary economic force. The youth bulge, high unemployment for college graduates, an over-saturated public sector, and the rising cost of living that has made the two-income household a necessity are all sources of tension inside the Kingdom. The King has never faced a serious challenge to his rule and there have been only muted calls for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Nevertheless, King Abdullah chose not to ignore the growing pressure on the country for some type of reform. Education policy is at the heart of these reforms.

There is also an ideological motivation for the Saudi government to support the internationalization of education. The country has its own divide between Islamic sects, the Sunni and Shia populations inside the country, and the country faces challenges from terrorists both inside Saudi Arabia and in nearby countries. The Saudi government is motivated to address the more extreme Islamic ideologies that are fueling the instability in the entire Middle East North Africa region and undermine Saudi Arabia's position as the most influential country in the Gulf.

Saudi Government Goals and Means

For the government of Saudi Arabia, the goal of supporting a large number of Saudi students attending schools in the U.S. two-fold. The Saudi Government is using education as a way to build human capital, hoping it will diversify the economy beyond oil and build a domestic workforce capable of expanding the private sector. The other goal is to modernize the society by opening it up to western norms and

standards. There is a need to secularize the education system and reform curricula and teaching methods. The Saudi government has also inferred that it hopes to reduce the appeal of radical Islam among disaffected youth.

Education Policy in Saudi Arabia

The Education Policy Document issued by the Supreme Committee for Educational Policy Council of Ministers in 1969 provides the foundation for education in the country. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) was established in 1975 to oversee all matters regarding higher education. The establishment of the Higher Education Council in 1993 created a formally structured agency with a chairman and specific laws that cover the administrative and regulatory issues of the Kingdom's higher education policy. Today the Higher Education Council under the MOHE is responsible for all matters pertaining to post-secondary education in the Kingdom. The MOHE is actively working to improve quality and availability of higher education within the Kingdom and has begun an initiative to modernize the entire system to meet the needs of the "knowledge society." While the K-12 education is criticized for its heavy emphasis on religious education, since 2000 the government has instituted plans to address deficiencies and support previously underrepresented groups within its society, including poorer students and Shiites in pursuing higher education (MOHE 2013).

The 2013 assessment report published by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education Department of Planning and Information offered a detailed review of progress to date and the next steps needed to meet their goal of updating the education system.

The wording in these reports emphasizes economic development, not specifically social changes although that is the subtext often read into the King's statements on education reform. Unlike other Gulf States that have chosen to import education from developing countries, the Saudi approach has been to undertake a large-scale transformation of its own education system. The efforts include increasing the number of primary schools, colleges and universities all over the country to include underserved areas, improving management, evaluating curricula for quality, and adopting international measurements to assess performance (Education, 2013). The country has begun administering international assessment tests to lower school children and keeping other data that is usable for longitudinal evaluations. Increasing physical capacity and modernizing curricula are attempts to raise the country's educational profile to meet recognized international standards.

According to the MOHE, since 1990 the number of public and private universities grew from 7 to 33 by 2011, the number of colleges increased from 83 to 543 and academic departments grew from 400 to 2,393. Geographic diversity is identified as a priority in order to provide access to education among all the 85 provinces, many of them in previously underserved areas. Student enrolment in higher education rose from 404,000 in 2000 to more than 1.1 million in 2012. The government provides a monthly stipend to everyone who undertakes full time study. According to the MOHE, 85% of all registered students qualify for the stipend. Graduate students are given an annual stipend of approximately USD 20,000 (Jamjoom, 2012).

In addition to providing supports for internet use and online courses, the MOHE also now tracks international rankings, such as the US News and World Report and the Chinese Shanghai Jiao Tong Ranking of World Universities, with the goal of seeing their own university rankings improve based on objectively measured international standards. The King Saud University, the only Saudi school to break into the top 400 in the world, moved up from 247th place in 2009 to 197th in US News and World Report in 2012. The MOHE publications present this as a validation of the government's efforts at overhauling the entire system, a "comprehensive renaissance" according to the MOHE, and confirmation that Saudi universities can successfully compete with their regional and international counterparts (Education, 2013).

Education reform is an expensive undertaking in Saudi Arabia. According to the Saudi Arabia Business Council, the government is allocating \$54 billion to education for 2014, 25% of its total budget, the highest amount in the world. This represents a 3% increase over last year and continues a trend of budget allocations of 20% or greater since 2000. The MOHE identifies a long list of current initiatives including 1,900 building projects currently underway. These projects range from school refurbishments to building entire new campuses, such as the SAR 9.4 billion (USD 2.6 billion) being spent to expand King Saud University to include a campus for women and US\$750 million for a teaching hospital. In total, the near term budget for expansion exceeds US\$12 billion, which includes seven nanotechnology research centers as part of the overall effort to develop the nation's primary research base.

University-housed research centers, science parks, and technology incubators have been built as outreach forums to private companies.

By some measure the country is advancing toward the development of a more competitive, technology driven economy but its global rankings for intellectual activity and competitiveness show limited results to date. The UN World International Property Organization, WIPO, ranked Saudi Arabia 42 of 142 countries for global innovation in 2013, up from 48 in 2012. Yet, the country's ranking for Knowledge and Technological output was only 78 of 142, showing that knowledge creation is a long term project, one that requires sustained effort and increasing connectivity to other knowledge communities (Global Innovation Index 2013).

Internationalization and the King Abdullah Scholarship Program

The MOHE identified internationalization of the education system as a necessary step toward developing a globally competitive knowledge society. According to MOHE publications, a key component of this is fostering cultural exchange by accepting foreign students into the country and encouraging Saudis to study abroad. The King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) is one of the most ambitious efforts of any nation in terms of government funded outward mobility (Altbach 2014). The Saudi government spent approximately US\$2.4 billion on the program in 2011 and budgeted US\$ 5.9 billion for scholarships supporting 185,000 students and families studying abroad in 2014 (SABC 2014).

Scholarships have been funded by the government since 1927 when fourteen students were sent to Egypt to study in disciplines ranging from Sharia law to agriculture and medicine. The number of students funded by the government grew with the state's revenue. The responsibility for supervising scholars abroad was formally delegated to the MOHE in 1975. In 2005, a Deputy Ministry for Scholarship Affairs was established to oversee the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP). The KASP represents a major effort to internationalize the education of young Saudis and dramatically improve skills in the sciences, technology, and other priority disciplines including business administration. It is also the Saudi government's response to the strained relationship with the U.S. after the 9/11 attacks, when fifteen of the nineteen attackers were Saudi citizens. After 2001, visa approvals for Saudi students trying to study in the U.S. fell to a trickle. In 2005, King Abdullah personally approached President Bush to address the issue, hoping to amend some of the negative perceptions of the country by sending young Saudis to the U.S., promote better U.S.-Saudi relations in order to combat extremism, and also provide Saudi students with opportunities for advanced education.

Education reform is the means by which the Saudi government is trying to address the economic, political, and ideological challenges it currently faces. The government is spending heavily to increase the availability of schools to previously underserved communities. King Abdullah was attempting to change the culture of the country and to encourage curriculum reform by presenting modernization of education in an Islamic light and as a national success that proves the superior

worth of the Saudi people. The scholarship program is a key component of this effort.

Why does Saudi Arabia not simply import schools like other Gulf countries in an effort to bring its own education system up to international standards? This is what nearly all the other Gulf countries have done. The Saudi government is opting to send its students abroad rather than inviting foreign schools into the country. The KASP is the means by which the Saudi government is exposing large numbers of its best students to western style education and modes of living. The KASP is offered to both Shi'ite and Sunni students. The KASP was launched in 2005 as a five-year initiative. It was renewed until 2020 and King Salman has pledged to continue Abdullah's policies but the internal tension between the voices for reform and the powerful religious conservatives remain an issue.

Scholarships are given to Saudi men and women who wish to study at the level of bachelor, masters, PhD, or medical fellowship. Women are nearly one quarter of the Saudis currently studying in the U.S. Students are awarded scholarships to study in approved countries and at approved schools based on the level of study. A school may only be approved for study at the undergraduate level and require a separate approval for higher-level study. The approved list for scholarships is published annually by the MOHE. The process for getting on the approved/recommended list is not made public but does consider regional and professional accreditation, such as by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the AACSB, the

Association to Advance Collegiate Business Schools of Business. ESL programs must be accredited by one of four professional language associations. There are reports that the government may place limits on the length of study and which schools are approved in an effort to reign in spending (Kottasova, 2016) because of the current budget crisis.

The KASP was first instituted in 2005 for study beginning in 2006. The United States was the only country approved for study in 2006 and Australia, New Zealand, China, and eleven other Asian countries were added in 2007. Canada and twenty-two European countries were added in 2008. The MOHE removed the U.K. from the approved list for scholarships in 2009 because it reached the saturation level for Saudi students. The KASP sponsors previously self-funded students in approved countries. Sponsorship for Australia was ended after one year due to the heavy concentration of Saudi students at specific universities. According to the government's website, limits are placed on the percentage of Saudi Arabian scholars at any given university or ESL program to ensure that the concentration will not get too large. The government openly states that it hopes to encourage Saudi students to integrate into the local community for the social exposure and academic benefits. According to the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission (SACM) approved areas of study are degree programs in medical and health sciences, engineering, business, science, technology, and math. The list of approved academic disciplines for graduate students is more extensive.

Students register their applications on the MOHE website. Once approved they attend an information forum providing them with details about their rights and responsibilities in the program as well as preparatory sessions on what to expect in their destination country. After attending the forum an official certificate of academic acceptance is issued and the student can apply for a student visa. Once the visa is granted the student receives an official decree from the MOHE and the scholarship is funded and airline tickets are provided.

The wife of a scholarship student or companion of a female student is eligible to study English or another language, payable at the government's expense and simply with the approval of the cultural attaché at the relevant embassy. These companions are also eligible to apply for scholarships once they successfully complete their language training. It should be noted that there is an increase of unaccompanied females now studying outside the country (Lebaron 2013).

Supervision of scholarship students is under the authority of the various Saudi cultural missions (SACM). This includes academic supervision, funds disbursement, working with students on gaining full admission to the programs of their choice, and monitoring each student on a regular basis. The SACM also supervises students who study in a country at their own expense, maintaining a relationship with them by offering round trip airline tickets back to Saudi Arabia and bonuses for outstanding academic performance. In some instances, the student may become eligible for a scholarship, even if the country is no longer on the approved list for study.

Applications are reviewed on an individual basis (Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in Canada, 2014). Acceptance to the program is not guaranteed but applications are still encouraged.

U.S. Higher Education Institutions and Supporting Industry

The list of institutions of higher learning that Saudi students attend comprises English language learning programs, community colleges, four-year colleges, and full universities offering advanced levels of study. The organizations that actively monitor and support student mobility include the IIE, the Institute for International Education and NAFSA, the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, a U.S. based organization that promotes study abroad and facilitates all aspects of internationalization of higher education. Data and analysis are made available by international public and private organizations such as the OBHE, the Observatory for Borderless Higher Education, the Brookings Institute, UNESCO, and other U.N. agencies.

U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the Supporting Industry

Motivations

The education providers in the U.S. are motivated to accept foreign students for many reasons. Economically, as a supplier of higher education, they want to attract foreign students because they generate revenue and they provide a critical mass in master's degree and doctoral programs in disciplines that do not attract enough U.S. students to proceed. These are often in programs that contribute to a school's

international reputation and generate patentable research. Many universities report that these programs would have to be eliminated if not for international student enrolment. Even in general education programs the U.S. has the capacity to enroll more students without reducing the quality of the education or student experience.

There is also an ideological motivation that is behind the efforts of HEIs and the supporting industry to support the increase in foreign students coming to the U.S. Universities and colleges (HEIs) support student mobility in order to encourage the internationalization of American schools and students. HEIs see education as a public good that creates better-informed citizens both here and abroad. Also, exposure to students from foreign countries is believed to enhance the learning experience for U.S. students because they provide other perspectives and expose American students to cultures and belief systems they would otherwise never encounter up close. Study abroad and exposure to international students is more highly prized than ever, and is now being mandated in top business schools.

HEIs are politically motivated to see government policies that facilitate foreign students coming to the U.S. Currently, the supporting industry is advocating for changes to U.S. immigration policy that prevents foreign students from staying in the U.S. once they complete their studies. They argue that restrictive immigration policy sends many foreign students to other countries that offer opportunities for work experience and possible pathways to citizenship. Easing of visa restrictions to

allow foreign students completing their studies the opportunity to stay and work in the U.S. is a way to improve U.S. competitive advantage in enticing talented students and scholars to come to the U.S.

HEIs and the Supporting Industry Goals and Mean

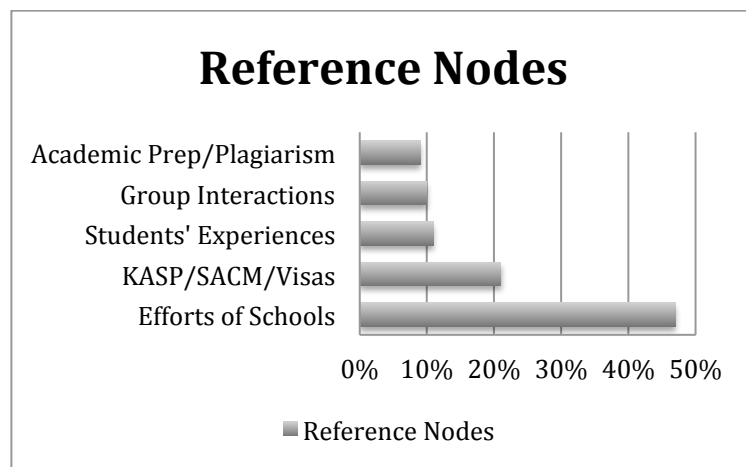
The goal of HEIs today is to attract more foreign students, especially from a diverse group of countries. The Saudi students are a particularly attractive population since many are provided full scholarships by their country. Another main advantage for the U.S. is that international students currently make up only four percent of the total student population whereas they comprise seventeen percent of the student population in the U.K. and twenty two percent in Australia. The U.S. has adequate capacity to absorb an increase in the number of international students. Also, since China, India, and South Korea make up forty six percent of foreign student enrolment, having a reliable sending partner such as Saudi Arabia could provide significant cushion in case political relations with one of those countries deteriorate and their students are no longer welcome in the U.S. or choose to study elsewhere.

HEIs in the U.S. have adopted the SEVIS computerized system for monitoring foreign students who are attending their schools as one of the means for accommodating the government's new rules for accepting foreign students. Also, the supporting industry functions as the means by which HEIs encourage and manage a growing number of international students in the U.S. The issues faced by HEIs and their political concerns are aided by the supporting industry of highly professional groups

that publish and analyze data, identify trends and issues among the stakeholders, and advocate for policy changes to various government agencies to increase the number of international students.

Interview Findings of HEIs – Emergent Concerns

The interview findings were analyzed by using Nvivo software to sort and organize the responses into nodes. The nodes represent specific areas of content that are mentioned during the interviews and are based on individual themes or types of information provided in the interviews. Coding can show interconnections between events as well as the relevance of factors that were not previously recognized. In the case of the interview data from the various HEI administrators the following nodes were most prominent, based on the frequency of the references in the interviews.



The Efforts of Schools comprises responses that relate to what actions HEIs are taking to facilitate international students sense of welcome, social and cultural

assimilation, and academic success. It includes student orientation and issues related to campus internationalization as well as programs or efforts to address other areas that have been coded into separate nodes. Those nodes contain comments and observations rather than direct action. Administrators at various HEIs offered comments that related to their efforts to serve foreign students more often than all other areas of discussion. The KASP and SACM are institutions that have an impact on the choices that Saudi students make and inform the efforts that HEIs make toward ensuring Saudi students remain in compliance with visa requirements. Students' Experiences contains responses that explore the lived experience of Saudi students from the perspective of HEI officials and Group Interactions include administrators' views about behavior of Saudi students as a single cohort that impedes their full integration into campus life. Academic preparedness and plagiarism emerged as a matter of concern about Saudi students' ability to meet the rigors of U.S. higher education and their understanding of plagiarism and its consequences.

Efforts of Schools - Student Orientation and Internationalization

Beyond visa compliance, some schools have established extensive programs to provide orientations and ongoing help to foreign students to ensure their success. For other HEIs, the issues surrounding integration and social adjustment are addressed on an ad hoc basis. Orientation programs often consist of a one-hour session on maintaining visa compliance. For a few schools the efforts are more extensive and continue throughout the year. It is unusual for a school to do what this large, flagship campus is doing to support foreign students.

“I believe we have one of the best orientation programs in the country. It’s a week-long conference style orientation program, with a lot of pre-orientation modules that the students go through and then at orientation they come in and stay with us the entire week and we offer them, I can share the program with you, we offer them sessions on paying bill, opening bank accounts, cultural adjustments, opportunities for social interaction, meeting the movers and shakers on campus.”

The desire to increase the size of the foreign student population comes with the reality that certain preparations need to be made, and hopefully will be in place before the students arrive. A successful experience for the students who come from overseas is important to officials at HEIs. School administrators are beginning to recognize the need to establish protocols and marshal resources needed for both the foreign student population to have a successful experience and the domestic students to interact meaningfully and learn from their foreign counterparts.

“We are looking at students who come from educational backgrounds that are very different from here. They don’t have the critical thinking skills. In a place like ours, we are almost 150 years old, our faculty in the school is used to teaching a student from a rigorous high school program. These students often have a language issue and a background of total non-involvement in the classroom, where they just sit and listen. We were finding that they were suffering academically, which affects their entire experience.”

“As our numbers grow we have created something called the global village on campus and with the partnership with INTO. Its not just about increasing marketing and recruiting, the whole team is dedicated to students services, and that means everything that makes sure they are succeeding academically but also that we are attempting to start to get the domestic population to participate and become global citizens.”

Levels of coordination between the schools’ many departments are varied. The range of issues is diverse, some academic, and some highly personal. Foreign student’s needs are often best addressed on an individual basis. These students

require more than an initial orientation; they face ongoing challenges that many administrators address with them. HEI officials identified problems that were unique to this population. For example, in addition to meeting the standards imposed on them by SACM, Saudi students, many who traveled to the U.S. with their families, needed help finding doctors, appropriate housing for their families and schools for their children, as well as transportation solutions. Administrators from schools at all levels noted that many Saudis are married or a bit older than the general populations of international students. Foreign students face other restrictions that can impede their progress for personal reasons.

“Their immigration status affects their lives in ways that you don’t ever think about. Just the fact that they have to be registered as full time, an American student can drop a class for many reasons, be it a mental health issue or whatnot. They can’t ever take three courses instead of four.”

“We have just one, a male Saudi starting a Ph.D. in literature. He’s coming here with a wife and six children.... When he first came to the office he was struggling. He was first in Philadelphia and was in a neighborhood that wasn’t working. Can you image dealing that many children? They are all almost school age and the kids are having adjustment issues.”

There are schools that have embraced comprehensive internationalization or created internal structures to coordinate resources across the entire campus that promote globalization among the student body and programs. Like the partnerships some smaller schools established with outside organizations, these efforts are aimed at increasing the number of foreign students and ensuring they integrate on campus and have a positive experience. They are also meant to help domestic students benefit from their presence on campus. This is no small task. Yet, for the Rutgers University flagship campus in New Brunswick, N.J., it earned the prestigious

Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization in 2014. The school established the GAIA Center for Global Advancement and International Affairs five years ago to bring together all services related to international students, domestic students studying abroad, creating global programs, and centralizing scholar and faculty mobility. The GAIA is the center for everything global and international at Rutgers New Brunswick.

At other schools the process of increasing internationalization of the campus required partnerships with outside organizations that had both expertise and resources. One large private university embraces comprehensive internationalization by viewing all of their students the same in an effort to fully integrate internationals into the student community. As one administrator said:

‘We have really tried to mainstream and not separate our international students. We take a somewhat different approach than some other schools. We’ve made everything international. Throughout our conversations we even see our domestic students as international. We’ve really tried to not separate and have specialized programs for international students.’

Often, having foreign students live with people who are not from their home country is used as a primary tool to encourage integration.

“For us it is a real focus, to break them up away from their fellow countrymen, because they are here to learn English....If possible, we try not to put students from the same language background in the same homestay, or in the same dorm room....And that’s for both the social and language reason.”

“For all of our freshmen you cannot choose who you want to live with. With geographical diversity the hope is that every... we have about 21% of international freshman, up from 6% seven years ago. Now every room, 85% of every freshman room has at least one international student in it.”

Group Interactions - Integration into the campus community

Saudi students arrive at HEIs in a chain of friends and family members who rely on each other as sources of information and cluster together in tight knit groups. The result is that, once one Saudi student chooses a program, many follow. While they are often a tight knit group they frequently come with sufficient English language skills to allow them to navigate their transition to the U.S.

“The students end up this program from other or often through the Saudi embassy or contacts from alumni or current students who work in the Saudi embassy. We must be on a list somewhere. We do attract quite a few of them.”

“We are on the list of approved schools for SACM and most of the students who come to us from SACM are here because they have family here in the NY area, or had family come here, or are interested in the NY area.”

“Yes, often they come here after a cousin did. We actually have several here now who are cousins. I’m not sure if in Saudi Arabia that actually means they are cousins.”

“Some [Saudi students] have friends from every country and hang out with all others but most Saudis tend to socialize with other Saudis. Especially the females, they tend to hang out mainly with other Saudi females. But that’s not a hard rule, because we have some that have friends of all nationalities.”

“I would [say the Saudi Student club is a very important source of information and emotional support for Saudi students.]”

Many school administrators felt the need to organize more events to help Saudi students meet and make friends with American students. As the following statements show, the range of efforts was varied but the consensus was that bringing the Saudi student population into the wider community was an area of concern.

“We don’t do anything at all except to introduce them to other students. I do find that most of the Saudi students work outside so they create a group within themselves so they talk to each other.”

“We encourage them all to integrate as much as possible. We advertise different activities that are going on on-campus and we work closely with our partners at the college to integrate students on the campus. We work with Campus Ministry to promote volunteering and we have some academic connections at the college that help us, too.”

“We have an office of student support services that runs programs that help students integrate, such as having international weeks and months. We do attempt to bring together all of our students.”

“So we start with orientation. That’s important for us, pre-arrival into our orientation program. The friendship program is sort of our continued programming for the semester, and through that there’s conversation hours, opportunities to bring together domestic and international students. There’s an international women’s group that brings together spouses and children. The friendship program does a lot of different things; holiday dinners, address student issues during school breaks and things like that.”

“We just set up a group of international ambassadors that are coming early to the campus. They are coming early and some are American, some are international. Their job will be to integrate all the foreign students into other areas of the university.”

SACM, the KASP, and Visa Compliance

The attitudes about internationalization and the approaches to managing issues concerning foreign students vary from one school to another. In general, the school’s admissions departments engage in recruiting and marketing to foreign students. Once foreign students have been accepted the admissions departments have no further contact with them. All HEIs have an Office of International Student Services (OISS) that manages visa compliance, with little time for anything else. The needs of Saudi students are greater than others because the OISS must interact regularly with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Fairfax, Virginia. SACM administers the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) and maintains strict

rules on student academic performance and reporting requirements. Helping students stay in compliance with U.S. government visa requirements is a priority for the OISS. For Saudi students it goes beyond the OISS and often requires extensive efforts on the part of the individual program directors. Comments from administrators at various schools highlight the efforts required to keep Saudi students' documentation in order with both the U.S. government and SACM:

"I have to write letters all the time...I am writing quite a few letters to the body that is funding them.... Sometimes at the end of each semester or year, depending on the student and how close of tabs the governments are keeping on them, I have to write down the actual courses they took. They want to make sure the courses help them with why they are educating them."

"I do send a report [to SACM] every session. We have four-week sessions. I show updates to their advisors about their grades, who passes and their attendance. I give notes such as the student is doing very well, the student is on academic probation, and this sort of thing."

"Once they get the visa and come here they are all ours. All the traffic in this office is based on that.... The immigration piece is a very niche area, that legal area where we not only have to help students maintain their status we have to maintain institutional compliance. The government puts a lot of responsibility on the institution itself."

"We are super lucky because J and her department are incredible. She will, if she sees a student's visa is going to be headed toward trouble, and the student isn't responding, she will say [to me] "Get that student in my office now." Because, often if you are having trouble with your visa, you have to go to your home country to resolve it. Most students don't want to do that."

Academic Concerns

English language training is offered in several different settings and with different levels of emphasis on academic preparation. Some programs are located directly on college campuses and offer students the ability to integrate with other students who

are there as regular degree seeking students. Some of these language programs have strong academic components that are designed to prepare students for college level work. Some, such as the specialized program at Borough of Manhattan Community College, have been developed for students who have been accepted to the school but have been referred to the program by academic advisors for intensive language and academic skills training. This differs from all other ESL programs because it is specifically available only to accepted students, not just people who want to learn the English language.

Interviews with school administrators pointed to academic preparation for college level study and combatting incidents of plagiarism as major areas of concern. These comments come from administrators applied to Saudi students at all types of schools:

“In our program, we try to get them to take our English writing course, which is only a one and a half credits but it does go to the electives...The master’s or Ph.D’s who come here are not prepared for courses with that much heavy reading and writing. If I see one of those students, and I generally only need one or two meetings with them, I will tell them ‘do not take that class.’”

“We absolutely see this as a problem not only from Asian students, who are famous for the rote learning but also from the former Soviet countries and Middle Eastern countries. Language learning is a bit unique in that in order to produce ideas you need to learn the language to express those ideas.”

“So academic integrity becomes a big thing [for students who come from countries where education is based on rote memorization and with heavy emphasis on Islamic studies.]”

Almost universally, school administrators spoke about the need to provide training for understanding and avoiding plagiarism. The seriousness of the problem should

not be underestimated. Plagiarism is a cause of extensive concern for program directors and foreign students who have experienced setbacks because of it.

Comments from administrators at all types of programs, from English language learning to as high as Ph.D. level showed this is a common concern.

“Yes, in many countries, including Saudi Arabia plagiarism is acceptable and it gets them into an awful lot of trouble. We try when they first get here to educate them about it but we have lots of trouble explaining what this is and the consequences of their actions, what they are risking. We try to go that extra mile to educate them and accept that there are different activities there.”

“We have a very strict code about plagiarism. Our teachers will use different online programs to see they are not plagiarizing. It happens sometimes and the student fails. We have an academic orientation [at the beginning of each four week module] where our academic supervisor talks about what constitutes plagiarism and the students typically would have some sort of plagiarism exposure to what is and isn't plagiarism in their writing classes, as well.”

“Those are all areas [academic integrity and plagiarism] we have been working very hard on. It is a huge component of our orientation.”

Cultural Sensitivity

Even cultural sensitivity became an important point of discussion for HEIs that were increasing their population of international students.

“And all of this did come out of it. Part of our efforts to alleviate some of these situations have been to develop training programs for staff. There are definitely some staff that are not trained to be culturally sensitive Maybe you just need to better align people with the needs of the students. It has to become part of your job expectations. So we have had international students face issues with administrators or faculty and sometimes it was language.”

“And the staff has got to get used to teaching so many different types of students.”

Measuring Success

Measuring success in one area where many HEIs are not well organized. The English language programs use passing the TOEFL or other internally designed language tests as one measure and some even track college acceptances and graduation rates. Universities do not seem to have one measurement to determine how successfully they meet the needs of foreign students, how well they integrate on campus, and the impact they make on U.S. students. Rutgers University does undertake extensive assessment, both self directed and by using outside an agency. There is a clear need for schools to track attitudes and knowledge of incoming domestic students and again when these students are graduating to evaluate what impact foreign students had on them. If the stated goal of bringing more foreign students to campus is to help domestic students build their interpersonal skills and become more competent global thinkers then this is an important step to take. These comments reflect the range of the attitudes about how HEIs measure their success in serving international students.

“Some are academically bound and some are general. So their ultimate goals determine that but one measure is, if they are academically bound, do they matriculate into a university?”

“The Saudis who finish our program do succeed. And our program is not particularly easy. There are 12 levels. The highest three levels are tough. If they can get through those levels they are prepared to do undergraduate work. There is a lot of success with the Saudis who complete our program.”

“We are definitely attempting to – that’s the beauty of this program, the partnership with INTO.... retention is really important and that is what offering these services is about. Our graduation rates are improving from these programs.”

“We want all our students to leave here as global citizens, whatever that means. But it means a lot.”

“The goal for international as well as domestic students is to build competencies that are needed to survive in the world and to gain this academic experience and degree.”

“We have to undertake a qualitative and quantitative approach to measuring success. Part of the measureable strategies has been to invite an outside survey and survey the entire campus, which we did for the first time last year....That kind of a larger measure is being undertaken by central administration and being very well supported. These things cost a lot of money.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, as noted by the Indian blogger, Gyanoprobha, there is widespread variation in the meaning of the term internationalism when it is applied to education. The writer settled on a definition that “internationalism as an ideology of education in none other that the attempt to understand and build bridges with people who are different from what we are.” (Gyanoprobha 2005). While the broadest literature from the websites of the HEIs presents a similar view, the execution of the vision is rarely done on a coordinated basis within any one institution. Hence, the people who actually serve international students are often not aware of the other efforts occurring in the school and are rarely able to access or recommend existing programs that might help an individual international student.

The exception to this case is the GAIA Center at Rutgers University, even though the administrator at the program admitted they constantly work to get the message out within the larger college community about their existence and coordinate services among the hundreds of schools and departments within the university. For most

HEIs, supports for foreign students often come directly from the programs they attend and are incomplete. Their efforts at full integration of international students are haphazard. No school-wide system for evaluating how well U.S. students learn about their foreign classmates was evident for most HEIs. The long-term benefits of having foreign students on campus are implied, but not clearly shown.

Chapter Six: Findings on Saudi Students

Students in Saudi Arabia are increasingly choosing to pursue higher degrees both inside the country and by going abroad. Total enrolment in higher education in the country rose from 404,000 in 2000 to over one million in 2012 (Saudi Ministry of Higher Education). The KASP supports Saudi students who are pursuing degrees outside of the country as detailed in Table 15.

Table 15: KASP Students, Number of Students vis-à-vis category, 2011

Level	Men	Women	Total	Percentage
Bachelor	64,109	11,156	75,265	53
Master	17,579	13,455	31,104	22
Doctorate	5,028	2,760	7,788	6
Fellowship	1,996	772	2,768	2
Other	6,541	3,349	9,890	7
Total	95,253	31,492	126,745	90
Accompanying				
Personnel				
Studying Language			14,478	10
Total			141,223	100

Source: Saudi Arabia MOHE "The Current Status of Higher Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2013"

The Undocumented Elements of the Increase in Saudi Students Attending Schools in the U.S.

The rapid increase in the number of Saudi students coming to the U.S. for higher education suggested the need for this study. There is little or no information about the Saudi students who choose to attend HEIs in the United States, beyond basic geographical destinations and levels of study. There is no research that specifically addresses why they choose to study abroad, why they choose the U.S. in greater proportion than other destinations, how they choose the school they attend, and what happens to them once they come to the U.S. For example, important questions arise about whether their attitudes and values have change as they spend years in the U.S. Also, what problems do they face as foreign students from a conservative Muslim country?

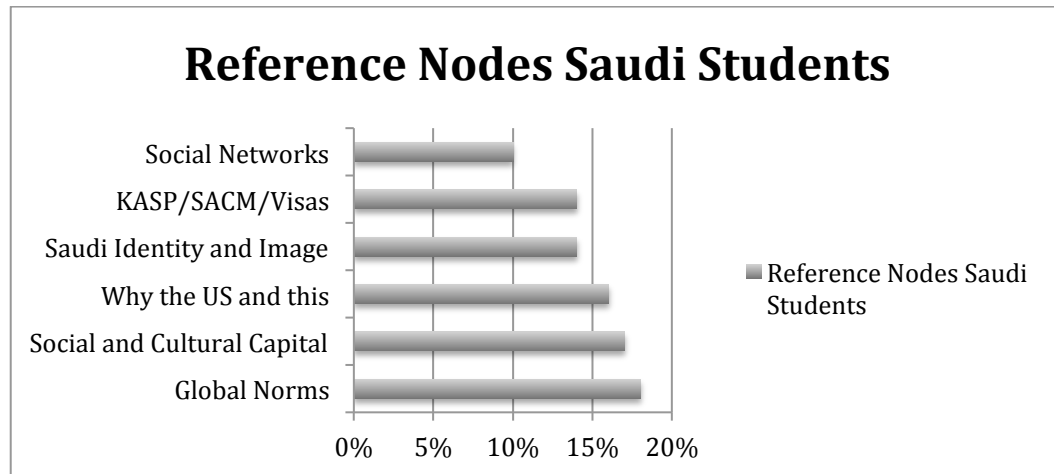
Saudi students' behavior is in clear contrast to the global trends in international student mobility. The U.S. and Saudi governments share the general assumptions that higher education will improve their nation's economic output and exposure to foreign students will help develop intercultural skills that can encourage deeper political and economic engagement. The U.S. government supports the Saudi's desire to strengthen its people's relationship with the U.S. by increased exposure to U.S. customs and values. The Saudi government provides financial support for students to go abroad to a long list of countries, not just the U.S. The supportive attitude and actions of the governments partially explains the attendance of Saudi

students at HEIs in the U.S. but this study provides information about Saudi students' personal motivations, experiences, and attitudes toward cultural and social change.

Interview Findings for Students from Saudi Arabia

There have been no previous studies of Saudi students using the theoretical framework applied to other populations of students choosing to attend college or study abroad. Semi-structured interviews of students from Saudi Arabia attending HEIs in the United States were conducted according to the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3 (Figure 7, p. 94) and based on the literature examining current and historical factors that might inform Saudi students' choices.

The interview findings for Saudi students were analyzed by using Nvivo software to coordinate the responses based on individual themes and types of information provided. The interview questions were based on the theoretical model to examine push and pull factors that would result in Saudi students choosing to study in the U.S. and to choose a specific institution. The following nodes were most prominent, based on the frequency of the references in the interviews.



The KASP, SACM, and Visas are a push factor for Saudi students. This node contained responses that identified the impact that these institutions had on Saudi students' choices as well as the ease of obtaining visas to study in the U.S. Why the U.S. and this School showed the pull factors that drew Saudi students to the U.S. including their desire for a better education than available in Saudi Arabia, their belief about the superiority of U.S. higher education, and other factors that informed their individual school choice. Social Networks contains responses that identify the role that family and friends of Saudi students play in providing information and support networks. These networks also serve as a pull factor for students who come to the U.S. and choose a specific school. Social and Cultural Capital encompass both push and pull factors that concern students' expectations, parental support, and previous exposure to the West. Global Norms contains responses about Saudi students' personal experiences encountering people from other races and reconciling their conservative values with western norms. Saudi Identity and Image emerged as area where students reflected cultural pride and concerns about misconceptions they felt most Americans had about Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.

Role of the Saudi Government, the KASP and SACM

Interviewing Saudi students showed several important finding. The Saudi government's influence on the students' decision to study abroad and where to study was significant. Most students identified the funding from the KASP as the reason they studied abroad or chose the school they attended. The KASP pays tuition and fees at each school the Saudi students attend but each student receives the same living stipend, no matter where they go. Students frequently reported that finding a school in a place they could afford to live informed their choices of where to attend school in the U.S. It was even reflected in their choice of which country to attend school in.

"Actually, at that time I didn't even consider studying abroad but when I learned about the program I realized this was my chance. It was all about the money. I wanted to study in a better college and a better place and a better educational environment but it was the money that helped me."

"The name brand recognition was part of it. Going to Johns Hopkins was partly about the name but I also wouldn't have chosen that school if I was not on the scholarship. There was no way I could have afforded the tuition or been able to move to Baltimore. The KASP played into my willingness to go to a name brand school."

"Most of Saudis don't want a crowded city so many Saudis are in Indiana and Mississippi. The small cities and cheap cities are best for Saudis."

"They get a budget so the students who come here to New York tend to have specific reasons because it is expensive. I used to have the same position in Ruston, Louisiana, affiliated with Louisiana Tech. It was far cheaper than NYC and that was a pretty popular type of place that Saudi students went to."

"SACM make everything easy for us. They give us courses for GRE and they give us a financial money for doing TOEFL, "Why?" they want us go to best university in United States. They want MIT, Hartford [Harvard]."

SACM played a role for many students in choosing a school if they did not already have information about a specific school or contacts in the U.S. directing their choices. Students reported they chose specific majors in order to qualify for a scholarship. Also, many Saudis reported that the limits placed by SACM on the number of Saudi students at any one school resulted in them choosing another HEI to attend.

“There is a website from SACM they told you how many ELS is opening, let you go there. The thing is the time I choose I find almost all of them is full. I have three choices and one of them is this because there is room and I can apply here. Otherwise can I wait another six month for others to finish.”

“The counselor at the cultural mission he helped me to get into Weber State University in Utah. That was easy for him, or for them to give me an admission. Because I didn’t know where to go. For myself, I applied to Louisiana and Florida. I had admission from Florida and Louisiana but he gave me admission in Utah and they told me it’s probably cheaper for you if you go there. “

“I knew what I wanted to study because the KASP at the time was limited to 10 different majors. I chose prelaw as their design for what I wanted to study.”

Obtaining Visas

Most also found that obtaining a visa to the U.S. was not a significant obstacle to coming to the U.S. once they were accepted to a school.

“No, It took less than one day. All SACM students got visa like this (snapping fingers.) The visa didn’t take a lot because I come with 58 SACM students who came on the same day I come. When a lot of students from SACM they make it easy for us.”

“It wasn’t hard but it takes lots of steps, especially after 9/11. But we had three embassies and even only two locations of the three for visa interviews. I had to travel to the capital city and stay for three nights.”

“I know the US visa process was very easy because the school did everything for you. All I had to do was go to the embassy. The visa process is barely a memory. I just remember someone telling me to never lose the I-? I don’t even remember what it is called. I remember being told to never lose it or go out without it.”

Expectancy Theory – Why The U.S.

Expectancy theory is commonly used to explore the choice to attend college.

Expectancy theory states that an individual will be motivated to exert effort or take a risk based on the perceived value of the experience (Vroom V. H., 1982). It has been used to understand the motivation behind selected behavior of individuals and has been applied to U.S. students' willingness to study abroad. Expectancy theory closely aligns with many studies about student college choice that examine socioeconomic and personal characteristics associated with attending college. This theoretical application was appropriate for examining the motivation of Saudi students to choose a school in the United States and showed that Saudi students perceived the value of attending and HEI in the U.S. to have substantial benefits.

There was widespread belief among the Saudi students that they would get a better education in the U.S. than if they attended a university in Saudi Arabia. Subjects were available in the U.S. that they could not study in Saudi and the overall quality of the teaching was a common concern. Students also voiced positive opinions about schools in other countries like the U.K., Canada, and Australia. Currently schools in the U.K. and Australia are no longer on the KSAP approval list since reaching saturation levels imposed by the program.

“I think western degrees have more weight but I think there is a hierarchy. Degrees from the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. are on par.”

“It's a major of computer science. Security is also a major and I have the choice of those two things. In my country we don't have this major. This is one reason I choose the United States.”

“Here education is considered strong education compared to Saudi Arabia and the teachers have a lot of knowledge and they graduate from famous university and when you return back to our university where I study my teacher are from India and they don’t or didn’t speak English very well so sometime I can’t understand them and they can’t give you the point they want you to know. Here for me, I really understand every single thing they teach me.”

“I also wanted the U.S. because I went to other countries. I decide the U.S. was much better. I went to Malaysia and I went to London. When I saw their system and when I saw the U.S. I immediately made up my mind to come to the U.S.”

“Most of Saudis who decide to get a bachelor’s degree they’d look into studying in another country because the higher education in Saudi Arabia is not well organized. It’s kind of messed up a bit. The professors are corrupted and stuff.”

“Most professors in Saudi take their education from the U.S. so I have to go to the U.S. to get my education, too. Most of the Saudi professor went to the U.S., or U.K., or Australia.”

All Saudi students had high expectations about their future employment prospects.

Many said they would like to stay in the U.S. and work for some time after completing their studies. This was unexpected, as it was previously believed that Saudi students immediately returned home once they earned their degrees.

“I want to go back to Saudi but I want to stay first and do the OPT program. It’s one to two years because it give you a better chance for a job in Saudi.”

“I will go to the university. I want to teach at the university and be a professor. That’s why I’m interested in education.”

“I would love to stay and work here so I’m going to work toward that.”

“Long term I’d rather work for an international entity like the secretariat side of the UN. I’m in the process of trying to get a job at the World Bank but they have a million rounds, so I’m on round number four.”

Social and Cultural Capital, Social Networks

Social capital theory is useful in explaining the mechanism of choice for Saudi students and provided valuable insight into how best to recruit them. Social capital is defined as “an individual’s access to information, resources and support, acquired through participation, or interaction with others who participate, in social networks or structures.” (Salisbury, et al. 2009, p. 123). Social capital theory predicts that family support and extra-familial networks play a role in student mobility (Portes, 1998). Social capital works to foster social, political, and economic integration for people and is widely associated with immigrant communities and migration issues (Schultheis 2009; Cheong, et al. 2007). Saudi students are relying heavily on input from family members or other acquaintances who are studying abroad as sources of information and as support systems in choosing where to study.

Marketing techniques used by HEIs did not play a large role in influencing the students interviewed. That may be because these are relatively new efforts on the part of schools to increase the number of Saudi students enrolled in their institutions. Many Saudi students used the Internet to get information about schools but family and social networks also played important role in choosing where to study. Saudi students relied on parental moral support to make the decision to study abroad as well as networks of friends and family to provide them with information and other support when they came to the U.S. Often one person came and established a long network of siblings and cousins who then came to the U.S.

"I mentioned that my father had gone to school in DC and we had family in the area...The second factor was a very near and dear family friend who I consider to be like an uncle. He went to American and other family friends went there for both undergraduate and law school. They ended up writing alumni letters of recommendation for me."

"Yes, my grandparents are both here which is why, when we came to the US we came here. I did my undergraduate in this area and came back to do my Ph.D. in this area because I wanted to be near family. And on the theme of familial connections, I've had four of my second cousins come to Seattle to study, at Seattle Univ. and some of the community colleges around here because we are here from Saudi Arabia."

"Yes, I have two friends. One in New Jersey, well, nearby NJ in Delaware. He suggested I come over here. We got almost the same degree [in Saudi Arabia] and he come here before me."

"My first landed was a sadness story. I didn't have any hotel booking. I didn't book hotel and didn't have a place to go and when I came here to ask about home stay or some place to go they say you have to order from the website. When I call my friend from New Jersey he book a hotel for me for two or three night until I find an apartment. And I do, I find."

"Yes, because I have some friends that went to school here before me. When we finished high school and they told me all about the US, I was working for an oil company. I decided when I had a chance to go back to school I knew I wanted to go to the US."

"I didn't know anybody there [Weber State College in Salt Lake City, Utah]. I went there for a two-year degree and transferred." [But later his younger brothers and cousins all attended the same school.]

"Yeah, I have two brothers who already finished. They went back and now I also have two in Missouri."

"But one of my uncles he went to Stanford and graduated from Stanford. He got a Ph.D. and then he married an American woman and he lived in the US for 10 years or something so he was helping me in the process of the papers and he was encouraging me, and my father, too. Then I came to study."

Levels of parental education differed but each person answered in the affirmative that their parents were supportive of their decision to come to the U.S. for higher

education, even proud. It is clear that education is a priority for Saudi families, even if they remain in Saudi. Almost everyone interviewed had siblings that were attending university at home or in the U.S.

“My father was very supportive and my mother was like sometime “Don’t go, I want you here, I need you here.” But I was like, “Come on, it is only one year maybe three year.”

“Yes, they [three brothers, three sisters] went [to university], they finished a bachelor’s in Saudi.”

“My parents were very supportive but the rest of the family felt I’d be tainted if I went alone. But I was like I don’t care and my parents didn’t care.”

In terms of other forms of cultural capital, there is no clear pattern of previous language ability or exposure to Americans or Westerners among the students interviewed. Some of the students had lived in the U.S. as children while their own parents earned degrees from U.S. schools. Other Saudi students had never traveled outside of the country. Some knew westerners from their workplace but others had almost no prior exposure to anyone who was not Saudi. Also, having English language skills was occasionally a deciding factor but the desire to improve their language skills was often a primary incentive to study in the U.S.

“My dad had gone to school at GW and I grew up going to DC so I always wanted to go to school there. It made it easier because family was in the area.”

“I went until second grade to school in Saudi and then high school. Everything else was the U.S.”

“No, my mom was here on scholarship but my parents said they’d figure out a way to pay for it if I ended up getting into a place like Harvard. For me then, it [KASP] wasn’t an influence. [My] parents are both educated. [My] father has his Ph.D. in economics from Clark University. He’s a professor in Riyadh and he’s got a column that he writes about culture and economics. My mom is a web developer for a finance type company.”

“...He said companies and government they prefer the people who graduate from U.S. university rather than Saudi university because they know how to speak English and writing in English better than Saudi university graduate.”

“English now in my country is a second language that is important.”

“At that time I thought that it was all about the U.S. or U.K. and also Canada and Australia, all places to compare. I chose those 4 countries because they all speak English and I already have good English so I am not going to spend a whole year studying another language. I wanted to go right away. I decided to go to a country where they teach classes in English.”

Human Capital

Human capital theory suggests that education and training programs will strengthen the aggregate skills, knowledge and productive capacity of people and contribute to economic growth (Al-Yahya, 2010). It is a neoclassical economic approach to developing a nation's human resources that is being embraced worldwide. Evidence suggests it may be a motivating factor for Saudi students choosing schools in the U.S. rather than in other countries or in Saudi Arabia but there is no confirmation that Saudi students are seeking education in the U.S. rather than in another country as a way to build their own productive capacity. Yet, Saudi students reported unexpected intellectual growth as a result of the U.S. system of higher education's liberal arts foundation.

Students provided enthusiastic feedback to questions about the liberal arts classes, or general education courses as the Saudi students consistently called them, that they were required to take. Nearly every student saw them as a positive experience

that opened them to new ideas and, in many cases, led them to change their course of study or pursue a minor in a field they had never previously studied.

“Yes, I took social work. I liked it, it was one of the general requirements, but it was like, wow, interesting.... It was an open eyes thing for me.”

“Yes, I took political science and I really liked it. I did not have to take so many because they would not be counted to my degree. I had to take English composition for writing and it was really fun. We had to read lots of interesting article about culture and stuff and write some kind of opinions.”

“I just know a small knowledge about every subject so every time I take a subject I get very interested and I read more about it. I don’t remember taking any course I ever regretted. “

“Yes, I think the Saudi government realizes that but they can’t put their finger on it. For Saudi, they know that coming from a U.S. school over coming from all other schools, it is very prestigious. I don’t think they can tell you that it’s because of the liberal arts but they feel that people coming from U.S. schools are somehow more able to succeed in the work place and your perception about them is that they will be more able to succeed. But it’s not because they understand it’s because of the liberal arts. They don’t know what it is.”

“We needed to take general education credits and I took a political science class because I had to and ended up getting a dual degree in it because I found things like international relations to be so interesting. So I thought why not? I’ll just get a dual degree.”

Students as Consumers, Why This School

Students were aware of international rankings and felt that attending a school in the U.S. that was well known in Saudi Arabia was important. Increasingly, they see the name of the school as mattering, except at the Ph.D. level. A doctorate degree is respected from every school. This attitude regarding a school’s international ranking and reputation was voiced by newer students and may reflect a maturing of the Saudis understanding of education in the U.S., such as the notion that the quality

of education may differ between schools. Also, as other Saudis have returned home after completing their studies in the U.S. they have become members of the working establishment who are better able to evaluate degrees from various schools in the U.S.

“Before 20 years old [ago], 10 years ago, the thing you are talking about is real. Any certification from the US is a big matter. But now most of the bosses are studying in the United States and they know the best colleges and imagine what they do if I come to them with Hartford [Harvard] certification. What you will do? And most of them have from not big name colleges and I have Hartford [Harvard] who should I hire?”

“Yes, [I want Virginia] because the Georgetown have good reputation and a lot of famous people from this school. [I] want to go there and the business law is a good major comparing another university. Business law is strong.”

““Yes, rankings are important to me. Yes, before I came I looked [online] for top 100 ratings, also Shanghai rankings.”

“First I checked the universities that were approved than I went to Google and then I went to US News Ranking to see the ranking for the school to get information about acceptance chances and get information about the schools and get reviews.”

“I was in the international program at Harvard and we make these T-shirts for the Harvard-Yale game and we made shirts that said “In my country no one has even heard of Yale.” But in Saudi they know Harvard is one of the best schools in the country.”

“When they do a lot of hiring in the Middle East a lot is based on the university where you went, not necessarily qualifications. They don’t look in depth at the resume. I also wanted to be able to work in the US so I knew that a reputable university with strong credentials would do that.”

Attitudes about the U.S.

Many students came to the United States as their first choice because they felt an affinity with American culture and because they wanted to live and study in a country where English was the primary language. That’s useful to know since many

other countries are establishing programs that are taught in English but the country's primary language is something else. Saudi students frequently identified strong English language skills as an important benefit to their career back in Saudi. It is unclear if Saudi students would have preferred school in the U.K. Many students noted that the U.K. was much closer to Saudi Arabia than the U.S. but it has long been off the list of countries available to KASP students. It is unclear how many would have chosen it over the U.S. given the positive view many expressed about life in the U.S. and their overall experience at U.S. schools.

"Since I was young it was always my dream to come to the US. I always watch movies about the U.S. and even listen to songs. Even Johnny Cash, I listen to him. I like the life here."

"I only thought about U.K. or U.S. but the KASP won't send me there. "

"But in terms of academics, when you look at world university rankings the U.S. dominates the higher educational market because it is part of the service economy and not a national right like it is in Saudi Arabia."

"The U.S. has a cultural hegemony. Even Saudis who never leave the country watch American TV shows. We don't watch French movies and Australian TV shows. Despite the fact that it's not like the movies it's more familiar than going to New Zealand. I doubt many Saudis even know where New Zealand is."

"It is only five hours. No more British because it already has a lot of students. I did still want to come to the U.S."

Many Saudi students had good knowledge of the U.S. system of government and favorable opinions about democracy. In some cases their knowledge was sophisticated and the language was nuanced.

“The society is looking for, and the whole world is looking for democracy. But I understood democracy when I came here. I’m not sure I – I have a positive opinion but I don’t like the two party democracy. I like the multiple party democracy.”

“But I think it is positive. From what I understood about democracy it’s a certain freedom.”

“I think it’s [democracy] a lot better, actually. I kind of like politics and I follow it and from what I’ve followed back in Saudi Arabia or here or even in China from what I see Saudi Arabia and China have a lot alike in terms of political system. The government doesn’t like people to access certain things so they just block it or make it a felony. For example, if someone want to criticize something going on in the country in the newspaper he cannot do it or he will go to prison and be in lots of trouble. If he just goes in the street and shouts or chants we should have democracy he will go to jail for life. And that’s in both Saudi Arabia and in China. Those kinds of things I don’t think it is fair.”

“I guess [my understanding of democracy] has gotten more sophisticated. I see the way American democracy works and there are lots of problems with it. I think the U.S. would like to see blanket democracy but it doesn’t work well everywhere. There is a fantasyland about how you can push democracy. I’d call it the big lie or the fallacy of the big push that we are going in to provide them [Iraq and Afghanistan] with democracy.”

“Yes, and compared to China, in Saudi you can open up and look at Facebook. Saudi doesn’t care about what you are going to say unless you don’t make any noise that is going to hurt the government. So you can otherwise do whatever you want [in Saudi Arabia.]”

Experiences in the U.S.

Not surprisingly, all Saudi students felt that their understanding of the U.S. was very different than when they first came to the country. Many expressed concerns about Islam-phobia but few were directly impacted by it. They were concerned that certain stereotypical images of Saudi men and women would result in people being unfriendly or grossly misinformed. In some cases they did find the preconceived notions about Saudis, mainly as presented in the media, to be upsetting to them. Yet,

the overall experience when first arriving in the U.S. was culture shock. For some of the Saudis, their own preconceived notions were tested, as well.

“I do think that what you learn in books is very narrow. And because the Middle East is so prominent in the news is because of ISIS and Al Qaeda and all the wars. But you don’t see anything else. Like you said before, meeting people and getting to know them changes your perceptions about them. The media helps create this Islam-phobic fervor that is way more present than it was even seven years ago, which was way closer to 9/11. I notice it much more. I think that ISIS is a part of it and people now think I am different. There are all these people that don’t know how different we are compared to how we are portrayed. Especially the images of Saudi women. I want all these feminists to meet Saudi women, only because I think that a lot of times, they’ll want to look at women in the Middle East and think about how horrible things are for them.”

“100%. I got a culture shock. Imagine I didn’t went outside [of Saudi Arabia.] I saw picture before I come but it was really, you know, unusual for me. In New York a lot of technology and stuff. I didn’t know about it. First day I rent a car from the airport and the rule of the driving here is totally different from home. Even the parking. I can’t parking in front of the red thing for water [fire hydrant] and I didn’t know. Or I have to go to a lot of space and I got a space. I got a ticket.”

“Some of them [people] so unexpected. You think he will reject you but when you come to him and ask him he’s so friendly and welcoming. Many person have different personality. For me, in my opinion, the black people they so amazing. I mean they so friendly and they smile and I mean, he could take me to hotel. He said go to there, go to there, and he tell me to take this train, no this train.”

“For me I spent 24 years old and I didn’t saw any Saudi gay before in my whole life. Not openly gay so I have no information about this.”

“I think so [my understanding of the U.S. is different from when I first came.] The media was the primary source of what I knew of the U.S. before I came here. The media is not really pro the US. Like everything –what is against pro—the cons, and the people doesn’t like the U.S. or doesn’t like the politics, the media was the primary source.”

“I did not feel unwelcome. Some of my friends are immigrants, some are American, some are Saudi like me who want to go back home.”

It was surprising to hear that the right to openly criticize the government was something that younger Saudis struggled to accept. These comments came from young Saudis who have been in the U.S. for a short time. They reflect deeply traditional notions of respect for authority that may not be as evident among older students or those who spend more time outside of the country.

“A little bit, [it was a surprise to hear people speaking critically of the president] I knew that, I did not know that there is almost no limitation of what if you want to talk about. I thought there is some kind of boundaries that you cannot go beyond but I realized that anyone can say or criticize and make fun of whatever you want about anyone.”

“One thing I don’t like about democracy is it cannot have like lines. You know sometimes you got to have some lines not to cross, like for example, when the fellow or daughter is past age of eighteen, not all of them but in most cases they talk rude to their parents.”

“Is it good that Americans have so much freedom to say things? I think it is bad and I think people should not be able to say so many things.” (Translated by another Saudi male student.)

Saudi students report that Americans are often poorly informed about Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. Most Saudi students wanted to educate people about Saudi Arabia. Many felt some irritation when others were critical of Saudi Arabia. One of the stated goals of the KASP is to reintroduce Americans to Saudis in a more positive light after the events of 9/11. There is no mistaking the Saudi governments intentions of having the KASP administered by the Cultural Mission. Saudi students are here as cultural ambassadors for their country. Most Saudi students see that there is little clear understanding about Saudi Arabia among their fellow students.

“A lot of foreign student here, when I tell them I am from Saudi Arabia, they start asking about local life there and why you can marry four women instead of one, and why or do you still ride a camel to go to work. They consider Saudi Arabia

like desert, like what they recording in the movies and people are not modern. But they are modern in some cities, they have a fancy car, they have same things as you, they are eating Mountain House.”

“Yet, it is but not only about Saudi Arabia but about the entire region. In the media there is a constant problem about being so biased against the Middle East. So, unfortunately, those are the kind of articles you find on MSN or AOL or CNN, you know. They are about the woman who get arrested for driving but they don’t look into other things like charity or the importance of community or the engagement with others, and the culture, like schools and institutions to help around the world.”

“It surprised me that so many Americans think that Islam is all about jihad and terrorism. When it happened in New York, I didn’t blame people for thinking that, but now I can know what is going on in China and I can know what is going on in South America.”

“When people meet me they are always saying that they are surprised I was wearing a skirt or not covering my hair. People are always saying they expected me to be different. They say they expected me to have these other characteristics. I say, “Well, you haven’t met any Saudi women.” They all have personalities, and even if they cover, it’s a choice and they aren’t this oppressed group.”

“I feel so bad [that Americans don’t know about Saudi Arabia.] Most people think you are oil yourself. One guy asked me if I had an oil company. I said “Oh yeah, I have an oil pipe that comes right into my room. And I have oil on my hands all the time.” And we laughed about it but the first thing they have only their mind is two things: oil or about the bad side, terrorism and jihadis. Especially since there were so many Saudis on the airplanes on 9/11.”

“Democracy and human rights, and things like that, I definitely think I see them as areas where things can be improved in both countries. I actually get upset when people criticize Saudi Arabia in terms of human rights because I try to show them how much worse it would be to live under the Taliban. There is a constitution (not really) but a document that enshrines peoples’ rights, but I try to make political arguments that way. But I feel I had the right, as a Saudi to criticize. I’d be offended when people outside the realm would criticize.”

Changing Attitudes and Viewpoints about Global Norms

Attending school with both men and women from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds was an eye opening experience for the Saudis but they all

reported becoming more comfortable with this and identified themselves as more tolerant now than before they came here. Many Saudis had little or no exposure to non-Muslims before coming to the U.S. Their interactions with others left them with less fear, deeper understanding of the meaning of human rights, and greater understanding of other people. Exposure to others did increase tolerance in those students who were interviewed. Many faced situations where they had to make a personal decision about how to react. Most chose to watch and learn and refrain from judging others when they behaved in ways that were anomalous to Saudi cultural expectations.

This research attempts to find a correlation between being a Saudi student in the U.S. and changes in their attitudes about global norms on human rights and creating a less traditional society at home. Saudi students agreed that laws preventing discrimination were necessary for defended human rights, some of which they didn't have in their own country. While it is unlikely that living and studying in the U.S. will turn these people into democracy activists once they return to Saudi Arabia, most give unguarded opinions about the value of a free press and freedom of speech, as well as a more equal society for men and women. Most Saudi students are comfortable with society changing to allow greater freedom for people, although how that will be manifested or how that change will occur was left unspoken.

"Some people in my country said don't go. If you see black people they are drug dealer and don't go to them. And don't make friend with them because maybe they do something to you – especially you are from Middle East. I say ok, I'll follow your suggesting and when I came here it wasn't true."

“Some of them [my views] are changing, some of them were straight and totally change – imagine with me someone who didn’t ever saw or interact with a woman before. And suddenly he will study with a woman and doing homework with a partner....You have to change. Some of them changing and when he return back [to Saudi Arabia] he want to return back to United States.”

“Yeah, especially the human rights issue. I look at some of the subjects you mentioned [same sex marriage, issues relating to religious freedom, free speech and a free press] and the human rights issues, I am in favor of them, in any way without limiting people, without the specifics of the subject, if it has to do with race or gender or other things. But it’s a difficult subject to talk about, especially when society is very homogenous.”

“Back home we don’t have this variety [of people] but I am more tolerant of different people than before. At home almost 90% of the people are Muslims. And even if they are gay or something they will not show it.”

“Living here and being part of a community that is very diverse, I’m sure I’m more tolerant than when I first got here.”

“Yes, I think it’s changing after all the study abroad but also things in Saudi are changing. They used to think that having good relationships with everybody was the best idea. You keep them from criticizing your domestic policy by keeping good economic relations, selling them oil, giving all this charity. With the other hand they are pushing their population down and no one says anything. Globalization is expanding and now people know what is happening.”

“Once they get over your not drinking and they realize you aren’t judging them for drinking it is okay. But the hookup culture was also very jarring to me. I was like what is happening? What is this? Now I just see it as teenage behavior.”

Chapter 7: Survey Results

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the findings of the survey in relation to the research questions, explore the findings about Saudi students' experiences at their schools, and make comparisons between groups of students here and in Saudi Arabia. The chapter will begin with a description of the sample population to show that it is an adequate representation of Saudi students in the U.S. and data to address the key findings presented in the research questions. The comparison of the opinions of Saudi students in the U.S. in contrast to Saudis who did not leave Saudi Arabia for higher education is one of the original intentions of this research.

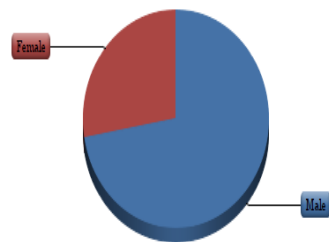
Key Findings

This section will show the key findings of the survey administered to Saudi students in the U.S. as they relate to the research questions and hypothesis stated in Chapter 4. It will begin with a discussion of the survey population to help develop a picture of who they are. The picture presented is a sample population that closely resembles the population as described in Saudi government publications. The students report that the KASP was the primary reason they chose to study outside of the country and that the majority received funding through the government. Very few students travelled to the U.S. before coming here to study and parental education levels, a proxy for other SES variables (McDonough 1997) indicate a broad range of educational attainment by the parents of students. This coincides with the Saudi government's efforts to provide scholarships to students all across the country and especially in previously underserved areas.

The Survey Population

There were 262 completed yielding 205 usable surveys of Saudi students attending HEIs across the United States. Completed surveys were included only if the participant was a Saudi national or citizen. Saudi students were contacted by email, Facebook, and Twitter. The ratio of male to female corresponds to the numbers of Saudi students studying under the KASP as reported by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Higher Education, 2013). According to the Saudi government, women comprise approximately 25% of all students obtaining higher education outside the country. In addition, respondents are studying for degrees in similar proportions to all KASP students (Saudi Arabian Ministry of Higher Education, 2013). The gender of the survey respondents and degrees they are seeking are shown in Figures 8 and 9.

Figure 8: Gender of Respondents



Male Respondents	148	72%
Female Respondents	57	28%
Total	205	100%

Figure 9: Degrees Respondents are Currently Seeking

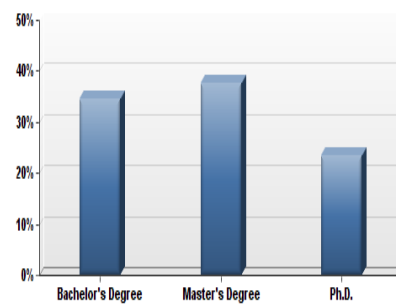


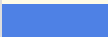


Figure 9 shows Degrees Respondents are Currently Seeking. This survey sample compares partially with all students studying abroad. According to the Ministry of Higher Education 38% of all Saudi students studying abroad are seeking Bachelor's degrees, 44% Master's Degrees, and 8% Ph.D.

Are you currently studying in the U.S. as part of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program?			
Answer		Response	%
Yes		145	71%
No, but I was in the past.		14	7%
No, I was never part of the KASP.		46	22%
Total		205	100%

According to the MOHE, as of 2013 the KASP was funding 76% of all Saudi students studying abroad while the remaining 24% were self-funded or government employees. The survey sample has a similar profile.




Would you have studied outside of Saudi Arabia without the KASP?			
Answer		Response	%
Yes		59	29%
No		106	52%
N/A, I did not participate in the KASP.		40	20%
Total		205	100%

Figure 10: Total Number of Years Respondents lived in the U.S.



Figure 11: Previous Number of Times in the U.S. Before Coming for Higher Education

Legend: Never 75%,
1-2 times 16%,
3 times or more 9%

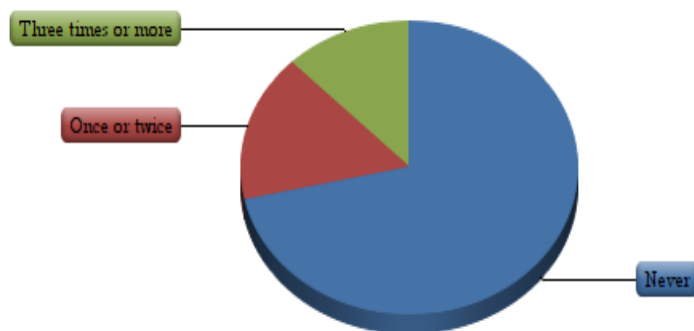


Figure 12: Father's Highest Level of Education

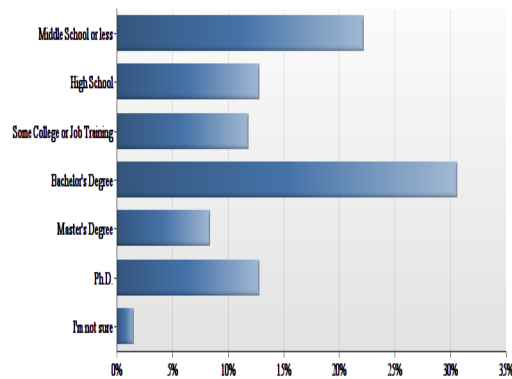
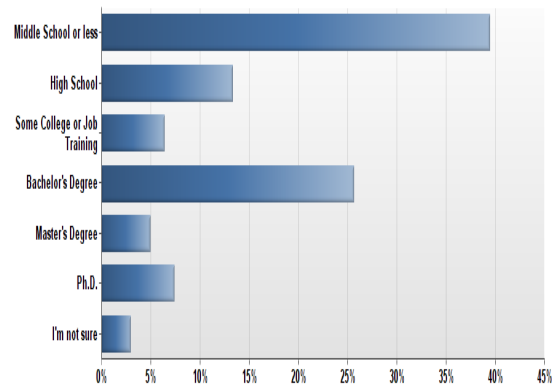


Figure 13: Mother's Highest Level of Education



Key Findings for Research Question One: How can the increase in the number of Saudi students coming to the U.S. for higher education be explained?

Saudi students have been choosing to attend HEIs in the United States at a faster rate than any other country. The literature and interview results helped clarify the research questions and hypotheses that explain this phenomenon. The survey results for H1 – H3 are considered here.

H1: Saudi students are influenced in their choice to study in the United States by the availability of scholarships from the government of Saudi Arabia and the accessibility of student visas to the United States.

The survey results support both elements of this hypothesis. Policies of both the Saudi and United States governments are influencing Saudi students' decision to come to the U.S. to pursue higher education.

The availability of scholarships informed Saudi student choice about where to attend college. More than just choosing the country, the scholarship programs also influenced which schools students chose to attend due to the availability of funding to HEIs on the SACM approved list and the cost of living associated with different areas of the U.S.

50%	Respondents chose their current school because of the scholarship program. Being on the SACM approved list was the most frequent reason cited for why students chose their current school.
52%	Reported they would not have studied outside of Saudi Arabia without the KASP.
34%	Agreed/strongly agreed they would have chosen a different school or one in a different country except for the restrictions of the scholarship program. 36% disagreed/strongly disagreed that they would have picked a different school or country to attend university, indicating that only 1 in 3 had a decided preference for the U.S. or the HEI they attended.
11%	Cited a lower cost of living in a place as one of the reasons they chose to attend school there. The KASP gives each student a set amount for living expenses and impacted where in the U.S. some students chose to attend university.

Getting a visa to study in the United States was not an obstacle for Saudi students.

- 69% agreed/strongly agreed that getting a visa to study in the U.S. was easy with only 12% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.

This result complies with findings about the U.S. government's actions to establish SEVIP and other efforts to facilitate and support Saudi students' attendance at HEIs in the country. SEVIS, the Student Exchange and Visitor Information System, was implemented in 2005 to address the visa backlog for foreign students attending HEIs in the U.S. that resulted from the events of 9/11/01. From 2001 to 2005 Saudi students experienced a 75% drop in visa approvals. According to the U.S. Department of State, since the implementation of the SEVIS computerized system, there has been a nearly 15-fold increase in the number of F-1 visas approvals for Saudi students studying in the U.S.

H2: Saudi students perceive that higher education in the United States is better than in other countries.

Survey results support this hypothesis. The United States is home to more top rated universities and colleges than any other country and has a competitive advantage in higher education.

- 67% of Saudi students agreed/strongly agreed to the statement "higher education in the U.S. is better than in other countries."

- When asked to choose from a list of reasons students were attracted to a school, 33% chose “A degree from a U.S. school would be better than a degree from a school in another country.”
-

H3: Saudi students perceive that a degree from a U.S. school will enhance their employment prospects better than a degree from a school in Saudi Arabia.

Survey results support this hypothesis and show Saudi students frequently seek education in the U.S. as a way to improve their job prospects when they return home. In addition, the survey results identify that Saudi students overwhelmingly felt that English language abilities would enhance their career prospects. This may also support Saudi student choice to attend HEIs in the U.S., as an English speaking country, despite many other schools in countries on the SACM approval list offering degrees taught in English.

23%	Said “a degree from this school will help me get a better job than going to a university in Saudi Arabia” as a reason they were attracted to their current school.
68%	Agreed/strongly agreed that they were confident that they would get a job after completing their studies. Interestingly, nearly 25% responded neither agree nor disagree, which may be a reflection of the dramatic downturn in their employment prospects given the current economic developments in Saudi Arabia.

95%	Agreed/strongly agreed that strong English language skills would be an important benefit to their career. This data corresponds to interview findings that Saudi students were choosing the U.S. because they felt that they would become better speakers if they lived and went to school in a country where English was the primary language.
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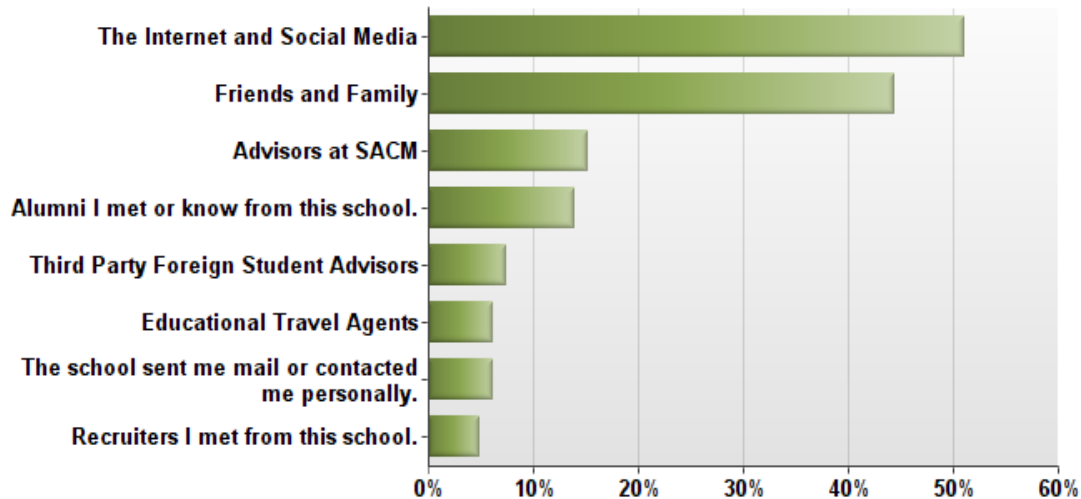
Key Findings for Research Question Two: What are the expected outcomes of this research?

The expected outcomes of this research were to provide information about the motivations of Saudi students to study in the U.S., their sources of information, the challenges they faced as students in the U.S., and their attitudes about the U.S. and other social and cultural issues. The survey findings offered some confirmation of expected outcomes but in many cases highlighted other factors that students reported as significant. Hypotheses 4 and 5 relate to motivations and mechanisms of choice of Saudi students.

H4: Saudi students' primary source of information about where to study in the U.S. is family and social networks.

The survey results do not fully support this statement. While social networks were important they were not the primary source of information for students. Figure 14 identifies survey results for where Saudi students got their information about schools they applied to in the United States:

Figure 14: Saudi Students' Sources of Information

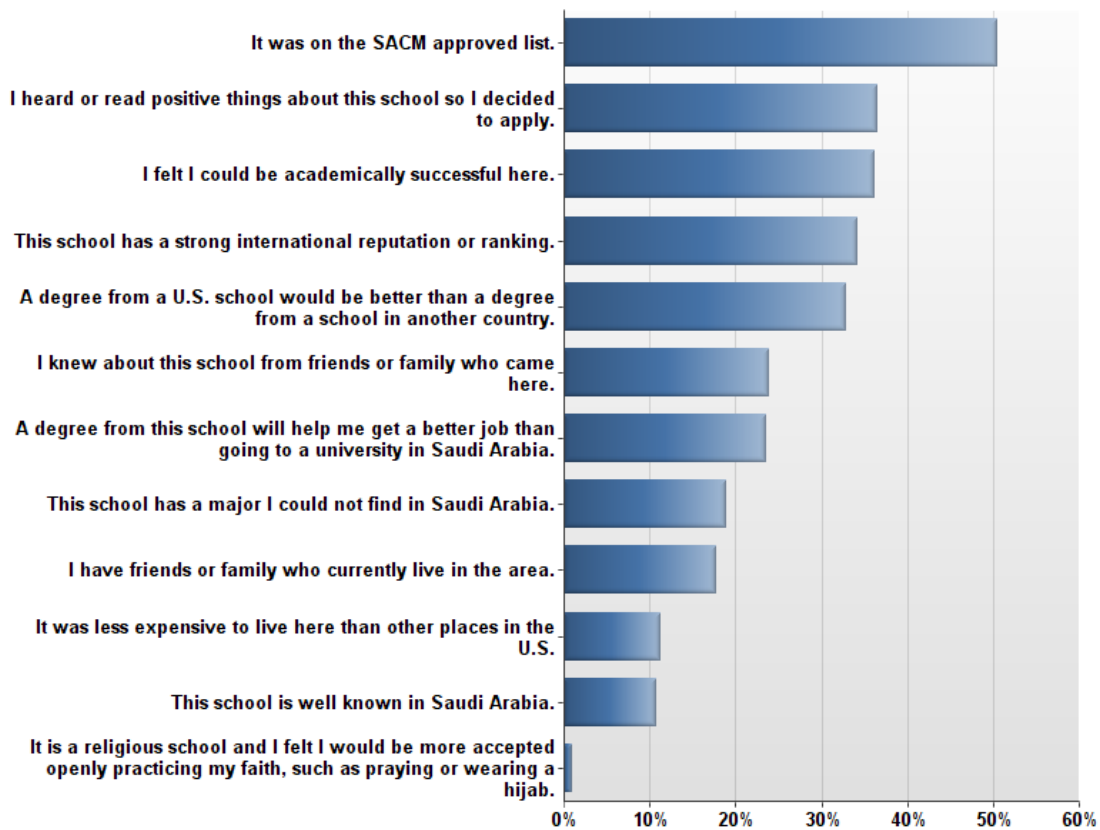


- Saudi students chose the Internet and social media 51% of the time and friends and family and social networks only 44% of the time.
- Students relied on advisors from SACM 15% of the time and alumni from schools 14% of the time.
- Students infrequently used other sources, mainly recruitment efforts by HEIs.

H5: Saudi students are influenced in their choice by a school's reputation, rankings, or how well known it is in Saudi Arabia.

This hypothesis is supported but other factors also mattered in student' choice about where to attend school. Figure 15 identifies the factors that attracted them to the school they currently attend.

Figure 15: What Attracted Students to Their Current School



- In nearly equal measure Saudi students identified school ranking (34%) and having heard or read positive things about a school (36%) as reasons they were attracted to the school they currently attend.
- Only 11% were attracted to a school because it was well known in Saudi Arabia yet in another question 61% agreed/strongly agreed that employers in Saudi Arabia care about which school you attended.
- 19% chose the school they currently attend because it has a major they could not find in Saudi Arabia.

- One of the more surprising findings to the survey was that 36% of Saudi students chose the school they currently attend because they felt they could be academically successful there. This was tied for the second most chosen response to factors that attracted students to the school they currently attend, just behind being on the SACM approved list. So, while ranking and reputation are important, Saudi students were more concerned with their academic success when considering where to attend college in the U.S.
- 53% agreed/strongly agreed that they did not consider some schools because they read or heard negative things about them.
- Hypothesis 6 – 8 consider changes in how Saudi students feel about the United States and changes in cultural views since studying in the U.S.

H6: Saudi students have a more favorable opinion of the U.S. than when they lived in Saudi Arabia.

Survey results support the hypothesis that their time in the U.S. has improved their opinion of the country.

- 60% agree/strongly agree that they have a more favorable opinion of the U.S. now than when they lived in Saudi Arabia.
- 9% disagreed/strongly disagreed that they experienced a change in opinion. Students from Saudi Arabia do not have free and open access to information about the world outside of their country. Interviews identified that many

Saudi students already had a positive predisposition toward the U.S. despite having limited exposure to American citizens and American culture.

-

H7: Saudi students became more tolerant of people from other cultures and religions after living in the United States.

Results of the survey support this hypothesis. Saudi students do not have the same opportunities at home to live and attend school with a diverse community of people. They overwhelmingly report that they are more tolerant of others after living in the U.S.

- 88% agree/strongly agreed that meeting different people such as Asians, African-Americans, Christians, and Jews made them more tolerant and open to other cultures.
- 44% agree/strongly agreed that they often felt that people were uncomfortable or did not like them because they were Saudi or Muslim. Saudi nationals enjoy a high degree of privilege in their country and Islam is the only religion legally allowed. It may be an unusual experience for them to personally experience intolerance and relates to the finding that 86% of the Saudis surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that most students at their school knew too little about Saudi Arabia or the Middle East.
- 85% agreed/strongly agreed that laws forbidding discrimination based on these factors were important for protecting human rights. This is in direct contrast with laws in Saudi Arabia and may provide the basis for change in

the future for how the country resolves its non-adherence to global social norms as recognized by the UNHDR.

H8: Saudi students agree that changing gender roles of men and women in Saudi Arabia are part of a positive global trend toward increased gender equality.

Survey results support this hypothesis across several measures. There is evidence supporting the desire for greater gender equality in Saudi Arabia.

64%	Agreed/strongly agreed that they saw changing gender roles of men and women in Saudi Arabia as part of a positive global trend.
83%	Agreed/strongly agreed that encouraging Saudi women to attend college and join the workforce is good for the Saudi economy.
65%	Agreed/strongly agreed that both a husband and wife should contribute to the household income. Only 12% disagreed/strongly disagreed.
35%	Agreed/strongly agreed that allowing women to work undermined their religious traditions while 14% disagreed and 33% strongly disagreed for a total 47% in opposition to the statement.

Findings on Saudi Students' Experiences at their Current School

This research examined Saudi students' experiences on their campuses from their perspective. Analysis of the interviews with administrators at HEIs identified the efforts made by schools as the most prominent node, or area of discussion. This node included commentary by HEIs regarding their efforts to facilitate a sense of

welcome, assimilation, and academic success among the foreign student population at their institution. The survey considered three main areas where Saudi students expressed their views about how their current school was meeting their needs in these areas and how they evaluated their overall experience as students in the U.S.

It is clear that Saudi students want help adjusting to the academic standards at the school they attend.

- 38% wished the school would offer more academic support.
- 32% responded that they wished their current school would offer more training to prevent problems with plagiarism. These responses coincide with the findings that student choice is heavily influenced by perception that they can be academically successful at the school they choose and corresponds to their desire for an increase in these specific services from HEIs.

Saudi students, by a large majority, want more help meeting American students and finding the services they need in the local area. In addition, their religious and cultural needs could be better met by HEIs.

62%	Agreed that their current school did not organize enough events to help Saudi students meet American students.
41%	Wished their current school would offer more help finding local resources such as housing, medical care, and transportation information.

38%	Hoped the school would organize more events to allow them to showcase Saudi culture to other students on campus.
56%	Would like their current school to make more effort to meet their religious needs such as providing prayer rooms, halal food, and accommodations during Ramadan and Eids.

Lastly, survey findings show that Saudi students are satisfied with their experience studying in the U.S. The high levels of satisfaction may relate to the general education courses that students were required to take which often led them to voluntarily pursue other areas of study.

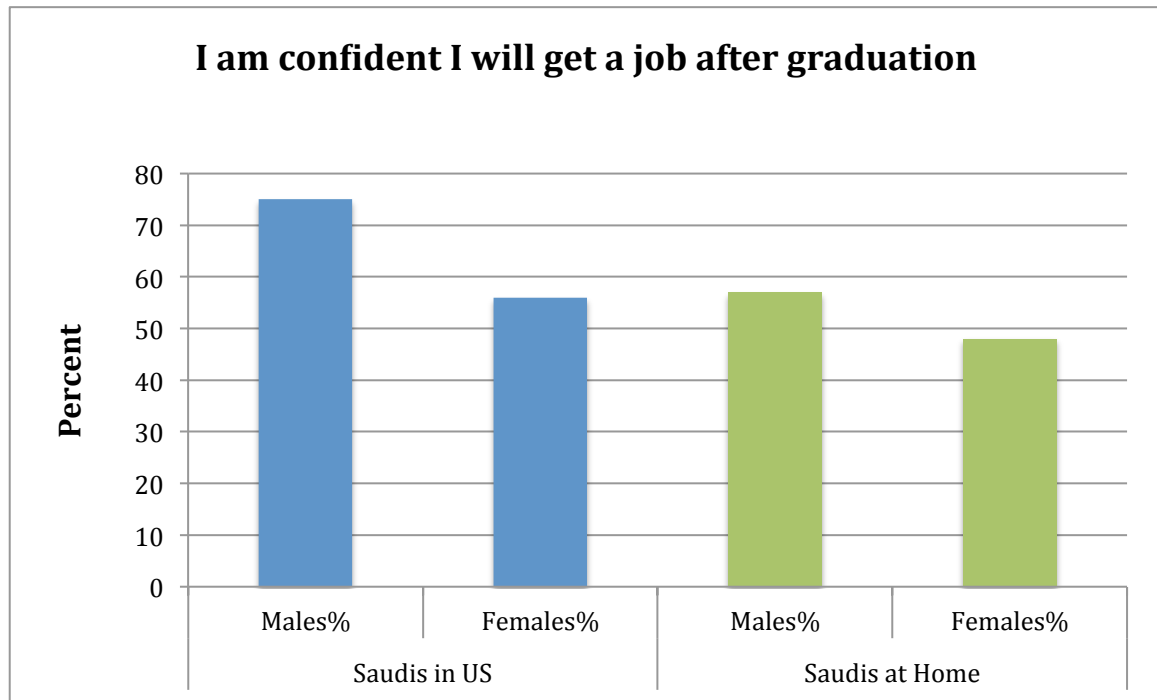
84%	Were very satisfied/somewhat satisfied with their experience in the U.S. Only 4% were somewhat dissatisfied/dissatisfied.
71%	Agreed/strongly agreed that the general education course they took exposed them to areas they never learned about before.
63%	Agreed/strongly agreed that the general education courses they took resulted in their decision to take more courses in an area of study.

Discussion on Findings about Saudi Students in the U.S. compared with Saudis at Home

One purpose of this research was to compare attitudes of Saudi students studying in the United States with students who attended schools at home in Saudi Arabia and the general population in Saudi Arabia. The survey repeated questions asked in the

Bridging the Gap Survey (2010) and in some cases repeated questions used in the 2003 World Values Survey for Saudi Arabia.

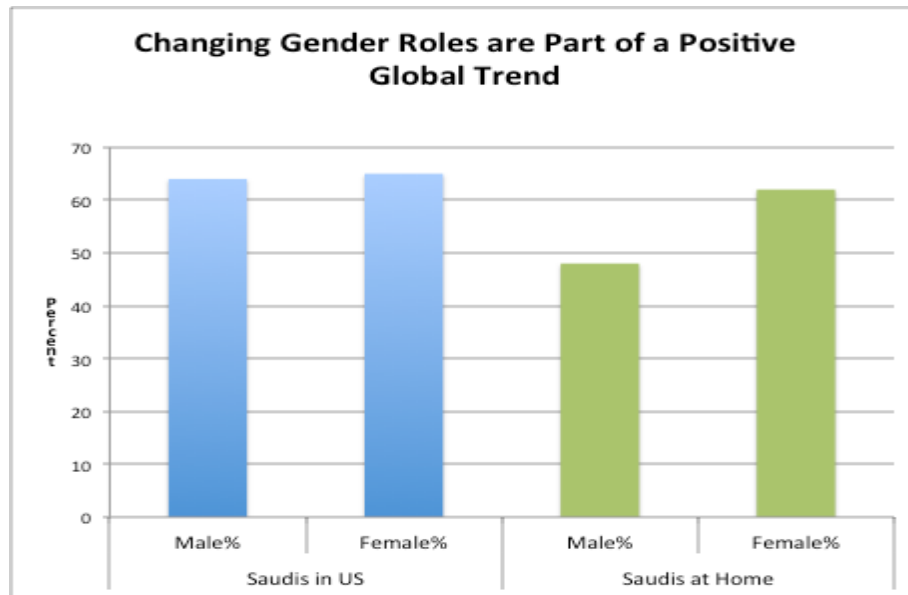
Figure 16: Confidence About Future Employment



Saudis in US include respondents who strongly agreed/agreed. Saudis at Home is based on Bridging the Gap Survey (2010) respondents who agreed/moderately agreed.

Saudi students are motivated to pursue higher education in order to improve their employability. Figure 16 shows both men and women who attend HEIs in the U.S. report greater confidence that they will get a job when they complete their studies than students in Saudi Arabia. For males studying in the U.S. were much more confident (75%) than males studying in Saudi Arabia (57%). For women the confidence gap was smaller; it was 56% in the U.S. compared with 48% studying in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 17: Views on Changing Gender Roles



Saudis in US respondents who strongly agreed/agreed. Saudis at Home is based on Bridging the Gap Survey (2010) respondents who agreed/moderately agreed.

Figure 17 shows there was a large difference among males studying in the U.S. compared with males studying at HEIs in Saudi Arabia when asked if changing roles are part of a positive global trend. Saudi males in the U.S. strongly agreed/agreed 64% while Saudi males attending HEIs in Saudi Arabia agreed/moderately agreed only 48% of the time. Responses for women were nearly identical with 65% studying in the U.S. agreeing compared with 62% studying in Saudi Arabia.

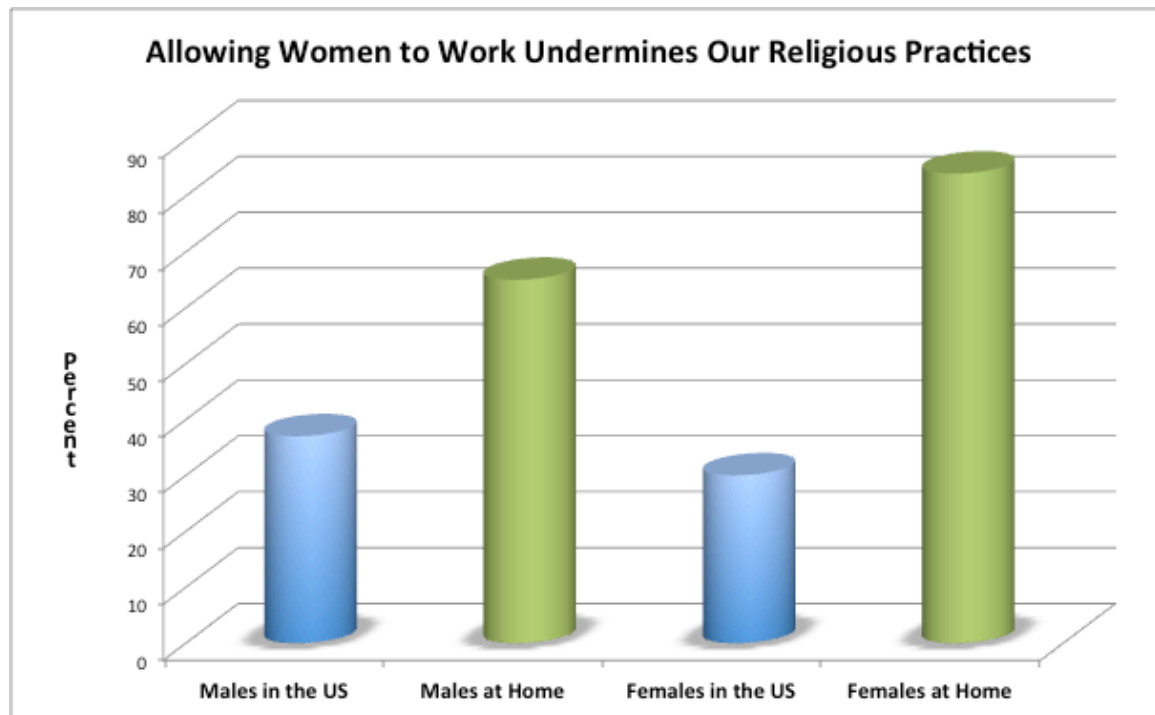
Table 16: Men and Women Should Contribute to the Household Income

	Men	Women
Saudis in U.S.	64%	68%
Saudis at Home	60%	73%
WVS 2003	68%	59%

Saudis in US strongly agreed/agreed. Saudis at Home based on Bridging the Gap Survey (2010) agreed/moderately agreed. World Value Survey Saudi Arabia 2003 strongly agree/agree.

Table 16 shows the similarity in responses between students in the U.S., Saudi students attending schools inside the country, and the general Saudi population. When asked if in a modern family both men and women should bring home an income or both husband and wife should contribute to the household income no obvious difference occur between Saudis in the U.S., Saudis studying at home or the Saudi population in general as reported in the World Values Survey for Saudi Arabia 2003.

Figure 18: Views on Women Working and Religious Practices



Saudis in US strongly agreed/agreed. Saudis at Home based on Bridging the Gap Survey (2010) agreed/moderately agreed.

The question about the intersection of women's employment and Islam shows clear divergence between students in the U.S. and those in Saudi Arabia. Figure 18 highlights the difference in opinion about whether allowing women to work will undermine religious traditions is large between both Saudi men and women. Saudi males in the U.S. agree only 37% of the time compared to Saudi males at home who agreed 65% of the time. Saudi women in the U.S. agreed only 30% of the time compared to Saudi women studying at home who agreed 84% of the time. More than half of the women respondents in the U.S. either disagree or strongly disagreed with the statement. The question about allowing women to work in Saudi Arabia is currently an ongoing one inside the country. 83% of Saudi students in the U.S.

agreed/strongly agreed that encouraging Saudi women to attend college and join the workforce is good for the Saudi economy. It remains unclear how the Saudi people will reconcile this dichotomy between religion and attitudes that point toward a desire for or acceptance of social change in a country where, according to the WVS 2003 74% of the people identify as Muslim above all and only 12% describe themselves as Saudi above all.

Figure 19: Views on Saudi Culture
Changing

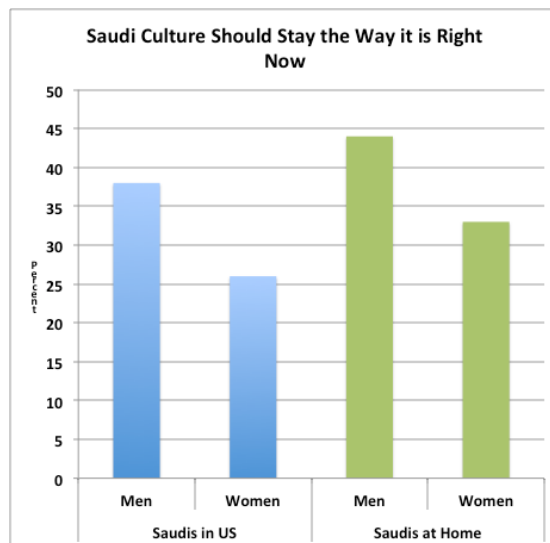
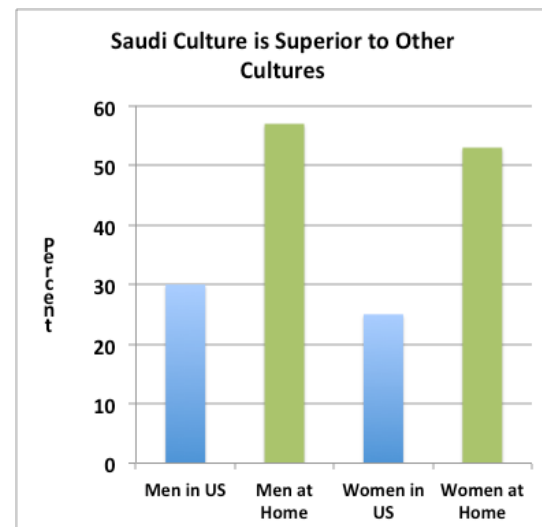


Figure 20: Views on Cultural Superiority



Saudis in US strongly agreed/agreed. Saudis at Home based on Bridging the Gap Survey (2010) agreed/moderately agreed.

Saudi students in the U.S. show more willingness to see cultural changes inside Saudi Arabia than Saudi students at home. Figure 19 shows only 38% of men and 26% of women studying in the U.S. felt the culture of Saudi Arabia should stay the same compared to 44% of the men and 33% of the women studying inside Saudi Arabia. Responses to the WVS question that asked about changing society showed that only 30.7% felt that society as it currently existed should be valiantly defended

indicating that the overall population may also be willing to see changes in society.

Figure 20 shows that Saudi students in the U.S. are less likely to see Saudi culture as superior to other cultures.

In conclusion, Saudi students who study in the United States show several areas where they differ from their counterparts who remain at home. They are more confident that they will find employment when they complete their studies. They are also in greater agreement that changing gender roles are part of a positive global trend and having women enter the workforce is good for the Saudi economy. Saudi students in the U.S. are far less likely to see women working as undermining their religious practices. This might be the result of living in the U.S. where many personally see that women's participation in the workforce has not interfered with their ability to live in accordance with their faith.

Saudi students in the U.S. are more willing to accept cultural change in the country and agree far less frequently that Saudi culture is superior to other cultures. This would affirm the findings in *H7* that Saudi students became more tolerant of people from other cultures and religions after living in the United States. Intergroup Contact Theory is used to explain how positive interaction among people from different cultures can be an effective way to reduce racial prejudice (Allport, 1954) and studies have shown how college increases tolerance and the ability of people to understand and communicate with others (Bowen, 1997).

The findings of this research show that 88% of Saudi students report that meeting different people such as Asians, African-Americans, Christians, and Jews has made them more tolerant and open to other cultures. It would be unrealistic to expect Saudi Arabia to become an open country in the model of Western democratic states but the increased tolerance and respect for other cultures can have help moderate extremist views inside the country. In addition, experiencing other models of interaction between citizens and government, from the local parent-teacher organization to the national discussion about personal freedom and privacy rights may provide returning Saudis some insight into developing forms of civil society along culturally acceptable lines inside Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This chapter begins with recommendations for HEIs to implement to improve the lived experience for Saudi students already attending their school and to enhance recruitment efforts, concluding with a summation focusing on the current situation in Saudi Arabia and recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for HEIs in the United States

U.S. schools need to work harder to fully integrate Saudi students into community life (LeBaron 2013). While English language training is usually the first stage of these students' journey, socialization is part of creating a meaningful, positive experience for Saudi students who will carry home with them the lessons learned while living in America. Schools need to recognize the importance of this for their long-term impact on U.S.-Saudi cultural, political, and economic relations. Every positive relationship is magnified when these students return to their families in Saudi Arabia. Schools need to also recognize the academic issues that many of these students initially face based on the type of learning systems they were taught under. This is not about lower standards. It is about appropriate adjustments and remediation necessary to succeed in an American university.

The market for international students is growing more competitive every year (Choudaha 2014). While the U.S. enjoys the largest number of international students it has seen its overall share of the market decline as other countries strive to attract

them. Yet, the United States continues to see growth from Saudi Arabia. How can an HEI take advantage of this pipeline of students who come fully funded by their government and represent an unusual cohort of students to expose the domestic population to? The survey of Saudi students in the U.S. identified several sources of information and areas of concern that HEIs should consider when developing a strategy to increase the enrolment of Saudi students.

1. Get on the SACM approved list of institutions that students can attend. SACM

approval was number one reason students applied to a particular HEI. HEIs in the U.S. need to better understand the process for being placed on the list of recommended or approved schools by the King Abdulla Scholarship Program. Professional associations and recognized accreditation are the first requirements but the timing of when a school gets evaluated and the formula used to determine the number of students the government will approve for scholarships to any one institution is not made publicly available. When a school reaches a saturation level for Saudi students, as determined by the Saudi Ministry for Higher Education, it is no longer on the approved list. It is not clear if this becomes a hard limit or there is room for some additional student enrolment or how long schools are taken off the approval list. There may be upcoming changes to the KASP that further limit which schools will be on the approved list. HEIs need to carefully monitor and manage their relationship with SACM in order to ensure the flow of Saudi students to their institution.

2. Marshall existing resources to improve the students' experience. The second most frequent reason students chose a school was because they felt they could be academically successful there. Saudi students are more concerned with being able to perform academically than they are about attending schools with strong international reputations or rankings. Helping Saudi students access existing academic supports and find other local resources such as health care providers and how to use public transportation can address basic concerns that impact their experience on campus and their overall performance as students. Addressing these primary concerns of Saudi students should be a priority for HEIs and can have an impact on students' experiences and perceptions.

3. Help Saudi students integrate socially on campus. According to U.S. News Best Colleges, a popular source for information cited by students, "Schools with a strong global presence often have a wealth of cultural groups and events, allowing international students an opportunity to share their food, music and traditions with their U.S. peers." (U.S. News and World Reports, 2015). Schools advertise their percentage of foreign students as a badge of honor, claiming they offer diversity and enrich the experience of everyone on campus. The survey findings show that Saudi students want more help meeting other students and would appreciate more opportunities to showcase Saudi culture. If colleges want to live up to the goal of campus integration they need to increase coordination among stakeholders and work to encourage positive engagement for both Saudi students and the general population (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011).

4. Become more culturally sensitive. Set up interfaith prayer rooms. Offer alternative schedules during the Muslim religious holidays of Ramadan and Eid. Provide halal foods during Ramadan. Organize more events to allow Saudi students to teach others about their culture and improve the general population's knowledge about the Middle East. Over 85% of Saudi students surveyed agreed that the students at their school knew too little about Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. This is important given the increasingly unfavorable views Americans have of Islam in light of recent events in the region and the attack in San Bernardino, California. Shortly after the events of 9/11 a Brookings Institute poll found that 39% of Americans expressed an unfavorable view of Islam. The number of people expressing an unfavorable view of Islam rose to 61% by December 2015 (Telhami, 2015). Education is the antidote to ignorance for Americans as well as Saudis. Respecting culture and sharing culture are fundamental tenets that any HEI should honor if they hope to successfully internationalize the student body.

5. Develop a marketing plan. Successful recruitment today means viewing students as consumers of higher education and creating a plan to reach them as individual target audiences. The survey findings show that few Saudi students got information about schools from educational travel agents, foreign student advisors, direct mail, college recruiters, or alumni from schools. All of these represent underutilized resources that HEIs should incorporate into any efforts to increase the number of Saudi students on their campus. Saudi students report that the Internet and social media were their first sources of information. According to Top

Universities.com “Two-thirds of [survey] respondents said they considered official university websites “essential” when researching higher education options, while university rankings websites were most likely to be classified as “very important”.” (QS Top Universities, 2014). Students reported difficulty in finding information in many areas. HEIs must invest in creating websites for international students that make it easy for them to navigate and address cultural specificities.

In terms of the Internet and social media, they were not as important as university websites but they did play a significant role in student choice. Saudi students surveyed for this project said they were influenced by what they read or heard about schools:

36%	Said they heard or read positive things about this school so I decided to attend.
53%	Agreed/Strongly Agreed that they did not consider some school because they read or heard bad things about them.

Communicating the positive aspects of your school and all the enhanced efforts being made on behalf of the Saudi student population is not enough. HEIs must closely monitor their online profile and address negative information immediately. The negative reviews can have long lasting effects (Ghosh, Whippie and Bryan 2001).

Summation and Future Research

Sending nearly two hundred thousand people to study abroad may have serious consequences for Saudi Arabia. It is important to remember that the Middle East is a region where Western influence has long been seen as corrupting and anti-Islamic. According to Peter Mansfield, the noted Middle East scholar, the 19th Century Persian Shah Naser al Din (1831-1896) refused to allow wealthy Persians to send their children abroad to study for fear they would be exposed to western ideas (Mansfield, 1991). Even today, many religious conservatives in Saudi Arabia do not approve of the educational and social reforms happening in the country. The growth of secular education is a source of conflict with the conservatives who see Islamic education as vital to maintaining Arab and Muslim social values in the face of growing westernization (Rugh 2002).

The Saudi government is acting very carefully to manage reforms. Saudi Arabia is first and foremost an Islamic country with a strong religious class, one where conservative values are widely accepted by the population. King Abdullah recognized the need to restructure the economy and create a more open society in response to the growing demographic pressures on the country. The new king, Salman, has pledged to continue these reforms. Turmoil in the region is another concern, providing incentive for extremism among an increasingly restless, discouraged population of young, unemployed Saudis. King Abdullah was always seen as a champion of liberal reforms, at least those that do not threaten the

privileged status of the monarchy. Education reform is one way to transform the rigid bureaucracy of the state into a more responsive one that fosters innovation. Yet, the question remains about how to modernize education in a country where the religious conservatives want to keep Islam the primary focus. “The ruling Al Saud have initiated controversial educational reforms by using peripheral institutions in order to bypass the clerical establishment. Institutions such as academic cities, international partnerships, and quasi-governmental organizations have often provided backdoor for reform.” (Nolan, 2012).

Sending students out of the country, rather than importing schools like other Gulf States may be a far more successful path toward social and economic liberalization. The language that the Saudi MOHE uses in its information brochures and status reports speaks to the pride of the Saudi nation and its achievements. The Forward to the MOHE publication titled “Study Abroad Scholarships” makes several direct claims, such as “The government has sought to support study abroad scholarships to make use of the skills of the graduates in the comprehensive development which the kingdom is witnessing. To achieve this, young Saudi men and women are being qualified in the finest and most experienced universities around the world, in all the fields needed by the nation for its present and future development.” Furthermore, “the KASP for Study Abroad embodies the aspirations of our nation’s leader for the development and prosperity of our homeland, to enable it to proceed on its civilizational course and rise to the lofty status which is its due.” One of the actual stated goals of the program is to “stimulate cultural, social and scientific interchange

between the Kingdom and foreign countries through the medium of the Kingdom's cultural ambassadors - the students it sends abroad to study." The appeal to national pride is unmistakable. These students are going abroad to expose the world to Saudi culture, not to become Westerners.

While the country's population is conservative and prefers to maintain much of Saudi cultural traditions, it is largely in agreement with the government about the needs for educational reform. Yet, the need to reform education to meet the demands of the global economy is at odds with the religious conservatives. Unless the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) is successful in updating the curriculum and teaching methods Saudi students will continue to perform poorly on the international assessments that measure both basic knowledge and also critical thinking skills. Both are the very foundations of a knowledge economy, one that will carry the nation forward in a post-petroleum era.

The previous discussion in the literature review about human capital development shows that education alone may not be sufficient to solve the unemployment problem in the country if the opportunities to use the skills don't exist and innovative ideas aren't allowed to flourish. It requires a mindset that speaks as much to willingness to address cultural values and attitudes as it does to the basic ability to learn. Absent from the discussion about education reform is the private sector in the country. The private sector is still largely based on a system of patrimony. The expansion of the private sector through entrepreneurship and

innovation will require creative and educated thinkers but it also needs a spark, an organic awakening that needs help to grow and be a sustainable economic force. It requires an atmosphere of openness and support in the form of subsidies, financial incentives, and easing of bureaucratic hurdles that will better nurture a community of risk takers and encourage a sense of what is possible inside the country.

Education and exposure to the West may not be enough to energize a population long used to generous government subsidies and not previously attuned to life as self-employed, outside of the box thinkers in a culture that values religion and conformity above much else. Today, low oil prices are making the prospects of an easy life even less likely and threaten to upset the unwritten social contract between the all-providing monarchy and the people (Hubbard 2016). The need for economic reforms is more urgent than ever.

Saudi women who study in the U.S. represent an acute example of expectancy behavior and risk taking. Many are getting educations in advance of opportunities to find meaningful employment at home. In contrast to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa and even in other Gulf States, women in Saudi Arabia face extensive legal and cultural barriers to employment. This is a subtle reminder that the Middle East is a sizeable region with no one set of rules that apply to women and one where the forces of globalization are pushing against deeply held cultural patterns and belief systems. "In no area has the force of tradition been felt more strongly and the effect of globalization been more apparent than that of the status and roles of women. The position of women in the Arab world, in particular, is neither uniform nor static." (Kirdar 2007, p. 39).

The restrictions faced by women in Saudi Arabia continue to represent an extreme example compared even to women in neighboring countries like Bahrain and the U.A.E., where questions about reconciling Islam with women's employment, voting, driving, and the right to own property have long been settled. Women in Saudi Arabia enjoy virtually none of those basic privileges. Today, in Saudi, "the guardianship system gives a woman a legal status resembling that of a minor." (Zoept, 2016). Thousands have graduated from university with degrees in law but only a small number have been granted a license to practice. Companies still need a special license from the labor ministry to allow women even to work in their offices (Zoept, 2016). Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, told reporters a story at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2007. When giving a speech to a segregated audience in Saudi Arabia, he was asked if he believed that the country could become one of the world's top ten competitive countries by 2010. Gates' response, that if they weren't fully utilizing half of the talent in the country they would not get "close" to the top ten, was received far more enthusiastically from the women in the audience than the men (Wall Street Journal 2007). Yet, women can only continue to express their hope that their employment prospects will improve. Despite being hopeful, the women's unemployment rate was 33.8% by the second quarter 2015, nearly triple the rate for men (People Excellence 2016).

The shift within Saudi Arabia toward greater global integration is inching forward but it is being propelled by the government's views toward economic development, changing social attitudes among the people, and practical necessity. Most

westerners see Saudi attitudes towards women as archaic and based on patriarchic systems that hold no relevance in a modern world. The treatment of women is a popular barometer for measuring change in Saudi Arabia and the international perceptions remain negative. Yet, there is evidence that attitudes in Saudi are shifting and there are new opportunities for women to experience personal and professional fulfillment according to modern standards. Today, women in Saudi Arabia are able to attend co-ed classes at the King Abdullah University for Science and Technology outside of Jeddah. Nearly one quarter of all KASP students are women, many traveling on their own, without a male family member as a chaperone. The high cost of housing means a second income is a necessity and a working spouse acceptable in the current economic climate. And, while the election of five women to local municipal council seats in December 2015 may seem like a small step, it represented the first opportunity for women to vote and participate in civil society and is understood as a major victory in the face of government obstruction and the objections of the most senior cleric in the country (Reidel 2015).

What is not yet known is whether these returning students will be less willing to live under the strictures of a segregated state where roles for men and women remain tightly proscribed and notions of cultural freedom and civil rights differ so much from the West. Already concern has been voiced in Saudi that changes are happening too fast, that females are more outspoken, they are wearing brighter colored headscarves and abayas, some are in mixed classes with men, and even moving about more on their own, unaccompanied by a male family member. Some

Gulf students return home with less favorable attitudes toward their home after spending time in the West (G-Mrabet 2012). It may come to pass that the effort to improve education as a step toward modernization of society and the economy will come at the expense of social cohesion and create new, deeper tensions within the country. Young Saudis at home are increasingly being exposed to the West through social media. Even modern technologies like Uber are helping women become more independent (Zoept, 2016) and have a level of control over their own physical mobility. Also, it seems unlikely that there will be a full scale Arab Spring type uprising in Saudi Arabia but there are signs that the younger generations want to be heard (Glum, 2016). The combination of that desire and the returning students who have lived and experienced life in a country where free speech and political expression are an integral part of daily life may be an unstoppable force for change in a country both unprepared for it and unwilling to accept it. Yet, with the price of oil at \$40 per barrel and the Saudi government dealing with several consecutive annual budget deficits in the \$100 billion range, the days of business as usual may be over.

The complex interplay between education, economic policy and outcomes, and social, political, and cultural change present a range of future research topics related to Saudi Arabia's education spending and the impact of Saudi students studying abroad. To begin, what happens to the KASP graduates when they go home? It would be useful to study their employment history to see whether they are employed at higher rates than students who studied inside Saudi Arabia and further

analyze their impact on the economy. It is possible that SACM maintains records for students after they return home and may be a source of information. Also, U.S. schools might track Saudi alumni and have data available for use.

Economic diversification is a stated goal of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Research that analyzes structural changes in the Saudi economy, including growth in the service sector, industrial output, production of knowledge outputs, adoption of new technologies, improvements in productivity, changes in private sector employment and the unemployment rate for both Saudi men and women could provide insight into the success of the educational overhaul and spending on scholarships. Also, further research can be conducted to track other changes in educational outcomes the country is seeing. Improved TIMSS and PIRLS test scores, higher scores on KEI indices, more patents granted to Saudi universities as well as papers published by Saudi authors in peer reviewed journals could be traced to the increases in educational spending. Saudi students who return from the U.S. may be responsible for some of the change and can be identified by reviewing biographical data.

Future research efforts could be aimed at assessing political and social changes in Saudi Arabia. These may be most obvious in changes relating to women's employment and legal status. After several years of exposure to civic and political engagement in the U.S., returning Saudi students may increase their own political participation, likely on the local level. These students may be the generation to form

business groups, women's professional associations, become advocates for improvements in their own children's education and any number of other civic organizations that portend the beginning of civil society. There may be calls for greater personal freedoms and a relaxation of the institutionalized restrictions on the mixing of genders. It is possible to see other demographic changes in terms of lower birth rates if women become more deeply engaged in the economy and the system of patrimony is eased to allow them greater autonomy.

A final area of future research considers the impact that the large influx of students from Saudi Arabia has had on students in the United States. The Saudi students have been coming to the U.S. in increasing numbers since 2006 and the KASP will continue to accept new students until 2020. Many Saudi students are here for five years or longer (see Figure 10.) Contact theory would predict a reduction in prejudice experienced both all parties, especially if it occurred in a positive, non-threatening environment. Increased contacts between ethnic groups are negatively correlated with prejudice (Crisp, et al. 2008). Yet, the current political rhetoric in the U.S. presents some troubling attitudes. Islamophobia is on the rise in the United States (Hameed, 2016). A Pew Research poll conducted in January 2016 found 65% of Republicans wanted to hear blunt talk about Islam and only 29% felt that politicians should not be critical of Islam as a whole. Republicans believe that Islamic teaching promote violence (32%) and believe that all Muslims in the U.S. are anti-American (16%) at more that twice the rate of Democrats (Libresco 2016). It may be a generational divide, with younger people not participating in these polls or

fewer identifying as Republican but, given the recent call from one of the presidential candidates for a full ban on allowing Muslims to enter the U.S., there is little doubt that there is need for improvement in America's own tolerance for Muslims.

Surveying American students from schools with large Saudi student populations can provide some indications about their views on Saudi Arabia and Islam. Also, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has updated the rules and extended the length of OPT visas for foreign students who wish to stay and work to 24 months after graduation. DHS encourages businesses to hire STEM OPT students to take advantage of the creative knowledge spillovers from recent graduates and to increase their own understanding of foreign markets and build relationships that can enhance future trade. Saudi students report they are increasingly interested in applying for OPT visas. More Saudis staying and working in the U.S. after graduation, along with concerted efforts by HEIs to integrate Saudi students in campus life, may better educate Americans about Saudi Arabia and Islam in general.

Appendix A

Interview Questions for HEIs

1. Do you actively recruit Saudi students? Explain if you rely on the Internet or hire foreign school advisors to market your school.
2. Do you have programs specifically aimed at helping foreign students integrate on campus? (Mixers, movie nights, dinner clubs, etc.)
3. Are there concerns about language skills, academic preparation, or academic performance?
4. What are the problems? Social tensions? Cultural tensions? Racial tensions?
5. Do you know of any Saudi student or Muslim student organizations on campus?
6. Would you like to have more Saudi students attending this university? Do you plan to improve your marketing to foreign students, including Saudis?
7. What contribution do you think they make to the university?
8. Does your school do enough to enable all the students to benefit from the contact between the cultures?
9. How have domestic students reacted or changed due to the presence of Saudi students on campus?

Interview Questions for Saudi Students

Regarding Government Influence

1. Did the KASP influence
 - a) Your decision to study abroad or
 - b) Your choice of program or

c) Your decision to come to the U.S. as opposed to another country? Would you have preferred to study in the UK?

2. Did the now well-defined process of obtaining a student visa in the US contribute to your decision to study in the US? Did you perceive it to be easier than going elsewhere?

Demographics

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your level of study? (Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, or Ph.D.)
3. What is the highest level of parental education (years or degree earned)?

Questions about HEI choice:

1. What marketing techniques were influential in your decision making process?
2. Did you make use of foreign student advisory services or private counselors?
3. How did you use the Internet?
4. What characteristics including location, size, programs, religious nature, academic profile, or other mattered to you?
5. Did you go to your first choice school? Why? (Not accepted, or not on the KASP list anymore or ever?)

Human Capital:

1. What are your expectations about future employment?

2. Would a degree from a U.S. school provide better employment opportunities?
3. Why the US and not another country? (Yes or No: Better reputation, better preparation of necessary skills, improved critical thinking skills)

Social Capital:

1. Were family and other social network influential in your school choice?
2. Are either of your parents professionals?
3. Were your parents supportive of your choice to study abroad? (Somewhat/moderately/not supportive)
4. Do you have friends or relatives currently studying in the U.S.? If yes, where they a source of information or support in your choice to study in the U.S.? Are you attending the same HEI as they are?

Cultural capital:

1. Do you consider yourself a confident or adventurous person?
2. How do you rate your English language skills? (Strong/moderate/weak)
3. Have you ever travelled outside of Saudi Arabia before coming to the U.S.?
4. Did you have extensive exposure to Western expatriates while at home either through your family or other contacts?

Impact of Study Abroad on attitudes and values:

1. Did your understanding of the idea of human rights change since you came to the U.S.?

2. Do you have a different, more positive opinion about democracy since you came to the U.S.?
3. Have the liberal arts requirements of your program exposed you to areas of study that you would never have pursued on your own?
4. Is your understanding of the United States different than when you first came to the country?
5. Is your overall opinion of the U.S. more favorable or less favorable than when you came?

Appendix B

Qualtrix Online Survey

Q1. This survey has been approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board. This is an anonymous survey. Only data in aggregated form will be used in this research. No individual data will be available to anyone but the Primary Researcher and Student Faculty Advisor.

Do you consent to participate in this online survey?

Yes No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q2. Are you a Saudi citizen currently living and studying in the US?

Yes No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q3. To choose this school or any school I attended in the U.S. I got information about the school from: Check all that apply.

☐ Friends and Family

☐ The Internet and Social Media

☐ Advisors at SACM

☐ Educational Travel Agents

☐ The school sent me mail or contacted me personally.

☐ Recruiters I met from this school.

Third Party Foreign Student Advisors

Alumni I met or know from this school.

Q4. I was attracted to the school I currently attend because: Check all that apply.

I have friends or family who currently live in the area.

I knew about this school from friends or family who came here.

It was less expensive to live here than other places in the U.S.

This school has a major I could not find in Saudi Arabia.

This school has a strong international reputation or ranking.

A degree from this school will help me get a better job than going to a university in
Saudi Arabia.

I felt I could be academically successful here.

It is a religious school and I felt I would be more accepted openly practicing my faith,
such as praying or wearing a hijab.

It was on the SACM approved list.

This school is well known in Saudi Arabia

A degree from a U.S. school would be better than a degree from a school in another
country.

I heard or read positive things about this school so I decided to apply.

Q5. Does your current school offer enough help with adjusting to the academic standards at the school you attend?

I think it is enough. I wish they would offer more. I have no opinion.

Q6. Does your current school offer enough training to prevent problems with plagiarism?

I think it is enough. I wish they would offer more. I have no opinion.

Q7. Does your current school organize enough events to help Saudi students meet American students?

I think it is enough. I wish they would offer more. I have no opinion.

Q8. Does your current school offer enough help finding services such as doctors, housing, shopping, and transportation?

I think it is enough. I wish they would offer more. I have no opinion.

Q9. Does your current school organize enough events to allow Saudi students to showcase Saudi culture to other students on campus?

I think it is enough. I wish they would offer more. I have no opinion.

Q10. Does your current school make enough effort to meet religious needs such as providing prayer rooms, halal foods, or accommodations during Ramadan and Eids?

I think it is enough. I wish they would offer more. I have no opinion.

Q11. These statements are about your thoughts and experiences as a student in the U.S.

Getting a visa to study in the U.S. was easy.

I did not consider some schools because I read or heard bad things about them.

College rankings are important.

Higher education in the U.S. is better than in other countries.

The general education courses I took exposed me to areas I never learned about before.

The general education courses I took resulted in my decision to take more courses in an area of study.

Most students at my school know too little about Saudi Arabia or the Middle East.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Q12. The following statements are about your future expectations.

I am confident that I will get a job after completing my studies.

Employers in Saudi Arabia care about which school you attended.

Strong English language skills will be an important benefit to my career.

I want to stay in the U.S. to work for some time after I graduate.

I would have chosen a different country or a different school if it were on the SACM approved list.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Q13. How would you rate your overall experience as a student in the U.S.?

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neutral

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Q14. Please respond to the following statements.

I often feel that people are uncomfortable or do not like me because I am Saudi or a Muslim.

I was uncomfortable with having both men and women in class but I am not anymore.

Laws that forbid discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation are important for protecting human rights.

Meeting different people such as Asians, African- Americans, Christians, and Jews
has made me more tolerant and open to other cultures.

I have a more favorable opinion of the U.S. now than when I lived in Saudi Arabia.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Q15. Saudi citizens and students were asked their opinion of the following statements. They are here for comparison purposes.

Encouraging Saudi women to attend college and join the workforce is good for the
Saudi economy.

Both husband and wife should contribute to the household income.

When jobs are scarce men should have more right to a job than a woman.

I see changing gender roles of men and women in Saudi Arabia as part of a positive
global trend.

Allowing women to work undermines our religious traditions.

The culture of my country should stay the way it is right now.

I think Saudi culture is superior to other cultures.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Q16. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Q17. What is your age?

17-19

20-22

23-25

26-29

30 and older

Q18. What degree are you currently seeking?

English language training

Associate's Degree

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Ph.D.

I'm here on an OPT visa.

Post Doctoral

Other

**Q19. Are you currently studying in the U.S. as part of the King Abdullah
Scholarship Program?**

Yes No, but I was in the past. No, I was never part of the KASP

Q20. Would you have studied outside of Saudi Arabia without the KASP?

Yes No N/A, I did not participate in the KASP

Q21. What is the total number of years you lived in the U.S.?

One year or less

1-2 years

2-3 years

3-4 years

4-5 years

Longer than 5 years

**Q22. How many times did you travel to the U.S. before coming here for higher
education?**

Never Once or twice Three times or more

Q23. What is your mother's highest level of education?

Middle School or less High School Some College or Job Training

Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Ph.D. I'm not sure

Q24. What is your father's highest level of education?

Middle School or less High School Some College or Job Training

Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Ph.D. I'm not sure

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