

***Media and Politics:***  
***The Relationship Between Media and Domestic Governance***  
***In Saudi Arabia (2001 to 2015)***

By

Auhoud Sultan AL Shehail

A Dissertation submitted to the Division of Global Affairs, Rutgers University,

The State University of New Jersey

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Under the Direction of

Dr. Jean-Marc Coicaud

Approved by

---

---

---

---

Newark, New Jersey  
May 2017

Copyright Page:

2017  
Auhoud Sultan AL Shehail

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## Abstract

The following research examines the relationship between media, both new and traditional, and Saudi governance between 2001 and 2015. By utilizing qualitative data gained through both acquiring Royal Decrees and independently soliciting case study interviews with high ranking officials in Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Media, Ministry of Education, and Presidency of Youth Welfare—the study demonstrates that the rapid increase in digital technology and media since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has played a significant role in bringing about policy change in three specific domains of Saudi life: women's empowerment, education, and citizen digital voice. For the first time in its history, Saudi Arabia is at the dawn of a new age, in which public expression and opinion are breaking down the unidirectional traditions of a once absolute monarchy. Although many aspects of Saudi culture and society influence the non-transparent political decisions of the ruling class, the intention of this study is to highlight only the role that media plays in influencing the governing process.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Logging Into the Kingdom:</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
I. <i>Purpose of the Study</i>	<i>3</i>
II. <i>Study Questions</i>	<i>4</i>
III. <i>Importance of the study</i>	<i>5</i>
IV. <i>Study Methodology</i>	<i>8</i>
a) <i>Philosophical Foundation</i>	<i>8</i>
b) <i>Research Design</i>	<i>9</i>
c) <i>Defining Variables</i>	<i>10</i>
d) <i>Data collection</i>	<i>11</i>
e) <i>Data Analysis</i>	<i>16</i>
V. <i>Introduction to Case Studies</i>	<i>17</i>
a) <i>Case Study 1</i>	<i>18</i>
b) <i>Case Study 2</i>	<i>19</i>
c) <i>Case Study 3</i>	<i>20</i>
VI. <i>Limitations and strengths</i>	<i>20</i>
a) <i>Limitation of Data Availability</i>	<i>21</i>
b) <i>Limits of Generalizability</i>	<i>21</i>
c) <i>Constraints of Saudi Culture</i>	<i>21</i>
d) <i>Study Strength</i>	<i>22</i>
VII. <i>Outline of Chapters</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>23</i>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>A Conceptual Map of Media and Governance</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>25</i>
I. <i>Clarifying Media Impact</i>	<i>26</i>
II. <i>Media Impact on Policy</i>	<i>29</i>
a) <i>The Media as a Power Resource</i>	<i>31</i>
b) <i>An Overview of Media Impact in Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>32</i>
c) <i>CNN Effect</i>	<i>39</i>
III. <i>Social Media Impact on Political Communication in the Kingdom</i>	<i>43</i>
a) <i>Citizens Acting as Watchdog</i>	<i>45</i>
b) <i>Mediatization</i>	<i>47</i>
IV. <i>Political Reform in Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>55</i>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>From Sand Dunes to Cyberland:</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>57</i>
I. <i>Historical Background</i>	<i>57</i>
II. <i>The Time Frame of the Study</i>	<i>61</i>
III. <i>Saudi Governance and Its Impact on Media</i>	<i>70</i>
IV. <i>The Evolution of Saudi Arabian Society</i>	<i>74</i>



V. <i>The Digital Revolution and Saudi Arabia</i>	79
VI. <i>Saudi Media's Ambivalence to Technological Change</i>	82
VII. <i>Media within Saudi Arabia Borders</i>	87
<i>Conclusion</i>	96
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>The Evolution of Saudi Media Policy</b>	<b>97</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	97
I. <i>Background of Saudi Media Policy</i>	97
a) 2000 Royal Decree M/32 Revises 1982 Saudi Media Policy	101
b) 2003 Royal Decree M/41 Articulates Saudi Copyright Law	102
c) 2007 Royal Decree M/17 Articulates Saudi Anti-Cyber Crime Law	103
d) 2011 Royal Decree A/93 Amend the Publishing and Print Law	104
e) 2013 Royal Decree M/16 Articulates Saudi Counter Terrorism Law	106
II. <i>Media Censorship</i>	106
<i>Conclusion</i>	109
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Unveiling the Subject of Women</b>	<b>111</b>
<i>Introduction:</i>	111
I. <i>Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia</i>	113
II. <i>Case Study 1: Women Driving in Saudi Arabia</i>	117
<i>Introduction</i>	117
a) The Government of Saudi Arabia's Position	118
b) The Movement	121
c) Phases of Government Reaction in Media	128
d) Evaluation	130
III. <i>Case Study 2: Saudi Women in Sports</i>	131
<i>Introduction</i>	132
a) International Media Pressure and Local Coverage	134
b) During and Post Olympics	139
c) Evaluation	140
IV. <i>Lessons</i>	141
<i>Conclusion</i>	142
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Reading Between the Lines:</b>	<b>145</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	145
I. <i>The Evolution of Education in Saudi Arabia</i>	146
II. <i>Case Study 1: Religious Textbook Reform</i>	148
<i>Introduction</i>	148
a) Background: A Wake Up Call	149
b) Phase One: 2002-2004	151
c) Phase Two: 2004-2005	152
d) Phase Three: 2005-Present	155
e) Evaluation	162
III. <i>Case Study 2: The KAUST Case</i>	165
<i>Introduction</i>	165
a) The King's Vision	167
b) The Controversy Begins	169

c) Reaction of the Media	169
d) Reaction from the Government	171
e) Evaluation	171
IV. Lessons	173
Conclusion	174
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Saudi Citizens Digital Voice:</b>	<b>176</b>
Introduction	176
I. Case study: The Impact of Social Media on the Ministry of Health	177
Introduction	177
a) First Event	179
b) Second Event	184
c) Evaluation	187
II. Lessons	190
Conclusion	193
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>In Their Own Words</b>	<b>194</b>
Introduction	194
a) Rationale for Selected Governing Bodies	194
b) What Was Said and <i>Not</i> Said	195
c) Understanding Context and How Policy Gets Enacted: The Royal Decree	195
d) An Overview of Governance: Understanding the Royal Decree	196
I. Focus Area 1: Women	196
II. Focus Area 2: Education	199
a) The Disconnect between Media and Education Policy	199
III. Focus 3: Media	202
a) Is Media Effective in Leading to Policy Reform?	202
b) The Disconnect Between Media and Policy	204
c) Are Policy Makers Inefficient, Or Are Policies Absent?	205
d) Media Impact on Citizen Voice	206
Conclusion	207
<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>From Deserts to I-Clouds</b>	<b>209</b>
Introduction	209
Light Entering the Cave	209
Case Studies Intent	211
I. Case Study Summaries	212
A. Case Study 1: Impact of Media on Women's Issues	212
B. Case Study 2: Impact of Media on Educational Reform	215
C. Case Study 3: Social Media's Impact of the Ministry of Health	218
II. Findings	220
a) Awareness	223
b) Duality	224
c) Power	226
III. Recommendations	229
Conclusion	234

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Works Cited</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>Thematic and Name Index</b>	<b>304</b>

## Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I give much gratitude to Dr. Jean-Marc Coicaud for being an incomparable advisor and mentor. His continued guidance, patience, knowledge, and support have been invaluable throughout the process.

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee— Dr. Sussan Carruthers, Dr. Eric Davis, and Dr. Gregory Payne—for their time, feedback, and insight throughout the research.

I would like to acknowledge my parents, Dr. Hend AlKuthaila and Sultan ALShehail, for being behind me in everything I do. I am eternally grateful for all of their tremendous love and support over the years, I am grateful that I can look to them as role models that help to guide and shape my life.

Thanks to my sisters and brother, for being my friends and support team throughout this experience. Thanks to my nephews, as well, for filling my days with joy.

This dissertation is only the beginning of my journey. Thank you, God.

## Chapter 1

### Logging Into the Kingdom:

#### *An Introduction to the Study*

#### Introduction

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, long before desert landscapes had been converted into major thoroughfares, or sand swept tents had risen into modern skyscrapers, Saudi Arabia was an impoverished nation. In fact, prior to the discovery of oil, King Ibn Saud's financial advisor reported that he could fit the entire treasury of the Kingdom into the saddlebags of a camel. It was a time before technology, when Bedouins told the time of day through navigating the direction of the sun. Saudi was a tribal nation, divided, and heavily rooted in one unifying force: its religious values and beliefs.

There was very real fear among the King's cabinet, with the knowledge that if better conditions did not come up, the country may never be able to sustain its people. Despite the immense poverty all around him, King Ibn Saud saw a future for his nation: he envisioned a world where technology could help to bring about positive change for his country. It was an unpopular view, strongly protested by many of the more traditionally minded leaders of the society. Yet King Abdulaziz persisted, believing that the way to birth the nation would be through creating alliances with other strong countries, and integrating substantive technological advances, while all the while believing that moving forward technologically would not damage or replace the past.

History repeats itself. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Saudi Arabia once again has become faced with a challenge to its identity, a reiteration, if you will, of the early confrontation with change that led to the rapid growth and advancement of the Kingdom under its first King. This repetition comes in the form of a new entity influencing Saudi people— not the black gold that bubbled in oceans underneath desert sands, but rather a new technology that has swept into the Kingdom and broken down traditional barriers previously impervious to change. From 2001-2015, the penetration of technology and media into the Kingdom has led to one of the most radical periods of cultural growth and expansion in KSA's modern history. With both traditional and new media flooding into Saudi with unparalleled force, governing bodies are re-establishing and redefining the way they listen to their people, think about change, and reform policy.

In the digital age, Saudi Arabia, like much of the world, finds itself at a dynamic crossroads in identity. On the one hand, the Kingdom stands as the guardian of the holy mosques and as the protectorate of the Muslim faith. It is anchored in tradition, conservatism, and adherence to its atavistic religious roots. However, with the unprecedented technological advances and innovation, Saudi Arabia since 2001 has faced an incredible clash between the force of modernization and the stones of its past. This advance in technology has completely revolutionized the way that media voices itself in the Kingdom and impacts policy making. The research will explore the impact that both traditional and new media are having on public policy and decision-making during this time period.

Chapter one will first outline the prominent study questions. Next it will convey the methodologies and research design used for acquiring data. Lastly, it will present the

philosophical foundations upon which the study is based, and provide strengths and limitations of the work.

## **I. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to shed light on whether traditional media and social media are impacting domestic public policy decisions in Saudi Arabia between 2001-2015. Although there are a number of elements impacting sociopolitical change in Saudi Arabia's domestic public policy, this study restricts itself to the impact media has in effecting changes on Saudi Arabia's domestic public policy: specifically, within the domains of women's empowerment, educational reform, and dissemination of information. The process by which public policy is formulated in the Kingdom is by no means transparent, since the procedure of political decision-making is determined through publishing a Royal Decree—a royal action that establishes law when enacted. The research contained in this study primarily focuses on Royal Decrees and Ministerial decisions made between 2001 to 2015. The rationale for this time period stems from the fact that this 15-year expanse featured two major world events: the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States and the Arab Uprising in the Middle East. Each of these events radically impacted both traditional and new media policies within the Kingdom, redefining and repurposing how citizens express themselves and interact with their government. This period has also coincided with and witnessed the birth of an increasingly young demographic that is transforming the nation by popularizing the use of digital technology. It is a youth culture heavily engaged with Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. For the first time, these voices are storming the walls of the Kingdom. As the voices within new and traditional media have accelerated and given rise to previously

unvoiced opinion in KSA, governing bodies have been forced to react and reform to citizen concerns. This is the first time in Saudi Arabia's history that we have seen citizen's voices influencing policy decisions at the highest levels of governance. This study intends to determine the extent to which the media has been able to effect policy development and bring about reform.

## **II. Study Questions**

Several fundamental questions reside at the heart of this study. Each, in its own right, deals with the ways that traditional media and new media are impacting policy-decisions in the Kingdom. The questions are as follows:

1. What is the relation between the Saudi monarchy and media development on the process of political reform?
2. Is the media in Saudi Arabia able to impact change in domestic public policy formation?
3. In each case, what has the Kingdom done to regulate the media in order to maintain control over it?
4. How has the technological development impacted the process of political decision-making?
5. How has new media impacted citizen voice in the Kingdom?

Through engaging with and providing well-researched answers to these questions, the study hopes to clarify how the development of new technologies is impacting policy making at the highest levels of Saudi governance.

The study focuses on the time period between 2001 and 2015— an era that has seen major changes in Saudi political communication. This period has featured the 9/11



terrorist attacks at the front end, “The Arab Spring” at the backend, and countless less dramatic though impactful moments in between. The force of these events within the media has compelled the Saudi government to react by issuing new policies and policy reform, which, in turn, have impacted the media. As a result, the study investigates what new policies have impacted Saudi media during the time frame studied. The research includes three independently solicited case studies concerning women’s empowerment, education, and dissemination of information. These case studies were conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Media, and the General Presidency of Youth Welfare in the Kingdom. Government policies in each of these areas are addressed.

### **III. Importance of the study**

While a growing body of research and commentary regarding social media and sociopolitical transformation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has sprung up since the Arab Spring, little or no research on traditional and new media’s impact on sociopolitical change in the Kingdom exists. The evolution in citizen voice and social media pressure is having an effect on how policy is made. Prior to this dramatic influx in technology, authority and decision-making power was relegated exclusively to the monarchy, with little to no citizen or media impact. Yet no research exists describing or accounting for this transformation. This study intends to fill that gap by exposing the underbelly of the political environment in Saudi Arabia, and by addressing the impact of media on domestic governance within the kingdom. Saudi Arabia holds a central strategic importance, due to its economic power from oil, and its religious power as the birthplace

of Islam. Both powerful forces need to be understood in the context of Saudi Arabia governance from a communication perspective.

Furthermore, it should be recognized that most of the research that currently exists regarding the impact of media and the Arab Uprising on sociopolitical change has been purposed through two distinct voices: 1) the voice and perspective of the Arab, Gulf Region and its constituents; 2) the voice of the Western world. Each of these voices is heavily inflected by cultural values, ideas, and traditions specific to their respective regions, beliefs, and moral values. The research proposed here will offer a perspective that is more objective, academic, and positioned within a framework that bridges the experiences of both Western and Middle-Eastern worlds. No such study currently exists.

This study intends to provide an unbiased comprehensive survey of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to bridge theory-practice gaps that commonly turn up in research literature. Given its influence as both a religious and an economic force in today's world, surprisingly little literature is available related to Saudi Arabia's political communication. This is in large part due to shortage of funding, red tape, strict regulations, and lack of cooperation. In no short terms, Saudi Arabia prefers to keep its political decision-making guarded and non-transparent. This research will provide a better understanding of the current Saudi political communication, for both locals and the international communities.

Interviews with high ranking government officials from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Media, the King Abdullah University for Science and Technology, and the General Presidency of Youth Welfare will be used to shed light on the thinking behind public policy formation and government attempts to control the media in order to achieve an understanding of how both traditional and social

media impact public life and governance. As social media is becoming the public voice of Saudi Arabia, this study includes an in-depth investigation of this new digital space by providing powerful socio-psychological insights into the demographics of the Kingdom. At the same time, the evolving social media platforms will be compared and contrasted with traditional media reports and editorials in order to identify points of convergence and interaction. This analysis aims to lift the veil shrouding political change in Saudi Arabia.

The research is significant in several important regards. In so far as it aims to understand what impact new media and traditional media are having on policy making in the Kingdom, it is the first study of its kind to provide a bridge between Western thought and cultural dynamics unique to the Kingdom, itself. Most of the literature that currently exists exclusively examines the issue from either a Western perspective or a Saudi perspective, but none bridges the gap. To this end, the research will utilize both Arabic and non-Arabic literature and documents. The study is also unique in that it provides uncommon access into the thinking and views of high-ranking government officials in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. No such insight exists in any of the current body of literature.

Finally, the study is significant in that it comes during a time of incredible acceleration in the way that technology is being used to influence policy and bring about change. The current explosion in new media within the Kingdom is producing unprecedented transformation and these must be better understood and accounted for.

## **IV. Study Methodology**

### **a) Philosophical Foundation**

Research in this study is primarily focused on events that occurred between 2001-2015. This time frame coincides with the emergence of social media as well as with the advent of new technology, which created informal networks within the Saudi society. According to Papachriss, the advent of social media permits citizens to voice “dissent with public agenda ... by expressing political opinion on blogs, viewing or posting content on YouTube, or posting comments on an online discussion group” (Papachriss 2009, 244). In this way, social networking has the potential to change the relationship between citizens and policymakers, and this has certainly been true within the Kingdom, where influxes of citizen social media activity have lead to Royal Decrees that have been implemented as a direct result of online citizen voice. Benkler stipulates that with the advent of new media ordinary people “no longer need to be consumers and passive spectators. They can become creators and primary subjects” (Benkler 2006, 272). The current research aims to ascertain the degree to which this public discourse through media is occurring within Saudi Arabia, and the effect that it is having on governance.

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, the framework of this dissertation is grounded in social constructivism, or constructionism. This framework “emphasizes the role of humans in actively using symbolic resources to objectify, circulate, and interpret the meaningfulness of their environments and their existence” (Lindolf and Taylor 2011, 45). For the purpose of this research, which views the impact of media on the formation of public policy within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the key foundational principal of constructionism is that meaning is a socially-derived concept that emerges from interpersonal interactions within the human community (Crotty 1998).

Within the field of communications, constructionist theorists “claim that communication is the fundamental activity through which humans constitute their social world as a ‘real’ phenomenon—that is, one conducive to shared understanding and coordinated interaction” (Lindolf and Taylor 2011, 46). This framework has been used by media scholars to explain news stories manufactured through institutionalized journalism and news reporting, how common understandings of controversial issues may be framed by the media, and how media content may be given local interpretations based upon the “shared knowledge and customs” of a given culture (Ibid).

In order to better comprehend the role of media on public policy in modern Saudi Arabia, this study will use constructionism as a conceptual framework in order to analyze shared interactions and understandings between the Saudi public and policymakers. These shared understandings and interactions will include political dialogues and the development of public policy as influenced by media channels.

#### **b) Research Design**

This study is phenomenological in nature, as it attempts to use a variety of data collection tools (interviews, case studies, social media content, news articles, and scholarly works) to synthesize a reasonable explanation for how new media and technology are bringing about rapid policy change in the Kingdom.

These case studies were derived from a compendium of sources which included academic literature, news reports, social media posts and YouTube videos, Saudi Royal Decrees, official government publications, and publications by non-governmental organizations. These sources were then assembled and analyzed in an effort to provide a complete and accurate portrait of the interactions between media and public policy in the

Kingdom. Three key areas were examined— women’s empowerment, education reform, and dissemination of information— and used to synthesize a more general understanding of the bigger, more holistic conception of Saudi society and culture.

In order to account for multiple angles and perspectives here, the research relied on both official traditional media sources internal to Saudi Arabia, as well as on citizens voices expressed through personal social media channels. Traditional media is the official public governmental voice and speaks well to the conservative, atavistic presence in the Kingdom. New media was used to account for the progressive movement among Saudi’s more liberal demographic populace. Both forces are operating with strong presence in the Kingdom, and each needs to be understood well in order to piece together Saudi’s current trajectory.

### **c) Defining Variables**

#### **1. Main Variables**

We must understand the relationship between the studies’ two categorical variables: media and governance. Media refers to reporting in Saudi Arabia (local and international), and governance in Saudi Arabia refers to Royal Decrees, published law and the enactment of public policy. As the purpose of the research is to measure the effect of media on Saudi Arabian governance, the independent variable is broadly defined as *media*, and the dependent variable is broadly defined as *governance*. The study will examine the way proliferation and content of media directly impacts government decision-making and policy reform. We must also understand the sub-variables involved.

#### **2. Independent Sub-Variable**

Within the overarching umbrella of media and governance, *public opinion* is a key independent sub-variable that may be seen to play a distinct role in moderating between media representation and policy outcomes on any given issue. While public opinion is influenced through both traditional and social media, social media networks provide a modern forum through which the public may interact with policymakers via both direct (interpersonal) and indirect (mass media) means.

### **3. *Dependent Sub-Variable***

A dependent sub-variable that should be considered is secondary policy change that arises as a result of social media and technology forces. There have been instances in the Kingdom where social media pressure has led not to specific policy change it targets, but to other related policy changes. For instance, social media discussions about women's participation in the 2012 London Olympics invariably spawned curriculum reforms for Saudi women in 2015. The study examines policy outcomes in the areas of women's empowerment, educational curriculum reforms, and modifications to communication and health concerns. It is worth noting at the outset that media attention to these respective issues has been varied, and met with unequal consideration from traditional official media. This indicates that other variables (such as discrimination, in the case of women's rights) influence the interplay between media and policy in Saudi Arabia (although it was not possible to directly measure such variables here).

#### **d) *Data collection***

The data gathered— Royal Decrees, published articles, and interviews— were all originally in Arabic and then personally translated. All of the Royal Decrees, which were housed in separate domains within the Saudi Press Agency and local newspapers, were

collected and organized by date, and then linked to events that corresponded with the particular case studies. The news reports and social media correspondences were also collected according to the most influential published material within the case studies. I have done my best to present faithful translations into English.

### ***1. Royal Decrees***

In order to determine whether a relationship may be shown through which media has a direct impact upon the formation of policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, three separate case studies were conducted: women's empowerment, educational reform, and dissemination of information. Independent data sources were used to measure the rate of policy change within the Kingdom. Each of the variables measured here relates to and is determined by policy. The primary source of data for this study was provided by Royal Decrees, which constitute the ultimate source of positive law within Saudi civil society. Royal Decrees issued between 2001-2015 provide the legal framework of the study (analogous to the US Constitution). To provide a point of contrast and demonstrate the rapid pace of policy change in the Kingdom, Royal Decrees issued between 1950-2000 are also considered. From a comparative perspective, the number of Royal Decrees from 2001-2015 vastly outnumbers those implemented in the final 50 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The acceleration seems to be directly related to the influx of new media and technology.

Unlike United States databases, which typically provide comprehensive information related to US policy decisions and modifications to the law, Royal Decrees in Saudi Arabia are not available online. In order to track Royal Decrees, one must actually seek them out through the Saudi Press Agency, which houses them individually in their



archives. Royal Decrees must be gathered on an individual basis by going through the Archives of SPA (the Saudi Publishing Agency).

## **2. News Reports and Social Media Correspondence**

News reports and social media correspondence provided a second source of data. Research from Saudi newspapers and social media outlets—with particular emphasis on Twitter and YouTube, due to their prevalence in Saudi Arabia—was used to research and analyze the dissemination of information and media policies through three separate case studies. Each of the three case studies is presented in a distinct chapter to link the issue of policy with published material or posted content on social media.

## **3. Interviews with High Ranking Officials**

Personal interviews with high-ranking Saudi officials represent the third data source for the purpose of policy interpretation here. These included: officials from *King Abdul Azziz City for Science and Technology* (the institution that controls and censors' digital information), the *Ministry of Information and Culture* (which regulates digital and non-digital information), the *Ministry of Education* (which is responsible for all education reform) and the *Ministry of Interior* (which is responsible for national security). In each case, different sets of questions were utilized in order to narrow the focus on how media reflects and promotes change within these respective governmental institutions. The questions were focused on three main categories: media, education, and women. The interview questions, responses and discourse analysis are woven into the case studies, with pertinent content questions embedded into analysis for each section.

### **a) Gaining Access**

I am aware that my interview participants are high-ranking officials within the Saudi government and society, and therefore not easily accessible by conventional standards. I had special access to the participants by virtue of both family connections and personal affiliation.

*King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology:* I interviewed Dr.Daham Alani, the President advisor for research institutes. I sent a letter to the institute's president, HH Prince Dr. Turki AlSaud, who responded graciously and instructed Dr. Alani to provide me with whatever I needed.

Ministry of Information and Culture: Initially I sent a letter to the Minister and every head of every department in the Ministry. Nobody responded to my correspondence or request for interview. So next I went to the Ministry, six times in total, staying all day waiting, I was the only woman there, which has obvious cultural implications.

Finally, the spokesperson of the Ministry answered one of my phone calls and told me that he would conduct an interview on the phone. One other high-ranking official spoke to me, insisting that he remain anonymous. While the Deputy Minister met with me asking that I would reconsider my topic and should focus on studying other media systems instead of the Saudi media and recommended I would come back again to him in few months and praised my family and that I should not study anything related to the Saudi governance, and said "media has no influence so don't waste your time".

Ministry of Interior: I initially sent a letter to HH Dr.Bandar AL Saud, the Assistant Minister of Interior for Technology Affairs. He replied shortly thereafter with an email. I had no previous connection with Dr.Al Saud, but he was highly cooperative

throughout the process. He asked me to email him the questions, and he responded right away with emailed responses to my questions. In general, Dr. Al Saud was the most prompt and cooperative of all interview participants throughout the study.

Ministry of Education: I gained access to members of this Ministry through my mother, who is the first full professor in Education in Saudi Arabian history, and first Saudi Dean. My mother has deep ties within the field of education and the Ministry, and I was able to leverage these connections. In all, I conducted four interviews with high-ranking officials within the Ministry of Education.

Saudi Press Agency: I conducted an interview with the president of the Saudi Press Agency, Abdullah AL Hussein, the Saudi press Agency (SPA), which is the governmental institute responsible for distributing material to media outlets, both locally and internationally. SPA news is considered “official” news within the Kingdom. All governmental news must come directly through SPA. I gained access by calling multiple of ten times. Finally, an official within the Agency connected me with the president, and he was willing to do an email interview.

Finally, I conducted two interviews with high-ranking officials focused on the role of women’s rights in Saudi society. I conducted these with a member of the Ministry Interior, and another with the Saudi Youth Welfare. Both participants asked their names remain anonymous.

#### ***b) A Caveat for Consideration***

As I went about analyzing the data presented to me, I was highly aware of the political nature of the work, and the fact that participants needed to answer me, or not answer me, with a delicate awareness of how their responses might be interpreted or

revealed. Saudi Arabia is a conservative monarchy with a rich history of adherence to traditional values, religion, and cultural norms. The people I interviewed were generous with their time and may have even taken some risks in speaking publicly about cultural and governmental matters that have some sensitivity. Many of the high-ranking officials I interviewed asked that they give responses anonymously. And for those who did not ask for total anonymity, it was clear that they were careful with their responses, choosing their words deliberately. Given their lofted positions within the Kingdom, it is easy to understand why they were careful with their answers. As I set to analyze the data, I will consider both what was said and *how* it was said or *not* said. Each of these provides important information for the purpose of this study. This was particularly true with the interview participants from the Ministry of Media. In general, they were highly sensitive and careful with responses, and often outright refused to answer questions.

#### e) Data Analysis

Data was independently collected and analyzed for each of the three case studies performed. Legal mandates and Saudi Royal Decrees, transcripts of interviews, and news reports and social media communications were subjected to inductive analysis and patterns in the data were identified.

A key foundation to the study was provided through utilization of a constructivist-interpretive paradigm, through which the theoretical building blocks are provided by the researcher's interpretation of local events and situations.

Trustworthiness was a primary concern in drafting this study, and every effort was made to ensure that the researcher's subjective interpretations of Saudi Arabian culture were not imposed, and that the research findings remained as objective as

possible. Therefore, several steps were taken to enhance the validity and reliability of the study findings. This was particularly true when accessing academic articles, periodicals, and books originating from Saudi Arabia. The research was careful to ensure that reported data found confirmation in multiple, distinct sources prior to inclusion in the analysis. This effort at bolstering credibility through triangulation of multiple sources helped to confirm study findings and augment reliability.

## **V. Introduction to Case Studies**

Existing literature confirms media can draw attention to both policy makers and citizens around a particular policy or issue. Media can also change the discourse of the policy debate by framing an issue. However, Saudi Arabia as a nation and media system cannot be understood solely through western literature, since the Saudi media system, government, and society has many unique features different than the western world. To better understand the impact Saudi media has on policy, the research will examine three different angles that influence Saudi identity and politics.

I have chosen to focus on women, education, and media. Women is a key area to examine for the following reasons: 1) women represent roughly half of the population within the Kingdom, 2) women are largely considered second class citizens in Saudi society, and 3) women lack full rights as citizens. Given the subordinate role that Saudi women have in contemporary society, they are significant demographic to examine in so far as media pressures may influence the way they are treated, envisioned, and dealt with in society. Furthermore, since women know that media power may positively influence their role in Saudi culture and society, they are actively using media opportunities to gain empowerment.

Education is a second key focal area, since how children are educated powerfully influences the future ideologies, values, and systemic structures of society. The youth generation is largely at odds with many of the more conservative, atavistic attitudes endemic to Saudi's governing past. This tension has been highlighted in the media both locally and internationally. Furthermore, there have been media pressures from other nations urging Saudi to modify its more radical and traditional educational content. These media forces invariably have lead to curriculum reform and likely will continue to do so.

The third focal area involves a recent firing of high-ranking officials within the Ministry of Health. The pressures coming from local media lead government replacement of lofty officials. This 2014 occurrence highlights the new ways that media and new media are bringing about real societal change in the Kingdom.

Each of these elements is considered a complex political component in its own way. The study will shed light on these three distinct domains within public policy that have brought about internal change.

#### a) Case Study 1

The first case is presented in chapter five, and focuses on women in the Kingdom. Since the topic of Saudi women topic is layered with religious, traditions, and social factors, two different case studies have been selected to better understand the effect media has on policy related to women. The first case is *women driving* and the second is *women participation in 2012 Olympics*.

The cases have been chosen because they highlight different yet important issues concerning the progression of women's rights in the Kingdom. Since almost any woman can theoretically learn to drive, women driving impacts almost all women in Saudi

Arabia, and is a matter confined to the country's borders, governmental system, and social codes. Women in the Olympics has a far less smaller direct scope, since only a very small percentage of Saudi women possess the ability to compete at an elite level of sports. However, given the scale and reach of the Olympic games, there are international media plays in local awareness. Each also highlights the importance of political reaction with the Kingdom.

### **b) Case Study 2**

The second case, which is presented in chapter six, relates to education. Following 9/11, the Saudi education system received accusations claiming that it was one of the main factors behind fostering radical mentality that lead to terrorist groups. This was especially true for religious textbook materials used in Saudi schools, which international reports portrayed as honoring and even promoting jihadist beliefs and actions. The United States administration and media pressured the Saudi government to reform adherence to religious textbooks. Saudi had a difficult time handling these pressures, since the government believed that efforts to reform education should come from within the nations borders and not from without. Higher government was open to reform, but local policy makers resisted, despite insistent pressures.

The local media filled with tension from two different views about religious textbooks: those who focused on the need to update textbooks that has not been changed for more than forty years, and those who believed the reform is a reaction to foreign pressure against Islam. The case sheds light on how the Saudi government dealt with local and foreign media campaigns, in dealing with reform in addition to the process of political reform in the religious education curriculum in Saudi education.

### c) Case Study 3

Chapter seven covers the final case, which illustrates how media pressure can propel the government to hire and fire Ministry members. In 2014, local dissenters began to express criticism of certain members of the Ministry of Health. The dissemination of these views reached government officials, and they responded precisely by dismissing two ministers and firing three high governmental officials within the health Ministry in one year. In a country with an absolute power and authoritarian media control, public opinion does not garner tremendous weight when it comes to making political decision, but with the advancement of media and citizen involvement through social media, ordinary citizens have begun to use online platforms to make an impact on the political decisions that result in Royal Decrees. This case sheds light on the introduction of public opinion and its influence in an authoritative government.

## VI. Limitations and strengths

This study has significant strengths and important limits. The basic limitations relate to three important categories: limitation of data, limitation of generalizability, and limitation of Saudi culture. These limitations are in large part due to the specific societal and cultural codes of the Kingdom, which, unlike Western culture, deliberately shields and safeguards much of its information. It is a challenge to uncover data on the Kingdom, since the Kingdom itself does much within its power to limit its dissemination. A unique strength of the study is that it bridges Western and Middle Eastern perspectives, and also provides unique access into the thoughts and viewpoints of high-ranking government officials within the Kingdom.



#### **a) Limitation of Data Availability**

This study had several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The primary limitation of the study is the lack of statistical data and lack of prior research on the impact of Saudi Media on public policy formation. Although cultural bias is to be expected in any research, the negative bias of western scholars (critical views of Saudi society and government) and the positive bias of Saudi scholars (tendency to boost rather than intelligently critique local politics and customs) made objective research difficult.

#### **b) Limits of Generalizability**

The nature of qualitative research conducted deliberately aimed to acquire reliable and meaningful data as well as to put together comprehensive description of the case study materials, designed to analyze the effect of media on governance in modern-day Saudi Arabia. In this sense, the data utilized for the research is reliable. However, the degree to which any qualitative data may be generalized is limited, as the data is applicable only to the situations and events discussed herein, and does not necessarily apply to other Middle Eastern countries or more global regions. This is to say that every Middle Eastern government body has its own distinct worldviews, constructs, traditions, and cultural norms. While the study sheds light on certain areas within the Saudi governance and policy-making, it does not pretend to account for government policy in other Gulf regions. This is not to suggest that the study is not applicable for the benefit of similarly situated cultures or individuals, just that it is not identical and must not be used to characterize other Middle Eastern media/political environments.

#### **c) Constraints of Saudi Culture**

Finally, and most importantly, the situation in Saudi Arabia limited the scope of this study. As discussed in the literature review, Saudi Arabia is a traditionally closed culture and practices state censorship of media. It goes without saying that this placed significant limitations on the research. The analysis section handles these limitations.

#### **d) Study Strength**

A key strength of this study is that it sought to merge data about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from both domestic and international sources. A major aim of the study has been to contribute to a dialogue on the interplay between governance and media in Saudi Arabia in the Information Age. This research is new and exciting, and has significant implications within Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and the international community. In this regard, the limitations mentioned above are also the strength of this study. The intent of the study was to examine Saudi Arabian governance and culture through a lens that was neither Western nor Saudi, but, rather, objective and academic. As the principle investigator of the study, my role as both Saudi citizen (born and raised in Saudi Arabia) and American scholar (educated at American universities) positions me uniquely to bridge this gap and give appropriate weight to both sides.

## **VII. Outline of Chapters**

The research is organized into nine chapters. Chapter one includes an introduction to the dissertation, an overview of the prominent questions handled in the research, a discussion of the methodology, an outline of the case studies, and a compendium of study strengths and weaknesses. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of the literature, examining media's impact on policy, social media's impact on political communication in the Kingdom, and political reform in Saudi Arabia. Chapters

Three and Four provide an introduction to the central concepts that delineate the impact of media on the Saudi political system. Chapter Three provides a contextual history, presenting the emergence and development of Saudi government, and the development of media outlets in Saudi Arabia. This includes sections clarifying the unique nature of Saudi culture intentionally designed to help Westerners better understand why Saudi Arabia is a unique case that must be viewed with a lens specifically sensitive to its national context. Chapter four lays out the design used to measure the impact of media on policy, with specific focus on how governing bodies responded to radical technological and social developments. Chapters Five through Seven deal specifically with three case studies. Chapter Five, the first case, focuses on women empowerment. Chapter Six presents the second case study on educational reform. Chapter Seven presents the final case study on information dissemination. Chapter Eight examines the content of the interviews themselves, with a rich discourse analysis highlighting several key features of what was said and not said during the interviews. Finally, Chapter Nine pulls the lens back and takes one more, big picture view of Saudi during the information age. It proceeds to draw general conclusion from three different case studies and the impact media has had on the formation of policy.

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the purpose, time frame and focus of the study, and also outlined the relationship between media and domestic public policy in Saudi Arabia. It introduced the questions covered by the study, the importance and purpose of the study, and detailed the methodological structures, philosophical foundation, research design, categorical variables, case data and data analysis,

furthermore study limitation and strength. The following chapter will provide an overview of both western and Middle Eastern literature that directly and indirectly relates to media and its relationship on policy reform.

## Chapter 2

### A Conceptual Map of Media and Governance

#### Introduction

The relationship between media and policy-making is well established within democratic societies. In global communities where free speech and media freedom are normative, it is easy to trace the ways that media impacts governance and policy reform. However, this is not the case in authoritarian governments, where rigid controls and a stark distinction between populace and control are a hallmark of society and rule. However, in recent years, with the explosion in technology and innovation, as well as access to social and international media, notable advances have occurred in the way that political decisions are made and executed. The primary aim of the research is to analyze the ways that media innovation is influencing policy within Saudi Arabia. The secondary aim is to report on the findings free from both western ideology/democratic biasness and Saudi parochial traditional perspectives. Each of these paradigms possesses the potential to distort the story by inappropriately weighing cultural biases and prominent societal assumptions.

Chronologically, the first section of the literature review examines and clarifies what is meant by the concept of media impact, and how it relates specifically to the study. The second provides an overview of the unique case studies that are related to the Saudi media system and its impact on Saudi governance and policy reform. The third section is focused on the way that social media is impacting Saudi political communication. The final section looks at Saudi reform literature.

An overview of the literature provides a comprehensive understanding of the study, while at the same time exposing the gap in the literature that this study seeks to fill—namely, a more complex and nuanced understanding of the Saudi system in its own context, free from either the biases of a western democratic lens, or the favorable support of its own embedded community's perspective. Current literature lacks scientific measurement and qualitative data to support claims. The following study aims to fill in this important data and better represent the phenomenon and how it is taking place.

### **I. Clarifying Media Impact**

As early as the 1920s, political and social scientists have been preoccupied with media effects on the audience's behavior and attitudes (Miller and Krosnick 1996). Early media effects revolved around the use of media in persuasion and propaganda. Scientists developed various theories and approaches to better understand the phenomenon. However, it is a young science with varied approaches resulting in different definitions depending on the focus of interest. Media effect and media impact are key terminologies used in communication, sociology, media studies and psychology to define media culture and mass media influences on audience behavior, attitude and thought. The first thing to clarify is the difference between media impact and media effect as these two are used interchangeably without any clear differentiation as to their true meanings.

Research on media effects is more extensive than the media impact because the latter is a more recent concept. Effect studies have gone through many phases, always adjusting to the mass media technological development. The terms media impact and mass effects are used interchangeably. In fact, it can be difficult to differentiate them. As a result, media impact is often defined regarding media effects in existing body of

research. Moreover, research on media effects is more extensive than research on media impacts.

Although there is overlap between media impact and media effect, the former can be typified as having a strong micro-orientation. The individual media user is the unit of analysis in media effects, and the main focus is narrowed to whether media exposure to a specific media message affected the users' beliefs, behaviors, cognitions or attitudes. Media impact is characterized as possessing strong macro-orientation because the conclusions and observations are based on institutions, social groups or systems (Inagaki 2007). Furthermore, media effect studies explore effects that are short-lived in nature. Due to methodological challenges implicated in carrying out long-term media effects research, media effects studies focus on short-term influences. However, inherent in the concept of media impact is the notion of a long-lived change (Harmony Institute 2013).

In addition to that, media impact goes beyond the traditional idea of media effects studies through its sprouting focus on the notion of engagement. This means that when evaluating media impact, the participants involved focus on the interaction between media and the audience, tracing beliefs, cognitions, and attitudes that are not quantitatively measurable. The focus is largely on how the audience uses the media, the nature of consumption dynamics, and what additional interactions are incited by the initial interaction.

Media effects are delineated regarding the short-term outcomes, which a media project can have, including engaging, reaching, mobilizing and informing the target audience. Impacts are long term and coupled with far-reaching changes like changes in citizens' behavior and public policy (Knight Foundation 2012). Media effects may be

defined as measurable effects. The effect of the media message on the target audience depends on several factors including psychological characteristics and demographics. Scientists examine audience following exposure to a particular media for changes in attitudes, belief system and cognition.

Media influenced effect is an interdisciplinary field that includes political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, communication scholars, economists, anthropologists, etc. and is defined as follows:

Media- influenced effects are those things that occur as a result —either in part or whole— from media influence. They can occur immediately during exposure to a media message, or they can take a long time to occur after any particular exposure. They can last for a few seconds or an entire lifetime. They can be positive as well as negative. They can show up clearly as changes, but they can also reinforce existing patterns, in which case the effect appears as no change. They can occur whether the media have an intention for them to occur or not. They can affect individual people or all people in the form of the public. They can also affect institutions and society. They can act directly on a target (a person, the public, an institution, or society) or they can act indirectly. And, finally, they can be easily observable or they can be latent and therefore much more difficult to observe (Potter 2012, 38).

From this definition, it can be understood that media influenced effects are such a broad topic that they can be interpreted and dealt with in many ways. Perhaps this explains much of the contradicting results in media research.

On the other hand, media impacts may be defined as the ability to change actual opinions, behaviors and attitudes of people or institutions. An impact may be defined as a change in status quo due to a direct intervention of mass media or social media. Media impact focuses on how the media content helps push for movement building or policy change. The fact that people are exposed to media content does not mean they will



demand policy change or take action. Media impact is concerned with macro-level effects in that it examines the impact of media on systems and large communities.

Moreover, media impact is a recent field with a limited body of research. But with the rapid development of technology and media, the definitions are also developing. Lang, states it best by saying "we must learn to understand communication as a fundamental dynamic, natural aspect of human adaption to the environment. We must redefine media regarding human-centric variables. We must understand how variations in message production influence every aspect of human behavior" (Lang 2013, 23).

As a result, for research to be meaningful, it must be specific and local because most academic studies related to media influenced impact have been conducted in democracies. Thus, only issues directly related to media influenced impact related to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are included in the literature review of this study.

## **II. Media Impact on Policy**

Central to this study is the question, "Does mass media have the power to influence policymaking?" According to Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer, policymakers have traditionally believed that the media has a strong influence on citizens since people tend to be substantively influenced by what they read and watch (Koch-Baumgarten and Voltmer 2010). We might assume that public opinion influences public policy, but how this is executed in actuality is more complex. One of the reasons we do not have a conclusive answer in the literature is that the media's impact on policy is simply too broad a question to be satisfactorily answered. It can only be studied when we divide it into focused, empirically manageable sub-questions: which media, which policy, and what impact?

Martin Linsky at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University conducted research studying the impact of the press on policy makers. Linsky and his team carried out six case studies which resulted in two types of impact that media has on the policy process: 1) massive news coverage speeds up the decision-making process; 2) extensive coverage tends to push decision-making up the bureaucratic hierarchy to higher level officials. Depending on the circumstances and the issue involved, media coverage can either narrow the options effectively available, or it can effectively increase the options decision makers consider (AlGer 1989).

Due to the nature of media in Saudi Arabia, traditional media outlets are controlled directly or indirectly by the government, so the cause and effect relationship is difficult to establish. However, international media and social media content accelerates the decision making process by pressuring government to utilize higher level officials and compel them to more rapidly effect change, a phenomenon that will be examined later in this chapter.

Another study, cited by AlSaud, that demonstrates cause and effect connection between media and its impact on influencing the process of decision-making is a study conducted regarding journalists' job satisfaction. Fifty-four percent of Saudi newspaper journalists participating in the study believe that journalism offers them an opportunity to impact decision makers, while twenty-one percent reported that they do not believe they can influence political decision making (S. Alsaud 2010).

The Saudi government acknowledges this reality, and therefore chooses to protect the traditional identity of the nation through media content control; as a result, heavy censorship is imposed on the media (Freedom House 2014). *Freedom of the Press*

(2014) ranks Saudi Arabia 164 out of 180 countries regarding media censorship. This clearly demonstrates that the Saudi government believes in the importance of media control, and has historically done much within its power to ensure that it holds dominion over media and its potential impact.

#### **a) The Media as a Power Resource**

The media has always been adequately leveraged as a tool for empowerment. Scullion, Gerodimos, Jackson, and Lilleker argue that power in political communication is not a zero sum game but a facilitation of civic voice, and the interaction of media and politics is a form of political communication, which has a cultural effect. This effect shapes values and norms, and has a significant role in influencing political communication and political discussions, leading to citizen empowerment (Scullion, et al. 2013).

In Scullion, Gerodimos, Jackson, and Lilleker's study, the researchers believe that the media's role in the Middle East both empowers and disempowers citizens. It empowers citizens by providing information on a variety of social issues, but disempowers them by selectively editing information, censoring, and deliberately providing a skewed perspective to advance their particular aims. To complicate the matter further, media in the Middle East provides minimal platforms for motivating individuals to mobilize and effect real change. In this sense, these scholars find that media within the Middle East both helps and hinders the common citizen.

When it comes specifically to women's empowerment, something that will be addressed much more comprehensively later in the study, there is some evidence that the media is helping to build and unify a female voice. Naomi Sakr conducted a review of

the region and established that the media has facilitated women's empowerment through a shift in the media's ecological interest in the Middle East. In the case of Saudi Arabia, she argues that women's empowerment should be viewed from a political economical perspective. She claims that the media and the issues covered within it usually are politically approved. She states "women empowerment can be rather easily traced to the very same power structure that excluded women for so long" (Sakr 2007, 3).

## **b) An Overview of Media Impact in Saudi Arabia**

### **1. Authoritarian Model**

To study the impact of media on policy in Saudi Arabia, we have to first understand the media system in the Kingdom and the relation between the media system and political decision-making. When considering Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's four major theories of the relation between the press and the government (*the soviet communist theory, the authoritarian theory, the libertarian theory, and the social responsibility theory*), the authoritarian model seems to best represent the Saudi media system.

According to Siebert, who developed the model of authoritarian theory, it is "a theory under which the press, as an institution is controlled in its functions and operation by organized society through another institution, government" (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm 1956, 10). Authoritarian theory presumes that the state is the optimal expression of a rational institutionalized structure and that individuals in society are neither capable nor trustworthy when it comes to disseminating information and views. On this basis, where the media supports the state and not vice versa, media promotes the views and goals of the incumbent governmental system, such that the society will

advance, and the state will attain its objectives (Ibid). Under this theory, the state and media form a partnership. However, the partnership is not carried out on equal footing. In actual effect, the elite rulers of society maintain ultimate control over mass media, the mechanism used for social control.

Wright Mills *Ruling Elite Theory* is a special category within the authoritarian model, and it applies to Saudi's historical media and governance dyad. According to Wright Mills, “the ruling elite” consists of the members of society that hold dominant positions and have the power to manipulate ordinary citizens, due to their lofty positions at the top of society (Mills 2000). The ruling elite and their decisions heavily impact the national and international community. Chomsky suggests that media is used by the powerful elite to utilize propaganda that serves the interests of the wealthy against the needs and interests of the working class (Chomsky 1988). This sort of media influence lends itself well to Saudi Arabia, where hierarchy and social order represent the cornerstones of everyday life.

## **2. Media Ownership**

The 1990 Gulf War opened the eyes of both Saudi rulers and citizens to the significant role media can play in determining politics and exerting influence. The elite Saudi citizens, who had access to international TV channels through satellite during the early 1990's, and were able to tune into CNN and other prominent international news outlets, learned about Iraq's invasion of Kuwait three days prior to the Saudi government's official announcement of the event (Cochrane 2007).

According to Douglas Boyd, Saudi's stated intention in purchasing vast amounts of media was to push towards modernization, but the actual motivation seems to be more

deeply rooted in controlling how and when information gets disseminated. Boyd elaborates that the primary motivation for media dominance is to stabilize the Saudi political system (Boyd 2001). On the other hand, Saad AL Saud says that Saudi investment in foreign media results from the recognition of the important role media plays in the world and the region by Saudi businessmen. Al Saud sees media buying among the private sector as a boon towards modernizing the image of Saudi media. He elaborates that restrictions imposed by local regulations motivate local and international private sector investment in media (S. Alsaud 2010).

Ownership is a crucial factor when it comes to media impact because Saudi Arabia is not only able to influence local news coverage but also can impact regional reporting. Thus, Saudi Arabia influences the Gulf region by presenting local politics in a wider regional context. As a result, coverage of political events is capable of triggering other local and regional events as demonstrated by the Arab Uprising.

### **3. *Why Ownership Matters:***

#### **3.1. Agenda Setting**

Communication scholars agree that owners of the media influence media content by funding projects, employing personnel, and providing a media platform for ideological interest groups (Meier 2002). Even in democratic societies with free media, ownership is a crucial matter. Noam Chomsky believes that media serves the dominant elite. His propaganda model, which he conceptualized in political economy, explains that even if the media is privately owned, it still serves the biased interest of the owners and not the public. In the case of Saudi Arabia, government restrictions within the authoritarian

model are presented in the government media outlet directly, and the political economy interest is presented in the privately owned media outlet indirectly.

When ownership equals control, as it does among Saudi media outlets, theorists refer to it as *Agenda Setting Theory*. Agenda Setting Theory dates back to 1922 when Walter Lippmann wrote "the world outside us and the pictures in our heads" (W. Lippmann 1922, 9). Lippmann introduced how media has the power to influence the audience. Then, in 1968, McCombs and Shaw proposed a theory explaining that the public's perception of the relative importance of issues is determined to a strong degree by the amount of media coverage devoted to issues. Hence, "people learn from the media what the important issues are" (McCombs and Shaw 1972). Bernard Cohen explains the process of the theory by stating that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (B. Cohen 1963). Subsequent studies have found a strong relationship between the media and public agendas.

Media content is the basis of media impact. Shoemaker and Reese elucidate integrating content and effect studies to facilitate growth in communication studies. Because they include the most important elements of the mass communication process: media content and the factors that shape it. In a study conducted by content analysis of the media agenda setting in the Saudi national TV, newscast revealed that Islamic affairs, foreign affairs, and interior affairs had the highest number of occurrences. Those three issues of focus convey that the government identifies itself with Islam as its main source, and the foreign affairs stories, which glorifies Saudi Arabia as a leader, while the interior stories focused on the efforts of development (Sabir 2012).

Agenda setting in the Kingdom greatly influences how the public sets its priorities. It may not create content, but media chooses which content to disseminate. This has a powerful impact on the way Saudi citizens lead their lives and experience/interpret the world. In another study—conducted at the other end of the spectrum in terms of influence—Giulio and AlFilali focus on the soft power of Saudi Arabia. They explain the power of Saudi in oil as hard power and cultural influence as soft power. They elaborate that much of Saudi's soft power is carried on the chariots of media sources by investing in modern technology. The researchers state that Saudi Arabia “has access to many potential sources of such power both nationally and internationally with which to address its problems and attain its most important national objectives” (Gallarotti and AlFilali 2012, 17).

Meraz analyzed the influence of Agenda Setting Theory in traditional and social media using time measures, and came to the conclusion that “traditional media institutions still have the power to set non-traditional media agendas at the issue level” (Maraz 2011, 178). Yu and Aikat also found evidence of sharing of agendas among traditional media platforms and non-traditional portal news outlets, such as Yahoo, News and Google News. Finally, Messner and Garrison assert that that traditional news media heavily influences the agenda of blogs by being their dominant sources (Messner 2011). However, the Arab Uprising has led to a hypothesis that perhaps an Agenda Setting media structure can be countered by the role of social media and networking as a tool for political mobilization towards political change. Egyptian Google executive Wael Ghonim famously said, “If you want to liberate a society, just give them the Internet” (Mackinnon 2011).



Evgeny Morozov counters the idea that social media provides an influential platform for common citizens. Morozov sarcastically refers to popular enthusiasm about technology's empowerment of the people as a "cyber utopianism". He argues that most often instead of granting freedom it constricts freedom. Morozov focuses on Internet political ramification, explaining that authoritarian governments use the Internet as a carrot and a stick: "Keeping their populace entertained, and punishing those who dare to challenge the official line" (Morozov 2011, 268), although he agrees that the Internet penetrates and reshapes all walks of political life. Morozov elaborates that authoritarian regimes are becoming more modern and open not from modern technology but rather "religion, culture, history, and nationalism are all potent forces that, with or without the Internet, shape the nature of modern authoritarianism in ways that no one fully understands yet" (Ibid, 29). He concludes that the dark side of the Internet is growing, and we have neither the intellectual nor the political tools to prevent its advance.

Additionally, today's modern media in the Kingdom provides diverse options to citizens— vastly more than they did even a few decades ago. Although it cannot account for the potential impacts and contributions of culture, politics, and education, agenda setting is the first step in the process of public opinion formation, which is the main determinant of media impact on policy.

### 3.2. Public Opinion

In the Western world, public opinion has traditionally had a strong influence over both media and policy makers. In Saudi, however, this has not historically been the case, with the exception of the role that tribes have had as consultants to the King. Prior to new media, the influence of public opinion was relatively non-existent in Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia (KSA). However, this is changing. A pioneering study conducted by Prince Mohammad Bin Naif Center for Counselling and Care has examined the role that public opinion has in the Kingdom, and the way that it impacts political reform and new media. The 2014 study found that religious scholars, in particular, possess a powerful ability to impact both the media and policy makers. The study bases its conclusion on the fact that religious scholars in the Kingdom hold great weight because they are respected as protectors and maintainers of social norms (Albshir 2014). According to the report, seventy percent of political extremists have been influenced by exposure and usage to social media: "there are several reasons for young people to become attracted to these extremist ideologies, with media being the number one source of influence, be it in the form of satellite TV or Internet and social networking sites" (Arab News 2015).

Social media has greatly augmented the influence of public opinion. This is a reality that even Saudi authorities have accepted. In 2004 Saudi Arabia lifted its ban on camera phones, which have become the primary tool for citizen journalism. In 2014, at his speech at the Asia Media Summit, King Abdullah confirmed the impact of the media on influencing public opinion: "Countries around the world are exposed to extraneous cultural influences that shake the foundations of humanitarian and religious values because of the dissemination of irresponsible media content. We request that media experts use their influence constructively" (CoastalDigest 2014). Public opinion is a 21<sup>st</sup> century reality for the monarchy.

The generalization that social media is influencing the Saudi society on many levels is attributed to the fact that Saudi Arabia has the highest Twitter penetration (activity) in the world— a fact that makes it one of the Middle East's most engaged

countries on social media. Additionally, Saudis watch more than ninety million videos daily on YouTube, which is the highest daily YouTube video viewership in the world (The Social Clinic 2013).

Although it is true that social media is influencing public opinion in the Kingdom, there are many attempts by authoritarian figures to suppress it. On November 5<sup>th</sup> of 2014, former Minister of Media, Abdulaziz Khoja, was dismissed from his position after tweeting "I had ordered the shutdown of Wesal channel's bureau in Riyadh and [am] banning it from broadcasting in the Kingdom." The late King Abdullah reacted to the Tweet by canceling the closure order. If a single Tweet regarding the closure of a channel resulted in the dismissal of a government minister, it demonstrates the power the authoritarian government still possesses to suppress unfavorable public views. This incident highlights the media system in the Kingdom.

Despite Khoja's dismissal, public opinion continues to battle for expression in Saudi. A few weeks later, on November 30, 2014, an article appeared in Alwatan newspaper titled "21 million media ministers are awaiting the minister of media" (Yazeed 2014). The intent of the columnist was to illustrate that during the transitional period it took to appoint a new Minister of Media, Saudi citizens were actively expressing their concerns over the incident on social media. The battle between public opinion's growth and the monarch's suppression of it still rages in the Kingdom today.

### c) CNN Effect

*The CNN effect has revolutionized the way policy makers have to approach their jobs" (Livingston 1997, 329)*  
-James Baker

One of the clearest examples of media impact on policy occurred in 1990 during the First Gulf War. This marked the first time in history that a news channel covered a major world war 24 hours a day, every day (Bahador 2007). The impact of CNN's coverage and its effect on policy was so extensive that a term was coined, the "CNN Effect".<sup>1</sup> Coiners of the term claimed that access to news of the combat "24/7" altered both the prosecution and politics surrounding the war.

That the "CNN Effect" has impacted policy-making seems widely agreed upon, but the extensiveness of its impact differs among communication scholars. Shaw and Ammonm, for instance, claimed that the "CNN Effect" impacted the Kurdish crisis, whereas Miller claims it did not. Mandelbaum and Cohen said it impacted the Somalia crises, but Livingston and Gibbs say it did not (Gilboa 2005, 335).

### ***1) The CNN Effect: Aspects of Agenda Setting***

Steven Livingston identifies the three agenda setting aspects of the "CNN Effect": first, is the acceleration of policy; second, is the impediment aspect to policy; and third is the agenda policy setter (Livingston 1997). The accelerant aspect refers to politicians feeling the need to respond quickly to news reports. As Babar Baha notes, when a policy is influenced indirectly due to time factors, then errors can occur in the policy (Bahador 2007). Another example of the accelerant aspect of the CNN effect relates directly to the accelerated media in Saudi Arabia's reporting news of the Gulf War due to the "CNN effect." Historically the Kingdom's approach to media has mostly been conservatively passive by remaining silent rather than actively reporting the local and global news.

---

<sup>1</sup> The CNN influence started during the 90's between politicians and gained acceptance and development among scholars.

The second Agenda Setting aspect of the "CNN Effect" is its impediment aspect. An example relating to Saudi Arabia can be seen in how reporting terrorist activities can be used as an advantage to members of the terrorist group while impeding efforts to curb terrorism.

The third Agenda Setting aspect of the "CNN Effect" is that it can be a policy setter when issues receiving the most international coverage become the ones that set international policy. In the case of Saudi Arabia, this is particularly evident in regards to issues of women's rights and terrorism.

## ***2) Al-Jazeera Effect***

The CNN Effect is not the only modern example of the way that media coverage leads to political decision-making. If the "CNN effect" was born during the 1991 Gulf war, then the Al-Jazeera effect came about during the 9/11 tragedy. Philip Seib, the first scholar to see the Al Jazeera effect in light of the CNN effect, believes that Al Jazeera has affected global politics and culture by becoming the new paradigm of media influence as follows: "The media can be tools of conflict and instruments of peace; they can make traditional borders irrelevant and unify peoples scattered across the globe. This phenomenon -the Al Jazeera effect- is reshaping the world" (Seib 2008, xi). Seib has not investigated the relation between the dynamics of media and high-level policy makers in the Middle East (Sakr 2009).

## ***3) Al-Jazeera Effect on the Kingdom***

Previous to the Al-Jazeera effect, Saudi had amicable relations with Qatar. In the aftermath of 9/11, however, tensions between Saudi Arabia and Qatar heightened when the Al-Jazeera channel (owned by Prince Hamad Al-Thani of Qatar) gave airtime to

Saudi citizens who spoke critically of Kingdom policies and are therefore considered enemies to the Saudi government. Osama Bin Laden is one example and Al-Jazeera provided him frequent and exclusive access to airtime interviews to share his anti-Saudi anti-American messages. Al Jazeera even portrayed America's war on terror as a war on Muslims. Mamoun Fandy, author of *An Uncivil War of Words: Media and Politics in the Arab World*, says "watching Al-Jazeera one might forget that Sept 11 ever happened and think that the United States invaded Afghanistan for no reason other than to target Muslims" (Fandy 2007, 47) Framing theory states that how an issue is portrayed in the media to an audience influences how it is understood (Goffman 1974). Saudi Arabia faults Qatar with framing many issues through Al-Jazeera media outlets in a manner that brought tension and instability to the region.

Ultimately, although Al-Jazeera had an impact on the Kingdom, this influence was marginalized. Mamoun Fandy says about Al-Jazeera: "it has failed to effect change in Saudi Arabia. This is because Saudis' see Al-Jazeera's information as suspect" (Fandy 2007, 126). Saudis grew suspicious of Al-Jazeera's attempt at giving a voice to Al Qaeda, and also for the way the channel's negative public portrayal of the Saudi Royal Family. These reports lead to considerable tensions between the Saudi government and the Qatari government. Due to the negative impact Al-Jazeera has had in Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom initiated an alternative media outlet called Al-Arabiya, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).<sup>2</sup> At the conclusion of their 13<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Muscat, information ministers stressed that they blame Al-Jazeera TV for defaming certain leaders in the GCC.

---

<sup>2</sup> GCC: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman.

#### **4) CNN Effect and Al-Jazeera Effect Not Limited**

Just as the “CNN effect” is not about CNN alone, so too, the Al-Jazeera effect is not confined to Al-Jazeera, as there are many other news services in the Middle East. Both the CNN Effect and the Al-Jazeera effect opened media scholars’ eyes to the tremendous impact that media outlets could have on political decision-making in the Kingdom and other areas of the Gulf as well. Given the previous decade’s accelerated rise in social media activity, media’s ability to impact changes to government system only continues to expand. CNN was the first to relay news 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but now this practice is common among many notable news channels. In some regards, reporting events all day every day has become the norm. Outlets who fail to do this become marginalized and fail to keep up with their competitors. And this phenomenon is no longer confined to just television. It has expanded online, and been utilized by common citizens as well, who are leveraging the force of social media to spread news and relay important messages.

### **III. Social Media Impact on Political Communication in the Kingdom**

One of the main questions of the research is to answer how the massive technological changes that have taken place in recent years have influenced media and policy in the Kingdom. Although social media opportunities through Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (to name a few) have provided a new voice and opportunity to Saudi citizens, there are also limitations to the tangible impacts of new media. For this reason, it is a mistake to become overly euphoric about the power of new social media, because the content is often controlled and censored through local policies. Citizens can speak their mind, but not about everything.

Challenging traditional media, social media is increasingly becoming the preferred information source of those aged twenty-five and younger. As a result of this new opportunity to give voice to a large percentage of the population that had historically lacked a forum for public expression, there has been a prominent shift away from government controlled or ruler elite media ownership with a single agenda to open participation and diverse agenda setting among actively engaged social media participants. American journalist David Hoffman describes social media as "citizens rising" in which "independent journalism and the spread of democracy portrays media's role in breaking the reign of ignorance and fear that are the first lines of defense for despots everywhere" (Hoffman 2013, 1).

The impact of social media on the Middle East first became apparent on December 17, 2010, when Mohamed Bouazizi, the man whose suicide inspired the Arab Spring, set himself on fire in Tunisia. Bouazizi was certainly not the first Tunisian to commit suicide, but his story became viral when his cousin posted a video on Facebook of Bouazizi's mother leading a peaceful demonstration. The video was covered by Al-Jazeera and later spread to all Arab Satellite Channels (Ibis). Bouazizi's suicide, turned social media phenomenon, is a clear example of how new media can trigger public uprising and thereby engender political reform.

Social media among citizens has had a pronounced impact in the Kingdom as well. The 2009 Jeddah floods are a key example of how citizen journalism on social media propelled political reform in Saudi Arabia. Heavy rains hit the port city of Jeddah in December of 2009, leading to 122 deaths, 350 missing persons, and billions of dollars in corporate losses. The government blanketed the event and failed to represent it in the



media, but the common people acted. Many posted pictures or commentaries on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These words and images went viral and inevitably compelled Jeddah's governing body to acknowledge the floods and take action to improve what had been substandard irrigation systems.

Both of these instances highlight the way that social media is influencing traditional media, which in turn, results in political reform. Among other things, social media's power is due to the greater availability of information and interaction between governments and citizens. The replacement of new media communications over traditional political connections is a trend that is very much apparent in Saudi Arabia, and this is changing the traditionally passive role that Saudi citizens have historically had in relation to their government. This subversion of traditional power norms stands at the forefront of this research and highlights a major empowerment movement among the Saudi populace. The shift from passive to active participation has been made manifest by three major factors: citizen journalism, citizens acting as watchdogs, and mediatization.

#### **a) Citizens Acting as Watchdog**

In a continuation of power subversion of traditional models, new media has emboldened citizens and made them watchdogs over governments. The unique role of the press in democracies is to serve as an independent monitor of all kinds of powers, both financial and political. Constitutional rights typically protect the press' role. Without journalists acting as watchdogs, democracies, as we know them, would not exist.

Communication scholars agree that democracies require a public space, and media makes an important contribution to the quality of this public domain. In discussing democratic societies, Bennett and Serrin point out in their study that the media is required

to check the actions of political elites; in fact, it is through a shared partnership between journalists and corporations or governing bodies that journalism thrives. When journalists do not receive support from corporations or governing bodies, they are often doomed to face tremendous adversity and invariably fail.

Since Saudi Arabia is a monarchy, it has a different rule set to consider. The Kingdom's media system traditionally does not allow Saudi journalists to act freely as watchdogs; however, with the integration of new technologies and social media, "citizen journalism" has arisen, a branch of citizen-generated media that acts as a "fourth state or watchdog." In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Kingdom, citizens are critiquing, monitoring, and ensuring that governing bodies perform and act adequately.

Rodrigues was one of the first scholars to define the term "citizen media." She defines it as a concept that empowers citizens and encourages a two-way media process, which makes the media consumer less passive and more actively participatory in the process of engaging with media (Rodrigues 2001). The two-way media process discussed by Rodrigues has been limited to democratic societies, and historically does not represent the way that citizen journalism plays out in the Kingdom. Even communication studies that followed the Arab Uprising primarily focused on citizens who used social media to mobilize protest and incite collective action.

David Hoffman coins the term citizens' rising, which describes the way that independent journalism can help to spread democracy and break from the reign of ignorance and fear that characterizes despotic rule. He explains that the dynamics of media and information are shifting the media controlled by few "elite" to media owned by all citizens; the voiceless are finding their voice through technology and documenting

events the traditional media is not allowed to cover. Media has developed to be an actor rather than an observer (Hoffman 2013).

## **b) Mediatization**

Although the term mediatization is considered new within the realm of communication research, the concept has been around for decades. In the English language, the word mediatization has been "repurposed" (Livingstone 2009, 4). It used to describe the process through which some parts of the society tend to increase their influence. The definition of mediatization depends on the context of its application. In communication and media studies, the term is used to describe a theory which holds that media plays a crucial role in framing or shaping political communication discourse and processes, and the society where communication occurs (Behrend and Wendi 2015).

The term mediatization is normally used interchangeably with mediation. However, there is a clear difference between the two. Mediation is a neutral process through which messages are transmitted using various types of media and does not focus on the autonomy of media and its influence in the process of political communication. Despite this, it is important to note that in modern politics, the process of mediation is an important prerequisite for mediatization of various aspects of politics. Mediatization helps to show the kind of influence that media has on the political life of the society. Media plays a significant role in the formation of political opinions, dissemination of political news, and enhancement of other political communications intended for the members of the society.

The most comprehensive definition among the various studies was by Hepp and Krotz: "Mediatization is a concept used in order to carry out a critical analysis of the

interrelation between the change of media and communication on the one hand, and the change of culture and society on the other” (Hepp and Krotz 2014, 3). Mediatization research claims not only that media, itself, is changing, but that these changes are leading to effects on society. The implication here is that media has come to constitute an organizing principle for other spheres of life (Livingstone and Lunt 2015).

Friedrich Krotz offers a slightly different conceptualization of mediatization, referring to it as a meta-process that cannot be researched empirically as leading to a single transformative occurrence. He defines it as;

The historical developments that took and takes place emerging media and at the same time changing forms of communication media and the consequence of those changes. If we consider the history of communication through music or the art of writing, we can describe the history of human beings as a history of newly emerging media and at the same time changing forms of communication. The new media do not, in general, substitute for one another. (as cited in Hepp 2010)

Mediatization is a dual process. On the one hand, it is used to demonstrate a situation where various media organizations enjoy the status of being independent; on the other hand, mediatization is used to demonstrate situations where media organizations have been incorporated into the operations of political and social institutions of the society. So although mediatization research is media-centric research, the attention focuses on other domains such as policies, education, and religion.

The process of mediatization is based on the way individuals and groups of people in the society construct their political, social and cultural worlds using various types of media. Linking this concept to the ruling elite in Saudi Arabia, Eric Louw proposes that mediatization is the work of policy elite. He argues that they deliberately and systematically use media to create consent and mass legitimacy. The result is that

political views and ideologies become engrained among passive recipients of the press (Louw 2010). Mediatization is sometimes used to account for broad scale changes that impact culture. In this particular case, media is regarded as the technological force through which messages are produced and disseminated in society. It is a matter of how changes occur when media patterns are transformed due to new technologies. This relates to one of the core questions of the research: to what extent political institutions and processes are influenced, altered, and shaped by media.

In Saudi Arabia, as with many other parts of the world, increasing penetration of media and media technology into the lives of people is reshaping the ways in which citizens relate to government, to each other, and to society. At the same time, it is redefining the boundary between local media and foreign media access, as well as blurring the traditional lines between domestic and international audiences. The boundaries are no longer limited to physical geography. In this sense, mediatization refers to the adoption of different systems, such as politics and religion, which, when incorporated to institutionalized rules creates a new brand of "media logic"—an entirely new form of operations and codes. This media logic is used in media and communication studies in order to conceptualize the ways in which media has penetrated various organizations and institutions of the society. This penetration can be felt in the political paradigm. For example, the United States has used media to collect the public opinion about what the Americans feel on the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the relationship with Israel. In this case, it is important to note that media is no longer considered to be an independent institution. Rather, it plays an integral role in determining the functioning of its central organizations and institutions.

Mediatization is important to consider in a Saudi context, since so much of the political climate, cultural views, and religious identity of the country are promoted through the media. Unlike in democratic states, where there is often separation between church, state, law, and governance, in the Kingdom, press, governance, culture, conduct, and religion are tied together, and media is a dominant vehicle through which messages get integrated into society. In this sense, mediatization in KSA may even have a stronger impact than mediatization in democratic, Western nations.

#### **IV. Political Reform in Saudi Arabia**

To understand the potential impact of media on the Kingdom, we need a clear sense of the extent to which Saudi Arabia, as a governing body is susceptible to media influence. The susceptibility to reform in the Kingdom is something scholars debate widely. The intellectual debate is divided into two main arguments: the conservative scholars (those who resist change) and the liberals (those pushing for secular progressivism). Pressure for reform can be divided into three categories: 1) *External Pressure* which is the aftermath of 9/11 and the war on terrorism, 2) *Domestic Pressure*, which can be traced to the first official petition in 1990 to reform the political system, and 3) *Social and Economic Pressures*, which began to occur in Saudi Arabia when it chose to enter the World Trade Organization in 2005.

Although there is momentum-pushing change, political change in Saudi Arabia takes place very slowly. Scholars Alrsheed, Dejeni, House, Yamani, Shehabi typically attribute this slow pace of change to both the influence of religion and the will of the Al Saud ruling family. However, it is more complex. Other western works speculate that the

oil wealth makes it easier for an authoritarian system (Haykel, Hegghammer and Lacroix 2015).

Reform is a process. In their work, *“Saudi Arabia Between Conservatism, Accommodation, and Reform”*, Roel Meijer and Paul Aarts discuss three phases of political reform that have taken place in Saudi Arabia. The first phase of political reform discussed by Meijer and Aarts occurred during the 1991 Gulf war when, for the first time, reform petitions were submitted to King Fahad from both liberals and religious leaders. King Fahad Al Saud had to balance these requests, since the liberals wanted more progressive changes, whereas religious leaders wanted to maintain tradition. The second wave of reform occurred in the wake of 9/11 when the Bush Administration pressured the Saudi government to make reforms. The US argument was founded on the notion that the Saudi terrorists who participated in the 9/11 attacks on US soil were reacting to Saudi's lack of proper education, religious radicalism, limited opportunities, and economic poverty. The third wave of reform occurred in 2009 when King Abdullah dismissed the head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Saleh Aluhaidan, in an attempt to limit the radical religious authority in the Kingdom (Worth 2009).

Sager (2006) envisions reform in Saudi as inevitably linked to technological advances and globalization. The Gulf Research Center has produced a groundbreaking study called *“Constitution Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf”*. The more than three-hundred-page report includes ten insightful articles by well-known political scholars in the Gulf. These articles cover a variety of topics ranging from media policy in the GCC to the institutionalization of the Saudi political system and the birth of *‘Political Personnel’* (Sager 2006). In the first chapter, *“Political Reform Measures from*

*a Domestic GCC Perspective*”, Sager emphasizes that Saudi’s ruling elite believe that sudden change is undesirable and will create chaos. Sager states that Saudi reform is not influenced by external pressures but is rather linked to overall shifting global and societal dynamics that have emerged within the past several decades:

Advances in technology and communication leading to ever widening and converging networks and the impact of burgeoning educational opportunities have turned the governments in the Gulf into respondents to demands for change, rather than initiators (Ibis, 21).

Sager’s view that reform is an inevitable social outcome in Saudi Arabia is shared by Dale Eickelman (2002) in his article “*The ‘Arab Street’ And The Middle East’s Democracy Deficit*”. The article predicts that normal Arab citizens (or what Eickelman refers to as the ‘Arab street’) will gain a social voice that may influence or challenge certain traditionally accepted norms. Eickelman believes that as the voice of the ‘Arab Street’ strengthens, it will challenge political and economic elites and impact governance and public issues. An interesting feature of Eickelman’s work is that it seems to foreshadow the Arab Uprising (Eickelman 2002).

The Brookings Institute expresses a similar viewpoint in its 2011 publication, “*Managing Reform? Saudi Arabia and the King’s Dilemma*”:

The Al-Saud regime is entering a crucial moment in its history; how it navigates this crisis will have profound effects for both the monarchy and the Saudi Arabian state in the years to come (Nolan 2011, 2).

The ‘crucial moment’ the Brookings Institute refers to is central to this study, and may determine the extent to which the Saudi ruling family is listening to and being influenced by Saudi Arabia’s new social media voice.



Henry and Springborg argue that the government reform efforts improved the overall environment without stimulating reform of the political system. They argued that Saudi government manages complex economic aims without holding themselves to “public accountability.” The authors hypothesize that economic development drives politics in the Kingdom—which is not something the Saudi government would admit, because they are not transparent with their political decisions. Henry and Springborg refer to this as a “Developmental Monarchy” (Henry and Springborg 2010).

When it comes to the way that Arab scholars describe political reform in the Kingdom, most write in a fashion that resembles literature rather than reality— crafting rhetorical reports that support current systems without providing data. In her book, Modernizing Saudi Arabia, Samar Fatany provides a current picture of government initiated reforms in the Kingdom. Among other topics, Fatany focuses on women, youth, and social media each of which the author considers being a driving force in modernizing Saudi Arabia. She highlights the importance of the growing number of active young social media users and their involvement in fighting corruption in public affairs. As a result, the government is challenged to fight corruption and extremist ideology, both of which present formidable obstacles against development. According to Fatany, social media users are the current watchdogs invested in protecting the interest of Saudi citizens (Fatany 2013). Although her work is significant, Fatany says that the data needed to properly change policies in the Kingdom contains fundamental deficiencies, which she also fails to provide.

According to Ottaway and Choucair-Vizoso, the benchmark of significant political reform is the occurrence of a “paradigm shift”. Significant reforms operate to

alter “the distribution of power and the character of the political system”. Other types of reform may occur on a smaller scale, but these are merely cosmetic. Cosmetic reforms “produce the impression of change without actually altering the ... distribution of power” (Ottaway and Choucair-Vizoso 2007, 4). As is common amongst Western scholars researching the processes of political reform in the Middle East, the pivot point for Ottaway and Choucair-Vizoso is democracy. However, as they point out, the process of democratization is not always cut and dry, nor should it necessarily be viewed in black and white terms.

While a focus on democratic principles is common in the United States, in reality the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not a democracy. The institution of democracy is itself antithetical to monarchical and authoritarian systems, as well as incompatible with extreme policies focused on maintaining the status quo within the Royal Family. This is one of the greatest fundamental philosophical and strategic differences between the United States and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it may be incorrect to speak of political reform in Saudi Arabia in terms of democracy, as to install democracy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would require a complete breakdown of the State. This would be revolution, not reform. However, it is possible to think of political reform in KSA in different terms. This is not reform in a democratic sense, per se, but modifications that help to develop the country, mitigate the state’s authoritarian grip on society, and allow space for alternative and dissenting voices.

Ammoun, Nonneman, Otaway, and Hamzawy have expressed optimism regarding opportunities for positive political reforms in post 9/11 Saudi Arabia. For instance, Hamzawy stated that in recent years new elements of dynamism and openness have been

injected into Saudi Arabia's political reality by international and domestic calls for reform. These calls for change have generated sufficient incentives for the government to initiate a road to reform. Ammoun, Nonneman, and Ottaway have cited incremental or even minor reforms to assert that the autocratic system is "opening itself up to society".

In order to reach a holistic understanding of reform in Saudi Arabia, we need to understand each scenario in context and on a case-by-case basis. In the Kingdom, policy "reform, development" is issued by a Royal Decree, which can be changed by another Royal Decree. In this sense, Saudi Arabia is very much an exception, a country with no normalized, systemic model to follow. Every political decision in the Kingdom must be examined and understood in context (Haykel, Hegghammer and Lacroix 2015). In order to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the patterns of governance and reform, we must examine many examples in context.

## Conclusion

In 2010, the World Bank published reports that Saudi Arabia's total 2004 expenditure on research and development constituted only 0.1%. By 2007, the Kingdom's spending on research and development had fallen to 0.0%. By comparison, the United States of America annually spends approximately 2.7% of a far larger GDP on research and development. It should go without saying, when exploring the relationship between media and domestic governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between the years 2001 and 2015, that comparatively little research has been conducted. The literature that does exist has typically been performed outside of KSA and concerns the impact that media has on Saudi society, but scarce research relates to media as a determinant of policy change in the Kingdom.

Given the fact that the Kingdom basically fails to provide funding for research and development, it is not surprising that research into politically sensitive areas like media's impact on changes in domestic policy are almost non-existent, and widely considered to be taboo. The three case studies (women's empowerment, educational reform, and information dissemination) that follow in Chapters 5-7 aim to fill this gap and provide meaningful data and insight into the political dynamics which shape and constitute the role that media has on governance in Saudi Arabia. These should offer significant value to a realm of literature and research currently underexplored.

## Chapter 3

### **From Sand Dunes to Cyberland:** *A History of Saudi Arabia 1902-the Present*

#### **Introduction**

The following chapter provides a historical context for studying the impact of media on domestic governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, there was a time in Saudi history long before computer screens and broadband Internet graced the desks of Saudis. The chapter will start near the beginning of the modern era for Saudi Arabia, the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when King Ibn Saud first began to imagine that his desert wasteland could be transformed into its current panoply of sky scrapers, mosques, state of the art shopping centers, and first world highways. The roots for this digital revolution began long before any citizen held an iPhone, logged into Facebook, or utilized YouTube. In a way, it began with King Ibn Saud's willingness to prospect for commercial quantities of oil, something many of his inner cabinet feared as anathema to Mohammad and his will. Ibn Saud's forward thinking attitude paved the way for the transition from camels to automobiles. This chapter will explore this early history, and take us up through the digital revolution, highlighting Saudi ambivalence to technological change and the windows to westernization that it opens.

#### **I. Historical Background**

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud founded the third Saudi State when he recaptured Riyadh in 1902 from Al Rashid family. As history tells it, Saud rode in on horseback with 60 of his followers and captured the Musmak, the city's main government

building. At that time, Saudi Arabia was comprised of various Bedouin tribes each governed by own leaders living in isolation from one another. To establish the modern state, Ibn Saud succeeded in uniting these disparate Bedouin tribes. Tribal loyalty has been and continues to be problematic to creating a sense of national unity because most of the Kingdom's traditions and customs are rooted in the Bedouin tribal lifestyle. To build unity, Ibn Saud established weekly meetings called Mjalis that were open to all citizens. Any member of the public could approach the king or other leaders at the national, provincial and local levels in order to discuss concerns or present their grievances.

At the time, communications consisted of oral messages using travelers, messengers, or mosques to inform communities. Later, when literacy spread written fliers were posted in public places and this method continued to be the main means of communication for over twenty-five years. Once Ibn Saud annexed the western region of the Arabian Peninsula from the Ottoman Empire, national newspapers came into use. Though the Ottomans had nine newspapers in the Western Region at that time, Ibn Saud ordered to reduce these to a single publication "Alqebila" and ordered that its name be changed to "Um Al Qura".<sup>3</sup> Thus the first Saudi newspaper was established with the first edition published December 12, 1924. The "Um Al Qura" exists to this day as a weekly newspaper. Initially, it covered general topics, but in 1952 it converted to an official governmental information bulletin concentrating on official announcements and religious affairs (Alshubaili 2003).

---

<sup>3</sup> Another name for Makkah city.

Prior to unifying the Kingdom, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud was known as the Sultan of Najd and Alhejaz. As Sultan of Najd and Alhejaz, Ibn Saud governed through the tenants of Islam. He integrated Islam as a way of life and governance into the formation of Saudi Arabia. He believed in the freedom of speech and ensured that his subjects were free to contact him directly. As a result, in 1952 the following public declaration was posted on the doors of the second holiest site in Islam, The Prophet's Mosque:

From Abdulaziz Ibn AbdulRahman Ibn Saud  
To: The people of the Arabian Peninsula

If any of our subjects feels wronged, he should contact us by telegraph or post free of charge. So, all post office and telegraph employees must process complaints sent by our subjects, even if their complaint is against my children, my grandchildren or my family. Let each employee be aware to not dissuade any of my subjects from filing a complaint, regardless of its worthiness, or persuade them to modify the wording of their complaint. If any employee does so, he will be severely punished. I do not want any to suffer injustice befalling others or for anyone to not be of assistance in removing an injustice or to not be of help in obtaining another's rights. Let all know this. O Allah be my witness (S. Alsaud 2010, 41).

The unification of the kingdom in 1932 marked the development of a national administrative foundation through the creation of the following specialized institutes: security, defense, and justice.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been the spiritual center of Islam since its founding. Five times daily over 1.6 billion Muslims (23% of the world's population) orient themselves in prayer towards Makkah. As a result, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia holds itself, and is held, to standards of conduct exceeding the norms of international bilateral relations. In recognition of this, in 1986, Saudi's fifth King, Fahd bin Abdelaziz

Al Saud, adopted the title of “Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques” to reflect a humbler, non-secular role in line with the expectations of Islam. This title continues to be in use to the present day.

When King Fahad had a stroke in 1996 Crown Prince Abdullah became the *de facto* ruler of Saudi Arabia for ten years until the death of King Fahad in August 2005. After King Abdullah came to the throne as Saudi’s 6<sup>th</sup> King, he initiated reforms and created the Allegiance Council (Bay’a) consisting of a representative of each of the founder’s sons or grandsons. He then replaced part of Article 5 of the Saudi Basic Law of Governance, which read “the king shall select and relieve the Crown prince, by royal order” (Basic Law of Governance 1992). As amended, Article 5 still limits Royal succession to the progeny of the founder, Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman. During his reign, however, the king names three candidates to the council for the position of Crown Prince, and the Allegiance Council (Bay’a) selects the most suitable candidate to become the Crown Prince.

King Abdullah made a statement in front of the Shaura Council in 2006, which laid his priorities and the pace at which they should be addressed

We cannot remain rigid while the surrounding world is changing...thereby we will continue, God willing, in the development process, strengthening national dialogue, liberalizing the economy, fighting corruption, uprooting monotonous habits, increasing efficiency of government institutions. We will enlist the efforts of all sincere workers, both men and women. All that will be done incrementally and moderately (Majlis Ash-Shura 1427-1438H).

Although Saudi Arabia has an oil-based economy, as oil accounts for eighty percent of totals budget revenues and ninety percent of export earnings, (The World



FactBook) the Kingdom's long-range strategy is to diversify its economy. As a result, reforms have been implemented like opening the Kingdom's stock market to foreign investors, joining the world trade organization in 2005 and empowering women by opening up educational and occupational opportunities.

## **II. The Time Frame of the Study**

The time frame for this particular study centers around the years 2001 to 2015, which corresponds with two significant developments that greatly impacted Saudi Arabia and forever transformed its relationship to the digital world. These two events, in order, were the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and the Arab Uprising in 2010, which began in Tunisia and swept through six countries in the Middle East. These two events lead to major changes that revolutionized media and its impact in the Kingdom.

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, changed the world on many levels. In the after math of the attacks it became clear that Osama Bin Laden had ordered this attack on the “far enemy” (the USA) to provoke revolution against the “near enemy” (the KSA) (Doran 2004). As a result of the attacks, Saudi Arabia, its government, its policies, and its society became topics of scrutiny by academics and journalists worldwide. Such international coverage and interest was difficult to control or censor by the Saudi government. Ironically, the radical conservative ideology that promotes a closed society enabled kicking open the doors of Saudi culture and freed media to discuss sensitive issues like putting limits on radicalism and establishing awareness of terrorist elements. In addition to the establishment of a national institution to encourage debate, tolerance and diversity were established under the title, the King Abdul Aziz National Dialogue Center. Each year the center adopts a topic. In 2011, the topic was “Media the reality and

methods of developments”. Four regional meetings in four different cities were held to conduct a study regarding Saudi media habits. The major outcomes of the study were:

- Saudis spend an average of five hours daily engaged with media.
- Visual media ranked number one, followed in order by digital media, then print media and lastly audio media.
- Pan-Arab media engagement ranked higher than did local Saudi media (King Abdulaziz National Dialogue Center 2012).

The second event that majorly impacted Saudi media was the Arab Uprising (more commonly called the Arab Spring) that was inspired by liberal youth in the Arab world. Even though the elements that triggered protests in neighboring countries were evident in Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom was spared the turmoil of the Arab Uprising in spite of having the following: forty-seven percent of the population under the age of twenty-five, an unemployment rate of twenty-eight percent, and a moderately high corruption index score of 49 out of 100, according to the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. From 2003 to 2014, the corruption index for Saudi Arabia averaged 40.67 points. The index establishes 0 as highly corrupt, and 100 as very clean.

The Arab Uprising started on December 18, 2010, in Tunisia. Within two years (by 2012) the governments of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya were forced from power. By contrast, unrest was witnessed in Saudi Arabia on social media but was not acted out on its streets, although a campaign on social media called for protests throughout the Kingdom on March 11, 2011. The lack of public action by Saudi citizens may be attributable to an announcement made by a spokesperson from the Ministry of Interior.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, he publicly stated that Saudi Security Forces were authorized to take all measures against anyone who tried to break the law and cause disorder. It is important to understand that the laws of the Kingdom are based on Sharia law and Saudi values, which prevent unlawful demonstrations, protests and strikes.

A few days later on March 18<sup>th</sup>, King Abdullah congratulated the citizens of Saudi Arabia in a televised speech thanking them for their loyalty, national unity and willingness to face the enemies of religion. He also announced the creation of 60,000 new security jobs within the interior ministry. The King also: 1) decreed that media must respect clerics or face penalties, 2) established a minimum monthly income equivalent of \$800 for all Saudis, and 3) ordered that all government employees and students be granted an extra two months' pay.

Based on calls for protest on March 11, 2011 on social media, one might have come away with the sense that major unrest was brewing. However, if older social media platforms were visited, like the prominent tribal Internet discussion forums al-muntadayat al-qabaliyya, the impression would be one of widespread sympathy for the King and antipathy towards those promoting protest. For every activist blogger who is imprisoned or harassed in Saudi Arabia, there are ten tribal Internet discussion forum members announcing their fealty to the King and the Saudi Royal Family (Samin 2012). Saudi society was neither ready nor willing to demonstrate.

The Saudi government reacted to the Arab Uprising in numerous ways. The most immediate and most obvious was the King's generous increase of benefits to Saudi citizens in lower and middle income brackets, a fifteen percent salary increase to government employees, and the provision of unemployment benefits and housing loans.

On the political level, the government announced that women would be allowed to vote and run for municipal elections scheduled for 2015. Furthermore, on March 13, 2011, King Abdullah published a Royal Decree establishing the National Anti-Corruption Commission. The actions by the King were proactive and viewed as positive reforms. In reaction to the threat of protests, religious authorities issued a religious fatwa banning mass demonstration. The Council of Senior Scholars (the highest religious authority in the Kingdom) published a lengthy statement that stated:

Since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on the Qur'an, Sunnah, the pledge of allegiance, and the necessity of unity and loyalty, then reform cannot be accomplished through demonstrations or other means or methods that give rise to unrest and divide the community (AlRiyadh 2011).

Although the Saudi Government was successful in keeping the Arab Uprising from becoming a reality on its streets, the movement affected Saudi society at many levels. It raised the ceiling of freedom of speech, as Saudi citizens became more politically aware as a result of political discussions concerning Saudi and neighboring countries.

The following “timeline” provides both an overview of the key issues and events the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has faced since 2001 while also showing how the government has responded to these issues: (BBC News Middle East 2014)

**2001:**

- December - King Fahd called for the eradication of terrorism, as it is prohibited by Islam, and took the unprecedented step of issuing ID cards to women.
- May - The government revised the criminal code to include a ban on torture and the right of suspects to legal representation.

**2002:**

- November - The Saudi foreign minister stated that Saudi Arabia will no longer allow the US to use its facilities to attack Iraq in the 2nd Iraq war-- even if the UN- sanctions the action.

### **2003:**

- April - The US agreed to pull out almost all its troops from Saudi Arabia and end its military presence that dated back to the 1991 Gulf war.
- May - Suicide bombers killed 35 people at housing compounds for Westerners in Riyadh hours before US Secretary of State Colin Powell flew in for planned visit.
- September - More than 300 Saudi intellectuals (men and women) sign a petition calling for far-reaching political reforms.
- October - Police broke up an unprecedented rally in center of Riyadh calling for political reform. More than 270 people were arrested.
- November - A suicide attack by suspected al-Qaeda militants on residential compound in Riyadh left 17 dead and scores injured.
- November - The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques granted wider powers to the Majlis as-Shura (Consultative Assembly), enabling it to propose legislation without his permission.

### **2004:**

- April - Four police officers and a security officer were killed in attacks near Riyadh as a car bomb at the Security Forces' HQ in Riyadh killed four, wounds 148. A group linked to al-Qaeda claimed responsibility.
- May - An attack at a petrochemical site in Yanbu killed five foreigners and was followed by an attack and hostage-taking at oil company compound in Al-Khobar

where 22 people were killed.

- June - Three attacks in Riyadh within a week left two Americans and a BBC cameraman dead. The same week, a US engineer was abducted and beheaded, his filmed death causing revulsion in America. Security forces killed local al-Qaeda leader, Abdul Aziz al-Muqrin, shortly afterwards.
- December - An attack on the US consulate in Jeddah ended in five staff and four attackers killed. Riyadh suffered two car bombs attacks as security forces killed seven suspects in a subsequent raid.
- February-April – The first ever-nationwide municipal elections were held although women did not take part in the poll.

#### **2005:**

- June - Crown Prince, Abdullah met with US President Bush to establish expanded education ties between the two countries (SACM 2014).
- August - The Saudi Royal court announced the death of King Fahd. The former crown prince, Abdullah, succeeded him.
- September - The King Abdullah Scholarship program was launched to provide Saudi students with scholarships to universities in the USA and around the world. (Ibid)
- September - Five gunmen and three police officers were killed in clashes in the Eastern Province city of Dammam.
- November - The World Trade Organization gave the green light to Saudi Arabia's membership following 12 years of talks.

#### **2006:**

- February - The Saudi Government foiled a planned suicide bomb attack on a major oil-processing plant at Abqaiq.
- June - Six men allegedly linked to al-Qaeda are killed in a shootout with police in Riyadh.
- October - Saudi Arabia initiated formalization of royal succession in hopes of avoiding infighting among the next generation of princes.

**2007:**

- February - Four French nationals were killed by suspected terrorists near the tourist site at the ruins of Madain Saleh.
- April - Police arrested 172 terror suspects, some of whom were trained as pilots for suicide missions.
- July - Religious police were banned from detaining suspects due to increased criticism of their overzealous behavior and the deaths of those they had taken into custody.
- December - Authorities announced the arrest of a group of men suspected of planning attacks on holy sites during the Hajj pilgrimage.

**2008:**

- December - Saudi Arabia and Qatar agree final delineation of border.

**2009:**

- February - King Abdullah sacked the head of the religious police, the Kingdom's most senior judge and its central bank head in rare government reshuffle. The King also appointed the country's first woman minister.
- April - Saudi Arabian security forces arrested 11 al-Qaeda militants who were

allegedly planning attacks on police installations, armed robberies and kidnappings.

- June - US President Barack Obama visited Saudi Arabia as part of a Middle East tour aimed at increasing US engagement with the Islamic world.
- July - A court issues verdicts in the first explicit terrorism trial of al-Qaeda militants in the country. Officials said 330 suspects were tried, but did not specify how many were found guilty. One was sentenced to death.
- August - 44 suspected militants with alleged links to al-Qaeda are arrested.
- November - Saudi troops moved to enforce buffer zone in northern Yemen after becoming involved in border clashes with Yemeni rebels.

#### **2010:**

- October - US officials confirmed a plan to sell \$60 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia - the most lucrative single arms deal in US history.
- November - Officials announced the arrest of 149 militants over past eight months, most of them allegedly belonging to al-Qaeda.

#### **2011:**

- February - King Abdullah announced increased welfare spending, as unrest spread across the Arab world in what was called “the Arab Spring”.
- March - Public protests were banned after small demonstrations in mainly Shia areas of the Eastern Province took place. King Abdullah warned that threats to security and stability will not be tolerated. Saudi troops participated in a crackdown on unrest in Bahrain.
- May - A revised quota (Nitaqat) program was launched to encourage the



Saudization of the Kingdom's workforce by imposing stricter quotas on foreign workers (Ramady 2013).

- June - Saudi women mounted symbolic protest drive in defiance of ban on female drivers.
- September - King Abdullah announced more rights for women, including the right to vote and run in municipal elections and to be appointed to the Majlis as-Shura (Consultative Assembly). Although a woman was sentenced to 10 lashes after being found guilty of driving, King Abdullah overturned the sentence.
- October - Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz al Saud was named heir to the throne, after Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz al Saud died.
- November - The Hafiz Program to alleviate unemployment and poverty is launched (Al Jassem 2012).

**2012:**

- April - Fifty men suspected of links to al-Qaeda went on trial and were charged with the 2003 bombing of an expatriate compound.
- June - Crown Prince Naif died and was succeeded by 76-year-old Prince Salman, who is a more liberal. Saudi Arabia agreed to allow women athletes to compete in the Olympics for the first time.
- July - Security forces detained several people in Qatif in the Eastern Province and witnesses reported that police opened fire on Shia protesters demanding the release of Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr.
- September - Human-rights activists Mohammad al-Qahtani and Abdullah al-Hamid go on trial, the former charged with setting up an unlicensed organization.

**2013:**

- February - King Abdullah swore in 30 women to the previously all-male he Majlis as-Shura (Consultative Assembly) - a major step in female participation in public life. It is the first time women have been able to hold any political office.
- October - Saudi Arabia turned down a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, accusing the world body of double standards on account of what it sees as an international failure to act on Syria, where it staunchly backs the rebels.

**2014:**

- February - New anti-terrorism law is introduced which to further stifle dissent.
- March - Saudi Arabia designates the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization.

**III. Saudi Governance and Its Impact on Media**

The governance of KSA is unique in comparison to that of other countries in that the tenants of Islam provide the basis of Saudi's governing system. Shariah law provides the kingdom with a political system consistent with ethical and moral principles and a legal system grounded in Islam. The ethical and moral basis for Saudi governance are trust, justice, consultation, pluralism, equality, brotherhood, and peace. The legal system consists of constitutional, civil, and criminal law. At the same time, the Shariah provides no definite injunction concerning what form or system of government is required (Krawietz and Reifeld 2008). Thus Saudi governance is grounded in Ibn Taymiyah's theory that rulers are capable of promulgating necessary legislation for government policy, provided the government serves public interest, and is complementary to and not

in contradiction to the Shariah. It is important to clarify, however, that while Shariah is central to Islam, how it is applied is open to interpretation in order to meet the needs of the people being governed. Contrary to popular belief, Islamic Sharia is not atavistic, but rather is intended to be applicable anywhere at any point in time. As a result, there is no fixed rigid Islamic political system that Muslims must adhere to.

Saudi Arabia considers its basic law of governance as its informal constitution. By Royal Decree in 1992, King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud implemented The Basic Law of Governance, which to some extent serves as an "informal" constitution, even though, Article I of the Basic Law establishes the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed as the "formal" constitution. Additionally, Saudi Arabian Basic Law of Governance mandates that the throne remain in the possession of the sons and descendants of the kingdom's founder, King Abdulaziz—best known as Ibn Saud.

The king embodies legislative, executive, and judicial functions and issues royal decrees to form the basis of public policy in the Kingdom. The king is also the prime minister, and presides over the Council of Ministers (Majlis al-Wuzara), comprised of both first and second deputy prime ministers, twenty-three ministers with portfolio and five ministers of state. A second council, known as the Consultative Council (Majlis AlShura), consists of one hundred fifty members that are appointed by the King. However the Consultative Council is limited to proposing laws for the King's consideration to enact through Royal Decree, which are published in the Um Al Qura or Official Gazette.

Even the role of the media is clarified under article 39 of the Saudi Basic Law of Governance, which states:

Mass media and all other vehicles of expression shall employ civil and polite language, contribute towards the education of the nation and strengthen unity. It is prohibited to commit acts leading to disorder and division, affecting the security of the state and its public relations, or undermining human dignity and rights (Basic Law of Governance 1992).

The language in Article 39 is vague enough to encompass most forms of media expression. This constitutes a deliberate move by the government to preserve a mechanism to ensure its ability to control and regulate speech and public expression.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the synchronization of institutions and the government is accomplished through adherence to established beliefs, traditions and policies set by the Kingdom's ruling council and the Saudi media institution is no exception. Saad Al Saud remarks that if you trace the history of the Saudi media it becomes clear that Islamic teaching and traditions are what governed local media, such that when media policy was later developed, Islamic teachings and tradition became the base of the state policy with the goal of preserving the Kingdom's Islamic identity (S. Alsaud 2010).

As a result of the conservative influence on media content, official T.V. channels and newspapers do not cover more than what is provided to them by government institutions. Over the past decade, however, the government has opened the door to greater transparency and variety of content, but still limits content on social and sports topics. Still government efforts to expand freedom of speech while encouraging collaboration between government officials and the media to produce their own content rather than obtaining it from secondary sources, have failed as chief editors have been at a loss for accurate and speedy information.

A recent study of Saudi chief editors related to their level of satisfaction in terms of content provided by official Saudi institutions, measured levels of satisfaction lower than thirty-three percent, which clearly illustrates Saudi media's frustration with access to information (S. Alsaud 2010, 82). Furthermore, Saudi journalists express dissatisfaction with the very organization that is supposed to represent them, the Saudi Journalists Association (SJA). Salim Al Thunayyan echoed the sentiments of most journalists by stating that the SJA is oblivious to their needs and circumstances. "The SJA is supposed to be one of the most important Saudi civil society organization but we have not seen any major initiative from the body taken on behalf of journalists ever since its inception 10 years ago. This body does not fulfill the aspiration of journalists" (Saudi Gazette Report 2014). This lack of access to timely accurate information is what has led many Saudi citizens to depend on foreign media or unofficial sources for access to news and information.

King Abdullah ascended the throne in 2005 and has been portrayed as the reformer of the country. However, balancing between the radicals and the reform activists on one side and traditional governance and modern technologies on the other side, has created a power struggle between government control and citizens' use of social media. Wolfsfeld explains how power translates into access to the media, with two options: either the front door, which is anything that is covered by traditional media or is considered worthy of coverage, or the back door, which is usually what is on social media. (Wolfsfeld 2011)

In the Saudi Case, the front door is controlled by the government and usually governmental institutions have the power over media, meaning they send their press

releases and immediately it is published exactly as received. While citizens' comments and concerns are usually posted on social media, which is a back door to the traditional media. The goal of back door users is to be published in traditional media, because it allows them to appeal to a wider audience than those reached on social media. The current relation between traditional and social media in Saudi Arabia is influencing the political communication of traditional media outlets. For example, when social media was highly active with users posting about women's driving, the government responded with an official statement that women driving is not allowed. In another example during the Arab Uprising, the government responded to Facebook users attempting to organize protests by issuing a new policy banning protests and stating that any such demonstrations will be punishable by death.

Citizens with camera phones are a credible source of information, and in many cases, the information posted by citizen journalists provides leads for traditional media. The ironic aspect of this situation is that the Saudi government responds to criticism about the slow pace of reform by saying that the Saudi society is traditionally conservative. Yet, citizen journalists using new technology are forcing change.

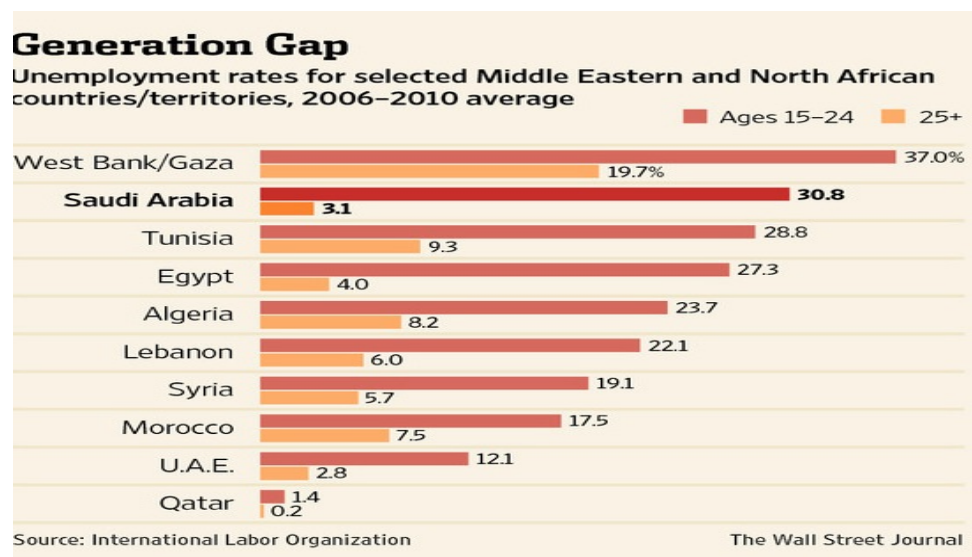
Historically the government has led to the move to modernity and has introduced modern communication, cars, television, and girls' education, all which were originally rejected by the majority of the population. At present, however, many Saudi citizens have embraced modern technology and are pushing for reform and modernity beyond what the government allows.

#### **IV. The Evolution of Saudi Arabian Society**

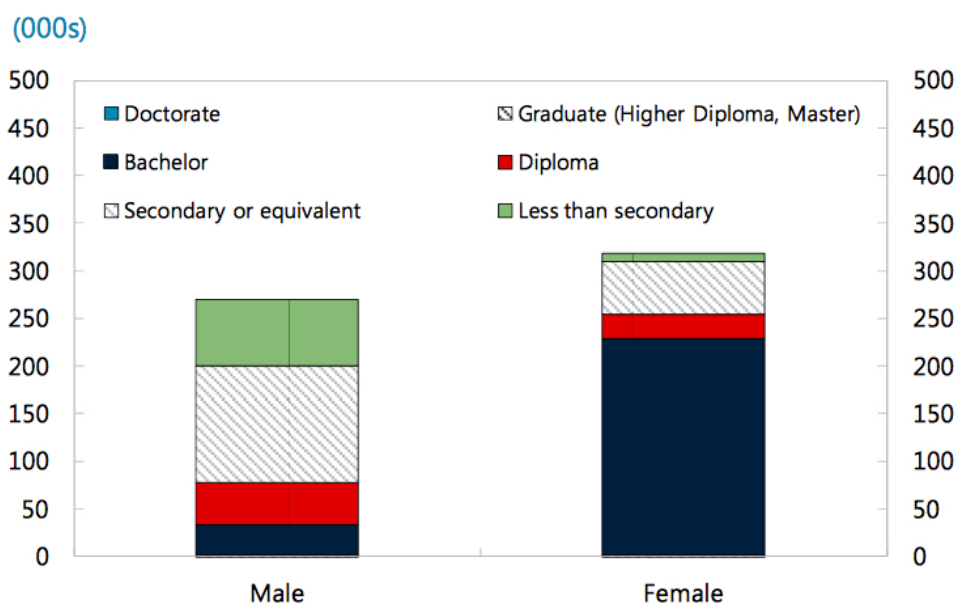
The tension between modernity and tradition is manifest in every segment of

Saudi society. Although Saudi has changed since 2001 and welfare programs have been implemented, the government has consistently stuck to its policy priority of protecting the Kingdom's customs and traditions. Even though Saudi society's traditions are deeply rooted in history, religious conservatism and tribal alliances, these roots are being uprooted by the globalization that is overtaking every region of the world. In most societies the middle class are the force behind change. What is interesting about Saudi society in general— and middle class in particular— is a radical polarization between traditional and modern mindsets. Both compete to acquire and enhance their power and influence. Traditionalists seek to protect local values and customs, while modernists seek a more inclusive modern society. Both groups agree that Islam is the fundamental social glue that cements socio-political power and status. A study by Alnuaim estimates that the middle class in Saudi Arabia comprises sixty-seven percent of the class pyramid (Alnuaim 2013, 35). However, increasing unemployment might result in political instability, because Saudi political stability is primarily based on a large middle class. Saudi Arabia has the second highest youth unemployment in the Arab world (shown below) (Knickmeyer 2012). Since 9/11, Saudi Arabia has witnessed a profound impact on the demographic. This shift is termed the youth bulge and results from the fact that fifty-one percent of the Saudi population is currently under the age of 25, while thirty-seven percent is under the age of fourteen. “The country's unprecedented ‘youth bulge’ has not yet crested, which means increasing numbers of job-seekers in coming years. This demographic profile is typical of the Gulf region where around 60 percent of the people are under the age of 30, making it one of the most youthful regions in the world” (C. Murphy 2011, 3).

## YOUTH BULGE IN UNEMPLOYMENT



## YOUTH BULGE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION (Fleischhaker, et al. 2013, 19-20)



Source: Central Department of Statistics and Information.

As shown above, despite the lack of consistent employment opportunities, the Kingdom has done an admirable job providing educational opportunities to its youth. As



an older Saudi expressed it, “Why should our youth rebel? The best of them, nearly 130,000, are studying at universities around the world—almost 60,000 of that number are in the United States. The King pays for their fees, travel, accommodation, cars, holidays, and medical insurance” (Husain 2012, 1). This is in large part due to the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) that was launched in the midst of the Arab uprisings in (2011) and expanded the opportunities for Saudi youth to study abroad that had been severely curtailed post 9/11. By 2012 over 71,000 Saudi students were studying in the USA with over 35,000 in ESL programs, 20,000 in Bachelor programs, 8,000 in Masters programs, and over 3,000 in Doctoral programs with other sponsored in residency medical programs. As a minor caveat, though nonetheless one worth explaining further here: these scholarships were phased out in 2015. The popular belief was that the termination of scholarships was due to the decline in oil revenues that occurred when oil prices fell sharply around the same time. This is partially true. The purposed scholarships were originally intended to have three distinct phases, with the final phase ending in 2015. The monarchy had intended to renew the funding and opportunities. When oil prices dropped, the program was not renewed. So oil definitely impacted the scholarships, but it does not account completely for the termination.

Unfortunately, the Kingdom’s ability to provide its young graduates with jobs lags far behind its ability to educate them in the first place. Total youth unemployment in the Kingdom is thirty-one percent. For young women with bachelor degrees, it is seventy-eight percent. As shown above, the youth bulge more than quadrupled enrollment in tertiary education in Saudi Arabia between 1995 and 2010. At the same time the number of young women in tertiary education grew approximately 500 %. Also

shown above, the number of unemployed young women with university degrees is more than ten times higher than that of males. Thus, while Saudi Arabia has made laudable strides in educating its young women, it has failed to place women graduates into jobs, creating a source of pent up disillusionment and a desire for government reform (C. Murphy 2011).

The result is that young Saudi women have been much more willing to advocate reforms and are willing to openly demonstrate for change. As young women demand greater personal freedoms and advocate for a greater voice in Saudi public life, many analysts agree that they will be the biggest driver of social and economic change in the Kingdom over the next decade for two reasons:

1. First, the increasing resistance from young educated Saudi women who are aware that Muslim women in other Arab countries have more personal freedoms, which include driving.

2. Second, is the guardianship system, as well as Saudi society's strict gender segregation, contradicts the government's stated intention of including women in the workforce while creating a more diversified, knowledge-based economy that is less dependent on oil (Ibis).

Saudi women are using entrepreneurship as a means to bypass traditional employment constraints in both public and private sectors by establishing their own businesses. Nearly twelve percent of Saudi companies are owned and controlled by women. In fact, Saudi women, who outperform men in obtaining advanced degrees, are rapidly leading knowledge-based enterprise in the Kingdom through pooling their resources, education and networks to produce jobs for women (Troemel and Strait 2013).

Studies have indicated that the socio-cultural practices have been determined to have a negative impact on the economy (Bokhari , Alothmany and Magbool 2011).

What we see, holistically, when we examine the evolution of Saudi Arabia during the digital age, is a progression without a complete resolution. With the inevitable increase in technology, the government has responded by generously providing more educational opportunities— especially opportunities for Saudis willing to travel abroad. However, the picture is as yet incomplete. Millions more Saudis are earning degrees, but due to a lack of well-positioned career opportunities, many of these people have no opportunities for securing meaningful jobs. In sum, the digital age has sparked a revolution, but the revolution may need to go further in order to become more effective for the growing needs of an educated society.

## **V. The Digital Revolution and Saudi Arabia**

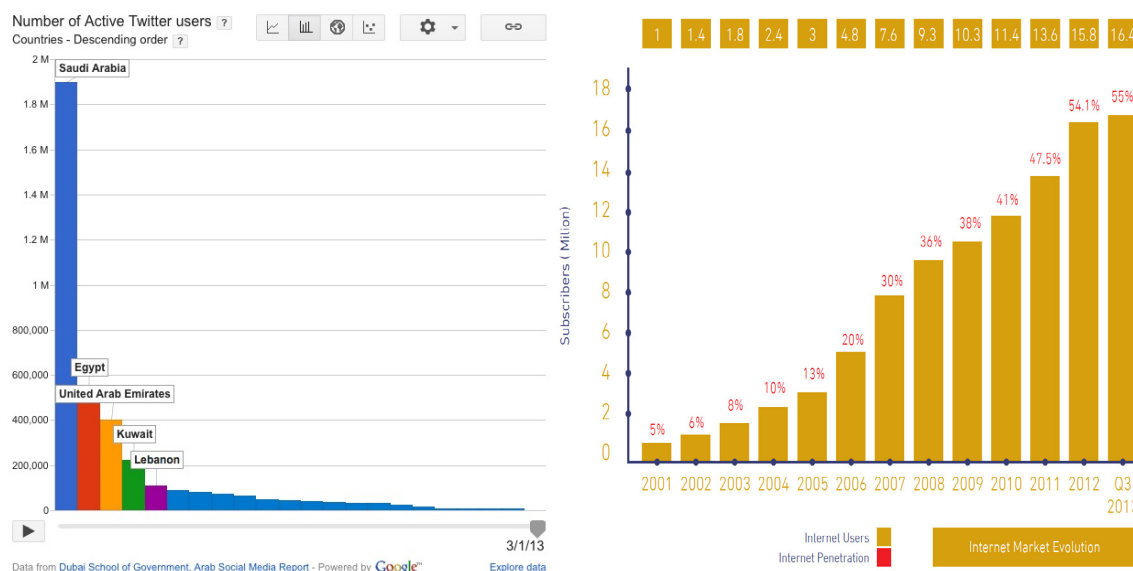
The integration of technology in Saudi Arabia has varied between acceptance and rejection. The having “media in our hands” metaphor in Saudi Arabia dates back to the introduction of cellular mobile phones on March 7, 1996 when people stood in long lines in front of banks to pay US \$2,600 in subscription fees to obtain a cell phone (M. S. AlSaud 2012). By 2013 the number of cell phone subscriptions in the Kingdom reached 51 million with a penetration rate of 170 % (1.7 phones per Saudi citizen) (Communication and Information Technology Commission 2013). In the Kingdom, many citizens choose to have more than one phone, assigning one phone for close family and friends, while another is reserved for more casual acquaintances or work. It is not abnormal members of society have three or four phones. Similarly, the number of Internet users grew from approximately 1 million in 2001 to 11.4 million by the end of

2010 (World Trade Organization 2011). Today Saudi Arabia ranks first in the Middle East in terms of technology spending (Al Arabiya News 2013). These facts clearly demonstrate how far the acceptance of the technology has come in the 60 years since King Abdul Aziz held a National Conference in his Palace on April 1, 1927 to discuss the telegraph, at a time when the majority of Saudis believed that it to be the work of the devil or black magic (M. S. AlSaud 2012).

These advances to technology are not specific to Saudi alone, of course. Telecommunication and technology are developing at an increasing pace worldwide. As a result, social media has found its way to Saudi Arabia and use is thriving. Saudi Internet users watch an average of seven videos per day, and the Kingdom as a whole ranks first in percentage of Twitter users worldwide. As a result, social media is impacting Saudi society at every level, as usage has shifted from solely entertainment to becoming a necessity for daily life— socially, economically, and even governmentally. Over sixty percent of the population of the Kingdom now uses social media, making Saudi Arabia one of the fastest growing social media markets in the world. In large part, Saudi Arabia's youth bulge accounts for why Saudi Arabia leads all other Arab nations in new Internet content creation, mobile phone penetration, and social media usage.

Saudi Arabia also leads the Arab world in YouTube consumption, as Saudis view over ninety million segments daily with about half of these views made on mobile devices. As a result, Saudi Arabia has earned the status of being the world's largest per capita consumer of YouTube, and this statistic is supported by increased mobile phone usage of nearly 170 percent (Albawaba, Saudi Arabia Leads in Social Media Usage in Arab Nations 2013).

Last year, in addition to YouTube consumption, over one million Saudis joined Twitter to achieve 1.9 million total users. The Saudi Twitter population “tweeted” forty-seven percent of all tweets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, tweeting 50 million messages per month. The average Saudi Twitter consumer follows 560 users and has 533 followers (Arab Social Media Report 2014). They tweet an average of 3 times daily, with sixty-six percent of tweets being re-tweets, while only twenty percent are actual tweets. Eighty- nine percent of users tweet in Arabic, and Saudi users tweet most regularly around midnight, with Friday (the second night of the Saudi weekend) being the most active day. Seventy percent of Saudis tweet through their mobile phones (Online Project 2013). Even the government of Saudi Arabia has started using Twitter for public announcements, such as the recent outbreak of the deadly virus, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (The Economist 2014).



Although Facebook use in the Kingdom lags behind Twitter usage, there are 7.8 million Facebook accounts in Saudi Arabia: seventy-four percent are male, and twenty-

six percent female; forty-six percent of Saudis between 25-34 years old use Facebook, followed by twenty-eight percent of the 18-24 years old group, and sixteen percent of 35-44 year olds. Again, the Arabic language is preferred, with seventy-two percent of comments posted in the native language. Fifty-one percent of Facebookers utilize an Arabic interface(CITC 213).

Before concluding this section, it is significant to offer an explanation for why Saudi citizens may consume so much social media. Unlike more progressive or Westernized nations within the Gulf region (such as the UAE), Saudi Arabia provides little to no entertainment for citizens. Movie theaters, alcohol, nightclubs, concerts, theater are all considered haram (sinful). In order to make up for the lack of diversion offered within Saudi society, citizens turn to social media for entertainment and a taste of the type of diversion they are denied in their own lives. Understanding this reality is a critical piece towards conceptualizing Saudi's rabid use of social media within a strict and authoritarian regime.

## **VI. Saudi Media's Ambivalence to Technological Change**

Even before Saudi Arabia was united as a modern state in 1932, the adoption of new technology was met with resistance from conservative religious elements inherent in a society grounded in tribal traditions. Communication technology, in particular, faced considerable religious opposition. For example, when the telegraph was first introduced in the 1920s, religious leaders rejected it because "Their interpretation of it was that it is the work of devil or something with a magic origin" (BaitAlmal 2000, 6). They referred to it as "devil's tools." In response, King Abdulaziz expanded debate to all segments of Saudi society by including scientific, political, tribal and religious views. The first

technique was when the King gathered two groups of religious leaders in his palace, put them in two different places far away from each other, and asked one from the first group to read a phrase from the holy Quran into the microphone. The other group listened to him on the speaker in the second room. When they heard a script from the Quran, they started understanding that this could not be the work of a devil. Secondly, King Abdulaziz held a meeting in 1927 to gain consensus that the telegraph is a work of modern science and does not contradict with Islamic principles. The meeting included princes, heads of tribes, religious leaders, and military leaders. Abdulaziz used religious, scientific, and political rationales in order to persuade them that the telegraph did not oppose Islamic principles. Once persuaded, these leaders went out into the community and educated the public about how and why the telegraph would contribute positively to society. Finally, after consensus was reached, the King requested fifteen religious leaders to issue a Religious Decree (Fatwa) on February 18, 1927 proclaiming the King's decision to allow the installation of a Telegraph system that did not contradict the tenants of Islam (M. S. AlSaud 2012).

A decade later when it came time to introduce radio technology to Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz, having learned from his earlier experience with the introduction of telegraph, utilized print media to gradually introduce the concept to the Saudi public. As AlShubaili states, it took ten years to introduce radio to Saudi Arabia as the first article announcing the spread of radio to Saudi was published (January 3, 1935) in the Egyptian magazine "Alfatih". However due to the social sensitivity of the topic, the article was not released to media outlets in the Kingdom. In March 1939, AlFatih published an article saying the government of Saudi Arabia was allowing radio sets into the Kingdom after

paying taxes. Over time the number of radio owners grew to an estimated seven thousand devices by 1947. In 1950 King Abdulaziz issued a Royal Decree removing taxes on radio sets (ALShubaili 2000). The third phase involved introducing radio broadcasting to the country. The technology began with religious broadcasts during the annual pilgrimage on Arafa Day—October 2, 1949— script read directly from the Quran, which was followed by a statement from the King and ending in prayers. Although the early adoption of radio technology in Saudi Arabia was slow, as a result of resistance from religious and tribal leaders, it has been strongly supported by the government since the 1960's. Government officials believe that producing their own radio broadcasts minimizes the impact of foreign broadcasts and overshadows potentially negative coverage concerning Saudi Arabia (Amin 2001).

The third major form of communications technology impacting Saudi Arabia is television. As with radio broadcast technology, Saudi society initially feared this new technology. In response King Faisal said, “television would fulfill three objectives: first introduce modern communications into the Kingdom, second bring remote communities closer together, third combat illiteracy” (BaitAlmal 2000, 10). The opposition resisted the advent of TV, stating two main concerns: 1) fear that exposure to foreign broadcasts would alter the conservative values and traditions of the Kingdom, and 2) promoting a religious ruling, *fatwa*, that forbids the human form in pictures and motion picture. Though there were supporters of the new technology, opponents were the loudest, and in a violent assault on Riyadh television station in August 1965, the nephew of King Faisal, Khlaid bin Musaad, was killed in a shootout with police that ultimately resulted in the assassination of King Faisal, when Faisal Bin Musaad avenged the death of his brother,



Khaled bin Musa'id.

Given social circumstances, when Saudi television first aired on July 17, 1965, there was no Royal Decree or official document announcing the broadcast (ALShubaili 2000). This is true even though the announcement allowing television was made public in November of 1962 in King Faisal's ten-point reform plan prior to his taking the throne. The seventh point of the reform plan included "raising social standards...providing innocent means of entertainment to citizens" (M. S. AlSaud 2012, 55). Thus King Faisal introduced television broadcasts into one of the most conservative societies in the world, in a nation that, up to this day, bans cinema or theater and yet has become the dominant provider and viewer of pan Arab satellite media in the region.

By the 1990's, having had a taste of the telegraph, television and radio, the Saudi people themselves began to push for more comprehensive integration of technology into the Kingdom. Saudi citizens demanded cell phones and satellite TV services in their region. As previously mentioned, in March 7, 1996, after the government first announced cellphone service, citizens stood in long lines at banks to pay membership fees (approximately \$2,600 US) for phones. (Ibis) That day changed Saudi Arabia forever, becoming a moment that ushered in the advent of "smart phones", "citizen journalism" and "the world at your hands". However, the story of wireless phones reached a turning point in 2002, when Nokia released camera phones. Religious scholars and conservatives refused to allow phones with cameras— a ban that lasted two years. After this two-year ban on camera phones, the Council of Ministers legalized them in them in 2004, but with

restrictions on their use in public places.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Kingdom had Internet access beginning in 1993, government officials took many years to make it available to its citizens. Initially the Internet was available only to high ranking employees at the King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals. In 1995, the Kingdom's incoming Internet connection switched to the King Abdul-Aziz City for Science and Technology (KACAT) (Al Tawil 1999). This move was followed by a decision among the Council of Ministers on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1997 that permitted public access to the Internet in Saudi Arabia in 1999.

The cause for the delay in providing public Internet access was to implement the control needed to ensure a secure system. KACST was made responsible for controlling all Internet access and information in the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia has been one of the most successful countries in the world at monitoring content and restricting access to the Internet, in part because censorship has always been part of the historical socio-political

---

<sup>4</sup> Nokia introduced 7650 model phones equipped with cameras, which led early adapters to purchase the phones from other countries and import it. The device triggered women to take pictures of themselves, which became a social issue. This led to a religious and governmental action. The religious community started releasing religious edicts, and government banned the device. Sheik Abdul Aziz AlSheik, the grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, announced the religious edict about the devices, saying the people were "spreading obscenity in Muslim society." Sheik Abdul Aziz AlSheik was concerned that women were defiling their purity by sharing images of themselves, and he viewed this as haram and a threat to the maintenance of chastity among Saudi women. Other religious scholars issued edicts to prohibit using the camera phones.

At the same time, police had the right to take away people's camera phones. Major General Mansour Alturki, the spokesman of the Ministry of Interior, confirmed that it is the duty of the police to seize the device, which is considered a banned device and falls under the illegal act of owning or trading with it. However, realizing that it would be in the interest of the citizens to legalize it, since the black-market was benefiting from the ban, four ministries (interior, commerce and industry, communications and information technology, and finance) separately asked for mobiles with cameras to be permitted. The ministries submitted requests to the Council of Ministers and based their requests on the fact that camera phones are a technological achievement equal to television and the Internet. By the end of 2004 the Saudi Council of Ministers legalized it.

fabric of the nation and in part because of the government's huge investments in the Kingdom's infrastructure. Khalid Al Tawil, the Director General of National Information in Saudi Arabia, who also serves as the Chief Information Security Advisor to the Saudi government, states:

With the huge expansion in public network and wireless access, government policy is changing to allow the development of new technologies while maintaining the same security and control of media use that is mandated in Saudi culture. Saudi Arabia has been linked to the Internet for several years, but public access was not widely available until January 1999 (Al Tawil 1999, 1).

Mr. Al Tawil justifies this level of governmental control on a historical and sociopolitical basis. The control was still offering Saudi citizens with more data and access to information, as a result a large number of Saudi citizens greeted the Internet with enthusiasm. New Internet Cafés became very popular since not everyone had access to a computer modem or dial up connection. Nowadays access is convenient to everyone who has a smart phone.

## **VII. Media within Saudi Arabia Borders**

In order to better gauge and contextualize the nature of the research, it is critical to understand what media means for the typical Saudi citizen. To clarify, there are significant differences among the various population demographics within the Kingdom. There are members of the royal family, businessmen, entrepreneurs, civil servants, Bedouins, professionals, the homeless, etc. Like any society encompassing approximately 28M, variation exists, especially in terms of class. That having been said, we can extrapolate certain fundamental truths regarding the type of media access that most citizens have. That is the purpose of this section.

### *Saudi Media: Isolationism, Censorship, and SPA*

Saudi Arabia is considered a late adopter to modern communication technology. Dr. Bait Almal, one of the leading media academicians in the Kingdom, explains Saudi's isolation from the world development, its choice not to be colonized like neighboring countries. This isolationism is partly reinforced by Saudi's geographic nature, since much of the land is covered with desert (BaitAlmal 2000). Ironically, despite its ostensible resistance to technology integration for its citizens, Saudi Arabia as a government has one of the most sophisticated monitoring and censoring media systems within its borders and the region. Its ability to monitor and censor is in large part due to the fact that KSA is the dominant owner of the leading media outlets within the Middle East. KSA owns Al Arabiya, MBC Group, Orbit, Rotana Group, etc.

The Saudi government dedicates significant effort and money into controlling the flow of information. Some of the state's strategy includes ownership of both radio and television; even press and telecommunications are kept under state control. Institutions within the Saudi government have been established to execute dominion over various media outlets, such as the Supreme Information Council, the General Directorate of Publications, and the Department of Domestic Press Censorship. The Ministry of Interior and the Communication and Information Technology Commission each has departments focused on monitoring the type of information that may reach a public audience. The control extends beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia and into the Arab Region. Critics such as Andrew Hammond points out that Saudi controls Arab media through monetary subsidies, inhibiting expressed criticism (Yushi 2012). It is worth mentioning that the

information provided to media outlets is officially provided by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). In order for any information or news to be considered official, it must go through SPA first.

### *Dominant Media Mediums*

The two dominant media mediums within the Kingdom are traditional media (newspapers, television) and digital media. Below is an overview of the access Saudi citizens have to each type, through both local and international media.

#### **1) Mass Media**

##### **a) Newspapers**

Newspapers have existed in the Kingdom since December 12<sup>th</sup> of 1924, during the early reign of the nation's first King. Today, local newspapers are established with a Royal Decree. There are nine daily Arabic newspapers (Al Riyadh, Okaz, Al Jazeera, AlWatan), three sports dailies (Al Riyadh, Al Riyadhiah), a business daily (Al Iqtisadiyah) and two English dailies (Arab News, and Saudi Gazette). Although wealthy members of the Saudi community privately own all, each is government controlled. For instance, for any of the aforementioned newspapers, the Editor in Chief must be appointed or at least approved by the government. If any of these newspapers publish anything opposing the government, the papers can be immediately shut down. Law prohibits criticism of the government. This is a vital point to understand: even though newspapers are privately owned, content is almost completely government determined. So owners benefit financially, but the governing bodies restrict and delineate output.

Nevertheless, the most dominant platform for obtaining news is print media. According to a recent poll by the Dubai Press Club, forty-seven percent of Saudis polled

read print media as their exclusive news source. Although less populous than other Arab countries, Saudi Arabia has the second highest newspaper circulation in the Arab World, with 1.8 million copies produced daily. When adjusted for population, however, Saudi Arabia publishes enough newspapers daily to supply 7) of its population. The most widely read newspaper in Saudi Arabia is Okaz at forty-two percent, followed by Al Riyadh at thirty-nine percent, Al Hayat at thirty-three percent, and Arriyadiah at twenty-three percent. The most widely subscribed to newspapers are Al Riyadh at twenty-five percent, Al Hayat at nineteen percent, and Okaz at fourteen percent.

#### **b) Television**

In 1965, when television first made its appearance in the Kingdom, TV ran for a maximum of two hours a day. In the 1980's it was six hours per day. Today, television airs 24 hours a day, every day of the year with live coverage. Control over content used to be easy, because channels were highly regulated and only local content aired. However, by the latter part of the 20th century, absolute control started to diminish with the development of powerful new technologies and access to satellite television.

In fact, by the early 1990's, select members of the Royal family began to sell satellites for the extraordinary price of \$150,000 Riyals— the equivalent of \$30,000 U.S. dollars. These satellites, though available, were heavily prohibited. If members of the religious police (ha'ia) saw them, they would shoot them down with rifles. The owners could not say anything.

The technological development of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century necessitated that Saudi governing bodies purchase progressively more media outlets in order to ensure dominion over aired content. Saudi Arabia soon became the leading owner of Arab media. Two of

the largest and most prominent media empires in the Middle East are owned by Saudis (MBC Group and Rotana Group). Furthermore, of the 600 available free channels in the Middle East, Saudi owns the top five free to air channels, accounting for 47% of all viewers in the Middle East (Yushi 2012). This is a particularly crucial factor, since Saudis statistically watch a disproportionate amount of television. Since, as previously stated, the Kingdom prohibits movie theaters, nightclubs, and other Western forms of entertainment, Saudis turn to the television as their main diversion option. In their 2015 Arab Media Outlook an analysis of TV viewing in Saudi Arabia, the Dubai Press Club claims that the numbers of hours spent watching TV increased from 2009 to 2012 (above 3 hours a day). By comparison, many Western countries have seen declines in television viewership during the surge in Internet activity.

### **c) Local Coverage**

An inordinate number of restrictions tempers the influence that local media coverage can have in the Kingdom. This is in large part due to government control and either extrinsically determined or self-censorship. Basically local journalists in the Kingdom must be careful about what they write, or risk losing both their jobs and careers. For one, local journalists have a reputation for lacking professionalism. In comparison to many Western style journalists, who are praised for analysis, critique, and in-depth coverage, local journalists must tread very carefully if they want to keep their jobs. In Saudi Arabia, local journalists report official events and take on a passive role when it comes to commenting on political issues. Self-censorship is a vital practice, and publishing anything offensive can lead to termination or, even worse, criminal charges.

#### **d) International Coverage**

The Kingdom's censorship is not exclusive to its own journalists. When international journalists seek to cover news and events within the Kingdom, much is done to complicate or prevent access into the nation's borders. Regarding international media, foreign journalists have a hard time obtaining visas to enter Saudi. Even for those who are granted visas, movement and access is heavily monitored. These controls create significant challenges, since most of the written reports are based on gathered information and second hand information. Furthermore, regarding international publications according to "Publication Regulation" (Article 12A), the Ministry of Information is authorized to censor all imported printed material.

#### **2) Digital**

With the advent of digital technology, media control is more challenging for governing bodies in the Kingdom. Currently Saudi houses 51 million cellphone subscriptions, almost double its population. According to a joint study conducted by Northwestern University in Qatar and the Doha Film Institute, Internet penetration among Saudis is approximately 93 percent (Saudi Gazette 2016). At the same time, citizens spend a quarter of the day on social media (Arab News 2016), and there are 2.4 million active Twitter users (40% of the total Middle Eastern usership) (Hubbard 2015).

Social media has created a cyber-universe that allows citizens to express their opinions and gain exposure to various views that clearly outnumber the limited exposure they once had. But as technology develops to allow access, so too do policies expand from within governing bodies. These policy changes offset much of the technological change and ensure that power and dominion still reside among the ruling class.



### **a) Digital A: Maintaining Power Over the Digital Content**

The rapid rise in digital engagement among Saudi citizens necessitated a need for a quick response from the government in order to maintain control over shared information in the digital landscape. The Anti-Cyber Crime Law was published by a Royal Decree on March 26 2007, and included 16 articles aimed at maintaining control over citizen exchange of information. Article 6 of the law states,

Any person who commits one of the following cyber crimes shall be subject to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years and a fine not exceeding three million riyals or to either punishment:

1. Production, preparation, transmission, or storage of material impinging on public order, religious values, public morals, and privacy, through the information network or computers.... (Anti Cyber Crime Law 2007)

This article can be used to prosecute citizens, and pressures individuals to engage in self-censorship in order to avoid committing a crime. Furthermore, if citizens re-tweet a rumor, they will be deemed guilty as the source that posted the rumor originally. According to the cyber-law, they will be held accountable and considered criminal. Under these laws, every crime gets classified under a specific category of cybercrime with specific punishments. For example, media outlets can face up to ten years in prison with fines of more than \$1.3 million Saudi Riyals for publishing rumors or false information. These reflect that the illusion that social media provides freedom of speech is a false claim according to the Saudi law. These laws have been amended several times since their inception. As of 2011, all online newspapers and blogs require a license from the Ministry of Media in order to operate, or they can be blocked. In 2015, naming and shaming was included in Article 6.

So long as there is technological growth and new opportunities for citizens, government policies will continue developing to catch up with the transformations in technology and ensure that Saudi people and culture maintain a status quo. So opportunities have arisen for more expression and freedom, but the restrictions are doing a good job of keeping control centered in the governing bodies. Pandora's box has opened, but citizens are smart enough not to get too carried away with divulging its contents. According to the Freedom House (which assesses cyber-freedom on the net), Saudi Arabia ranked 72 out of 100. A measure of 1 indicates a free society.

#### **b) Digital B: A screen to the outside world**

Saudi Arabia is ranked globally as a leader in Internet usage. It has the highest YouTube viewership per capita in the world. According to Arab Media Social Report, it has the highest active social media user accounts in the Arab world. Since the Internet was introduced in 1999, it is the most sophisticated censorship system, yet citizens are relying on digital media as the main source of information and communication.

The impact of social media has undoubtedly been created by its millions of Saudi users. Demographic realities and societal restrictions can account for the dynamic fixation Saudis have with social media usage. The Saudi population's youthful majority seek entertainment through digital media. At the same time, the segregation of women and men, which has been a keystone feature within Saudi life, has vanished with the digital media. For the first time in history, women have access to information they were restricted from few years ago.

The reliance on technology as a means to circumvent real societal obstacles has become possible in the digital world. Women are now able reach their entrepreneurial

goals through social media accounts. These entrepreneurial acts were not possible for women prior to the digital age. In a general sense, digital media has exploded access and given liberal entry to domains that were previously restricted within traditional media outlets.

### *Overall: Change and No Change*

While it is undeniable that digital media, in combination with traditional media, has built in a vast number of opportunities for Saudi citizens to broaden their scope, gain exposure to a world outside the Kingdom, and imagine enhanced possibilities for change and transformation, the reality is that governing policies have quickly reacted to ensure that control remains in the hands of the ruling elite. What we see, therefore, is an almost schizophrenic divide among the Saudi people, wherein they know things they did not know before, but must act and engage as though things are the way they were, when they now know that things have changed. The explosion in technology during the past 15 plus years has citizens in almost every culture speeding to adapt to modifications that are outpacing their own natural adaptation. In the Kingdom the problem is even more contextualized, since change is rapidly happening and yet not happening at all. And this is the struggle in Saudi Arabia in general. It is a nation that has turned from a desert into an urban landscape of skyscrapers, and yet its principals, values, and beliefs remain firmly rooted in the original sands of its conservative past. As long as this is the case, media will always struggle to make its most impactful imprint, even though it is very much present and knocking on the door.

## Conclusion

From the beginning, Saudi Arabia has had a complicated relationship with technology. On the one hand, there have been prominent elements clamoring for the integration of technological systems into the Kingdom, beginning with King Ibn Saud and his compelling case for ushering in the telegraph and radio. And once Saudi citizens got a taste for how technology could improve their lives by giving both efficiency and, more importantly, rich exposure to worlds beyond the world they lived in, it became clear that technological advances would become as essential to life in Saudi Arabia as they have in other developing nations of the world. But the tensions still exist. Saudi, the home to the holy mosques, must always balance its will for digital progression with its identity as keeper of the flame. This tension still exists today, as Saudi citizens walk the streets cloaked in thobes or abayas, attending to prayer five times a day, but carrying iPhones, Apple watches, and countless other devices that stretch beyond the traditional norms and codes of its deeply embedded culture. Where all of this is headed is, as yet, not known, but it seems certain that all steps forward technologically will be resisted in some form or another by the strong will of an atavistic force to protect and defend the allegiances of its past.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Evolution of Saudi Media Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter four relates to the evolution of policy governing Saudi media. It chronicles Royal Decrees issued over almost a century, from the 1920's to 2015, accounting for government documents and orders coinciding with the beginning of radio broadcasting, to the influx of print media, to Saudi media policy, to copyright law, to Saudi anti-cyber crime law. As technology evolved, new Royal Decrees were needed to address television broadcast, satellite TV, the Internet and the emergence of terrorism following 9/11. With the accelerations present in technology, the Saudi government is doing its best to implement policies that respond to and account for a rapidly changing technological landscape in the Kingdom.

#### **I. Background of Saudi Media Policy**

Media policy in Saudi Arabia was born in 1926, when King Abdulaziz issued a Royal Decree establishing an administration for print and intelligence. King Abdulaziz further clarified media policy in subsequent Royal Decrees governing print media, radio, and television, which provided guidelines for all media policy in Saudi Arabia. Saudi media norms were governed by a common understanding of the politics of the country, and Royal Decrees were issued to appoint, dismiss, approve, budget, open or close establishments, etc. Thus, Saudi media policy reflects changes in national political interest.

AlShubaili describes the different eras of Saudi media. From 1926 to the 1960's, it was considered a time of quantitative and qualitative prosperity for media. During the 1970's, the Ministry of Information and its institutions were static, and AlShubaili claims the reason was that the employees focused on administrative and personnel concerns such as raising the hierarchical ladder of employment rather than the development of the institution or policies. Alshubaili labels the 1970's a liberal time for media. Near the end of 1970's, however, the dynamics of the regional politics shifted to radical Islamist and Arab nationalists, which necessitated rethinking national government policies. As the 80's approached, Alshubaili says that media started to lose its professional liberal coverage of local news within the kingdom, as the trend Saudi media traveling abroad started to develop. Media investments and media professionals moved to neighboring countries in order to escape Saudi restrictions (ALShubaili 2000).

On September 9, 1982, the first official document issued governing the Saudi media was named "media policy". It is the most significant document governing Saudi media because it is the base of all the current Royal Decrees and new policies. The policy included thirty articles that were not organized into sections or subcategories, but rather in consecutive order. Each article dealt with different issue related to media. These articles encompassed all media since its beginnings. To analyze these articles, they have been organized topically below.

The media policy begins with an introduction, which provides the frame and roots of the policy by mentioning that Islam is the guiding force behind 'The Media Policy Document', which in turn provides guidelines for media in achieving media goals through education, guidance, informing, and entertainment.

The first three articles of the Media Policy Document focus on Islamic and cultural guidelines for the media. The first article states, “Saudi media is committed to Islam and all that issues from it is committed to protect the faith of this nation. And is committed to exclude from all of its media anything contrary the Sharia of Islam” (Media Policy 1982). The second and third articles deal with affirming the mission of mass media to oppose what is contrary to Islamic teachings and to protect its values, such that the mass media in Saudi Arabia oppose destructive trends, atheistic tendencies, materialistic philosophies and any attempt to divert Muslims from their faith in accordance with the nation’s founding principles.

Articles four through seven affirm Saudi patriotism as article four states “mass media works to service the Kingdom’s policy built on sustaining the highest interests of citizens specifically and Arabs and Muslims in general by adapting this policy and presenting it in an objective manner supported with proof and facts.”(Ibis) This article clarifies the responsibility of mass media to promote the interests of citizens without conflicting with the nation’s founding principles. Article six affirms Saudi nationalism and mass media’s responsibility in endorsing love and unity among citizens by informing Saudi citizens about different parts of their country. Article seven affirms nationalism by giving the mass media responsibility for generating patriotism by reminding citizens to give generously to their homeland.

Articles eight through eleven focus on the family and its members. Article eight highlights the importance of family as the basis of the society and the need to provide special attention in assisting and supporting the family to guide its children and maintain its unity. Article ten is dedicated to women and states, “While recognizing that women

are sisters of men, mass media appreciates the unique natural difference of women by supporting them with programs in what suites her in society directed specifically to achieve their goals in the job granted to them by God.”(Ibid) The article addresses the media’s responsibility to develop programs directed at women by presenting issues of interest to them while at the same time reflecting the segregation of women and men in caring for the family. Article eleven provides special consideration directed at youth by providing them with programs of study to guide them through their sensitive age by discussing their issues, interests, and protecting them from deviation.

Articles twelve through nineteen deal with the ideology of media. Article twelve relates to the importance of documentation of anything relating to the history and heritage of Saudi Arabia at the national or international level. Next professionalism in the media is discussed in article thirteen and stresses the importance of research and cooperation with institutes of higher learning. Article fourteen addresses higher education and special programs required to meet the needs of higher education. Article fifteen through nineteen stresses the importance of producing high quality media and the need to attract highly qualified professionals. Article sixteen stresses the responsibility of media to erase illiteracy. Article seventeen highlights the use of classical Arabic rather than vernacular Arabic and article eighteen includes five points underlining the support of education and culture in Saudi Arabia evolution, while article nineteen emphasizes the need to protect Saudi heritage.

Articles twenty through twenty-three affirm the responsibility of Saudi media to maintain Islamic and Arabic unity through collaboration that best serves the interests and unity of these common cultures. Article twenty-four concerns individual and community



rights by affirming the role of media in building awareness of individual rights and social solidarity. Article twenty-five affirms the need for objectivity and states, “the Saudi media must be totally objective in presenting facts and exaggeration and alteration of facts should be avoided. The media should appreciate and honor language to protect it from frivolity and rise above anything invoking sedition or malice.”(Ibid) Article twenty-six deals with the idea that “freedom of expression is guaranteed within the framework of Islamic and national goals and values” by making it clear that freedom of speech is guaranteed as long as it does not conflict with Islamic values or harm national interests.

Article twenty-seven, addresses Saudi Arabia's foreign policy goal of maintaining a humane attitude with respect to the right of man to live in freedom on his national soil. It denounces any assault whatever on the rights of individuals and opposes any national expansionist designs. It also promotes human rights, justice, peace and stands against injustice and racial discrimination. Articles twenty-eight and twenty-nine affirm the importance of maintaining qualified trained media professionals in the field. Finally, article thirty affirms that all media institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia commit to this policy.

#### **a) 2000 Royal Decree M/32 Revises 1982 Saudi Media Policy**

In November 2000, Royal Decree (M/32) updated the outdated 1982 policies governing printed material and publication in order to keep pace with technological changes impacting Saudi media. Forty-nine new articles were issued, as follows: (1-12) general articles, (13-17) internal printed matters, (18-23) External printed matters, (24-34) local journalism, (35-41) penalties, (42-49) general provisions. Royal Decree (M/32) rescinded the need for government approval prior to newspaper's going to print, but

maintained the need for publishers and editors to be approved by the Ministry of Information, who recommend their dismissal at any time by Royal Decree.

#### **b) 2003 Royal Decree M/41 Articulates Saudi Copyright Law**

Royal Decree (M/41) issued the copyright law in 2003. The policy meets the requirements of the World Trade Organization agreement on trade related traits of Intellectual property rights. Saudi spent over twelve years negotiating with the World Trade Organization, and was the only country in the Gulf region not in the World trade Organization. Being accepted into it became a symbol of international respect and acceptance for Saudi Arabia, and the Kingdom established twenty-eight articles to action and impose fines for copyright violations. The year 2003 saw new political dynamics take shape in Saudi society. Two major terrorist bombings took place in Riyadh; the first was in May and the second in November. New media laws accompanied this increase in terrorism because studies proved that the relation between media and terrorism is symbiotic.

After 2001, Saudi came under attack from the international media and the resulting negative coverage benefited local media because more freedom was allowed by the government to react to international media's negative coverage (Alkarni 2005). At the same time, these attacks transition from foreign countries to targeting local Saudis. As a result, the government responded with a comprehensive media campaign that included advertisement, religious programs, talk shows addressing anti-terrorism, interviews, books, flyers, etc. to eradicate radical terrorist propaganda. Local media was encouraged to discuss sensitive political and religious issues that were previously absent from media, and these discussions opened access to a variety of sources outside the government.

The harmonization between the development of the media system and the societal development are not in coordination. During an interview with Assistant Minister of Interior for Technology Affairs, Prince Dr. Bandar Al Saud, Prince Al Saud commented on the societal development and media policy:

In general it is acceptable although it needs to be speedier through institutions in which the responsible institute initiates the policies needed to match the development, instead of waiting for another governmental institute, or a higher order from the society or the private sector to ask for it, then it starts its policy path or executing the policy. At the same time, we do have a delay in transforming policies into reality; sometimes we issue policies but executing those policies takes a long time because the responsible institute does not have the human qualifications. I will give you an example protecting the society from immoral content via digital communication and Internet: the responsible institute is the General Commission for Audiovisual Media which is still in the beginning of its establishment although the policies have been issued from the Council of Ministries not a short time ago (B. Al Saud 2015).

Dr. Saud Kateb, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Information and Culture, conveyed a different view during his interview on the harmonization between development and policies: “media has developed very fast and the policies are finding it difficult to catch up.” Saudi society, and not just media, have developed swiftly in many regards, and remained static in other significant ways (Kateb 2015).

#### **c) 2007 Royal Decree M/17 Articulates Saudi Anti-Cyber Crime Law**

In Saudi Arabia, it is considered easy to regulate content and impose media policy and laws because of an authoritarian system in which almost all media outlets are government owned or controlled. However, it has become extremely complicated for the government to exercise any control over social media. Internet use has increased since its

introduction to the country in 1999 when only 0.5 % of the Saudi population were Internet subscribers. By 2001 the country had 425,000 Internet subscribers, and by 2007, forty-three percent of the population were on the Internet with fifty-three percent by 2009 (Communication and Information technology Commision 2009), and sixty percent of the population by 2014 (Internet Live Stats 2016). Saudi Arabia ranked the most vulnerable of the gulf counties to fall victim to cybercrime as demonstrated in the hacking of governmental institutions, Saudi Aramco and King Saud University. In litigating cybercrime, it has been difficult for judges to determine appropriate penalties because Sharia law is of little help, so judges must use their own discretion in determining appropriate penalties and punishment. As a result, a few lawsuits sparked outrage among human rights activists and attracted international media coverage during mid 2000s and put pressure on the government to intervene in the judicial process.

Royal Decree (M/17) an Anti-Cyber Crime Law was issued on March 26, 2007 in response to international media coverage of the Saudi Judicial System. Dr. Kateb considers this law as very important development in Saudi media (Kateb 2015).

#### **d) 2011 Royal Decree A/93 Amend the Publishing and Print Law**

On December 18, 2010— the beginning of the Arab Spring— the entire Arab world became glued to Pan Arab news channels and became active users of social media. Saudi citizens used available platforms to debate political, regional, and local issues on social media and newspapers. A few months later on April 29, 2011, Royal Decree A/93 was issued to amend five articles from the printed material and publication laws (9, 36, 37, 38, 40). In article nine a paragraph was added before the list to heed in published material:

All officials printed materials will heed to objectify constructive criticism in the public interest based on facts and correct testimonies and are barred from publishing in any form whatsoever the following:

1. Anything that violates Islamic Sharia rulings or laws in force.
2. Anything calling for breaches of the security of the country or its public law, or anything that serves foreign interests in conflict with national interests.
3. Anything affecting the reputation or dignity of, or slandering or personally insulting, the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom or members of the Board of Senior Ulema, or dignitaries of the state or any of its employees, or any person of ordinary standing or any legal person.
4. Inciting and propagating division between citizens.
5. Promoting or inciting to crime.
6. Anything damaging to the country's public affairs.
7. Details of investigations or trials without obtaining permission from the legally authorized authority.

The remaining four amendments also addressed violation in published content related to article nine, as well as penalties they incur. The focus of the amendments was public order, but many of the words used were vague. For example: 1) what defines “inciting and propagating division between citizens”, 2) how do we measure “anything damaging to the country’s public affair”. These words become troubling if a citizen or a journalist intends well to the country, but his views get interpreted otherwise. The law can hold him accountable. Those laws were constructed to avoid enflaming political discussions, which can overflow into the streets of Saudi. The amendments were a reaction to the Arab Uprising, and demonstrate an obsessive media attachment to the developments in countries that overthrow regimes.

With the regional political developments and specifically Arab uprising, many local activists considered the situation an opportunity to campaign for their opinion online, such as the Facebook page calling for protest around the Kingdom on March 11,

2011. The women driving movement and an online reform petition were the major active groups. The unrest in neighboring countries and battling terrorism at home were challenges that created unrest within the Kingdom.

#### **e) 2013 Royal Decree M/16 Articulates Saudi Counter Terrorism Law**

On December 27, 2013, Royal Decree M/16 was issued to combat terrorism. It consisted of new Counter Terrorism Laws that included forty-one articles. Although the law is not media specific, it did cover media policy, since according to the law any tweet or even an upload of a video on social media can be considered an act of terror. The law criminalizes acts that disturb public order, defame the reputation of the state, or threaten the Kingdom's unity. The Saudi minister of culture and information, Abdel Aziz Khoja, was quoted saying, "the legislation strikes a balance between prevention of crimes and protection of human rights according to Islamic law" (Associated press 2014).

## **II. Media Censorship**

In the past, in order to understand any state media or political policy, we had to understand local media and culture. Interestingly, today one must grasp the logic of the global system and then determine how local media deviates from the overall system. Censorship plays a prominent role in Saudi Arabia's media landscape. According to freedom of the press 2014, Saudi ranks 83<sup>rd</sup>, and in the 2014 World Press freedom index, Saudi ranked 164 out of 180 countries. In addition, Saudi Arabia ranked the third most censored country in the world. It is a fact that Saudi Arabia censors content within its borders. This is made clear through the government's laws. However, the word censorship is not clear. Nicole Moore, describes it best by stating:

To answer the question—what is censorship? Is to undertake much more than a definition. Identifying what constitutes censorship in our societies turns out also to be an attempt to identify the limits and effects of regulatory power as such. And more than that: about the productive means by which regulatory power makes and shapes communicative social formations, or culture” (Moore 2013, 61).

For the purpose of this research, censorship will be looked at from two points of view: one political and the other religious. Politically, censorship can be defined as “the suppression of information by a government that is determined by the authorities as capable of increasing public dissent or opposition to government policy. Most commonly, this type of censorship is directed at news media outlets and individual journalists” (Boreham 2011). Another definition is “the exclusion of some discourse as the result of judgment by an authoritative agent based on some ideological predisposition” (M. Cohen 2001, 8). While religious censorship is “the act of suppressing views that are contrary of those to an organized religion, when freedom of expression, is controlled or limited using religious authority or on the basis of the teachings of the religion” (Censorship In America 2013).

Freedom of expression is the fundamental human right that allows other rights to flourish. Although it may seem over-simplistic, access to information and the right to speak freely on important issues in society are vital to the development of any society. It is important to note in Saudi Arabia that freedom of expression and censorship are covered by two different and separate government laws. Within the confines of Islamic teaching, the right to freedom of expression must not disrupt public order and must not attack religion.

King Salman has publicly claimed “the government guarantees freedom of expression” (Arab News 2015). Article 39 of the basic law of governance addresses the issue of freedom of expression by stating:

Mass and publishing media and all means of expression shall use decent language and adhere to the laws of the Nation. They shall contribute to educating the nation and supporting its unity. Whatever leads to sedition and division, or undermines the security of the State or its public relations, or is injurious to the honor and rights of man, shall be prohibited. Laws shall set forth provisions to achieve this (Basic Law of Governance 1992).

Saudi amended the Press Law of 1963 in 2003, stating in article eight (the article governing expression): “freedom of expression is guaranteed in the different media of publication within the limits of Sharia rules and law” (Royal Decree M/32 2003). As a result, this article expands freedom of expression.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, consisting of 57 Muslim governments, met and jointly issued the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* to serve as a guide for its member states in the field of human rights. The declaration contains twenty-five articles and article twenty-two discusses freedom of expression. According to Article 22:

- (a) Everyone shall have the right to express his opinion freely in a manner that is not contrary to the principles of the Sharia.
- (b) Everyone shall have the right to advocate what is right, propagate what is good, and warn against what is wrong and evil according to the norms of Islamic Sharia.
- (c) Information is a vital necessity to society and must not be exploited or misused in such a way as may violate the sanctity and the dignity of Prophets or undermine moral and ethical values or disintegrate, corrupt or harm society by weaken its faith.



(d) It is not permitted to excite nationalistic or doctrinal hatred or to do anything that may be an incite any form of racial discrimination (Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam 1990) .

Because Saudi Arabia is considered the guardian of Islam, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's definition of freedom of expression has a crucial impact on media in Saudi as the Kingdom's religious scholars' interpretation of what can be expressed in the media imposes itself on all forms of expression. As the government expects that the media will censor itself, self-censorship has become a way of life. So much so, in fact, that Jihad Khazen, an editor in chief of several Pan-Arab newspapers, once said, "I feel at times I am not so much covering the news as covering it up." Khazen continued by saying he can afford to be banned in other Arab countries but not in Saudi Arabia. He explained that his financial survival depends on it. In this sense, though it is generally agreed that every citizen in Islam has a right to criticize and express opinions, allegiance is a religious duty and criticizing religion is unacceptable. It follows that criticizing the government is unacceptable (Khazen 1999).

## Conclusion

The Saudi monarchy has guided media policy in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia since its inception, and has aimed to protect and adhere to the tenets of Islamic teaching. The legal mechanism of Royal Decrees successfully stewarded Saudi media until the 1990's, when new technology challenged Saudi Media Policy as citizens gained access to satellite TV, mobile phones, the Internet and social media. In response to this challenge and in response to the growing threat of global terrorism, the Saudi government responded in 2013 with strict policy measures to fight terrorism. This intense response has served in ways to challenge or dampen the voice of the Saudi public in social media.

Although the self-censorship imposed on Saudi media inhibits public policy debate, the government's inability to control social media enables Saudi citizens to express their opinions more openly than ever before. Having gained its voice, the Saudi public has been successful in ways at effecting change, as will be discussed next in a series of case studies.

## Chapter 5

### Unveiling the Subject of Women

“Equality does not mean sameness: difference does not mean inferior” (Creedon 1998, 99)

#### Introduction:

This chapter presents two case studies that demonstrate the impact of media on changing public opinion and policy regarding women’s rights in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The two case studies document the place of women in Saudi society before integration of media as well as after, and demonstrate a clear link between media and its impact on women’s empowerment in the Kingdom. This chapter is important because women constitute half the population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and they have become active users of social media. As a result, Saudi women have gained a voice that traditional media and the Saudi government is unable to ignore. The chapter begins with an introduction to women’s rights in Saudi Arabia as viewed by the international community. Next, the first case study discusses the ban on driving for Saudi women and the women’s movement that is fighting to abolish the ban. The second case discusses restrictions on women participating in sports and how these restrictions have been successfully lifted as a result of the 2012 summer Olympic games. Both case studies speak to the overall issue of women’s rights in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and have been selected because each demonstrates the interaction between media and public opinion’s ability to effect changes in government policy. The chapter concludes with lessons learned from the two case studies.

The cultural reality of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is that women are denied full participation in society, are segregated from males, are not allowed to drive, and must veil themselves in public. These restrictions were, in part, codified into public policy during the 1960's, by stipulating that mixed gender by law is forbidden in the workplace and education (Le Renard 2014). As a result, Saudi society is segregated by gender and women are forbidden to access many public spaces. Access to government buildings is restricted to certain sections, and women are forbidden from attending public sporting events. All restaurants are divided into family and single sections, and women are only allowed in the family section.

This reality for women has not always been the case. At its beginning, Islam held women essential in all aspects of society. The wife of the Prophet Mohammad was a successful businesswoman and she also fought alongside her husband in battles. During the Prophet's lifetime, women participated in the decision-making. The story of the Queen Sheba appears in Islam's holy book in recognition the fact that there is no limit to which a woman can rise in the society. Ironically, the Prophet Mohammad feared these values would be forgotten once he was gone and during his final pilgrimage, he expressed concern for women and warned followers to "observe your duty to Allah with respect to women and treat them well".

There were certain points in Arabian history and culture where women were viewed less conservatively; female sexuality and forbidden love were even topics of pre-Islamic poetry. With the advent of Islam, Arabic poetry shifted to praise the feminine qualities of decency, humility and nobility and portrayed women modestly out of respect for their role as a mothers and wives. As a result, Arab culture embraced women as

“jewels in need of protection”, which in turn, gave rise to the practice of women covering themselves in public and, in the extreme, has led to the segregation of women by excluding them from participation in male dominated society.

### **I. Women’s Rights in Saudi Arabia**

The following discussion of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia begins with the increasing emphasis that media gives them due to the reality gap between what rights are guaranteed to women under Saudi law and the burdensome restrictions women experience in their everyday lives. Amélie Le Renard, an author who has written on Saudi women, notes that in the Kingdom segregation “produces two social worlds, of which one is subordinate to the other” (Ibid, 6) The resulting contradiction creates a palpable tension in Saudi society, as women constitute half the population and must be reckoned with, but fail to receive adequate opportunities to do so. To better understand the two case studies presented later in the chapter, a discussion of how women have been viewed in Arab culture before and after the advent of Islam is presented and is followed by recent developments in women’s empowerment in Saudi Arabia.

Women’s rights in Saudi Arabia have been receiving increasing attention from both local and international media. In 2010, a Saudi study concluded that forty-one percent of all published content in local newspapers was directed at women (Amer 2014). Similarly, a Canadian study found that the women’s issues that attracted most attention in the local media were political rights, independence from men, driving, employment, and wearing the veil (Ibid). This increased attention to women’s rights in the media, in large part stems from the ongoing contradiction between public policy and public reality in Saudi Arabia. For example, in 2007, the Saudi Government reported its compliance with

the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and stated that, under the Kingdom's laws, governing education, civil service, labor and the rights of workers, women should be treated the same as men with regard to grade, salary, etc. (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women 2007) Yet in 2007, Saudi Arabia ranked 124<sup>th</sup> of 128 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index, which tracks gender disparity worldwide. In 2014, the Kingdom ranked 130 out of 142 countries in the study (The Global Gender Gap Report 2014).

The Arab Human Development Report entitled *The Rise of Women in the Arab World* concludes, "(c)ontradiction is the outstanding characteristic of images of Arab women in the media as in society itself" (United Nations Development Programme 2006, 159). According to statistics from the Saudi Central Department of Statistics and Information, women occupy only 13 percent of private and public sector jobs, in spite of the fact that they account for 51 percent of all university graduates in the Kingdom. Statistics also show that women comprised 64 percent of all bachelor degree graduates from public and private universities in the Kingdom from 2010 to 2013 (Saudi Gazette 2015). According to a report from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on Saudi Arabia, the following factors limit the level of female participation in the workforce:

1. Educational Status: the educational status of women affects their access to the job market. In 2001, 47 % of women in the workforce held bachelor's degrees.
2. Marriage: Results of the 1992 general population census show that approximately 30% of women devote themselves to the responsibilities of marriage and children.

3. Customs and tradition: there is no doubt that the increased levels of education, economic progress and the cultural and media revival have enabled many social customs and traditions to be overcome.
4. Early retirement: data on the patterns of early retirement confirm that women tend to retire earlier than men in the private sector. The phenomenon is beginning to increase in the public sector, with female early retirement rising from 23.2 % of total early retirees in 1999/2000 to 42.5 % in 2003/2004 (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women 2007, 25).

Of all the restraints placed on Saudi women, perhaps the most burdensome is the imposition of a guardianship law under which a woman's life is under complete control by her legal guardian. She needs his permission to leave the country. She needs his permission to start a business or work if she wants. Over time, however, this law has been gradually eroded by reforms that now enable women to obtain government identification cards independent of their male guardian. Prior to this change, women required a male guardian present to prove her identity to governmental agencies or vouch for her in court, due to the fact that the government did not allow women to have a photo ID and thus could not confirm their identity in court. As a result, an optional national identification card program for women was announced on December 11, 2001, when Minister of Interior Prince Naif AlSaud announced to the press, "The issuing of identity cards to women is now dictated by the requirements of modern life to enable a woman to carry out all her activities with ease and to prevent forgeries and trickeries committed in the name of women as a result of the lack of national identification." A significant rationale for granting women identification cards was more a matter of public security

than a progression of women's rights, as terrorists had been portraying themselves as women so as to move through the Kingdom undetected. The policy statement ended by affirming that possession of a national identification card by no means implies any lack of modesty for a woman and is in no way contrary to Islamic Sharia.

The Minister of the Interior reminded the public of a previous successful implementation of passports for women. From 2001 to 2013, public opinion divided into two camps: those who favored identification for women and those conservatives who opposed photos of unveiled women on national identification cards. At a 2013 meeting of the Council of Ministers, a Royal Decree was announced amending Article 67 of the civil law, making it compulsory for "Saudi women to obtain a national identification card within a period of seven years, after which period, a national identity card will be the only accepted means for her to prove her identity" (Saudi Press Agency 2013).

As the Arab uprising brought political issues out into the open, women's rights in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia became a focus of international legitimacy and local reform. Although King Abdullah has long supported women's issues and been committed to reform, he surprised the Kingdom on September 25, 2011. In his annual speech to the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia, known as Shura Council, he announced that women would participate in the next round of elections to the Shura Council. Two years later, on January 11, 2013, Royal Decree A/45 was issued modifying Shura Council policy article 3 saying that among the one hundred fifty appointed members of the Shura Council, women participation would not be less than twenty percent. The decree mentioned that King Abdullah had consulted religious scholars, who had approved women participation in accordance with Sharia Law. The Royal Decree also amended



article 23 to provide guidelines for the participation of women, which included a special entrance and exit for women to ensure segregation of male and female and separate seating to be allocated for women inside the Shura Council chambers. Saudi media openly praised the policy change, as the public became more optimistic for the future of their country.

## **II. Case Study 1: Women Driving in Saudi Arabia**

### **Introduction**

This case discusses the ban on women's driving in Saudi Arabia by first describing the Saudi government's position on the issue, and then addressing the women's movement which is attempting to remove the ban on driving, followed by the Saudi government's reaction to the movement. Finally, it is summed up in an evaluation of the case. This case study is important because the ban on women's driving in Saudi Arabia has received more international press attention than any other public policy issue that has faced the Kingdom. The international attention paid to this issue alone makes it worthy of study. More importantly, however, social media coverage of this issue has challenged the citizens and religious scholars in Saudi Arabia to examine their preconceived notions and, by doing so, an unprecedented shift in public opinion has occurred. Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that does not allow women to drive. The impact of this ban is significant not only for the day-to-day life of Saudi women, but also to the economic life of the Kingdom. A 2007 Gallup poll states that sixty-six percent of Saudi women and fifty-five percent of Saudi men are in agreement that women should be allowed to drive (Rheault 2007). Traditional and social media report positions favoring women driving because it is a right and a necessity that will

eliminate over one million foreign drivers currently employed by households to transport their female members. Those opposed to women driving argue that allowing women to drive breaks with traditional values and customs. For the purpose of this study, three aspects of the issue will be presented:

- 1) Statements of government's position on women's driving.
- 2) Statements and actions by women's rights activists that have produced results.
- 3) Saudi governmental reactions to the women's movement to remove the ban through changes in public policy.

#### **a) The Government of Saudi Arabia's Position**

Prior to the Gulf War, when Saudi Arabia became the focus of international media attention, any discussion of the ban on women driving was taboo in local media. During the Gulf War, however, female members of the coalition forces were required to drive on Saudi roads and the 24/7 news cycle had occasion to report on the Saudi ban on women drivers. As satellite TV and the Internet became more prevalent in Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom was forced into a new awareness of the issue, as it became the target of international criticism. In December 2005, then Crown Prince Sultan first publically addressed the issue of women driving in a press conference when he said, "the issue of (women) driving is a concern for fathers, husbands, and brothers. The government has nothing to do with it and if those men request women to drive, then we will look at the matter" (Okaz 2011). Affirming this point, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, told Britain's Channel 4 news that there were no Saudi laws prohibiting women from driving and said, "Myself, I think they should drive. For us, it is not a political issue;

it is a social issue. We believe that this is something for families and individuals to decide and not be forced by the government, either to drive or not to drive."

However, during a press conference in March 2011, Prince Ahmed bin Abdul-Aziz, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, reported "A statement was issued in 1990 prohibiting women from driving cars in the kingdom." And, the Arab News quoted him as saying, "The Ministry of Interior's task is to implement an order. It is not our job to say something is right or wrong" (Wahab 2011). Although, King Abdullah in his first televised interview with Barbara Walters addressed the issue of women being allowed to drive by saying, "I believe strongly in the rights of women ... my mother is a woman, my sister is a woman, my daughter is a woman, my wife is a woman. I believe the day will come when women drive. In fact, if you look at remote areas in Saudi Arabia, the deserts and in the rural areas, you will find that women do drive. The issue will require patience. In time, I believe it will be possible" (20/20 abc news 2006). In support, the minister of information and culture, Abdul-Aziz Khoja tweeted, "Driving a car for Saudi women is her right, as long as she follows the regulations, customs and Islamic manners" (MacFarquhar 2011).

Although there is no law that bans women from driving in Saudi Arabia, neither is there a law that guarantees the right of women to drive. Article 36 of Saudi Basic Law states, "The state shall provide security to all its citizens and residents. A person's actions may not be restricted, nor may be detained or imprisoned except under the provisions of the law." Thus, based on Article 36, as citizens the mobility of Saudi women must not to be restricted. Additionally, it must be noted that the Kingdom's traffic law does not exclude women. Under Article 38 of Saudi Basic Law, it states, "Punishment shall be

carried out on a personal basis. There shall be no crime or punishment except on the basis of Sharia or statutory provision, and there shall be no punishment except for deeds subsequent to the effectiveness of a statutory provisions.” Based on Article 38, nowhere is it stated in any of the Saudi rules and regulations that women are banned from driving. Even in the Sharia, nowhere is it mentioned in Quran or the Hadith (Teachings of the Prophet) that women are banned from operating machinery or riding any form of transport, including driving. As a result, it must be concluded from both Sharia and the Saudi Basic Law that women are not only allowed to drive, but are also protected from punishment if they do.

Although, the traditions and customs of Saudi Arabia continue to foster a ban on women driving in contradiction to the well-known fact that Bedouin women in rural areas of the Kingdom drive, international media has devoted substantive attention to the ban on women driving and has done so without any deep understanding of Saudi culture or tradition. In 2005, when U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was asked about women driving during her visit to Saudi Arabia, she said, “I’m going to worry about women voting, I don’t know about women driving” (Karl 2005, 11). Later she explained that if women have political rights, then the right to drive is not an issue.<sup>5</sup> The following day when Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal was asked by reporters about Secretary Rice’s speech in Egypt calling on the Kingdom of Saudi to give more freedom to women, he said “I have not read it, to my eternal shame.”(Ibid, 10) In spite of the outside pressure of the foreign press, Saudi government officials view the ban on women’s driving as an internal issue. However, since the events of Arab uprising, there

---

<sup>5</sup> In 2011 King Abdullah announced that women will be allowed to vote in municipal election

has been a sustained push for Saudi women's right to drive. In 2011, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton praised Saudi women's movement by saying, "What these women are doing is brave and what they are seeking is right, but the effort belongs to them" (Associated Press 2011).

From the above statements deriving from the ruling elite of the Kingdom, it seems clear that the majority of Saudi leaders believe that women's driving is an issue that is culturally rather than religiously determined. Furthermore, the majority emphasizes their personal opinion that women should have the right to drive, and many express their belief that a time will come when women will drive in the Kingdom.

#### **b) The Movement**

At the start of the Gulf War, on November 6, 1990, forty-seven Saudi women met in a parking lot to which each had driven themselves. As a result, they were all arrested and only released after their male guardians signed a pledge that they would never drive again. A month earlier, "In October 1990 articles began appearing in the heavily censored Saudi press quoting women expressing alarm that had Saddam Hussein invaded Saudi Arabia rather than Kuwait, they would have not have been able to drive their children to safety as Kuwaiti women had done" (House 2013, 84). As a result, an overnight national debate concerning the right of women to drive opened up.

Later in a 2005, at a Shura Council session regarding traffic laws, a Shura member named Alzulfa requested a lift on the ban on women driving and requested that the topic be moved up to Council Level. "I know that talking about women driving is taboo, so I decided to take advantage of our discussions to bring up the topic" (Abu Nasr 2005), Alzulfa said after his proposal to the head of the council was ignored.

Nevertheless, the request received widespread local media attention and gave local media a chance to host him to discuss the topic. At the same time, arguments for and against Alzulfa's proposal appeared in print media. The issue was closed, however, when the Minister of the Interior, Prince Naif, criticized Alzulfa's timing and declared that driving was a secondary issue (Khalaf 2005).

Although articles and interviews highlighting the right of women to drive appeared monthly in the media over the next few years, the issue only came to a head when several religious scholars declared publicly that the matter of women's driving is not a religious one. In a 2009 article published in the *Okaz* newspaper, Dr. Abdullah Almutlaq, a member of the Saudi Committee of Senior Religious Scholars, confirmed there is no Islamic text that prohibits women from driving. Furthermore, he noted that the large number of molestation incidents by foreign drivers would be eliminated if women could drive, explaining that customs and traditions should not govern us (Alawad 2009).

With the spread and access of social media through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, Saudi women activists were able to gain supporters, discuss feminine issues, and demand their rights in Saudi society. For over a decade the issue of women driving had been covered in international media while Saudi local media imposed self-censorship of the issue. However social media broadcasted the topic across the Kingdom, and provided women the medium needed to openly and freely discuss it.

Ironically, as Arab youth rose up to challenge authoritarian regimes across the Middle East in 2011, women were the only activists to rise up in Saudi Arabia and driving was the issue at the top of their agenda. As the events of the Arab Uprising

unfolded, a “Women2Drive” campaign was announced in Saudi Arabia for June 17, 2011, and was intended as a day of protest. One of its leaders, Manal AlSharif, posted an eight-minute YouTube video on May 19, 2011, showing her driving. Within two days, her YouTube video had been viewed 600,000 times. The next day, police arrested her and held her for nine days, after which considerable international coverage and social media pressure forced police to release her by Royal Decree. International and social media coverage included the Twitter hashtag, #Women2Drive, as well as Facebook postings. By the time the scheduled June 17<sup>th</sup> protest came, it is claimed that approximately one hundred women drove on the streets of Saudi Arabia and none were arrested.

During the 2011 Manal Alsharif incident, the Saudi Government avoided taking any official position on her case. No charges were brought against her when she was arrested. She was released only after she and her brother signed an agreement that she would never drive again. However, the same night she was released from custody, she posted another video of her driving on YouTube. The video received so many views that she was again arrested by the Ministry of the Interior and held in custody for nine days, after which she was charged with inciting public disorder by violating a government ban in collaboration with foreign media.

A few days later, Deputy Ministry of the Interior, Prince Ahmed, responded to a question in a televised interview regarding the legality of women driving saying:

Regarding women driving, a ruling was issued in 1991 banning (or rather not allowing) women to drive cars. For us at the Ministry of the Interior, this ruling still stands and it is our duty to apply the law. It is not our duty to determine whether the law is right or wrong. After all, it is our responsibility to uphold the law.

The ruling Deputy Minister of the Interior, Prince Ahmed, referred to a religious

fatwa issued after the arrest of the forty-seven women back on November 6, 1990, just after Iraq invaded Kuwait starting the First Gulf War:

The Ministry of Interior declares to all citizens and residents that, based on the Fatwa issued 20/4/1411 from Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz the head of Scholarly Research and Ifta and Sheikh Abdul Raziq Afifi the Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta, and a member of the Senior Scholars, Sheikh Saleh bin Mohammed bin Luhaidan, President of the Supreme Judicial Council and member of the Permanent Panel of Senior Scholars. This fatwa states that it is inadmissible for women to drive cars and it is necessary to punish those who do drive cars with an appropriate punishment in order to restrain signs of evil, as explained in legitimate religious evidence that requires banning that which might expose women to temptation and given that women driving cars is contrary to the True Islamic behavior enjoyed by the Saudi citizen jealous for his female relatives. The Ministry of Interior clarifies for the general public and confirms that all women are strictly prohibited from driving in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and violations of this prohibition will receive deterrent punishment (Ministry of Interior 1990).

As a result of her actions, Manal Alsharif was portrayed as a hero in the international media, and she received a number of prestigious international awards; local Saudi media portrayed her as a traitor. The ultimate price Manal paid was defamation by the Saudi press and being fired from her job. She left Saudi Arabia as a result and now lives abroad.

The movement went quiet for the two years following Manal departure from the Kingdom. Then on March 31, 2013, the religious police published a statement in the Alyoum newspaper saying women are allowed to ride bicycles and motorbikes as a means of entertainment as long as they are dressed appropriately, covered in an Abaya, and accompanied by a male guardian. Though the Alyoum was the only newspaper to publish the statement, it was enough to create buzz on social media, although most tweets



expressed skepticism over the statement. Sarcastically, international media outlets like CNN, Time Magazine and The Guardian ran headlines saying “Saudi Women Can Now Ride Bicycles in Public- (Kind of)”, or “Saudi women are allowed to cycle but only in circles”, or “Saudi Arabia allows women to ride bikes- sort of”.

Later in 2013, the campaign for women to drive became active again and called for an “October 26<sup>th</sup> Campaign”, as Saudi women rights activists called on other Saudi women to post photographs and videos of themselves behind the wheel on social media websites. A social media flurry occurred two days after three female members on the Shura Council requested that the issue be discussed at the October 9<sup>th</sup> Ministry of Transport Review by stating that “there is no law that bans women from driving. It is only a matter of tradition” (Nafee 2013). The Saudi Shura Council rejected putting the ban on women’s driving on the agenda. The Council, which includes 30 women among its 150 members, said the issue was “irrelevant” and “not within the Transport Ministry’s control” (Alarabiya 2013).

The renewed campaign also initiated a petition that collected 17,000 signatures demanding the government to issue driving licenses to women (The Economist 2013). The highlight of the campaign was the uploading of a song on YouTube on October 26<sup>th</sup> that was viewed more than 13 million times and received huge international and local coverage. The song supported the campaign to allow women to drive by bringing awareness to the issue using the popular reggae tune “*No Woman No Cry*”. Three comedians, Hisham Fageeh, Fahad Albutairi and Alaa Wardi, performed the song in English with Arabic subtitles in a four-minute video while clapping, whistling and

singing without musical instruments (since radicals believe musical instruments are sinful). The lyrics mocked the ban as follows (Telfaz 2013).

Say, say  
 Say I remember when you used to sit  
 In the family car, but backseat  
 Ova-ovaries all safe and well  
 So you can make lots and lots of babies  
 Good friends we had and good friends we lost  
 On the highway  
 In this bright future you can't forget your past  
 So put your car key away  
 No woman, no drive  
 No woman, no drive  
 Hey, little sister, don't touch that wheel  
 No woman, no drive  
 I remember when you used to sit  
 In the family car, but backseat  
 Of course the driver can take you everywhere  
 Because the queens don't drive  
 But you can cook for me my dinner  
 Of which I'd share with you  
 Your feet are your only carriage  
 But only inside the house and when I say it I mean  
 Ev'rything's gonna be alright.

In the end, the three comedians were not charged by the government and did not even receive a warning. However, the campaign website was blocked within Saudi Arabia.

To legitimize the ban on women driving, three days before October 23<sup>rd</sup>, a spokesperson from the Ministry of Interior issued the following statement:

Based on rumors exchanged over social networks and some media outlets calling for demonstrations and marches supporting an alleged day of female driving. The laws of the Kingdom prohibit activities that disturb the public peace and opening venues of sedition that only serve senseless, ill-intentioned intruders and opportunity hunters. The statement added that the Ministry of Interior assures all concerned bodies will fully and firmly enforce the laws against violators. At the same time, the Ministry values

what many citizens have voiced concerning for the importance of keeping the peace, stability, and avoidance of what leads to disunity and stratification of society (Saudi Press Agency 2013).

More than fifty women activists participated in October 25<sup>th</sup> protest and about fourteen were arrested. Local media focused their reporting on a security crackdown by police and religious police in the Kingdom.

The following year, as October approached, local media— without the permission of the Shura Council— reported that the council would be discussing the issue of allowing women to drive. International media picked up on the report and all major international news outlets covered the topic of lifting the ban on women's driving. As a result, women's rights activists renewed their campaign, but avoided driving in the streets to avoid violations that might tarnish the council's discussions. Local media reported that the activists had abandoned their campaign. On social media, activists emphasized that October 26<sup>th</sup> was a symbolic day to create awareness of the issue (AliKhan and Quraishi 2014). However, no official comment was released until November 8<sup>th</sup> when a spokesperson from the Shura Council said that its members had not yet decided on the issue of allowing Saudi women to drive. "The Council did not make any decision on this issue," Mohammad Al Muhanna said. "Reports disseminated by some media included lots of misleading details that prove that it was baseless and lacked credibility." He specifically singled out the BBC and the Associated Press for spreading rumors (Sabq 2014).

Saudi activist, Loujain Al-Hathloul, reiterated that the goal of the October 26<sup>th</sup> campaign was not necessarily to drive, but to keep the momentum going (AlBargi and Ghazanfar 2013). As part of the campaign, on November 30<sup>th</sup>, Loujain drove her car from

United Arab Emirates to the border of Saudi Arabia and documented her journey on Twitter and YouTube. Her YouTube video received a million views and her name trended in international social media (BBC Trending 2014). After having been held for 24 hours at the Saudi border with her social media feed live tweeting in Arabic under a new hashtag “#Lujain Alhathloul arrested”, a Saudi friend of Lujain attempted to approach her from the UAE to provide her with supplies. Although she did not intend to cross the border, she too was arrested and held for two months in jail. Both were finally released after being referred to an Appeal Court in Al-Hasa (the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia) that ruled their case was in the Al-Hasa Court’s jurisdiction and should be ruled on by a specialized court established specifically to deal with cases against the ruler and against the laws of the country. As a result, the case was transferred to a court specialized in terrorism. Although both defendants in the case are active supporters of Saudi women’s right to drive, they were put on trial not for driving but rather for the comments they made on social media criticizing the government. As a result, local media shied away from covering the trial, and it was only reported on social media and by the foreign press. More importantly, the government has issued no official statement on the case.

### **c) Phases of Government Reaction in Media**

It is possible to envision the Saudi government’s reaction to the movement to allow Saudi women to drive as a phenomenon that has played out in the media over four phases. The first phase occurred from 1991 to 2005 during which women driving was considered a taboo in local media. During this phase media had no impact on the movement because the government controlled traditional media (press, broadcast). At the

same time, Saudi citizens censored themselves on local media outlets to avoid being labeled as “liberals” or anti-tradition, which for Saudi culture has a negative connotation. Given the widespread international media attention given to the ban on women driving, government reaction was slow. The reason for the sluggish pace was that citizens’ access to international media was limited due to strict censorship laws on media access; before the spread of the Internet, citizen’s access to information was also controlled. The second phase of the Saudi government’s reaction to the issue of Saudi women’s driving occurred during 2011, when the Saudi government attempted to find a legal means to codify the ban. The third phase occurred during 2013 when the Women’s driving movement was made illegal as being organized resistance under the guise of constituting a disturbance to the public order as described in Saudi Basic Law. The fourth phase occurred in 2014, when the Saudi government equated the act of a woman driving to an act of terrorism.

In reaction to Saudi government attempts to derail the Saudi Women’s Driving Movement, social media became the backbone of the resistance campaign. Dr. Khalid Alfirm conducted a scientific study regarding the “Saudi dialogue on Twitter about the reality of women driving.”<sup>6</sup> The results of his research demonstrated that sixty-nine percent of those who tweeted on the issue of women’s driving were men; thirty-five percent of these tweets were sarcastic; twenty percent were violently opposed to women’s driving; twelve percent were objective about the issue; and only five percent expressed factual opinions. The study also looked at what evidence was used in supporting the opinions expressed regarding women driving. Again, sarcasm lead with thirty-seven percent, while the remaining evidence to support opinion came from other sources on the

---

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Alfirm is the head of Communication department in Imam Mohammad Bin Saud University, which is considered an Islamic conservative university

Internet (7.5%), followed by religious texts (4.7%). Official statements constituted only (4.1%), and the least support came from tweets by eye-witnesses (1.3%). Dr. Alfirm concluded that the main reason Twitter is playing a major role in social change is due to the fact that the issue of driving is a social issue and not related to Islamic Sharia (Sabq 2014).

#### **d) Evaluation**

Media has not managed to influence a change in policy with regards to allowing women to drive in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, the media— especially social media— has changed Saudi culture by making Saudi citizens more aware of the benefits of women driving and has removed religion as a reason for the ban. Religious scholars have altered their position from having a religious obligation to protect women from driving, to affirming that the issue of women's driving is not a religious matter, as there is nothing in Islamic religious scripture to support the ban. These same religious scholars say that during the time the Prophet was alive, women rode camels and horses— the equivalent of cars in the modern era. In spite of this change in position, conservative resistance remains. Having lost their religious footing, conservatives recently published questionable research on the ill effects driving can have on women, which stated that women who drive can cause damage to their ovaries, or incite rape. Needless to say, these claims have given the international press plenty of food for mockery.

Local media successfully framed women driving in a financial economic context. The financial burden created by banning women from driving has since influenced the debate, because the salary needed for maintaining a driver costs a female teacher

approximately half of her income. Moreover, the changing complexity of social life in Saudi Arabia demands freedom of mobility for women.

As a result, media has successfully helped to shape public opinion. Alotaibi says, “The decision today is a political one. There were a lot of delayed decisions in the past that were viewed as social decisions and once the policy was issued we discovered that the rejection was superficial and people were ready for it. For example, women participating in the Shura council was delayed and the argument was the society was not ready, but when it happened people were happy and driving is the same case” (Alotaibi 2015).

While social media enables activists to create local awareness of the need for women to drive, it has also stirred up international pressure for policy change. It must be concluded that impact of media alone has not been successful in implementing change to the issue of women driving in Saudi Arabia, because the issue has not yet been elevated to the level of a Royal Decree; and the government has responded by making arrests and used exiting laws to deter the movement.

### **III. Case Study 2: Saudi Women in Sports**

This second case study discusses the right of women to publically participate in sports, and focuses on Saudi women’s partaking in the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. The case study is important because it demonstrates how pressure from outside the Kingdom and the foreign media have been able to impact changes to Saudi public policy. We can envision the case as being divided into two main sections: Pre and Post Olympics. During the pre-Olympic period, the international media outlets were the main actors of influence, while Saudi local media reacted to international pressure and local

concerns. The second section of the case study concerns media coverage of the days leading up to the opening of the 2012 Summer Olympics Opening Ceremony. The final section of the case study presents an evaluation of Saudi media's impact on the process of reforming Saudi women's participation in sports.

The eyes of the world focus on the Summer Olympic Games every four years, and although fielding female participants is in the best interest of Saudi Arabia's national prestige, in the past, the absence of female participants has reflected negatively on the Kingdom. The arbitrator of international opinion primarily rests with the media, as it played a major role in both shaping public opinion regarding Saudi women's participation, while also helping to impact a change in public policy.

## Introduction

For over ten years the issue of girls' physical education in schools was a concern in local media, and an awareness of women's health issues resulted in public awareness and support for physical education in schools. The time span involved is relatively short and focuses in large part on statements made in the media by the International Olympic Committee and the response of the head of Youth Welfare, Prince Nawaf Al Saud.

Although the first modern Olympic games were held in 1900, the first time Saudi women were allowed to compete was the 2012 Olympics in London, where 42% of total participants were women (Olympic Studies Center 2014). The 2012 Olympic games were also a milestone for the Kingdom, because it was one of the last three countries in the world to sponsor female athletes. The participation of Saudi women in sport has not been a simple matter and women in Saudi Arabia were only granted the right to girl's physical education in 2015. In addition, women are not allowed in gyms, and are banned from



public sporting events. However, there is no Saudi law that prevents women from participating in international sporting events, as the Kingdom has signed a number of international agreements. One such agreement is The United Nation Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women, which grants in article (10) paragraph (g) equal “Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education.” Although the Saudi government included a general reservation upon ratification of CEDAW stating that “In case of contradiction between any term of the Convention and the norms of Islamic law, the Kingdom is not under obligation to observe the contradictory terms of the Convention.”, the International Olympic Committee Charter states in Rule 2 Paragraph 7, that the Kingdom is obligated “to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women” (International Olympic Committee 2015).

The year 2012 was not the first time a Saudi woman participated in an international sporting event, but it was the first time such participation was officially sanctioned. Two years before the London Olympics, Dalma Malhas participated in the 2010 Youth Olympic Games as an equestrian. Dalma is an American born Saudi citizen who was educated in Europe. During the youth Olympics, she displayed the Saudi equestrian logo on her horse and wore green and white, the national colors of the Saudi flag, even though the government of Saudi Arabia did not officially sponsor her. The Deputy Chair of the Saudi Olympic Committee said “she went on her own expense and by invitation from the International Olympic Committee” (Alhayat 2010). Saudi media had no interest in the event, and did not cover her participation until after she had won a

medal. Then all Saudi newspapers ran the same headline: “Saudi Equestrian Dalma Muhsin First Khaleeji<sup>7</sup> to Win a Bronze Medal in the Olympics”. All Saudi newspapers printed the same content and a picture of her sitting on her horse celebrating her achievement as a Saudi athlete, while ignoring the cultural fear of appearing in a picture without the traditional veil. In an interview, the equestrian admitted, “I didn’t care much about my being there as a representative of Saudi Arabia, because anyone could probably do that” (Ramadani 2012). Maybe her statement reflected her understanding that her country would not have sent her and that she benefited from the International Olympic Committee’s policy of allowing all countries to send male and female competitors to the Olympic Games, as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) reserves limited places for male and female athletes. Although equestrianism is rooted in both Saudi culture and religion, it is not easy sport for women to participate in any professional sports in Saudi Arabia, due to country’s cultural restrictions— the same cultural limitations that have kept women from driving.

#### **a) International Media Pressure and Local Coverage**

The International Sports Committee lobbied for the change and has made the participation of women a priority in its statements to the international press. Tessa Jowell, Britain’s former Minister for the Olympics, led the movement in February 2012 with a statement saying that with its attitude towards women and sport, Saudi Arabia was “clearly breaking the spirit of the Olympic charter’s pledge to equality.”(Ibid) International Olympic Committee members made statements to the press to encourage the Saudi government to move forward, and, in March 2012, from eight thousand other

---

<sup>7</sup> Khaleeji are citizens of the Gulf Arab Countries: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Kingdom of Bahrain

athletes, they selected Reema Abdullah, founder of the first non-official Saudi women's football team to carry the Olympic torch (Hadi 2012).

The General Presidency of Youth Welfare is the Saudi governmental agency responsible for all sporting activities and sports-related activities in the Kingdom, and is headed by Prince Nawaf. When asked about women participation in the 2012 Olympics, he replied, "the Kingdom has received international invitations for over twenty years and has yet to allow women to participate and there has no intention of doing so" (AlSharq Alawasat 2012). Prince Nawaf continued by stating that those women who are studying or living abroad might participate but he said, "we will only support them if they participate according to our traditional teachings." The same month in an interview in Riyadh newspaper, Prince Nawaf said, "We don't endorse Saudi female participation in the Olympic or in any international tournament" (Reuters 2012). Ten days after this statement was made, Jacques Rogge, the President of the International Olympic Committee announced, "we are waiting for Saudi approval for women participation" (AFP 2012). Again in May, he confirmed "We are still discussing with them on the practicalities, but we are optimistic that this is going to happen" (Associated Press 2012). Later the BBC reported that a secret meeting was held in Jeddah, KSA and "officials say a consensus was reached between the King, the Crown Prince, the Foreign Minister, leading religious clerics, the grand mufti and others, to overturn the ban" (Gardner 2012).

Twenty days after Prince Nawaf stated that women would not participate in the 2012 Olympic Games, an official statement from the Saudi Embassy in the United Kingdom announced in a press release, Date 6/24/2012:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to reaffirm its support for the sublime meanings reflected by Olympic

games and the cherished values of “excellence, Friendship and respect” that they represent. It also supports the objectives of the Olympic movement to hold the games in an atmosphere of the fair competition without the burdens of politics or racism.

Therefore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is looking forward to its complete participation in the London 2012 Olympic games through the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee, which will oversee the participation of women athletes who can qualify for the Games.

Meanwhile, the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee is working in a close and constructive cooperation with the international Olympic Committee to achieve this participation.

Still Prince Nawaf did not confirm the participation of Saudi women in the Olympic games to local media, and in July said that their participation was a “possibility”, with the restriction that they “wear an approved uniform that is conservative according to traditions, with the approval of her male guardian; and he should accompany her while there is no mixed participation with men” (AFB 2012). Another official statement published in ‘Al Sharq Alawsat’ newspaper announced that male athletes would have to qualify to compete in track, equestrian and weightlifting at the games, but that no “female team would compete in these three fields,” according to an unidentified Saudi official (The Associated Press 2012).

The first time women participation in the Olympics was announced in local media was at a press conference in November when Prince Nawaf confirmed that women would participate but according to Sharia Law. However, neither participants nor the events they would participate in were named (Alshalan 2011). It was not until ten days before the Olympics were to begin that the Saudi Government finalized arrangements and announced that two Saudi women athletes would compete.

In her research on gender equality and mass media, Pamela Creedon explains that the media helps us to understand the cultural debate over the definition and legitimacy of women and sport by saying, “Sport is a gendered cultural institution” (Creedon 1998, 98). Thus, if Saudi media is a platform for understanding women’s participation in sport, then, according to Creedon, it would be unjust not to include Saudi women in sports media. Although all eleven Arabic daily newspapers have sports sections, it is a rare occurrence that women are featured in these. In fact, it takes a highly unusual event, such as the controversy surrounding the Olympic games, for women to gain press in this domain of Saudi periodicals. At the time, however, the topic was front-page headline news both in the press and in social media.

In a global sense, equality in the reporting of sport has been the focus of many mass media critics as content studies demonstrate that female athletes are nearly invisible and ignored by the media. (Ibid, 92) In the case of Saudi Arabia, women in sport truly are invisible because achieving international standards of professional sporting competition is basically impossible to achieve in an environment where women cannot even register for sport clubs or competitions. Women are banned from entering national trials making it impossible for them to ever qualify for international competitions. During the Olympic debate, however, women in sports managed to gain the attention of local media, traditional media, and social media, which were all filled with mixed reactions and comments. These reactions split into those opposed to women’s participation in sport and those for it.

The first group considered participation of women in sport as disrespectful to the traditional values of the Kingdom. For example, a religious cleric named Salman Alodah

tweeted: “women participation in the Olympics is not appropriate nor is it what we need to develop our society and the status of women.” (Twitter 2012) Alodah is one of the most influential Twitter users in Saudi Arabia, having achieved 7.5 million followers. Additionally, his followers have exchanged a lot of hateful tweets towards the participation of female athletes. According to a report on women participation in the Olympics, perhaps the most infamous tweets regarding Saudi women participating in the Olympics came from Adel Alkalbani (Hadi 2012). In reference to the torch lighting, he tweeted, “A Saudi woman carrying the Olympic torch will extinguish the torch her modesty and the flame of her faith” (@abuaddelelah 2012). According to reports, this infamous tweet only received 331 re-tweets and 16 likes from among his nearly 2 million followers. This group of conservatives is concerned that if the door opens for women to participate in sports, then it will be difficult to maintain a conservative dress code in the future. This fear was strengthened after the International Judo Federation announced that wearing a headscarf was not safe due to a risk of strangulation. Later, a Saudi National Olympic Committee spokeswoman said the IOC and the International Judo Federation agreed on an acceptable form of headscarf that could be used. “They agreed on a design, and she (the Olympic athlete) will compete wearing this design” (Alarabiya 2012). As a result of the Saudi Committee’s insistence on maintaining an acceptable dress code, the Saudi government was reassured that traditional values would be maintained.

The supporters for women participation in sport viewed the announcement as a step towards equal rights for women in Saudi Arabia. Many of this group strengthened their argument that it concurred with Islamic teaching saying, “It is an Islamic imperative to allow girls to exercise; Aisha, the wife of our beloved prophet Muhammad, ran with

him on several occasions. That is a religious proof of the need to move and exercise” (Alshingiti 2012). These views came to the forefront at a time when the need for girl’s participation in physical education was also under debate, and provided an opportunity for advocates to push for a new policy to include physical education in girls’ curriculum.

#### **b) During and Post Olympics**

On the day of the Olympic opening ceremony, a number of Saudi political and public figures expressed feelings of patriotic pride. However, the common theme in Twitter that newspapers reported on the day after the opening ceremony was that the Saudi delegation was the only one in which women had to march behind their male counterparts (Akhbaar24 2012). Even after the Olympics, this group continued lobbying for women’s rights in sport and highlighted that although neither Saudi female athletes was up to international standards of competition, they succeeded in breaking down a strong wall that has dominated Saudi society for generations. In his opening ceremony speech at the World Conference on Women and Sport, the President of the International Olympic Committee said, “It is not enough to send women to the Games if girls are denied opportunities to participate in sport. On a recent trip to Saudi Arabia, we heard of the progress the sporting movement is making in that country to introduce sport for young women in the education system” (Bach 2014, 2). The concept of having truly qualified women compete and not just participates for the sake of participating has successfully spread through the Saudi sport community. In an interview conducted with a high ranking official in the Youth Welfare Organization, “I don’t see anything wrong with women participating as long as it is limited to sports that she can wear her conservative cloths, and participation should not be for the sake of only participating, but

also because they will achieve good results.”

Abdullah Bakeet published an article in the Alriyadh newspaper that sums up the media’s analysis of the Olympics. He writes that the debate is not about winning, losing, or about the game: “Our issues do not concern the world or any humanity in written history. When we compare our discussion of the Olympics and the world’s, the only common thing is the word ‘Olympic’.” Bakeet is pointing out that the culture is not even focused on the game. They are focused on women’s dress code (Bakeet 2012) .

### c) Evaluation

The idea of one or two Saudi women participating in the Olympics games is not much of a story on one level, but understood within the greater context of Saudi Arabia’s heavily gendered cultural values, it is a major story with serious ramifications. There is a clear difference in this case study between local and international media coverage of Saudi women’s participation in sport and the Olympics. Even Saudi officials spoke two different languages: one for local media and the other for international. To local media outlets, Saudi officials did not show support for women participating and fed the public traditional conservative excuses rather than building awareness and presenting a confident political face to the nation. On the other hand, they told the international media and officials representing the Olympics that they were optimistic that Saudi Arabia was sincere in allowing the participation of women and would make it a reality. Additionally, “Social media forced traditional media to deal with issues, that in the past they used to be hesitant to cover— especially women issues” (Aqel 2011).

Public opinion was also an influential factor as international media coverage created pressure on Saudi Arabia to avoid a boycott of Saudi men participating in the



Olympics if women were not included. As a result, the media played a major role in influencing the participation of women in the 2012 Olympics, and created awareness and support by lobbying for implementation of a new policy to open gyms for women. The Ministry of the Interior announced in March 2013 that it would allow licensing of women sports clubs and introduce physical education to girls' curriculum in the education for the first time. As a result, it could be argued that the Saudi Government gave into international pressure to maintain international legitimacy during the sensitive period of the "Arab Uprising". The real agent of change, however, was international media, social media and public opinion. For without pressure from these areas, the Youth Welfare Organization would have ignored the need to change just, as they have for twenty years prior.

#### **IV. Lessons**

Each of the two case studies presented in this chapter resulted in a different outcome, in spite of the fact that media played a major role in shaping public opinion and awareness. In both case studies, media exposure shed light on the important facts underpinning the events. For example, the media showed that the ban on women driving is not a religious restriction, but rather a social tradition and government policy. In the case of female athletes' participating in the Olympics, the media opened the discussion on women health and physical movement as a right and a necessity.

##### **Lesson One: Media Reach**

The first lesson to be learned concerns the broad reach of media today. Globalization and the wide reach of the international press now dictates that Saudi officials realize local and international media have become one. Modern technology has

given Saudi citizens access to both local and global media. As a result, the Saudi government should align its messaging with views prevalent in the media, rather than promoting ideas in conflict with it.

### **Lesson Two: The Empowerment of Saudi Women**

The second lesson from the study is that Saudi women, working independently, only have so much influence when it comes to bringing about substantive reforms for their gender. In order to bring about more substantive change, they will need help. The movement for Saudi women to drive lacks collective action and most efforts consist of the personal stories of a few individual women who have championed a cause that is not supported by a large lobby of women supporters. In the case of women's participation in sports, female athletes worked and trained for many years before their cause was championed by the International Olympic Committee and not by any organized effort of their own. An interesting lesson in both cases is that the lack of policy can open debate in the media and the resulting dialog often provides a "green light" for the government to effect reforms. At the same time, when an article, opinion, or tweet crosses a "red line", then it is the government reaction to repress a debate.

Although the empowerment of Saudi women is largely dependent on the courage and activism of women in the Kingdom, true empowerment for Saudi women will only be realized in the country, when higher ranking members of the ruling class foster this transition by implementing a Royal Decree.

### **Conclusion**

Between 2001 and 2015, the impact of media on changing government policies concerning women's issues has met with mixed results. In the case of the prohibition on

women's driving, it has been shown this issue has been widely reported in international, local, and traditional media. However, the tone of most of these articles has been very guarded. As a result, traditional media has succeeded in persuading public opinion that the ban is not based in religion. As such, many members of the Kingdom have removed religion as the source for the prohibition.

The local media has also pointed out there would be clear economic benefits to ending the ban, as families pay illogical sums for drivers. However, the Saudi government continues to remain ambivalent on the issue, balancing progressive ideologies against deeply entrenched cultural values. While government officials state it is a matter of tradition, as no law exists prohibiting women driving, the government has yet to grant women the right to obtain a driver's license.

Despite these failures within the domain of women's driving, media has demonstrated its ability to impact domestic policy change when it comes to women's participation in sports. This change, however, resulted primarily from the outside pressure of the international press and the International Olympic Committee, while both the local press and the Saudi government attempted to downplay the issue. However, Saudi public opinion expressed in social media widely supported women participating in the 2012 summer Olympic games. As a result, the Saudi Government allowed women to participate in 2012 Summer Olympic Games, allowed gyms to open for women, and initiated physical education for girls in schools. Although this case focused specifically on women's participation in the 2012 Summer Olympics, it had ramifications that stretched far beyond this single event. The direct impact was the granting of permission for women to participate in the Olympics; the indirect impact was related to the greater

issue of women's health and physical education in Saudi Arabia. So, the case is a significant example of both successful direct and indirect impact.

Lastly, it should be noted that the successes and failures of the media's impact when it comes to women's empowerment most likely reflects the fact that the idea of gender roles is deeply rooted into the cultural identity and norms of the Kingdom. As we proceed with future case studies, we will see that certain domains have been more easily impacted by media, while others have been less. For Saudi, these issues are domain specific, and, as this study demonstrates, women's empowerment still is one of the more static issues— although not intractable. The progress in sports participation gives hope that in years to come, more significant breakthroughs await the women of the Kingdom.



**Figure 5.1:** The above diagram highlights the powerful contradiction that women face in the Kingdom, as they are at times dependent on men for daily activities.

## Chapter 6

### Reading Between the Lines:

#### *The Impact of Media on Educational Reform*

#### Introduction

This chapter presents two case studies that demonstrate the impact of media on public opinion and government policies regarding educational reforms in the Kingdom. To better understand these case studies, first the evolution of education in Saudi is presented to show how deeply religion has historically been rooted in curriculum, and how government policies and public opinion concerning education are necessarily intertwined with religious doctrine and tradition. The importance of the role that education plays in shaping attitudes of citizens is vital to the future of the Kingdom and its place in the world.

The first case study focuses on the reform of religious textbooks due to international pressure asserting that texts used to teach religion in Saudi schools promote an interpretation of Islam espoused by radical Islamic terrorists. The second case study presents the opening of the first co-educational university in the Kingdom's history, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), which represents a radical departure from traditional Saudi institutions of higher education. Needless to say, the school has received considerable backlash from conservative religious circles. In presenting each case study, views reported in the media by the international press, local religious authorities, and the Saudi public are contrasted with government statements and press releases in the media.

## I. The Evolution of Education in Saudi Arabia

Historically, education in Saudi Arabia began as *Kuttab*, which means “students of the book”, and refers to how students learned to read write and memorize Islam’s holy book, the Quran. In 1925, public education was formalized in the Kingdom and placed under the Director of Knowledge. As with any developing Arab nation, Saudi Arabia initially adopted the educational system of Egypt, and the government recruited Egyptian educators to develop and teach curriculum for the Kingdom. Shortly thereafter, parts of Syria’s educational system were integrated. The effort to develop a Kingdom-wide curriculum was initiated by Royal Decree No. 173 dated July 27, 1927, which established the Kingdom’s first education committee responsible for the creation of educational policy, schools, and the selection. The first curriculum in Saudi Arabia focused almost entirely on Islamic studies and the roots of the contemporary Saudi education textbooks date back to the 18th century, when Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abd Alwahhab called for the return of Muslims to the fundamentals of Islam.

It was not until after World War II that a few secular Western-oriented private schools opened and broke with traditional Islamic *Kuttab*. Regardless, most of the curriculum in these new private schools was devoted to religion. In 1952, the Kingdom established the Ministry of Education. The Supreme Committee for Educational Policy was established in 1963, when the Kingdom’s educational curriculum underwent a major modification— starting with elementary school curriculum— when math and science were added to supplement religious studies (Al Aqeel 2013). The priority the Saudi government currently places on education is demonstrated by the fact the majority share of the government’s annual budget (25%) is devoted to education. This is more than any

other country in the world, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's expenditures on education as percent of GDP from 2001 through 2008 were: (Indexmundi.com)

YEAR	% GDP
2001	7.77
2002	7.68
2003	7.15
2004	6.28
2005	5.43
2006	5.89
2008	5.14

From a Western point of view, educational outcomes in relation to the level the Kingdom spends on education are surprisingly low. According to a 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Saudi Arabia lags behind international benchmarks in math and science. According to western reports, this is due to the Kingdom's continued emphasis on religious education as, in 2016, religious studies comprise thirty percent of the primary school week, while math, science, social studies, Arabic language, English language and physical education compete for what remains.

From a Saudi point of view, the Kingdom's education system successfully reflects its commitment to religion as its highest priority. The stated goal of the Ministry of Education is to create a generation that serves their country and religion (Al Aqeel 2013). To achieve this goal, the following subjects are taught in Saudi schools: Qur'an, Tawhid (Declaration of the oneness of God), Tajweed (recitation), Tasfir (interpretation of Qur'an), Hadith (Prophet Mohammad sayings), and Fiqih (Islamic jurisprudence) (Prokop 2003). In addition to thirty percent of weekly hours in elementary school being dedicated to religious subjects, twenty-four percent of weekly hours in intermediate school, fourteen percent of weekly hours in secondary schools, and thirty-five percent of

weekly hours in schools with technical and natural science curriculums are dedicated to the study of religion.

Given that Islamic studies are the basis of Saudi education, the Kingdom has been accused of fostering terrorism by allowing radical interpretations of Islam to be taught. As a result, the international community has made demands that Saudi religious textbook be reformed. In recognition for the need for reform, the influence of religion as a political force in education, has come under scrutiny by the Saudi government, the Saudi press, and Saudi public opinion. Due to the secretive nature of Saudi public policy formation, however, it is only possible to analyze reform efforts through what is reported in the media, and how local Saudi media and international media outlets report the same issue.

Using this methodology sheds light on the two case studies that follow in this chapter. In the first case, pressure from the international community and Saudi public opinion push the Saudi government for reforms to religious textbooks, which in turn, provokes reaction from religious conservatives. In the second case study, pressure from reform-minded King Abdullah pushes the Saudi government to open the first coeducational university in the Kingdom's history, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). As aforementioned, the school received criticism from conservative religious groups; these concerns lead to a political reaction.

## **II. Case Study 1: Religious Textbook Reform**

### **Introduction**

This case study discusses the role Saudi media played through three phases of religious textbook reform and brings to light the tension between political and religious



institutions in Saudi Arabia. This case study is important because Islamic schools around the world are supported by the Saudi curriculum, and the content of Saudi religious textbooks has become a global issue. The case study first presents the background of the reform needs of religious textbooks, based on the events of 9/11. The second section of the case study presents press releases and public statements issued by the government regarding religious textbook reforms divided into three phases. In the first phase of reforms, the case study presents how the Saudi media helped shape public opinion by introducing the need for religious textbook reform. Next, the case study discusses the second phase of religious textbook reform and how the Saudi media started to build local awareness of the textbook reform campaign. The case study then discusses the third phase of textbook reforms, by aligning Saudi public policy with the expectations of the international community and the international press, highlighting how government promises turned into action and reformed religious textbooks. The final section of the case study presents an evaluation of Saudi media's impact on the process of reforming Saudi religious textbooks.

#### **a) Background: A Wake Up Call**

After the events of September 11, 2001, experts and institutions from around the world analyzed Saudi society in an attempt to better understand what led fifteen Saudi hijackers to attack the United States of America. Conclusions drawn by the international community— based mainly on investigative reports by the U.S.A.— focused on the educational system of Saudi Arabia and suggested that the Kingdom's religious textbooks fostered intolerance and animosity against non-Muslims. For example, hatred of unbelievers (non-Muslim) is introduced in the first grade and reinforced throughout

school and culminates in the twelfth grade with doctrine of using conquest (Jihad) to spread Islam. In addition, criticism stated that Saudi textbooks repetitively focused on a narrow violent element of Islam.

However, the reaction of Saudi educators and scholars responsible for the curriculum was that the problem was much larger than just reforming textbooks. “Educational reform has many political, religious, social and financial aspects such that radicalization in education is a reflection of radicalization in politics or religion. Thus, there is no harm in reforming radicalization, because reform is a continuous process” (Alsani 2015). In supplement, Dr. Abdullah AlManie, a scholar in the Education sector, in an interview said, “Our problem here is from the reactions; we have a report that was published from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that said radicalization is a product of our education. And from my own point of view, radicalization stems from managerial and financial problems that control the citizens’ benefits and services. Therefore blame should not be assigned to the Ministry of Education alone but also to the Ministry of Youth Welfare, the Ministry of Social Affairs and other governmental institutions that also need to be part of the reform” (Almanie 2015).

As the spotlight of attention on Saudi Arabia’s school curriculum revealed that its religious textbooks were a main factor in fostering radical Islam, both the Saudi government and Saudi media reacted defensively. Their initial stance rejected reports in the foreign media and only later did they begin to realize the need to build awareness of religious textbook reform. Reactions from the academic community and public opinion were divided. Conservative elements saw the problem as foreign interference in Islamic

studies and the identity of Saudi society. On the other hand, reformist affirmed the need to revise textbooks as a long-standing problem that had not been addressed for years.

#### **b) Phase One: 2002-2004**

Saudi government officials in local media affirmed the position that there was no need to revise religious textbooks. In 2002, the Minister of Education, Mohammed AlRashid, said that Saudi Arabia would never allow anyone to impose changes on its national educational curricula. According to Dr. AlRashid, the Kingdom's educational curriculum has never promoted extremism, as "this is mere anti-Saudi propaganda, our national educational curricula never urged extreme thinking. This is unfair, as it has been promoted by enemies' poisonous propaganda," he stressed (Gulf News 2002).

In a statement issued on October 2002, Saudi Deputy Education Minister Dr. Khaled Al Awad reported that meetings between United States and Saudi officials, concerning the Saudi education system, resulted in an understanding that:

Saudi curriculum is fine and does not encourage or boost terrorism and hatred of a member of another religion or faith. According to which it was claimed that the curricula nourished the ideas of terrorism in the souls of the pupils following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. These meetings yielded positive results, and since most of those present realized that the Saudi curricula were fine, they retracted their baseless accusations (Stalinsky 2003).

However, one month later, on December 19, 2002, the Saudi Embassy in Washington D.C. published the following press release:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has approved budgets for the construction of 780 new schools as well as improvements to another 380 schools. Part of this funding will improve and equip a number of educational facilities, such as supplying schools with computers, laboratory tools and other devices. The funding will also provide maintenance

to existing schools. In addition, money has been allocated to update books and curriculum.

"Our schools and our faith teach peace and tolerance," stated the Foreign Minister, HRH Prince Saud Al-Faisal. "There is no room in our schools for hatred, for intolerance or for anti-western thinking. We are working very hard to build a world-class educational system that will help our children be prepared to make substantial contributions to the global society. An audit conducted by the Foreign Ministry determined that about five percent of the school's books and curriculum contained possibly offensive language. A program is now in place to eliminate such material from schools (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Embassy - Press Release 2002).

When these two official statements are compared— one by the Ministry of Education and one by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington— they are clearly speaking to two different audiences from two different points of view regarding the same issue. Regardless, it is clear that reform was needed to ensure political stability at home and abroad.

#### **c) Phase Two: 2004-2005**

Once the initial shock and denial of international community's condemnation of Saudi religious textbooks subsided, the Kingdom confronted a phase requiring substantial time and effort given political instability and social resistance. After having denied the need for reform initial, educational systems entered a new phase wherein they accepted that certain reforms were necessary. As a result, Saudi media in the Kingdom modified its message to build public awareness of the need for reform, while persuading conservative elements that the desire for change was present in the Kingdom, and did not result from outside foreign pressure. In part, Saudi media's efforts were based on studies within the Kingdom.

A 2004 study conducted and published by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs revealed that media's ability to successfully combat terrorism varied from one medium to another. Seventy percent of study participants agreed that print media covered the issue of terrorism frequently and consistently, while providing a variety of religious views and accompanying discussions that stimulated an educational awareness of the issues. On the other hand, study participants said that visual media only presented religious views and twenty-eight percent of the public sampled thought that media coverage varied depending on the situation. The study suggested that it would be worthwhile for the media to combat terrorism and conservative religious radicals by holding open forums of discussion in which educators, academics and journalists freely participated. The issue, after all, as one of social responsibility rather than the responsibility of any single government institution (AlRiyadh 2004).

A second study presented during a Forum for National Dialogue demonstrated that the Kingdom's religious textbooks "encourage violence toward others, and misguided pupils into believing that in order to safeguard their religion, they must violently repress and even physically eliminate followers of other religions" (Center for Religious Freedom 2006). Because this study was conducted locally, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and was broadly covered in local media, the Saudi public was less resistant to its findings.

The Saudi government affirmed the need for internal reforms through a number of press releases. Prince Sultan, who was Second Deputy Prime Minister at the time and a very influential member of the Royal family, released a statement through the Saudi Press Agency saying, "... reform aims to strengthen morality, flexibility, openness to dialogue

and respect of other opinions, while retaining religious subjects as the basis of our education system” (Bashir 2003). Prince Naif, the Minister of the Interior, attempted to appease radical elements by saying planned reforms conformed with the teachings of Islam. “Most people in the Islamic world have studied the same curriculum but their thoughts and ideas have not been corrupted like this small number of terrorists, who were the product of deviant thoughts, alien to Islam.” His statements both supported religious textbooks and the need for reform. “The Saudi leadership will go ahead with its plan for the educational development of its citizens by reviewing some curriculum drafted about 50 years ago. We are doing this not because of any foreign pressure” (AlRiyadh 2004).

Affirmation of the need for reform extended beyond local Saudi press releases and included a Report on the Development of Education in the Kingdom, presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the International Conference on Education organized by the International Education Bureau which stated:

There are indications that the fault lies in the kind of methods of education and their ability to influence types of behavior and attitudes of thinking. The educational system with its tools and methods has not had the desired effect on students’ behavior and has not contributed to the vision of the present circumstances in relation to the immediate and distant environment. Education is not merely a group of skills, knowledge and values that the learner acquires only to repeat at exams. Education transcends all these to the goal of preparing the Muslim personality to effectively interact fully with the world (The Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education, and General Establishment of Technical Education and Vocational Training 2003).

However, when Government reports are not intended for the international community, the tone tends towards conservatism. For example, in the Ministry of

Education Ten-year Plan for 2004 to 2014 included the threat education faced from mass media as a “cultural invasion and its results”. The report stated,

The development and wide spread of unrestricted mass media communication and the reduction of its costs constitute a challenge and a threat to the Kingdom’s national identity and culture. This issue requires a balanced approach that will allow students to enjoy the benefits of modern technology (which, in turn, will benefit the community) while maintaining the Kingdom’s values and faith, and that is able to protect them from the risks that might harm them as individuals and groups and that might negatively affect Muslim society. (Ministry of Education 2004)

This statement recognizes that although the media is influential to Saudi educational system, it is a threat to the Muslim society. This statement is crucial to understanding the mentality of those who are leading what is claimed to be a balanced approach confronting radicalization.

Based on official statements released to the press, it seems that the government attempted to combat public opposition to the reform of religious textbooks and, yet, the voice of the opposition was never made public due to media self-censorship. The most obvious and strongest opponent of reform in Saudi Arabia is the conservative religious establishment that has always exercised considerable influence on the life of Saudis (Raphaeli 2005). While the Saudi government has attempted to confront the religious extremism responsible for terrorism, the Kingdom’s religious establishment has kept relatively silent, and religious scholars have utilized the media to defend Islam from terrorist ideology while warning that Islam is being targeted by extremists.

#### **d) Phase Three: 2005-Present**

In 2005, when King Abdullah was interviewed by Barbara Walters and asked if

any changes had been made to the Kingdom's textbooks, he replied, "we have toned them down" (20/20 abc news 2006). Saudi officials continued to confirm reform efforts to the US Government. On March 7, 2005, Adel AlJubeir (then spokesman for the Saudi Foreign Ministry, now the new Foreign Minister) held a press conference in Washington and announced, "We have reviewed our educational curriculums. We have removed materials that are hateful or intolerant towards people of other faiths" (Pletka 2006).

In 2006, the Freedom House published a report regarding Saudi religious textbooks stating that, much to the disappointment of the US Government, only a few modifications have been made to religious texts. The report said that a chapter on *Walaa wal Baraa* (loyalty and disavowal) had been deleted and most passages referring to *jihad* (holy war) had been removed from Saudi textbooks. The report included passages from textbooks that promoted hatred, deplored tolerance, and highlighted that Saudi students are taught that Jews and Christians are their enemies. In reaction to this report Prince Turki AlFaisal, Ambassador to the United States, published an article in USA Today saying,

Updating a national educational system is a major undertaking. Hundreds of books must be revised, and several hundred thousand public school teachers need additional training. The process remains ongoing...the government launched a public awareness campaign across all national media outlets to reinforce the true values of the Islamic faith and educate young Saudis about the dangers of terrorism." (T. A. Alsaud 2006)

Thus, the Saudi government acknowledged that radicalism was widespread in the Saudi society and in order to update religious textbooks, multiple aspects of Saudi social, political, religious life needed to be addressed. The same logic used to persuade the Saudi public was employed to persuade the US Government. During a press conference with



the US Secretary of State, Prince Turki AlFaisal, brother of Prince Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs, was asked about criticism that not enough was being done to revise textbooks. He replied,

The education reforms in Saudi Arabia go beyond textbook rewriting. They go into teacher training, directions or the messages that are given to children in the formative years, and this is done for our own security and our own education and standard the ability of our young people to compete in the marketplace with anybody else in productivity. They have to be educated in the proper system of education. And so the whole system of education is being transformed from top to bottom. Textbooks are only one of the steps that has been taken by Saudi Arabia (U.S. Department of State 2006).

Still, the Saudi government made a commitment to the American government to remove all intolerant material from Saudi textbooks by 2008 (Weinberg 2014).

At the local level, the Saudi media dealt with education reform as a matter of terrorism and radicalism. “Education: Reality and Development Methods” was selected as the 2006 National Dialogue topic at an annual meeting at the King Abdul Aziz Center. The Minister of Education explained the selection of the topic by stating that education “is an expression of involving the society in participating with professionals and leaders to create the policy of education and united the vision of the country through dialogue” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). By selecting this topic, government efforts to include different views for reforming the Kingdom’s school curriculum would be discussed. During the event, a study called “Religious Curriculum...Where is the defect?” was presented. The study emphasized the need to evaluate religious textbooks in the context of having been written at a time of religious and political disturbance and war. As a result of the cultural shifts and social developments that have occurred in recent years, students

were exposed to ideas not considered beneficial for their development, and religious texts were held responsible for inducing violence. The conference promoted the idea that reform is for the benefit of Saudi citizens— that the Kingdom should make corrective modifications rather than simply complying with the super powers (The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research 2004).

In 2008, the Ministry of Education announced the launch of a large project to eliminate radicalism from both girls' and boys' schools in local media. The program was called "Intellectual Security" and mandated that all teachers attend training programs and required reports from all schools on their progress. In 2010, as a result of these efforts, the Director of Intellectual Security in the Ministry of Interior announced that nearly two thousand teachers had been detained by the Ministry, and their right to teach had been revoked due to their radical views. In addition, four hundred other teachers were suspended for sympathizing with AL Qaeda (Bin Salim 2015). By 2015, the program had grown to the point where it required its own department within the Ministry of the Interior.

After the Freedom House Report was issued, attempts to analyze and confirm changes to Saudi textbooks became difficult because access to the textbooks was restricted. Previously, textbooks could be obtained through unofficial sources but was no longer possible. As a result, in 2011, the US State Department commissioned the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD)<sup>8</sup> to evaluate Saudi textbooks, since earlier efforts were both inconclusive and incomprehensive. Douglas Johnston, the president and founder of ICRD, recommended that the results of the study not be

---

<sup>8</sup> A non-profit that promotes religious tolerance

published: “We strongly suggested it should not be published because they (the Saudis) are making great progress on this. We can achieve a lot more if we pursue this outside the public domain” (Lake 2014). This non-transparent methodology complies with the typical strategy employed in the Kingdom in both public and private sectors. The ICRD website posted a brief paragraph about the report stating, “ICRD’s review of those texts, the most comprehensive to date, confirmed that the Kingdom has made some laudable progress, but much remains to be done to fully complete the task of reform” (ICRD official website). Positive examples were also provided. The report included: 1) an analysis of textbook changes over the course of a decade, and 2) a comparison of some key theological concepts with Qur’anic source material, both for selective referencing and distorted emphasis (conducted with significant guiding input from key Saudi counterparts and accomplished Muslim scholars). Ultimately, however, two considerations arose that were perhaps more significant than issues with textbook content. The two considerations were teacher training and the global exporting of Wahhabist ideology through other means. A lack of pedagogical capacity and the intolerant beliefs of teachers are particularly insidious to rendering any positive reforms applied to textbook content which makes it much less relevant” (Ibid).

Religious conservatives universally resist change. In the context of Saudi Arabia, religious scholars have always had the loudest voices and any attempt at change over the years has created instability in conservative Saudi society. For example, in 2010, a *Fatwa* (a religious decree) was issued by Saleh Alfwzan proclaiming that updating of religious textbooks was *Haram* (forbidden). Since religious media is the most censored in Saudi Arabia, conservatives resorted to social media in expressing their refusal to change

religious curriculum. Although conservative outrage created noise on social media, their lack of technical expertise and sophistication paled in comparison to the Saudi government's awareness campaign that flooded social media outlets and provided far better reach to its intended audience.

In order to analyze the relationship between the media and educational reform, the relationship between these two institutions needs to be identified. Most academics see the link as weak, at best, as no strategic relation exists between the two. Additionally, "The relationship is contaminated with a lot of doubts and sensitivity. The Ministry of Education thought for many years that the media was deliberately picking on the weaknesses and mistakes in the educational system, rather than realizing that the criticism held merit, and should be heeded in the form of reform. Even so, till this day, little development has occurred" (Alotaibi 2015).

In contrast to the relationship of the media and education, all newspapers in Saudi Arabia have a section devoted to religious issues, and every media outlet in Saudi Arabia has reporters dedicated to covering religion. The real issues endemic to Saudi society and its religious institutions run much deeper than the content of religious textbooks printed and published by the Ministry of Education. Saudi Arabia's entire media system is dedicated to spreading and supporting Islamic society by Government decree. Yet religious media have failed to foster an awareness of the terrorist mentality and how dangerous it is for internal security. According to Khalid Almshoh, editor of religious section of the Alwatan Newspaper, self-censorship is one of the reasons behind this failure, and enables religious scholars to resort to expounding views unrelated to confronting terrorist ideology.

In 2013, Mohammed AlRashid, the Minister of Education from 1994 to 2003, wrote an article titled “The Development of Religious Curriculum”, in which he focused on the wordings of the texts for both girls and boys. Yet it is ironic because his views could have been implemented when he headed the Ministry of Education. While highlighting the importance of revising religious textbooks, AlRashid also said there was a need to include academics and social scientist in the development of religious textbooks, and emphasized that they should not to be excluded by religious scholars (AlRashid 2013). Ironically, in 2002, when he was the Education Minister, he defended religious textbooks when the Kingdom experienced anti-Saudi propaganda. It is also interesting to note that during the 2013 reform of Arabic and religion textbooks, the names of authors were excluded for the first time and replaced with being authored by “a group of specialists”. This resulted in a debate in media concerning the public’s right to know the credentials of the authors of textbooks, and was countered with the argument that attention should be focused on the material and not the authors (Alarabiya 2013).

By analyzing media impact on religious textbook reform, the power struggle between the religious and political institutions was brought to light. Although there have been educators in society that have demanded revision and update to the content of the Saudi school curriculum, the only views appearing in religious media resisted revision of religious textbooks under the rationale that because Islam is the pillar of education, they should not be touched. Nonetheless, Saudi media has played an influential role by critically reviewing political policies and by creating public awareness of the need to reform religious textbooks, while also maintaining the importance of religious studies. Most importantly, the media exposed hidden agendas within the educational institutions

that supported radical ideas.

#### e) Evaluation

The process of religious textbook has been surprisingly slow considering the challenges Saudi Arabia has faced in confronting the radical Islamist terrorism that threaten the stability and security of the region. The first factor impacting the pace of religious textbook reform results from Saudi educational policy. Saudi Arabia defines itself as an Islamic state, and religion forms both the foundation of the Saudi political ideology and its educational system. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's educational policy is an integral to a Kingdom-wide policy issued in 1970 that defines the principles, objectives, and goals of education in the Kingdom. The prominent principles defined in this policy are:

- A belief in Allah (God) with Islam as its religion and Mohammed as its prophet.
- A comprehensive Islamic vision of universe, human being, and life.
- A conviction that Muslims invest their energy in this life for the afterlife.
- A conviction that the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad are the correct path to achieve happiness to humanity and rescue it from corruption and misery.
- A conviction that education is a duty in Islamic teaching and the state must provide it.
- A conviction that religious Islamic science is essential through all years of education (Elementary, Middle school, High school and higher education).
- A conviction that the purpose of education is to understand Islam in a proper and complete manner, to implement and spread the Islamic faith, and to provide

students with Islamic values and teachings.

- A conviction that an exchange of views between the ruler and his citizens strengthens loyalty and devotion.
- A conviction that Jihad<sup>9</sup> in the name of God is an obligation and a requirement that lasts until judgment day.
- A conviction that education is the right of all women in accordance with their nature to prepare them for their mission in life with respect to decency and dignity in Islamic teachings, since women represent one half of humanity.
- A conviction that the Arabic language is the formal language to be used in education, except where other languages are required, like learning a foreign language. (Alhqel 2011)

These are few of the 236 articles of policy related to this case study that demonstrate the overarching principle of religion, as it relates to government policy. The first section of the policy includes twenty-seven general rules, of which twenty-one are related to religion. Additionally, the second section states the purpose of education and its aims necessarily include the Islamic goals of education.

- The goals of education are: understanding Islam correctly and completely, implementing and spreading the Islamic faith, providing students with Islamic values, instruction and ideals, enabling students to obtain knowledge and various skills, promoting constructive behavioral traits, developing society economically, socially and culturally, and preparing individuals to become useful members of

---

<sup>9</sup> The Literal meaning is struggle or effort, Muslims use Jihad to describe: A Muslim internal struggle, fighting Satan, Holy war.

society.

- Promoting the spirit of loyalty to Islamic Law [Sharia's] by disavowing any system or principle that contradicts Islamic Law by producing upright action and behavior in accordance with its general and comprehensive rules.
- Awakening the spirit of Islamic Jihad in order to resist our enemies, reclaim our rights, return our [past] glories, and fulfill the duty of the Islamic mission.

The policy illustrated above demonstrates the importance of religious teaching that form the basis of the Kingdom's educational system— not only its importance, but the role jihad and spreading Islam are embedded as a main principle. Analyzing educational policies necessitates revision to coincide with current politics of the Kingdom.

The second factor impacting the pace of religious textbook reform is the government's ability to present the issue in Saudi media. When the government controls media, the media frames the content by which the public interprets and discusses the issue of religious textbooks revision as defined by the government. A media frame is defined as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events...The frame suggests what the controversy is about the essence of the issue” (Scheufele 1999, 106). According to statements made by the Ministry of Education in 2002, the public was told “Islam is under attack by western propaganda” (Gulf News 2002). These statements conflicted with the statements made to the United State Government and press. As seen in the case, Saudi media responded in the second phase by publishing two local reports framing the discussion in the context of by us, for us. However, in August 2005, after King Abdullah ascended the throne, the media



became more liberal in how it reported on religious textbook reforms. King Abdullah announced that improving the education was his utmost priority, and approved a generous budget for educational programs. Additionally, King Abdullah replaced the minister of education<sup>10</sup> with his son-in-law, Prince Faisal bin Abdullah, a former assistant director of intelligence. The King has also appointed Nora al-Fayez as deputy education minister, making her the highest-ranking female official in the country's history.

However, the most important and crucial factor impacting the pace of religious textbook reform has been the religious institution. Although it is not formally a part of the government, it forms the backbone of both the government and education. The Kingdom's religious scholars did not support reform in the media, and their silence considerably strengthened the argument opposing revision. At the same time, the opposition of the religious establishment raises the question of where religious scholars reside in Saudi society— especially with regards to the Council of Senior Scholars, the highest religious body in Saudi Arabia.

### **III. Case Study 2: The KAUST Case**

#### **Introduction**

This second case study discusses how religious opposition to the King's vision for a world-class educational institute caused a media storm that resulted in the unprecedented removal of a member of the Council of Senior Scholars, the highest religious body in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This case study is important for two reasons: 1) it demonstrated the limits of religious power as defined by King Abdullah

---

<sup>10</sup> The ousted minister, Abdullah al-Obaid, had come to education in 2005 from the post of secretary general of the Muslim World League, he was considered a conservative person, with no reform history.

through his actions and in the press, and 2) it demonstrated through international media reports that the Kingdom is capable of founding a world class educational institute.

Central to this case study is the issue of co-education in traditional Muslim culture like Saudi Arabia. Traditionally, the Kingdom segregates the sexes in all public places, and though the issue of mixed gender, *Ikhtilat*, has existed since the Kingdom was founded, King Abdullah's vision for King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST) required that KAUST be a co-educational institution conforming to international norms while violating traditional Saudi standards. It was sure to lead to a media storm. The case study first presents, in King Abdullah's words, his vision "of a university that has been a dream of mine for more than 25 years" (KAUST 2009). This dream was well received by the international press.

Next, the case study discusses how a television interview of the youngest member of the Council of Senior Scholars put him in direct opposition to the King. The case study then presents how the Saudi media reacted to this young cleric's confrontation with the King, and, by doing so, added fuel to the fires of controversy. Finally, the case study presents the reaction of the King and ends with an evaluation of the case and lessons learned.

Ever since education for women was introduced in the late 1950s, the segregation of girls and boys in school has been the norm. Even in higher education, female Saudi university students are only able to experience male professors' lectures via T.V. monitors, and professors are only able to react with their female students through a microphone and speaker, since they are not allowed to see them. Gender segregation is imposed in all public places in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The following case study

presents the unprecedented establishment of co-education in Saudi, which triggered an interview on Saudi T.V., and which the Saudi press reacted to, resulting in action by the Saudi government.

#### a) The King's Vision

King Abdullah chose Saudi Arabia's National Day to inaugurate the King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST), and invited world leaders to attend the ceremony. During the inauguration ceremony, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2009, the King delivered a speech that shared his vision of the university with the world for the first time. This speech is particularly noteworthy as it links science and faith at a time the Saudi education ranked the lowest possible against global science and math benchmarks.

In the name of God, the most graceful, most merciful,  
Your Majesties,  
Your Excellencies,  
Your Highnesses,  
Distinguished guests,

The idea of this university has been a dream of mine for more than 25 years. It has been a persistent desire that has lived with me ever since. And I thank God, the Great, the Merciful, that he enabled us to embody it as a reality that stands mightily, with God's will, on our soil today. On behalf of the Saudi people, I would like to express our deepest thanks for your presence here and your participation in the birth of our dream.

The Islamic civilization historically has played an enormous role in serving humanity. After God, the great Islamic scholars have contributed to many areas of scholarship, such as the role played by Ibn Al-Nafees in medicine, the impact Jaber bin Hayyan had on chemistry, and Al-Khawarizmi's pivotal role in algebra. Similarly, the study of sociology benefited immensely from the genius of Ibn Khaldoon.

For all of that, the university, whose inauguration we celebrate today, did not emerge from nowhere. It is a continuation of what distinguished our civilization in its

golden age. This is, first of all, what the university stands for.

Throughout history, power has attached itself, after God, to science. And the Islamic nation knows too well that it will not be powerful unless it depends on, after God, science. For science and faith cannot compete except in unhealthy souls. And God has graced us with our minds, which we use to understand and recognize God's laws of nature. For He, the Almighty, said, "Of his faithful, God is feared by scientists." And this is the second meaning of the university.

Brothers and sisters,

Humanity has been the target of vicious attacks from extremists, who speak the language of hatred, fear dialogue, and pursue destruction. We cannot fight them unless we learn to coexist without conflict - with love instead of hatred and with friendship instead of confrontation. Undoubtedly, scientific centers that embrace all peoples are the first line of defense against extremists. And today this university will become a House of Wisdom to all its peers around the world, a beacon of tolerance. This is the third meaning of the university.

Finally, I would like to thank Saudi Aramco, which supervised the development of this university in an extraordinarily short period of time, and I wish to the entire university community continued success.

May God bless you all (KAUST 2009).

The King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST) is located in the western Province of Saudi Arabia, on the shores of the Red Sea, just North of Jeddah, and opened its doors in 2009 with a \$10 billion-dollar endowment to establish it as an international graduate research university. However, to gain international acceptance and ranking, KAUST became the first mixed gender university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the issue of mixing sexes became the most controversial story in the history of Saudi Arabian education. It should be noted that KAUST houses only 15% of Saudis among its student body, with 85% of those enrolled coming from the international community.

## **b) The Controversy Begins**

KAUST was celebrated in local and international media as an educational establishment and a sign of educational reform. However, this attention was short lived. A few days after the ceremony, Saad AlShithri<sup>11</sup> initiated Kingdom-wide controversy in a televised interview on September 28, 2009, when he was asked about his reaction to KAUST and its mixed gender policy. His response lasted nine minutes and initially praised the King. He claimed that he thanked King Abdullah for restoring the Islamic Umma to its previous position as a world leader in science, and therefore thanked King Abdullah for this blessed step. Next, he questioned whether there might be aspects of the university that the King would not approve of and recommended that special ulama “scholars” committees be established to ensure that the university acts in accordance with the King’s wishes and remove things contradictory to sharia. Moreover, he emphasized that mixing sexes may lead to other corruptive distractions that make ‘men look at women and women look at men’, distracting their hearts from the original purpose, which is education. He ended his response with the certainty that such a decision did not come from the King, but from other officials, since the Custodian of the Two Holy Cities works for the good of the Islamic nation to be a source of knowledge and not just a receiver.<sup>12</sup>

## **c) Reaction of the Media**

The interview may very well have gone unnoticed, if Jamal Khashoggi had not published an article in the AlWatan newspaper two days afterwards criticizing Sheikh Al Shithri for what he described as an attempt to interrupt the progress of the nation. More

---

<sup>11</sup> A member of Saudi Senior Ulamaa.

<sup>12</sup> Translation from the interview aired on Majd channel on September 28, 2009.

seriously, however, Khashogji criticized the Sheikh for attacking the very King that appointed him a scholar because of his belief in giving opportunities to young scholars. By openly casting doubt on the legality of KAUST in a TV broadcast, Sheikh Al Shithri promoted *fitna* (dissension). Khashogji also demanded that the Almajd channel be a partner in the Kingdom's progress and not broadcast noise that blurs opinions.

Alshithri defended his position the following day, on September 30, 2009, in a letter to AlWatan newspaper praising KAUST, saying he objected to the content of his interview being distorted by Alkashogji, the editor in chief of AlWatan. He attempted to clarify his remarks by saying that he did not criticize the King, as his comments were made out of love and appreciation for His Majesties achievements. Over the next few days, no less than eighteen articles were published debating mixed gender issues and Islamic law from various school of thoughts (Meijer 2010). Liberals stated that the prohibition of *ikhtilat* is not Islamic, and in the debate an important concept emerged differentiating mixed genders in a group or *Iktilat* and *Kelwa* mixed company between one male and one female, as these concepts need to be discussed religious scholars, educators, and the public to determine how they apply in the modern era. Even the Imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, Sheikh Abdulrahman Alsudays, addressed the issue of KAUST in his Friday sermon and called upon all Saudis to remain calm and prevent *fitna* (dissension) from spreading. He praised KAUST and pressed upon the Kingdom's leaders, its Ulama, its intellectuals and "those interested in the general welfare to uphold the consensus and agreement on this important endeavor" (Arabian Business 2009). It was an exceptional time, because the Saudi public was able to criticize the interference of religious institutions that receive unparalleled support and immunity from the very

Monarch they criticized for sharing his vision for the Kingdom.

#### **d) Reaction from the Government**

Five days after Sheikh AlShithri's televised interview, King Abdullah enacted an unparalleled order by issuing a Royal Decree removing AlShithri from both his position on the Council of Senior Scholars and as a member of the Permanent Council of Religious Studies and Fatwa. This was the first time in Saudi Arabian history that a King had ordered a Royal Decree promoting an action that destabilized and trumped the Council of Senior Scholars. In Saudi culture, this council is technically the highest religious power, so the action was not only unusual but actually unprecedented.

#### **e) Evaluation**

Although students from Saudi Arabia only comprise 15% of the total student population of KAUST, it was enough to fuel the debate over co-education. Unfortunately, Sheikh AlShithri failed to fully appreciate that KAUST was the realization of King Abdullah's vision. As the youngest member of the Council of Senior Scholars, one might expect AlShithri's comments to reflect a more progressive, forward thinking mentality. Given the King's reaction, however, AlShithri failed to fully appreciate two factors relating to the delicate balance between maintaining Islamic norms internal to the Kingdom and the need for a Saudi educational institution that meets global standards.

The first factor AlShithri failed to appreciate is that Saudi Arabia has been accused of promoting religious radicalism in its education system by the International Community. At the same time, KAUST embodied the hopes of King Abdullah for a new beginning, and he would not tolerate religious interference to tarnish his hope. Sacking a

member of the Council of Senior Scholars is unprecedented in the history of Saudi Arabia, and has helped to redefine the limits of their influence in regards to KAUST. At the same time, a member of the religious establishment crossed the line by interfering with political decision and provided an opportunity to remind the Council of Senior Scholars that there are lines they cannot cross.

The second factor AlShithri failed to realize is that although Saudi Arabia spends more on education than any country in the world, the quality of education in Saudi Arabia fails to meet global standards due to its religious focus and cultural conservatism. For KAUST to meet global standards, it had to be an exception to the Kingdom's educational norm. To ensure the independence needed, King Abdullah relied on Saudi ARAMCO to design, build and staff KAUST. Saudi ARAMCO is the world largest oil and gas company, and is considered not only the most successful and influential corporation in the Kingdom, but also the most valuable in the world. KSA's ruling body has relied on Saudi Aramco for Ministerial talent, as Ali Al-Naimi, former President and CEO of Saudi Aramco, was appointed Minister of Petroleum and Minerals in 1995, and serves as the Chairman of KAUST.

Saudi media's role in King Abdullah's decision to remove AlShithri from office was crucial, in spite of the fact that both the media and education in Saudi Arabia are controlled by religious conservatives. The broadcast of AlShithri's interview enabled the press to position Alshithri in opposition to King Abdullah through his misguided defense of traditional norms of segregation in education.



## IV. Lessons

### **Lesson One: Social Consensus**

The lesson to be learned from the first case study is that social consensus is crucial to reforming existing educational curricula. Without fairly universal agreement, curricular modifications are unlikely. Ironically, in order for educational reform to take place on a substantive level, education, itself, must improve among Saudi citizens, many of who lack formal education and insight into global perspectives that differ from their own. Education reflects society, and is the realization of culture's vision of itself. If that vision is not clear, then the resulting curricula will be composed of random individual efforts within the Ministry of Education that do not necessarily reflect the vision of the Saudi people. In addition, the reaction of society resisting change is often due to a lack of understanding. To introduce a policy change, debate and discussions are needed to move the change forward in society so that more people can benefit from it.

### **Lesson Two: Royal Decrees and the Rate of Reform**

What these case studies highlight is the enormous influence of the Monarch and the potential strength of Royal Decrees to produce rapid and impactful change. Each of these cases invariably lead to change: with the textbook case, change came about gradually, primarily as a result of pressure from the international media. In the case of KAUST, the change was dramatic and immediate, basically taking place in a few days. What does this teach us? In the instance of the textbook reform, the will for change was initiated by international forces, rather than that of King Abdullah, himself. Because the will for reform was extrinsic to the nation, change came about slowly and over several years of internal debates and negotiations. In the instance of KAUST, however, because

the impetus for change was personally compelling for the King, change occurred quickly. This may teach us something important about the future of reform for Saudi Arabia. If nothing else, this will help to set our expectations more accurately, and better understand both the processes that occur and *don't* occur. For Saudi Arabia to enact political reform quickly, the King must feel strongly about the change and implement a Royal Decree. If he does not, then change is still possible, but will likely take a significantly longer period of time, with results being subject to compromises rather than more full-fledged modification.

## Conclusion

Through examining educational reform in the Kingdom, 2001-2015, we see a sharp difference between the effect of internal and external pressures for change. Religious textbook reform resulted from the international media's efforts to remove terrorist propaganda from religious textbooks used in Saudi Arabia's educational system. In contrast to the progression of acts that lead to reform for religious textbooks, the road to reform for KAUST resulted from a personally derived initiative of King Abdullah. And the King was able to enact the change, even though it violated established norms separating the sexes.

In the case of religious textbook reform, the Saudi government eventually bowed to international pressure, even though local Saudi media pandered to conservative religious elements. Saudi public opinion on religious textbook reform was mixed, as both progressive and conservative elements expressed their views. Nonetheless, outside pressure and international media were enough to impact a change in Saudi's educational policy.

By contrast, King Abdullah's dream of a modern institute of learning, devoted to science and technology, met with resistance from conservative religious elements in the Kingdom, which opposed co-educational schooling. The opposition view was expressed openly in local Saudi media, while both public opinions in social media and the international media were openly supportive of KAUST.

The story of educational reform in the Kingdom highlights an important reality in the Saudi Arabia. Unlike many Western societies, where education, politics, and religion exist as intertwined though clearly separate systems with independent identities and features, education, politics, and religion exist much more as a single, solidified unit in KSA. They operate in conjunction each other, and are envisioned, truly, as serving one major purpose: the religion of Islam and the will of Allah. So we cannot look at education in the Kingdom without knowing politics and religion, and we cannot look at politics without knowing education and religion, etc. Once understood through this lens, we can better anticipate reform within the domain of education, as a force that results when political, educational, and religious wills align. When this occurs, change can be rapid and predictable. When they do not, change can be arrested or altogether intractable.



**Figure 6.1:** The above cartoon highlights the role that censorship plays in determining what Saudi citizens do and do not read.

## Chapter 7

### **Saudi Citizens Digital Voice:**

#### *Social Media's Impact on the Ministry of Health*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a single case study documenting the impact of media on public policy change in Saudi Arabia. The case study is important because it clearly shows the impact that local social media has had on Saudi domestic public policy, as illustrated by the removal of two Ministers of Health due to public pressure exerted through local social media. The case study begins with background information on the Ministry of Health, and how the Saudi government appoints cabinet ministers. Next, it presents two incidents where social media lead to the removal of two Ministers of Health. The first incident stems from public outcry over a Minister of Health's handling of an outbreak of the MERS virus. The second incident stems from a YouTube video that appeared in Saudi social media, showing a new Minister of Health berating the son of an elderly patient over the care his father was receiving. An evaluation of the case study highlights how each incident provoked the Saudi government to in response to negative publicity that appeared through social media. The case study concludes with lessons learned.

The importance of this case study relates directly to the emphasis healthcare is given by citizens of Saudi Arabia. As provided in the Saudi Basic Law of Governance, all citizens of KSA are provided free access to public health care services. In the Kingdom, the Ministry of Health is the main provider and financier of health care services. The

Ministry of Health is also responsible for managing, planning, and formulating health policies and supervising health services in the private sector. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health provides 60% of all health care services. An additional 20% are provided by government ministries that, prior to the creation of the Ministry of Health, have traditionally catered to their own employees. The remaining 20% of all health services are provided by the private sector (The Economist, Intelligence Unit 2014).

Despite Saudi Arabia's health care achievements, the system faces challenges from two prominent factors: a growing population and a heightened susceptibility to uncontrollable and difficult to treat diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO), which reports government spending on health care in Saudi Arabia, indicates that Saudi is well below the average prevention costs that other high-income countries spend. Only 4% of Saudi Arabia's GDP was allocated to health care in 2010— only 4.7% in 2014 (Ibid). Due to the importance of healthcare to Saudi citizens, major challenges confront the Ministry of Health. These challenges have been widely reported in the Kingdom's media. Healthcare issues confronting Saudi citizens have been popularly reported in social media, and provide a basis for the following case study.

## **I. Case study: The Impact of Social Media on the Ministry of Health**

### **Introduction**

This case study demonstrates how social media caused two Health Ministers to lose their jobs in the same calendar year. Though the case focuses on the way that social media augmented public voice to the point where it directly impacted public policy and the government, it is important to understand the cause behind the urgency of the plea. With new diseases entering Saudi society, citizens felt compelled to lobby for adequate

healthcare and demanded government accountability. At the same time, it is important to realize that the King and the Ruling Council felt deeply responsible for the health and well-being of their people, and were more than willing to attune themselves to clamoring voices, and accept responsibility in order to make necessary changes.

The necessity of individuals having a voice in politics is clearly understood in democratic governance. In an absolute monarchy, however, the voice of the people is often only exercised to some degree by mainstream media. However, when a nation's media is, itself, constrained and controlled by the absolute monarchy, public opinion is stifled. In KSA, public opinion has never been a factor in political decision making processes. The voice of the citizens has not been heard because government control of the media has turned media into the voice the government, itself. With the spread of new technology, however, public access to the Internet, and cellular technology have enabled individual citizens to make their voices heard through social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. More importantly, however, this case demonstrates that the government is listening and changing its policies based on public opinion. Though this poses a challenge to the Kingdom's authoritarian control of media, the genie of public opinion is out of its bottle, and the Saudi government is seemingly listening and acting with the knowledge that they will never be able to put the genie back in.

Traditionally, government ministers are appointed for a term of four years, but are usually renewed for more than one term. Although a minister can be terminated at any time, some ministers have served up to forty years (Prince Saud Al Faisal, the Foreign Minister), and others have lasted only 10 weeks (Mr. Ahmed Al-Khatib, the Health Minister). Yet, from April 2014 to May 2015, five different Ministers of Health held

office. This unprecedented turmoil occurred due to negative public opinion, which forced the government's hand in firing two Ministers of Health.

Initially, Abdullah Al Rabiah held the portfolio of Minister of Health, but was fired due to public pressure in the late April 2014. Then, Adel Fakih, the Minister of Labor, was asked to act as Minister of Health until a permanent minister could be appointed. In December 2014, Dr. Mohammed Al-Hayaza was then appointed but was soon replaced in a cabinet shuffle when King Salman ascended to the crown. King Salman then appointed Ahmed Al-Katib as Minister of Health, and ten weeks later a social media scandal resulted in his being fired and permanently replaced by Khalid Al-Falih, former CEO of Saudi Aramco in late April 2015. Supplementing the two incidents that make up the body of the case study are a number of related instances in which concerned citizens have effected change in the Ministry of Health through social media.

#### **a) First Event**

The first event involved the sacking of Dr. Abdullah Al Rabiah. In spite of the fact that the local press claimed that the MERS virus lead to his removal, what follows demonstrates that social media activists were behind his firing. Over the past ten years, Saudi Arabia has been confronted with deadly diseases— as is the case of the Alkhurma virus, Rift Valley Fever, N1H1 Influenza, Bird Flu, and Ebola. All have caused deaths in the Kingdom. What differentiated MERS from the other diseases was that Saudi citizens expressed their displeasure through social media— primarily through Twitter.

Since the Ministry of Health was formed in 1950, fifteen Ministers of Health have been appointed prior to appointment of Dr. Abdullah Al Rabbiah in 2009. The Arabian Magazine listed him among the one hundred most influential Arabs in 2010, saying that

as “Minister of Health to the Gulf’s largest economy, Saudi Arabia, he oversees a 16.3-billion-dollar budget and a population that boasts one of the highest rates of obesity and diabetes in the world. As the man holding the reins, Al Rabiah is powerful indeed” (Arabian Business Magazine 2010).

The media campaign against Dr. Al Rabiah started in 2013, during a television talk show hosted by Daoud Al-Sharian, a well-known television presenter on the Saudi-owned MBC channel, during which he called on the Health Minister Abdullah Al Rabiah to resign as a result of a 12-year-old girl reportedly receiving a transfusion of HIV-positive blood. This case sparked outrage throughout Saudi Arabian society, and provoked angry calls for the Health Minister to resign. Shortly thereafter, local newspapers reported that the Minister visited the girl in the hospital and presented her with an iPad. This gesture sparked numerous comments in social media (Elwazer, Jamjoom and Ayish 2013). Furthermore, an Arabic tweet by Saudi preacher Adel Al-Kalabani mocked, "this should go into the Guinness Book (of world records) as the cheapest compensation ever." (AlKalbani 2013) By February 16, 2013, Al-Kalabani’s remark had been re-tweeted nearly 3,269 times. Although this episode did not result in any change, it did shine the light of public opinion on the Saudi health system and cast a negative light on its Minister.

Fingers were once again pointed at Minister Al Rabiah with the spread of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). According to World Health Organization, the first proven case was in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Since that date there have been 1,413 confirmed cases of MERS, and at least 502 deaths reported in the Kingdom. This deadly disease became a concern to the public after many incidents where MERS deaths were



registered as resulting from natural causes instead of the disease. Fearing a cover-up, public concerns were raised, as special procedures for dealing with MERS victims' bodies were required to prevent the disease from spreading. Because the Ministry of Health is responsible for all hospitals and health centers in Saudi Arabia, people voiced their concerns on social media, requesting the Ministry of Health to control the spread of MERS.

Additionally, world health experts blamed the Saudi government for not being more forthcoming with information regarding the spread of MERS. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Diseases Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, said,

European countries have largely done an exemplary job of investigating and following up on the cases [that have been exported there]. Now, either the Middle Eastern countries, particularly KSA, have not, or they're just withholding information, for whatever reason. And in a situation where this represents a potential global pandemic, that is inexcusable (Branswell 2013).

In June 2013, an international team of experts organized by the WHO gathered in Saudi Arabia in an attempt to collect data on and better understand the MERS outbreak. According to Global Health Middle East, however, the "closed society" and lack of press freedom resulted in a deliberate effort to hide information related to the MERS virus. This concealment of data was reinforced by a government decision issued by the Saudi Council of Ministers on April 14, 2014, in which "the Council stresses on the media to adhere to all of the issued instructions not to publish any news concerning this virus or any epidemic disease except through the approved official department at the Ministry of Health" (Saudi Press Agency 2014)

To make matters worse, the Saudi Ministry of Health issued a notice threatening prison sentences for health workers who disclosed any health ministry information. However, this did not stop doctors from posting on social media. Observe, for example the following tweets:

“It has been forbidden to write on coronavirus as the cause of death.” 4/18/14 tweeted Dr. Saud Almaslmani, an orthopedic surgeon at King Abdulaziz Hospital in Jeddah, tweeted to his followers.

“The numbers that the ministry of health provided are significantly lower than the real number of cases. How long will you continue to lie under the pretext of not scaring the people?” 4/18/14 tweeted Dr. Rahaf Al-Harbi, a heart surgeon.

“The local situation in Jeddah already has negative consequences, and a proof for that is the state of my brother Dr. Ismail. There is a lot of cover-up around the subject.” 4/18/14 tweeted Dr. Ahmad Azhar, a pediatric cardiologist at King Abdulaziz Hospital in Jeddah.

Twitter and WhatsApp are the most active social media outlets in the country, and were filled with postings and forwards about the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) or “Corona”, as it is called in Saudi Arabia. That this virus has created worry and tension throughout Saudi society is evident among Twitter users, who can be roughly divided into three categories:

- Users sharing prayers and expressing sympathy for the families with infected members.
- Users who criticize and attack the system, blaming the ministry for lack of transparency.
- Awareness groups spreading information and methods of protection.

In a televised news conference on April 20, 2014, the Minister of Health, Dr. Al Rabiah, reported that there was no medical reason to impose tighter precautionary measures to contain the spread of MERS in spite of the fact that, as of the day of the press conference, 231 of the 243 confirmed cases of MERS in the world had been in Saudi Arabia. A day later, a Royal Decree removed Dr. Al Rabiah as the Minister of Health, even though he dealt with MERS in the same manner government officials have historically dealt with such issues. The difference is that social media has given Saudi citizens a voice that no longer accepts government cover-ups and inaction. Angry tweets demanded greater transparency and stricter prevention of the MERS virus, and blamed the Minister of Health for keeping the public in the dark.

In a typical response, the Ministry of Health blamed social media for spreading rumors and creating anxiety in the society. Abdullah Al-Aseeri, an Undersecretary in the Ministry of Health, told Arab News that social media outlets were spreading misleading rumors (MD Rasooldeen 2014). The same Royal Decree that removed Dr. Al-Rabiah as a Minister of Health, appointed him an advisor to the Royal Court in an attempt to whitewash the incident and minimize the fact that pressure from social media was the reason for his removal. Nonetheless, the very first comment made by the acting Health Minister to local media about the Ministry of Health and the MERS outbreak, was that the Ministry was "committed to transparency on this issue" (BBC News 2014). The acting Minister's first tweet after his appointment on April 22, 2014 was "the Ministry of Health will update you with all the information and reply to all your concerns through this portal" (@adelfakeih 2014).

Although the Ministry of Health warned its employees not to share any information regarding MERS, the warning did not stop doctors from documenting their concerns over the lack of transparency and precautions needed to slow the disease's outbreak. The Ministry of Health is responsible for overseeing the healthcare of Saudi citizens and hospitals in both the public and private sector, while also managing data and awareness campaigns on diseases. In doing so, however, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Media are subject to government control. As health care is vital to the citizens of Saudi Arabia, the public has resorted to social media to challenge government control of information they consider vital to their well-being. Although social media was not solely responsible for changes in the Ministry of Health; without it, a change would not have been possible, as the frustration and anger of normal citizens found a voice and influenced political decision making in an absolute monarchy.

#### **b) Second Event**

The second incident presented relates to the removal of Ahmed Al-Katib as Health Minister, due to a viral YouTube video which showcased Al-Katib demonstrating an arrogant attitude towards the son of a patient. This is not the first incident where a high official has treated a normal citizen disrespectfully. However, it was the first caught on a cell phone camera and spread on social media to create a public outcry of anger that clearly had political consequences.

After Dr. Abdullah Al Rabiah was removed as the Minister of Health, Adel Fakieh, the Minister of Labor, was appointed Acting Minister of Health for eight months. Then in December 2014, Dr. Mohamad Al-Hayaza was appointed the Minister of Health, but was soon removed due to a cabinet reshuffle when King Salman came to the throne

and appointed Ahmed Al-Khatib on January 29, 2015. However, Al-Katib's term was short-lived. He was dismissed on April 11, 2015— only ten weeks into his term— when the voice of public opinion in social media showcased a twenty-seven second video capturing Al Katib's condescending and arrogant treatment of the son of a patient. In the video, the son of an elderly patient requests that his father be moved to a hospital in Riyadh where there is better care. In the video, Al Khatib responded arrogantly in an irritatingly high voice. The video went viral and was picked by the press under the headline, "Al-Khatib squabble has been a hot topic throughout the Kingdom" (Arab News 2015). This video generated so much anger on social media that, within days, King Salman issued a Royal Decree removing the new Minister of Health from office which resulted in the Hashtag: "Minister of Health Sacked". Tweets under this hashtag spread to 33,000 users, making it the second highest tweeted event of the day in the world and first at a national level (Naser and Alqahtani 2015). The incident also spawned numerous reactions on social media. One Twitter post read, "Health minister sacked after neglecting the health of a citizen. Thank you King Salman" (Arab News 2015). The removal of a high-ranking government official as a result of being held accountable on social media would be unprecedented if it were not for the removal of the previous Minister of Health.

It is interesting to note that local media very quickly jumped on the social media bandwagon, as Minister Al Katib's relation with mainstream media was not positive to begin with. At the first official event he attended on March 4<sup>th</sup> to launch a new project in the city of Al-Qasem, Minister Al Katib was filmed after the ceremony as journalists asked him to respond to a few questions. He replied, "let me answer your questions when I get to my car" (MzMz 2015) But instead of answering any questions, he got in the car

and drove off. As a result of this incident, a new Twitter hashtag appeared “minister escapes journalists” (Ibid). Although this story was limited to social media outlets and not reported in traditional media, his intentional snub haunted journalists, and they were all too willing to let their feelings be known, when the YouTube video that got him fired appeared a few weeks later.

Within a week of the removal of Al Katib as Minister of Health, King Salman named Khalid Al-Faleh as the new Minister of Health and as the new Chairman of Saudi Aramco, where he has served as President and CEO since 2009. Soon after the appointment of Al-Falih, an incident occurred in which the Director of the King Fahd Hospital in Jeddah was fired after a YouTube video showed cockroaches in hospital convalescent wards. The video went viral on social media. The following day, June 22, 2015, the Ministry of Health issued the following statement:

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has announced that, upon investigating the video clip circulated yesterday on social media websites concerning poor hygiene in the Convalescence Center affiliated with the King Fahad Hospital (KFH) in Jeddah, and the prevalence of insects in one of the patient's rooms, HE the Minister of Health, Eng. Khalid Al-Falih, issued the following decision:

1. Closing the hospital and moving, as quickly as possible, to the new building at Al-Mosadiah.
2. Relieving all relevant officials of their posts, including the director of the hospital, the director of the convalescence center, the nursing director and supervisors of maintenance and cleaning.
3. Applying tough cleaning standards at all MOH medical facilities and developing administrative procedures to avoid recurrence of such negligence.

‘These actions come as part of the keen interest shown by the Ministry in avoiding such negligence in its facilities, and in reiterating its commitment to improving services provided for patients as well as providing them with proper healthcare to maintain their health and safety. Meanwhile, the Ministry, hereby, apologizes for the harm

done to its patients owing to this negligence by some of its staff.

Contrary to what has been the historical norm, social media again forced the Ministry of Health to react and publish a statement but this time the statement accepted responsibility and apologized for its negligence. It also outlined specific measures to remedy the situation.

The second incident relates to another video posted on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2015, which showed a health official angrily expelling a woman and her mother from his office. This video, too, went viral. On Twitter, the following hashtag spread: “Head of Najran health [department] expels female citizen out of his office” (translated from Arabic). (Ajroudi 2015) Saudi Twitter users were quick to voice their condemnation of the official’s behavior. They were also successful in getting the attention of the Minister of Health, who responded, “The circulating video clip upset me and all those involved will be called for investigation and questioning” (Ibid). As a result, social media postings of video, tweets, and pictures are serving as the watchdogs of Saudi Arabia, and are difficult for government officials to ignore, and sometimes compels them to enact political change. Mobile phones have become every Saudi citizens’ favorite “anti-corruption tool”, and “Saudi official’s worst nightmare” (Ibid).

### c) Evaluation

This case study demonstrates the impact of social media on recent decisions regarding the leadership of the Ministry of Health in the Kingdom. For all intense purposes, the causality is clear; public outcry in social media effectively caused the King to replace two Ministers of Health due to incompetence. Of all areas of Saudi public life, perhaps healthcare is the one that is most strongly felt by citizens of the Kingdom as it

effects the lives of children, parents, wives and husbands. In the Arab world, family is everything, and the health and well-being of one's loved ones is taken very seriously. As a result, it must be recognized that there is an acute public sensitivity to healthcare in the Kingdom. Furthermore, corruption and incompetence that might be tolerated in other ministries, such as the Ministry of Transportation or the Ministry of Labor, are not tolerated in the Ministry of Health. This has been demonstrated in the public anger engendered by events, such as Abdullah Al-Rabiah's attempt at placating an HIV-infected young girl by giving her an iPad. By finding an outlet for their anger over the insensitivity demonstrated by the Minister of Health, Saudi citizens' voice grew in magnitude when the succeeding Minister of Health was shown in a YouTube video disrespecting the son of an elderly patient who only wanted what was best for his father.

This second case is remarkable in two aspects: first for how quickly King Salman acted and secondly, because King Salman is the first Saudi monarch to actively use social media. As a result, he has initiated a modern open door policy through Twitter for the Kingdom. Given the fact that KSA has the highest number of active Twitter users in the Arab world, this alone constitutes a major policy shift in how the government interacts with its people. By issuing his Royal Decree regarding Twitter, King Salman let his citizens know that their voices are heard by the King. Within a month of removing Al-Katib as the Minister of Health, King Salman tweeted "My best wishes to his Highness Crown Prince, to his Highness the Deputy Crown Prince and to all new Ministers as they responsibly serve our citizens whose rights I will protect." (@KingSalman 2015) The King's tweet was re-tweeted 160,000 times and liked 62,000 times.



In itself, King Salman's use of social media is proof of the impact that social media has on public policy in the Kingdom. However, a long history of media censorship and control of information necessarily tempers undue optimism regarding free speech in the Kingdom. Saudi citizens have embraced social media faster and more completely than any other Arab nation. In doing so, they have gained a voice which has been used to positive effect, as clearly demonstrated by the changing of two Ministers of Health in a single year. Yet, skepticism prevails as the Kingdom struggles to become a more open society. Although Saudi citizens desire accountability, secretly they know that they are dealing with a monarchy and hierarchical bureaucracy deeply entrenched in ensuring non-transparency and constrained by generations of nepotism.

An alternative causality that has, in part, motivated political change in the Kingdom can be attributed to external pressures from the International community. While a clear cause and effect relationship is difficult to document and would likely be denied by the Saudi government, the impact of reports in international media that reflect negatively on the Kingdom add weight to internal public pressure for increased government transparency and accountability. For example, the World Health Organization requested the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia to be more transparent regarding the MERS virus, and released statements regarding its concerns in the international media in hopes that pilgrims from around the world attending the annual Hajj pilgrimage would not spread MERS worldwide. Such international pressure was considered in the eventual firing of the Minister of Health, Al Rabiah. Secondly, a subsequent video surfaced showing the Minister of Health, Al Katib, disrespecting the son of a patient. The Kingdom faced increasing pressure from the international

community regarding Saudi laws on freedom of speech. This was especially true after the government announced the sentencing of Raif Badawi, a Saudi human rights blogger, who was sentenced to prison for ten years, received 1,000 lashes, and was fined one million Saudi riyals for being guilty of insulting Islam on his blog. This act was criticized by the United Nations, European Union, and International press. The Swedish Foreign Minister, Margot Wallstrom, spearheaded the criticism, which resulted in Saudi's decision to cut diplomatic relations and withdraw the Kingdom's Ambassador in Sweden, until KSA received several apologies from the government and the King of Sweden. During those few months, Saudi domestic policy regarding freedom of speech was criticized and attacked. However, the Kingdom defended its position and fired Ministers of Health to demonstrate that public opinion and freedom of speech are exercised within Saudi, but only under certain circumstances and within certain limits. Regardless of the Kingdom's need to defend its practices, it is nevertheless clear that the media succeeded in influencing policy making in the domain of healthcare reform and accountability.

## II. Lessons

This case study has highlighted two major challenges facing Saudi governance: transparency and accountability. More importantly, however, it has demonstrated how the desire for transparency and accountability have found an outlet through social media, thereby enabling the Saudi public to gain the ear of their ruling monarch.

### **Lesson One: Freedom of Expression in Social Media**

As a result, the first lesson to be learned from this case is that social media has impacted and continues to impact public policy formation in the Kingdom. Technological developments now offer citizens of conservative societies opportunities to express

themselves. Digital technology also provides Saudi society the opportunity to redefine what it means to be a citizen. A report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development shows that Saudi Arabia has the largest number of mobile phone users per capita in the world. Average per capita mobile phone ownership in the Kingdom is 1.8 mobile phones per person. The spread of smartphone usage has enabled Saudis to become the most active Internet users globally. Saudi Arabia ranks seventh world-wide in terms of individual social media accounts, and, the Kingdom made headline news when Google reported that it ranked first in the world in per capita for YouTube views and Twitter usage (Arab News 2015). The number of Twitter users in KSA grew 80% from 2013 to the mid-2015. A Twitter usage point that stands out is that Saudi users of Twitter tweet at least five times daily, and 87% of these tweets are re-tweets (Baghdadi 2015). Such high usage rates demonstrate the major role social media now plays in the Saudi society. Social media not only enables citizens with access to the Internet the ability to communicate with others, it has also democratized media in a country where traditional media has been tightly controlled and censored. Saudi citizens have discovered new freedom through their smartphones. As a result, technological development has increased freedom of expression in the Kingdom, and enabled citizens' voices to be heard at the highest levels of government.

Increased social media usage in Saudi society has also helped redefine the role of traditional media. Traditionally, local media in the Kingdom has been limited to providing a voice to government institutions. With the advent of social media, however, the voice of the citizens has had considerable impact on traditional news, and has expanded news coverage of issues and topics that would have not been covered in the

past. At the same time, traditional media has become a credibility filter for social media, eliminating noise and preventing the spread of rumors.

### **Lesson Two: Social Media Trumps Censorship**

The second lesson to be learned from this case is that the egalitarian aspect of social media is diminishing authoritarian control of local media in the Kingdom. Although dissent behind closed doors in the safety of the home has always existed in the KSA, nowadays cyberspace has expanded dissent beyond a few close friends or family to a near limitless audience. Social media has empowered citizens to become active in their communities and in their field of expertise. As a result, civic awareness and engagement has increased throughout the Kingdom. Average citizens have become “watchdog journalists” through social media, and Saudis are now actively engaged in protecting their society against the abuse of power or information.

### **Lesson Three: Social Media’s Impact on Changes in Public Policy**

The third lesson to be learned from this case study is that social media is redefining the meaning of political power. The level of public engagement and awareness increases through social media has challenged the Saudi government to strive harder to fight against corruption and obstacles standing in the way of progress. Although this case demonstrated the influence of social media on impacting public policy in the Ministry of Health, it has also raised the larger question of how social media impacts the entire power structure of the Kingdom. Although individual citizens were able to bring pressure such that the monarch sacked two ministers, the larger problem is the conservative laissez-faire culture endemic to the Ministry of Health, which has been entrenched at all levels of Saudi bureaucracy. As Khalaf AlHarbe stated in the Okaz newspaper, “Responding to the

wishes of the citizens is a behavior that is worthy of respect but it does not change anything real on the ground. The performance of the ministry will remain the same even after this ill-fated minister has been sacked” (AlHarbe 2015).

## Conclusion

The impact of media on effecting changes in the Ministry of Health between 2001 and 2015 clearly demonstrates that social media has become a major force in voicing public opinion. In a single year, the King replaced two Ministers of Health due to pressure exerted in social media regarding the inept management of the Ministry of Health. The influence of Saudi citizens’ digital voice in this case influenced both local media and the Saudi monarch to focus attention on their health concerns and the issues they experienced regarding the Ministry of Health. As a result, Saudi citizens have been able to affect a change in Saudi domestic policy through the collective voice of public opinion in social media.



**Figure 7:1:** The above cartoon illustrates the growing ability of Saudi citizens to use Twitter and other social media platforms to voice their opinions on policy decisions in the Kingdom.

## Chapter 8

### In Their Own Words

#### Introduction

This chapter will focus exclusively on twelve interviews conducted in the Kingdom in May of 2015. These interviews were carried out with high-ranking officials within Saudi ministries and significant government institutions, specifically the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Media, Ministry of Interior, Saudi Press Agency, and the Youth Welfare of Saudi Arabia. As mentioned in the methods section, I was able to gain access to these organizations through a combination of willpower, persistence, and family connections.

This chapter will include a rationale for why participants were selected, a contextual point about the nature of governance, and policy-making in the Kingdom, and an overview of the main interview content and an accompanying analysis. Not all interview content was utilized; the research focused on only the key areas related to media and its impact on policy change.

#### a) Rationale for Selected Governing Bodies

As outlined in the methods, each interview focal area concentrated on a specific domain for a specific reason. *Women's empowerment* was chosen because women (who constitute roughly 50% of the nation's population) have historically been treated as second-class citizens in the Kingdom. If there is any area where media might push to modify policy, it is in women's rights.

The second focal area is in *education*. Saudi has a history of merging religious doctrine with its standard curriculum. In this sense, education is susceptible to media pressures, as outside nations, in particular, pressure Saudi schools to reform content and assume educational platforms that are more progressive in nature.

The final focal area is the *media* itself, since the media is changing the process of political-making in the Kingdom. A few years ago, political decisions were made in a vacuum, with almost no media influence. Today, high-ranking government officials are much more in the spotlight. Their decisions are more public, and they are held more accountable by the media.

#### **b) What Was Said and *Not* Said**

As a general rule, the interviews illuminated certain key aspects of media and its impact on policy, but there were also ways in which stated answers seemed deliberately vague and information was withheld. Many of the representatives chose to remain anonymous; for fear that speaking overtly about some of these issues might jeopardize their job security. Given the context of Saudi society, this is quite understandable and to be expected. This point is expanded upon throughout the discourse analysis.

#### **c) Understanding Context and How Policy Gets Enacted: The Royal Decree**

In order to properly make sense of this section, which will focus exclusively on twelve interviews conducted in the Kingdom in May of 2015, it is important to give some contextual frame for how Saudi governance works. Since the focus of these interviews centered around media and its impact on governance and policy-making, it is imperative to understand how policy gets carried out in Saudi's monarchical society. Here is the basic course of action.

#### **d) An Overview of Governance: Understanding the Royal Decree**

The country has its own unique ruling style, and its governance is original in that it often makes determinations on a case-by-case basis, rather than utilizing a system that governs all. The Saudi basic law is the base of governance, which was issued in 1992. It is equivalent to the Constitution in other countries. According to article 44 of Saudi's Basic Law of Governance, "(t)he authorities of the state consist of the following: the judicial authority; the executive authority; the regulatory authority. These authorities cooperate with each other in the performance of their duties, in accordance with this and other laws. The King shall be the point of reference for all these authorities" (Basic Law of Governance 1992). The implication here is that policies are issued by a Royal Decree which can also be cancelled by another, competing Royal Decree. Although Saudi has a history of absolute monarchical rule, in recent years ministers from the nation's various ministering bodies have exercised more influence. This is significant for the purpose of our study, since the participants interviewed come directly from a handful of Saudi's most influential ministries.

#### **I. Focus Area 1: Women**

In addition to the scholarly research, social media analysis, and historical background, this research conducted several sets of interviews aimed at gaining first hand perspectives on several key issues surrounding Saudi Arabia's identity, and potentially highlighting how various members of Saudi's high-ranking governmental organizations perceived women, education, and the media.



Although I asked pointed questions aimed at shedding light on several key issues surrounding women's roles in the Kingdom, and the extent to which media might bring about social change and betterment of women's place in contemporary Saudi society, many of the participants either refused outright to answer certain questions, answered questions in vague, opaque responses, or gave honest answers but insisted on remaining anonymous. In fact, not one person whom I interviewed agreed to admit their identity while saying anything meaningful about the progression of women's rights through the media.

Still, there is much to be learned from their answers. When it came to women's engagement in future Olympic games, one anonymous high ranking official from within the Saudi Youth Welfare claimed:

In this country we have a mentality that is programed to reject anything new and a lot of people within the government tend to follow this mentality or show courtesy to this mentality, they believe that they should be different than all the nations around the world, they hold a masculine view ignoring women's rights and the studies that recommend physical activity to both sexes (Interview transcript Appendix A).

This participant acknowledges the programing that takes place in Saudi society, through which the society at large is trained to follow an old-world mentality filled with patterns of thought and behavior that both defines the Kingdom as a unique establishment in its own right, but also places it in opposition to many other nations and political systems globally. The participant highlights the Kingdom's resistance to change, and also emphasizes the clearly male dominated paradigms extant in KSA. He uses the word "ignoring" when it comes to giving value to or promoting women's rights. In general, he

admits that Saudi's cultural past and ideology stands as a major obstacle to more progressive movements concerning women's rights and potential advancements.

Saudi has an almost schizophrenogenic nature as it concerns women and women's rights. One of the interview questions related to the mixed messages sent to women in the Kingdom. On the one hand, recent media forces have lead to policy changes that have empowered women— such as the right to vote and gain a seat in the parliament. But these progressions in society's treatment of women have been offset by strict societal codes that continue to hold on to traditional values, such as limiting administrative policies that require “approval from a male guardian to travel, open a business or issue a legal document”.

When I interviewed participants about this paradoxical mixed message— giving women new powers while still restricting them in key, problematic ways— high ranking officials claimed that they acknowledged the limitations that ensured that women retain boundaries and restrictions within society. A participant from the Ministry of the Interior claimed, “I think it is important to eradicate all those policies that are limiting women from becoming full citizens and enable them to (achieve) empowerment” (Interview transcript Appendix A). It is significant to highlight here that of the two people I interviewed concerning women's rights in the Kingdom, only one gave an answer to this question, again asking to remain anonymous. Even though there is progress in the media and certain policies concerning women's rights, it is still clearly very fragile and sensitive area for discourse.

As it concerns women's driving in the Kingdom, this same participant talked about the “delays” (Appendix A) that seem to arbitrarily arise when it comes to executing

change in the Kingdom. He analogized women driving to a delay that occurred within the Shoura Council: “(it) was delayed and the argument was the society was not ready, but when it happened people were happy and driving is the same case” (Ibid). The interview participants core belief is that change will invariably come, and that when it comes people will accept it. However, the processes that lead to change in the Kingdom inevitably take a great deal of time and involve an unnecessary amount of delay. This same participant added:

There is progress in cases and fall behind hand in other cases. Women empowerment is not moving according to sequential steps or planned strategy, for this reason we find that Saudi women are participating in the Olympics but are not allowed to study physical education in schools (Interview transcript Appendix A).

Again, what we see here is an acknowledgement of the paradoxical push and pull that is occurring with women and their rights, roles, and opportunities in society. Every movement forward is accompanied by a pull backwards, and as progressive as certain measures seem, others that are specifically non-progressive and confining exist at the same time. This is Saudi Arabia. The participant added, finally, that he personally believed that women should be allowed to participate in the Olympics, “as long as it is limited to sports that she can wear her conservative cloths” (Appendix). That says it all.

## **II. Focus Area 2: Education**

### **a) The Disconnect between Media and Education Policy**

According to the four interviewed officials within the Ministry of Education (all insisted upon remaining anonymous), media plays an important role in activating education policies. All agreed on this point, although each members also claimed that the media’s ability to influence policy change in the realm of education, though apparent,

was not particularly strong. Media attempts at inhibiting or fighting against the promulgation of radicalization often come up short. The interviewed participants each felt that this particular area of potential media influence was contaminated with doubts and sensitivity.

According to one of the more outspoken interview participants within the Ministry of Education:

the ministry of education thought for many years that the media is deliberately picking on the weaknesses and mistakes in the education system without realizing that it being criticized for the sake of reform and development of the society, which is part of the media role in voicing the citizens voice (Interview transcript Appendix A).

Reading between the lines here, the participant seems to be suggesting that when the Ministry of Education hears criticism from the media, it does not often realize that the media portals are arguing for reform. It tends to hear and interpret the criticism as simply criticism, rather than listening to the criticism and understanding that the citizens complaining are actually asking for change and reform. This disconnect, between media voice and Ministry interpretation highlights a very real disconnect in the Kingdom between the citizen population and policy makers. In order for more significant change and reform to occur, the ministry must recognize the legitimate voice of citizens within the media and seek to activate change. The leveled nature of Saudi society, wherein the citizens are typically controlled by policies implemented by members of the cultural elite, is a hallmark within Saudi culture and governance. Things are changing, but the change is slow and deliberate.

Three of the interviewed participants explained, in fact, that there is a tenuous relationship between the media and education in the Kingdom. One participant claimed:

“(t)he relation is very weak, educators are absent on what is happening in the media” (Interview transcript Appendix A). A second stated, “(t)here is no strategic relation between the media and the education institutions, although there are personal attempts to expose issues in the media” (Interview transcript Appendix A). A third emphasized that to “this day the relation did not develop much” (Interview transcript Appendix A). Each of these portrayals speaks to a significant chasm between what happens in terms of educational policy and what happens within the media. It is curious to hypothesize as to why this disconnect exists. Perhaps education, which represents the cultural lessons and values endemic to both the Kingdom’s past and future, are seen governmentally as intractably set in stone. If the government listens more to the media and thereby modifies its curricular choices, perhaps it fears that the old world of Saudi values and cultural beliefs gets wiped away, and the Kingdom loses its identity as religious center of the Arab world. This interpretation is hypothetical in nature, but seems to be supported by cultural realities and worldviews present in the Kingdom today.

Although in current Saudi society, the media may not have the clout to bring about reform in the political realm, it can and does serve as an alternative to the educational platforms that are promulgated throughout the current curriculum. As one of the interviewed members of the Ministry of Education claimed, “the Saudi media has a big role in spreading education and change in the educational system. Media is considered one of the tools of education or an alternative to mass education” (Interview transcript Appendix A). The power of the Internet is undeniable. As of 2016, approximately 64.7% of Saudi’s have Internet connections (Internet Live Stats 2016), based on statistics conducted by Gogulf Saudi Arabia ranks seventh globally in term of

individual accounts on social media, with seven accounts for each individual, the country also accounts 40% of twitter users in the Middle East and North Africa region. According to Peer Reach, Twitter usage ranks 7<sup>th</sup> worldwide, accounting for approximately one third of the country's online population. While the Saudi government and religious forces fight on the one hand to maintain atavistic policies, religious attitudes, and cultural norms, the Internet as a resource blasts through traditional modes of thinking and gives Saudi citizens access to modes of thought from all cultures and customs throughout the world. So while education on the one hand stays relatively static within conventional schooling, the Internet and the media offer opportunities for Saudis to learn what is not taught in school. In this indirect way, the media is seriously influencing how Saudi students think, feel, and act within the world.

### **III. Focus 3: Media**

#### **a) Is Media Effective in Leading to Policy Reform?**

If the media is effective in leading to policy reform, this effectiveness is slow, discontinuous, and indirect. Policy is governmentally determined in the Kingdom, and since Saudi has a history of authoritarian control and royal rule, the hand that rocks the cradle in educational reform is still steered by the ruling influence of the Ministry. There are instances where the Ministry heeds media criticism— for instance, when the media claimed that radicalization was due to curricular choices in the Kingdom, or when the media published the Mckinsy stats indicating that Saudi Arabia ranks third to last worldwide in science and math. But though members of the Ministry recognized critical perspectives from the media, the reality of media's actual response and modification due to criticism is limited at best. If the interview participants relayed anything consistently

among the 9 questions they answered, it was that KSA's political environment and cultural norms regarding education are fairly impervious to outside influence. Again, this firm resolve may be based in the Kingdom's belief that education is a core feature of Saudi's connection to its cultural and religious past, something that the current monarchy believes is the rooted essence of the nation's identity, and a key ingredient towards ensuring maintenance of religious and cultural norms for the future.

Intel engineers did a rough calculation of what would happen had a 1971 Volkswagen Beetle improved at the same rate as microchips did under Moore's law. These are the numbers: Today, that Beetle would be able to go about three hundred thousand miles per hour. It would get two million miles per gallon of gas, and it would cost four cents! Intel engineers also estimated that if automobile fuel efficiency improved at the same rate as Moore's law, you could, roughly speaking, drive a car your whole life on one tank of gasoline (T. L. Friedman 2016, 37).

We are living during an unprecedented technological revolution. As illustrated by Thomas Friedman in *Thank You For Being Late*, the world is changing faster than we have the wherewithal to keep up with it. Friedman claims that our current inflection point is analogous to what happened to the world with the advent of the printing press, except on steroids. At no other time in history has information been so readily available and accessible by so many so rapidly.

This is of course particularly relevant to the extraordinary growth and attainability of media information that has rocketed into mainstream reality. Since January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the day that Steve Jobs presented the iPhone to the world for the first time, an extraordinary age of information availability has presented itself. The Pandora's box of

content has been opened, and it cannot be shut. This is even true in one of the most conservative and rigid of all monarchical systems, the Saudi government.

#### **b) The Disconnect Between Media and Policy**

During my interview process, I was fortunate to gain access to HH Prince Bandar Al Saud, the Assistant Minister of Interior for Technology Affairs. When asked about how governmental policy is responding to or keeping up with the incredible pace of media expansion, Prince Bandar claimed that he saw it as “acceptable, although it needs to be speedier through institutions in which the responsible institute initiates the policies needed to match the development— instead of waiting for another governmental institute, higher demand from the society or the private sector to ask for it for it to start its policy path” (Interview transcript Appendix A). Pr. Bandar seems to be highlighting a couple key points here. First, he is clarifying his opinion that policy-makers need to respond to media pressures more quickly. Second, he emphasizes that policy makers need to get approval from higher-up’s on the leadership chain, and this further exacerbates delays. He continues:

At the same time, we do have a delay in transforming policies into reality. Sometimes we issue policies, but execution of those policies takes a long time, because the responsible institute does not have employees specialized in carrying out these policies. For instance, the General Commission for Audiovisual Media is meant to protect the culture of Saudi Arabia, and ensure that certain codes of conduct are maintained, but for twenty years nobody actually executed the policy within the Ministry (Interview transcript Appendix A).

The disorder among policy makers that Prince Bandar relays highlights certain realities within Saudi policy-making and governance. Changes are happening and policy-



makers are responding to media forces, but this change is slow-paced and often inefficient.

### **c) Are Policy Makers Inefficient, Or Are Policies Absent?**

In relation to Prince Bandar's perspective that policies are present but inefficiently enacted, Dr. Saud Kateb, a spokesman for the Ministry of Media, states his belief that sufficient policies do not yet exist, and need to be created in order to keep up with media pressures and demands. Dr. Kateb states, "media has developed very fast and the policies are finding it difficult to catch up; however, in the Kingdom there is a development in the policies. For example, there have been big steps in Electronic Transaction Law (laws governing Internet usage, cyber-security" ( Interview transcript Appendix A). Kateb's perspective is an interesting counterpoint to Pr. Bandar's belief.

Further along these same lines, an official within the Ministry who asked to remain anonymous, explains this gap between policies and execution within the Ministry of Media as such: sticking to what we know is a cultural tradition within our society. Policies are made by humans, and policies will not change unless mentalities change. In this sense, it does not matter how much or how fast the media is changing if policy-makers stay rooted to traditions" (Interview transcript Appendix A).

However, not all officials highlight problems or inefficiency in policy-making. Some believe that adequate steps are being taken to respond to media demands. An active columnist in the Saudi media (who also asked to remain anonymous), stated positive views about the relationship between the media and policy: "it is good and has participated a lot in moving the static silent state the Saudi society was living in. Media has lead to social change, especially after September 11" (Interview transcript Appendix

A). The variability and opposing perspectives that we see among Saudi officials likely highlights the fact that various officials experience different comfort levels and risk tolerance when it comes to being openly critical of the Kingdom. After all, these individuals occupy substantive positions in Saudi, and likely do not wish to jeopardize their lofty roles and careers through explicitly saying the wrong things. This is an understandable phenomenon and to be expected from participants existing within a monarchical society. As a follow-up study, perhaps it would be interesting to interview individuals at a lower level of society and see how vulnerable or risky they are willing to be with their responses. We cannot assume that the officials interviewed here necessarily held back, but it is a fair hypothesis that they did.

#### **d) Media Impact on Citizen Voice**

In Saudi Arabia, the domino effect occurs as such: the media impacts the citizens, the citizens respond through their own social media, and this, in turn, influences policy-making within the government. When asked how the media is impacting citizens in the Kingdom, Dr. Saud Kateb highlighted the incredible exposure that KSA citizens have to media and technology:

for sure very influential, and specially social media if we take a look at our influence on social media we are #1 on Youtube and Keek, and 5 million active users on Twitter and smart phones are unstoppable it is contributing a lot in how influential media is, the ratio of smart phones spread in Saudi is 169% which means every person has two phones and this is a big percentage on both sides; active users or receivers (Interview transcript Appendix A).

These statistics may be surprising for a nation with 28.83M people (as of 2013). The United States, by comparison, has over 10 times Saudi's population. So while the Kingdom's population is moderate in size (and keep in mind many of these 28.83M were

desert-dwellers only a few generations ago), its exposure to media and technology is tremendous. A second interview participant who requested anonymity perceives the media's current role among citizen life and ideology as "very influential" (Appendix A).

As media presence and influence has grown within the Kingdom, individuals are responding by expressing their own voices and finding avenues for the promulgation of their own ideas and ideologies. As Kateb makes clear: "(s)ocial media is citizen journalism, and it allows people to express their views. Furthermore, satellite channels are influential. But the biggest influence is social media and a number of private satellite channels" (Interview transcript Appendix A).

What was once a quiet society where the voice of the masses was often muted or uttered privately among close friends, family, and relatives has now been granted an opening. An anonymous participant comments: "media is throwing stones in a very quiet lake, which is resulting in a dialogue that is shaping a new culture among the new generation— even if not in a fully achieved form, the results are good" (Appendix A). This revolution in expressivity through the opportunity of social media and technology was one of the prominent forces behind the Arab Spring. It is important to state that Saudi society is not transforming nearly at the rate that we saw among neighboring Arab nations during the Arab uprising, but there are changes that are occurring. Again, the media compels the citizens, the citizens express their views using social media, and then social media pressures policy-makers. The end game is a domino effect that is changing Saudi society. The change is slow and at times moderate, but it is happening. It is not crazy to imagine quite a different cultural norm in Saudi Arabia 50 years from today.

## Conclusion

I was fortunate to gain access to a unique sampling of high-ranking officials in Saudi government. Through a combination of persistence, stick-to-itiveness, and connections, I received written or spoken correspondence with 12 total participants. Although there were certain substantive differences among members, what seems undeniable is that the media is impacting policy in the Kingdom. This impact may not be happening at astounding rates, and the changes may be gradual, but change is occurring. In a relative sense, the fact that change is happening at all is quite significant. We must remember that Saudi Arabia, as a society, has been quite resistant to political change for the better part of its existence. In terms of certain civil rights issues and gender restrictions, it still holds onto societal codes and cultural norms that set it at odds with much of the rest of the world. So the fact that media is opening the gates for active citizenship (even if the change is slow) is a substantive progression in the Kingdom.

Given the rapid pace of change that is taking place globally, the likelihood is that this change will continue to occur and perhaps accelerate. Once the gates open and citizens gain exposure to worldviews, perspectives, and realities, it is impossible to un-know and un-see. These interviews indicate that we are likely at the beginning of a profound period of societal change and cultural revolution. We cannot know how long it will take or what the outcomes will be, but it is happening. That seems to be a commonly felt perception.

## Chapter 9

### From Deserts to I-Clouds

#### Introduction

In a nutshell, the study has demonstrated the media's ability to impact domestic policy decisions in Saudi Arabia between 2001 and 2015. Given Saudi's monarchical tradition of authoritarian power and private decision-making, this impact has been subtler and more complicated than might be expected. Prior to the year 2001, Royal Decrees enacting public policy were announced in the Saudi media without analysis and were not subject to open discussion in any public forum. Yet, the Saudi public commonly discussed government policy decisions in the privacy of their homes, among family and close friends; and, as the study shows, once the development of technology made it possible for citizens to express their concerns and opinions on social media, "public opinion" started to influence policy decisions. Social media has clearly created a platform for Saudi citizens to speak out about their attitudes and responses to monarchical decision making, highlighting the very real impact that new media is having on culture, custom, and citizen voice in the Kingdom.

In this final chapter, the main lessons from each case will be presented sequentially. Afterwards, common indicators that can contribute to the Saudi political communication will be offered. Finally, future research possibilities and goals will be presented for consideration.

#### Light Entering the Cave

Prior to the integration of digital technology, Saudi Arabia tended to exist within its own cave, isolated from much of the world, following its own scripture, and maintaining a society and customs specific to itself. It is perhaps the case that governing members of the royal elite knew that they had created a cave for their people, but the people themselves lived in darkness, largely oblivious to possibilities for thought and existence outside of the encasing parameters of the rigid system put in place.

But on September 11<sup>th</sup> of 2001, two planes manned by Saudi hijackers crashed into the World Trade Centers in New York City. Another plane crashed into the Pentagon, and a fourth went down in a field in rural Pennsylvania. The impact of these terrorist attacks was so powerful as to shake the very foundations of Saudi society, and, perhaps for the first time, to create cracks in a very strong cave with very rigid walls.

The flood of media information storming into the Kingdom had such a force as to relentlessly shake Saudi citizens from the cocoon of their traditional realities and ask them to consider how sheltered, protected, and endemic their own society had been. 9/11 opened the floodgates, pouring light into the cave of contemporary Saudi culture. Suddenly, there were other perspectives to consider, other national identities to contend with, other political views to mediate, and, finally, other possible lives to lead. The global and technological development pulled open Saudi Arabia's protected shelter and asked its citizens to confront a new world that had previously existed only in theory.

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, after being told by a police officer that he could not sell fruit on the street, Mohamed Bouazizi of Tunisia lit himself on fire in a public protest and suicide. Thus began the Arab Uprising, an intercontinental phenomenon that occurred within the nations of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Bahrain. Millions rallied,

protested, and fought against governmental regimes. Rulers were toppled. Societies were forever changed. One of the main force inspiring this uprising was social media, which facilitated the instantaneous connection of complete strangers who were united by a common goal: to rally individuals and challenge oppressive governments.

The uprisings reached the Kingdom. As the force of international and new media flooded onto the computer screens of Saudi citizens, they began to Facebook, Tweet, YouTube at record numbers, gaining confidence and steam with every new posting. Suddenly, the absolute monarchy under which they all had lead was not just a distant, controlling force, but an establishment with which citizens could interact, dialogue, and even influence.

The journey is by no means over. There are still many dwelling in caves, but the caves are becoming more rare, and the rigidity of their walls are starting to soften or crumble, as media development creates new opportunity for freedom of expression, dialogue, and the possibility for influencing the crown.

### **Case Studies Intent**

The case studies contained in the research have focused on three main domains: women's empowerment, educational reform, and the social media impact on the Ministry of Health. In each case study, the role of traditional and new media has been examined to determine what influence specific media platforms had on policy-making within the Kingdom. As a result, this study has been valuable to understanding the extent to which the media impacts change in public policy in Saudi Arabia, and, in an effort to present an unbiased narrative, has done so in a way that presents research accounting for both local Saudi Arabia sources and existing international research.

To better understand the relationship and impact of the media on Saudi domestic policy, study results were divided into two areas: media and policy. The media was further divided into traditional media and social media and the role each played among the three case studies. The impact of traditional and new media varied from case to case, although there was notable crossover.

Since each of the three cases featured scenarios that were not only contextually bound but also domain specific, different degrees of traditional or new media served to produce change in each case. As a general rule, traditional media, including the press and broadcast media, are usually regarded as official mediums, more oriented towards conservative viewpoints. Social media, on the other hand, typically represents an emerging sector of the population and express diverse viewpoints of the masses.

Local and international news coverage is also represented within the media. Within the case studies, most of the domains are influenced significantly by local coverage, but, depending on the case, varying degrees of influence and public reactions can be attributed also to the involvement of international media.

## **I. Case Study Summaries**

### **A. Case Study 1: Impact of Media on Women's Issues**

The research encompassed two case studies related to women's empowerment case: 1) women's driving in Saudi Arabia, and 2) women in sport in Saudi Arabia. In the first case, both supporters and opponents to the driving ban and other regulations concerning women's ability to drive in Saudi Arabia were identified in every type of media. But, it was observed that social media offered a hub for substantive political dialogue, and opened the door for a collaborative online campaign to support the



women's driving movement. The same fervor of support did not show up to nearly the same degree in traditional media. In regard to women in sports, both traditional and social media played a role, but traditional media formats were more influential contributors.

### ***1) Women Driving in Saudi Arabia***

#### **Media's Role**

The female driving ban in Saudi Arabia received more international press attention than any other public policy within the Kingdom. Players within the international media have also served as catalysts for momentum within the reform campaign. However, from the Saudi point of view, the international attention has not been viewed positively, but rather, as a direct attack on the Kingdom. Critiques of Saudi policies tend to be interpreted locally as negative coverage against the Saudi government, its people, and the Muslim religion.

These defensive reactions began to fade, however, with the spread of social media conversations and dialogue, which clarified that women's driving is not in fact a religious issue but rather a cultural choice within the Kingdom. The effect of media debate on this process demonstrates that the development of technology has influenced the emergence of new viewpoints, which see international media as a support rather than "bad coverage" within Saudi Arabia. The crucial point here is that government officials express different messages in local media than they do when reporting to international media. These contradictions in messages likely highlight a very real reality in the Kingdom: Saudi, in a sense, has two identities, the face it shows locally to its citizens, and the façade it represents to international observers.

## What Happened

The Saudi government states there is no law prohibiting women from driving; the issue is a matter of “tradition”. As a result of taking no action, the Saudi government enabled conservative religious elements in the Kingdom to articulate the role of women in Saudi. It should be mentioned that although women have not been granted the ability to drive, government efforts have aimed to enhance women’s role in the Kingdom, including receiving more significant workplace opportunities and voting rights. The issue of women and their place in Saudi has many cultural and political layers. Although the media failed to pressure the Saudi Government to lift the ban on female driving, they were successful in creating awareness that driving is not a religious matter.

Additionally, the media has promoted discussions about the financial benefits of permitting women to drive in the Kingdom. However, the likelihood that women gain the right to drive, at present, seems low. While not legally disallowing women’s driving, policy makers have established a rhetoric and policies that can severely punish a women for getting behind the wheel, claiming that women drivers threaten the security of the society and labeling such offenders as terrorists. In sum, the media has failed to force policy makers to establish a new policy, but it has succeeded in augmenting the importance of the conversation, and enhancing awareness of the very real economic benefits that can arise from getting women the right to drive.

TRADITIONAL LOCAL MEDIA	INTERNATIONAL MEDIA	SOCIAL MEDIA
Relatively objective reports on economic impact	International pressure on Saudi society & government	Major impact on Saudi public opinion

**Results: No Policy Change**

## 2) Women in Sport in Saudi Arabia

## Media's Role

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) published statements in the international press encouraging KSA to allow women to participate in the Olympic games. These statements served as the main factor that influenced a change in Saudi policy regarding the participation of women in Olympic sports. Again, a major factor related to the development of policy was the contradictory nature of the messages from government officials depending on whether they were addressing local or international media. When officials addressed local media outlets, they tended to convey misgivings about women's participation in the games. However, when they addressed international media outlets, support and cooperation were substantively present.

## What Happened

Inevitably, the Saudi Government allowed women to participate in 2012 Summer Olympic Games, gave permission for women's gyms to open, and initiated physical education for girls in schools. Although this case focused on women participation of the 2012 Summer Olympics, it demonstrates both direct and indirect impacts on policy. The direct impact was that permission was granted for women to participate in the Olympics. The indirect impact related to an overall enhanced attention to women's health and physical education in Saudi Arabia. Though imperfect and still in progress, this case has had a successful direct and indirect impact.

TRADITIONAL LOCAL MEDIA	INTERNATIONAL MEDIA	SOCIAL MEDIA
Attention on dress code and confirming the participation	Major pressure on Saudi government & society	Showed public opinion favored women in sport

**Results: Policy Change**

## B. Case Study 2: Impact of Media on Educational Reform

The second case study focused on two instances of educational reform: 1) the religious textbook reform, and 2) the KAUST case. The religious textbook reform, which occurred following 9/11, focused on American pressures to modify religious curriculum embedded in Saudi textbooks. The American government urged the kingdom to modify its textbooks, which are claimed to promote jihad. Although Saudi officials initially reacted to these pressures by calling them an attack against Islam and Muslim identity, they eventually heeded to the pressure and reformed textbooks to eliminate these more extreme elements. The three phases in reaction to American pressures proceeded as follows: phase one, featuring responses from high government officials, as well as articles, and interview, claiming that American pressures were outspoken gestures against Islam and Saudi Arabia. In the second phase, following terrorist attacks by Saudi on Saudi soil, a local campaign was organized to create awareness and execute reform within the educational system, including local reports and seminars. The final phase included a more open media discussion that included a strategic campaign to move forward with government reform.

The second case, KAUST, is based on a small though significant incident that played out in the media and received a political decision. A member of the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars, Saudi's religious version of the Supreme Court, openly criticized King Abdullah University for Science and Technology for allowing male and female co-education. King Abdullah took this criticism very personally and proceeded to fire this member from the Saudi Council of Senior Scholars. It was the first time in the history of the Kingdom that a member of the Council has been fired. For the purpose of this research, it is significant because it all played out publicly through the media.

### **1) Religious Textbook Reform**

#### **Media's Role**

The religious textbook case study resulted from the international media's pointing fingers at religious textbooks promoting terrorist ideologies that were used in the Saudi educational system. Reports published by the government of the United States claimed that Saudi religious textbooks were largely responsible for radical Islamic ideology. In turn, the Saudi government reacted to the international media by broadcasting that positive reform efforts have been made within the Saudi educational system. These same claims were not in local media. The dual nature of Saudi reporting, the face it shows to international press verses the face it shows to local press, is a significant feature that must be recognized.

#### **What Happened**

In this case, Saudi government came under considerable pressure from foreign government and international press to reform religious textbooks. Over time, curricular reforms have made some progress in spite of opposition from conservative religious elements of Saudi society. The educational reform case study illustrates that the media is an influential tool even in the hands of the monarchy.

<b>TRADITIONAL LOCAL MEDIA</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL MEDIA</b>	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>
Pandered to conservative religious elements	International pressure enabled gradual reform	Enabled opinions for and against reform

**Results: Policy Change**

### **2) King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)**

#### **Media's Role**

The KAUST case was based on a televised interview that prompted the unprecedented removal of a member of the Council of Senior Scholar-- the highest religious body in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In the KAUST case, traditional media was the main platform for triggering change. An interview was given by the high ranking council member, which lead to numerous published articles over the course of the following three days.

### What Happened

King Abdullah ensured the continuation of his coed university by ending criticism from conservative religious elements. The articles published in the press criticizing the scholar's position in not supporting the Kings vision, who were previously considered untouchable. The King reacted by issuing a Royal Decree, and fired the Council member.

TRADITIONAL LOCAL MEDIA	INTERNATIONAL MEDIA	SOCIAL MEDIA
Facilitated opposition to the King's coed university	Supported the King's new progressive coed university	Public opinion favored the opening of KAUST

**Results: Policy Change**

### C. Case Study 3: Social Media's Impact of the Ministry of Health

#### Media's Role

The focus the study was the Ministry of Health and the influence of social media on the dismissal of officials within the Ministry. Social media was definitely the main player within this study, as social media forums were the primary platforms for the expression of citizens' digital voices. Even the role of traditional media here was to cover the content of social media, making social media the main player.

### What Happened

The King replaced two Ministers of Health in a single year due to social media pressure highlighting inept management of the health sector in the Kingdom. The influence of Saudi citizens' digital voice in this case influenced decision makers in Saudi Arabia to make a change never before seen. Citizens expressed their concerns on social media platforms, and the King reacted accordingly.

TRADITIONAL LOCAL MEDIA	INTERNATIONAL MEDIA	SOCIAL MEDIA
Sided with public opinion in social media on health issues	Not an influence, but the pressure from WHO	Major impact on Saudi public opinion

**Results: Policy Change**

## II. Findings

As the aforementioned case studies indicate, international media and social media have been shown to impact traditional media and policy making within the Saudi government. In four out of five case studies researched, “the media” has impacted the formation of domestic public policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results of this study offer broad implications for understanding the contemporary advancement of Saudi governance and public policy. First off, it is clear that political processes have been influenced by the development of media, although the extent of influence appears to depend on the political context. Another implication which arises within the context of the study, is the interactive relationship between traditional media and new media. Hot topic issues reported within traditional media frequently become widely debated on social media sites. At the same time, information and posts that gain widespread attention on social media networks often then receive a wide-range of publicity in the mainstream press. This results in augmented press freedom. But, while positions of politicians and influential figures are commonly covered within traditional media platforms, social media outlets provide forums wherein reciprocal conversations may occur between the average social media user and the politicians themselves. Because of the ability of average social media users to post opinions online, social media has become a common medium for political dialogue, a fact that can lead to influential political consequences—especially when certain posts or topics go viral.

This outcome was made clear in the case study on the Ministry of Health, where Saudi citizens’ digital voice resulted in the King’s willing to respond to concerns expressed by citizens online. The educational reform case study also demonstrated that



issues trending in the media can create a forum for dialogue between the media and policy-makers, establishing the potential to influence policy. Here again, we see a new power emerging among proactive media influences, who are able to impact top policy makers within the Saudi monarchy.

Although there have been instances when Saudi citizens have used social media to bring about change at the highest governmental levels, this is not always the case. The cumulative voice of influential members of Saudi society combined with traditional media and social media are not always enough to influence change. For instance, the women's driving movement has not yet seen success despite widespread international and social media support. As stated above, the female driving ban in Saudi Arabia received more international press attention than any other Saudi Arabian public policy. Within the media, wide-scale pressure was expressed on both a national and a global level in support of giving women the right to drive. However, despite the vast amount of attention and debate over the issue, in 2013 the women's driving movement was made illegal under the guise of constituting a disturbance to the public order. Later, in 2014, the Saudi government equated the act of a woman driving to an act of terrorism. It may be concluded that the media's impact has been unsuccessful in spawning change around this issue because the issue has not yet been elevated to the level of a Royal Decree, and the government has responded by repressive practices.

The only example where local media failed in its ability to influence policy concerns the rights of women. Given Saudi's cultural heritage and embedded sexual politics, there are many potential explanations that explicate this. The women's issue is a complex topic, even puzzling at times. With all the media attention, diplomacy pressure,

and reform demand, Saudi women still lacks basic rights and human independence. There is no one direct, simple answer to explain why women's rights have advanced at a far slower pace than other public policy issues; it seems to be due to an amalgamation of religion, culture, tradition and politics. Women's limited rights in the Kingdom get misattributed to religion, but it is clear that Islam is not the issue. Cultural and political power groups disguise their own aims under the general umbrella of religion, which is not responsible for these restrictions. And many possible dissenters do not speak up, because they assume that they would be violating religious code, and religion is an untouchable topic within Saudi society. However, as women gain more awareness of their faith and a better view into Islamic religion, they are becoming more aware of Islamic teachings and have come to realize that Islam grants women many of rights they are culturally denied.

It is important to understand that the suppression of women is taking place in a masculine society with masculine leaders. So the progress is slow and presumably will be for some time. To compound this problem further, women in Saudi are required to depend upon a "man figure", who maintains a clear role in protecting and supporting women. As a consequence, women are systematically treated as minors maintaining a passive identity. And this perception of women has become a reality, enforced by the state and adopted by traditions, which are based on subjective concepts embedded in the traditional cultural hierarchy, which evidences itself in family, tribe, and politics.

But this very traditional model may be losing stability, as modern society now somewhat encourages women in the workplace, shared economic responsibilities, higher education and awareness of her own rights. Each of these influences urge her to pursue

more equal rights. However, as stated, the road towards equality and augmented rights among women in the Kingdom is a long road, and one of the areas where we still see considerable political and cultural resistance.

In the following section, the findings break down the research further into three major themes: awareness, duality, and power.

#### **a) Awareness**

The remarkable increase in media presence and exposure makes citizens more aware of issues that confront Saudi society. For example, the open media dialogue regarding whether women should be allowed to drive essentially eliminated religion as the reason why Saudi women are not permitted to drive. Following this elimination of the role that religion plays in this issue, the entire campaign shifted to secular explanations for why women should not drive.

In the case of religious textbook reform, as public awareness of the issue increased, the political voice from within the government shifted. Initially when it was only an international media issue, Saudi officials claimed that Saudi society was being scapegoated and criticized for its long-standing religious ideals and values. However, as the issue gained more and more press and attention, Saudi governance reacted by beginning to hold seminars to consider reform policies. As more attention blossomed within the media, reform measures were taken. What we see here, therefore, is a direct, proportional relationship between media awareness and policy change. As awareness grows, the rate of policy adaptation quickens. Of course, this phenomenon has not been the case with women's driving, for reasons the research has made clear.

## b) Duality

In the study, media has exposed the duality within the Saudi society and Saudi politics. Saudi women live both a conservative and liberal life, are both segregated from and integrated into Saudi culture, are both confined to the home and encouraged to get out. Although isolated, Saudi women are now freed by digital technology to live mobile free lives.

These specifically Saudi urban femininities, performed within public spaces of the capital, indirectly participate in renewing the nation's image, an objective central in the project of reform. Transformations of gender norms participate in transforming images of the nation. In shopping malls, behind the tinted windows of their cars, in banks, in newspapers, on television, and in bookshops, young Saudi women are both visible and invisible (Le Renard 2014, 163).

The case studies cited above reveal that both citizens and government officials have dual personalities depending on the message they wish to communicate within a given context. For instance, the case on women's issues highlights contradictions. Saudi women are banned from driving, but are permitted to surf the web. Women are restricted in their ability to establish a business outside the home, but they are becoming successful online entrepreneurs. In the case of the Ministry of Health, citizens were censored from sharing or expressing their concerns over a deadly virus, and yet, they flooded social media with their fears, in spite of its being illegal. Finally, in the education case, government officials' messages contradicted each other depending on whether they were presented to local or international media outlets.

The duality in the Saudi political message might be linked to Saudi Arabia's very complex role as both custodian of the holy mosques at Mekka and Medina, and its

industry identity as one of the leading producers of oil in the world today. Balancing these two identities, each of which caters to and services distinctly polarized audiences—the atavistic, religious traditionalists on the one hand verses the global super powers on the other hand— places Saudi Arabia in a uniquely bifurcated role vis-a-vis its own identity and decisions. As the Kingdom goes about to ensure that both sides of its disconnected contingency remain contended and indebted to the throne, it must adopt vastly different voices and messages to suite and appeal to both parties. This, by the way, has been a featured reality of Saudi governance ever since the discovery of oil in 1938. The Kingdom has always had to juggle its progressive needs for adaptation with its culturally and religiously rooted past. Thomas Lippman, a scholar who has published several books on the Middle East, describes the dual nature of Saudi Arabia's identity:

Saudi Arabia is both rich and vulnerable, a unique combination of the modern and the backward. It is, of course, the world's leading exporter of oil and will remain so for decades to come despite media inspired fears about the potential decline of its reserves. Yet for all its wealth the country lacks the tools to meet the challenges that confront it: a restless, young population; new generations of educated women demanding opportunities in a closed society; political stagnation under octogenarian leadership; religious extremism and intellectual backwardness; social division; a flawed education system; chronic unemployment; shortage of food and water; and troublesome neighbors (Lippman 2012, 5).

Lippman highlights the bifurcated nature of Saudi culture and national identity. It is heavily rooted in its religious foundations, but also attempting to appease various progressive movements, which threaten the sanctity and atavistic nature of its custodial identity.

As technological advances occur, it is clear that Saudi is maintaining cyber legitimacy by allowing limited degrees of freedom of expression on specific issues, and this limited space is providing a civic engagement and sense of duty among its people. But the debate does not have free reign, even in cyberspace. Governing bodies and the law ensure that conversations can proceed within given limits. So there are really two challenges facing the throne: one, the challenge of balancing between the local needs and foreign powers, and, two, determining the extent to which citizens can use online media to express voices of dissension. And the challenge for citizens is how skillfully they can convey their messages of dissent without becoming too specific and thereby crossing a line and endangering themselves.

### c) Power

Research continues to shed light on many factors that explain aspects of media power in the ever changing political environment of the Kingdom. The interactions of the media with political institutions and political decision makers has influenced the conduct within Saudi politics and shaped political outcomes. Although a top down hierarchy controls both policymaking and the media, social media limits the monopoly on power over media in that social media is available to anyone with a mobile phone. Cyberspace will not altogether replace geographical space, but both will coexist and will serve to redefine the meaning and dynamics within a powerful state. As social media gains more influence and voice in society, the power dynamic is bound to shift from a more top down hierarchy to one in which the bottom of society exercises more influence on the top tiers.

With the ever-increasing push of technological advance, coupled with the very real influence of new media, Saudi leaders will need to adapt to these rapid changes in order to lead effectively and keep up with modern expectations and pressures. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, King Abdulaziz' role was exceptional in introducing modern technology to nomads who believed that technological innovation was the work of evil. Nomads rejected these advances because they had been made by non-Muslims. But then King Abdulaziz told rejecters to get rid of their guns too, as they were not Muslim made. This was a convincing argument. For a desert warrior, King Abdulaziz had a remarkably clear vision. He did not see modernity and religiosity as two conflicting realities. King Abdulaziz stated, "Never does Shariah ban anything useful to people, nor does it permit anything harmful to them. This truism is understood by sound judgment" (AlJeraisy 2008). He succeeded in persuading them to the benefits of what they feared, which went a long way towards bridging the gap between traditional stagnation and inevitable progress.

Failing to see how important modeling adaptation was, his sons had a different approach in adapting to modernization. King Abdulaziz understood this vital aspect of a leader's role. Ironically, this same type of scenario is presenting itself in the Kingdom today. Ronald Heifetz, states that the role of a leader is "to help people face reality and to mobilize them to make change." (T. L. Friedman 2016, 311) One of the main challenges facing the Saudi governance is to understand how Saudi political institutions and society work to adapt and evolve within the constructs of a world marching forward. Thomas Friedman explains that physical technologies can surpass the ability of social technologies: "physical technologies evolve at the pace of science— fast and are getting

exponentially faster, while social technologies evolve at the pace at which humans can change— much slower” (Ibid, 200). During this age of rapid advance and assimilation, what Friedman refers to as an inflection point like no other since the advent of the printing press, effective leaders will have no choice but to be open to adaptation and integration. Given Saudi’s hyper-orthodox identity, this certainly will be a challenge facing Saudi governance now and into the future.



### III. Recommendations

#### *Suggestions for future Research*

##### *A Need for Quantitative Analysis*

This research contributes to a much needed and growing field of scholarly literature that is critical to understanding the changes taking place in the political communication industry— both globally, and, for the purpose of this research, in the Kingdom. Scores of scholars (Robert Denton, Gary Woodward, Brian McNair) have focused on media impact in democratic nations. In contrast, there has been little research on media impact in monarchies, and even less in Saudi Arabia. It is for this reason that the research conducted here is groundbreaking. The case studies contained here establish groundwork for future research into media impact on governance in the Kingdom.

Only in the past decade or so have Saudi citizens found a voice in social media. Because of the undeniable presence and pressure that social media creates, the Saudi monarchy has tuned in and is beginning not only to listen to the social media of its citizens but also to utilize social media for its own governing purposes. Never in the history of the Kingdom has communication been so egalitarian, and this new openness is worthy of further study. We are at the beginning of an ever-evolving media landscape like none we have ever seen in Saudi Arabia. The results of this study, which have been qualitative in nature, could be coupled with quantitative data (assuming availability) to provide an even more holistic understanding of the Kingdom's media landscape. For the purposes of this research, quantitative data has not been available.

For future researchers focusing on the development of media and its influence on policy in the Kingdom, it would be important to strengthen the study further by providing data that is currently unavailable, due to the lack of statistics compiled by political

scientists in KSA. Conducting quantitative research in the Kingdom will open the door for more comprehensive answers to significant questions in the field. As statistics related to Twitter and other social media outlets become more available, future researchers can examine the correlative effects of usage and content on policy reform, drawing a more concrete and traceable relationship and thereby indicating with more clarity what types of messages and volume of messages get heard and lead to societal change in the Kingdom. This new information will be valuable for both citizens seeking to propel policy changes, and also to governing bodies looking to create policies that better fulfill the needs of its people.

### Gap in Literature

There is a serious gap in the literature related to the media's impact on policy making in Saudi Arabia. What we do have assumes a lens that is largely Western in perspective. What the literature needs is more local, Saudi— or at least Middle Eastern— researchers who can tell a more localized story, capturing significant elements of the Kingdom's society, governance, and style. For as much as it may be valuable for a Western perspective to comment on and analyze Saudi media and governance, these perspectives often contain judgmental attitudes which fail to understand or incorporate the cultural realities and norms of Saudi society, custom, and tradition.

Saudi research concerning its own nation, culture, and identity needs to be performed with a higher degree of scholarly integrity— more academic and systematic. It is important to ask rigorous questions that may challenge norms, and seek for answers backed by statistics, data, and evidence. These are currently lacking.

### *Holding Officials Accountable*

Saudi governance has had a habit of issuing policy reforms at the highest levels of government, without assigning the practical steps necessary for change to be enacted by executive level government officials. Perhaps this is the Kingdom's way of partially satisfying citizen needs without actually carrying out actions to do the tough work of amending policy and cultural norms.

Going forward, the Saudi ruling class should assign specific government employees to specific tasks necessary for ensuring that change actually takes place. Reform is not simply a conceptual idea. It requires expertise and enactment. But since government employees may lack the skills necessary to carry out particular types of reform, the government should provide certain officials with the training necessary to carry out reform protocols. More substantive reform in the Kingdom will occur when thinking and conceptualization meets practical solutions and enactment.

### *Strengthening the media and communication as a profession*

When compared with Western or European standards, Saudi local journalists lag far behind when it comes to their ability to use words and arguments to craft articles and stories that possess the rhetorical strength, data, and insight to have substantive impact on society. Too large a percentage of Saudi journalists lack the types of educational backgrounds that might give them journalistic power and presence. To this end, much of the local journalism published in the Kingdom parrots contemporary values of Saudi society, rather than promoting new ideas, posing meaningful challenges to Saudi society, or recognizing possible areas for growth, transformation, and reform. The contemporary Saudi journalist is more a servant to the crown than an objective, paradigm shifting

presence in the Kingdom. In order for more effective, impactful journalism to voice itself in KSA, Saudi journalists will have to be willing to risk both reputation and career advancement in order to better highlight key features for growth and change.

Furthermore, journalists need to present more unified voices in order to bring about more substantive policy change. Local journalism in the Kingdom tends to present itself as a series of disconnected, independent voices, rather than as one unified voice making a collective argument. The splintered, individualistic nature that characterizes much of Saudi journalism often fails to bring about substantive reform, because the stories lack centralization and unification. It is the recommendation of this study that journalists think about presenting more cohesive, aligned narratives in order to promote real change and transform society.

### *Understanding Citizens*

Saudi government needs to better understand the needs of its citizens. Historically, public opinion has been heavily marginalized or even ignored by the weight of authoritarian, unidirectional governance. But in the modern era, with heightened acceleration of technology, an explosion in new media, and an increasingly shrinking global world, governments have no choice but to listen to and better understand the people they govern. The risk to silencing or ignoring the Saudi people is potential revolution, online public defamation, or general dissatisfaction and lack of progress. In this new age, the Saudi government could benefit greatly from better understanding and implementing policies to protect and serve its people.

With globalization, the Internet, social media, rapid advances in technology, and a world now opened to Saudi citizens, the Saudi government will have no choice but to

continue to modify its policies and advance towards more globally accepted, Western ideals. With the advent of the Internet, many Saudi citizens for the first time caught a glimpse of other societies where freedom and independence are commonplace features of daily life. With increasing broadband width, and millions of Twitter and Whatsapp users in the Kingdom, Pandora's box has flown wide open and cannot be shut. Once people know something, they cannot un-know it.

In order for Saudi Arabian government to maintain the full loyalty of its people and a better respect from the outside world, it is going to need to be more flexible and pliable going forward. Changing its stance on textbook reform, women in the sport, and health administration are just a few examples of the types of modifications that governmental policy makers are going to need to enact in order to appease its people and not lead to exodus or instability. Saudi may be a stable nation with a stable government, but stability can be upended at any time. We have seen already the type of revolts that social media has produced in other regions of the Middle East.

As Saudi makes moves to meet its people half way, researchers need to be attuned so as to capture the stories in real time and properly describe and account for the changes that will inevitably transform certain aspects of the Kingdom.

## Conclusion

As with any meaningful study, the research has opened more doors to explore, and more questions to answer for future inquiry. The study aimed to provide an understanding of the current relation between Saudi media and policy; however, in some ways it served to open doors for deeper and more comprehensive contributions to this, as yet, too little explored territory within the literature.

With the advancement of society and the rapid development of technology, the relationships examined are far more complex than they were twenty years ago, when Saudi Arabia was an absolute monarchy with a closed media system and inordinate levels of censorship. At that time, Royal Decrees were published without any debates before or afterwards. Today, however, with unprecedented political and technological developments, millions of Saudi male and female citizens comment on political matters as part of their citizenship.

Saudis rank among the most prolific users of Twitter and YouTube in the world. Perhaps more significant than the social role these have created among Saudis, technological developments have forged a path for public opinion to start to play a more prominent role in Saudi's culture. It is remarkable to think that social media has opened doors that can connect a common citizen to the King.

These technological developments have also opened borders digitally, making official statements available to local and international media. This open communication has introduced new and conflicting messages to the Kingdom, and greatly influenced the road to reform. In certain instances, technological development has united social media with international media as one force.

At the same time, however, technological advances have also highlighted the extensive gap that exists between traditional local media and most other legitimate informational systems. The gap is of crucial importance, as it negatively influences the credibility of Saudi media and must be considered.

When faced with more Western media outlets commenting on local Saudi policies, it becomes evident that the Kingdom must wear many hats (the leader of the Islamic world, the head of the Gulf and Arab countries, the custodian of the holy mosques, and the largest exporter of petroleum). These diverse, and at times contradictory roles, cater to a wide audience, from liberals to conservatives, from traditionalists to reformists, from locals to internationals, and from citizens to foreigners.

In some ways the Kingdom is juggling its duties and various roles admirably, but in some ways the nation must uphold a singular, clear political message. As of now, this is something the government lacks. And, given Saudi Arabia's considerable weight and influence in the Gulf region and Middle East, this lack of central message creates ripples that extend beyond its borders. As the leader of the GCC countries and the head of the Islamic nations, anything that Saudi Arabia does politically or culturally influences the region as a whole. In summation, any Saudi Arabian media or governmental failings negatively impacts the landscape of the region, since the main owners of all the media outlets in the MENA region are Saudis.

Based on the findings of the study, we can conclude that the Saudi government needs to develop a unified message to both its local and international communication to empower the state strategy and policy. The other shared element that seems to be evident in the political communication is that messages shared by the executive officials often

times contradict policies and political decisions suggested at the highest level of government. We see this clearly through the three case studies.

Reform in the Kingdom is a heavily contextualized phenomenon. As we see in several of the case studies explored through this research, reform can be surprisingly rapid or alarmingly slow. When it comes to certain things— skyscrapers, shopping malls, economics, industry, and fast cars— the Kingdom readily embraces change. But when it comes to other domains, religion and women’s empowerment, to be specific, reform is a slow and tricky process that is widely resisted. What does this tell us? Understood within the highly specific nature of Saudi culture and identity as the guardian of the two Holy Mosques and the protectorate of the Muslim faith, these resistances make sense. Saudi feels strongly compelled to serve as the symbolic figurehead for Islam, and, because of this, it must be ever aware and protective over the aspects of its culture that have traditionally defined Islam and Shariah Law. But when it comes to aspects of Saudi life that fall outside of traditional religious values and norms, the Kingdom more readily adopts change and implements reforms that help Saudi to become a more progressive and westernized nation. In this sense, reform is in some ways becoming far easier to bring about through media pressure, and in some ways as challenging and intractable as ever. In this sense, reform is less about logistics than it is about ideology— which makes it at once easily actionable as well as impossibly static. In so far as we must come to understand reform initiatives in the Kingdom, we must know that the probability of change will always be indirectly proportional to the change’s purported relationship to Islamic Shariah and traditional values. Knowing this will not accelerate the road to reform, but it will at least contextualize it for people and help to ease the process.



The research has been an effort to better understand the relationship between Saudi governance and the media, and has attempted to do so using an unbiased lens that incorporates both Western and native Saudi perspectives. And yet Saudi's own perspective is changing. With social media and a growing awareness of life outside the Kingdom, the advancement in technology has spawned a new generation, one that has one eye rooted in tradition, while the other stares at flashing computer screens, scrolling Twitter feeds, and streaming online content. The walls that once encircled the Kingdom and made it almost impervious to internal or extrinsic influence, have partially crumbled to reveal a veil that is semi-permeable— one that can be shifted more easily to expose a new and fuller face for the Kingdom. And with the opening of this new door, Saudi citizens find themselves staring out windows they did not even know existed, gazing across desert landscapes and finding what were once only mirages of the imagination, and seeing clearly what only a generation ago seemed as non-existent as water under a penetrating sun. As this new world gets progressively ushered in, transparency is required instead of censorship, and a developing Saudi Arabia, perhaps, continues to unveil itself.

## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Texts**

The following represents the translated answers to the interviews that I conducted with high ranking officials within the Ministry of Media, Ministry of the Interior, Commission of the Youth Welfare, the Saudi Press Agency, King Abdullah City for Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Education. These interviews were conducted between April and June of 2015 in the capital city Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The questions were divided into three major categories: media, education, and women's empowerment.

### **Media**

#### **Ministry Policy**

1. How do you view the harmonization between the development of the media system and the societal development?
  - P.Dr.Bandar; in general it is acceptable although it needs to be speedier through institutions in which the responsible institute initiates the policies needed to match the development, instead of waiting for another governmental institute, higher demand from the society or the private sector to ask for it then it starts its policy path. At the same time we do have a delay in transforming policies into reality; sometimes we issue policies but executing those policies takes a long time because the responsible institute does not have the human qualifications. For instance, the General Commission for Audiovisual Media is meant to protect the culture of Saudi Arabia, and ensure certain codes of conduct are maintains, but for twenty years nobody actually executed the policy within the Ministry.
  - Dr.Saud Kateb: media has developed very fast and the policies are finding it difficult to catch up, but in the Kingdom there is a development in the policies for example Electronic Transaction Law, and there many efforts from different sectors to develop.
  - A: Policies in the Saudi media are human made and are open to criticism and there are people within the Ministry that are demanding and requesting some polices to be reviewed, but sticking to what we know has become a culture.
  - It is good and has participated a lot in moving the static silent state the Saudi society was living in. media has lead social change specially after September 11.

2. How influential is Saudi media on its citizens?

- Dr.Saud Kateb: for sure very influential, and specially social media if we take a look at our influence on social media we are #1 on Youtube and Keek, and 5 million active users on Twitter and smart phones are unstoppable it is contributing a lot in how influential media is, the ratio of smart phones spread in Saudi is 169% which means every person has two phones and this is a big percentage on both sides; active users or receivers. Social media is citizen journalism and it allowed people to express their views. satellite channels are influential, But the biggest influential is social media and a number of private satellite channels.
- A: in general it shapes and speaks to the public, the ministry role is very important which is directing the public opinion and guiding it in a positive way this is our role, but did the Ministry fulfill this role “NO” ISIS won 1/0 because I think our media did not do anything, millions have been spent but did your message reach your target ! our youth are the biggest watchers of Youtube and they cal our channels “Must 1, Must 2, Must3” they should be able to discuss their issues on our channels, because if we allow them to participate in our media they will make an influence.
- Very influential, media is throwing a stones in a very quite lake which is resulting in a dialogue that is shaping a new culture among the new generation, even if not in a fully achieved but the results are good.

3. The basic law states that the media’s role is to educate and inspire unity, and that’s why criticism is not allowed. However in the last few years we have seen few issues that were criticized. Do these changes result from pressure from journalists and editors or does the government initiate them?

- Dr.Saud Kateb: our media and journalists never stopped criticizing, but social media complement a new dimension to criticism, criticism is practiced now by non professionals making it accusations without proof. In our media there is space to criticize governmental institutions, note that what is important is that it is not accusations or slander.
- A: The policy did not change but the ceiling of freedom increases and decreases depending on the political and security circumstances and at times international pressure “USA”. It is the culture of the society, the person who is in position is part of the society, our religious and educational systems don’t have open dialogue, we don’t know how to have an open discussion.
- They both are moving in the same direction, the press used to test the waters at times to raise the ceiling of freedom at the same time the political policy which King Abdullah encouraged newspapers to be more transparent and to publish the citizens voice, by being the watch dog on public service and the insufficiencies provided by government public service to citizens.

4. From your point of view, which governmental institutions influence the political policies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

- Dr. Saud Kateb: Ministry of Media, and when it comes to censorship it is the Communication and Information Technology Commission, but if its related to journalists then it's the General Commission for Audiovisual Media.
  - A: Ministry of Interior, our political leaders who are suppose to influence our policies or are suppose to elucidate the need to update certain polices are very old fashion and all they care about is keeping their position within the ministry.
  - Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Interior, and Foreign Ministry.
5. What is the impact of Ministry of Interior on media Policy in the Kingdom?
- P.Dr. Bandar: the Ministry of Interior is like any other ministry it contributes in framing the policies in general and media is one of them, what concerns the Minisstry of Interior is protecting the society, its identity unity, and security and not exploiting media in harming it.
6. What is the impact of global digital content on local policies?
- P.Dr. Bandar: growing impact and it s is the source of information but it is less credible although it spreads very fast. We need national success stories to reinforce positive utilization of social communication and media and reinforce the individual responsibility, we also need to localize social media production and services.

### **Saudi Press Agency**

7. The ministry established SPA in 1971 to serve as a central body to collect and distribute local and international news in the kingdom and abroad. How is SPA managing its main goal with the advancement of technology and transparency of information?
- SPA: Quick coverage, to be present in social events, and adopting a new language that is more direct and matches the mentality of the new generation.
8. SPA is the main source of news in the Kingdom: what is SPA policy when it comes to local political news?
- SPA: Every media outlet in the world has a systematic strategy that it works according to it. As who is eager to succeed and achieve satisfactory results, must study, manage, and put a long-term strategy to ensure lasting in competition and stay competitive amid momentum with the enormous number of media outlet globally. People have become participants in this competition thanks to modern technology, which makes regular people editors, or what is knows now "citizen journalist", a lot of the events today reach us through regular citizens but it lacks professionalism which transmit credibility, objectivity, presenting the truth with all its dimensions in front of the viewer. Therefore, the role of media agencies remains important and pivotal as the main source of news.

We at SPA are keen on accuracy and objectivity. We work on covering all the events that is organized within the Kingdom and outside. With respect to the countries polices and interest locally and internationally. Then we spread our news in all our Internet sites and accounts on social media, and text messages through phones so it can reach different countries. We investigate accuracy in reading and writing our news with depth, to be transferred with full transparency, taking into account the clarity of vocabulary, to avoid disturbing the readers mind with ambiguity who is exposed to a great deal of information through social media and many of them lacks credibility, which is the foundation of any journalistic news, and at times in its content is against our countries policy.

9. SPA has forged cooperation and exchanged news agreements with five world news agencies: Reuters, the Associated Press (AP), the United Press International (UPI), the Agence France Press (AFP), and the Dutch Press Agency (DPA). How does SPA react when the Saudi government or a new policy is being covered from a negative angle?
  - SPA: When any agency addresses the Government of the Kingdom, whether hose you mentioned or other, we do not interfere in the liberation of agencies and their polices in editing news about Saudi Arabia, but when it dealing with Saudi affairs or leaders in a negative way contrary to the reality, then it is our national duty as professionals to monitor the published material or report and present it to the officials, and this is the case all around the world

### **Global Influence and Advancement**

10. Saudi Arabia is the leader in MENA media, but when it comes to its local governmental media, it is not on the same level. Why is this the case?
  - Dr.Saud Kateb: governmental channels can not be compared to private channels because the governmental represents the country and considers traditions more so it is difficult to compare because it has its target.
  - A: professionalism. Our atmosphere is evacutive and Saudies when they get the opportunity of a better pay it attracts them. So we don't have materialistic or moral appreciation. In 2009 one of our undersecretary said I don't believe in electronic newspaper although the King him self recognized it, how don't you!!
  - SPA: we cannot be sure about the extent of influence and success of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East as the issue needs more research from the media experts.
  - The local culture which forces a lot of restrictions on local media, in addition to the unqualified and unskilled people within the field, also lack of training.
11. What do you think the main challenges on local media are?
  - P.Dr.Bandar: establishing credibility and keeping pace with developments in technology and developing media at the same time protecting the society from negative impact.

- Dr.Saud Kateb: the biggest challenge to print media is new media and this is a global thing, local print media is facing challenges because of new technologies and new generation they don't read paper anymore, and this is the biggest challenge. The second is the availability of qualification.
  - A: the information is not available and this is the reason behind people seeking other sources for answers which as we saw created extremism and wrong understanding, at the same time our religious institution is busy with non important issues. The second challenge is training a lot of our employees lack developing their skills, they are not even capable of gaining training because they can't afford it because the pay is low, what is also important is our journalists don't have the safekeeping mentality in how they present the information.
  - The deviation which is present in social media, the unqualified skills of journalists in traditional media, and the immigration of the qualified people to national stations because of the financial attraction that is not offered in local media.
12. To what extent do you believe that Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube compete with the Kingdom's traditional media outlets?
- P.Dr.Bandar: a strong competitor due to its advancement with technology and lack of censorship, but traditional media will continue as long as it has the credible and distinct information, but it is not alone in the field anymore.
  - Dr.Saud Kateb: a big competitor and it is killing print media in a very slow way.
  - It is a big competitor, and its is influencing the public opinion and their views and in many cases it has exceeded traditional media.
13. What is the impact of social media from a political and security point of view on local policies?
- P.Dr. Bandar: Social media is a strong influencer due to its speed, globalism and easy utilization to good or bad to benefit or harm, and the challenge is how can we employ it to our national interest
14. How does the global influence of leading media outlets inside the Kingdom compare with London based Saudi-owned dailies such as *Al-Hayat* and *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, and the online news site *Elaph*?

### **KACST Policy**

1. One of KACST's main responsibilities is both to propose national policy for science and technology development and to propose plans to implement development. Would you please clarify these roles?
2. In its long-term vision, KACST wants to join with advanced knowledge-based economies by 2025 in areas of highly competitive science, technology and

innovation (STI) ecosystem. How far has KACST progressed in achieving this goal and does current government policy help or hinder you in achieving this goal?

3. In shaping the Kingdom's policy governing the Internet and digital content, do KACST officials consult with other GCC governments or international bodies?

### **Global Influence and Advancement**

4. What is the impact of global digital content on local policies?
5. How has digital control changed in response to the Arab uprising?
6. Could you please comment on what KACST is doing to protect the Kingdom from the worldwide threat of cyber attack?

### **Censorship**

7. To what extent does the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia censor the Internet, and how are censorship decisions made?
8. Approximately 35% of the Kingdom is under the age of 15 and these young people use the Internet and social media daily. How does KACST policy differentiate youth's casual use of the Internet from more serious Internet threats?
9. Some argue that the main purpose of the filtering system is to block politically sensitive information? How would you reply to this?
10. If I try to access Wikipedia in Saudi, I will get through, but the site has been blocked and unblocked many times with no explanation or effective recourse. To cope with the world's current advancements in technology- where access to information is easier than ever before- do you think this strategy creates confusion?
11. Saudi has the highest per capita Youtube use in the world. In April 2014, the news shows that Saudi wants to regulate local Youtube channels, to ensure they adhere to local cultural values, traditions and values according to Islamic teaching. Could you tell me more about it? Some argue that traditions are diverse within the Saudi society and Islamic teachings are based on interpretation. How do you define that based on policy?
12. An attempt to view a blocked page inside the Kingdom will return a page that says: "Access to the requested URL is not allowed. Please fill out an unblocking request if you believe the requested page should not be blocked."

KACST has recently given the responsibility of blocking and unblocking sites to the Communication and Information Technology Commissions, so KACST is acting as a technical organization that receives requests. Why was this decision made?

13. KACST has formed partnerships with some of the world's leading university research centers including Cambridge University and MIT. How have these institutions reacted to the role KACST plays in the control and censorship of the Kingdom's Internet?

## **Education**

### **Education Policy**

1. The government has allocated 9 billion riyals for the (Tatweer) development project, which started in 2008, but teachers and parents complain in the press that they can't feel it in the classroom? How do you explain that?
  - There is clear problem in media and its credibility in presenting the street especially when it comes to the teachers and educators. A decade has passed since this project was launched and the achievement that has been reached does not match with what the government is spending. The project was not based on a clear master plan allowing it to achieve specific and clear strategy. And the educators were not consulted and their views did not reach the media, in addition there was no studies to evaluate the project, and how it will reach classrooms.
  - I think the issue of education development is a holistic case and needs the involvement of all segments in the society from parents and those interested in education from a side, and ministry employees from the other side too. There also needs to be a strategic plan that covers all aspects of the educational process.
  - The project did not deliver what was expected, its isolation from media worsened the case. It also lacked transparency and the project was distant from its Beneficial's, limiting it to certain schools and not to the public in general, and this needs evaluation and questioning those responsible of the project.
2. The need to add physical education has been voiced in the local media in addition the Shura Council has also advised the Ministry to consider allowing girls to participate in physical education and athletics in girls' schools (so long as dress code and gender segregation is enforced). What do you think of this proposal?
  - In this country we have a mentality that is programed to reject anything new and a lot of people within the government tend to follow this mentality or show courtesy to this mentality, they believe that they should be different than all the nations around the world, they hold a masculine view ignoring women's rights and the studies that recommend physical activity to both sexes this country we have a mentality that is programed to reject anything new.



- I think permitting girls to participate in physical education is a strategic need as long as it is under the umbrella of Islamic values, which is segregation and following the conservative dress code. Especially that health reports emphasized the importance of physical activity in schools for girls.
  - Physical education is an important activity for girls in schools, it also has a positive influence on health education in general. The ministry has recently established a committee to study how to equip schools with what it needs to prepare them to start offering physical education.
3. What is the Saudi media role when it comes to the interaction of education policy with the political decision?
- There is a big gap in sustaining educational policy and the political decision in the Saudi media, there are a lot of policies that contradicts with the political policy specially that the educational did not change or develop for example the spending on education exceeds the ten industrial countries based on the competition report but the results in our education is disappointing.
  - Definitely, the Saudi media has a big role in spreading education and change in the educational system. Media is considered one of the tools of education or an alternative to mass education.
  - The media has played an important role in activating the political policies, after terrorism the media has encouraged the educational institutions to respond and be active with the political decision to fight radicalism and become more diverse in the educational methods and to fight hidden curriculums that support radical thoughts.
  -

### **Curriculum**

4. After 9/11, attention on radicalization in Saudi society was seen as the force behind educational reform. The religious curriculum in Saudi education system was criticized and blamed, what is your response to that?
- Our problem here is from the reactions; we have a report that was published from the ministry of foreign affairs it pointed that radicalization is a product of our education. And from my own point of view, radicalization goes back to managerial, financial problems that control the citizens' benefit and service, and blame should not be on Ministry of education only but the Youth Welfare, Ministry of Social Affairs, and the other service governmental institutions are also part of the reform.
  - Education reform has many political, religious, social and financial aspects, so any radicalization in education is a reflection of radicalization in politics or religion. And there is no harm in reforming radicalization, because reform is a continuous issue.
  - The event of 9/11 was like a wake up call to the Saudi nation, and realize the danger that lives in it. I think that terrorism and radicalization are the main force behind reform in education and it made it a political responsibility. And I don't

think it's an accusation but a reality. Our leaders and the decisions that are taken are a result of their maturity and right thinking.

5. According to a report that was published in 2007 by McKinsey & Company, Saudi Arabia ranked third to last world wide in mathematics and science. What is the Ministry doing to improve its science and math curricula?
  - Yes, the results were not promising and very disturbing but it gave us a wake up call on our curriculums and there was also a report on 2003 with the same results, the question is what did the ministry do after 11 years to fill the gap; based on personnel conscientiousness that is not based on scientific and studied strategic plan, and decision makers in education did not have a serious desire to develop the education, what is surprising is there are countries that suffer from financial and political problems but exceeded us in the ranking.
  - The ministry is providing substantial efforts in developing both the math and sciences, perhaps the obvious example is the Math development center in King Saud University, and in my opinion currently Saudi is in a good rank due to the attention given to math and sciences.
  - Changing and developing the math and science curriculums is the best global experience. The ministry is intensifying the classes of both subjects, also training the teachers on the new curriculums, in addition to the interest of international tests, and participating high talented achievers in innovation associations.

### **Education and Media**

6. How do you describe the relation between the local media (traditional, new) with the governmental educational institutions?
  - The relation is very weak, educators are absent on what is happening in the media.
  - There is no strategic relation between the media and the education institutions, although there are personal attempts to expose issues in the media.
  - The relation is contaminated with a lot of doubts and sensitivity, the ministry of education thought for many years that the media is deliberately picking on the weaknesses and mistakes in the education system without realizing that it being criticized for the sake of reform and development of the society, which is part of the media role in voicing the citizens voice, and till this day the relation did not develop much.
7. The Ministry hosted "The First International Conference on Media Education" in 2007; however there is still a shortage in local media education. Why?
  - The role is still below standard, even the Ministry of education has hosted a conference "what do educators want" in 1997.
  - The role still needs to mature, although the kingdom hosted it but it was not translated in practice to policies and programs
  - Unfortunately, the collaboration was suppose to grow but the educators participation in media was restricted when the ministry required permission for

any one who will be present in media outlets and this closed the door of participation and criticism.

8. There have been significant issues related to teacher appointments. Some teachers have been given jobs three hours or more from their homes. The media has written extensively on this. How influential have media reports been in modifying or influencing how teachers get appointed?
  - In my opinion it's not the ministry fault, the blame falls on the teacher or her guardian who accepts to take those long commutes.
  - The ministry is providing support in dealing with those tragic accidents, and there needs to be a strategic plan that includes a center or housing for teachers who are appointed in remote locations.
  - Saudi women situation and her limited options in the work force is creating pressure on the ministry of education, it is the biggest employer of women in the country and it is natural to appoint teachers in rural areas to satisfy the goal of providing education to all saudies.
9. When negative issues related to the ministry are published, how does the ministry react? Would you be willing to give examples?
  - Seriously and with firmness, and it should be more active than reactive, and not be influenced by topics that doesn't not benefit the student.
  - There is no plan or clear program to react to negative coverage, although the public relation department is supposed to handle and respond and take this role in building a strategic proposal.
  - There is attention to issues presented in the media, but there are also people who try to minimize the importance of mass opinion and its role in positive change.

## **Women**

### Women Right

1. The government has issued policies to empower women, yet the administration policies are still limiting her;
  - a) Gain an approval for to continue her studies from her male guardian or
  - b) Open a business or
  - c) Issue a legal document or
  - d) Approval to travel

What do you think of these administrative policies?
- Yes, I think it is important to eradicate all those policies that are limiting women from becoming full citizens and enable them to achieve empowerment.

2. International media deals with woman driving as a symbol for giving women their right, do you think is a political or social decision? And please explain
  - The decision today is a political one, because the society has matured and is capable to receive the decision and deal with it. There were a lot of delayed decisions in the past that were viewed as social decisions and once the policy was issued we discovered that the rejection was superficial and people were ready for it, for example women participating in the Shoura council was delayed and the argument was the society was not ready, but when it happened people were happy and driving is the same case.
3. The government gave women high ranked positions but at the same time she is not allowed to follow up with her governmental matters unless through the women's department "if available" within governmental institutions? What are your views on the matter?
  - There is progress in cases and fall behindhand in other cases. Women empowerment is not moving according to sequential steps or planned strategy, for this reason we find that Saudi women are participating in the Olympics but are not allowed to study physical education in schools. The government should look at women as a full citizen and facilitate her services as an independent person in the society, instead of her need for a stick to prop on.

#### Olympic participation

4. Sarah Attar, the first Saudi female to compete in the Olympics, was born in the USA and was on a university track team in the Los Angeles area. She wanted to represent Saudi Arabia at the Olympics as a way of inspiring women. "For women in Saudi Arabia, I think this can really spark something to get more involved in sports, to become more athletic," she said. "Maybe in the next Olympics, we can have a very strong team to come." This month the Shura Council recommended that the long-standing ban on sports at girls' schools be lifted in the Kingdom.

Would you please share your views on this recommendation? Do you feel the Kingdom should encourage and sponsor women to compete in the Olympic games?

- I do agree with the recommendation, and I don't see anything wrong with women participating as long as it is limited to sports that she can wear her conservative cloths, and participation should not be for the sake of only participating but also because they will achieve good results.

## بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الأمير الدكتور بندر بن عبدالله بن مشاري آل سعود  
حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ... وبعد :-  
انني أحد مبتعثي جامعة الملك سعود للدكتوراه "قسم الإعلام" و حاليا في مرحلة كتابة رسالة الدكتوراه بعنوان "الإعلام و تأثيره على النظم الداخلية في المملكة العربية السعودية" في جامعة رتكرز، بالولايات المتحدة الامريكية. الهدف من هذا الخطاب هو طلب لقاء من سموكم وتحديد الوقت المناسب لجدولكم (30 دقيقة) ، وفي حال يتعذر عليكم فيإمكانكم إعادة الأجوبة عبر الإيميل. ومرفق لسموكم الأسئلة التي سوف تطرح ، علما بأن الأجوبة فقط للغرض الأكاديمي.  
أتطلع موافقة سموكم لما يعرف عن شخصكم من جهود مميزة لخدمة الوطن. شاكرة و مقدرة حسن تعاونكم و دعمكم للعلم و أهله. ويسعدني أن أتلقي مرثيات و تقويم سعادتكم ليس فقط في الإجابة بل أيضا في صياغة، حذف ، إضافة الأسئلة.

دمتم و الله الموفق.

ابنتكم

عهود بنت سلطان الشهيل

وعليكم السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته وشكرا لحرصكم واطمني لكم التوفيق في دراستكم وأسأل الله أن ينفع بكم وبما تبحثون فيه..  
تجدون أدناه إجابات لعلها تؤدي الغرض وتكون حسب توقعاتكم وإذا كان لديكم أي استفسار فيمكن التواصل معنا بالهاتف وبالتوفيق..

- بندر

### الأسئلة:

1- كيف ترى توافق تطور النظم في الإعلام السعودي مع التطور الاجتماعي؟  
بشكل عام مقبول ويحتاج لتسريع وأن يكون من خلال عمل مؤسسي بحيث تكون الجهة مسؤولة عن المبادرة بإصدار التشريعات والنظم اللازمة ومواكبة للتطورات ولا تنتظر جهات أخرى أو حدوث طلب عالي من المجتمع أو القطاع العام أو الخاص ثم تبدأ مشوار التشريع. في المقابل لدينا تأخر في تحويل التشريعات إلى واقع وتنفيذها فأحيانا تصدر التنظيمات والتشريعات ولكن يتأخر تطبيقها بسبب عدم وجود إمكانيات بشرية لدى الجهة المسؤولة عن التنفيذ وأضرب مثلا لذلك بالتشريعات والقرارات الخاصة بحماية المجتمع من المحتوى الأخلاقي المسيء عبر وسائل التقنية والإنترنت فلا زالت الجهة المناط بها التنفيذ وهي هيئة الإعلام المرئي والمسموع في بداية المشوار رغم مضي فترة ليست قصيرة على صدور القرارات من مجلس الوزراء.

2- هل لك أن تعلق على تأثير وزارة الداخلية على السياسة الإعلامية للمملكة؟

وزارة الداخلية مثل غيرها من الوزارات تساهم في صياغة السياسات عموماً والإعلامية واحدة منها ويهم وزارة الداخلية الجوانب المتعلقة بحماية المجتمع ومكوناته ولحمته الوطنية وأمنه وعدم استغلال الإعلام في الإساءة لذلك.

3- ما هو تأثير المحتوى الرقمي العالمي على السياسات المحلية؟

تأثيره متزايد وهو مصدر من مصادر المعلومة ولكنه أقل موثوقية برغم سرعته وانتشاره، ونحتاج لقصاص نجاح وطنية تعزز التوظيف الأيجابي لوسائل التواصل والإعلام الرقمي وتعزز المسؤولية الفردية، كما نحتاج لتوطين صناعة خدمات التواصل الاجتماعي.

4- في رأيك ما هي التحديات الرئيسة التي تواجه وسائل الإعلام المحلية؟

من أهم التحديات: تحقيق المصادقية ومواكبة التغيرات التقنية وتطور صناعة الإعلام وفي نفس الوقت حماية المجتمع من أي آثار سلبية.

5- إلى أي مدى في رأيك تمثل وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية مثل "فيس بوك" و" تويتر" و" يوتيوب" منافسة لمنافذ وسائل الاعلام التقليدية بالمملكة؟

منافس قوي بحكم توافقها مع التقنيات الحديثة وعدم وجود رقابة ولكن ستبقى وسائل الإعلام التقليدية طالما أن لديها معلومة صحيحة ومتميزة تقدمها ولكنها لم تعد الوحيدة في الساحة.

6- ما هي أبعاد شبكات التواصل من الناحية الأمنية و السياسية على أنظمة المملكة العربية السعودية؟

شبكات التواصل مؤثر قوي بحكم السرعة والعالمية وسهولة توظيفها للخير والشر وللنفع والضرر، والتحدي هو كيف نتمكن من توظيفها في المصالح الوطنية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية ولرفع الإنتاجية أكثر من جعلها لقتل الوقت ونشر الإشاعات والتنازع بين مجاهيل، لذلك نحتاج استراتيجية ناضجة ونحتاج صناعة وطنية لخدمات التواصل الاجتماعي الإلكتروني لتوطين التطبيقات والبيانات.

## الإجابة على أسئلة الباحثة عهد الشهيل

### ❁ السؤال الأول :

قامت وزارة الثقافة والإعلام بإنشاء وكالة الأنباء السعودية عام 1971هـ، بهدف أن تكون جهازاً مركزياً لجمع وتوزيع الأخبار المحلية والعالمية داخل المملكة وخارجها، كيف يتسنى للوكالة تحقيق هدفها الرئيس في ظل ما حدث من تقدم تكنولوجي وشفافية في المعلومات؟.

تأسست وكالة الأنباء السعودية (واس) بموجب أمر ملكي صدر عام 1390هـ / 1971م، لكي تكون جهازاً مركزياً لجمع وتوزيع الأخبار المحلية والعالمية داخل المملكة وخارجها، من خلال كوادِر وطنية مؤهلة يعملون على مدار الساعة يومياً، ملتزمين بمعايير الدقة والموضوعية في صناعة المادة الإعلامية، يساندتهم في ذلك نشاط إخباري مكثف يرد من مكاتب (واس) داخل المملكة وخارجها، ومن مراسليها، وماتبثه وكالات الأنباء العربية والإقليمية والدولية.

و تمكنت "واس" من امتلاك تقنية اتصالات متقدمة أهلتها لأن تكون أول وكالة أنباء عربية تبث خدماتها عبر الأقمار الاصطناعية، كما قدمت موقعاً على الانترنت ([www.spa.gov.sa](http://www.spa.gov.sa)) أتاح الفرصة للعالم بأن يتابع كل ما هو جديد عن المملكة لحظة بلحظة والأحداث العالمية بثلاث لغات هي : ( العربية، والإنجليزية، والفرنسية) مدعمة بصور فوتوغرافية عالية الدقة، علاوة على التواصل الإخباري مع المتابعين عبر شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، وخدمة رسائل الجوال "SMS".

وفي السابع من شهر رجب عام 1433هـ الموافق 28 مايو 2012م، صدر قرار مجلس الوزراء بتحويل وكالة الأنباء السعودية إلى هيئة عامة، ليكون ذلك داعماً قوياً لها لتطوير عملها الإداري المعني بتنظيم خططها ومشروعاتها الحالية والمستقبلية، والإخباري لتكون منطلقاتها أوسع وأشمل على المستويين الداخلي والخارجي.

كما اهتمت (واس) بالنهوض بمستوى منسوبيها من خلال تطوير مهاراتهم في مركز التدريب الإعلامي في مقرها الرئيس بالرياض، وإحاقهم في دورات إعلامية، وفنية، وإدارية في بعض مراكز التدريب المحلية والعالمية للاستفادة من خبرات هذه المراكز في كل ما يفيد تطور عمل منسوبيها، فضلاً عن أنها تقيم العديد من الدورات الإعلامية

لعدد من منسوبي الإدارات الحكومية في مجالات صناعة الخبر، والتقرير، والإعلام الجديد، والتصوير، وغيرها من فنون العمل الصحفي.

وتتابع (واس) سيرها الإخباري المتلاحق التطورات في وسائل الاتصالات ونقل المعلومات، وما أحدثته من تنافس إعلامي كبير بين مختلف أجهزة الإعلام المرئية والمقروءة والمسموعة، وتحرص على الاستفادة من كل وسيلة جديدة لخدمة عملها من أجل ضمان سرعة وصول المعلومة إلى المتابعين بكل أبعادها المكتوبة، والمصورة، والمتحركة أيضا عبر استخدام برامج الوسائط المتعددة، وتسهيل عملية الوصول كذلك من خلال نقل كل معلومة عبر تطبيقات الأجهزة الذكية، أخذا بعين الاعتبار أهمية نقل المعلومة بمهنية وموضوعية متقنة لا تخل في مضمون المادة نفسها، وفي الوقت ذاته تضع المتابع في محل الحدث بوضوح ومصداقية.

وتعمل "واس" على إعداد نسخة مطورة من برنامج ( نيوزوايز ) أطلق عليه برنامج ( نيوزوايز 2 ملتي ميديا ) الذي يطبق خدمات الويب 2، والاستفادة من برامج الوسائط المتعددة التي تعرض الفيديو، والصورة، والمادة المكتوبة على موقع الوكالة، علاوة على الارتباط بأدوات شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، وخدمة رسائل الجوال الإخبارية، وتنظيم برامج أرشفة المعلومات، والأخبار، سواء التي للبحث العام، أو التي للبحث الخاص.

وتتنتظر وكالة الأنباء السعودية، الانتقال إلى المبنى الجديد في حي الصحافة بمدينة الرياض، حيث سيلبي احتياجات الوكالة ويساعد على أداء العاملين على نحو أفضل، من خلال تجهيزه بأحدث المعدات التقنية التي تساعد "واس" على تأدية مهامها الإعلامية بشكل متطور.

## ❁ السؤال الثاني :

تعد وكالة الأنباء السعودية المصدر الرئيس للأخبار بالمملكة ، ما هي سياسة الوكالة فيما يتعلق بالأخبار السياسية المحلية؟.

لكل وسيلة إعلامية في العالم منهجية تسير عليها لاسيما التي تتبع المؤسسات الإعلامية المقروءة، أو المسموعة، أو المرئية، أو الإلكترونية، إذ إن الذي يتوق للنجاح وتحقيق النتائج المرضية لابد أن يدرس، ويدير، ويضع له استراتيجية طويلة المدى تكفل له البقاء في المنافسة وسط الزخم الهائل في عدد وسائل الإعلام في دول العالم التي أصبح فيها الإنسان مشاركا ومنافسا حقيقيا في الحراك الإعلامي، بفضل التطبيقات الحديثة لأجهزة الاتصال التي جعلت منه رئيس تحرير صحيفة الفرد أو ما يُعرف في أدبيات الإعلام ( الصحفي المواطن)، فالعديد الأحداث التي تصلنا الآن من أفراد عاديين، لكنها



بطبيعة الحال تفتقد في بعض مضامينها إلى المهنية العالية التي تنقل بمصداقية، وموضوعية، وتضع الحقيقة كاملة من مختلف أبعادها أمام المتابع، ولذا يظل دور وكالات الأنباء مهمًا ومحوريًا في نقل الأخبار ومتابعة الأحداث، وهي المصدر الأول للأخبار كافة.

ونحن في "واس" نحرص على الدقة والموضوعية في نقل الأخبار، فنعمل على تغطية كل المناسبات والنشاطات التي تنظم داخل المملكة وخارجها، وتعبّر مضامينها عن توجهات الدولة واهتماماتها الداخلية والخارجية، وفي مختلف المجالات، ونبثها عبر موقعنا في الإنترنت، وحساباتنا في شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، ورسائل الجوال (SMS) لتصل إلى مختلف دول العالم، ونتحري في كتابة هذه الأخبار قراءة الحدث بعمق واسع، ليتم نقله للمتابع بكل شفافية، مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار الوضوح في المفردات التي يتم فيها كتابة الخبر، حتى لا يُشوّش على ذهن القارئ الذي يتعرض خلال الـ 24 ساعة لكم مهول من المعلومات عبر شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، والأجهزة الذكية ويفتقد الكثير منها إلى المصداقية التي تعد الأساس في بناء أي خبر صحفي، وربما يكون في مضمون هذه المعلومات أساليب ممنهجة ضد سياسة بلادنا.

### ❁ السؤال الثالث :

لقد وقعت الوكالة اتفاقيات تعاون مع خمس وكالات أنباء عالمية هي "رويترز" و"الأسوشيتدبرس" و"اليونيتدبرس إنترناشيونال" و"وكالة الأنباء الفرنسية" و"وكالة الأنباء الألمانية"، وكيف تتصرف وكالة الأنباء السعودية عندما تكون تغطية هذه الوكالات للحكومة السعودية أو إحدى سياساتها الجديدة من زاوية سلبية؟.

كما قلنا لكل وسيلة إعلامية إستراتيجية خاصة بها، ونحن لدينا اتفاقيات تعاون وتبادل إخباري مع العديد من وكالات الأنباء العالمية، بما في ذلك الوكالات العالمية "رويترز"، و"الأسوشيتدبرس"، و"اليونيتدبرس إنترناشيونال"، و"وكالة الأنباء الفرنسية"، و"وكالة الأنباء الألمانية"، ووكالة "إيترتاس" الروسية، في حين ترأس "واس" حاليًا دورة المؤتمر الدولي لوكالات الأنباء، ونظمت في شهر نوفمبر 2013م بالرياض المؤتمر الدولي الرابع لوكالات الأنباء العالمية تحت عنوان (إعادة تشكيل وكالة أنباء في القرن الحادي والعشرين) بحضور أكثر من 70 وكالة أنباء، وتم خلال هذه المحفل الإعلامي تبادل الخبرات في المجال الإعلامي الخاص بعمل الوكالات في ظل التطور الذي نعيشه في وسائل الاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات، وحينما نتطرق أي

وكالة سواء ممن ذكرتي أو غيرها لحكومة المملكة بشكل عام فنحن لا نتدخل في سياسة تحرير هذه الوكالة وفي طريقة طرحها الإخباري عن المملكة، ولكن حينما تتناول الشأن السعودي أو القيادة بشكل سلبي ينافي الواقع، فإن واجبنا الإعلامي الوطني يحتم علينا رصد هذا الخبر أو التقرير الذي نشر، وعرضه على المسؤولين للنظر فيه، إن رغبوا في إصدار بيان إعلامي يوضح حقيقة المعلومة التي نقلت، وهذا الشيء معمول به في بقية وكالات الأنباء سواء الوطنية أو التجارية التي تمثل سياسة بلد معين.

### ❁ السؤال الرابع:

تأتي المملكة العربية السعودية في صدارة وسائل الإعلام في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا ، لكن عندما يتعلق الأمر بوسائل إعلامها المحلية لا نجدها على نفس المستوى ، ما السبب من ذلك ؟.

لا نستطيع أن نجزم بمدى تأثير وتصدر المملكة وسائل الإعلام في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا، إذ إن الموضوع يحتاج إلى المزيد من الدراسات المتخصصة في مجال الإعلام، أما ما يتعلق بتأثير الخبر المحلي عبر الوسائل الإعلامية التي تملكها المملكة على منطقة الشرق الأوسط وأفريقيا، فإن ذلك يعود لنوعية كل وسيلة وإستراتيجيتها الإخبارية التي تتبنى فيها أساليب وبرامج تختلف باختلاف أهداف كل وسيلة، فعلى سبيل المثال القنوات الرسمية لكل دولة قد لا يصل تأثيرها بشكل قوي إلى الدول الأخرى التي يصل بثها إليها إلا على الجنسيات التي تنتمي لها، ويعود ذلك لتنوع برامج القنوات الفضائية التي تبث، وامتلاك المشاهد القدرة على اختيار ما يلبي احتياجاته بضغطة زر، لذا نجده المشاهد في المناطق التي ذكرتها لا يهتم الشأن المحلي في المملكة بقدر ما يهتم شأن بلاده، أو الشأن السياسي في المنطقة الذي تقدمه قنوات سعودية أخرى كالإخبارية، والعربية، وغيرها، حيث تملك قدرات فنية، وبشرية، وإستراتيجية إعلامية تخولها الحديث والانطلاق في معالجة مختلف القضايا دون أي قيود معينة، لكن الوسائل الإعلامية المحلية الرسمية تصل إلى مناطق الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا في أوقات معينة من السنة وذلك خلال شهر رمضان المبارك الذي يحرص فيه المسلمون على متابعة صلاة التراويح والقيام في المسجد الحرام والمسجد النبوي، علاوة على مشاهدة موسم الحج في شهر ذي الحجة، كون هذه المشاهد تنقل مباشرة عبر الأقمار الاصطناعية لجميع المسلمين، وخلال هذه المواسم الدينية يلتفت العالم للقنوات السعودية، وفيما يتعلق بالوسائل الأخرى كالصحف الورقية فأظن أن الانترنت وشبكات التواصل الاجتماعي قد أسهمت في إيصال رسالتها إلى تلك الدول، لكن عامل اللغة يبقى حائلا أمام انتشارها بالشكل المطلوب، ونوعية البرامج التي تلبي

رغبات مواطني تلك الدول، بينما وكالة الأنباء السعودية، لديها مكتبان في كل من مصر، وتونس يعمل فيهما طاقم تحريري سعودي ومن هذين البلدين، لنقل أخبار مصر، وتونس، وكل ما يتعلق بالنشاط السعودي فيهما، علاوة على وجود مراسلين في المغرب، والجزائر، وموريتانيا، والسودان، ويقومون بنفس الدور الذي تقوم به المكاتب، وتتبادل "واس" مع وكالات أنباء تلك الدول الأخبار على مدار الساعة من خلال شراكتها الخاصة، حيث نطلع على أخبارهم وهم يطلعون على أخبارنا، وتنقل صحفنا ما ننقله عنهم وهم كذلك، بالإضافة إلى ما يبث عبر موقع وكالات الأنباء العربية (فانا)، إلى جانب وجود (واس) في العديد من الدول الأفريقية عبر إفاد المندوبين لتغطية بعض الأحداث المهمة، ومايرد لها من مصادرها ومن بينها السفارات والملحقيات.

### ❁ السؤال الخامس:

في رأيك ما هي التحديات الرئيسة التي تواجه وسائل الإعلام المحلية؟.

التحديات التي تواجه وسائل الإعلام المحلية في اعتقادي متعددة، لكن أبرزها القدرة على البقاء في الريادة الجماهيرية في ظل منافسة وسائل الإعلام مع وسائل الاتصال الحديثة، وبروز مصطلح "الصحفي المواطن" الذي أصبح يصدر أخباره وينقلها دون المرور على حارس البوابة أو دون الحاجة لوسيلة إعلامية تزوده بما يلبي شغفه المعلوماتي، إضافة إلى ذلك من الممكن أن تواجه بعض الوسائل خاصة المؤسسات الصحفية انخفاضاً في حركة الإعلان التجاري الذي يعد أحد مواردها المالية، إذ سيتجه المعلنون إلى الوسائل الأسهل والأقل تكلفة في الوصول إلى جمهورهم بغض النظر عن نوعية الوسيلة وأهميتها، وسينعكس ذلك الأثر سلباً على أداء الصحفيين، وبقاء الصحيفة في مستواها المعهود قبل ظهور وسائل الاتصال الحديثة.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك فإن وسائل الإعلام قد تعاني من إمكانية استثمار مواكبة تقنيات أدوات وسائل الاتصال، والمواكبة هنا ليست في اقتناء أحدث الأجهزة وحسب، بل في كيفية إيجاد الصحفي المتمكن من توظيف هذه الأدوات في إنجاح عمله بمهنية عالية بإيصال رسالته سواء في تغطية الحدث أو كتابة الخبر، فضلاً عن قدرته في قراءة الأحداث وفهم أبعادها وتأثيراتها وفهم طبيعة متلقي الرسالة المستهدف، وربطها الربط المنطقي في كل ما ينقل من معلومة حتى لا يحدث تشويشاً ذهنياً لدى المتابع، ويعتمد تجاوز هذا التحدي على مدى نجاح الجامعات في تحسين جودة مخرجات خريجي كليات وأقسام الإعلام بكل فروعه، إذ إن البعض لا توجد لديه الرغبة الأكيدة في العمل الصحفي الاحترافي الذي يظل بشكل يومي على علاقة وطيدة ما بين نبض الشارع والقلم، وعلى مقربة من

اهتمامات الجمهور، وانشغالهم اليومي، ويستوعب أن من مهام الإعلام خدمة المجتمع وليست إثارته أو تظليله.

### ❁ السؤال السادس:

إلى أي مدى في رأيك تمثل وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية مثل "الفيس بوك" و"التويتر" و"اليوتيوب" منافسة لمنافذ وسائل الإعلام التقليدية بالمملكة؟.

الظهور المتعاقب والتطور التقني للوسائل الإعلامية لم يلغ الوسائل السابقة، فالتلفزيون لم يلغ الإذاعة، والإنترنت لم يلغ الصحافة بل أسهم في تنوع إصداراتها فأصبح لديها نسختان ورقية وإلكترونية، كما أن وسائل شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي واليوتيوب لن تلغي الوسائل التقليدية، بل ستكون داعمة لانتشارها ووصلوها إلى مختلف شرائح المجتمع وأدوات من أدوات نجاحها، ووسائل الإعلام الجديد بعمومه، إن لم يكن لوسائل إعلامية تقليدية سعي جاد لاستيعابه، ومواكبته، واستخدامه، وإلا بالتأكيد سيكون هناك تأثيرات سلبية كبيرة على حضورها في كل جانب.

إلا أن هذه الوسائل الحديثة أجبرت الوسائل التقليدية على اختيار كوادرات متخصصة تجيد التعامل مع التقنيات الحديثة في برامج الاتصالات، وتتنقن استخدام أسلوب حديث يتوافق مع جمهور هذه التقنيات الذين معظمهم من الشباب، لأن جمهور اليوم أصبح منفتحاً على آلاف القنوات، فضلاً عن أن المعلومة ليست ملكاً لوسيلة، ما يعني أن أمر نقلها قد يرد من الصغير قبل الكبير ومن الفرد قبل المؤسسة، لكن المهم هنا أن هذه الوسائل الحديثة أجبرت الوسائل الإعلامية التقليدية على تحسين أدائها، والسعي لتناول طرق جذب جديدة لاستقطاب الجمهور، بغية كسب أكبر قدر ممكن منهم، وضمان البقاء في ميدان المنافسة.

### ❁ السؤال السابع:

ما هو حجم التأثير العالمي لمنافذ وسائل الإعلام الرائدة داخل المملكة مقارنة بالصحف السعودية اليومية التي تصدر في لندن مثل "الحياة" و"الشرق الأوسط" وموقع الأخبار الإلكتروني "إيلاف"؟.

لكل وسيلة إعلام محلية أسلوبها الخاص في تحقيق الوصول داخل المملكة وخارجها الذي يتسق مع منهجيتها وإستراتيجيتها، وهذا بطبيعة الحال لا يعني تقليل الشأن في أي وسيلة أخرى، وطرق التأثير في المتابع الخارجي ليست بالضرورة أن تكون في الطرح الإخباري السياسي، بل ربما تتجاوز ذلك في التقارير والقصص الصحفية أي من فنون العمل الصحفي التي تلفت مشاعر الإنسان من بين زخم الأحداث السياسية المشتعلة في منطقة الشرق الأوسط على سبيل المثال، فمتابع اليوم يتوق كثيرا إلى الأخبار والصور الخفيفة التي يستطيع تصفحها من هاتفه الخلوي دون فتح صفحات عريضة، في حين أن صحيفتي الحياة والشرق الأوسط، تتبع المنهج ذاته في مخاطبة جمهورها، فبطبيعة أخبارها التي تتناولها تختلف في عرضها ما بين طبعتيها المحلية والدولية لأن لكل طبعة جمهورها الخاص، ونفس الشيء ينطبق على موقع "إيلاف" الذي يعتمد في طرحه على التقارير والقصص الإخبارية الموسعة الفنية والسياسية، بالإضافة إلى الأخبار الخفيفة المسلية التي تلفت نظر شريحة كبيرة من الجمهور، ولا يهتم الموقع بالسرعة في نقل الخبر أو تغطية الحدث في وقته، بقدر ما يهتم بالتوسع في تفاصيله التي يسهب فيها من خلال التحليل، والتقرير، والمقال، والصورة، ويختلف هنا في إستراتيجيته عن الصحف والوكالات التي تعتمد في خطتها على صناعة الخبر وتغطية الحدث في وقته، ويبقى القول في الأخير أن لكل وسيلة طريقها الخاصة في التأثير من خلال حضورها التقليدي عبر طبعتها الورقية أو التلفزيونية أو الإذاعية أو من خلال مواقعهم الإلكترونية، وحساباتهم في شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي.

## فقرة التعليم

### الموضوع:

تأثير وسائل الإعلام على الأنظمة الداخلية في المملكة العربية السعودية ( الفترة ٢٠٠١ حتى ٢٠١٥ )

### الهدف:

الغرض من هذه الدراسة تقييم التأثير المباشر وغير المباشر لكل من وسائل الإعلام التقليدية والحديثة على وضع السياسات وتغييرها في المملكة العربية السعودية.

### المحاور:

- (a) السياسة التعليمية
- (b) المناهج
- (c) التعليم و وسائل الإعلام

### السياسة التعليمية

١. لقد خصصت حكومة خادم الحرمين الشريفين ٩ مليار ريال لمشروع "تطوير" الذي بدأ عام ٢٠٠٨، لكن المعلمين وأولياء الأمور يشكون على صفحات الجرائد من أنهم لا يشعرون بشيء من ذلك في قاعات الدرس. كيف توضح ذلك؟

هناك بالفعل إشكالية في الخطاب الإعلامي ومدى مصداقيته في نقل نبض الشارع وخاصة فئة المعلمين ومن في حكمهم من مديري ومترففين تربويين فلم يدعى على عمر المشروع ما يقارب عقداً من الزمن والخطوات التي تم التوصل إليها لا ترقى إلى البذل الذي صنحته الدولة في المشروع ، فالمشروع لم يبنى على (ماسة بلان) واضحة تمكنه من تحقيق استراتيجية واضحة ودقيقة ، ولم يتم استشارة المتخصصين في التربية وإيصال رأيهم إعلامياً ولم تتم هناك أي دراسة تقويمية لما أُنجز من عمر المشروع ، وكيفية وصوله إلى غرفة الصف.

٢. تناولت وسائل الإعلام الحاجة إلى إضافة التربية البدنية في المنهج الأساسي و ناقش مجلس الشورى وزارة التربية والتعليم إلى النظر في السماح للبنات بالمشاركة في أنشطة التربية البدنية ( طالما تمت مراعاة الزي المناسب والفصل بين الجنسين ) ما رأيكم في هذا الاقتراح؟

لدينا في هذا البلد فكر مؤدلج على رفض كل ما هو جديد وببسر خلف هذا الفكر الدهماء ، ويجد هذا السيار تأييد من كثير من مسؤولي الدولة مدارة ومجاملة لهذا الفكر الذي يرى أن هذا البلد متفرد ويجب أن يختلف مع كل أمم الحكون ، في النظرة الذكورية ملعياً بذلك حق العدل وحق المساواة وحق الحرية الشخصية ، ورافضاً نتائج وتوصيات الدراسات والتي توصي بالرياضة للجنسين .

٣. ما هو دور الاعلام السعودي في تفاعل النظم التعليمية مع القرارات السياسية؟

هناك فجوة إعلامية في الاعلام في المملكة بين النظم التعليمية وملائمة القرار السياسي فكثير من قرارات السياسة مخالفة للنظم التعليمية وخاصة أن سياسة التعليم في المملكة لم تتغير ولم تتحدد مع تطور النظم العالمية فالاندفاع في التعليم تجاوز العشر الدول الصناعية حسب تقرير التنافسية والنتائج مخيبة للآمال .

### المناهج

٤. بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر ، نظر البعض إلى أن الدافع وراء إصلاح منظومة التعليم كان مرده إلى التركيز على التطرف في المجتمع السعودي. ما هو ردكم على هذه الإتهامات؟

مشكلتنا هنا من ردود الأفعال فهناك تقرير خرج من الخارجية لمصح إلى أن التطرف سببه التعليم ، ومن وجهة نظري أن التطرف يعود إلى إشكاليات إدارية وإقتصادية تتحكم في مصالح الناس فيجب أن تشارك المؤسسات الحكومية في مصلحة المجتمع ولا يجب أن يقع اللوم على وزارة التربية فقط فالرئاسة العامة لرعاية الشباب ، ووزارة الشؤون الإجتماعية ، والإسكان ، والخدمة المدنية والقطاعات الخدمية الأخرى ليست بمنأى عن الإصلاح .

٥. حسب أحد التقارير التي نشرها مكتب "ماكينزي للاستشارات" عام ٢٠٠٧ جاءت المملكة في المركز الثالث بين آخر ثلاث دول في آخر القائمة في تدريس الرياضيات والعلوم. ما هي جهود الوزارة لتحسين مناهج الرياضيات والعلوم؟

نعم كانت النتائج غير مبشرة وأزعجتنا كثيراً لكننا أعطينا واهتمامنا التعليمي في مصر في العلوم والرياضيات للصف الثاني المتوسط وكانت عام 2003 ولكن السؤال ماذا فعلت الوزارة لردم تلك الفجوة بعد إحدى عشر عاماً لقد كانت جهوداً إيجابية لم تبن على خطة علمية دقيقة ومحكمة ولم يكن لدى مسؤولي التعليم الرغبة الجادة في التحسين والمستغرب في ذلك أن هناك دول تعاني من ويلات إقتصادية وسياسية سبقتنا في التصنيف للدراسة الدولية للعلوم والرياضيات.



### التعليم ووسائل الاعلام

٦. كيف تصفون علاقة الإعلام المحلي (التقليدي و الاجتماعي)\* بمؤسسات التعليم

الحكومية ؟ ومدى تأثيره إن وجد؟

العلاقة ضعيفة جداً فتربوية التربويين مغيبة تماماً  
عن ما يحدث في لغة الإعلام .

٧. لقد استضافت المملكة "المؤتمر الدولي الأول لتعليم الاعلام" عام ٢٠٠٧، بعد هذه

الإستضافة السباقه ، ما هو دور التربويون اعلاميا من وجهة نظركم؟

الدور لا زال دون المستوى ، وسبق أن دُخِلت وزارة  
التربية والتعليم في عام ١٤١٨هـ مؤتمر ماذا يريد التربويين

٨. هناك تغطية إعلامية كبيرة لحوادث المعلمات ، و يوجه الإعلام اللوم على التعيينان

التي لا تراعي البعد الجغرافي، مما يسبب أزمة مواصلات ، ما هو تفاعل الوزارة

إزاء ذلك؟

لا أحسن الوزارة أي خطأ وإنما الخطأ يقع على المعلمة أو  
على أمرها التي تقبل على نفسها تجثم عناء السفر  
يوميًا ومخاطرة ، وخاصة للمسافات البعيدة ، وتوقع على  
أقارب بأنها من سكان تلك المدينة أو القرية .

٩. من وجهة نظركم، كيف تتفاعل المؤسسات التعليمية مع القضايا السلبية المطروحة

بإعلاميا؟  
بجملانية وحزم وأن تكون هناك أفعال وليس ردود أفعال

و عدم التأثر بالقضايا التي لا تخدم مصلحة الطالب .

\*الإعلام التقليدي : جرائد ، صحف ، مجلات ، تلفاز - الإعلام الاجتماعي : تويتر ، يوتيوب ، فيس بوك

سعادة الأستاذة/عهود ، أستاذة (كيفية) مهينة ، وسعطي نتائج مبهرة وبالتوفيق

عبد الرحمن بن أحمد صالح  
 مدير إدارة التربية  
 شركة التربية

فقرة التعليم

حماة الملك سعود  
 في محرم المحلة السعوديه للعالم  
 العالي - وزارة التعليم العام

الموضوع:

(٢٠١٥)

الهدف:

الفرض من هذه الدراسة تقييم التأثير المباشر وغير المباشر لكل من وسائل الإعلام التقليدية والحديثة على وضع السياسات وتغييرها في المملكة العربية السعودية.

المحاور:

- (a) السياسة التعليمية
- (b) المناهج
- (c) التعليم و وسائل الإعلام

#### السياسة التعليمية

١. لقد خصصت حكومة خادم الحرمين الشريفين ٩ مليار ريال لمشروع "تطوير" الذي بدأ عام ٢٠٠٨، لكن المعلمين وأولياء الأمور يشكون على صفحات الجرائد من أنهم لا يشعرون بشيء من ذلك في قاعات الدرس. كيف توضح ذلك؟

أُعْتَدَ أَنَّهُ قَصْدُهُ التَّحْوِيلَ لِلْعَلَمِ فِي وَفْقِهِ شَامِلُهُ وَتَحْتَاجُ  
 إِلَى إِسْرَافِ ثَنَاتِ الْجَمْعِ لِأَسِيَا أَوْلِيَاءِ الْأُمُورِ وَالْمُهْمِّينَ فِي  
 ( الْمُخَصَّصِينَ الرَّبُوبِينَ فِي مِهْمَةٍ ، رِيْعَنِي وَرَأَى الْعَلَمِ فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ  
 وَالْقِيَارَاتِ الرَّبُوبِيَةِ فِي مِهْمَةٍ أُخْرَى . فَالْعَلَمِ مَحَلَّةٍ كَمَلِيَّةٍ تَطْوِيرِيَّةٍ  
 يَطْلُبُ وَضْعَ خَلْفَةِ إِسْرَافِيَّةٍ تَبَاجٍ كَانَتْ آيَادُ الْعَلَمِ الْعَلَمِيَّةِ

٢. تناولت وسائل الإعلام الحاجة إلى إضافة التربية البدنية في المنهج الأساسي وناقش مجلس الشورى وزارة التربية والتعليم إلى النظر في السماح للبنات بالمشاركة في أنشطة التربية البدنية ( طالما تمت مراعاة الزي المناسب والفصل بين الجنسين ) ما رأيكم في هذا الاقتراح؟

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
 البنية عليه السلام  
 من صور مبادئ التربية الإسلامية  
 من حيث عدم الاختلاط والتزام بالزينة المناسب ،  
 سيما في الدراسات الطبية أو صحت فاعلية احترام  
 طالبات المدارس من برنامج للتربية البدنية

٣. ما هو دور الاعلام السعودي في تفاعل النظم التعليمية مع القرارات السياسية؟

سأله انه الاعلام السعودي له دور كبير من ترفاعه  
 التطور والتغير من النظام التعليمي ، فالاعلام عمل  
 أحد وسائل التثقيف الاجتماعي ، كما أنه عمل أحد وسائل  
 أو بدائل التربية الجماهيرية .

### المناهج

٤. بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر ، نظر البعض إلى أن الدافع وراء إصلاح منظومة التعليم كان مرده إلى التركيز على التطرف في المجتمع السعودي. ما هو ردكم على هذه الإتهامات؟

١. إصلاح العلم نفسه لها أبعاد سياسية وإقتصادية ودينية  
 ٢. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ٣. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ٤. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ٥. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ٦. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ٧. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ٨. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ٩. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف  
 ١٠. من أهمها منه وكفنه ، ته هذا المظهر فانه العرف

٥. حسب أحد التقارير التي نشرها مكتب " ماكينزي للاستشارات " عام ٢٠٠٧ جاءت المملكة في المركز الثالث بين آخر ثلاث دول في آخر القائمة في تدريس الرياضيات والعلوم. ما هي جهود الوزارة لتحسين مناهج الرياضيات والعلوم؟

١. تبذل الوزارة جهوداً جسيمة من تطوير تدريس الرياضيات  
 ٢. والمعلم ولعل أبرز شاهد على ذلك جهود مركز تطوير تدريس  
 ٣. الرياضيات من جامعة الملك سعود ، ومن اعتقادنا انه  
 ٤. الملكة من الوقت المال من مركز مناسب نتيجة الاهتمام المتزايد  
 ٥. بجوانب المعلم والرياضيات

### التعليم ووسائل الاعلام

٦. كيف تصفون علاقة الإعلام المحلي (التقليدي و الاجتماعي) \* بمؤسسات التعليم الحكومية ؟ ومدى تأثيره إن وجد؟

لا توجد علاقة إيجابية بين الإعلام والتعليم  
لأنه هناك محاولات إيجابية لعرض قضايا التعليم  
على الإعلام

٧. لقد استضافت المملكة "المؤتمر الدولي الأول لتعليم الاعلام" عام ٢٠٠٧، بعد هذه الإستضافة السابقة ، ما هو دور التربويين اعلاميا من وجهة نظركم؟

دور التربويين اعلاميا لا يزال يقتصر الى النصح ،  
وبالرغم من انضمامه الى المملكة للمؤتمر الا انه ذلك  
لم يترجم الى الجانب التعليمي الى سياسات وبرامج

٨. هناك تغطية إعلامية كبيرة لحوادث المعلمات ، و يوجه الإعلام اللوم على التعيينات التي لا تراعي البعد الجغرافي، مما يسبب أزمة مواصلات ، ما هو تفاعل الوزارة إزاء ذلك؟

الوزارة تعلم بجهود إيجابية لتقديم التفاعل مع  
الحوادث مع أنه لا بد من جهود فاعلة إيجابية  
تتطلب للتخفيف من هذه الحوادث مثل رفع سنه وتر  
تكاليف الخدمات للمعلمات في المناطق النائية

٩. من وجهة نظركم، كيف تتفاعل المؤسسات التعليمية مع القضايا السلبية المطروحة إعلاميا؟

لا يوجد فعل أدبرناج واضح المعالم لرد على القضايا  
السلبية المطروحة بالرغم من إدارة العلاقات العامة سيجي آه  
\*الإعلام التقليدي : جرائد ، صحف ، مجلات ، تلفاز - الإعلام الاجتماعي : تويتر ، يوتيوب ، فيس بوك  
سأطرحها إليكم بهذا الشكل وأبتم بفضل

د. طارق محمد السمين  
رئيس قسم الإدارة التربوية

فقرة التعليم

الموضوع:

تأثير وسائل الإعلام على الأنظمة الداخلية في المملكة العربية السعودية ( الفترة ٢٠٠١ حتى ٢٠١٥ )

الهدف :

الفرض من هذه الدراسة تقييم التأثير المباشر وغير المباشر لكل من وسائل الإعلام التقليدية والحديثة على وضع السياسات وتغييرها في المملكة العربية السعودية.

المحاور:

- a) السياسة التعليمية
- b) المناهج
- c) التعليم و وسائل الإعلام

السياسة التعليمية

١. لقد خصصت حكومة خادم الحرمين الشريفين ٩ مليار ريال لمشروع "تطوير" الذي بدأ عام ٢٠٠٨، لكن المعلمين وأولياء الأمور يشتكون على صفحات الجرائد من أنهم لا يشعرون بشيء من ذلك في قاعات الدرس. كيف توضح ذلك؟

٢. تناولت وسائل الإعلام الحاجة إلى إضافة التربية البدنية في المنهج الأساسي وناقش مجلس الشورى وزارة التربية والتعليم إلى النظر في السماح للبنات بالمشاركة في أنشطة التربية البدنية ( طالما تمت مراعاة الزي المناسب والفصل بين الجنسين ) ما رأيكم في هذا الاقتراح؟

اعتقد انه اقتراح ممتاز

٣. ما هو دور الاعلام السعودي في تفاعل النظم التعليمية مع القرارات السياسية؟

اعتقد انه دوره الى حد ما متوسط

المناهج

٤. بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر ، نظر البعض إلى أن الدافع وراء إصلاح منظومة التعليم كان مرده إلى التركيز على التطرف في المجتمع السعودي. ما هو ردكم على هذه الإتهامات؟

المملكة وثما من إلى التطوير المستمر  
واعتقد أن التطوير مستمر ومعهم الهدى  
مروحة

٥. حسب أحد التقارير التي نشرها مكتب "ماكينزي للاستشارات" عام ٢٠٠٧ جاءت المملكة في المركز الثالث بين آخر ثلاث دول في آخر القائمة في تدريس الرياضيات والعلوم. ما هي جهود الوزارة لتحسين مناهج الرياضيات والعلوم؟

٥. د. هيفاء عفاة في تدريس العلوم  
عزات اطمين



### التعليم ووسائل الاعلام

٦. كيف تصفون علاقة الإعلام المحلي (التقليدي و الاجتماعي) \* بمؤسسات التعليم الحكومية ؟ ومدى تأثيره إن وجد؟

تأثير ضعيف

٧. لقد استضافت المملكة "المؤتمر الدولي الأول لتعليم الاعلام" عام ٢٠٠٧، بعد هذه الإستضافة السباقه ، ما هو دور التربويين اعلاميا من وجهة نظركم؟

ما زال الدور التربوي في الاعلام  
مستواه متدني

٨. هناك تغطية إعلامية كبيرة لحوادث المعلمات ، و يوجه الإعلام اللوم على التعيينان التي لا تراعي البعد الجغرافي، مما يسبب أزمة مواصلات ، ما هو تفاعل الوزارة إزاء ذلك؟

اعتقد ان الاعلام اكبر هم وزير التربية  
فما اعتقد ان وزارة التعليم مسؤولة  
عن ذلك

٩. من وجهة نظركم، كيف تتفاعل المؤسسات التعليمية مع القضايا السلبية المطروحة إعلاميا؟

يتطور التعليم والتفكير النقدي وعملية  
الاستيعاب

\* الاعلام التقليدي : جرائد ، صحف ، مجلات ، كتاب - الاعلام الاجتماعي : تويتر ، يوتيوب ، فيس بوك

## المرأة

### الموضوع:

تأثير وسائل الإعلام على الأنظمة الداخلية في المملكة العربية السعودية ( الفترة ٢٠٠١ حتى ٢٠١٥ )

### الهدف :

الغرض من هذه الدراسة تقييم التأثير المباشر وغير المباشر لكل من وسائل الإعلام التقليدية والحديثة على وضع السياسات وتغييرها في المملكة العربية السعودية.

### المحاور: حقوق المرأة

تمكين المرأة

### حقوق المرأة

١. حظيت المرأة السعودية باهتمام الحكومة الرشيدة من خلال قرارات سياسية لتمكينها. إلا أن الإجراءات التنظيمية حيال مواصلة دراستها ، مزاوتها لأي نشاط تجاري ، إصدارها وثيقة قانونية، أو موافقة للسفر جميعها تحتاج إلى موافقة ولي أمرها. هل ترون أن هذا الإجراء التنظيمي يحتاج إلى تغيير لمواكبة تمكينها؟

لمع أرى ذاته من الضروري الحد  
هذه الإجراءات التي تحد من أهمية  
المرأة ممارسة مواطني المملكة  
وتتبع تنميتها ..

٢. يتناول الإعلام العالمي قضية قيادة المرأة للسيارة على أنه رمز لإعطاء المرأة حقوقها، هل ترون أن قيادة المرأة هو قرار سياسي؟ أم اجتماعي؟ مع التوضيح

القرار السليم ساري مفعله نفي  
الحقيقه وان صحت مؤهل به استقبال  
مضى القرار والقابل معه كصيفه  
صانه .

وهناك قرارات عديدة كان ينظر  
لها انها قرارات اجتماعيه  
رحبت تأخر لا لكه صمأ قررت  
ألتحق انه صانعة الحقيقه كانت  
جلسه ر محمد صبيح هو في لفئه  
عديه .

مضى دخول المرأة لمجلس السورى  
كله محمد القوا - اعتراضاً مجتمعياً  
متما تانه يوم المعار هتون .  
قرار صياغة المرأة للسيارة هو آخر  
قرار سياسي لمحمد صانعة اجتماعيه  
منها لقر .

## تمكين المرأة

٣. أعطت حكومة المملكة المرأة مكانتها الوظيفية ووصلت إلى مناصب وزارية إلى أنها لا زالت لا يسمح لها بدخول و مراجعة شؤونها في المؤسسات الرسمية إلا عن طريق الأقسام النسائية إن وجدت ، ما هو رأيكم في هذا؟

تمه تآ خر كبير في مواقع وتقدم  
على مواقع أخرى .  
تطور المرأة وتقليد لا يبر  
وفقا لتألق مدرسي خطوات  
مقننه ترابية .  
ذلك في أنه امرأة شاركت من  
العملية العالمية مثل أنه ممارسة  
التربية البدنية في مدرستك !!  
ذلك ، المؤسسات الحكومية أنه تنظر للمرأة  
أخ مواطن كأحد الأخوة  
وتعد للأصغر كمنافع تتوهم هي  
كأنه متعلق بذكره استعارته  
الدعوى لها تتوكل عليه .

## وسائل الإعلام

## الموضوع:

تأثير وسائل الإعلام على الأنظمة الداخلية في المملكة العربية السعودية ( الفترة ٢٠٠١ حتى ٢٠١٥ )

## الهدف :

الغرض من هذه الدراسة تقييم التأثير المباشر وغير المباشر لكل من وسائل الإعلام التقليدية والحديثة على وضع السياسات وتغييرها في المملكة العربية السعودية.

الجهة: وزارة الثقافة والإعلام

المحاور : سياسة الوزارة

وكالة الأنباء السعودية

التأثير والمكانة العالمية

سياسة الوزارة

١- كيف ترى توافق تطور النظم في الإعلام السعودي مع التطور الاجتماعي؟

متطورة وجيدة وساهمت كثيراً في تفكير  
حالة المحود والصحة المجتمعية  
فقد ما دام هذه الحركة التغيير الاجتماعي  
سارقتاً .  
ما صرنا به الحادي عشر من شهر

٢- هل ترى أن الإعلام السعودي يؤثر على وعي وثقافة المواطن؟ كيف؟

حيث  
ما لا يمدح برص من يوم حرراً من البحيرات  
الرائدة مما أدى إلى هزاله وحوار  
كبيراً من عصر تكين ثقافة جديدة  
لدى الجيل الجديد و لم لم يتحقق ذلك  
التي لم تكنه معقاً تعانيه جديدة .

٣- توضح اللائحة التنظيمية للسياسة الإعلامية ، أن دور وسائل الإعلام هو نشر و بث الوحدة الوطنية وهذا هو السبب في عدم السماح بالنقد، لكن في السنوات الماضية القليلة شهدنا طرح بعض القضايا للنقد، فهل هذه التغيرات جاءت نتيجة لقرارات حكومية أم ممارسات جريئة من الصحافه؟ موضحا وجهة نظركم حيال ذلك؟

تد الأمرم ك نا ليران معاً ..  
 فالصحافة كانت ترضى أحياناً بمبالغة  
 أضيقاً بحيت تحرب رضع القف  
 وتذكر القراء ليس الذي يتناه  
 المدة مبالغة حيث كذب من الصحف  
 أن تكون أكثر شخاضية رأسه تنقل  
 صوت المواطن وتكون عيناً نافذة  
 على الخدمات والعقود مثيراً .

٤- من وجهة نظركم ، ما هي الجهات الرسمية المؤثرة في القرارات السياسية الإعلامية في المملكة العربية السعودية؟

- وزارة الثقافة والإعلام  
 - المجلس الأعلى للإعلام  
 - وزارة الداخلية  
 - وزارة الخارجية

### وكالة الأنباء السعودية

- ٥- قامت وزارة الاعلام بإنشاء وكالة الأنباء السعودية عام ١٩٧١ بهدف أن تكون جهازاً مركزياً لجمع وتوزيع الأخبار المحلية والعالمية داخل المملكة وخارجها. كيف يتسنى للوكالة تحقيق هدفها الرئيس في ظل ما حدث من تقدم تكنولوجي وشفافية في المعلومات؟

المحاكاة السريعة للحدث

التواصل مع كل المقامات والإعلام

الحيوية والقدرة على التكيف

تحت إلهام من طلبة مدرسة الصحافة

مع تفكير في مستقبل الإعلام

- ٦- تعد وكالة الأنباء السعودية المصدر الرئيس للأخبار بالمملكة: ما هي سياسة الوكالة فيما يتعلق بالأخبار السياسية المحلية؟

- ٧- لقد وقعت الوكالة اتفاقيات تعاون مع خمس وكالات أنباء عالمية هي "رويترز"، و"الأسشيوتيد برس"، و"يونايتد برس انترناشيونال"، و"وكالة الأنباء الفرنسية"، و"وكالة الأنباء الألمانية". كيف تتصرف وكالة الأنباء السعودية عندما تكون تغطية هذه الوكالات للحكومة السعودية أو لإحدى سياساتها الجديدة من زاوية سلبية؟

### التأثير والمكانة العالمية

٨- تأتي المملكة العربية السعودية في صدارة وسائل الإعلام في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا، لكن عندما يتعلق الأمر بوسائل إعلامها المحلية، لا نجد لها على نفس المستوى. ما السبب في ذلك؟

- التعاقب الحاصر التي تعرضت لها وسائل كثيرة
- الإعلام المحلي
- صحف القذافي واللقطات وصحف الزعيم
- صحف الاستقطاب

١٠- في رأيك ما هي التحديات الرئيسة التي تواجه وسائل الإعلام المحلية؟

- الإقراض الذي تمسكه وسائل الإعلام الاحتكارية
- (وسائل التواصل المستوحاة)
- صحف القذافي الإخبارية المتواضعة من
- الإعلام التقليدي المحلي
- صورة أكثر من الكفاءة ذات نظراً للمخبرات
- المادحة التي تقدمها محطات أخرى بخلاف المحطات المحلية
- ١١- إلى أي مدى في رأيك تمثل وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية مثل "فيس بوك" و"تويتر" و"يوتيوب" منافسة لمنافذ وسائل الإعلام التقليدية بالمملكة؟

نستطيع منافسة بيكس كبير وأصميت  
لنعم من تكسب الرأي العام وتؤثر من  
أخباراته بيكس يعوق أحياناً منافذ  
الإعلام التقليدي

١٢- ما هو حجم التأثير العالمي لمنافذ وسائل الإعلام الرائدة داخل المملكة مقارنة بالصحف السعودية اليومية التي تصدر في لندن مثل "الحياة" و"الشرق الأوسط"، وموقع الأخبار الإلكتروني "إيلاف"؟





## الخلاصة

~~من جهة~~  
 جاءت التسمية الدينية لنا طمعاً جداً للفتيات  
 من المبادئ العامة من التزاور بيني مني  
 تفرز الثقافة في الصحة .  
 أصدرت الإدارة مؤقراً تقيماً لقيمتي  
 من ~~تدبير~~ الإدارة مؤقراً تقيماً لقيمتي  
 تتعلق المراسلة الدينية في المراسل  
 مستند كنية للمؤيد في تقريره كد ما تتطلبه  
 المراسل من أمدب الذي تطبق التسمية  
 الدينية للفتيات .

### التعليم ووسائل الاعلام

٦. كيف تصفون علاقة الإعلام المحلي (التقليدي و الاجتماعي) \* بمؤسسات التعليم الحكومية ؟ ومدى تأثيره إن وجد؟

تتواءم العلاقة كثير من الحاسيات والتأثيرات  
خارجية ظلت لتتواءم مع الإعلام مترصد  
لدمرها ومحاربا ولم تنظر لنقد في أنه سعي  
دفع به سعي مراد رسالة إعلامية مجتمعية  
تفقد صوت الجسد والمواطنة من وراء أعلام  
ولم يطرأ بعد تحسين كثير من هذا السياق  
٧. لقد استضافت المملكة "المؤتمر الدولي الأول لتعليم الاعلام" عام ٢٠٠٧، بعد هذه  
الاستضافة السابقة، ما هو دور التربويين اعلاميا من وجهة نظركم؟

بأنفسنا نفكر من أنه تنمو وتنمو وتيرة  
حداثة التربية سيم من الإعلام لكنه الذي حدث  
هو العكس فقد تراجع في بعد الإعلام الوزارة  
لصعود المطالبات من منسوبي الصحافة بدون  
متن وهذا منه لمتدق تناء النقد والمشاركة  
٨. هناك تغطية إعلامية كبيرة لحوادث المعلمين ، و يوجه الإعلام اللوم على التعيين  
التي لا تراعي البعد الجغرافي، مما يسبب أزمة مواصلات ، ما هو تفاعل الوزارة  
إزاء ذلك؟

وتنع المرأة السعودية ولهم وجود صاف محمل متقدرو  
للمسؤولية على ضغوطا متزايدة التربية من  
الحصة الأخلاقية تفرط العلاقات من النساء ومن  
الصلبيات التي تقييده من فرق ناشئة لتحقيق مبدأ  
السلام للجميع ومبدأ الوظيفة من حق المواطنة وقد أخذت  
عدها من أجل أن تكون لهم تحت المملكة بعد هذا  
٩. من وجهة نظركم، كيف تتفاعل المؤسسات التعليمية مع القضايا السلبية المطروحة  
إعلاميا؟

هناك اهتمام بالقضايا المطروحة من الإعلام وصالح  
سريع لمواقع الخلل لكنه من المقابله هناك محاولة  
للتضييق الرأى الإعلامى راجع من قيمته

الإعلام التقليدي : جرائد ، صحف ، مجلات ، تلفاز - الإعلام الاجتماعي : تويتر ، يوتيوب ، فيس بوك

## نقطة التعليم

السؤال ٣

١- لصداح نظام درهم في تعامل  
 النظام الإقليمية مع القوائم السابقة  
 ٢- لقوائم العامين المأوى  
 ٣- بهدء مريد دعم كبير من الإهم  
 ٤- دء للنظم الإقليمية في أسر  
 ٥- تتجارب وتتفاعل مع هذا القار  
 ٦- ثاخرة المآثر الصفية التي  
 ٧- في نة حصة لشراؤنا  
 ٨- المتطرفة رعت ماضية وتفصيل  
 ٩- الأمانة المتوقعة من  
 ١٠- كما أنه هناك تقدير كبير من  
 ١١- المناجحة وصل للتركة  
 ١٢- العلوة والرياضات مهم  
 ١٣- بهدء من دفع النظم الإقليمية  
 ١٤- للقضاء على ما سبق بالمشي  
 ١٥- كفى أو ما صرته  
 ١٦- والتضيق عليه

فقرة السليم  
القول الرابع

الجبلي :  
سأنت أصدات سيميد عناية هرس ائنا -  
مؤمة السودية كي تنبيه

المطر المحدث صلي .  
و انا اري انه ادر صا والسقرف  
مع من انا انا صا التي دفعت  
! مع السليم لقوة وجعله  
فما ميا مبدرا .

و انا انا ما لي هو حقيقة  
و ما هو الخطا في ذلك .  
فحين قادتنا منا هو السليم  
الى السقرف انا انا صا  
وهذا هو السليم العقل وصنعت  
الكلية .

### المناهج

٤. بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر ، نظر البعض إلى أن الدافع وراء إصلاح منظومة التعليم كان مرده إلى التركيز على التطرف في المجتمع السعودي. ما هو ردكم على هذه الإتهامات؟

٥. حسب أحد التقارير التي نشرها مكتب " ماكينزي للاستشارات " عام ٢٠٠٧ جاءت المملكة في المركز الثالث بين آخر ثلاث دول في آخر القائمة في تدريس الرياضيات والعلوم. ما هي جهود الوزارة لتحسين مناهج الرياضيات والعلوم؟

- تغيير محتوى مناهج الرياضيات والعلوم
- رياضيات - منهج متكامل وصققدم منه أفضل
- التحاير العالميه العلوم والرياضيات
- تكثيف عدد صفوف التعليم والمحلات في المناهج الجديدة
- تدريب المعلمين والمحلات في المناهج الجديدة
- الاهتمام بالقياسات الرياضيات والعلوم
- الدوليه كبرى الطلاب المعفون منه
- إقرار عدد كبير من الطلاب المعفون منه
- الموصيه من انديه اعليا

### Works Cited

@abuaddelelah. "London 2012 Olympic." *Twitter*. Riyadh: twitter, March 22, 2012.

- @adelmfakeih. *Twitter*. Prod. @adelmfakeih. Riyadh, April 22, 2014.
- @KingSalman. *Twitter*. Riyadh, May 4, 2015.
- 20/20 abc news. "Transcript King Abdullah Talks to Barbara Walters." 2006.
- 4International Colleges and Universities. "Prince Sultan University." [4icu.org/reviews/4180.html](http://4icu.org/reviews/4180.html).
- AbdulGhafour, P.K. "PE for Girls in School: Royal Decree Needed." *Arab News*. Jeddah: Arab news, April 5, 2014.
- Abeer Mishkhas, Arab News. "Saudi Arabia to Overturn Ban on Camera Phones." Jeddah: Arab News Newspaper, December 17, 2004.
- Abu Nasr, Donna. "Driving By Women Lead to Evil." Riyadh: The Associated Press, June 2, 2005.
- AFB. "Women Participation with Restriction." Riyadh : Alarabiya, July 2, 2012.
- AFP. "Rogg: we are waiting for Saudi Approval for Women Participation In the Olympics." Moscow : Sabaq, April 15, 2012.
- Agency, Saudi Press. "Council Of Ministers head by Crown Prince." Alriyadh newspaper, March 26, 2013.
- Ahmari, Sohrab. "Manal al-Sharif: The Woman Who Dared to Drive." New York: The Wall Street Journal, March 22, 2013.
- Ajrouti, Asma. "Social Media Keeps Saudi Officials in Check." Dubai : Al Arabiya News, June 23, 2015.
- Akhbaar24. "Commnets on Saudi Women Participation in the Olympics." [akhbar24.argaam.com](http://akhbar24.argaam.com), July 28, 2012.
- Al Aqeel, Abdullah. "Education Policy and Regulations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Riyadh: Alrushd, 2013.
- Al Arabiya News. "Saudi Arabia is Biggest Spender on Technology in MidEast: International Data Corporation." Al Arabiya News, February Tuesday, 2013.
- AL Arabiya News. "Saudi Releases Picture of Pilots who took Part in Strikes Against ISIS." *Middle East News/English*. Al Arabiya, September 25, 2014.
- Al Jassem , Diana. "Hafiz: Inspiration for Job Seekers." *Arab News*. Jeddah: Arab News, 5 16, 2012.
- Al Saggaf, Yeslam. "Social Media and Political Participation in Saudi Arabia: The Case of the 2009 Floods in Jeddah." *Proceedings Cultural Attitudes Towards technology and Communication*. Murdoch University, 2012. 1-15.
- Al Tawil, Khalid. "The Internet in Saudi Arabia." Dharan: King Fahad University of Pertoleum & Minerals, April 2001, 1999.
- Alajmi, F.M. "The New Press Law: Kuwait Journalists and Newspapers Owners Knowledge and Attitude." 2011.
- Alali, Hassan. "Middle Class in the Gulf Countries: Characteristics and Prospects." *Al Jazeera Center for Studies*. Doha, July 21, 2013. 1-10.
- Alarabiya. "London Olympics: Saudi Judo Player Allowed to Compete Wearing Hijab." London: Al Arabiya with Agencies, July 31, 2012.
- . "Ministry of Education obscures the names of textbook authors 'religion' 'Arabic Literture'." Alarabiya, January 27, 2013.
- . "Saudi Women Flood Social Media with Driving Videos, Pictures." Riyadh: Alarabiya, October 11, 2013.

- Alatwe, Nora. "Saudi Middle Class Shrinks due to Cost of Living." *AlRiyadh Newspaper*. Alyamamah, May 13, 2013.
- Alawad, Mutaib. "Women Driving a car wards off evil of the driver." *Hail: Okaz Newspaper*, June 4, 2009.
- AlBargi, Abdullah, and AliKhan Ghazanfar. "Women Driving Campaign Fizzles Out." *Arab News*. Riyadh: Arab News, October 27, 2013.
- Albawaba. "Saudi Arabia Leads in Social Media Usage in Arab Nations." 2013.
- . "Saudi Arabia Leads in Social Media Usage in Arab Nations." *MENA Report*. London, Oct 4, 2013.
- Albshir, Mohammad. "Public Opinion ." Riyadh: Obeikan, 2014.
- Alfozan, Abdulaziz. "Women Right in Saudi Regulations." *Almultaqa AL fiQHI*, April 17, 2012.
- AlGer, Dean. "The Media and Politics." Englewood, NJ: prentice Hall, 1989.
- AlGhazzi, Omar. "Citizens Journalism in the Syrian Uprising Problematizing Western Narratives in a Local Context." *Communication Theory*. no. 24. International Communication Association, 2014. 435-454.
- AlHarbe, Khalaf. "Social Media and Axing of Ministers." *Okaz Newspaper*, May 18, 2015.
- Alhayat. "The saudi Delma...First Khaleji to win an Olmpic Medal." Singafor: Alhayat Newspaper, 8 25, 2010.
- Alhqel, Sulaiman Abdulrahman. "Regulation and Policy of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Riyadh: Alhumaithi Publishing , 2011.
- AliKhan, Ghazafar, and Afifa Quraishi. "Women Driving Campaign Dropped." *Arab news*. Riyadh: Arabnews , October 26, 2014.
- AlJeraisy , Khaled. "King AbdulAziz Noble Character." Translated by Mohamed Atif Mohamed. 2008.
- Aljwer, Mohammad Ahmad. "Transform in Saudi Media, A Modern Prespective ." Riyadh: Alhumaithi Publishing , 2013.
- AlKaibi, Mohammad. "Prince Ahmad bin Abdulaziz on Women Driving: Our Job is to Execute the System." *Alsharq Al-Awsat*. Alsharq Al-Awsat, May 27, 2011.
- AlKalbani, Adel. "@abuabdelelah." *Twitter*. Riyadh, February 17, 2013.
- Alkarni, Ali. "A Media/Terrorism Model: The Saudi Experience." Riyadh, 2005.
- Allam, Abeer. "Online Law Curbs Saudi Freedom of Expression." *Financial Times*. Financial Times , April 6, 2011.
- Almanie, Abdullah. *Interview* Riyadh, (2015).
- Alnuaim, Mishary. "The Composition of the Saudi Middle Class: A Preliminary Study." Gulf Research Center, October 2013.
- ALomani, Fathel. "saudi media Challenges and Ambitions." *Al Watan Newspaper*. Al Watan, 6 9, 2011.
- Alotaibi, Fatima. "Interview." Riyadh , 2015.
- AlRashid, Mohammed. "The Developmnet of Religous Curriculum." Riyadh: Alriyadh Newspaper, January 1, 2013.
- AlRiyadh. "A study conducted by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs Reveals the Shortage of Tools to Face Terror and Radicalism." Riyadh : Alriyadh Newspaper, July 11, 2004.
- Alriyadh. "Alriyadh newspaper." Riyadh: alriyadh.com, 2014.



- Alriyadh Newspaper. "Educational Reform not under foreign pressure, said Naif." *Arabnews*. Jeddah: Arabnews, January 22, 2004.
- AlRiyadh Newspaper. "Exporting Panda Phones ." Riyadh : Riyadh Newspaper , September 25, 2004.
- AlRiyadh. "The Council of Senior Scholars: Reform is Not through Demonstrations and Methods that Provoke Sedition and Divition." *AlRiyadh Newspaper*. 15596. Riyadh, March 7, 2011.
- Alsani, Abdulrahman. "Interview ." Riyadh: Interview, 2015.
- Alsaud , Saad. "Saudi Media and its Political Development." Riyadh: Alkanawat, 2010.
- AlSaud, Bandar, interview by Auhoud AL Shehail. *Interview* Riyadh: Director of the National Information Center, Ministry of Interior, (2015).
- AlSaud, Mohammad Saud. "Rejection and Acceptance, the story of the Saudi society with telecommunication ." Riyadh: Rdmik, 2012.
- AlSaud, Naif Thunayan. "Communication Technology and Social Changes in a Globalized Media." Riyadh: Safer Publisher, 2009.
- Alsaud, Turki Alfaisal. "were Trying Hard to Change." *USAToday*, 6 4, 2006.
- Alshalan, Abdullah. "Nawaf Bin Faisal we will participate with a womens delegation according to Islamic regulations." Riyadh : AlRiyadh Newspaper, November 23, 2011.
- AlSharq Alawasat . "Nawaf Bin Faisal "Saudi is not sponsoring any women participation in the Olympics"." London: Alsharg Alawasat newspaper, April 4, 2012.
- Alshingiti, Almamoun. "Defining Moment for Women's Excercise." *Arab News*, May 21, 2012.
- Alshubaili, Abdulrahman. "King AbdulAziz and Media." Riyadh: Safir Publisher, September 2003.
- ALShubaili, Addulrahman Salih. "Media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Riyadh: Safeer Publishing, April 2000.
- Al-Sulami, Muhammad. "Kingdom Amends Media Laws." *Arab News*. Arab News, April 30, 2011.
- Alterman, Jon. "New Media New Politics? From Sattelite Television to the Internet in the Arab World." *Policy Paper*. no. 48. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998.
- Alzbeidi, Monther. "The Role of Media in Political Decision Making ." Amman: Dar Alhamed Publishing, 2013.
- Alzuhayyan, Abdulrahman. "Saudi Women Partipation in Olympic games Against Cultural Norms." *Arab News*. Riyadh : Arab News, July 2, 2012.
- Amer, Hind. "Women Issues in saudi newspapers." *hindamer.com*. hindamer, 2014.
- Amin , Hussein. "Mass Media in the Arab States between Diversification and Stagnation: An Overview." *Mass Media, Politics & Society in the Middle East*. Edited by Kai Hafez. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2001. 23-42.
- Ansorge, Josef Teboho. "Digital Power in World Politics: Database, Panopticons, and Erwin Cuntz." *Journal of International Studies* , 2011. 65-83,70-73.
- Anti Cyber Crime Law. *Royal Decree*. Royal Decree, March 26, 2007.
- Aqel, Maha. "Using Media to Exagerate Women Voices." Jeddah: CommonGrounds.org, September 30, 2011.
- Arab Media Outlook 2012-2015. "Arab Media Oultook 2011 2015 Forecast and Analysis of Traditional amd Digital Media in the Arab World." Dubai: Dubai Press Club, 2012.

- Arab News. "70% of Extremists swayed by Exposure to Social Media ." Jeddah : Arab News, 2015.
- . "Freedom of Expressio Guaranteed." Riyadh: Arab News, 05 21, 2015.
- . "King Relieved Health Minister of His Post." *Arab News*. April 2015, 2015.
- . "KSA Residents Spend quarter of the day on social media." Jeddah: Arab News, July 5, 2016.
- . "Saudi Social Media Users ranked 7th in the World." Jeddah: Arab News, November 14, 2015.
- Arab Social Media Report. "Citizen Engagement and Public Services in the Arab World: The Potential of Social MEDIA ." Dubai : Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, June 2014.
- Arabian Business. "Immam of Grand Mosque blesses the opening of KAUST Allowing Mixed genders." Riyadh, October 10, 2009.
- Arabian Business Magazine . "Power 100 2010." Arabian Business Publication , March 27, 2010.
- Arnett, Peter. *PBS*. 2003.
- [pbs.org/weta/reportingamericaatwar/reporters/arnett/livecoverage.html](http://pbs.org/weta/reportingamericaatwar/reporters/arnett/livecoverage.html).
- Associated Press . "Saudi Arabia Bans Cell Phone Cameras." Riyadh : nbcnews, september 29, 2004.
- Associated Press. "Hillary Clinton Backs Saudi Arabia Women's Right to Drive Campaign." *The Guardian* . The Guardian -US edition , June 21, 2011.
- . "London 2012: Jacques Rogge Confident Saudi Women will make Debut." *TheGuardian*. London: The Guardian, May 25, 2012.
- Associated press. *News Saudi Counter terrorism law Criminilizes Soeech Critical of Gov or society*. CNS News.com. Dubai, February 2, 2014.
- Ayish, Muhammad. "Television Broadcasting in the Arab World." *Arab Media*. Cambridge , MA: Polity Press, 2011.
- Ayish, Muhhamad. "Political Communication on Arab World Television: Evolving Patterns ." *Political Communication*. Vol. 19. Taylor & Francis, 2002. 137-154.
- Bach, Thomas. "6th IWG World Confrence on Women and Sport ." Helsinki: International Olympic Committee, June 12, 2014.
- Baghdadi, Alexis. "How Social Media Is Dominating The Saudi Market." Beirut: Arabnet, September 23, 2015.
- Bahador, Babak. "The CNN Effect in Action, How the News Media Pushed the West Toward War in Kosovo." Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- BaitAlmal, Hamza. "Transfer and Developmnet of Modern Communication Technology into Saudi Arabia: A Conservative Model." *ICA Theme Panel*. June 2000.
- Bakeet, Abdullah. "Regulations of Participation in Olympics." Riyadh: Alriaydh , August 18, 2012.
- Bashir, Abdul Wahab. "Education System Reform to Promote Moderation: Sultan." *Arab News*. Riyadh : Arabnews, December 5, 2003.
- Basic Law of Governance. "Basic Law of Governance." *Royal Decree No.(A/91)*. Umm AL-Qura Gazette N0.3397, March 1992.
- BBC News Middle East. "Saudi Arabia Profile, A Chronology of Key Events." *BBC*. BBC, October 7, 2014.

- BBC News. "Saudi Fears Rise Over Mystery Virus ." BBC, May 12, 2014.
- BBC Trending. "#BBC Trending: Saudi WomenDriving Blog 'Arrest'." *BBC Trending*. BBC , December 3, 2014.
- Behrend, Heike, and Tobias Wendi. "9/11 and its Remediations in Popular Culture and Arts in Africa." Berlin: LIV Verlag Berlin, 2015.
- Benkler, Yochai. "The Wealth of Networks, How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom ." 2006.
- Bimber, Bruce. "How Information Shapes Political Institutions." *Media Power In Politics*. Edited by Doris Graber. Chicago: University of Illinois, 2007.
- Bin Salim, Hassan . "Education ... Managing Intellectual Security." Riyadh : AlArabiya, May 12, 2015.
- Black, Ian. "Saudi Arabia Leads Arab Regimes in Internet Censorship." *The Gurdian*. The Gurdian, June 30, 2009.
- Bokhari , Abla Abdul Hameed, Nazeeh Alothmany, and Samia Magbool. "Entrepreneurship and Unemployment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Jeddah: The Saudi Economy Conference: Challenges and Opportunities, 2011.
- Boreham , Kevin. "Words, Words, Words: The Human Rights Discourse and the Arab Awakening." *ANU Collage of Law and Research*. Vols. 11-21. The Australian National University, July 25, 2011.
- Boyd, Douglas. "Saudi Arabia's International Media Strategy: Influence through Multinational Ownership." *Mass Media, Politics & Society in the Middle East*. Edited by Kai Hafez. Hampton Press, 2001.
- Branswell, Helen. "Saudi Silence on Deadly MERS Virus Outbreak Frustrates World Health Experts." *Scientific American* . June 7, 2013.
- Bshara, Azma. "Media and the Process of Reform in the Arabian Region ." *Written for Aran Anto Corruption Organization*. Center for Arab Unity Studies Publishing , November 2010. 39-56.
- Burrows , Peter. "Internet Censorship, Saudi Style." *Bloomberg Business Week Magazine* . WWW.businessweek.com, December 12, 2008.
- Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam . *Organization of Islamic Cooperation* . Cairo, September 1990.
- Carlyle, Thomas. "On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic History." New York: Cosimo Books, 2009.
- Carrington, Daisy. "Middle East Media Survey Finds Mix of Freedom, Controls, and Contradictions." *CNN Inside the Middle East*. CNN, August 4, 2013.
- Castells, M. "Networks of Outrage and Hope." Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012.
- Cater, Douglass. "The Fourth Branch Of Government ." The University Press Cambridge, 1959.
- Censorship In America. *censorshipinamerica.com*. 2013.
- Center for Religious Freedom . "Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance: With Excerpts From Saudi Ministry of Education Textbooks for Islamic Studies." Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2006.
- CGTSA. "Saudi Government & People: What Others Do Not Know ." Riyadh , 2013.
- Chamerois, Nicolas, and Pascal Gillon. "Womens Athletics: Between Globalization and Confiscation?" *Women & Sport* . Paris : CERSO, March 2000.

- Chomsky, Edward Herman and Noam. "Manufacturing Consent, The Political Economy of the Mass Media." Boston: Panthom, 1988.
- CITC. "CITC Electronic Newsletter." Vol. 17. no. Safar. Communication and Information Technology Commission , Dec 213.
- CoastalDigest. "Media Mustn't Influence Public Opinion Negatively: Saudi King ." Jeddah : coastaldiges.com, May 7, 2014.
- Cochrane, Paul. "Saudi Arabia's Media Influence." *Arab Media and Society Journal*. Vol. 3. 2007.
- Cohen, Bernard. "The Press and Foreign Policy ." Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Cohen, Mark. "Censorship in Canadian Literature." *McGill Queens University Press*. 2001.
- Cohen, Nick. "You Can't Read This Book,Censorship in an Age of Freedom." London: Fourth Estate , 2012.
- Communication and Information technology Commision. "Computer and internet Usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2007-2009." Riyadh : Communication and Information Technology Commision , 2009.
- Communication and Information Technology Commission . "Newsletter." Vol. 17. Riyadh, Dec 2013.
- Communication and Technology Commision. "Information and Telecommunication Technology in Saudi Arabia." Riyadh: World Summit on the Information Society, May 28, 2003.
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. "Consideration of reports submitted by states parties under article 18 of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women." CEDAW, March 29, 2007.
- Cordesman, Anthony. "saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty First Century: The Political, Foreign Policy, Economic and Energy Dimensions." London: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003.
- Creedon, Pamela. "Women, Sport, and Media Institution: Issues in Sports Journalism and Marketing." *Media Sport*. Edited by Lawrence Wenner. New York : Routledge, 1998.
- Croteau, David, William Hoynes, and Stefani Milan. *Media Society: Industries, Images, and*. Sage Publisher, 2012.
- Crotty, Michael. "The Foundations of Social Reseach, Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process." St Leonards: Allen & Unwim, 1998.
- Dar Al Qimam for Media. "Saudi Media Establismment and Development." Riyadh: Alwan Publishing Company , November 1992.
- De Hert, P., Kloza, D. "Internet (access) as a New Fundamental Right. Inflating the Current Rights Framework?" Vol. 3. European Journal of Law and Technology, 2012.
- Dejani, Nabel. "Arab Media and Building Public Opionion: the Missing Role, Media and the Process of Reform in the Arabian Region." *written for Arab Anti Corruption Organization*. Center for Arab Unity Studies Publishing, 2010. 207-220.
- DeJong, Julie, and Mansoor Moaddel. "Trends in Values Among Saudi Youth: Findings From Values Surveys." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*. Vol. 6. no. winter. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. 151-164.

- Delong-Bas, Natana J. "The Freedoms Saudi Women Really Want." *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1979-2009: Evolution of a Pivotal State*. Washington, DC: The Middle East Institute , 2009.
- Dewey, T., Kaden, J., Marks, M., Matsushima, S., & Zhu, B. "The Impact of Social Media on Social Unrest in the Arab Spring." prepared for Defence Intelligence Agency , 2012.
- Doran, Michael Scott. "The Saudi Paradox." Vol. 83. *Foreign Affairs*, February 2004. 35-51.
- Duffy, Matt J. "Media Laws and Regulations of the GCC Countries." Doha: Doha Center for Media Freedom, 2013.
- Dunn, Alexandra. "Digital Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Descriptive Analysis from Tahrir Data Sets." *International Journal of Communication*. 5 2011. 1248-1272.
- Economist. "The Kingdoms Press and its Social Media are Livelier than Ever." *Middle East and Africa*. The Economist, February 8, 2014.
- Eickelman, Dale. "The Arab "Street" and the Middle East Democracy Deficit." Vol. LV. *Naval War College Review*, 2002. 39-48.
- Elwazer, Schams, Mohammed Jamjoom, and Samya Ayish. "Saudi Health Ministry Under Fire in case of Girl and Alleged HIV-Tainted Blood." CNN.Com, February 20, 2013.
- Fandy, M. "An Uncivil War of Words: Media and Politics in the Arab World." Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007.
- Fatany, Samar. "Modernizing Saudi Arabia." CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.
- Fleischhaker, Cornelius, Malin Hu, Padamja Khandelwal, Jimmy McHugh, and Niklas Westelius. "International Monetary Fund, Saudi Arabia." Vol. 13/230. June 24, 2013.
- Frank, Christopher. "Improving Decesion Making in the World of Big Data." *Forbes*. Forbes, 03 2012, 2012.
- Freedom House . "Freedom on the Net 2014." Washington : Freedom House , 2014.
- Friedman. *The Rise of Popularism*. 2012.
- Friedman, Thomas L. "Thank You for Being Late, An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Acceleration." New York , NY: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2016.
- Gallarotti, Giulio, and Isam AlFilali. "The Soft Power of Saudi Arabia." *From the Selected Works of Giulio M Gallaroti*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University , 2012.
- Gardner, Frank. "London 2012 Olympics: Saudi Allow Women to Compete." *Middle East* . London: BBC , June 24, 2012.
- Gause, Gregory. "Saudi Arabia in the New Middle East ." *Council Special Report, Center for Prevention Action*. Vol. 63. December 2011.
- GCC. *Mission Statement of the Cooperartion Council for the Arab States of the Gulf*. 2014. <http://www.gcc-sg.org/eng/index895b.html> (accessed April 21, 2014).
- Gilboa, Eytan. "Gloabl Television News and Foreign Policy: Debating the CNN Effect ." Vol. 6. *International Studies Perspective* , 2005. 325-341.
- Goffman, Erving. "Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience." New York, NY: Harpor & Row, 1974.

Graber, D.A.,. "Media Power in Politics." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication , 2010.  
 Grindle, Merilee. *Despite the Odds*. Princeton University Press, 2004.  
 Grubmuller, V.Gotsch,K. & Krieger,B. "Social Media Analytics for Future Oriented Policy Making." *European Journal of Futures Research*, 2013.  
 Gulf News. "Saudi will not allow Changes Imposed on National Curricula." *gulfnews.com*. Dubai: GULFNEWS, March 7, 2002.

Habermas, Jurgen. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article ." Vol. 3. *New German Critique* , 1974. 49-55.

—. "Theory of Communication Action ." Beacon Press, 1989.

Hadi, Haya. "Fever of Debate is lighting in Saudi before London Olympics." *Dammam: Alarabiya*, April 1, 2012.

Harmony Institute. "Impact Playbook, Best Practices for Understanding the Impact of Media." Edited by Alex Campolo. Harmony Institute, 2013.

Hashim, Rabab. "Media and Political Reform in Egypt." *Dar Alam Al Arabi*, 2011.

Haykel, Bernard, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stephane Lacroix. "Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, political, Economic, and Religious Change." New York , NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Henry, Clement, and Robert Springborg. "Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East ." New York, NY: Cambridge Uuniversity Press, 2010.

Hepp, Andreas. "Media and Communication Studies Intersections and Interventions." Tartu University, 2010.

Hepp, Andreas, and Friedrich Krotz. "Mediatized Worlds: Culture and Society in a Media Age." Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Herzberg, Ann. "Second Class Rights." Edited by Gerald Steinberg. *NGO Monitor*, December 2013.

Hoffman, David. "Citizes Rising; Independent Journalism and the Spread of Democracy." New York: CUNY Journalism Press, 2013.

Horkheimer, Max. "The Eclipse of Reason ." New York: Oxford University Press, 1947.

House, Karen Elliot. "On Saudi Arabia." New York: Vintage Books, June 2013.

Hubbard, Ben. "Social Arabia." *The New York Times Upfront*. New York Times, December 14, 2015. 8-10.

Husain, Ed. "The Arab Street; Taking the Political Temperature Inside Saudi Arabia." Council on Foreign Relations, April 25, 2012.

Inagaki, Nobuya. "Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development, Recent Trends in Empirical Research." Vol. 120. Washington, DC: World Bank , 2007.

Inglehard, R. "Modernization and Post Modernization, Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Countries." Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

International Olympic Committee. "Olympic Charter." International Olympic Committee, 2015.

International Research and Exchange Board. "Media Sustainibilty Index, Saudi Arabia." *Media Sustainability Index*. International Research and Exchange Board, 2009. 186- 193.

Internet Live Stats. *www.internetlivestats.com*. July 1, 2016.

*www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/saudi-arabia/* (accessed January 13, 2017).

Interview transcript Appendix A.

Interview. "Women ." *Ministry of Interior*.

J. Negoponte, Samuel Palmisano, and Adam Segal. "Defending an Open, Global, Secure, and Resilient Internet." *Independent Task Force Report*. Vol. 70. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2013.

Kaplan, Andreas, and Michal Haenlein. "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media." *Business Horizon*. 2010. 59-68.

Karl, Jonathan. "Reading Them the Riyadh Act." *The Weekly Standard*. The Weekly Standard.PAIS International, July 4-11, 2005.

Karlekar, K.D, and J Dunham. "Press Freedom in 2011:Breakthroughs and Push Back in the Middle East. Middle East Volatility Amid Global Decline: Selected Data From Freedom Houses Annual Press Freedom Index." 2012.

Kateb, Saud, interview by Auhoud AL Shehail. *Interview Riyadh*, (2015).

KAUST. *The King's Speech at KAUST Inauguration Ceremony*. Jeddah: WWW.kaust.edu.sa, September 23, 2009.

Khalaf, Roula. "Saudi Ban on Women Driving s a Taboo waiting to be Broken." *Financial Times*. The Financial Times, September 25, 2005.

Khater, AkramFoud. "Sources in the History of Modern Middle East." Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011.

Khazen, Jihad. "Censorship and State Control of the Press in theArab World." *The Harvard International Journal of Press Politics* . Vol. 4.3. Cambridge, MA, 1999. 87-92.

King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology. *Internet Service Unit*. 2014. www.kacst.edu.sa/en/depts/isu/pages/about.aspx.

King Abdulaziz National Dialogue Center. "The Results of the ninth meeting Saudi Media ...Reality and methods of Developments." Hayel : King Abdulaziz National Dialogue Center, february 23, 2012.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Embassy - Press Release . "Saudi Arabia Increasing Spending ON Schools and Curriculum." Washington, DC, December 19, 2002.

Knickmeyer, Ellen. "Saudis Push Young People, Including Women, Into Jobs." *The Wall Street Journal* . Dow Jones & Company, January 31, 2012.

Knight Foundation. "Digital Citizenship Exploring the Field of Tech for Engagement." 2012.

Koch-Baumgarten, Sigrid, and Katrin Voltmer. "Public Policy and Mass Media; The Interplay of Mass Communication and Political Decision Making." *Routledge Studies in European Political Science*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.

Kraidy, Marwan. "Hpermedia and Governance in Saudi Arabia ." *University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons*. Pennsylvania: Annenberg School of Communication, 2006.

—. "Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and the Changing Arab Information Order." Vol. 1. *International Journal of Communication*, 2007. 139-156.

Krawietz, Birgit , and Helmut Reifeld. "Islam and the Rule of Law Between Shariah and Secularization." Berlin: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2008.

Lacey, R. *Inside the Kingdom*. New York, NY: Viking Penguin Group, 2009.

- Lacey, Robert. "Has 9/11 Chaged Saudi Arabia for the Better?" *The Daily Beast*. 9 11, 2010.
- Lake, Eli. "U.S. Keeps Saudi Arabia's Worst Secret." *thedailybeast.com*. The Daily Beast, March 25, 2014.
- Lang, Annie. "Discipline in Crises? The Shifting Paradigm of Mass Communication Research." *Communication Theory*. Vol. 23. International Communication Association, 2013. 10-24.
- Le Renard, Amelie. "A Society of Young Women: Oppurtunities of Place, Power, and Reform in Saudi Arabia." Standford, CA: Standford University Press, 2014.
- Levinson, Jack Balkin and Sanford. "The Process of Constitutional Change: From Partisan Entrenchment to the National Surveillance State." Vol. 75. no. 2. Fordham Law Review , 2006. 489 -535.
- Lindolf, Thomas, and Bryan Taylor . "Qualitative Communiacion Reseach Methods." SAGE Publishing , 2011.
- Lippman , Thomas W. "Saudi Arabia on the Edge, The Uncertain Future of An American Ally ." *A Council on Foreign Relations Book*. Potomac Books, Inc., 2012.
- Lippmann, walter. "Public Opinion." Transaction Publishers, 1946.
- Lippmann, Walter. "Public Opinion." Green Book Publication, 1922.
- Livingston , Steven. "Clarafying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention." *The Joan Shorenstein Center Press Politics* . President and Fellows of Harvard Collage, June 1997.
- Livingstone, Sonia. "On the Mediation of Everything: ICA Presedential Address 2008." Vol. 59. Journal of Communication , 2009. 1-18.
- Livingstone, Sonia, and Peter Lunt. "Mediatization: An Emerging Paradigm for Media and Communication Studies." London: London School of Economics, 2015.
- Louw, Eric. "The Media and Political Process ." Thousands Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2010.
- Luhmann, N. & Cross,K. "The Reality of the Mass Media." Standford University Press, 2000.
- Lynch, Marc. "Arab Media: Power and Weakness." Edited by Kai Hafez. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2008.
- Maceda, Cleofe. "World of Wealthy Women ." *Gulf News*. Riyadh, August 14, 2010.
- MacFarquhar, Neil . "Social Media Help Keep the Door Open to Sustained Dissent Inside Saudi Arabia." *New York Times*. New York : News York Times, June 15, 2011.
- Mackinnon, Rebecca. "Our Web Freedom at the Mercy of Tech Giants." *TedTalk Tuesday*. CNN.  
<http://www.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/07/31/mackinnon.tech.freedom/index.html>, July 31, 2011.
- Majlis Ash-Shura. *WWW.shura.gove.sa*. Riyadh , 1427-1438H.
- Maraz, Sharon. "Using Time Series Analysis to Measure Intermedia Agenda Setting Influence in Traditional Media and Political Blog Networks." *Jounalism and Media Communication Quarterly*. Vol. 88. March 2011. 176-194.
- McChesney, Robert. "Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism is Turning the Internet Against Democracy." New York: The New Press, 2013.



- McCombs, Maxwell, and Donald Shaw. "The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media." no. 2 (1972): 176-187.
- McCombs, Maxwell, Donald Shaw, and David Weaver. "Communication and Democracy." Laurance and Erlbaum Associates, 1997.
- McLuhan, Marshall. "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man." Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.
- MD Rasooldeen. "MERS Contained, Says Health Ministry Official ." *Arab News*. Riyadh: arabnews, April 3, 2014.
- Media Policy . "Saudi Arabia Media Policy ." Riyadh : Council of Ministers, 1982.
- Meier, Werner. "Media Ownership-Does It Matter?" *Networking Knowledge for Information Societies: Institutions & Intervention*. Vol. VI.4. Edited by Robin Mansell, Rohan Samarajiva and Amy Mahan. Delft University Press, 2002. 298-303.
- Meijer, Roel. "Reform in Saudi Arabia: The Gender-Segregation Debate." *Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. XVII. Middle East Policy Council, 2010.
- Meijer, Roel, and Paul Aarts. "Saudi Arabia between Conservatism, Accommodation and Reform." Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Cligendael', January 2012.
- Menoret, Pacal. "Saudi TV's Dangerous Hit." *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Paris , September 2004.
- Messner, M., Garrison, B.,. "Study Shows Blogs Affect Traditional News Media Agenda." *Newspaper Research Journal* . Vol. 32. 2011. 112-126.
- Miller, Joanne, and Jon Krosnick. "News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: A Program of Research on the Priming Hypothesis." *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*. University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Miller, L.E., Larrabee, F.S., Rabasa, A., Pezard, S., Taylor,J. "Democratization in the Arab World Prospects and Lessons from Around the Globe." National Defense Research Institute , 2012.
- Mills, Wright. "The Power Elite ." New York: Oxford , 1956.
- . *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Mills, Wright, and Alan Wolfe. "The Power Elite." New York: Oxford, 1956.
- Ministry of Education. "The Executive Summary of the Ministry of Education Ten Year Plan (2004-2014)." Riyadh: Ministry of Education, 2004.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs . "Selecting Education as the Topic for National Dialogue." Riyadh : MOFA , 2006.
- Ministry of Interior . "Statement by Ministry of Interior ." Riyadh : ALJazeera Newspaper, November 15, 1990.
- Mishkhas, Abeer. "Why is There no PE for Girls on Our Schools?" *Arab News*. Arab News, September 20, 2002.
- Momani, Nail, and Ayman Fadil. "Changing Public Policy Due to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Flood Disaster." *2010 Science Publications*. Vol. 6. Jeddah: Journal of Social Science, 2010. 424-428.
- Montagu, Caroline. "Civil Society in Saudi Arabia: The Power of Chanllenges of Association." *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*. Chatham House , March 2015.
- Moore, Nicole. "Censorship Is." *Australian Humanities Review* . no. 54. Edited by Monique Rooney & Russell Smith. May 2013.

- Morozov, Evgeny. "The Dark Side of Internet Freedom: The Net Delusion." New York: PublicAffairs, 2011.
- Murad, Ezat. "Saudi Media Glory and Developmnet." Jeddah: Rdmak, 2013.
- Murphy, Caryle. "Saudi Arabias Youth and the Kingdoms Future." *Middle East Program Occasional Paper Series* . Vol. winter 2. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011.
- Murphy, Brian . "Saudi Olympic Opneing to women 'small Step'." Cairo: AP Top News Package- Associated Press, July 13, 2012.
- MzMz. "Video: The Minister escapes Journalists." *mz-mz.net*. mz-mz.net/438269, March 5, 2015.
- Nabth Alsahafa. "Interview with Khalid Almshoh." Aljsad.org, March 2007.
- Nafee, Ibrahim. "Campaign for Female Driving Shifts Gear: Shoura Women Join Cause." Jeddah: Arab News, October 9, 2013.
- Naser, Tahani, and Sahar Alqahtani. "In a Quick Responce: Minister of Health Sacked." *Altagreer*. Altagreer, April 11, 2015.
- Nolan, Leigh. "Managing Reform? Saudi Arabia and the King's Dilemma." *Policy Briefing*. Qatar: brookings Doha Center, May 2011.
- Nye, Jr. Joseph. "Redefining NATO Mission in the Information Age." *NATO Review*. Vol. 47. 1999. 12-15.
- Okaz. "Women Driving is a social decision delayed by society." *Okaz*. Edited by Adnan Shebrawi, et al. Okaz, May 27, 2011.
- Olympic Studies Center. "Women in Olympic Movement ." Lusanne: International Olympic Committee , May 2014.
- Online Project . "Getting to Know Social Saudis; a Closer Look on the Behavior of Saudi Users on Social Networks." Riyadh, Dec 2013.
- Ottaway, Marina, and Julia Choucair-Vizoso. "Beyond The Facade: Political Reform in the Arab World." *Political Reform in the Arab World*. Washington , DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2007.
- Papachsriss, Zizi. "Journalism and Citizenship: New Agendas in Communication." *A Volume in the New Agendas in Communication Series*. NEW YORK: Routlrdge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009.
- Parker, Chad. "Transports of Progress: The Arabian American Oil Company and American Modernization in Saudi Arabia, 1945-1973." ProQuest, Indiana University, June 2008.
- Parolin, G.P. "Generations of Gulf Constitutions: Paths and Perspectives." *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf*. Gulf Research Center, 2006. 51-87.
- Patrick, Stewart. *The Future of Internet Governance:90 places to Start*. June 10, 2013. cfr.org.
- Pavletic, Ivan. "Political Competition, Economic Reform and Growth: Theory and Evidence from Transition Countries." vdf Hochschulverlang AG, 2010.
- Piccone, Ted, and Emily Alinikoff. "Rising Democracies and the Arab Awakening: Implications for Global Democracy and Human Rights." Washington, D.C: Foreign Policy Brookings, January 9, 2012.

- Pletka, Danielle. "Reform in Saudi Arabia: New Textbooks, Old Ideas." *American Enterprise Institute*. Washignton: aei.org, May 24, 2006.
- Potter, James. "Media Effect." SAGE Publication, 2012.
- Prokop, Michaela. "Saudi Arabia: the Politics of Education." *International Affairs*. Vol. 79. Wiley-Blackwell, 2003. 77-89.
- Ramadani, Nabila. "Saudi Womens Olympic Hopes a Leap too FAR." *The Age London* 2012. The Age, June 26, 2012.
- Ramady, Mohamed. "Gulf Unemployment and Government Policies: Prospects for the Saudi Labour Quota or Nitaqat System." *Int. J. Economics and Business Research*. Dammam, 2013.
- Raphaeli, Nirmrod. "Demands for Reform in Saudi Arabia." *Middle Eastern Stduies*. Vol. 41. Taylor & Francis, July 2005. 517-532.
- Rasheed, WAJID. "Energy for Generations; Saudi Aramco 7fth Year Anniversiry." *Saudi Arabia Oil and Gas*. Edited by Majid Rasheed and Mauri Martins. Jeddah: EPRasheed, 2008.
- Reuters. "Saudi will not Stop its Women Competing in Olympics: Paper." Dubai : Alarabiya, April 6, 2012.
- Rheault, Magali. "Saudi Arabia: Majorities Support Women Rights." *Gallup*. Washignton: Gallup Poll, December 21, 2007.
- Rieger, Rene. "In Search of Stability: Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring." *Saudi Arabia and the Arab Uprising: National, Regional, and Global Responses*. Cambridge: Gulf Research Center, 2013.
- Robinson, Piers. *Media as a Driving Force in International Politics: The CNN Effect and Related Debates*. October 8, 2013. [www.globalpolicyjournal.com](http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com).
- Rodrigues, Clemencia . "Fissures in the Mediascape: An International Study of Citizen Media ." Cresskill, NJ: The Hampton Press Communication , 2001.
- Royal Decree 169. "Media Policy In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Riyadh: Council of Ministers, August 10, 1982.
- Royal Decree M/32. "Law of Printing and Publication ." Riyadh, October 28, 2003.
- RoyalDecree. "Jeddah Flash Floods Disaster." *NO. A/191*. Saudi Press Agency , 10 05, 2010.
- . "Law of Press Establishmnet." *NO. M/20*. [wipo.int/wipolex/en](http://wipo.int/wipolex/en), July 29, 2001.
- Sabir, Faisal. "A Content Analysis of the Media Agenda Setting in the Saudi National TV Newscast." Arkansas State University, April 2012.
- Sabq. "Shoura Rumors to Permit Women to Drive Cars." Riyadh: Sabq, November 8, 2014.
- . "study: Women Driving Dialogue is Driven By Men ." Edited by Eisa ALHarbi. Riyadh: Sabq Online , 2014.
- Sabry, Tarik, ed. "Arab Cultural Studies." New York : I.B.Tauris & Co, 2012.
- SACM. "King Abdullah Scholarship Program ." Virginia , 2014.
- Sager, Abdulaziz. "Political Reform Measures from Domestic GCC Perspective." *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation*. Edited by Giacomo Luciani Abdullah Khalaf. Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2006.

- Sakr, Naomi. "Arab Media and Political Renewal; Community, Legitimacy, and Public Life." New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009.
- . *Women and Media in the Middle East, Power Through Self Expression*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007.
- Salem, Fadi, Racha Mourtada, and Sarah Alshaer. "Transforming Education in the Arab World: Breaking Barriers in the Age of Social Learning." *Arab Social Media Report* 5, no. 1 (2013): 1-32.
- Samin, Nadav. "Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Social Media Moment." *Arab Media and Society*. no. 15. The American University in Cairo, 2012.
- Saudi Gazette Report. *Journalists Association Fails Miserably, Say Members*. Riyadh: Saudi Gazette, 2014.
- Saudi Gazette. "Use of Social Media apps in Saudi Arabia Growing Rapidly." Jeddah: Saudi Gazette, May 26, 2016.
- . "Women Constitute 13% of Saudi Work Force." Dammam: Alarabiya.net, February 10, 2015.
- Saudi Press Agency . "Interior Ministry will enforce the regulations." *Alyoum*. Riyadh: Alyoum, October 23, 2013.
- . "Ministry Of Interior Statement ." Riyadh , October 23, 2013.
- Saudi Press Agency. *Crown Prince Chairs Cabinet Sessions*. Riyadh Daily. Riaydh, April 14, 2014.
- Scheufele, Dietram A. "Framing As A Theory of Media Effect." *Journal of Communication* . International Communication Association, 1999. 103 - 122.
- Schultz, J. "Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy , Accountability, and the Media." Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Scullion, Richard, Roman Gerodimos, Daniel Jackson, and Darren Lilleker. *The Media, Political Participation and Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013.
- Seib, Philip. "The Al Jazeera Effect, How the New Global Media Are Reshaping the World Politics ." Virginia: Potomac Books, 2008.
- Shirky. "The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere and Political Change." *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2011.
- Siebert, Fred, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm. "Four Theories of the Press." University of Illinios, 1956.
- Stalinsky, Steven. "Inside The Saudi Classroom, Seeking Reform." *National Review*. February 7, 2003.
- Telfaz. "No Women No Drive." *Youtube.com*. Riyadh, October 26, 2013.
- The Associated Press. "Report: No Saudi Women Qualified for Olympics." Riyadh : Al Sharg Al Awsat, July 9, 2012.
- The Economist . "Social Media in Saudi Arbia A Virtual Revolution ." Jeddah/Riyadh, Sept 13, 2014.
- The Economist. "Saudi Arabia Women Drivers, Ovarian Issue." *The Economisr*. The Economist , October 26, 2013.
- The Economist, Intelligence Unit. "Healthcare in Saudi Arabia, Increasing Capacity, Improving Quality?" Geneva: The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014.

- The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research . "Curriculum Reform: Local Need and Foreign pressure." The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, April 24, 2004.
- The Global Gender Gap Report. "GGGR 2014." Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2014.
- The Ministry of Education in coopertaion with the Ministry of Higher Education, and General Establishmnet of Technical Education and Vocational Training. "The Development of Education." Geneva: Ministry of Education, 2003.
- The Social Clinic . "The State of Social Media in Saudi Arabia 2012." Riyadh , 2013.
- The World Bank. "Research and Development Expenditure (% of GDP)." [data.worldbank.org/indicators](http://data.worldbank.org/indicators).
- Troemel, Mark, and Patricia Strait. "Bedouin Rising: How Saudi Female Entrepreneurs are Leading Saudi Arabia Into A Knowledge Based Economy." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. Vol. 2. Rome : MCSER Publishing , October 2013.
- U.S. Departmnet of State. "Remarks with Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Saud AL Faisal." Washington: state.gov, May 18, 2006.
- Um Alqura University. "saudi Ministry Experience with Cirriculum." Makkah: uqu.edu.sa/nashahrani/ar/1122444, 2015.
- UNCCSF. "United Nations Startegic Framework - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2012-2016." Riyadh, 2012.
- UNESCO. "Media Development Indicators: A Framework for Assessing Media Developmnet." Paris: UNESCO, March 26-28, 2008.
- United Nations Development Programme. "Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab." *The Arab Human Development Report 2005*. New York: UNDP/RBAS, 2006.
- United State Institute of Peace;. "Arab Media: Tools of the Governments; Tools for the People." *Virtual Diplomacy Series*. Vol. 18. United State Institute of Peace, August 2005.
- United States Institute of Peace. "Arab Media: Tools of the Governmnets; Tools for the People?" Vol. VDS 18. washington : United States Institute of Peace , August 2006.
- Wahab, Siraj. "Manal AL-Sharif's Release Orders Issued ." Dammam: Arab News, May 30, 2011.
- Weinberg, David Andrew. "Textbook Diplomacy." Washington, DC: Foundation for Defense of Democracies Press, March 2014.
- Willis, J. "The Media Effect: How the News Influences Politics and Government." Greenwood Publishing Group , 2007.
- Wolfsfeld, Gadi. "Making Sense of Media and Politics; Five Principles in Political Communication." New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- World Trade Organization . "Trade Policy Review Report by The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Vols. (11-6340). December 14, 2011.
- WorldBank. *Worldbank.org*. April 21, 2014. (accessed April 21, 2014).
- Worth, Robert F. "Saudi King Dismisses 2 Officials in a Shuffle." *The New York Times - Middle East*. New York: The New York Times, February 14, 2009.
- Yamani, Mai. "Saudi Arabia's Media Mask." *Kingdom Without Borders*. Edited by Madawi Al Rasheed. London: Hurst&Company, 2008. 323-333.

Yazeed , Mohammad. "21 Million Media Ministers are awaiting the Minister of Media ." *Alwatan newspaper*. Alwatan , 11 30, 2014.

Yushi, Chiba. "A Comparative Study on the Pan Arab Media Strategies: The Case of Egypt and Saudi Arabia." *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Stduies*. Japan: Kyoto University, February 2012. 47-60.

Ziccardi, Giovanni. "Resistance, Liberation, Technology and Human Rights in the Digital Age ." *Law, Governance and Technology Series*. Vol. 7. Springer, 2012.

—. "Resistance, Liberation, Technology and Human Rights in the Digital Age." *Law, Governance and Technology Series 7*. London: Springer, 2013.

Zingarelli, Megan. "The CNN Effect and the Al Jazeera Effect in Global Politics and Society." Washington , April 10 , 2010.

## Bibliography

### Censorship

Cohen, N. (2012). *You Can't Read This Book, Censorship in an Age of Freedom*. London: Fourth Estate .

Khazen, J. (1999). Censorship and State Control of the Press in the Arab World. *The Harvard International Journal of Press Politics* , 4.3 , 87-92. Cambridge, MA, USA.

### Education

Al Aqeel, A. (2013). *Education Policy and Regulations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 10th* . Riyadh, KSA: Alrushd.

Alhqel, S. A. (2011). *Regulation and Policy of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 16th* . Riyadh, KSA: Alhumaithi Publishing .

Center for Religious Freedom . (2006). *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance: With Excerpts From Saudi Ministry of Education Textbooks for Islamic Studies*. Washington, DC, USA: Freedom House.

### Media

Albshir, M. (2014). *Public Opinion . 1st* . Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Obeikan.

Aljwer, M. A. (2013). *Transform in Saudi Media, A Modern Prespective . 1st Edition*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Alhumaithi Publishing .

Alsaud , S. (2010). *Saudi Media and its Political Development. first*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Alkanawat.

AlSaud, M. S. (2012). *Rejection and Acceptance, the story of the Saudi society with telecommunication . Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Rdmik*.

Alshubaili, A. (2003, September). *King AbdulAziz and Media*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Safir Publisher.

ALShubaili, A. S. (2000, April). *Media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. first*. Riyadh, KSA: Safeer Publishing.

Alzbeidi, M. (2013). *The Role of Media in Political Decision Making . Amman, Jordan: Dar Alhamed Publishing*.

Ammoun, C. (2006). *The Institutionalization of the Saudi Political System and the Birth of "Political Personnel". Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf* . Dubai, UAE: Gulf Research Cneter.

Arab Media Outlook 2012-2015. (2012). *Arab Media Oultook 2011 2015 Forecast and Analysis of Traditional amd Digital Media in the Arab World. 4th* . Dubai, UAE: Dubai Press Club.

Ayish, M. (2002). *Political Communication on Arab World Television: Evolving Patterns . Political Communication , 19 , 137-154*. Taylor & Francis.

Ayish, M. (2011). *Television Broadcasting in the Arab World. Arab Media* . Cambridge , MA, USA: Polity Press.

Bahador, B. (2007). *The CNN Effect in Action, How the News Media Pushed the West Toward War in Kosovo*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- BaitAlmal, H. (2000, June). Transfer and Developmnet of Modern Communication Technology into Saudi Arabia: A Conservative Model. *ICA Theme Panel* .
- Bimber, B. (2007). How Information Shapes Political Institutions. *Media Power In Politics , fifth*. (D. Graber, Ed.) Chicago: University of Illinios.
- Boyd, D. (2001). Saudi Arabia's International Media Strategy: Influence through Multinational Ownership. *Mass Media, Politics & Society in the Middle East* . (K. Hafez, Ed.) USA: Hampton Press.
- Duffy, M. J. (2013). Media Laws and Regulations of the GCC Countries. Doha, Qatar: Doha Center for Media Freedom.
- Fandy, M. (2007). An Uncivil War of Words: Media and Politics in the Arab World. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Graber, D. (2010). Media Power in Politics. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication .
- Grindle, M. (2004). *Despite the Odds* . USA: Princeton University Press.
- Koch-Baumgarten, S., & Voltmer, K. (2010). Public Policy and Mass Media; The Interplay of Mass Communication and Political Decision Making. *Routledge Studies in European Political Science* . New York, NY, USA: Routledge.
- Livingstone, S., & Lunt, P. (2015). Mediatization: An Emerging Paradigm for Media and Communication Studies. London, UK: London School of Economics.
- Louw, E. (2010). The Media and Political Process . Thousands Oaks, California, USA: SAGE Publications.
- McLuhan, M. (1994). Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press.
- McCombs, M., Shaw, D., & Weaver, D. (1997). Communication and Democracy. Laurance and Erlbaum Associates.
- Sakr, N. (2009). Arab Media and Political Renewal; Community, Legitimacy, and Public Life. New York, USA: I.B. Tauris.
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing As A Theory of Media Effect. *Journal of Communication , Winter*, 103 - 122. International Communication Association.
- Scullion, R., Gerodimos, R., Jackson, D., & Lilleker, D. (2013). The Media, Political Participation and Empowerment. *Routledge Research in Political Communication* . New York, USA: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Shirky. (2011, January/February). The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere and Political Change. Foreign Affairs.
- Siebert, F., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). Four Theories of the Press. University of Illinios.
- Willis, J. (2007). The Media Effect: How the News Influences Politics and Government. Greenwood Publishing Group .



Wolfsfeld, G. (2011). *Making Sense of Media and Politics; Five Principles in Political Communication*. New York, NY, USA: Routledge.

Zingarelli, M. (2010, April 10 ). The CNN Effect and the Al Jazeera Effect in Global Politics and Society. Washington , USA.

### **Reform**

Dejani, N. (2010). Arab Media and Building Public Opinion: the Missing Role, Media and the Process of Reform in the Arabian Region. *written for Arab Anti Corruption Organization* , 207-220. Center for Arab Unity Studies Publishing.

Henry, C., & Springborg, R. (2010). *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East . Second Edition* . New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Meijer, R., & Aarts, P. (2012, January). Saudi Arabia between Conservatism, Accommodation and Reform. Hague, Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'.

Nonneman, G. (2011). Political Reform in the Gulf Monarchies: From Liberalization to Democratization ? A Comparative Perspective. *Reform in the Middle East Oil Monarchies* . Reading, UK: ITHACA Press.

Raphaelli, N. (2005, July). Demands for Reform in Saudi Arabia. *Middle Eastern Studies* , 41 , 517-532. USA: Taylor & Francis.

Sager, A. (2006). Political Reform Measures from Domestic GCC Perspective. *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation* . (G. L. Abdullah Khalaf, Ed.) Dubai, UAE: Gulf Research Center.

### **Social Media**

Al Tawil, K. (1999, April 2001). The Internet in Saudi Arabia. Dharan, KSA: King Fahad University of Petroleum & Minerals.

AlGhazzi, O. (2014). Citizens Journalism in the Syrian Uprising Problematising Western Narratives in a Local Context. *Communication Theory* (24) , 435-454. USA: International Communication Association.

AlSaud, N. T. (2009). *Communication Technology and Social Changes in a Globalized Media. first*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Safer Publisher.

Alterman, J. (1998). New Media New Politics? From Satellite Television to the Internet in the Arab World. *Policy Paper* (48) . USA: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Arab Social Media Report. (2014, June). Citizen Engagement and Public Services in the Arab World: The Potential of Social MEDIA . 6TH . Dubai : Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government.

Al Saggaf, Y. (2012). Social Media and Political Participation in Saudi Arabia: The Case of the 2009 Floods in Jeddah. *Proceedings Cultural Attitudes Towards technology and Communication* , 1-15. Australia : Murdoch University.

Grubmuller, V. &. (2013). Social Media Analytics for Future Oriented Policy Making. European Journal of Futures Research.

Morozov, E. (2011). The Dark Side of Internet Freedom: The Net Delusion. New York, USA: PublicAffairs.

Ziccardi, G. (2012). Resistance, Liberation, Technology and Human Rights in the Digital Age . *Law, Governance and Technology Series* , 7 . Springer.

### **Saudi Arabia**

Alnuaim, M. (2013, October). The Composition of the Saudi Middle Class: A Preliminary Study. Gulf Research Center.

Cordesman, A. (2003). Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty First Century: The Political, Foreign Policy, Economic and Energy Dimensions. London: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Fandy, M. (2001). Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent. New York, NY, USA: PALGRAVE.

DeJong, J., & Moaddel, M. (2013). Trends in Values Among Saudi Youth: Findings From Values Surveys. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* , 6 (winter) , 1, 151-164. Johns Hopkins University Press.

### **Women**

Alfozan, A. (2012, April 17). Women Right in Saudi Regulations. Almultaqa AL fiQHI. AlGer, D. (1989). The Media and Politics. Englewood, NJ, USA: prentice Hall.

Delong-Bas, N. J. (2009). The Freedoms Saudi Women Really Want. *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1979-2009: Evolution of a Pivotal State* . Washington, DC, USA: The Middle East Institute .

Le Renard, A. (2014). A Society of Young Women: Opportunities of Place, Power, and Reform in Saudi Arabia. Stanford, CA, USA: Stanford University Press.

Meijer, R. (2010). Reform in Saudi Arabia: The Gender-Segregation Debate. *Middle East Policy Council* , XVII , 4. Middle East Policy Council.

Troemel, M., & Strait, P. (2013, October). Bedouin Rising: How Saudi Female Entrepreneurs are Leading Saudi Arabia Into A Knowledge Based Economy. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* , 2 , 9. Rome , Italy: MCSER Publishing .

### **Women Sport**

Chamerois, N., & Gillon, P. (2000, March). Womens Athletics: Between Globalization and Confiscation? *Women & Sport* . Paris : CERSO.

Creedon, P. (1998). Women, Sport, and Media Institution: Issues in Sports Journalism and Marketing. *Media Sport* . (L. Wenner, Ed.) New York , USA: Routledge.

Olympic Studies Center. (2014, May). Women in Olympic Movement . Lusanne, Switzerland: International Olympic Committee .

## Thematic and Name Index

- Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, 8, 64, 57, 58, 83, 78, 103
- Abdullah AL Rabiah, 186
- Abdullah AL Saud, 45, 52, 58, 67, 70, 73, 80, 84, 117, 123, 126, 155, 162, 171
- Agenda Setting, 34, 41
- ALArabiya, 43, 49, 95
- ALJazeera, 48, 82
- Arab Uprising, 8, 37, 53, 62, 74, 107, 117, 213
- ARAMCO, 111, 175, 179, 186, 193
- Authoritarian theory, 39
  
- Basic Law of Governance, 67, 78, 115, 183, 204
- Bedouin, 8, 65, 94, 127
  
- Censorship, 29, 37, 89, 93, 95, 113, 245
  - Self-censorship, 98, 100, 111, 116
- Cinema, 92
- Citizen journalism, 45, 51, 92, 215
- Closed culture, 29, 183
- CNN Effect, 46
- Constructionist, 15
- Copyright law, 109
- Council of Senior Scholars, 71, 172
- Cyber utopianism, 44
- Cybercrime, 100, 110
  
- Democracies, 36, 52, 61
- Education Policy, 171, 169, 207
- Education, 19, 152
- Empowerment of Saudi women, 149
  
- Fahad Alsaud, 58, 67
- Freedom house report, 158
- Freedom of speech, 58, 64, 73, 94, 102, 194
- Freedom of the press, 37, 101, 163
  
- Gulf cooperation council (GCC), 49, 58, 243
- Gulf war, 40, 47, 119, 125
  
- Hadith, 127, 154
- Haram “forbidden sin”, 89, 166
  
- IbN Taymiyah theory, 77
- Ikhtilat ‘mixed gender’, 173, 177

Intellectual security, 165  
 International center for religion and diplomacy (ICRD), 165  
 International Educational Bureau, 161  
 International pressure, 138, 148, 152, 181, 196  
 Internet, 37, 63, 79, 87, 93, 206  
  
 Jeddah floods, 51  
 Jihad, 157, 163, 170, 224  
  
 King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), 93  
 King Abdulaziz National Dialogue Center, 61, 155, 159  
 Kuttab, 146  
  
 Legitimacy, 56, 123, 138, 144, 148, 234  
  
 Majlis ALShoura (Consultative Council), 78, 123, 207  
 Male guardian, 122, 143, 206  
 Media as a power resource, 38  
 Media content, 35, 41  
 Media effect, 33  
 Media frame, 171  
 Media impact, 33  
 Media logic, 56  
 Media ownership, 40  
 Media Policy, 104  
 Mediatization, 54  
 Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 12, 88, 243  
 Ministry of Education, 20, 153, 207  
 Ministry of Health, 183  
 Ministry of Information, 20, 99  
 Ministry of Interior, 20, 95, 120, 131, 143, 165  
 Muhammad ibn AbdAlwahab, 153  
 Mosque, 65, 66  
  
 Newspaper, 65, 96  
     AlRiyadh newspaper, 97, 147  
     Alwatan newspaper, 46, 96, 167, 176  
     Oaz newspaper, 96, 97, 129, 196,  
 Newspaper journalists, 37  
  
 Olympics, 118, 138  
  
 Prince Mohammad bin Naif Center, 45  
 Prince Naif, 122, 129, 161  
 Prince Saud Alfaisal, 125, 159, 185  
 Prince Sultan, 125, 160

Propaganda, 33, 41, 109, 158, 168, 171, 181  
 Prophet Mohammad, 119, 127, 137, 146  
 Public opinion, 18, 27, 36, 44, 118, 123, 132, 185, 217, 240  
 Publishing and print law, 111

Quran, 90, 127, 153

Radical mentality, 26  
 Radicalism, 58, 68, 163, 178  
 Radio, 90  
 Reform, 57  
 Religious Fatwa, 71, 90, 130, 166  
 Royal Decree No.173, 153  
 Royal Decree, 10, 19, 62, 71, 78, 91, 100, 104, 190, 204, 217  
 Ruling elite theory, 40, 55, 59

Saudi Embassy, 142, 158  
 Saudi Gazette, 96  
 Saudi Press Agency (SPA), 22, 96  
 Saudi Youth Welfare, 139, 142  
 Schizophrenia, 102, 206  
 Shariah, 77, 235  
 Sunnah, 64, 78

Telegraph, 66, 87,  
 Television, 91, 97  
 Textbooks, 147, 150, 220  
 Tribe, 44, 65, 84, 90, 230  
 Twitter, 39, 80, 93, 124, 131, 184, 188, 191, 206, 233

Um Al Qura, 65, 78

Walaa wal baraa, 163  
 Watchdog, 46, 52, 194, 199  
 Women 2 Drive, 130  
 Women rights, 120,  
 World Health Organization WTO, 184, 196

YouTube, 46, 87, 101, 129, 183, 190, 198