

Determinants of Patriarchy in the Middle East: Hope for the 2030 Vision in a New Saudi Arabia

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Abstract— *This paper is examined the gender construction in Saudi Arabia. The reinforcement of kinship in Hijaz was a response to Al-Saud family power and prestige's, their influence and growth in number. This paper traces the meaning of "Aila" as the principal of Hijaz tribe on Urbanization and Modernization, reflected by the proverb, "I belong to nothing else but Ghuzaiyya (my tribe). And if Ghuzaiyya goes astray, I will follow. If it returns to the right path, I will do so". However, today Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) has portrayed himself as a revolutionary leader and reform the current Hijaz, UAE, to be more progressive, especially on women's rights. Nevertheless, this progression was predicted slow, because the traditional group still has influence and the women themselves need to fight for their own rights against restrictives and patriarchal laws to improve their double standard status in that countries.*

Keywords— *gender, women, reformation, Saudi Arabia*

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the pillars of social change is women. The role of this critical position is based on good policy and the character of leadership of women. To develop this critical role, women's empowerment programs are needed because the impact is not only on women but also on society. Improvements in the quality of women's lives can be promoted through empowerment programs that could encourage improvements within the family to promote transformation and change society and the country. States need to promote women's rights; then, they could be "agents of change" for sustained socio-economic development and security worldwide.

The topic of women's rights is one of the most hotly debated topics in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, one of the biggest problems regarding the topic of women's rights is that this topic includes many interpretations from scholars of religion in Saudi Arabia based on their opinion—and not science.

Patriarchy is not unique to MENA (Middle East and North Africa); however, because MENA is one of the most patriarchal regions of the world, women are more restricted from income-earning activities. A major barrier to women's success in the formal sector is the male version of the breadwinner model: Men are the breadwinners in families, and women's main responsibility is to remain at home and raise children. This ideology is closely related to Islamic ideology on the sexual division of labor and is supported by state laws in many countries. In MENA such as Iran and

Egypt, for instance, after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, many jobs were declared unsuitable for women and "the appropriateness of women's place within the family was advocated." The state's policy is that men should receive priority over women in securing jobs because men are the heads of households—not women. (Solati, 2017:44-45).

Education provide women to improve their opportunity in employment, therefore she could have their own money to get a better social status their future. However, families invest in their children's education, and this is a rational act. If the employment opportunities for girls compared with are much fewer, parents will support boys' schooling more than girls' schooling (Solati, 2017:14-15).

Saudi Arabia is a country in West Asia was established in 1932 by King Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud. The country covers approximately 900,000 square miles. Arabic is the official language, and Islam is the official religion. According to official statistics, Saudi Arabia has a total population of approximately 32 million people; notably, of the total population, 12 million people are migrants and approximately 11 million people are employed (i.e., hold a job that pays a salary). Of the employed, 5 million people are Saudis and 6 million people are migrants. Of the 5 million employed Saudis, 1 million are women. Phrased differently, out of the approximately 20 million Saudi nationals, 40% and 10% of the men and women are employed, respectively. By international standards, these numbers are extremely low (Hvidt 2018).

Saudi Arabia's HDI (Human Development Index) value for 2017 was 0.853, which put the country in the very high human development category and positioned it at 39 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2017, Saudi Arabia's HDI value increased from 0.697 to 0.853, an increase of 22.4%. Between 1990 and 2017, Saudi Arabia's life expectancy at birth increased by 5.7 years, mean years of schooling increased by 3.8 years, and expected years of schooling increased by 6.1 years. Saudi Arabia's GNI (Gender National Index) per capita increased by approximately 13.1% between 1990 and 2017. The 2017 female a Gender Development Index (GDI) value for Saudi Arabia was 0.782 compared with 0.892 for males, resulting in (GDI) value of 0.877 (UNDP 2018).

Saudi culture is a totality of beliefs, customs, and behaviors based on the values of Islam and affects every part of life, for example, the impact on human rights. The system or law in Saudi Arabia is based on two major subsystems: (1)

the Islamic religion, which is the religion for the majority of Saudi citizens and has a crucial influence and (2) traditional tribal customs. Those two elements are paramount important when discussing the topic of women's rights in Saudi Arabia. (Alharbi, 2015:9). Women in Saudi Arabia are regulated by those two subsystem, which merely patriarchal in law and norms in tribe. Moreover, those two subsystem sometimes tangled to each other and make a law and Arabic traditional norms similar to each other. Saudi citizens embrace the cultural and religious attributes of society in totality, thus they are taking it for granted and make the society adapted conservative values (Al Alhareth et al 2015).

This paper investigates the determinants of patriarchy in the Middle East and focuses on Saudi Arabia, where Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) is bringing hope to some people regarding his attempts to carry out a series of liberal reforms by 2030.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have discussed the role of women in Saudi Arabia. Amani Hamdan wrote "Women and Education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and Achievements" in *International Education Journal*, 2005, 6(1), page 42-64. In the article, Hamdan explores some restraints on and achievements of women in the field of education in Saudi Arabia. The historical socioeconomic and political conditions of Saudi Arabia are an essential aspect of understanding women's position in Saudi society. If the country plans to survive this globalized era, women's education in all fields should be a priority.

Safaa Fouad Rajkhan, under supervision Professor Karam Dana, wrote, "Women in Saudi Arabia Status, Rights, and Limitations" to earn her Master of Arts degree in Policy Studies at the University of Washington Bothell School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences in June 2014. In her acknowledgment, she says that her study is dedicated to every hopeful and courageous Saudi woman who dreams of a free society. The research was started in 2013 with investigation of women in political position, the following year, Saudi Arabia has their first female lawyer that granted a lawyer licence. In addition, she emphasized the ban on women's driving as one of the biggest obstacles to women's rights. Legislative, social, educational, and occupational constraints prevent women from fully participating in the development process of their country. Overcoming these constraints is essential if the Kingdom is to introduce comprehensive reforms that would enable Saudi women to participate more substantially in the development of their country. Reforms to the labor market, politics, and laws, including legislation promoting gender equality, should be implemented. This study presents a socioeconomic profile of women in Saudi Arabia.

Yahya Al Alhareth, Yasra Al Alhareth, and Ibtisam Al Dighrir published their works "Review of Women and Society in Saudi Arabia" in the *American Journal of Educational Research*, 2015, written that Saudi society is a unique mix of religion and culture, which poses difficulties for the government regarding education for women. The position of women in this society is complicated, and they have to overcome many barriers to obtain an education because they live under male authority all the time. The paper reviews the body literature on women and society in Saudi Arabia and its relation to their educational

achievement while considering several aspects, for instance: feminist theory, Islamic feminism in Saudi society, the status of women in Saudi society and Al Quran comparison.

Rakan Alharbi from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals wrote a paper "Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia: Example of Political Life and Employment" (November 2015). He explains that in Saudi Arabia, the rights of women is limited compared to men. He hopes that the Saudi people can consider women equal to men in employment, politics, and all aspects of society. He assert, within the lifetime, the connection between revolution for the equal treatment of women in Saudi Arabia will occur, and the fundamentalist mistreatment of the women in Saudi Arabia will end forever.

A. Methodology and Theoretical Concept

Gilligan defined patriarchy as an anthropological term denoting families or societies ruled by fathers. This type of rule established a hierarchy—that a male has power in society. For example the rule of priest, indicate that the priest, who merly male, is the savior, the father/pater. As an order of living, patriarchy elevates some men over other men and all men over women; within the family, patriarchy separates fathers from sons (the men from the boys) and places women and children under a father's authority (Gilligan, 2018:10).

Feminism is an ideology that belives the equality in social, economic, and politics. These days, the inequality are appears through women's in social roles, their quantity in public roles comparing to male and a struggle for women's rights. In principle, the philosophical understanding of the feminist theory explicates the world view of gender inequality (Wajcman in Al Alhareth, 2015:121).

This research using a descriptive method. First, heuristic or collecting data. The data conducted through literature review and interview with specialized. Next, the data is being collected and analyst with feminist approach. Then, in further research, I could conduct interviews with a sample of respondents to improve the understanding of women issues related to the 2030 vision in Arab Saudi. Thus, the research questions in this study are as follows: (Q1) Which policies from MbS in the 2030 vision directly affected women in Saudi Arabia? and (Q2) Which policies should be implemented to ensure improvements in the roles of women in Saudi Arabia?

B. Findings

Despite such lofty ambitions, the contradictions in Saudi society are clearly illustrated by an incident where the death of a student was reported in 2014. A young female Saudi student, 24-year-old Amena Bawazir, died of a heart attack after waiting for nearly 2 hours because the male medical staff was not allowed to attend her. This situation occurred because when an ambulance was summoned to help Bawazir, the crew was male and thus unable to enter the campus; therefore, a female crew had to be summoned, and by the time they arrived, Bawazir was dead (Cowan 2018).

If women are critical to the success of Saudi's *Vision 2030*, then, from a global stance, the marginalization of women in society means that women has to avoid severely limited role in business. It is only in 2017 that women can now drive to their university or work. This right was granted

after years of sustained protest, including a major incident on October 26, 2013, when more than 60 Saudi women's activists drove their cars to protest against the ban on women driving. One of the women was arrested, and she was adamant that the driving ban was not trivial. This incident signified the plight of women in modern Saudi Arabia, and if such a policy changed, there would be hope for further changes.

The abolition on women's driving law was the first, hence many obstacles remain. Women generally cannot work alongside male colleagues; instead, women have a partitioned section for their offices. Often, for women in the workplace, the basics are not well provided, such as restrooms, which may be some distance away from an office or meeting room. Women are required to wear the *abaya* and *hijab* to work, which distinguishes them from men but and makes it impossible to undertake some roles.

Comparing to other Gulf Countries, *abaya* are not obligated to women. Saudi Arabia merely imposing this restrictions for women in their countries. (Cowan 2018). "The rain begins with a single drop." The lifting of the driving ban and the right to go to football matches are incremental steps on the path to equality for women. Women in Saudi Arabia have certainly noticed the recent steady fall of rain in the Kingdom.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In 1940s the Middle East region has endured major challenges that have affected all Middle Eastern nations, and the Gulf States were no exception. Saudi Arabia, similar to other Gulf States, directly and indirectly, has experienced major social changes. First and foremost, the discovery and production of oil in the 1930s was a major occurrence in the country.

The oil boom that happened in early 1970 has impacts to major changes: economic, political, and social. The economic increased from the oil income that resulted in a trend to earn an education abroad and a change in lifestyle; these two changes affected the whole structure of society. (Yamani 1996).

The concern regarding women being considered a marginal group compared with mainstream culture remains a hotly debated topic. The perspective used to analyze the condition of women in Saudi Arabia is a cultural perspective. These factors have a major influence on the formation of society construction that affirms a patriarchal gender-biased ideology. Religious doctrine is often used to legitimate and justify violence against women. Religious doctrine is considered a standard definite law and cannot be sued to create change; thus, the marginal position of women in religion is considered a destiny that cannot be changed. This condition has been rejected and criticized by Muslim feminists because it denies the mercy of Allah as the Most Merciful and God of all His creatures. God frees humans, men and women, to reveal His image in each of them regardless of gender.

In addition to religion, culture influences the formation of unequal social structures and cultures in Arab society; thus, women are weakly positioned to survive under the power of Arab patriarchal culture. This culture forms a family structure by placing men as leaders. Male domination in the family increasingly oppresses and marginalizes Arab

women. Violence against women in the family is covered up because the family is considered private.

Saudi Arabia has a "strong emphasis on Arab culture [and] on masculine role attributes." This masculinity culture plays a key roles in whole society. Gender stereotyping seems to be the decisive factor in determining what is thought to be masculine and feminine roles in Saudi culture. Masculine societies have defined rigidly stereotyped roles in which men and women perform gender-based tasks; thus, masculinity can be defined in this study as extreme enforcement of gender differentiation in which male traits of assertiveness, power, control, and achievements dominate and rule the concerned society. In the context of this high level of masculinity, while the advantaged Saudi males seek achievement and success, their female counterparts are made to be deferential, dependent, and certainly not equal. As such, female Saudis might be expected to emphasize a higher need for autonomy and independence (Fallatah, 2017:86).

The conservative Saudis are known for a low tolerance for uncertainty (e.g., women and men are prohibited from mingling in the workplace, a zero tolerance for political policies allowing women to drive cars, and a zero tolerance for women traveling without the official approval of their guardians). This conservative orientation is largely affected by the Saudi tendency to conform tightly to its interpretation of the values and teachings of the Islamic faith. Thus, Saudis, are likely to be intolerant of any individual who deviates from the values and teachings that exist within their respective cultures, thereby tends to affect the lives of Saudis.

This highly structured approach to uncertainty based on preserving and protecting the Saudis' conservative culture pervades the lifestyle of the Saudis, including the work context of Saudi employees and their motivational needs (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 1987; Saleh 1984 in Fallatah, 2017:88). To avoid uncertainties, Saudi employees greatly emphasize and prioritize their need for assured security to curtail any uncertainty resulting in diminishing their religious values. The need is adjusted to the establishment and development of a more standardized and structured Islamic ruling regime and subsequent policies. (Hofstede in Fallatah, 2017: 87-88). The interpretation of Islam as understood by Saudi religious scholars and promoted in Saudi Arabia does recognize women as equal to men. In addition, there is a restriction on the rights of the women in employment, but it is not similar to what the scholars of religion espouse. Conservative religious scholars stated that traditional Sharia law is mandatory. Women, consequently, under Sharia law, must follow norms in three areas: 1) the need for a male guardian, 2) limited access to mobility and transportation, and 3) employment and political participation restrictions. (Alharbi, 2015:20).

This condition of injustice and inequality has made Saudi Arabia's current government, under the leadership of MbS, reform the role of women and provide practical solutions and steps for women to have increased freedoms and the right to justice.

A. *Women Awakening is a Phenomenon in Saudi Arabia*

Several notable phenomena can be used to measure social change. In the traditions of the past, Saudi men wore a long white robes and a head covering with various designs. Each

region and tribe in Saudi Arabia had different customs and dress codes. Nowadays, this scene is likely to be found in only the suburbs that have not been influenced by globalization and modernization. Old generations of Saudi men prefer to wear "national dress" rather than their "tribal dress." Young people prefer casual clothing such as jeans, shirts, t-shirts, and training pants. In the past, Saudi women dressed in a black abayas along with niqab, burqas, or khimar. Now, Saudi women wear various designs and types of clothing. The abaya is no longer plain black but a colorful. (Al Qurtuby 2017). This change is as stated by Sheikh Mutlaq, "Saudi women should not have to wear the abaya, a long loose-fitting robe used to cover their bodies in public." Sheikh Abdullah al-Mutlaq, a member of the Council of Senior Scholars, said women should dress modestly, but this did not have to mean wearing the abaya. Saudi women are currently required to wear the garment by law. The cleric's intervention comes amid moves to modernize Saudi society and relax the restrictions on women. "More than 90% of pious Muslim women in the Muslim world do not wear abayas. So, we should not force people to wear abayas," Sheikh Mutlaq said. This statement is the first time a senior cleric made such a statement and may form the basis of Saudi law in the future. Sheikh Mutlaq's intervention has generated intense reaction online, and people have expressed support and opposition (BBC 2018).

Currently, some abaya designs are made to look slimming, modern, fashionable, and contemporary. According to Al Qurtuby's observations, many Saudi women now only wear abayas and hijabs without being equipped with a niqab covering their faces, especially either in Jeddah or in the province of Ash-Sharqiyah. Another example of social change is the feminist movement that has been growing since 2007. Compared with Gulf Arab countries such as the United Arab Emirates or Qatar, Saudi Arabia is a bit late in responding to these concerns about women's roles. However, its delayed reaction does not mean that there has been no changes regarding increasing the rights of Saudi women. Since King Faisal, women have had the opportunity to higher studies. Saudi Arabia has the largest women's campus in the world, Princess Nora University. Since King Abdullah reigned, women have had greater opportunities and positions. They have been participating in academia and have opportunities to work in all public sectors, except the military. Women are allowed to contribute in business, which roles are industry publishing and technology. A number of women in the ruling elite are also the members of the Shura Council, responsible for advising and supervising the king regarding various topics concerning women's empowerment. Al Qurtuby cited Mark Thompson, who said that women in the ruling elite were the impetus for the social, political, and cultural changes concerning the rights of women Saudi Arabia. (Al Qurtuby 2017).

By following Vision 2030, MbS and Saudi policymakers have been implementing three key items of the agenda: human rights, the gender revolution, and the younger generation movement. Notably, I focus on the gender revolution. Riyadh has is expansive and architecturally stunning university: Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University. This university is for women only and was inaugurated in 2008 by merging a number of colleges and universities for women into one impressive campus, which formally opened in 2011. At the ceremony, King Abdullah stated:

"Women carry a responsibility that is more than a duty, to maintain the stability of society and contribute to building the economy of the nation, and to represent the community and the nation to the highest standards, outside and inside the country. To be the caring mother, exemplary citizen and productive employee. Outside the nation, to be the ambassador of her country and community, and to represent well her religion, faith and our values. The vision of the university is "to become a beacon of knowledge and ethical practices for women" and its mission is "to become a comprehensive university for women, distinguished with its academic leadership and scientific research that contributes to building a knowledge economy with societal and international partnerships." (Cowan 2018:85-86)

B. Saudi Vision 2030: Education, Economy, Politics, and Woman

In Saudi Arabia, half the population is aged younger than 25 years. Education policies and literacy goals are paramount for societal and economic progress. Thus, the Saudi Arabian government has set the goal of totally eradicating illiteracy in the Kingdom by 2024. The government has granted SR192 billion (US\$51 billion) to the education sector in 2018 as part of Vision 2030, and this grant was part of the government's ambitious program to reduce economic dependency on oil sales by 2030. According to Business Insider, fluctuating oil prices and the price crash in 2015 have disrupted the unwritten social contract between the Saudi government and its people and resulted in a change in the political order of this one-product economy. The government is now working to diversify the economy by removing its over-reliance on unpredictable oil revenues.

The Saudi Gazette reported that through improving education and increasing literacy rates, the government hopes to create a more stable, knowledge-based economy. Since launching the Adult Education and Literacy System in 1972 and the General Secretariat for Adult Education and Literacy in 1977, the illiteracy rates in the country have decreased from 60% in 1972 to 5.6% in 2018. A separate report said the government allocated 31% of the budget to women's colleges as part of their commitment to women's empowerment. Students in Saudi Arabia will also participate in the Program for International Student Assessment (ISA) for the first time. The test is issued every 3 years by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to 15-year-olds worldwide to compare reading, math, and science comprehension in different countries. The Saudi government reportedly hopes that through continued investment in education and progressive goals, the country will have higher literacy rates by 2024, allowing 6 years for the improved knowledge to diversify the economy (2018).

Saudi Arabia is spending half-a-trillion dollars on coastal resorts and entertainment to move this country's economy away from oil (The Economist 2018). Women movement in Saudi Arabia consist of two groups with different perspective. First, women with a liberal perspective want additional freedoms that allow them to study, work, travel, and participate in development without restrictions on their roles. Second, the Islamist women, however, would prefer a higher level of adherence to sharia, especially those areas that grant women rights as defined by Islam. Both groups rely on the state to honor its promise to provide them with welfare services and spaces for participation in the well-being and

progress of the country. Questions raised by women tend to be gender focused, and these questions explore the reinterpretation of Islamic texts in matters related to their status. The broader picture of the application of sharia, democracy, elected government, and other topics I discuss in the book do not seem to feature strongly in their intellectual production, with very few exceptions (Rasheed, 2016:45). Women, however, have signed reformist petitions and participated in activism in defense of political prisoners to lift the ban on driving and other modes of mobilization that became prevalent after the Arab uprisings. Some of the modernists discussed in the book reflect on women's issues, their exclusion and inequality, but they remain men's voices on women's issues and cannot be considered representative of women or their aspirations in general (Rasheed, 2016:45-46).

Regarding gender, in 2016, Saudi Arabia was ranked 141 out of 144 on the Global Gender Gap Index, and critics scoffed at the Kingdom being elected by the United Nation's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to a 4-year term on the Commission on the Status of Women. The committee is "exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women." A 2015 survey in Riyadh also suggested that for women, driving was not as important as education and participation in community development projects, and offered a picture of optimism about the progress of gender equality in the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia's Princess Ameerah al-Taweel said, in 2013 on a panel discussion at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Jordan, that many conservative men in Saudi Arabia say "we don't want women to work, we want her to maintain her dignity. I think the main reason is fear from women and not for women, because they are afraid of women. We know that women are stronger than men in our society because they are a minority and the minority usually wants to prove itself." The WEF's annual Gender Gap Index for 2014 now place Saudi Arabia in the nine comparing to whole Arab countries in terms of gender equality, stating that Saudi Arabia has improved the income of Saudi women compared with their male counterparts, with higher levels of political and economic participation and improvements in education, health, and living standards. (Cowan 2018).

The role of women will drive the economy and the religious narrative, and the likelihood is that both these dynamics can only be positives for Saudi Arabia and Islam. As Amina Wadud-Muhsin, a specialist in gender and Islamic interpretation, explains, the Koranic evidence advances a view that stresses the significance of each to the other:

With regard to social justice, it becomes necessary to challenge patriarchy – not for patriarchy, but for an efficient co-operative and egalitarian system which allows and encourages the maximum participation of each member of society. This system would truly respect each gender in its contributions, and all tasks that are contributed. This would allow for the growth and expansion of the individual and consequently for society at large. As such, women would have full access to economic, intellectual, and political participation, and men would value and therefore participate more fully in home and child care for a more balanced and fair society (Wadud in Cowan 2018).

Women in Saudi Arabia are entering the job market; becoming business executives, professors, politicians; and driving themselves to work. New laws are making these

changes possible. But what is life like for women in Saudi Arabia? A German camera team was granted much sought-after permission to film in Saudi Arabia. Their report provides a unique glimpse into the lives of Saudi women and their families. Since February 2017, the Saudi stock exchange has had its first female chairperson, Sarah Al-Suhaimi. There is also Dr. Reem Alfrayan: She is aged in her early 40s, married, has four children, she received a doctorate in education in California before returning to Riyadh. Ten years ago, she, as a woman, would not have been allowed to enter the building of the Council of Saudi Chambers. Today, she is its Assistant Secretary-General and director of its businesswomen's division. Princess Reema bint Bandar Al Saud is an entrepreneur who owns a luxury department store in Riyadh and an official in the country's top sports federation. If a family has no sons, daughters can inherit large companies. Emancipation is filtering into the middle classes as well. Education is the watchword. Saudi young women are entering the job market, and foreign companies are eager to hire them. "Female Saudi applicants are far fitter than their male competitors," says Thomas Dreiling from Thyssen-Krupp. Today, Saudi women may also work as saleswomen or at supermarket checkouts. New laws and a new pragmatism in their application enable this change. Companies are supposed to provide their female employees their own "compartment." But, Aljohara Almansour, personnel manager at Thyssen-Krupp, says, "Our office door is always open, and we hold meetings together with the men." Saudi Arabia, whose state budget was in the red in 2015 for the first time in decades due to falling oil prices, can no longer afford to mandate that half the population remain at home. The driving ban is already a thing of the past, but a more important goal for Saudi feminists is abolish the system of male guardianship entirely. (Deutsche Welle 2018).

The winds of change for equality between women and men continues to blow in Saudi Arabia. Nowadays, women can pursue careers as co-pilots and cabin crew. Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammad bin Salman (MbS) is assumed to be serious about returning Saudi Arabia to a state that follows "Moderate Islam." He initiated Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 in 2017. This vision is to reform Saudi Arabia to be modern and open.

In this vision, social and economic reforms is an anticipation of the end of the oil era. Conservative Saudi Arabia, as it was called by MbS in an interview with the Guardian in October 2017, is not the real Saudi Arabia. He blamed the 1979 Iran Revolution causing Saudi Arabia become ultra conservative (interview with The Guardian, 2017). However, the conservative policy of Saudi Arabia, according to some scholars, began long before that, namely, since the 18th century when the Saud family which founded the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made the Wahhabite school an official state teaching. In matters relating to women, this school applies guardianship rules that require women to obtain male permission from family members, namely, a father, husband, or brother, to conduct activities in the public space. The global changes, including the joint movement of many countries to reduce the use of petroleum as a source of energy, related to the global warming of the Earth's surface temperature and the anticipated decline in petroleum reserves, eventually forced the Kingdom to think of new economic resources. For this reason, social economic reform is an absolute requirement. (Kompas 2018).

Prince Salman, in *The Economist* interview, explained his view of women in economic terms, and these views are commonplace among Saudi men: *So why is Saudi Arabia's rate of women in the workforce, 18%, one of the lowest in the world?* Culture of women in Saudi Arabia; the woman herself. She is not used to working. She needs more time to accustom herself to the idea of work. A large percentage of Saudi women are used to the fact of staying at home. They are not used to being working women. It just takes time. *Do you think having a greater proportion of women in the workforce would be good for Saudi Arabia?* No doubt. A large portion of my productive factors are unutilized. And I have population growth reaching very scary figures. Women's work will help in both of these issues. (The Economist 2016).

Women are half of the country's population and critical social economic resources. Studies from the World Bank and other economic studies, including studies conducted in Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, and the United Kingdom, have reinforced the evidence that including women in a country's economic activities is related to positive results, women who have an income are more likely than men to spend their income to improve family welfare, for example, on nutrition, health, and education. A society with greater gender equality, including allowing women to work in public spaces, also tends to grow faster and more evenly. A lot of evidence shows that poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, consumer choice, and decision-making on various topics are beneficial to the community (Kompas 2018).

C. Saudi's Women Vote

Women in Saudi Arabia began registering to vote in 2015 for the first time in the nation's history. The late King Abdullah announced in 2011 that women would be allowed to run for office and vote in municipal elections, which take place every 4 years (O'Connors, 2015). According to official figures, 130,000 women registered to vote in Saturday's poll, compared with 1.35 million men. There were 979 female candidates compared with 5,938 male candidates. Two thirds of the seats in the Kingdom's 284 councils are open. Approximately 100,000 women have registered to vote, compared with more than 400,000 men. (Safdar 2015). Researcher Adam Coogle said the following in a Thursday article for Human Rights Watch.

"To make serious headway on women's rights, Saudi authorities should scrap the male guardianship system, under which ministerial policies and practices forbid women from obtaining a passport, marrying, traveling, or accessing higher education without the approval of a male guardian. Only then will Saudi Arabia's women be able to contribute to society on an equal footing with men."

Suad Abu-Dayyeh, the Middle East and North Africa consultant at the international women's advocacy group Equality Now, echoed Coogle's concerns in an email to The Huffington Post.

"It is a great step forward and we encourage every single move towards empowering women and girls in Saudi Arabia and ending discrimination against them. What is needed next is to continue to work towards ending the male guardianship system in Saudi Arabia, which causes enormous hardship for Saudi women. Everyone will benefit from this" (O'Connors, 2015).

Saudi officials first proposed allowing women to vote in 2005, according to Human Rights Watch. The late King Abdullah, who died in January, 2011 ordering that women be allowed to vote in municipal elections and stand as candidates. Two years later, he ordered that at least 20% of seats in the Consultative Council be designated for women. The council advises the king and can propose laws. He appointed 30 women to the council one month later, according to the U.S. State Department. The number of women in the Saudi workforce has also been increasing: from 23,000 in 2004 to more than 400,000 in 2015, according to the government (Pearson 2015).

D. Role of Women in Vision 2030

In an effort to increase the total number of Saudis in the labor force, Vision 2030 makes a special effort to increase the percentage of women in the workforce. To start this process, MbS asked various entities in the public sector to post jobs that target women. In January 2018, the General Directorate of Passports advertised 140 jobs for women to work in airports and land-border crossings. Allegedly, the jobs were attractive. Notably, 107,000 women applied for these jobs, and the directorate claimed that the job adds posted on their website were visited more than 600,000 times. The Kingdom's Public Prosecution Office announced that it would recruit women as investigators for the first time. The new policy from this office followed an announcement by the Ministry of Justice that it plans to recruit 300 women as social researchers, administrative assistants, Islamic jurisprudence researchers, and legal researchers. In addition, employment of women within the military opened (Hvidt 2018).

The most visible initiative taken to bring women into the job market and change their status in society was the decree issued by MbS in September 2017, which reinstated the right of women to drive. The implementation took effect on June 24, 2018. In addition to the strong symbolic statement of change embedded in this initiative, rolling back the ban on women's driving, which was instituted in the early 1980s, serves crucial functions related to bringing more women into the labor force and increasing work-related productivity. First, currently, if a woman wants or needs to leave the house, her husband, an adult family member, or a driver employed by the family must accompany her. Culturally, taxis are generally not an option unless at least two women travel together, and in the major cities in Saudi Arabia, public transport is not a culturally acceptable means of transportation, and is significantly underdeveloped. Hiring a driver poses no problems in families with financial means, but this economic burden is significant for the great majority of households, who rely on an ordinary public sector salary. As such, transportation is a significant problem for the household and work-related productivity. To follow the laws, one woman in transit requires two persons' time, and the time involved is significant (especially when considering the slow-moving traffic in, e.g., Riyadh); thus, unless the job provides transportation, it is nearly impossible for both parents to hold a job. Furthermore, in families without drivers, the husband is socially obliged to leave work to drive his wife if she needs to go to the dentist, doctor, or other matters deemed essential. Most employers, at least in the public sector, accept this cultural norm, implying that driving one's wife is a legitimate reason to not be present at work. In this perspective, reinstating the right of women to drive

benefits the national economy in two critical ways. First, because it is easier for women, who are increasingly well educated, to enter the workforce, and second, because the workplace will benefit when the husband can spend more hours working and fewer hours in traffic queues (Hvidt 2018).

Gender politics are changing somewhat; this change is slow, and a sudden turnaround should not be expected in Saudi Arabia. However, a conclusion is that change is largely a matter of time. In recent days, the government of Saudi Arabia has been making substantial efforts to protect women from domestic violence, through the National Family Safety program. Through this assistance, women are provided with proper medical and psychological care, and violent men are being detained with greater frequency in an effort to denounce this type of behavior toward women. In addition, the government of Saudi Arabia wants to increase the participation of women in civil society and support any type of organization that supports women's rights (Almohammed in Alharbi, 2015:9).

IV. CONCLUSION

In the academic literature, there is little comprehensive qualitative analysis of how ride-hailing technologies compare with pre-existing conventional transport systems from the perspective of user experience. To address this gap, this paper gathered insights from 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews with ride-hailing app users in Metro Manila. Interviewees were selected with the aim of maximising sample variability in terms of home location, place of study and work, age, income, and frequency of use, among others.

The empirical data reveals that while interviewees held positive views about CPT, very few specific reasons were cited, with the most common being the affordability CPT modes such as jeepneys, buses and trains. The conviction behind these positive statements are weak as evidenced by the numerous caveats attached to the initially positive appraisal of CPT. A few respondents went as far as refusing to acknowledge anything positive about their experiences with CPT. In stark contrast, general experience with CPT is overwhelmingly negative for all respondents, with a very high frequency of negative references and very strong corroboration among them. Negative experiences stem from difficult origin to destination conveyance, multi-modality, lack of comfort, exploitative behavior of service providers, and issues with safety.

CPT is generally cheaper than ride-hailing apps. However, a nuanced analysis of the data indicates that the cost differentials against ride-hailing apps vary among several modes of transport, with trains buses and jeepney often being cheaper than ride-hailing but taxis being conditionally more expensive. Moving beyond the issue of cost, there is a clear and strongly corroborated trend among interviewees to unfavorably compare CPT to RHA when it comes to convenience, comfort, and safety.

The comparison-driven narratives presented here are important as these provide the foundation for subsequent inquiries about the motivations behind the usage patterns and attitudes toward CPT and ride-hailing apps. The provisional empirical analysis presented here is part of a

larger, ongoing research effort to understand the implications arising when on-demand platform technologies operate in contexts ripe with market potential, and yet riven with structural and institutional inadequacies. The findings of the current study must be seen as a baseline from which the level of corroboration may increase, or new themes emerge, as subsequent phases of data gathering are completed and more detailed coding cycles are carried out.

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