

Running head: CHANGES FACING SAUDI WOMEN

Reema,

Congratulations and many thanks for developing this extremely interesting, much needed and timely research proposal. In reading this version, I realize that you have worked extremely hard on it, and have conducted assembled a large amount of quality information and are tackling a complex and pertinent issue.

On the content/ theoretical side of your paper, I would have been interested in learning more about the ways the traditional attitudes and worldviews of the new generation of Saudi women are a cultural lag reflecting the traditional mores, customs, and values of the Bedouin societies that preceded the Saudi kingdom.

In addition, when discussing the process of modernization currently being experienced by Saudi society, what elements, factors, and influences—in addition to the oil money that has been coming in during the past 75 years—have fueled this transformation?

Your proposal still needs, however, some language editing and polishing. The current version has the content and structure of a good, solid working draft. Personally I believe that, after reviewing your manuscript, and cutting redundancies and repetitions, your 42 pages could easily be shorted into a tighter and more solid manuscript.

Mabruk!

The New Saudi Women:

Modernization and Western Media at a Secondary School in Riyadh

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Changes facing Saudi women -2-

EDUC 893

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*“Change in Saudi Arabia is glacial: it may not be easy to see, but it does exist”*

Peterson, 2000

#### Abstract

In Saudi Arabia, women’s basic values and beliefs are changing, in ways that affect their political, sexual, economic, and religious behavior. These changes are roughly predictable: they are largely due to the impact that the media, specifically Western, has on the lifestyles and value systems of Saudi female high school students. In this paper my aim is to understand the affects of modernization on Saudi women, and how that plays a role in changing these women’s social capital, creates multiple identities, empowers them through reform in their education and in the work field, and contributes to the overall change in their role in society. I will be looking at modernization in a traditional Arab society through the medium of an in-depth study of female high school student in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

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The New Saudi Women:

Modernization and Western Media at a Secondary School in Riyadh

*Introduction*

Saudi Arabia is a relatively young nation with an ancient history. Founded in 1932 by Abdulaziz Al-Saud, it morphed from a vast empty desert inhabited by Bedouins, to a modern united society. It remains one of the most conservative, orthodox, and traditional societies in the world grappling with the impact of modernization wrought by the influx of great oil wealth beginning only in the mid twentieth century. Saudi culture is in constant flux, and the culture gap between the West and the Saudi Islamic culture is wide. This is evident in the life of its female citizens. The curtailing of the women's personal freedom can be seen from limiting her access to a public life, as well as her full rights in the legal system, to even the most trivial customs like driving a car.

**Comment [jpo2]:** Plural?

Saudi Women are required by law to wear traditional black robe dress and cannot travel or marry without the consent of a male guardian. American newspapers have referred to the role of women in Saudi society as that of second-class citizens, a view which many Saudi women do not seem to share. and resent? However, need time frame the changing economic conditions and increased foreign media exposure through ... (cable? Internet?) have brought the issue of Saudi women to the attention of a much larger audience. This time the topic is no longer taboo like it was in 1990 - a hopeful sign for the petitioners in a country where change comes very slowly.

**Comment [jpo3]:** How far back does this tradition go? Does it predate Islam and Christianity?

**Comment [jpo4]:** When possible, avoid using "American" [which refers to the entire Western Hemisphere. Use instead United States

Not very much was known about Saudi Arabia to many non- Arab or non-Muslims before the events of 9/11 except that it was a Middle Eastern desert nation with plenty of oil.

There were many misconceptions about that country. [As a Saudi professional woman](#), Many times I was asked by Westerners if I lived in a tent, or rode a camel, or, my favorite, if I had an oil drill in my backyard. However, it has now come under a harsh light and great scrutiny post 9/11 as many of the hijackers were Saudis. People began to question where these boys came from, how they got that way; a closer look was taken at the culture and education of these young men. It became known as one of the strictest and most ridged and traditional countries (Clarke, 2007), especially when it comes to its female citizens, who still cannot vote or drive, and only recently (2000) were issues [identification cards \(IDs\)](#), (whereas before they were merely a name on their guardians ID.)

In [contemporary?](#) Saudi Arabia, women portray certain [traditional](#) roles prescribe to them by society [which go back ....](#) - These roles are not necessarily religious, even though there is no separation between the state and Islam in that country. "Although interpretations of 'correct' Islamic behavior influence all sections of society, local customs, norms and tribal traditions actually dictate women's roles and are enforced through familial structures." (Yamani, 2000, p. 96) There is an old saying in Saudi roughly translated to mean '*a women lives her life in three places, her father's house, her husband house, and finally her grave*'. A woman's role is seen as the obedient daughter, the silent and respectful wife, and the loving mother. However, change is on the way, and it can be seen in the slow shift in the woman's role form an unseen unheard obedient family member, to a productive member of society, who is able to satisfy and successfully combine both modern needs and traditional roles in moderation.

*Impacts of Media in a Traditional Society*

The global communications revolution of the last twenty years has ... Innovations in media technology such as the Internet, communications, and satellites have obliterated traditional borders. This mass communication has brought people who share beliefs, attitudes, backgrounds, and experiences together.

Please comment on those social trends that are being felt globally such as the proliferation of electronic mass media, urbanization, "modernization," along with the individual alienation and deracination which accompany them.

Taken together, these phenomena have come to be known internationally as the "Americanization" of culture & often result in the erosion of traditional cultural activities.

A TRANSITION PARAGRAPH ON:

- SOCIAL CHANGE (i.e., the alteration of social interactions, institutions, stratification systems, and elements of culture over time.), its causes (e.g., modernization theory: societies become more homogenized due to global and technological change) as well as on
- CULTURAL DIFFUSION (I.E., The transmission of cultural elements from one society or cultural group to another) and
- RESISTANCE TO CHANGE (e.g., political, economic, cultural)

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## Changes facing Saudi women -8-

With the introduction of [mass media, non-electronic such as print, music, film, as well as electronic, such as television and radio broadcasting](#), these technologies, modernization [was](#) slowly taking place, Traditional roles were being questioned as women are exposed to outside worlds, specifically the West. As more people began to accept the introduction of satellite dishes (which were at first described as immoral and against everything Islam stands for) and the internet into many homes, women became exposed to outside worlds, new ideas and ways of life. Their previously prescribed [traditional](#) roles are now under analysis, and with their [growing](#) economic and material needs more women began to realize their place is not only at home. As Mezirow (1991) theorized “an individual's belief system may change as a result of exposure to knowledge that challenges previously learned thoughts, or as a result of the individual's efforts to comprehend another culture that differs from or contradicts his/her own, which may have been previously perceived as perfect” (discussed in Al-Salem, 2005, p. 4)

Today, many Saudi women live [in](#) multiple worlds, the religious, traditional, cultural, gender role, and now a new world, the outside world. These women also realize that there is a need for them within society as [professionals?](#) doctors, business women... etc [and](#) [Consequently](#), in order to achieve [this-this goal](#) and compete in [the-21<sup>st</sup> century? he](#) world there needs to be a change in the [country's](#) educational system and a slow change in the culture itself. As this change is currently taking place with the introduction of more 'liberal' private schools and universities for females and a general acceptance of travel and study abroad, there is still great resistance from the wider community. This resistance comes from many, the family, religious members, peer groups, society, and generational differences.

**Comment [jpo6]:** Need to define modernization.

**Comment [jpo7]:** All (100% of Saudi women)? Or mostly the younger generation?

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### Statement of Problem

Central to this inquiry and the main motivation for my research topic is my personal experience of having to face the dramatic changes, which sometimes leave me flabbergasted, whenever I set foot in my homeland of Saudi Arabia for a visit after being gone for a minimum of a year. How can such great changes take place in that short period of time? Although these changes may seem insignificant and minuscule to an outsider (i.e. non-Saudi), they are, I believe, giant leaps for such a strict and rigidly traditional country. Many of these leaps are occurring for the Saudi female, a citizen many around the world wondered about and thought of as prisoners within her own religion and tradition. The truth is, as a Saudi female, I never felt like a prisoner, I was able to live, study and work all within the guidelines placed before me. Never have I stopped to wonder if those guidelines are fair or simply the creation of the dominant group to gain control. However, after stepping away then returning I see how some of those guidelines were somewhat restrictive, especially in the field of education, labor, and the female's role in society. I question if it has been taken for granted that the traditional, and not Islamic, Saudi society has inhibited women's progress. Also what does reform mean to such a traditional Society?

**Comment [jpo8]:** This excellent paragraph does not belong here. Perhaps it should go in the introduction.

As a result of .... Women in Saudi Arabia today [early 21<sup>st</sup> century?] are challenging many of the previous roles prescribe to them during the past centuries ... by ....; they are breaking the mold and yet retaining their religious and cultural traditions. They have shown that they are a vital part of society, and by being more apparent and participant they have not broken any rules. Although many feel that this change might have a negative, and some even go as far as immoral, aftermath, those females breaking the mold have shown differently. They were able to

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move forward, slowly but steadily, and keep their religious and cultural beliefs alive. [\[Are the following your research questions?\]](#)

- How were these females able to [negotiate "traditional" and "modern" identities while ...](#) move forward and yet keep some of those backwards thoughts at bay?
- What has helped them take these steps and make this move? [Moderate change from traditional attitudes to more liberal views](#)

I believe that the media plays a major role in this move, and it has helped reform people's beliefs about the Saudi women's role in society.

#### *Existing Literature and Subsequent Research Gaps*

Although there is plenty of work done on Arab women [\[in an academic proposal or paper you MUST include references\]](#), there remains to be a gap in literature on the [21<sup>st</sup> century process of change currently being experienced by](#) Saudi female. It seems that through my [bibliographic](#) search I was not able to find many studies on these females, and when I did they were by a non-Saudi and painted a very negative unrealistic picture. There is a contrast between the abundant studies on Arab women in Palestine, Egypt, even the UAE in comparison to the almost non-existence studies on the Saudi female.

However, I must state that there is an interest in the issue of Saudi Arabia as a country and many questions are being asked, especially in the aftermaths of September 11. There have been studies on [Saudi](#) in relation to change, modernization, attitudes and reform in education (or at least a hope for), but non focus on the female, which I believe endured the most hardship and

**Comment [jpo9]:** Avoid colloquial language.

resistance due to tradition. One of the main studies that has helped guide my research is a book by Mai Yamani titled “Changed Identities” (2000). It is described by Amazon.com as follows:

**Comment [jpo10]:** Rather than quoting Amazon com, can't you find a good academic review?

“Structured around the themes of identity and change, this is an examination of the forces affecting the attitudes, motivation and aspirations of the new generation in Saudi Arabia and exploration of the tension between perceptions of tradition and modernity. Crucial to this is an explanation by the youth of Saudi Arabia themselves of how they understand and explain this tension. How the ruling elite envision meeting the challenge of the new generation given the decline in the oil-based economy is central to this debate. While a redefinition of patriarchy is inevitable, globalization of identities represents a significant concern for the new Saudi Arabia in terms of modernizing an outdated education system and containing emerging Islamic trends among Saudi youth.”

Yamani’s book touches upon many of the topics I wish to research, and sheds the light on many aspects of the Saudi society which were left in the dark for so long. Yet, she does not focus on the Saudi female, which in my view needs a floodlight.

**Comment [jpo11]:** Great ... I hope you can read it, even review it for a professional journal.

#### *Identification of Relevant Need for Inquiry*

The relevance of this research inquiry is directly related to the slow but dramatic changes taking place in Saudi Arabia for its female citizens. As I have mentioned above their needs to be a floodlight flashed at the Saudi female and her role (and how it is changing) in society. There is also a need for reform in the educational system and the work field to accommodate for this new generation of women who are looking towards the future with hope, who are armed with knowledge that was not available to those before them due to their exposure to the world via the media.

**Comment [jpo12]:** New generation ....

*Personal Interest and Researcher Background*

Being a Saudi female, national, born and raised in the United States, and being greatly changed by my exposure to the outside world, I cannot help but wonder how I was able to combine two different and sometimes conflicting worlds within myself, and to use my new defined self to create a better environment for others within my society. Through my exposure to the West and its plethora of information through its mass the media I was able to use my knowledge of the language to better myself by going to private schools, getting a job in what is considered a liberal environment (mixed hospital setting), and finally continuing my education in the united States. I was able to use my knowledge of both the Saudi world and the “outside” world to create a ‘smoothie’ suitable for that society and yet allowing me to move forward and make a difference. I consider myself lucky to have lived in both the United States and Saudi Arabia, but could not help but wonder how the Western media plays a role in creating and developing Saudi women change agents who may have not lived anywhere else, and how these women can help in creating change for themselves in such society.

**Comment [jpo13]:** You may want to qualify this.

**Comment [jpo14]:** Any other country other than the United States?

Carful with the generalizations.

I use the mass media, electronic and non-electronic, as an important socializing agent and an agent of reform because I believe young people, especially females, in Saudi are heavy viewers due to the lack of other activities. It also becomes a source of abundant information as there is no alternative information

Purpose and Research Questions

My aim is to look at the process of identity change (how and why people change) in the new generation of Saudi females (both externally and internally) from the ridged traditional role describe above to multiple identities employed to fit today’s 21<sup>st</sup> century ... different needs. I

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want to look at the process of modernization and change (both cultural and educational), and how that was impacted by technology specifically the Western media. I wonder how [the new generation of Saudi women](#) ~~these females~~ negotiate the cultural resistance and clashes between what they live and what they aspire to be. Finally I question what role the media plays in empowering these women.

### Saudi Arabia

A vast desert peninsula located between Africa and Asia, it borders the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and Yemen (*figure 1*). [Saudi Arabia is](#) –It is one of the most conservative and orthodox Muslim societies in the world. It was [rapidly](#) transformed [from](#) a nation of Bedouins, to a rich and modern nation, with great wealth and prosperity due to the discovery of oil in 1938, which has been of primary importance to the country.

**Comment [jpo15]:** You may want to qualify TRANSFORMED: only economically?

A strong Arab culture and Islam [continues to](#) ~~shapes~~ the character of the region. The Saudi life is completely ingrained by the Islam religion. All Saudis are Muslims, and they live their life by its sayings, “*Shari’a*<sup>1</sup> is the law and constitution of the land. The *Sunna*<sup>2</sup> regulates daily life. *Al-Shahadah*<sup>3</sup> forms the Saudi Arabian flag. The King is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The two holiest cities in Islam, *Macca* and *Madinah*, are in Saudi Arabia, making the country the focal point for over one billion Muslims worldwide. All of these factors [continue to](#) regulate and influence the daily lives of the people in Saudi Arabia and are expected to prevail in the future like no other Islamic country on earth. It is believed that Islam will continue to hold together the fabric of Saudi Society in the twenty-first century and beyond.” (Pharaon, 2004, p.349) Its capital city, *Riyadh* is the largest with 3.7 million, followed by *Jeddah* (2.7

million) and *Macca* (1.6 million). The main language spoken is Arabic, although English is quite common in the business communities.

Nonetheless, There are great changes taking place currently in Saudi Arabia. T-taking a look at some recent events one realizes that it was an absolute monarchy until 1992, at which time the Saud royal family introduced the country's first constitution. In Feb. 2005, Saudi Arabia held its first elections ever to choose half of the new council members in Riyadh while the other half continues to be appointed, in keeping with the previous Saudi system. However, women were not eligible to vote, and less than a third of eligible voters registered showing that there is still some resistance to change.

To conclude on Saudi Arabia, I think Pharaon (2004) summarized it best, “present-day Saudi Arabia is one of the largest market economies in the Middle East. It is difficult for both Saudis and foreigners to stand back and realize the true extent of infrastructural development in the Kingdom over the last half a century. From virtually nothing, Saudi Arabia now has a world-class infrastructure network. The revenue from oil has been wisely invested into the modernization of the country in all sectors of the economy. However, Saudi Arabia is facing many challenges as it treads into the twenty-first century. The significant growth in its young population, a substantial decrease in its per capita oil wealth, and its excessive reliance on foreign labor, all contribute to destabilize its impressive developmental path. Furthermore, with the sudden spotlight on Islam and Muslim societies, and in particular the plight of women, it is hardly surprising that the Saudi society is suddenly squirming under this close scrutiny and torn between admitting the desire to progress and emancipate its women and defending its failure to do so.” (Pharaon, 2004, p.351)

**Comment [jpo16]:** How about social services?

### Women's Role in Saudi Arabia

The Saudi society is very patriarchal, with the male as the head of the family with total control on all the female members. The female's role was dictated and prescribed by religion? society, "For many years, the principal roles of Saudi females have been wife and mother." (Mill-Rosser, Chapman, & Francis, 2006, p.2) The country had no formal public schools for girls before 1960, and very few, if not none, were employed. Transition sentence ... "A Muslim woman's main function is to produce righteous Muslim children; she is the primary caretaker, in charge of the household and chief supporter of her husband. She is allowed to participate in other activities only to the extent that they do not detract from her primary duties." (Al-Marayati, 1997, p. 22)

**Comment [jpo17]:** Was it the same way BEFORE the discovery of oil, during the Bedouin period?

The Islamic belief has been and continues to be .... totally incorporated into public policy "Shari'a laws of personal status remain unmodified and are enforced through the courts: men retain prerogatives in marriage, divorce, and child custody, and also in the practice of polygamy... Women are not allowed to travel without the permission of a Mahram<sup>4</sup> a policy which is enforced by the state at airline check-in counters, railway stations, and hotels, where women traveling alone may not register for a room. Further, women may not receive a commercial license unless a male manager has been hired, and certain courses, such as engineering, are only now opening up in female universities because it was view that an employment in engineering is incompatible with sex-segregation" (Doumato, 1992, p.34). Women are able to find ways around some of these 'laws' and are able to move a few steps forward, for example obtaining commercial licenses. Yet this does not come without its drawbacks and restraints, for example, not being able to find work with their newly received licenses.

**Comment [jpo18]:** May want to comment that Saudi Arabia is NOT the only country in the world where these things happen.

However, [things are beginning to change today ...](#) it is a different picture today, with many educated women who work long hours outside the home and are sometimes the main source of income for their families. Although there is a movement in the women's role from inside to outside the home, it does not come without resistance from many, "modern conservative Muslim writers have produced extensive publications extolling the virtues of women who choose to remain at home, e.g., '*Remain in Your Place and Be Grateful*'. They argue that the breakdown of Saudi family values is directly related to women's employment outside the home." (Mill-Rosser et al, 2006, p.6)

With this constant struggle between the modern needs and the religious and cultural traditions, [the new generation of](#) Saudi women have created multiple identities to be able to move in and out of all their roles. It is believed that the old traditional ways are no longer compatible with the modern world, yet there is great resistance and fear in abandoning it, and thus it must be reinterpreted. Pharaon (2004) states it best by calling it 'schizophrenic', "This has resulted in a schizophrenic approach, which both encourages women to join in the process of development as equal partners and holds them back in their place as secondary actors within the family context. This dilemma will take time to resolve in Saudi Arabia, because the debate on the role of women in society is caught up in the larger debate on the role of religion in society." (Pharaon, 2004, p. 353)

There are many factors that have propelled the [new generation of Saudi women](#) into positions of social and economic importance in society. One of the major ones was the Gulf War in 1990, which created economic restructuring which increased the funding of women's education creating an increased number of female graduates. It also created a large number of unemployed women, who could not find 'suitable' jobs after graduations. With the end of the oil

wealth era, employment outside the house became a financial necessity for women, and has led many to flock to private sectors where segregation rules in the work field are not as strict.

A sign of an important step forward was the creation of the national dialogue, held in *Medina* in June 2004 on women's rights and duties in Saudi society. "The recommendations reaffirm the first duty of women, their role "side by side with men" in the "conservation of the family as a unite," while specifying their right to work and to earn their living within the limits defined in the *Quran*<sup>5</sup>, *Sunna*, and consensus of religious scholars.... Aside from the limited impact of the negotiations, the dialogue mainly has permitted the participants to complain or give their suggestions for changing the state of affairs" (Renard, 2008, p. 619) As one interviewee concluded, "I think that even if there are no clear results, the important thing is to open the dialogue, including in the media: I switch on television and I see that they are talking about Saudi women, not on a foreign channel, but on a Saudi channel. This is a change" this might mark a step towards making women's problems public.

However, the slow change in the Saudi female's role is due largely to her symbolic [traditional](#) status in society. "In Saudi Arabia, like most of the modern nation states of the Middle East, women have been and continue to be manipulated to symbolically represent the cultural integrity of the dominant culture in the country. Women's lives are situated in a complex web of influence that derive from personal and political developments, cultural and structural environments, and local, national, and international concerns. At any given time, this web of influences determines for the individual women what is probable, possible, or out of bounds." (Pharaon, 2004, p. 364) This is clearly exemplified by the punishment of forty-seven Saudi women for a driving demonstration in 1990, at a time when there was no Islamic or legal reasons for their punishment. It, however, helped the government by playing an important role in

deferring the religious *sheikhs'* attention from focusing on the large number of American troops arriving during the Gulf War. And, thus, the Saudi woman was used as a tool in this case to keep the king in power (Goodwin, 2003). She will continue to be used as a national symbol, the 'ideal Muslim woman'.

In conclusion, it is clear that [the new generation of Saudi](#) women are slowly gaining a voice, albeit a quiet one. Although they have joined the Consultative Council in 2006 "the council members only ask the female consultants about specific, so called women's and family questions such as the inflation of dowries, the opening of consulting institutes for concluding marriages, and even breastfeeding." (Renard, 2008, p. 620) This integration of women, although elite, in the field of consultation to represent and symbolize (even artificially) the Saudi women, is a change in the traditional regime. No matter how small, a step forward is a step forward. Change is on its way in the acceptance of women presence in society as a productive and important member.

#### Women's Education in Saudi Arabia

Women's public education in Saudi began only in the 1960. Before that there were a few private institutes for the daughters of the [privileged](#). The first private school for middle class girls was established in 1941 by [muslim](#) immigrants from Indonesia and Malawi who came to Saudi for pilgrimage and decided to stay. [Soon private girls' schools](#) founded by Saudis began to appear in *Macca, Jeddah* and *Riyadh* in the late forties to mid-fifties. However, these schools were for the daughters of the middle and upper class and not all members of society. The main mission for females' schools was prescribed in the speech given by King *Saud* while he addressed the nation on the subject in 1959:

Thanks be to god, we have decided to bring into effect the desire of the *Ulama*<sup>6</sup> in

**Comment [jpo19]:** Who were the privileged?

**Comment [jpo20]:** Where these early schools Madrasas, attached to mosques?

Saudi Arabia, and to open schools to teach our girls the science of our religion from the *Quran*, and belief and *fuqaha*<sup>7</sup>, and other sciences which are in harmony with our religious beliefs, such as home economics and child rearing, and anything of which the effect on their belief will not make us fear for the present or for the future. The schools will not have any negative effect on our belief or behavior or customs. To this end, we order that a committee be set up, its members being drawn from the important *Ulama*, who we trust very much to organize this school, to decide on a program, and to see that it is carried out. (Al Rawaf & Simmons, 1991, p.288)

**Comment [jpo21]:** Are the Ulama the mullah's?

It is clear from the statement above that girls education was a mere continuation of peoples believe of a female's role in the traditional society; the running of a household, becoming an obedient wife and child rearing. However, it must be pointed out that the basic education in literacy and numeracy for girls in Saudi was a big step forward. Even with this basic mission, female education faced great resistance because people feared that it could destroy the foundation of the traditional extended family and ruin the moral values of those females. This is reflected in the objectives of *Dar Al-Hanan* (House of Tenderness), one of the first schools for females sponsored by the king's wife, which were to produce better mothers and home- makers through Islamic guided instruction.

These new sSchools were designed and used to create and maintain the socially acceptable barriers, need a BIG transition here "Social reproduction theorists argue that power relations and domination underlie formal education systems. In this theoretical framework, schools serve to support existing power relations and to socialize young people to play their class and gender roles in these relations... Feminist social reproduction theorists in turn argue that

schools serve to preserve patriarchy and dominant gender relations that relegate women to a subordinate role in society” (Adely, 2004, p.354). This is made abundantly clear in a study conducted by Mill-Rosser et al (2006) [of Saudi women schools](#), where they state “funding for programs for educating women has been confined to those that prepare for occupations deemed culturally and religiously appropriate, such as teachers and school administrators” (p. 7.) Many, in fact fear that the school system is used as a tool to keep women in their place. Benard (2006) echoes this concern in her study on Middle East education, “education has begun to lose its significant role as a means of achieving social advancement in Arab countries, turning instead into means of perpetuating social stratification and poverty” (p. 32).

Even with resistance and shortcomings of the schools, many saw the importance of educating their females. This is apparent in the rise of female enrolment and completion of high-school and college, and for many, higher education. The rise and popularity of private schools and universities for women is also another indicator of peoples changing view of the role of a woman. Although half of university students in Saudi Arabia are women, showing a certain amount of freedom in terms of education, the education provided as mentioned above, is largely education concerning Islam which further indoctrinates the women.

None-the less, [Saudi citizens people](#) now have a wider range of choices for the education of their children. Whether they choose to educate them at home or abroad, there is a multitude of non-religious curriculum available which is seen as compatible with today’s needs. Therefore, there [has been what could be described as a](#) was a paradigm shift in [Saudi](#) education which reflected the *crisis* faced by the people, the transformation of Saudi Arabia from a relatively isolated, predominantly rural country into a wealthy, urbanized nation. [As a result, t](#)There became a demand for a change in the role of females by the new exposed generation of women,

“Education has been one of the major vehicles for the transmission of external values and is bound to have an uneasy relationship with existing social and familial standards.” (Yamani, 2000, p. 49)

It is clear that education plays a pivotal role in helping the Saudi women’s cause, As Bahgat (1999) states “in spite of social and cultural barriers the personal and professional status of women in the Gulf has tremendously improved over the last few decades. Certainly, education has played a pivotal role in promoting this change.” (p. 134) Pharaon (2004) continues “Education seems to have been a more important variable than employment in changing the position and self-perception of women in general. Education, while still limited, has been extended to many more Saudi women than has formal employment.” (p. 365) However, the educational change within Saudi was not quick enough to catch up with the females changing role. That is because there needs to be a fundamental change and not just material support. “Economic growth and social development has produced a unique educational system in the region. The number of individuals with formal schooling is rising, but the quality of the education they receive does not correspond to the need of the Gulf societies.” (Bahgat, 1999, p.129)

Also, another problem arose, that of employment; “lack of foresight and planning in the education sector has left the country unprepared for increasing numbers of educated women” (Mill-Rosser et al, 2006, p.7.) Benard (2006) states that this is due to a “mismatch between the skills required in the modern job market and those provided by the educational systems.” (p. 33) She believes the solution lies in an educational reform that “must tackle two objectives. First, it should focus energetically on socialization. Second, it should address forcefully the disconnect between the educational system and the economy.” (2006, p. 36)

**Comment [jpo22]:** Was this the result of unplanned, accelerated change?

Not only was the issue of education in the way of employment, tradition was a big barrier. "While the principle of sex segregation is to some extent consensual, it engenders high costs: for this reason, there ~~continues to be?~~ ~~are~~ few available jobs for women. Many qualified young women are looking for a job; their aspirations, developed in the context of widespread higher education and the diverse media available via satellite television and the Internet, differ from those of their mothers' generation: the young want to be financially independent, to live an active professional life rather than "being bored" at home (according to their perceptions), and to be able to ask for divorce if necessary. Many of these young women have a financial need for a wage to help their parents or to complement their husbands' salary, which often no longer meets the family's expenses, including the employment of a maid and/or a driver. However, many young women prefer to work in segregated spaces, for various reasons: to feel more "comfortable" and "relaxed," according to their own words, as they are used to frequenting female spaces most of the time; not to have to wear their *abaya*<sup>8</sup> all day long; for religious reasons; or because their family or husband prefers so." (Renard, 2008, p.626)

#### Education and Empowerment

In this section I question what the empowerment of women means, I believe the real measures are education and financial independence. It became clear that with the tool of education, ~~the new generation of Saudi women have females~~ became a powerful force that can no longer be ignored by the government or the religious authority, who formed the strongest resistance in women's change. "Where a woman has the opportunity to earn a university degree and obtain employment outside the home, she has more resources to change the nature of power relations in the family to her favor. She may question the norm of wife obedience and reject the

institution of polygamy.” (Moaddel, 2006, p.94) Young woman began to view education “as their best chance to escape the tedium and powerlessness of their traditional alternative: lifelong disenfranchisement.” (Benard, 2006, p. 41) There is a move, specifically through higher education, from the silent role to a questioning stage, where the female questions the ideals, values and morals behind traditional and cultural aspects of her role, and I believe this questioning leads to change or is at least a small baby step in that direction.

I will digress here for a minute to discuss *Women’s Ways Of Knowing*. After reading Belenky’s et al. book on white women’s way of knowing and finding it an eye opener, I felt it fell short in incorporating the voices of the many other diverse women, whether due to race, class, or socio economic background. “ Nonetheless, it remains important to deconstruct these *ways of knowing* by examining the differences that occur across racial and class lines and understanding how the different types of “knowing” may appear when placed in a culturally dissimilar context” (Bing & Reid, 1996, p.192). It became a passion of mine to try and understand the Saudi females’ epistemology, of the new generation of Saudi women, and to bring up the issue of Saudi women’s ways of knowing. In my search, it became clear that there is a large gap in this area and a drastic need for research. It also became clear that there is a need to look at other epistemological studies to guide me in my research journey.

Although I do not see Arab women’s ways of knowing as linear, it must be stated here, that I believe/ posit, that there is a move from a “silent” role to an ‘inquiring’ individual, a move made either on their own or through non-Saudi contacts. In her research, Yamani concludes that many of the young Saudis she interviewed believe that “a truly independent approach to knowledge, a questioning approach, is gained through contact with outside influences such as travel or from foreign teachers.” (2000, p. 51) Here, there is an echo Goldberger’s statement in

**Comment [jpo23]:** Need a transition sentence like ... use Belenky et al lens/ model to explain/ support ....

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her chapter on bicultural women's ways of knowing, "the double consciousness for these bicultural individuals was marked by the conflict between the old culture's norms of received knowledge from sanctioned others and new Western cultural norms that sanction personal authority and independent thought." (1997, p.349) This shows that although great strides have been made in the educational systems in Saudi, media and the outside world plays an important if not major role in the overall cultural and social change in Saudi Arabia, especially in the role of women.

Yamani continues "in Saudi Arabia independent thinking is discouraged, and students are restricted by being forced to memorize without analysis. At the same time, with increased exposure to the outside world, the new generation has become more aware that in education more than elsewhere the *ulama* are imposing restrictions that could be potentially harmful. Although it seems unfair to blame the *ulama* for all the shortcomings of the Saudi educational system, they are the most visible target for young people, who perceive that their education is not allowing them to interact on an equal basis with the rapidly changing wider world that they know exists beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia." (2000, p. 66) I see this as a call for a pedagogical change by the new generation, who realize that a state run by only tradition cannot continue.

#### The Role of English

Part of the question in this research paper is the importance of the English language.

Once spoken by a few, it is now almost a second language in the Saudi society, clearly indicated in the bilingual street signs, book stores, popular multimedia...etc, one cannot find a place in Saudi where English is not an alternative language. Although not the whole population spoke E speak English, it is clear that they are exposed to it in one way or another.

**Comment [jpo24]:** Is this a paper or a research proposal?

The English language has such great power and high statuses [\(status\)](#) in almost all the world [including the Middle East](#), and there can be no denying of that fact. It is the international language of the world, and with globalization the power of the English language has doubled. I believe that English is the language of power, a language that endows its users with opportunities for educational and social advancements. And thus, it should come as no surprise that many are flocking to English language institutes whether they are learning it as a second or foreign language.

One must remember however that “all languages carry within them a particular worldview and a particular culture” (Su Kim, 2003, p.156). This indicates that a language and its culture cannot be separated, Mentkowski et al (2000) added that “language cannot be separated from culture, so a change in language can both signal and prompt a change in culture” (as quoted in Al-Salem, 2005, p.26) and this is shown in the Saudi society. With the introduction to the new cultures through the English language, whether in the media or school education, there has began a change in the thinking, even if it is simply the questioning, and this is most apparent in the changing roles and the creation of multiple selves in those who use it. The English language has become a means that enables the Saudis to open up to and interact with many different worlds.

In Saudi, an effort for modernization and urbanization meant [a growth in English the status and prestige of the English language](#) [statue](#), “English is the language of instruction and of technical knowledge, and it is crucial for success in the secular fields of business, commerce, higher education and government. Therefore, proficiency in spoken and written English becomes a status symbol, a marker for the ability to obtain private education and to travel abroad, and a sign of cosmopolitan life style.” (Yamani, 2000, p.58) Jan (2006) extends this by stating that “English is taught not only as a specialty in itself as language and literature, but also as a

**Comment [jpo25]:** Meant? Came together with? BICS & CALP? In the fourdomains?

medium for other specialties to enable the students to read books and research written in English in their fields.” (p. 5)

Along with being the language of **statues** and power, I believe that English is also an outlet to many. It is used to bypass the censorship applied by the government, since many articles written in English are over looked. Therefore, the Saudi public is able to get its hands on materials and ideas that they would not have been able to in Arabic and are able to somewhat express themselves without reprimands. For example, in a study conducted by Wetmore (2008), he found that over “65% of the blogs maintained on <http://saudiblogs.blogspot.com/> are in the English language. It is clear from many interviews that the English language blogging community is perceived to be more liberal in general than the Arabic blogging community.” (p.

4.) One might wonder why the English language has become a powerful tool in expressing the Saudi self? Wetmore states that “many believe blogs written in Arabic are likely more closely monitored than those written in English, for the main reason that many government officials cannot speak English”(p. 9.) However, Wetmore continues and warns that even here there are certain “red lines that are not to be crossed... the denigration of specific figures in government or religious circles is considered taboo by many bloggers. Direct criticism of Islam is also very uncommon... but for the most part, it seems bloggers say what they want to say” (p. 5.) I believe this kind of gives a glimpse into the multiple identities a Saudi must create, how to be controlled in a somewhat free environment?

Although the Arabic language is a large part of Saudi and Middle Eastern identity ... identity, the English language is one of prestige and used by the elite, it is one of power and freedom even if slight. Once only spoken by royalty and businessmen, the English language is now part of secondary school curriculum in public schools and from as early as daycare in

**Comment [jpo26]:** Spelling? You are not referring to monuments?

private schools. People are realizing the importance of a second language, particularly English to the education and employment of their young ones. However, more research needs to be conducted on the connection between the English language and Arab identity, part of which I am trying to uncover in this research project.

### Modernization/ Westernization

Before I begin to talk about modernization, I must attempt to define the [concept term](#). However, I found it quite difficult as the term I use here to describe the state in Saudi Arabia does not fit with the definition of the term modernization as it is usually used. Saudi is moving towards modernization, but in a manner all its own, that is, it is modernizing and keeping its old [traditions](#).

[The modernization theory, as developed by Talcott Parsons, stressed the importance of societies being open to change and saw reactionary forces as restricting development. Maintaining tradition for tradition's sake was thought to be harmful to progress and development.](#)

A juxtaposition people in Saudi have become accustomed to. It moved from an agrarian to a modern city, from rural to urban, and began to pay attention to its female citizens. Yet, there is no separation of 'church and state', or a move to secularization and scientific authority. Also there is a very slow move from ascribed to achieved status, sex equality in the home and workplace, and growth of multilayered governance. Thus, although there is a move towards modernization, it is taking its own path.

There are many factors that lead to the modernization of Saudi Arabia, the most important of which was the wealth that accompanied the oil discoveries in the late 1930's. The

**Comment [jpo27]:** The process of general social change brought about by the transition from a traditional society into a modern? industrial?

to process in which society goes through industrialization, urbanization and other social changes that completely transforms the lives of individuals.

**Comment [jpo28]:** Of course, you are referring to a process of modernization.

money was used to create a metropolitan city with skyscrapers and modern buildings along the skyline. It poured money into creating free public education, building large free of charge hospitals and grand mosques for all. However, this was juxtaposed with the strict religious and cultural laws implemented in the country. New cars crowded the streets but it quickly becomes clear that the sexes continued to be ~~are~~ segregated with the women covered in their black *abayas* and shielded in darkened cars driven by chuffers. The oil money helped finance and build new Western style malls and restaurants, however .... have signs indicating where each sex can mingle, and large security guards stand at entrances to enforce segregation. Technology is another indicator of modernization, with the introduction of Western television and the internet, which can only be used in the privacy of one's home and many times anonymously due to fear of punishment.

I ~~believe~~ believe that the process of modernization helped the Saudi females' in their stride for social and cultural changes. These include improvements in education, access to mass media and modern technology, job opportunities and economic independence, and the ability to gain a voice, even if a quiet anonymous one. Modernization also allowed these women to join the labor force because it provided them with opportunities to fulfill their priorities such as taking care of her family and home, this is by introducing household technology that made to easier to keep her home in top shape and it also improved child care facilities so there is no sense of neglect or guilt. Therefore, through modernization and technology women were able to slowly break free from their cultural and social chains.

I must take a moment here to speak about the Saudi woman's use of the internet which gave them a voice. Women are using the internet as a way to be heard, to express themselves, and as an outlet for many who escape their lives through this media whether it is websites,

**Comment [jpo29]:** More or less, since when?

forums or blogs(to read or run). Wetmore (2008) states, in his study on blogging in Saudi Arabia, that female bloggers find “blogging an escape from a restrictive culture, for which anonymity is key. The Arab News writes, “lured by the possible anonymity of the medium, Saudi women have produced a string of blogs filled with feminist poetry, steamy romantic episodes and rants against their restricted lives and patriarchal society” (Abou-Alsamh, 2006)” (p. 6.) Pharaon (2204)

continues this idea,

“The Internet has opened up an entirely new arena for gathering information and for socializing, and one does not have to leave the house in order to do this.

Young Saudi women are increasingly turning to chat rooms to discuss issues such as why women are forbidden to drive, and why the sexes must remain segregated. One can be anonymous in chat rooms, and this encourages frankness about issues that would be difficult under other circumstances. It should be noted that discussion of political and social issues are not the main use of the Saudi Internet. It is entertainment and dating. While the government tries to reflect and enforce the conservative tribal values of the society and restrict this space, it cannot really do so.” (p. 365)

With the exposure to new cultures, ideas, identities and reformed education [through the mass media, the new generation of](#) Saudi women questioned their old roles and were able to combine multiple identities and use them when needed in order to merge the traditional with the new. However, I would like to stress that modernization does not mean [Westernization?](#) the imitation of another culture; it is simply a means of establishing one’s own identity in the new world within ones culture. To me modernization in Saudi Arabia lies in the framework of women (education and role), in mass media (exposure and use), and the overall good of the people.

With modernization comes change, and change is a very difficult concept for anyone, for with change there is the fear of the new and unknown. This is especially true in Saudi; Yamani states it best when she described that “There is a sense of inevitability about the growth of the

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modern in their lives. Problems arise from the need to negotiate between the 'traditional' Saudi social basis to their lives and the modern pressures seen as emanating from outside. Preexisting cultural identities seem less and less able to encompass the kinds of social practices and social relations to which the state and market have increasingly given rise. The task facing the new generation is the need to negotiate a sense of self in these new and unfamiliar circumstances. All the new generation, indeed members of Saudi society, irrespective of their political and social affiliations, face the problems that modernity throws up." (2000, p. 2) Therefore, the young Saudi generation not only has to deal with the changes brought on by modernization, but with the strong cultural clashes that arise as a result. Yamani provides a solution, but again is confronted by the Saudi culture and the difficulties it faces with modernization "the uncertainty that modernity brings can be challenged and placed in perspective by confronting its effects and questioning the outcomes. These young people, however, have not been given the personal autonomy to question a profoundly disorientating experience because of basic beliefs, traditions and religious customs that constrain and censor their thoughts and actions." (p. 9)

Another problem facing the young generation in Saudi is the issue of censorship. The Saudi government keeps a strict guide on what can be exposed to the Saudi people whether through ripping out and blackening out 'unsuitable' materials, using a proxy to block un-Islamic and unpatriotic [web?](#) sites, or deleting scenes in movies and TV shows it finds offensive. There is censorship of both the technological and political aspects for fear of rebellion. Saudi is rapidly developing its economic status, yet its political and social systems are very slow to develop and change. There is a clash or contradiction. "Today the Kingdom stands at the forefront of developing nations in terms of wealth and infrastructure, but close to last with regard to political openness... the country still has a long way to go before its social, legal, and political structures

begin to resemble the modern character of its economy.” (Clarke, 2007, p. 31-2) I believe this further contributes to the creation of multiple identities in many Saudi citizens especially females who are under more censorship and restrictions.

In conclusion, I believe Bahgat (1999) stated it best,

“The educational system in the six Gulf monarchies reflects the basic dilemma that these societies face – how to reconcile the requirements of modernization with their traditional values. For a long time, religion, language, and history have been the main focus of public education. These disciplines, while essential for preserving existing culture, must be complemented with a proper dose of modern diversity in science, technology, and information. Yet, the free movement of information is not accepted in the region for fear of instability. The clearest illustration of this apparent contradiction between the desire to shield traditional values and the necessity to be part of the global system is the accessibility of Internet in the Gulf States. Internet is provided by state telecommunications monopolies through proxy servers that block politically, socially or culturally sensitive sites.” (p.131)

However, I must point out that many times non-Arabic materials were not blocked, and with the power of a second language came more exposure.

There is a cultural clash between the traditional and the modern, and all is clearly visible in the educational field and most importantly the changing role of women. However, this has not been challenged by the Saudi youth as Yamani (2000) explains, “although there are both implicit and explicit frustrations with the quality of education, as well as with the existing censorship,

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there is also a sense in which the youth continue to cling to the family and the conventions of Saudi society as part of their social identity.” (p.69) The Saudi youth are at loss, with all the new lives, ideas...etc exposed, they find comfort at home where many are facing the same search or the ability to combine the multiple selves cohesively.

One finale point I would like to make on modernization, is the important role [the new generation of](#) Muslim women play in it. As Elsadda (2001) states “women’s physical appearance or disappearances, their enrollment in schools, or their participation in the formal labor market became the acknowledged marker of the stage reached by the entire country in the modernization process” (p. 41.) Thus, the women’s movement and involvement within her own society is a vital role in building that society and moving it towards the future, especially in the Muslim and Arab worlds, where she was in the back seat for a long time due to traditional or cultural aspects. Elsadda continues to say that this is so because “cultural specificity and cultural relativism... can always be used as excuses to abort efforts to modify or change cultural practices or laws” (2001, p.58) and so the road to change for a Muslim and Arab women is a long one, yet one that can be done.

#### Shifting Multiple Identities

The term identity has been defined by many; however for the purpose of this study I will use the following definitions. Jan, in her 2006 dissertation, described identity as an inclusive term which encompasses the personal and individual, as well as gender, class, race, family, social status, education, vocational, cultural and national aspects of the person. Therefore, identity is a multifaceted human aspect that is not only made up of the self but the environment one interacts with. Here this is similar to Naspor’s belief, which describes identity as being created by living in a community which creates a strong sense of social and physical identity.

Nespor also adds the aspect of pop culture which gives the individual a chance to try on new selves and move within the domain of pop culture to better find one's self. He states "pop culture passes out bus tickets for identities. In using them kids move in and out of networks or funds of knowledge... their memberships are fluid, overlapping, sometimes temporary, almost always partial rather than total." (1997, p.184) Yamani describes identity as the "key to any individual, allowing one to place oneself within the family, community and wider society. An individual's identity has many strands, each assuming different importance depending on the situation" (2000, p. 10) I must also add the aspect of self identity, which I believe one uses to create meaning and to express oneself within the diverse experiences drawn from the multiple contexts within which we live

From the above, I gather that identity is constructed not only from the self but from the outside 'worlds' one interacts with. I use the term 'worlds', because in today's society one does not merely interact with one world but with multiple through the introduction and heavy reliance on media and technology. People became exposed to new worlds, life styles, and different ways of thinking and knowing. Therefore, I believe, people in today's world are composed of multiple identities. However, I also believe that the Saudis, specifically the females, are composed of not only multiple but also contradicting self's. Through her interview, Yamani (2000) found that the family in Saudi Arabia remains the key point of reference in the formation of identity. She found that the families influence the attitude and personalities of the young more than education and that their career options were heavily influenced by the parents' wishes and experiences. I believe this is where the conflict of the modern and traditional take place, the home. There is a need for change, and at the same time, a desire to remain the same for the fear of change (maybe disappointment since the family is a big part of the Saudi Culture). This, I

believe is the root of the multiple identities employed by the young Saudi generation today.

I often wonder if there is a defined Saudi national identity. I believe there are certain aspects shared by all Saudis; these include history, ethnicity, geography, religion, ethnicity, language and sometimes common experiences. However, I cannot say that there is one easily define identity due to the different individual life experiences; I believe these include class, socio-economic background, gender, level of education, family education and background, exposure to other cultures through travel, exposure to and use of media...etc. my aim for this research study is to understand change taking place in Saudi Arabia and how that may aid in the creation of multiple identities, specifically for the Saudi female who is the center or symbol of the Saudi national identity, whatever it may be.

#### Research Method

*Method*

**Comment [jpo30]:** Triangulation?

For this study my aim is to use a qualitative in-depth [case](#) study of ten female high school students in one of the popular private schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for middle class members. I will use open-ended questions in face to face personal interviews to allow the participants to tell their stories. Here I agree with Elsadda (2001) in that personal story telling is one of the best methods to represent the Arab women, "One way of constructing alternate representations of Arab women is through focusing on women's experiences and life narratives as manifested in autobiographical/biographical writings. ... The challenge is to construct alternate representations of Arab women without falling into the essentialist trap of claiming to speak for the "real" Arab woman or recovering her "authentic" cultural identity suppressed in male discourses." (p. 39) There is a need to tell personal stories to create an identity, and a stronger need to listen to these

women tell their own stories in their voice in order to paint a proper picture. Through the use of interviews, Yamani (2000) “deliberately set out to give a voice to the most important but frequently overlooked section of the Saudi Arabia, the youth. It is hoped that this approach will assist in building a more nuanced understanding of Saudi Arabia with greater awareness of the everyday concerns and opinions of its young population” (p.150) and my goals are an echo of Yamani’s with the focus directed on the Saudi females.

I also plan on using the method of participant observation in school settings and at home paying particular attention to media use and to the questioning/ conflict of traditional values. I want to observe the use of technology (or lack of) in school settings and how that may differ from the government standardized curriculum. Also, since the school I plan to observe is a private one, I will also take a closer look at the curriculum set by the school and how that differs from the above describe curriculum, how it incorporates the changing needs of the newer generation and how it may aid in their ‘shifting’ or the creation of new selves. At home, I plan on observing family background, education, and use of technology. I also believe that there is a need to interview the parents and family members to get an idea on how this new generation was raised and what values and traditions are emphasized or not. Therefore, I think home and school observation are a very important method to use along with interviews to create a triangulation of methods and obtain the best possible data to address my research interests.

### *Participants*

The Saudi female participants will attend a private single-sex Islamic school in the capital Riyadh and will range from middle to upper middle class. The students ages will range from 15-18 with the mean age of 16.5. All participants will be recruited on a voluntary basis. The aims of

**Comment [jpo31]:** How would you select them?  
Will you use a purposeful sample?

the research and methodology used will be explained to the students by the researcher and no incentives will be offered. Student participants from this school are fluent in Arabic and have learned English either through school, travel or private tutoring, and are considered intermediate to advanced students of English. The tuition for the school is \$X a year. The majority of students are Saudi.

There will also be the need to interview the family of these students in order to elect more background information, as well as, to better understand the environment these students live in. as mentioned above, family is a very strong unite for identity construction in Saudi and it would render this research useless not to look into that aspect of the students lives. Thus, participants will also include parents and siblings (as well as anyone else living in the family home, i.e. grandparents, aunts, uncles...etc).

### *Limitations*

I believe that although my work will shed light on the subject of Saudi women and modernization it will only show a small percentage, and thus there will be a generalization of findings. However, I do believe that my findings will help in creating the needed motivation for the role of women in our society, and to shed light on those who have already begun to take the first steps.

My participants will be a few selected middle class females who have had an opportunity to travel, to access media, and to attend private schools. I believe that although the majority of Saudi females fall into this category, the purposeful selection of my sample does create a limitation to this study. However, this is an open invitation for a replication and extension of my study (hopefully).

**Comment [jpo32]:** A well conducted in-depth case study will provide much valuable data.

One other limitation, one I believe to be a major aspect, is my interpretation of the data. Although I believe that there are not many studies on Saudi women by a Saudi female, my background and prior experiences will create a specific lens from which I will view my work and findings.

### Conclusion

*The New Saudi Woman: Modernization and Western Media at a secondary school in Riyadh*

Although a young state, established only in the 1930's, Saudi Arabia has made great strides in improving its educational and economical fields. The greatest stride and one that still faces the greatest restrictions is that which involves its female citizens. With the introduction and exposure to the media, changes were inevitable and clashes were abundant. Yamani (2000) describes it best "Over the past few years, pre-existing economic, political and religious behavioral standards have come under increasing pressure within Saudi Arabia. This has resulted in old standards of behavior being either discarded or modified, a process that has inevitably resulted in the reinvention of new levels and forms of identity. This has generated an ambiguity of outlook, embracing technology and the information it brings while seeking security in a modification and reinvention of tradition that permeates the identity of the new generation." (p. 22) Therefore, change was introduced but caution was taken. It is clear that the Saudis have a long way to accomplish their goals of creating a modern traditional state. Although the change is slow, it has never the less created in the people a questioning self "The new generation, which has been exposed to much more than its parents through education, satellite television and travel, is aware of its capabilities, and this inevitably leads to the questioning of some norms and social rules" (Yamani, 2000, p. 68), this new way of knowing will help in closing the gap created by the clash of the new and the old.

I must also mention the great stride made by women in Saudi and the influence of the media on that stride. Without the introduction of media and the exposure to new ideas, questions would not have been raised and changes would not have been made. Although, the government tried to stop this from happening by the use of censorship, the people were able to get around with the power of a second language.

With the creation of multiple identities, and with the knowledge of the proper implementation of the different selves, the young, especially females, in Saudi are able to combine the contradicting, clashing and difficult roles prescribed to them by a very traditional state within an ever changing modern world. They were able to carve and create a world for themselves with the powerful tool of 'questioning', the change of education, and the introduction and use of modern technology and the media.

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Footnotes

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1. Islamic doctrine, the body of Islamic law; the legal framework inspired by the Quran.
2. Directly translated it means "trodden path. The ways and the manner of the Prophet Mohammad the tradition of the prophet
3. The oath to God
4. Legal male guardian
5. The Muslim holy book believed to be the words of God.
6. "The ulama are men who study the Quran, the Muslim Holy Book, and the Hadith, (the tradition of what the prophet Mohammed said and did), and who work as religious scholars to apply the Sharia, (which is the body of teaching and prescription that comes from the Quran and the Hadith), which constitutes the basic law of Saudi Arabia". (Al Rawaf, Simmons, 1991, p. 288)
7. Religious instructions.
8. Black robe worn loosely around the female body covering her entirely from head to toe with (occasionally) only the face and hands showing

Figures



Figure 1

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3584.htm>