

Saudi's Opening Policy for Women Rights : Considerations and Prospects

Sidik Jatmika¹

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Corresponding email: dr.sidikjatismika@gmail.com

Abstract



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been well known as one of most conservative regime in the world, especially on women rights policy. Among the factors that define rights for women in Saudi Arabia are government laws, the Hanbali and Wahhabi interpretation of Sunni Islam, and traditional customs of the Arabian Peninsula. Women campaigned for their rights with the women to drive movement and the anti-male-guardianship campaign, with the result that some improvements to their status occurred during the second decade of the twenty-first century. For example, in 2018 King Salman issued a decree allowing women to drive, lifting the world's only ban on women drivers. This research finds that opening policy practise of Saudi's policy is understandably highly influenced by three factors : domestic politics; economics capabilities and international contexts. All conderations of opening policy for women rights refers to assumption that Saudi's regime as political system, to preserve its existency, should has characteristics such as wholistic; flexible and mixing to old and new value systems.

Keywords

opening policy, women rights, considerations, prospect

Introduction

In the past decade much research has focused on Arab -Saudi'uthoritarianism (Jatmika, 1998, p. 1-10). Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been well known as one of most conservative regime in the world, especialy on women rights policy. During the late 20th and early 21st centuries, women's rights in Saudi Arabia were limited in comparison to the rights of women in many of its neighbor countries due to the strict sharia law in place in Saudi Arabia. The World Economic Forum's 2016 Global Gender Gap Report ranked Saudi Arabia 141 out of 144 countries for gender parity. Among the factors that define rights for women in Saudi Arabia are government laws, the Hanbali and Wahhabi interpretation of Sunni Islam, and traditional customs of the Arabian Peninsula.

Women campaigned for their rights with the women to drive movement and the anti male-guardianship campaign, with the result that some improvements to their status

occurred during the second decade of the twenty-first century. Women were previously forbidden from voting in all elections or being elected to any political office, but in 2011 King Abdullah let women vote in the 2015 local elections and be appointed to the Consultative Assembly. In 2011, there were more female university graduates in Saudi Arabia than male, and female literacy was estimated to be 91%, which while still lower than male literacy, was far higher than 40 years earlier. In 2013, the average age at first marriage among Saudi females was 25 years. In 2017, King Salman ordered that women be allowed access to government services such as education and healthcare without the need of consent from a guardian and enter to stadium. In 2018, King Salman issued a decree allowing women to drive, lifting the world's only ban on women drivers (Jerry Feierstein (2018 : 1-5)). The purpose of this study was to ask why does Saudi conduct political openness in early of 21'st centuries? How does it's prospect?

Literature Review

There are such previous researchs which study such of similiar case with this seminar paper, ie :

1. Larry Diamond & Marc F. Plattner, e.ds (2015: 1-25) mentioned that the uprisings that swept the Arab World beginning in 2010 toppled four entrenched rulers and seemed to create a political opening in a region long impervious to democratization. In *Democratization and Authoritarianism in the Arab World*, leading scholars address the questions posed by this period of historic change in the Middle East and North Africa. This volume examining theme the legacy of authoritarian ruling arrangements, the strengths and vulnerabilities of remaining autocracies, and the lessons learned from transitions to democracy in other parts of the world. It also features chapters analyzing the political development of individual countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, and the monarchies of the Gulf. This seminar paper only focus on Saudi's case, especially the legacy of authoritarian ruling arrangements, the strengths and vulnerabilities of remaining autocracies.

2. Michele Dunne (2015 : 75 – 79), “After the Arab Spring: Caught in History's Crosswinds” , argued that we are still struggling to understand the mostly bitter harvest of the Arab Spring, but there are a few lessons that can be drawn. The handful of political openings that occurred in Arab countries after the 2011 uprisings have yielded a bitter harvest that Arabs and non-Arabs alike are struggling to comprehend. The essays that follow go a long way toward demolishing certain early analyses of what went awry following the “Arab Spring.” Arab publics never really wanted democracy in the first place, one argument goes; they wanted economic betterment and gave up on the idea of democratic governance as soon as insecurity loomed and material benefits failed to appear. Another argument is that the Arab uprisings were all just so much hype, a soap bubble of social- and broadcast-media enthusiasm that quickly

collapsed. In this seminar paper we will search such lesson from Saudi's political openness case.

3. Michael Robbins (2015: 80-89), "After the Arab Spring: People Still Want Democracy", mentioned that data from the Arab Barometer suggest that Arabs have not rejected democracy. In fact, they still by and large believe in it and want it. The Arab uprisings dramatically changed the political landscape, but what was their effect on support for democracy? The results of public opinion surveys conducted as part of the Arab Barometer suggest relatively little changed. Democracy remains the most preferred political system in the region, but few citizens say they live under a democracy. Yet, what changes the Arab uprisings did bring about in public opinion are not uniform, especially in the countries most affected by these events. Tunisians have become much more concerned about negative effects of democracy while Egyptians attribute poor political outcomes to the Muslim Brotherhood instead of democracy. This seminar paper will search what kind political effect of Saudi's political openness?

4. Tarek Masoud (2015: 74-87), "Has the Door Closed on Arab Democracy?", argued that in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, democracy in the Arab world seems farther away today than at any point in the last 25 years. If it is to ever arrive, it will likely be through a more evolutionary and elite-driven process. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, democracy in the Arab world seems farther away today than at any point in the last 25 years, leaving one to conclude that the answer to the question posed in this special anniversary issue of the *Journal*—"Is Democracy in Decline?"—is, at least in the case of the Arab world, a resounding, even deafening, yes. If democracy is to ever arrive in the region, it will likely be through an evolutionary and elite-driven process. Is it also happen in Saudi ?

5. Andrew Reynolds, Jason Brownlee & Tarek Masoud (2013: 210-221), "Tracking the "Arab Spring": Why the Modest Harvest?", mentioned that popular uprisings have occurred only in some Arab states and in even fewer have authoritarian rulers been overthrown. What factors allow us to predict whether an authoritarian regime will be vulnerable? What happens in Saudi case ?

6. Daniel Brumberg (2013 : 88 -133), "Transforming the Arab World's Protection-Racket Politics", mentioned that The Arab world's old autocracies survived by manipulating the sharp identity conflicts in their societies. The division and distrust that this style of rule generated is now making it especially difficult to carry out the kind of pact-making often crucial to successful democratic transitions. In the Arab world, pact-making has proven painful and sometimes politically (if not literally) fatal. There are many reasons for this. Two particularly worth mentioning are the persistence of sharp identity conflicts in Arab societies, and the skill with which the Arab world's "protection-racket" autocracies have played upon these tensions for so long. Where they have fallen, these autocracies have left behind a tricky dilemma: Groups that they

once shielded remain significant but cannot win elections, while their rivals (who can win elections) wonder why they should make concessions to sure losers. Is this phenomena also happen in Saudi ?

Theoretical Approach

This research conduct Theory of Political System (Gabriel Almond, 1960) which explain that political decision, is influenced by in put (domestic and external factor). Also, every political system has such of characteristics, ie. : holistic, adaptive, combination of old and new aspects. This research finds that opening policy practise of Saudi's policy is understandably highly influenced by three factors : domestic politics; economics capabilities and international contexts. All conderations of opening policy for women rights refers to assumption that Saudi's regime as political system, to preserve its existency, should has characteristics such as wholistic; flexible and mixing to old and new value systems.

Alfred Stepan Juan J. Linz (2013 : 15 – 30), Democratization Theory and the “Arab Spring”; mentioned that in light of the “Arab Spring,” how should students of democratic transition rethink the relation between religion and democracy; the nature of regimes that mix democratic and authoritarian features; and the impact of “sultanism” on prospects for democracy?

What does the “Arab Spring” imply for democratization theory? In this article, we first re-examine the relationship between democracy and the “twin tolerations” in the world’s Muslim-majority countries that are democracies—Indonesia, Turkey, Senegal and Tunisia, as well as in Muslim-minority India. Second, we characterize the emergence of what we call an “authoritarian-democratic hybrid” form of regime and explore why a regime of this type has emerged in Egypt but not in Tunisia. Third, we examine Max Weber’s “sultanism” and its implications for the “military as institution,” democracy and “stateness” along a continuum of intensity from most to least sultanistic in Libya, Syria, Egypt to Tunisia. In this seminar paper, we will focus on such of Kingdom of Saudi Arabian political openness.

The politics of Saudi Arabia takes place in the context of a totalitarian absolute monarchy with some Islamic lines, where the King is both the head of state and government. Decisions are, to a large extent, made on the basis of consultation among the senior princes of the royal family and the religious establishment. The Qur'an is declared to be the constitution of the country, which is governed on the basis of Islamic law (Shari'a). The Allegiance Council is responsible to determine the new King and the new Crown Prince. All citizens of full age have a right to attend, meet, and petition the king directly through the traditional tribal meeting known as the majlis.

Government is dominated by the vast royal family, the Al Saud, which has often been divided by internal disputes and into factions. The members of the family are the

principal political actors allowed by the government. Political participation outside the royal family is limited. As for now the Saudi Arabia is on its way for changing their political system, from the conservative one to the modern one through using 'Vision 2030'.

The decision making process of Saudi Arabia are divided into three aspects, there are input, decision process, and output. The input of the decision process in Saudi Arabia is the criticism by the two groups of Saudi Arabia, that is Sunni and Shia, for the decision process, the criticism being processed by the government through using data that have been gathered, and for the output of it was the result of the decisions process which became the true decisions, such as the creation of 'Vision 2030'.

Methodology

Process of data collection and techniques data analysis . The data used for this study were collected by literature review with materials used such as newspaper, thesis, book, and also some articles related to this discussion. Procedures performed by providing analysis and review on the sources obtained.

Results

Beginning in December 2010, a series of uprisings swept the Arab World, toppling four longtime leaders and creating an apparent political opening in a region long impervious to the "third wave" of democratization. Despite the initial euphoria, the legacies of authoritarianism—polarized societies, politicized militaries, state-centric economies, and pervasive clientelism—have proven stubborn obstacles to the fashioning of new political and social contracts.

Saudi conduct political openness in early of 21st centuries, because this regime face such of political crisis, i.e:

Political Crisis of Saudi. As one of the biggest monarchy country in the middle east region, Saudi Arabia that led by King Salman Bin Abdul-Aziz al-Saud having so much influence towards the other neighbor in the country. Oil and gas reserves as a based of economic that make Saudi Arabia becoming superpower and growing up as the wealthy country. Beside that, Saudi Arabia well known as a country that having a sharia law and it famous as a religion place for the Muslim since there is a holy place of Islam that located inside the country. However, in Saudi Arabia there is a crisis of power and loyalty that will creating an instability whether in a long term or short term and it will endangered the sustainability of the country. Thing that we will have a concern is on how the politics that going on in Saudi Arabia and about how and why the crisis of power and loyalty that happened in Saudi Arabia affecting the whole countries with the political system studies and also including decision making process to create a resolution.

In Saudi Arabia that using an absolute monarchy as a political system, that led by the king as a head of the governance and also using Syariah as basic of running the governance system and creating policy is having a problem since there is few factors that challenge the governance system as an opposition and it will become instable when the government side is no longer capable to maintain their power. And the instability causes created by some crisis that happened against the government . Those are :

Crisis of Authority, is about the recognition towards the country to have a power and have control towards certain area whether by the local citizen or the other country. and the crisis of authority mostly begin by the rebellion, separatism, coup d'etat, revolution and whatsoever that threaten the sovereignty of a country and against the authority of a country. As an example that Iran which have the different point of view in the politics, religion and anything that makes Iran is no longer recognizing power of the Saudi Arabia.

Crisis of Loyalty. One of the factor that creating crisis in the Saudi Arabia is the crisis of the loyalty. It happened when the society is no longer loyal or believe to the government that caused by some domestic reason that occurred in the domestic area. It also well known as societies are become trustless to the ruler. Mostly it caused by some reasons. Such as Ashabiyah, is a feeling of fanatic or a high sense of belonging towards certain group or certain family that seems like superior and it becoming the model to be a way of thinking for certain people. In Saudi Arabia, certain group that mostly becoming the role model is Bani Saud, Bani Hasyim etc. and also the group of religion is become the matter of the group that possibly to create a chaos such as Sunni-Syiah that always having different opinion, especially in the politics.

Crisis of equality, it happened when the government no longer can give the justice or same treatment towards the society and ensure that each group that exist in society get the equal treatment. And what happened in Saudi Arabia is that there are few groups that trying to get the equal position with the majority and also the group by the economic position such as the elite such as the kingdom family, the rich and the other until the poor and kind of abandoned such as the kurd, syiah. And the problem is as an example that Syiah Group that trying to get an equality with the sunni as the majority using a conflict. And also the gap that still high between the poor and the rich in the Saudi Arabia is becoming one of the problem that possible to create a crisis.

Crisis of continuity, is about the fragility of the government's power to lead the country because of the threat whether from domestic people like rebellion or the intervention from the outside actors that trying to break the power of the government. It can be from the value that coming to Saudi Arabia that is not inline with the government's policy and also from the foreign policy of the other countries that challenge the power of the government of the Saudi Arabia. As an example that United States of America with its democracy value trying to influence the societies mindset

to be like what democracy is. And also the other thing is that mostly the value from the western countries that get into the local people that possible to create a chaos in the future.

Arab Spring and its impacts to Saudi

Term and early Arab Spring. In the early 21st century, the region of the Middle East was marked by protest movements of the citizens sued their national leadership. This revolution was known by Arab Spring or Revival Arab.⁽¹ The rebellion started in Tunisia on the spring season, December 2010. As for another view that the Arab Spring is the wave of the revolution in rallies and protests that took place in the Arab world. The movers of the Arab Spring are the educated youth in each zone of the revolution. In the process, they muster support through a variety of media, especially social media. Nevertheless, the emergence of this revolution (Spring) not without the support of other parties, thus a lot of opinions that assumed that this revolution is not separated from the interference of foreign countries, such as the European Union, the United States and its allies, as well as the Eastern socialist countries that have an interest towards the Middle East.

This revolution started from the first protest took place in Tunisia on 18 Dec 2010 tragically, a young man named Mohamed Bouazizi protest over police corruption and health coverage in the form of suicide. The action of a roadside fruit seller's life was not helped sparked a large protest folk Tunisia finally made President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to retreat from power he held for 23 years². The unwavering power for decades fell just 10 days since Bouazizi died.

Activists in other countries in the region were inspired by the regime change in Tunisia. The country's first democratic parliamentary elections were held in October 2011 and began to protest similar authoritarian governments in their own nations. The participants in these grassroots movements sought increased social freedoms and greater participation in the political process. Notably, this includes the Tahrir Square uprisings in Cairo, Egypt and similar protests in Bahrain. However, in some cases, these protests morphed into full-scale civil wars, as evidenced in countries such as Libya, Syria and Yemen.

This tragedy was influence other countries that have also situation the economic and political crisis of that time. The first outbreak affected is Egypt. President Husni Mubarak resigned on 11 February 2011 and handover of power in the military Council

¹ Indonesia Membaca, "Arab Spring; Badai Revolusi Timur Tengah yang Berdarah", <http://indomembaca.blogspot.com/2016/03/arab-spring-badai-revolusi-timur-tengah.html>, access on 1 August 2018.

² Elba Damhuri, "Arab Spring: Musim Semi atau Musim Gugur?", <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/kolom/resonansi/17/12/09/p0o3gn440-arab-spring-musim-semi-atau-musim-gugur>, access on 1 August 2018.

that appoints Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik to lead. But on March, Egypt revolatile, the Prime Minister who was given the mandate was retreat.

In mid-February start to spread the protests in Libya and triggered a civil war among party loyalists and insurgency based in Benghazi. The conflict ended after the death of President Muammar Khadafi on 20 October 2011. While in June 2010, President of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh was injured after the escape from the assassination attempt. The continued rise of the various pressures, forcing the President to surrender then Vice President Abd Rabbuh al-Hadi in early 2012. Meanwhile, former President of Egypt Mubarak convicted guilty and sentenced for life, June 2012, as former President Ben Ali Tunisia was also jailed. In Egypt a new character appears, President-elect Mohammad Mursi, of the Group Muslim Ikhwanul Muslim movement.

If seen from another conflict in the form of dropping the regime, if compared with the revolution Egypt, Tunisia or Libya, Syria can say Revolution slowly. In fact, the Revolution Egypt was able to overthrow the regime of Husni Mubarak in only 18 days. One of the main factors is the involvement of Russia and Iran that is diplomatic and militaristic defended the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Russia strongly favors to Syria because Russia has geostrategis interests in the area. Syria is now the last bastion of Russia, after Libya tumbles. In Syria, Russia has a naval base at Tartus, even since the time of the Soviet Union, and the more enlarged in recent years. So, in the geostrategis if Syria had lost, then Russia have no diplomatic presence and influence in the Mediterranean.³

The Reaction of Saudi Arab towards Arab Spring

Al-Saud dynasty, descendants of the late King Abdullah, gave the name to the Arabian Gulf monarchy ruled Saudi Arabia, son of its founder Abdul Aziz bin Saud. Descendants of Al-Saud traces their origins from the year 1700, when Saud bin Mohammad appointed sheikh (local leaders) in the middle of the Arabian peninsula, is the birthplace of two centuries later, the only thing a country in the world named after a family.⁴

In this regard, Saudi Arabia has concentrated all its own with a wave of the spring happening in Arabic, in which the Government of Saudi Arabia felt threatened the sovereignty of his monarchy led political system with a variety of events that occur. So Saudi Arabia is trying to protect the powers of the monarchy. Saudi Arabia

³ Iqbal Kholidi, "Arab Spring dan Enam Tahun Revolusi Suriah", <https://geotimes.co.id/kolom/internasional/arab-spring-dan-enam-tahun-revolusi-suriah/>, access on 1 August 2018.

⁴ BHarian Online, "Nama Arab Saudi Berasal dari Dynasti Al-Saud", <https://www.bharian.com.my/node/31058>, access on 2 August

impressed cunning in taking the role. On one side would like to attempt to overthrow the regime of absolute that is in Syria by supplying weapons.

The Impact of Arab Spring to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia becoming the first interesting to imagine it can immunise itself from the political change that has toppled three dictators is folly, but this is what it is trying to do. The 87-year-old King Abdullah made two moves this week to present a more liberal face. He revoked a sentence to lash a woman 10 times for driving her car, and decreed that women could take part in council elections in 2015. Neither will make more than surface ripples. Only half of the council seats are up for election, and the councils themselves have no real powers. All the important posts in the provinces are chaired by members of the royal family. As for free speech in a country where the government already controls the print and television media.

In countering the uprisings, Saudi Arabia is doing no more and no less than what it has traditionally done when a major state threatens to upset the apple cart. That includes Nasser's Egypt, Saddam's Iraq, revolutionary Iran. Its leading challenger in this enterprise is the rising influence of Turkey. But the vulnerability of the Saudi kingdom remains a domestic one. Saudis, whether they be women drivers or anyone else yearning for more freedom, are part of the region and watch what is going on around them. The worm is turning in Saudi Arabia as decisively as it is elsewhere in the region.

The Arab Spring also gives some bad impact to the some countries in Arab World. Inflation is not the only factor that pushed the Arab Spring, but the number of cases of corruption that make people living poor and difficult in terms of economy and survive life. On the other hand, the authorities are losing the Office and luxury as well as the emergence of the power harness tripolar in the region of the Middle East; Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt. Saudi Arabia's decision to end a ban on watching at the cinema is part of a broader change in all walks of life.

In the 20th century, Saudi Arabia the Al Saud Dynasty ruled relies on two sources of power. Such as rich oil wealth and an informal agreement with the conservative clerics. But now the country must adjust to the 21st century, when oil wealth will no longer be enough to finance government spending and create jobs. The role of the ulama has also not like it used to be, their influence is decreasingly with new leaders at the Royal family.

Analysis of Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia Regime towards Saudi Spring

At this time, not just the Arab Spring which has a great impact in the Arab world, but also a focus on decision making by Saudi Arabian spring is heading. Each country must have the aim to satisfy the interests of his respective country. There are bunch of transition to a democratic regime, some even include liberalization or democratization. In this regard, Saudi Arabia has its own focus in this threat he was. Saudi Arabia argues that this could threaten the sovereignty of his country has long been the country with

the political system of monarchy. Therefore, Saudi Arabia is trying to protect his monarch led power. Saudi Arabia looks very sly, on one side wanted to maintain his monarch led regime but on the other hand trying to overthrow the regime of absolute Government.

Saudi Arabia created the crisis in the Middle East was discussed the actions that are not rational. Saudi Arabia sought to create new conditions in the Middle East and encourage the foreign country involved so that it can strengthen its position, such as the United States. Trump wants to form a dent against Iran to NATO and to maintain the system of monarchy in Arab countries at the expense of their people's freedom. Some analysts say that the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia was the source of the violence.

Domestic Aspirations and Movements Criticize Saudi Political Conservatism.

Saudi Arabia have been known as the country with its strong Conservatism. Then, what is conservatism? Conservatism is a political and social philosophy promoting traditional social institutions of culture and civilization. Conservatism that happening in Saudi Arabia Political affairs are mostly about the difference on the religion cultural, lead by two groups or movement in Saudi Arabia. (Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population, 2009)

The condition of conservatism in Saudi Arabia is become worse day by day, as how the King of Saudi Arabia, King Salman created 'Vision 2030' and give peace for the women in Saudi Arabia for driving car and also giving them permisson to enter the Sport Stadium, but some group on the Saudia Arabia are more to their Traditionalism and rejected the peace being given to the Saudi Arabia peoples. Some of the group in Saudia Arabia are being considered as a hindrance for the Big Project of Saudi Arabia ' Vision 2030'.

Therefore In order to make sure you get the knowledges over this part, we are trying to explain point by points on how the conservatism happened on the Saudia Arabia. Starting form the various groups in Saudia Arabia, what groups that still stand on their traditionalism over modernity on the modern era, then continued with the various forms of cirticism of the groups or movements in Saudia Arabia, which will explain what kind of criticism that being brought by those groups or movement, then continued with the various results of the domestic criticism, as how it will explaining on what kind of impact that being obtained from the criticism by the Saudi Arabia peoples. Then will be continued by the Reviewing the Political Systems of Saudi Arabia and how the Decision Making Process works in the Saudia Arabia.

Through those points, you will be able to learn on how the consevatism in Saudi Arabia works. The kind of conservatism that happen in the Saudi Arabia, the things that make

Saudi Arabia being seen as the conservatism country. Various groups within Saudi Arabia are doing the criticism movement.

The First factor is the various groups within Saudi Arabia are doing the criticism movement. Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah or Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah or more often abbreviated Ahlul-Sunnah, Aswaja or Sunni are the largest Muslim groups called with Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah or groups that carry out the sunnah (Rasulullah SAW) with an emphasis on the imitation of the life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW About 90% of the world's Muslims are Sunni. Sunnis criticize conservatism using the muamalah system. where this system has the understanding that Muamalat is all Shari'a law concerned with world affairs, by looking at the activities of one's life such as buying and selling, exchanging, borrowing and so on. Muamalat is also a procedure or regulation in the human relations of fellow human beings to fulfill their respective needs based on the Shari'a of Allah s.w.t which involves the economic and social fields of Islam. Muamalat which is meant is in the economic field which is the foundation of all people to get the pleasure of living in the world and happiness in the hereafter. All the treasures that are in this world are on earth, on the sea or on the basis of God's property, absolutely. Humans are told to have the property provided by Allah s.w.t through the knowledge and skills that are given to him. Those who own wealth in the world are the holders of Allah's trust and are responsible for these assets. (Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population, 2009). Shia is a branch of Islam which holds that the Islamic prophet Muhammad designated Ali ibn Abi Talib as his successor. Shia criticizes conservatism in a rather crude manner, as how shia is not really care about human rights. The case of terrorism are usually connected to the shia act. They criticize anything through violence, such as bombing, using act of terrorism to finish any affairs that occur. (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018)

Various results of domestic criticism. The results of domestic criticism on Saudi Arabia gave a big chance for the woman on the country. Saudi Arabia granted the permission for the woman in the Saudi Arabia for the rights to drive, attend events in sports stadiums. Not only this, the other result of domestic criticism is the creation of 'Vision 30'. (Goals | Saudi Vision 2030, 2018).

Saudi Arabia's mega development project 'Vision 2030' has now entered its third year. Launched in April 2016, Vision 2030 aims at fundamentally reforming the Saudi economy and society. It is primarily an economic blueprint that seeks to transform the Kingdom from a petro-state to an industrial manufacturing-based productive economy. Its overarching goals are to achieve a private sector-led self-sustaining economy, an open and vibrant society, and an ambitious nation. In short, Vision 2030, announced by the young and ambitious Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, is a bold initiative to change the image of historically oil-dependent and traditionally conservative Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Lofty goals notwithstanding, 'Vision 2030' is

a hard sale, both domestically and internationally. There are big question marks about its potential to succeed, with some critics predicting its slow demise and others cautiously projecting its future. Viewed realistically, 'Vision 2030' looks more hanging in the balance. Its potential to succeed is seriously undermined by a series of domestic and regional obstacles, most notably portrayed in problems to reform the Saudi social contract, lack of openness and transparency, absence of a domestic scientific and technological base to drive economic modernization on a sustained basis, and a regional environment unfavorable to a business boom in Saudi Arabia. Whether it succeeds or fails, 'Vision 2030' may prove to be a double-edged sword: its failure may unleash domestic chaos and instability with regional spillover effects; its success may further embolden ambitious Mohammad bin Salman to promote Saudi nationalist narratives to strongly push for a regional preeminent position breeding more conflicts and violence in the Middle East. (Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population, 2009).

Foreign aspirations and movements criticize Saudi conservatism.

The Saudis in deciding to modernize their country certainly get a lot of pressure, such as intense pressure due to the decline in economic capacity and the collapse of the state budget in recent years. In response, the Saudi Government seeks to get out of its dependence on oil with Saudi 2030's vision. Besides that, the contents of 2030 are also about giving freedom to the community itself in carrying out the activities they want, especially women who often get different treatment from men who in Saudi.

In addition to diversifying investment and selling part of ARAMCO's shares, the Saudis also seek to build a positive and "open" climate in the Saudi Arabian community. Thus, this is where the open door policy is intensified including encouraging religious understanding to be more moderate and tolerant

Among the policies that are so broadly echoed are the acquisition of women driving their own cars that are valid in the middle of this year. Another policy is the reform of the role of the Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar Institute, the vanguard of religious institutions in controlling Saudi society so far to conform to the conservative religious ideals adopted by the Kingdom. This is what shows that the Saudis are very concerned about their society and are trying to meet the needs of the community itself.

Another unexpected step is the development of recreational and artistic facilities for the community such as cinemas, music concert halls, and the construction of beach tourism facilities. No less great is the construction of the Neom supermetropolis city project which stretches to parts of the Jordanian and Egyptian borders⁵. This is also

⁵Ibnu Burdah "isukudetadisaudidanakhirsejarahwahabisme" retrieved from <https://geotimes.co.id> on 03 august 2018

because the Saudis realize that natural wealth, like oil, can no longer be expected to improve the country's economy.

This was also encouraged by the Egyptian state which after the fall of Mubarak from his government. This also proves that Muslims have power. The Saudis who are also the majority are Egyptians, of course, have the ability to provide input or change existing policies in order to carry out and fulfill the interests of the community itself.

A 2014 survey showed that two-thirds of internet users in Saudi Arabia watch movies online every week. Nine out of 10 Saudis also have smart phones. People buy cheap flight tickets to Bahrain or Dubai to be able to watch in various theaters there. When oil wealth declines and the country is looking for new economic sectors to develop, there are clear economic arguments for opening the entertainment sector - and bringing the money back to the country to create jobs.⁶

Groups outside the Arabian nation

The criticism that came from Iran and of course this was inseparable from the 1979 Iranian revolution. At that time, Imam Khoemaii forced Prime Minister Bakhtiar to resign from his position and he appointed Mehdi Bazargan as Prime Minister to organize government administration and economic stability. Khoemaii then formed the Islamic Republic Party (IRP) to maintain the ideology of the Islamic Revolution. The party has the support of scholars, urban communities and rural communities. In March 1979, a national referendum was held to approve the change from monarchy to the Islamic Republic.⁷

Having a pretty good background, Iran has a foundation and also a reason to criticize Saudi Arabia, which at this time still adheres to the conservative movement when there are still many needs of the community must be given such as individual freedom or the so-called human right. This revolution itself proves that the country is able to meet the domestic needs of its country and has its own way of upholding justice in the midst of a society that proves an independent state.

Although there are often differences of opinion or political policies between Iran and other Middle Eastern countries. Iran, which is the majority of the people is Shi'ites, often experiences differences in political views with the Egyptian or Saudi countries, even though it has more Sunni society. This difference which sometimes leads to conflict between countries in the Middle East, competes for power in the Middle East. This is also one of the comments or movements from outside the Arab nation that gave aspirations to Saudi conservatism.

⁶Jane Kinninmont "mengapa arab saudi tiba-tiba memutuskan untuk membuka bioskop" retrieved from www.bbc.com on 3 august 2018

⁷Khamami Zada "Gelombang revolusi dan transisi politik di Timur Tengah dan Afrika utara" retrieved form <https://www.academia.edu/15117155> on 3 august 2018

Iran and Saudi Arabia did not fight directly but they were involved in various 'proxy wars' throughout the region. Syria is a temporary example in Yemen, Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of supplying ballistic missiles fired at Saudi territory by the Houthi Shiite rebel movement - an incident that has intensified the war of words between the two countries.⁸

The position of the United States towards the reform movement in Saudi.

In general, the strategic context of US-Saudi Arabia relations in the first seventy years is far clearer than now. During the Cold War, the United States viewed Saudi Arabia as a partner in US efforts to examine Soviet influence in the Middle East and in countries such as Afghanistan. Whereas Saudi Arabia saw the United States as a reliable country during a period when Arab nationalism gave rise to tension, and regional competition for monarchies such as Saudi Arabia.

Decades of relations between the United States (US) and Saudi Arabia have faced major challenges since the start of the Middle East uprising in 2011. The 2011 uprising in the Arab world has opened the door to a new phase of competition for influence among countries - countries in the region, influence the role of America, and how that role is seen.⁹

In this discussion, we note that America itself supports the reform movement and also about Saudi modernization itself. It is said that there are several aspects that are felt necessary to be renewed and reviewed. For the sake of implementing democratic values and also guaranteeing the rights of each community itself.

Prospects of Saudi's political openness.

Analysis on Supporting and Resisting Factors of Saudi Arabia's Political Transparency Process and Its Future Prospects. If we use the study of the political system, we can analyze that the policies adopted by the Saudis in responding to their society about the conservatism that still survive, it is necessary to change the political direction that is more open and has an open nature that eliminates gender discrimination. The coming of a lot of input and also pressure from the interest group was able to urge the Saudis to renew their policies with the vision of 2030.

The input we can pay attention to comes from the Arabs in the form of criticism from Egypt or other neighboring countries. Those who are more open and democratic towards their society require that the Saudis also guarantee the rights of every society so that the creation of comfort in their country. Criticism also came from Iran, although most of the conflict happened to control the Middle East. Modernization is also

⁸ Jonathan Marcus "apa yang melatar belakang perselisihan arab saudi dan iran" retrieved from www.bbc.com on 3 august 2018

⁹ Brian Katulis "hubungan amerika arab saudi diujung ditengah" retrieved from <https://www.matamatapolitik.com> on 03 august 2018

supported by the United States, which has long been in a relationship with the Saudis even though at first it came from the oil trade.

All these inputs will later be considered by the Saudis, also by paying attention to many factors. The output that can be seen at this time is with the vision of 2030 which will guarantee the benefit of the community and also become the economic foundation for the future so that the Saudis no longer depend on oil which is the current economic supporter, but also must consider other factors such as necessary to pay attention to the tourism sector, entertainment for the community and of course this can be to support the Saudi economy.

Followed a month after the ban of women driver ended, Prince Mohammed bin Salman released another project named as *anti-corruption drive* by detaining officials that are alleged into doing corruption. However, some analysts argued that this was Prince Mohammed bin Salman's way in order to protect his position and to remain controlling the kingdom. As the result, there were eleven princes, four ministers, and influential businessmen were detained. Despite the criticism, Prince Mohammed bin Salman also decided to allow Saudi Arabian women to attend the football match for the first time in history and also opened the opportunity for women to join the Saudi Arabian military.¹⁰

Despite having a good reputation in developing Saudi Arabia into a *moderate Islam*, the new reformation still left questions hanging as its people of Saudi Arabia began to ask for a more transparent politics in family-ruled Saudi Arabia kingdom. As prince Mohammed bin Salman has promised to bring a more liberal and open Saudi Arabia, we will be trying to analyze on the possibilities of Saudi Arabia having a political transparency in the future and its political systems.

King Salman Bin Abdulaziz kingdom seeks for a rapid major political changes with means of rebuilding Saudi Arabia's political systems through leaving the old teachings where Saudi Arabia's political system has been guided for a long time since. Soon after entering the Throne, King Salman promoted Crown prince Mohammad bin Salman in leading several most part the officials. The initiation is to promise crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to have a stable position in ruling government. To grant his intention, Prince Mohammad bin Salman was placed as the center of power, by making him as the defence minister. Besides, some princes were removed from their positions as ministers and leader of institutions inside the Kingdom. The removal was due to the policy of vanishing corruptions held by crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. Seeing all of this we can conclude, as what I mentioned above, that crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman was given the authority by King Salman as ruling the

¹⁰ BBC News. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, power behind the throne. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40354415> (Accessed August 03, 2018)

government thus he can maintain his position and able to rule the government in stable positions.¹¹

In the other hand on economic matter, more than 200 princes and businessmen was alleged to corruption where more than \$100 billion of wealth were seized. Besides, they also arrest some media outlets owners, includes *Al Arabiya* and *Rotana* television channel, making the crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to control the economic and media power of Saudi Arabia once again. Whilst a lot of people and influential sheikhs were also arrested, Saudi Arabia seemed to face a major changes in cultural term, to mention one of it is the legalization of women driver.¹²

However, in responding to actions taken by the crown Prince and King Salman seemed to be pressing the rights for Saudi Arabian people to participate in policy making since the power is centralized to the focus of government ruling, crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. If centralizing the power means no rights for the media to talk nor for society to take actions, then in my opinion, Saudi Arabia will remain as closed as possible — in term of its politics transparency — and will result to a zero reformation.

Before going further on the analysis, we have to figure out the meaning of political participation and also reformation. In general, political participation means that the society or individuals are actively participate in political activities. According to Samuel P. Huntington and Joan M. Nelson, political participation is the condition where a citizen is involved in a political activities in order to influence the policy making by government. This could be individually or collectively, organized or spontaneous, legal or illegal, and effective or not.¹³

Looking back to the history of previous Kings, it was true that Saudi Arabia Kingdom has tried their best into reforming their closed political system into a more open and transparent one. These reformations done by the previous Kings up to King Abdullah back then has proved that it was the voice of satisfaction and disappointments by the people since they demanded for the government to stop the corruption that was suspected to run within the kingdom and bureaucracy of government as well. There were also several demands which was asked towards the government and their political system, mostly voiced out by sheikhs or theologian in the Kingdom. However, overall the reformation trial tested by the previous Kings are all focused on increasing the participation of society in policy making, actualize the reformation as written

¹¹Alaa Bayoumi. "Challenges of the political change in Saudi Arabia". Middle East Monitor (MEMO). <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171115-challenges-of-the-political-change-in-saudi-arabia/> (Accessed August 03, 2018)

¹² Ibid

¹³Ahmad Efendi Siregar, (2015) *Partisipasi Politik Anggota Dewan Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Fiqh Siyasah (Study Kasus Aktivitas Anggota DPRD Wanita Propinsi Riau Periode 2009-2014)*. Skripsi thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.

constitution, and to fight corruption. In King Abdullah's administration, the government held a *National Dialogue* aimed to connect the people with Saudi Arabia government as a tool in developing a harmony between two of it. Another reformation done by King Abdullah in his administration was general election in 2005, eventhough it was aimed for the city council only, still it was considered as an important actions taken by King Abdullah's administration for a more open and transparent political system the Saudi Arabian people are craving for.¹⁴

Saudi Arabia has always been the politically closed country and it seems to be hard to do a reformation. As mentioned by Alaa Bayoumi, the crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman has cut off the limited pluralism and diversity existed in Saudi's political system when he becomes the center of ruling government by controlling institutions. Thus, the opportunity of free expression in Saudi Arabia is threatened and it could reduce the diversity in policy making. Besides, by overthrowing ministers and leaders would make Saudi Arabia lacks of institutions that can secure the speed of rapid changes. As the power is centralized, the responsibility laid on the crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman also increased as the Prince will have to take care of everything that happens in the Kingdom.¹⁵

The Saudis who are still surviving with a conservative government system in which government and policy are also influenced by conservative scholars and are very closed with reform. Although on the other hand, the kingdom also tried to meet the needs and desires of the community itself. There are many factors and also pressure on the Saudis themselves, whether from within the Arab nation or from outside the Arab nation. Also the position of the United States, which has done a lot of cooperation and also relations with the Saudis to support modernization and also develop other aspects to improve the economy.

Vision 2030 is the basis for developing the economy, so that it is no longer dependent on oil which is currently an economic supporting factor. With this vision will also modernize Saudi and eliminate gender discrimination that often occurs.

Discussion

The findings of this study clearly show that Saudi as an authoritarian regime in fact is vulnerable by such crisis : authority, legitimacy, equality and continuity, but in fact until now still strong enough to be overthrown. This fact show that Saudi case different with what **Andrew Reynolds, Jason Brownlee & Tarek Masoud** (2013: 210-221) arguments that popular uprisings have occurred only in some Arab states and in even

¹⁴Arie Permadi, (2014) *Reformasi Politik Arab Saudi Masa Pemerintahan Raja Abdullah*. Skripsi thesis, Universitas Gadjah Mada

¹⁵ See Alaa Bayoumi. "Challenges of the political change in Saudi Arabia" <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171115-challenges-of-the-political-change-in-saudi-arabia/> for further informations.

fewer have authoritarian rulers been overthrown. It's also different with argument of **Larry Diamond & Marc F. Plattner**, e.ds (2015: 1-25) argument that the uprisings that swept the Arab World beginning in 2010 toppled four entrenched rulers and seemed to create a political opening in a region long impervious to democratization.

Such of fact of Saudi' case also different with argument of **Daniel Brumberg** (2013:88-133), that The Arab world's old autocracies survived by manipulating the sharp identity conflicts in their societies. The division and distrust that this style of rule generated is now making it especially difficult to carry out the kind of pact-making often crucial to successful democratic transitions. In the Arab world, pact-making has proven painful and sometimes politically (if not literally) fatal. There are many reasons for this. Two particularly worth mentioning are the persistence of sharp identity conflicts in Arab societies, and the skill with which the Arab world's "protection-racket" autocracies have played upon these tensions for so long. Where they have fallen, these autocracies have left behind a tricky dilemma: Groups that they once shielded remain significant but cannot win elections, while their rivals (who can win elections) wonder why they should make concessions to sure losers. Those phenomena do not happen in Saudi because Saudi regime controll all political aspects very strickly.

This study also clearly show that Saudi political openness is through a more evolutionary and elite-driven process. It's important to answer **Tarek Masoud** (2015: 74-87) question: "Has the Door Closed on Arab Democracy?". The answer is The door still open on Arab Democracy. People of Saudi, in fact also want to gain economic betterment but in same time also want to more democratic governance. This fact also answer to **Michael Robbins** (2015: 80-89), argument who mentioned that data from the Arab Barometer suggest that Arabs have not rejected democracy. In fact, they still by and large believe in it and want it. The Arab uprisings dramatically changed the political landscape, but what was their effect on support for democracy? The results of public opinion surveys conducted as part of the Arab Barometer suggest relatively little changed. Democracy remains the most preferred political system in the region, but few citizens say they live under a democracy.

Conclusion

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been well known as one of most conservative regime in the world, especialy on women rights policy. During the late 20th and early 21st centuries, women's rights in Saudi Arabia were limited in comparison to the rights of women in many of its neighbor countries due to the strict sharia law in place in Saudi Arabia. The World Economic Forum's 2016 Global Gender Gap Report ranked Saudi Arabia 141 out of 144 countries for gender parity. Among the factors that define rights for women in Saudi Arabia are government laws, the Hanbali and Wahhabi interpretation of Sunni Islam, and traditional customs of the Arabian Peninsula.

Women campaigned for their rights with the women to drive movement and the anti male-guardianship campaign, with the result that some improvements to their status occurred during the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Women were previously forbidden from voting in all elections or being elected to any political office, but in 2011 King Abdullah let women vote in the 2015 local elections and be appointed to the Consultative Assembly. In 2011, there were more female university graduates in Saudi Arabia than male, and female literacy was estimated to be 91%, which while still lower than male literacy, was far higher than 40 years earlier. In 2013, the average age at first marriage among Saudi females was 25 years. In 2017, King Salman ordered that women be allowed access to government services such as education and healthcare without the need of consent from a guardian and enter to stadium. In 2018, King Salman issued a decree allowing women to drive, lifting the world's only ban on women drivers.

This research conduct Theory of Political System (Gabriel Almond) which explain that political decision, is influenced by in put (domestic and external factor). Also, every political system has such of characteristics, ie. : holistic, adaptive, combination of old and new aspects. This research finds that opening policy practise of Saudi's policy is understandably highly influenced by three factors : domestic politics; economics capabilities and international contexts. All conderations of opening policy for women rights refers to assumption that Saudi's regime as political system, to preserve its existency, should has characteristics such as wholistic; flexible and mixing to old and new value systems.

Limitations & recommendations). This studi was limited by time because in 2019, - Saudi' political openness still on beginning since 2018. So it is still very premature to take such fact and data that show answers that those efforts are already succes or fail.

References

- Alfred Stepan Juan J. Linz (2013). Democratization Theory and the "Arab Spring". in *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring*; April 2013, Volume 24, Issue 2, Johns Hopkins University Press, USA
- Almond, Gabriel (1960) in Mohtar Mas'oeed & Collin Mc Andrews (1991), *Perbandingan Sistem Politik*, Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University Press
- Andrew Reynolds, Jason Brownlee & Tarek Masoud (2013). "Tracking the "Arab Spring": Why the Modest Harvest?" *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring*. , Volume 24, Issue 4, Johns Hopkins University Press, USA
- Brumberg, Daniel (2013). "Transforming the Arab World's Protection-Racket Politics", in *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring* July 2013, Volume 24, Issue 3, Johns Hopkins University Press,

- Dunne, Michele (2015) “After the Arab Spring: Caught in History’s Crosswinds” , in *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring*; October 2015, Volume 26, Issue 4, Johns Hopkins University Press, USA,
- Feierstein, Jerry (2018). *The Foreign Service Journal*, May, 2018, “Saudi Arabia : Liberalization, not Democratization”
- Jatmika, Sidik (1998). *America as an Obstacle of Democracy : Case Study of US Foreign Policy toward Saudi Arabia*, Bigraf Publishing, Yogyakarta
- Larry Diamond & Marc F. Plattner e.ds (2015), “Democratization and Authoritarianism in the Arab World”, *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring*; Johns Hopkins University Press, USA,
- Masoud, Tarek (2015), “Has the Door Closed on Arab Democracy?”, January 2015, Volume 26, Issue 1 . *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring*; Johns Hopkins University Press, USA,
- Masri, Safwan M. (2017) *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring, October 2018*, Volume 29, Issue 4; “Tunisia: An Arab Anomaly”. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017 .
- Robbins, Michael (2015) . “After the Arab Spring: People Still Want Democracy”, in *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring*; October 2015, Volume 26, Issue 4 Johns Hopkins University Press, USA
- Yom, Sean (2017), “Jordan and Morocco: The Palace Gambit” in *Journal of Democracy, Subject Arab Spring*; April 2017, Volume 28, Issue 2, Johns Hopkins University Press, USA