



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Salam Kedan

Title: The role of women in the reforms in Saudi Arabia

Programme/year: MAIN/SS 2023

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): doc. PhDr. Běla Plechanovová, CSc.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	35
<i>Total</i>		80	68
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	16
TOTAL		100	84



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis addresses an interesting and relevant topic of the role women in recent major social changes launched in Saudi Arabia, the richest autocracy of the world. Vision 2030 initiated by the crown prince Mohammed bin Salman as a reaction to multitude of challenges faced by this country. One-dimensional economy combined with one of the most conservative versions of the Islamic regime.

The Author looks at the Saudi modernization program from the perspective of gender relations in the society which was for decades locked in the strictest rules of sharia law closing women behind the door of the households with limited chances for employment or independent social life. She hypothesizes that the program has the potential to empower Saudi women to become a driving force of the transformation of the Saudi society that will expand its human capital by educating women and include them to the changing, modernized economy. Internationally, these changes should help the country to enhance its status and soft power.

The thesis builds on the modernization theory as a lens for assessment of the reforms started by the Vision 2030 program. International context pushing for the empowering of women globally invites feminist perspective, in Author's choice of a normative leaning. The text is structured as follows, intro section establishes the relevance of the topic for IR, literature review focuses mainly on the modernization and feminist theories discussing their applicability on the topic. Methodology section explains the choice of the single case study design and introduces also the plan for the interviews. The empirical chapter then introduces the Vision 2030 plan from the perspective of various dimensions of women as participants, starting from the background of a brief picture of social dynamics of the country since early 20th century. Conclusion summarizes strengths and limitations of the transformation process as well as it offers directions for further research.

I appreciate the thesis for its coherence and focus and for the Author's effort to get reflections of the transformation process in Saudi Arabia that is just evolving.



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My critical comments point to bit weak connection between the theoretical framework and its application in the analytical part. Also, the section presenting information from the interviews remained quite raw showing the time constrains in finalizing the text.

Question for the defence: What is your opinion on the long-term transformative potential of the Vision 2030 program in relation to Saudi political regime?

Minor criteria:

The scope of resources used is sufficiently wide. I appreciate the Appendices that present the summary of the content of the interviews. The style and the language of the text is adequate. The number of typos in the text is not very high.

Overall evaluation:

The strength of this thesis lies in the choice of the topic as well as in the interviews conducted with the Saudi women, the weakness rests in less elaborated research design. I commend the thesis to be defended.

Suggested grade: B

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jana'.