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Muhammad Bin Salman’s Vision 2030: Strategy of the Kingdom in the Facade of Modernization

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ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of Arab Spring, the Middle East (ME) by and large underwent various political upheavals. This change was palpable in some countries particularly where it resulted in a new political dispensation. However, in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the state opted to placate the antagonists by some economic concessions and social flexibility. Under the leadership of Muhammad bin Salman, the Crown Prince of KSA, the country is now following an approach of modernization which has two dimensions: first, moving towards social liberalization and secondly, initiating new sources of revenue and reducing dependence on oil revenue. Behind all initiatives, there is a long-term strategy to maintain loyalty of their people and enhance influence of KSA in the ME particularly. This article evaluates goals of Muhammad Bin Salman’s Vision or Saudi Vision 2030 and strategies which require substantial changes in social setup and developments to the Kingdom’s fiscal and budgetary measures and policies. This study reflects the political, religious, family and institutional challenges that can antagonize the Vision and its probability of accomplishment. While theorizing the study, it will be evaluated that a re-drawing of the ‘social contract’ in the Kingdom seems necessary. This means not only more effective strategic communication and consultation with the stakeholders, but also a greater focus on inclusive growth and social safety.

Keywords: *Arab Spring, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Muhammad bin Salman, modernization, institutions, social liberalization, fiscal reform, Purge*

Introduction

In June, 2017 Muhammad bin Salman, popularly known as MBS, was appointed as Crown Prince of the KSA by his father King Salman. Before 2015, MBS had held no public office; however, he was not only named as Deputy Crown Prince but also head of ‘Super Committee’, an amalgam of ministries and agencies that direct Saudi

economic policy. Since then, his aim is to diversify the Saudi economy and reduce its dependence on oil revenue. This vision is called 'Saudi Vision 2030.' And an important aspect of the Vision is to increase the role of private sector in the growth of the economy.

Although various economists of this view believe that Saudi Arabia will not achieve ambitious goals of Vision 2030, yet it provides a course for economic development. It also includes some other policies, which were previously considered as taboo for Saudi government like privatization of Saudi Aramco company as well as establishment of Sovereign Wealth Fund. As Vision 2030 has some benefits and MBS has invested his own political capital in it but at the same time have some limitations like the interpretation of the plan is closely associated with the interpretation of MBS own leadership style. However, it seems prudent to diversify economy and reduce government spending which economists and policy makers had been insisting for decades.

Since 1970s, diversification of economy has been one of the most important goals of successive governments; however, they have been unable to materialize it. Though some diversification plans devised by different governments but none of them was implemented. These include, for example, five years' developmental plan first introduced in 1970 and the creation of six 'economic cities' in 2000s. Government spending, almost exclusively underwritten by oil revenues, remains the engine of economy. The number of Saudis working in public sector is double compared to working in the private sector.

Notwithstanding the fact that diversification has been effective to some extent but has been ignored. These include: development of infrastructure and non-oil sectors (even though large industries working with energy sources such as petrochemicals and plastics); establishment of new industrial cities at Jubail and Yanbu (mainly consist of petrochemical production facilities); movement of oil production above the worth chain from unrefined to refined; and a large number of Saudi citizens particularly women, although from low base, working in the private sector.

There has been a long record of reform programs being fallen short of their targets, particularly in fiscal and labor market policies. This is due to the fact that such policies were aimed at reducing structural fiscal burden as well as minimizing dependence upon government spending. Such policies could affect the implicit social contract. The social contract can be viewed a series of unwritten agreements between ruling elite and important stakeholders such as royal family, influential clerics, businessmen and tribes. Saudi government does not want to disturb this implicit social contract and therefore all diversification plans are either partially implemented or suspended when oil prices spike again. This is evident from recent example of Arab Spring when the government increased the spending by 25% in comparison to previous years. These included 130 billion dollars of social spending, increased salaries and bonuses for public sector workers.

For a long time, it has been an assumption among the researchers and analysts that a decrease in monetary benefits for citizens will generate demand for political benefits in exchange. However, the current scenario is quite different from that of 2011 and therefore, such assumption seems to have weakened relevancy. There may have been two reasons: in the early days of Arab uprisings people demanded political reforms particularly a series of online petitions which demanded for anti-

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corruption measures, political participation of people and judicial reforms. Though these ambitions still exist, but organized campaigns for reforms have subsided in recent years. The reason for this is the incarceration of political and human rights activists like Muhammad Al Qahtani and Waleed Abu Khair. The second is the regional political climate, particularly the widespread opinion that the Arab uprisings have failed to achieve the demonstrators' goals of greater political inclusion, accountability and justice.

Research Question

The main research question of this paper is that whether Saudi Vision 2030 is solely economic diversification plan or it has also some political implications. The auxiliary question, which the study also deals, is the issue of the realization of the Vision.

Research Methodology

This paper is based upon descriptive methods of research. Secondary data in terms of researches, newspaper articles and books have been used. Moreover, government reports have also been consulted while doing the research.

Social Contract-Theoretical Frame Work

The idea of the social contract was devised to explain how states legitimize their authority beyond force, through consent of people and acceptance of the rule. Its origins are in European enlightenment philosophy, particularly in a context of citizens trying to limit the power of the state, and, secondly which is most important, to protect individual rights from excessive authority of state. The idea is used to explain the relation between citizens and state, and for that matter the relationship between citizens and state is based on social contract. Thomas Hobbes wrote in his 'social contract' theory, then John Locke further explained and finally in 18th century French philosopher Rousseau described social contract as it is an implicit agreement between the state and its citizens, and citizens agree to give up some freedom in exchange the state will provide protection to citizens. However, in KSA the relation between the government and citizens is shaped by the state's ability to provide economic benefits due to massive oil resources.

In KSA, the social contract has multiple constituents, implicit agreements drew by the Al Saud with different stakeholders like the royal family, religious clerics, business community, tribal leaders and various social groups rather than as a single deal that the state usually makes with citizens. KSA is described as 'Rentier state', where the government offers monetary benefit and distributes wealth among people without putting their labour, in exchange for citizens' loyalty towards government. Similarly, other Gulf states are also 'rentier states' unlike the traditional model in which citizens work, they pay taxes and resultantly the government runs the state by this wealth. The 'rentier state' model is rather mechanistic, but the core argument about the relationship between a state which provide economic benefits to population and citizens who do not pay taxes and enjoy economic benefits, has resonance in the Gulf. (Beblawi, 1987)

The principal objective of the Vision 2030 is to reshape the economic structure of the country with emphasis upon decreasing economic welfare by state but at the

same time maintaining authoritarian rule; and, secondly, lessening the dependence on oil. The Saudi state aims, in order to achieve these objectives, to redesign the social contract with little increase in economic and social liberty. This development will eliminate the importance of already existing social contract which is based on authoritarian rule and will lead to more social and political liberalization. If the dependency on oil decreases and private sector develops then the individuals will be more associated with private sector thus the coercive authority of the state will be reduced. With the reduction of state's power will lead to the increase in the spread of information and freedom of expression which will eventually lead to political reforms. However, a number of barriers exist which may prevent this from occurring. (Joyner, 2018)

Religious Clerics and the Saudi State

Saudi government has legitimized its rule by the power of religion. From the beginning of their rule, clerics have been part of the government to govern the country; the partnership was established by an agreement between the influential Cleric Mohammed Abdelwahab. The clerics have influenced the education system, judiciary and policies related to social and family matters. The king appoints the council of senior *Ulema* and other clerical elites, while the Al Sheikh family is enjoying more privileged position and controls the education system. To decrease the influence of fundamental and traditional clerics, King Abdullah in 2016 added two additional moderate clerics to the council of senior *Ulema*. The purpose of this act was, to implement Vision 2030 and introduction of process of social liberalization. Clerics in Saudi Arabia are preaching political obedience, which tends to avoid political demands but, as matter of fact, it helped Al Saud to legitimize his rule. The role of clerics in preaching political obedience and declaring protest against the government as un-Islamic, legitimized the rule of Al Saud and delegitimized opposition towards the government. ("Futures Initiative at Tabah Foundation," , 2020)

Vision 2030-Economic Aspects

Saudi government under the leadership of King Salman and (MBS) introduced Saudi Vision 2030, to decrease economic dependency on oil and move towards privatization; to decrease dependency of citizens on government and diversify economy of the country. Overall impact of Vision 2030 will be political liberalization but the situation in Saudi Arabia will oppose these changes like the authoritarian rule of the government and Wahabism the conservative sect of Islam will be major opposition towards liberalization. (Kinninmont, Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia's Social Contract Austerity and Transformation, 2017) Some Saudi thinkers when discuss the Vision 2030, take economic matters more seriously, but certain take religion as serious issue while fewer take political liberalization as important aspect. However, some Western thinkers deny the existence of social contract in Saudi Arabia because according to them the relation between Saudi government and citizens are imposed one rather than contract based. Such thinkers argued that the situation in Saudi Arabia is different than the situation in Western countries. They are of the opinion that the *Abayaa* means allegiance is actually the social contract, but it is different than the social contract is understood in western countries. (Nazer, 2005)

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Al Saud used the distribution of unearned economic resources for political gains. Economic incentives are not only used simply to distribute the jobs in public sector and money but used in a complex way. Economic resources are distributed to use it as a political tool, it is distributed among different business elites and also among members of royal family. Spending on infrastructure and other basic needs is also different like in urban and rural areas but it is used for political interest. It will go without saying that economic benefits are used to gain more support of citizens and it is also a way of obligation.

In the past, opposition and protest in Saudi Arabia have mainly been due to economic and political reasons. In 1950s and 1960s nationalists and leftists increased in numbers due to which education in Saudi Arabia expanded and academics from neighboring countries like Egypt, Palestine, Syria started visiting Saudi Arabia and began taking more interest in Saudi Arabian issues. The siege of Mosque in 1979, was due to the impact of revolution in Iran rather than due to economic or political reasons. In 1990, different groups like constitutionalists, Islamist *sahwa* clerics and Shia opposition-in-exile started activities against Saudi government and economic problems gave more powers to these activities. In 2011, the Arab spring started as a movement of petition in support of political liberalization in spite of increasing oil resources value. Saudi government repressed the activists like members Saudi association for civil and political rights and lawyers and also imprisoned them. So the protests in Saudi Arabia were due to political liberalization but Saudi government is not willing to give space to them, so they were always oppressed by the authorities. Vision 2030 will also become a catalyst for protests in coming days. ("Futures Initiative at Tabah Foundation," , 2020)

The clerics have a strong hold on educational policies in Saudi Arabia. In fact, education system is using traditional techniques, mainly on rote learning. In education they have ignored the modern scientific knowledge and critical thinking due to which education system of KSA performs very low in international education ranking. Students who graduated from this education system have very little modern knowledge and skills due to which they are unable to secure good jobs in markets. With the passage of time and the implementation of Vision 2030 criticism on education system will increase because graduates will be unable secure positions in private sector as well as public. During King Abdullah's reign reforms in education system was introduced and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology was established to promote scientific study based on modern system. It was funded by government with \$20 billion to make it distant from the influence of clerics. Similarly, scholarship opportunities were also introduced for Saudi citizens to get best education in foreign universities. So almost 100,000 scholarships were provided every year for Saudi students. After 9/11, issue of revision of curriculum aroused, the criticism on the curriculum was that it contains material, which promotes extremism, and fundamentalism, which will eventually lead to violence.

In 1990, another religious group called *Sahwa* aroused, which was more critical and moderate than the traditional religious establishment. Al Saud recruited more moderate religious scholars other than the traditional religious establishment to form a parallel religious group. These new religious establishments in government supported Al Saud and did not provide opposition towards the regime. It is a fact that *Sahwa* helped the government by criticizing *Al-Qaeda*.

During 2000 to 2004 some groups attacked inside Saudi Arabia, *Sahwa* criticized these people and supported the government. King Abdullah increased the members of council of *Ulema* by appointing people from other school of *Sunni* Islam, but the *Shia* minority which is 15% of the population has been excluded from the beginning because *Sunni* scholars see *Shia* sect as illegitimate because the interpretation of *Shia* is different from that of *Sunni*. King Abdullah brought reforms to judicial system and tried to reduce the influence of *Salafists* in judicial system. Government in KSA argues that the policies related to social and religious issues are the reflection of people's thoughts, but in fact the religious establishment influences the policies. Now with Vision 2030 the MBS want to transform the system and says that the people want to implement social liberalization (Rashad, 2014).

Some Saudi thinkers also argued that the reforms in King Abdullah's era, was the transformation of Saudi Social Contract. He gave more emphasis on government ability to unite the people rather than the strengthening religious compartmentalization. Though religious establishment opposed Al-Qaeda and ISIS and supported King Abdullah yet they were also the source of major opposition to the government. Therefore, King Abdullah and now the current government are trying to curb the influence of religious establishment. Security of the state now depends on military and more secular organizations so the role of other traditional institutions is decreasing. The King now makes more emphasis on nationalism to contain the influence of traditional clerics. An academic of Saudi Arabia Madawi Al Rasheed called nationalism in Saudi Arabia as 'Hyper Nationalism' in the Gulf region. The celebrating of National day in Saudi Arabia is a new development. It started in 2005, when King Abdullah got the reign and declared 23 September as National Day of KSA and an official holiday was announced to strengthen national identity. However, in 2016, first time National day was celebrated officially in Saudi Arabia as the initiative of Vision 2030. Before this mufti Abdel-Aziz bin Baz declared the National Day a western phenomenon and it is forbidden in Islam. Thus celebration of National Day is part of Vision 2030; it is celebrated to decrease the influence of religious establishment and tribal identities. (Rasheed, 2015)

How much Vision 2030 is important for Saudi Arabia?

Saudi Arabia's economy is mainly based on oil revenue and around 85% of its exports are accounted by Hydrocarbons. Oil generates about 30-40% of actual GDP, however, the public finances depends almost entirely on oil's revenue. Therefore, a major part of economy is indirectly dependent on oil. It is noted that public sector, including state-controlled oil sector, generates almost about 2/3 of entire GDP while the private sector relies mostly on governmental contracts. The oil boom in the recent era resulted in the increase in spending on infrastructure and education, both of which are essential for growth. However, these improvements were the result of constant increase in government expenditure from 2003 to 2015. During this decade, the share of oil revenue and public spending in the economy increased considerably. According to UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) data from 2009-14, the share of state-funded capital investment accounted for nearly half of total capital investment in comparison to the previous 5 years where it was about one-third of overall capital investment. (World Investment Report , 2015)

Though during this boom period, there was some frustrations among the public due to unemployment rate, economic inequality and pressure on public services such as

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education and healthcare. As the prices of oil fell down at the end of 2014, public were worried regarding the employment of 4.5 million young Saudi's who were expected to enter the labor market by 2030. (Al Kibsi , et al., 2015)

These recent economic reforms are also attributed to reduction oil prices for a longer period of time. The price of oil per barrel was 114 Dollars in the summer of 2014 which eventually fell down to 30 dollars per barrel in early 2016 until it was stabilized between 45-52 Dollars per barrel range. It should be noted that budget deficit was about 97 Billion Dollars in 2015 which was equal to 15% of GDP. Therefore, the expenditure was reduced by 15% in 2016 which decreased the budget deficit by 13% of GDP. Also foreign reserves fell down from 723 Billion Dollars in late 2014 to 545 Billion Dollars in October 2016. (Monthly Statistical Bulletin, 2016) Thus, economists thought that the Riyal would be devalued. Since 2014, foreign reserves of Saudi Arabia have been fallen down by a third, which led to lower credit ratings as well as pressurized long-standing currency peg.

Owing to low prices of oil, Saudi Arabia, OPEC and Russia decided to co-ordinate the oil policy. Since then the price of oil was somewhat stabilized. This was the signal for Saudi authorities to reverse some of the austerity measures as happened in the past. However, if the prices were above 100 Dollars per barrel for a sustained period, even then Saudi Arabia could not maintain the pattern of increasing expenditure, similar to that of from 2003-2015. (Kinninmont, Future Trends in the Gulf, 2015) Since 1970s, it has been the aim of the government to diversify the economy away from it reliance on oil revenue. Its actual implementation is possible if oil revenue is reduced even if the prices of oil are high and can lead to windfall wealth.

The question of economic diversification gained momentum in 2015 due to combination of critical economic signals as well as the emergence of new Saudi leadership. The appointment of Prince Muhammad not only as deputy crown prince (initially) but also as head of economic development body was intended to provide impetus to process of diversification of economy.

Targets and Policies in Saudi Vision 2030

MBS offers, "A new social contract that functions better than the rigid bureaucracy of the past, opportunities to have fun and an economy that will create jobs that can last, whatever happens in oil markets". The Saudi Vision 2030 is envisaged as a development program in a document that provides, apart from objectives and framework an insight of the ruling dynasty's understanding of the objective environment and their understanding of it. As it is relatively short document therefore the details are provided in National Transformation Program (NTP) 2016-2020. (National Transformation Program 2020 , n.d.) The aim of the vision is to generate alternative sources of revenue (taxes, fees and income from a newly expanded sovereign wealth fund) to lessen the reliance on public spending (including subsidies and salaries) and to increase the role of private sector in economy, both in steering GDP and creating jobs for Saudis.

However, there are some new policies for Saudi Arabia in Vision 2030. First, it has broken some of the traditional taboos like privatization of minority stake in Saudi Aramco. Secondly, since Vision 2030 is the brain child of Muhammad bin Salman,

therefore he has invested a considerable amount of political capital in it. He had adopted a new tone and criticized the country's dependence upon oil. He even stated that the country would survive without oil revenue by 2030. Thirdly, MBS has created a small but trusted group of ministers and close advisors who control economic policymaking. Thus, the authority has concentrated in the hands of small group. This centralization of power has deviated the country from dynastic monarchy in which power was distributed among senior members of royal family. Owing to this reorganization, the Vision 2030 has been viewed by some observers as not only as national developmental project but also as a part of MBS own power game.

The Neom city project, often referred to as signature constituent of the Vision, has drawn significant attention on account of its potential for contribution to the gross domestic product of the country. This City will be established in the Tabuk province on the West coast of the country and North of the Red Sea with a whopping cost of 500 Billion US Dollar. The City is not only intended to be equipped with smart city technologies but also will be an attractive tourist destination. The purposely built City will help in the diversification of Saudi economy as well as to make it business and services hub for investors on the footprints of Dubai and Hong Kong. It has been planned, on the one hand, to develop fourteen important economic sectors in the City for the future from hi-tech to mobility but the principal focus is invariably to attract investors and tourists. The City is expected to organize arrangements for one million tourists by 2025 and the figure is likely to increase to five million by 2030 and thereby its contribution to the country's GDP may stand \$16 billion. (Kamel, 2021)

In January 2016, when government announced to privatize about 5% of Saudi Aramco, it was viewed by many as a signal that government intended to adopt such policies which were previously considered as taboos. It should be noted that Aramco was established in 1970s by nationalizing four United States (US) companies which were previously operating in the Kingdom. For decades, the sentiment of 'resource nationalism' has been given much significance in the Arab countries, which meant that oil and gas sectors were not opened for foreign private investment (like Kuwait cancelled such plans time and again). Also, MBS declared that funds amassed through Initial Public Offering (IPO) will be used to support sovereign wealth fund. This shows that divestment is being used as a national economic developmental plan. (Kinninmont, Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia's Social Contract Austerity and Transformation, 2017)

Implementation of Vision 2030

There has been long history of diversification plan being either diluted or partially implemented because the government officials thought that it might cause unfavorable political results, the oil price cycles usually allowed the countries to return to old habits and sometimes lack of coordinated efforts among governmental officials regarding the implementation of reforms. In order, to increase the confidence of people regarding the implementation of the plan, most parts of the Vision 2030 statement had focused on the ways and methods which would centralize and streamline government's decision making processes as well as key indicators which would measure the performance of officials. Interviews from government ministers and advisors have highlighted that 'ministers are now working 60 hours a

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week rather than 12 or they are working 'eight days a week' and also mentioned that they are now more vulnerable to be discharged, in case they failed to perform their duties. Ministers and policymaker at senior level are working more closely together. But it is much bigger challenge to reform and streamline civil service. The long time Saudi oil minister told at an event in 2016 that, 'you need more than a vision'; he added further that the next essential step was its implementation the budgets and the division of labor. The most important question concerning investors both at home and abroad is regarding the implementation of the plan, given the track-record of non-delivery of the plans in the past. Policy makers and economists are of the view that if 70% or even 50% of the plan is implemented it would be an excellent achievement for Saudi Arabia.

It should be noted that the goals set in Vision 2030 should not be taken literally because usually the Gulf economic diversification plans are based on optimism bias. These plans set ambitious goals, in part for what some economists call signaling (while others might call attention). These plans showed a right course to travel instead of forecasting.

Impact of Vision 2030 on Saudi's International Image

A large number of interviews and articles have been published throughout Arab and Western media, regarding MBS and his Vision 2030, which emphasize the Saudi's claim to develop and modernize. Therefore, international public relationing is important for attracting investments from abroad. It is very important for Saudi Arabia as its international image is very blemished currently while other small Gulf countries like United Arab Emirates (UAE) have taken advantage from a more successful international marketing and branding efforts. Thus, Vision 2030 has been successful in creating a positive image of Saudi Arabia internationally (Ross, 2017).

The experience of other Arab countries show that Saudi Arabia will also be faced with questions like whether Vision 2030 is good for Saudi people or is it just a product of international consumption? Gulf economists were skeptics of the 'Vision' document because these were largely influenced by major international management consultancies particularly in countries where free debate on such issues is restricted.

Influence of Vision 2030 on State-Citizens Relations

The Saudi Vision 2030 is not only limited to economy but it will also modify the relation between citizens and state. This includes following:

- Transparency in governance, communications and consultation with the people.
- More social freedoms from entertainment and movement.
- A society based on local traditions.
- A vibrant society with a careful space to civil liberties.

The Saudi Vision 2030 is not only the program of economic development but also a national modernization. Although, there is no explicit mention of political reform but still it has political consequence. After presenting Saudi Vision 2030, MBS gave

an interview to *The Economist*, where he was asked that whether the plan would affect the social contract. He answered that the two matters cannot be related: since the Saudi government already represented its people it was not an issue to be considered. (‘Transcript: Interview With Muhammed Bin Salman, 2016)

Conclusion

The aim of “Saudi vision 2030” is to decrease the economic dependency of state on oil but to achieve the above plan, the government must reform social structure and liberalize laws. The social changes we have recently saw like lifting restrictions on female driving, cinemas and musical concerts. Social reforms will directly affect social contract because the Saudi political elites are legitimizing their rule on the basis of religion. With the liberalization the relation between royal elites and clerics will be disturbed due to which not only clerics but also the common fundamentalist citizens will oppose these changes. So implementation of the Vision will require overall reformation of political and social structure.

The Vision 2030 is an aggregate of many reforms which will attempt to make long term changes to the system which will eventually lead to bring certain changes in political system. Now at this level, it is unclear that how the political will impact from vision 2030 and how it will bring changes but with the passage of time, it will become clearer. The transformation from traditional system to a new system will be very difficult because in early days’ majority of the youth supported by the government will be unable to secure jobs in private sector, so the overall transition will be very difficult for the whole of Saudi population. Scientific and technical education will be needed for the sustainability of private sector but the education system in Saudi Arabia is very weak in terms of technical and scientific knowledge. Reformation of education takes much time, while in Saudi Arabia, it will take much more time because education is under the control of traditional clerics so they will resist changes in education system.

With the implementation of Vision 2030, economic system will adversely affect. Economic inequality will be the major problem, due to the decrease of government spending on welfare works and unemployment will lead to inequality. Due to the shift from public sector to private, many people will lose their job. Education is a long-term process so short term training and programs will be required to make the system successful. It is argued that most important thing for social enterprise will be to provide opportunities of training, and another important thing will be the service of job matching for women. For such training and short-term programs Saudi Arabia will need international help.

Saudi government in implementing Vision 2030 wants to see the citizens more independent, active and educated, however, the major obstacle for critical and scientific thinking is the religious establishment. But it is not clear that whether they will want more critical and free thinking citizens who will question the ongoing authoritarian political system and demand political liberalization, freedom of speech and expression.

There could be another impediment to the socio-economic liberalization i.e., the royal family. In 2017, MBS initiated a ‘Purge’ drive using the pretext of corruption and many members of the royal family were, some of whom had held important portfolios in the government, detained and jailed. It happened first time in the history

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of KSA that princes had been tried under corruption charges and incarcerated. Apparently, the purpose of the entire exercise was to rid the government of corruption but critics were of the view that the objective was to weed out MBS' potential political rivals from within the royal family to strengthen his position and fasten his grip on the affairs. (Nakhoul, McDowall, & Kalin, 2017) According to Said Jamal Khashoggi, a US based journalist and critic of Saudi government who also remained advisor to Prince Turki al Faisal, Chief of Intelligence of KSA from 1979-2001, "I believe MBS wants it to be strongest but his problem is that he wants to rule alone". It is pertinent to note that Khashoggi, who had called the 'Purge campaign' as selective, was murdered in dubious circumstances in Turkey in 2018; however, some are of the view that it was mastermind of MBS. Though apparently the royal family is silent for obvious reasons but cracks within family cannot be ruled out. There is a famous incident that took place in KSA when King Faisal was assassinated by his own nephew in 1975. So, without having cohesion in the royal family, MBS can face an adventurous upheaval in future.

Apart from domestic opposition there are certain challenges from outside for the materializing of Vision 2030. Saudi's involvement in ongoing war in Yemen, serious disputes with neighboring Qatar, confrontation with Iran and departure of Trump who strongly stood behind the incumbent regime can create security problem for the Kingdom. It is a fact that foreign investors rarely invest in the projects where there is not business friendly environment.

The Vision 2030 is essentially a national transformation plan having more emphasis upon diversification of the economy and introducing a framework intended for citizens' participation in economic aspect. However, there is a need for equal attention upon introducing political reforms in the country for that matter it must not be connived at that economic transformation and political liberalization goes parallel and without the political support of the people there is likelihood that the very soul of the Vision may be stifled. Therefore, in order to forestall this twin diversification political as well as economical must go hand in hand.

Al Saud will not want to establish an independent private sector but a strong monitoring system to maintain state's role is required. It will also change the structure of different organizations and groups like: the opening of cinemas and music concerts have given more power to liberal constituency against already existing constituency of religious police and clerics. So from the above discussion it is clear that Vision 2030 will transform not only the economic system but will also lead to social and then political reforms. However, it seems a daunting task to make people dynamic, liberal and participative and at the same time expecting them to be loyal to an authoritarian system.

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