Being Civil Society in an Authoritarian State

A Case Study of Saudi Arabia Post-Arab Spring

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Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Saudi Arabia), one of the most authoritarian and conservative states in the world, is going through a process of change, or so it seems. In June 2018 women in Saudi Arabia were granted the right to drive. In February of that same year the country staged its first ever jazz festival. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (known to many as MbS) is presenting himself as a charismatic leader of the future, with a new and modern vision for his nation. At the same time however, worrisome developments are taking place. Only a few weeks before the lifting of the ban on women driving, some important women's rights activists, including Loujain Al-Hathloul, Aziza Al-Yousef and Eman Al-Nafjan, were arrested (Baynes 2018). Allowing women to drive while at the same time arresting those women that demanded this right for years shows a contradictory image. In addition, civil society actors that go against the government risk severe reprisals. It is not only in Saudi Arabia, but all around the globe, that civil society faces increasingly severe reprisals from governments. Since 2012, governments in 60 different countries have enacted more than 120 laws that constrain the freedom of civil society in their country (Rutzen 2015, 30). Civil society organisations (CSOs) which strive for civil, human, or political rights, or which receive western funding, are frequently being labelled as change agents or foreign agents. By labelling these CSOs in this way, the governments in these countries try to delegitimize their activities (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3-4).

The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society describes civil society as "the sphere of uncoerced human association between the individual and the state, in which people undertake collective action for normative and substantive purposes, relatively independent of government and the market" (Edwards 2011, 4). Since 1989, civil society came to be seen as a universal concept that could play an important role in helping countries work toward democracy. Civil society was considered to be the "missing ingredient" which could ensure a "happy marriage" between the state and the people (Sadowski 1993, 14; Rabo 1996, 157). The notion of civil society as a driver of political change is still prevalent. This is seen in policymaking, where civil society, due to its transformative role, has become an important instrument for achieving democratic change. Kienle refers to how in the Middle East, civil society is alleged to function as "a force that, almost by definition, opposes authoritarianism and works towards the liberal democratic transformations of states and societies" (2011, 152). Consequently, the concept has become almost unquestionably connected to liberal democracy. However, this transformative or radical role of civil society has been questioned by many. Spires, for example, states that "we should not assume that NGOs in authoritarian states, even independent grassroots

organisations, are working toward democratic purposes" (2011, 35). Hawthorne argues that civil society can be a source of democratic change, but it is not inherently one (2004, 3).

Consequently, some scholars argue for a more neutral use of the concept. This use of the concept would see it stripped of its radical transformative associations and the idea that it is a force for political change (Aarts and Cavatorta 2013, 6; Bakker 1999). This conceptual debate has not yet reached the policy-making community, where up until the present day civil society has continued to be viewed through a radical lens and the "people power model", in which NGOs and social movements are expected to mobilize opposition against authoritarian rule, remains alive (Edwards 2004, 15; Hawthrone 2004, 5). For example, the Dutch Cabinet Rutte II (2012-2017) considered civil society actors to be 'change agents' that could help societies going through transitional processes. Policy documents state that as "key driving forces behind change" these people [i.e. civil society actors] need Dutch support (MFA 2013, 23-24). It remains unclear if CSOs in non-western, authoritarian states indeed aim to pursue political change, or if this is just the role that is imposed on them. This 'imposing' of a political role can be done by western democratic governments who refer to CSOs as *agents of change*. However, it can also be done by authoritarian states who want to delegitimize these groups by referring to them as *agents of the West*.

In light of this, this thesis aims to shed light on what impact the label 'civil society' has on civil society actors in Saudi Arabia. Are civil society actors in non-western authoritarian states stuck with one of two images: being either 'change agents' or 'foreign agents'? If not, then how do these actors perceive themselves? How do they act under a label, 'civil society', which is of western origin and has become a reference point for political change and liberal democracy? This thesis primary research question is: *How do Saudi civil society actors cope with being labelled as a change agent and/or a foreign agent?* With the exception of a small number of studies looking at legitimacy loss by civil society (outlined in the literature review) this question has hardly been studied in civil society literature. It has not been studied at all with regards to Saudi Arabia, which will form this thesis' central case.

The most important findings of this research are that Saudi activists do indeed aim for change, but that they do not seek to create chaos in the way which their governments will often claim. In the long term they hope to establish a political system in which the people are represented, and the government is held accountable. In the short term they aim to stop government violations and achieve fundamental rights. Furthermore, civil society actors feel that they represent their own people and are by no means agents of the West. Via the internet, activists hope to convince other Saudis of the real intentions of their activism. Online activists

can provide a counter narrative to the story told by the government. In this way Saudi activists cope with the labels imposed on them.

The rest of this thesis proceeds as follows. A literature review will discuss worldwide repression of civil society. Reprisals often lead to a weakened civil society that has lost its legitimacy. Consequently, chapter one provides a conceptual analysis of the concept of civil society. It discusses how people have conceptualized civil society's form, function, and relation to the state at different times, both in western and non-western societies. Chapter two contains a country study of Saudi Arabia in which the current state of civil society is mapped out. It also provides a chronological overview of the political context in which Saudi civil society is located. In this context, civil society sometimes seeks the opportunity to demand change but often faces harsh repressions. The second part of this country study then discusses Saudi activists and describes how these activists cope with being part of civil society in Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review

There is a clear lack of knowledge about civil society in non-western states. This often leads to false assumptions about civil society's formation and function in these states (Hann 1996, 2; Edwards 2004, 108-109). Non-western civil societies are considered to be homogenous, where in reality they are varied and sometimes deeply fragmented (Hawthorne 2004, 13). Civil society is also expected to function as a bridge to the "silent majority" within the state. Foreign governments want to tap into this group, which according to them does not follow the anti-western and anti-democratic sentiment of the authorities (Hawthorne 2004, 5).

Western Support for Civil Society

Foreign governments envision that CSOs they work with represent the majority of the people, a majority that is naturally opposed to the government. However, in reality, foreign governments mostly engage in cooperation with those organisations that resemble civil society groups in western democracies. Foreign governments work with CSOs whose leaders speak English, who are familiar with the international environment, but who do not necessarily resemble the majority of the local people (Hawthorne 2004, 14). Consequently, these CSOs are seen within the countries where they operate as elitist, foreign and unrepresentative. This view is often fuelled by the governments and state media (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3-4).

As well as critiquing the lack of knowledge about non-western civil society, the existing literature also criticizes western support for CSOs in authoritarian states. According to Durac

and Cavatorta (2009, 9-19), western governments fail to fully commit to undo authoritarian structures. They prioritize economic interests and domestic security, rather than support society's moves towards democratization. These 'half attempts' at support lead to false hopes for local activists and reduce the credibility of western actors. Additionally, the legitimacy of those people arguing against democracy increases. As a result, local groups campaigning for human rights need to distance themselves from foreign support to retain their legitimacy.

Repression by the State

Over the last 15 years, regimes around the globe have increased the restrictions on civil society. They have done this by implementing laws that reduce the space for CSOs to carry out their work, harass civil activists, and prohibit international (financial) support for civil society. While critical organisations in authoritarian states are familiar with repression, a report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace states that the wave of repression following the Arab Spring[1] is the "widest and deepest" that has been seen in decades (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3). Sprokel has stated that these repressions are extra worrisome because they weaken civil society, making it less able to play a key role in identifying and solving political, social and economic issues (2018, 5). For instance, in authoritarian states, as well as those that are 'freer' such as Brazil and India, the media faces repression and there is a high level of anxiety among journalists (Safi et al. 2017). A journalist from Sudan notes that the government does not hesitate to kidnap, torture or even kill journalists that criticize the government. The journalist states that the only way to write about what is really happening in the country and stay alive, is to do so from exile (Safi et al. 2017).

Unlike the current restrictions on civil society, about two decades ago the world was in the midst of an "associational revolution" (Rutzen 2015, 28). Civil society was welcomed as the "ingredient" that would liberate states from authoritarianism (Cavatorta 2010, 218). This positive view of civil society changed after the 9/11 attacks in the US. Then US President George W. Bush launched the Freedom Agenda in which support for civil society had an important place. According to Rutzen (2015, 29), this marked the start of suspicion among governments in those countries where international and local CSOs received foreign funding. This mistrust became visible after the colour revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), and Kyrgyzstan (2005). Allegedly, US groups played a role in provoking these upheavals

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[1] The Arab Spring is the name given to the large number of popular uprisings across the Arab world that started in December 2010.

(Carothers 2006). A wave of restrictions followed especially aimed at international NGOs, local groups that received foreign funding, and groups involved in political activities (Sprokel 2018, 2). Christensen and Weinstein claim that governments are more likely to restrict external support for civil society when they feel vulnerable to domestic challenges (2013, 83). It is questionable to what extent these regimes indeed believed that they could lose their power to often weak civic and political groups. However, regimes did use the threat as a justification to implement repressive measures (Carothers 2006).

A second wave of civil society restrictions followed the Arab Spring, when governments around the globe imposed restrictions on civil society to prevent their own people from engaging in revolt. Since 2012, more than 120 laws constraining the freedoms of civil society have been proposed or enacted in 60 countries (Rutzen 2015, 30). According to a report by Amnesty International, human rights defenders are facing pressure on an alarming scale (2017, 5).

Those organisations receiving foreign (financial) assistance have been especially targeted, as they are seen as having the potential for unwanted foreign influence expecting to follow the wishes of their funders (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3). Some governments believe that these organisations receive money to intervene in domestic affairs, destabilize the country, and push for regime change. Therefore, these states invoke the notion of state sovereignty to legitimize restrictions on civil society and prohibit foreign funding (Rutzen 2015, 31). Organisations that do accept western funding are labelled as being foreign agents and sometimes even risk closure (Kienle 2011, 152-153). For instance, after nation-wide protests in 2012, the Russian President Vladimir Putin introduced the Foreign Agent Law. He believed that the protests were inspired by foreign countries who funded the organisations behind these protests. Since 2012, CSOs that receive foreign funding need to work under the foreign agent status. In Russia, the term 'foreign agent' is unquestionably associated with espionage and treason, and groups branded as being foreign agents immediately loose legitimacy. After receiving the foreign agent-label many groups decided to shut down which resulted in a remarkable fall in the number of organisations. If groups refused to register under the label, they also faced closure (Digges 2017).

Although different countries have launched their own legislation restricting civil society, there are a number of striking similarities between the different laws:

First, CSOs are often permitted to continue their work as long as they stay away from political activities (Rutzen 2015, 29). In countries where the state and/or market is rather weak, CSOs play an important role in providing services such as healthcare (Edwards 2004, 13-14).

Besides their economic role, most CSOs are also allowed to keep fulfilling their social role, which includes "promoting collective action for the common good" by for example protecting cultural life and educating people (Edwards 2004, 14). However, the provision of education is a grey area as teaching people about their basic civil rights, or teaching women empowerment is often interpreted as a threat and therefore forbidden by the government (Njogu 2018, 14; Zihnioğlu 2018, 23). In this thesis, a case study about civil society in Saudi Arabia will further elaborate on this idea of education as a form of resistance.

Second, many pieces of legislation in different countries criminalize activities that are related to politics and human rights. These laws use a very broad definition of 'political activities' which leaves a lot of room for governments to interpret the regulations in a way which suits their own purposes. An example is the Anti-Terrorism Law which was issued in Saudi Arabia in 2014. The promotion of human rights is considered to "harm the public order" which according to the law is a terrorist activity (HRW 2014). Consequently, anti-terrorist laws that at first sight seem to fulfil legitimate goals are used to repress civil rights and those people demanding them (Azoulay 2014; Sprokel 2018, 4).

Third, under many regulations foreign funding is restricted or forbidden. Without financial support, organisations need to shut down or become dependent on state funding which often influences their agenda and activities. According to Youssef Cherif, a Tunisian civil activist, many Tunisian organizations owe "their continued existence to foreigners' money" (Cherif 2018, 17). Christensen and Weinstein (2013, 79) believe that this restriction on outside funding is an indication that such funding is an efficient form of democracy support.

Fourth, most of the civil society legislation places an enormous administrative burden on organisations to provide detailed information about their activities, members, and financial administration. It also allows authorities to randomly 'check' on CSOs and shut down these organisations if they find something that is not in line with the regulations (Lammertink, De Roij and De Haes 2018, 8).

Finally, the legitimacy of groups that are affected by the legislation is questioned. Labels such as 'foreign agent' are used by the authorities to delegitimize the activities of these CSOs.

Legitimacy Loss of Civil Society

As well as bringing in new legislation restricting CSOs and other forms of assembly, governments have questioned CSOs' legitimacy in order to increase the gap between civil society actors and the people that could potentially support these groups. Brechenmacher and Carothers describe this modus operandi: "Rather than engaging with the substantive issues and

critiques raised by civil society groups, [governments] draw public attention to the real and alleged shortcoming of civil society actors as channel for citizen grievances and demands" (2018, 4). Brechenmacher and Carothers outline four types of arguments which are used by governments to attack civil society legitimacy (2018, 3-4). These arguments are also largely confirmed by other scholars and activists who have researched this topic.

First, governments point to the fact that CSOs are self-appointed instead of elected (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3). In Hungary, for example, the government has used this argument to prevent human rights organizations from influencing public policies (Kapronczay 2018, 25).

Second, CSOs receiving foreign financial assistance are often expected to be accountable to foreign rather than to local agendas (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3). The previously mentioned 'foreign agent' label, derived from this assumption, is also used in Kenya to define CSOs as actors that work with foreigners and in this way weaken their legitimacy and damage their relations with the wider population (Njogu 2018, 14).

Third, civil activists are accused of being partisan (anti-regime) political actors disguised as non-partisan civic actors: "Political wolves in citizen sheep's clothing" (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3). According to Walter Flores, a civil society actor from Guatemala, many politicians in the country use CSOs to launch their political careers, something which reinforces the idea that civil society actors are indeed politicians (2018, 9).

Fourth, civil society actors are presented as being a westernized elite that do not truly represent the people they claim to represent (Brechenmacher and Carothers 2018, 3). This claim is supported by the fact that western governments do choose to collaborate with groups that resemble organisations in the West (Hawthorne 2004, 14). The things which the civil society actors aim for, such as human rights, a representative government or female empowerment, are presented as 'western concepts' that are not suited to the societies in which the actors operate. This idea of CSOs as promoters of western values is strengthened by the way in which some organisations' agendas are indeed shaped by western funding. Consequently, these groups sometimes participate in actions that lack local resonance (Cherif 2018, 17). While the Dutch government wants lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organisations in Russia to participate in public events such as gay parades, for example, these organisations feel this work is counterproductive (De Roij 2018, 64).

Finally, it should be recognised that CSOs which choose to follow government policies or collaborate with the government can lose legitimacy and credibility as well. This is a point not mentioned by Brechenmacher and Carothers because it is not an example of how the

government deliberately challenges an organisation's legitimacy, but nevertheless noteworthy. How can CSOs who collaborate with corrupt authorities also help the people in their struggle against the state (Al-Sayyid 2013, 214)? State funded CSOs can also be connected with the corruption and poor performance of the government (Flores 2018, 8). In Thailand for instance, receiving state funding means an immediate loss of legitimacy for an organisation (Sombatpoonsiri 2018, 19).

Being Non-Western Civil Society: A Case Study

This research specifically focuses on civic activism in Saudi Arabia to provide a clearer understanding of civil society in non-western authoritarian states. As mentioned, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding about civil society in non-western, non-democratic contexts. As argued by Cherif, it is important to raise awareness about the way in which civil society functions to push for greater democracy and respect for human rights outside of western democracies (2018, 18). The urgency of conducting studies into this topic is increasing as the space for civil society around the world is shrinking (Unmüßig 2016). With a case study of civil society in Saudi Arabia, this research seeks to partly fill this 'gap'.

Saudi Arabia has been chosen as a case study for several reasons. First, it is one of those countries that did not become democratic during the 1990s, a period which is also known as the Third Wave of Democratization (Huntington 1991). On the contrary, Saudi Arabia ranks lowest in the Arab Democracy Index published in 2017 (Arab Reform Initiative 2017). Furthermore, civil society in Saudi Arabia is in transition. On the one hand Saudi Arabia's economic diversification plan, Vision 2030, aims to increase the country's associational life (Vision 2030 2016, 77). The Law on Associations and Foundations (hereafter NGO Law) implemented in 2016 enables certain service providing and economic orientated organisations to organize themselves. On the other hand, activities related to human rights and politics are now labelled as terrorist activities under the Anti-Terrorism law. In addition, the NGO Law forbids the establishment of CSOs that do not follow government policy. Meanwhile, the Internet offers new ways for civil society actors to 'meet' online.

This case study focuses on the period from 2014 until the present day. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, civil society in Saudi Arabia faced a new wave of repression. The legislation under which most Saudi activists were trialled was the Anti-Terrorism Law that came into action in 2014 (HRW 2014). Besides elaborating on the most recent 'waves' of repression, the country study also provides a short historical overview of the development of civil society in Saudi Arabia.

Two other important researchers looking at civil society in Saudi Arabia are those written by Montagu (2010; 2015) and Kanie (2012). Montagu's research mainly focuses on the voluntarily and charity sector and only briefly touches upon those civil society actors working on social and human rights. Kanie's study elaborates on the non-political, semi political and political segments of civil society in Saudi Arabia. This study comes closest to the aims of this thesis. However, it was published in 2012 and therefore only discusses the period before the Arab Spring. In contrast, this thesis specifically focuses on the years after the Arab Spring. Furthermore, whilst Kanie does mention the globalization of civil society, his research does not examine the western connotations of the concept and the impact these connotations can have on the work of Saudi activists (Kanie 2012, 35).

Methodology

For this thesis, I carried out a conceptual analysis and interviews to obtain qualitative data. The research focuses on how activists in Saudi Arabia make sense of the reality of civil society. It studies how Saudi activists relate to the concept of 'civil society'. To open up the concept of civil society and understand its function and features, conceptual analysis is used. Analysing a concept can shed light on how this concept has changed over time, how it functions in different cultural settings, and how it materializes in policy-making. Through conceptual analysis, the 'slipperiness and vagueness' of a concept is peeled off and the concept is 'prepared' for research. Besides conceptual analysis, I also conducted interviews to explore how Saudi activists cope with the label of being part of 'civil society'. Since this information could not be obtained from existing literature, interviews were seen as a suitable method through which to overcome this gap. The interviews aimed to acquire qualitative data since the goal was to find out how the interviewees make sense of the label civil society.

Methods

A wide range of sources were used to carry out this research. Some parts, such as the literature review and the conceptual analysis, were mostly informed by academic literature. Data from the interviews was used to write the second chapter on Saudi Arabia. The section focusing on civil society in exile was based entirely on interview data.

Between November 2017 and March 2018 I carried out a research project for the LeidenAsiaCentre (LAC). This project studied the Dutch Human rights policy towards Saudi Arabia after the Saudi government had brought in new legislation, placing restrictions on its

civil society. Besides Saudi Arabia, this project also involved a study of civil society in the People's Republic of China (by Jonas Lammertink) and of civil society in the Russian Federation (by Marit de Roij). Some parts of the LAC research have also been used to write the second chapter of this thesis. This is because the LAC research is the most recent study of civil society developments in Saudi Arabia[2] that has been carried out to date.

Giving the sensitivity of studying civil society in Saudi Arabia, this project has been through a rigorous ethical clearance process. For more details on this process see appendices 1, 2, and 3. In total, seven people were interviewed during the LAC research and research for this thesis (numbered as interviewees 1-7). For the LAC research, I had established contact with interviewees 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7. For this thesis, I spoke with interviewees 1, 2, and 3 again. Because of ethical restrictions, I could not re-establish contact with those interviewees still living in Saudi Arabia, namely interviewees 6 and 7, when carrying out this research. All the other interviewees are living outside Saudi Arabia. Interviewees 1, 2, and 3 have given their consent to use the information collected during the LAC research for this research. As such their data is merged. Interviewees 4 and 5 were specifically interviewed for the purpose of this thesis research.

I employed a snowballing technique to establish contact with the interviewees. From one contact I got the contact details of another contact and so on. It is important to note that I only spoke with interviewees who were willing to talk to me. Some of them have a history of expressing their views and are known for their critical stance against the Saudi government. This thesis does not claim that these seven interviewees fully reflect Saudi civil society. Finally, expressing your views in Saudi Arabia, even for those living in exile, is not without danger. The interviewees themselves are best aware of the dangers they face and able to analyse the risks. To contribute to their personal safety all data was anonymised, and no references are made to names or gender.

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[2] The LeidenAsiaCentre has given their full permission for me to use the research I did on their behalf for my Master thesis. For this research I did not receive any ECTS. This enables me to use parts of the research for my thesis. For more information about the research project see: Lammertink, Jonas, de Roij, Marit and Emilie de Haes. 2018. *Partners under pressure: the future of civil society in Dutch human rights policy*. Leiden: Leiden Asia Centre. http://leidenasiacentre.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Partners-under-pressure.pdf

Chapter 1: Conceptual Analysis

Concepts in International Relations theory can be complex, narrow and open at the same time. Civil society is one such concept that cannot be given a definite meaning and therefore is hard to grasp. This concept analysis aims to advance understanding of the concept 'civil society', the concept's alleged functions and how these functions play out in practice. Throughout the analysis, the political critical approach to concept analysis is used. This approach focuses on the performance of a concept and the discourse of which it is a part. It also reflects on the use of concepts and the consequences of certain conceptual definitions (Berenskoetter 2017, 167-170). This analysis is structured in a chronological way and outlines the use of the concept 'civil society's over time. As such, it describes the way in which the concept of civil society was initially formed and then its performance through time (Berenskoetter 2017, 167).

Apart from looking at how changing time has affected how 'civil society' is conceived, the analysis also looks at the relationship between the concept of 'civil society' and the place where it is being employed. How is 'civil society', a concept with a western origin, used in different political and cultural settings? By examining the development and deployment of the concept 'civil society' across different times and places, this analysis opens up the concept and sheds light on how the current 'dominant' understanding of civil society emerged. Three main questions guide the analysis:

1. What does civil society consist of?
2. What is the function of civil society?
3. What is the relation between society and the state?

To start, civil society is a confusing concept that can refer to anything or nothing, and has questionable assumptions and features. The literature about civil society is huge and lacks consistency, which often results in more confusion about the concept. According to Edwards, civil society can be interpreted as: a *part* of society where it constitutes associational life; a *type* of society, in which trust, non-violence and cooperation are essential values; [and] a *space* for civic action and engagement that offers room for rational dialogue and active citizenship (2004, vii-viii; 2011, 7-11). Baker adds that civil society can be interpreted as a number of *non-state institutions* or an *analytical tool* that accounts for democracy and the change of democratic strength in a region (1999, 2). The different types of civil society mentioned by Edwards and Baker are not necessarily mutual exclusive.

Besides different types of civil society, civil society can also have various relations to the state. Chambers and Kopstein outline six perspectives regarding the relation between civil

society and the state in the Oxford Handbook of Political Theory. The different kind of relations are also compatible (Chambers and Kopstein 2008, 363-381).

First, there is civil society *apart* from the state. This is civil society as a sphere where individuals can organise themselves based on shared interests and communicate about a wide variety of matters. The state does not intervene in the group's affairs and membership is voluntarily (Chambers and Kopstein 2009, 364-367).

Second, there is civil society *against* the state. In this form, civil society is a separate sphere that interacts with and opposes the state (Chambers and Kopstein 2009, 367-369).

Third, there is civil society *in dialogue* with the state. In this role civil society is a public sphere where ideas, interests, values, and ideologies are formed and presented to the state. In this sphere social movements are activities that demand action from the state on certain issues and keeps the state accountable (Chambers and Kopstein 2009, 369-371).

Fourth, there is civil society *in support of* the state. In this case, civil society has a kind of love/hate dynamic with the state. On the one hand, it supports the state; on the other hand, it forms an opposition against the state (Chambers and Kopstein 2009, 371-373).

Fifth, there is civil society *in partnership with* the state where civil society steps in when the state is unable to deliver all public goods. As such civil society supports the state and makes it stronger (Chambers and Kopstein 2009, 374-375).

Sixth, there is civil society *beyond* the state. Chambers and Kopstein refer to global CSOs that deal with problems that do not stop at state borders such as climate change and global diseases. Through the Internet activists can stay in touch with each other and a global network is formed (2009, 376-378).

The next paragraphs focus on civil society's form, function and relation with the state in different periods and places. The first section is structured in a chronological way and starts with the classical era. The second part elaborates on civil society in non-western, non-democratic societies.

Classical Era

At this time civil society described the nature of good society and characterized the *type* of society. Civil society formed a guideline explaining how citizen's should adapt their individual autonomy to fit with collective aspirations and assure a peaceful society (Edwards 2004, 6). As such civil society referred to the elements required for good citizenship. In ancient Greek city states, white male inhabitants were given the possibility to share in the tasks of ruling and being ruled. Furthermore, civil society consisted of the few citizens qualified to participate in the

decision-making process. Civil society was seen as a space for civic engagement. Civil society was made possible by the state and therefore the state and society were seen as indistinguishable (Edwards 2004, 6).

From the Enlightenment to 1989

During the Enlightenment period, ideas about civil society changed. Civil society became voluntary associations of civilians who proclaimed the newly discovered individual rights and freedoms of the Enlightenment era (Edwards 2004, 7; Hann 1996, 3-5). In this period, thinkers like Adam Ferguson aimed to unite basic collective solidarity and rising individualism. Civil society became a model for how individuals, in this individualistic era, could engage in social interaction while maintaining values such as trust and sociability (Hann 1996, 4). Others such as the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Hegel and French political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville, put less focus on interactions within society, but elaborated on relations between society and state. Civil society was believed to balance the state and prevent the state from gaining too much influence over society (Lewis 2001, 1-2).

This liberal interpretation of civil society, as a form of defence against anti-democratic forces, led the debates (Hann 1996, 5). With this conceptualization, civil society prevented domination by one single group and acted as a barrier against intrusions of the state. At that time, state power was perceived with more suspicion and these concerns were articulated in this new role for civil society (Edwards 2004, 7). Apart from being a form of defence, civil society also became a tool to improve democracy by transmitting demands and articulating the interests of sectors within society, helping to move the political environment towards democracy (White 1994, 384). Civil society became a site for democratic participation and therefore an essential part of democratic society.

In this period, civil society came to be seen as something that did not necessarily support the state but functioned as a separate sphere that could operate apart from the state, was in a dialogue with the state, or sometimes was opposed to it.

Post 1989: the Beginning of the Transition Paradigm

Following the rich history of civil society, it is only since 1989 that the concept has come to be seen as a universal concept and gained international attention. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the communist era can be seen as a turning point (Keane 1998; Edwards 2004, 2; Lewis 2001, 1-4). Liberal democracy seemed the ultimate solution and civil society was

considered to be the cornerstone of democracy and good governance (Edwards 2011, 4). Furthermore, the end of the communist era left people disillusioned with economic models of the past and yearning towards a community offering security. At the time, people were also seeking alternative means of civic participation. Voluntarily organisations seemed a good remedy and, after 1989, the number of NGOs around the globe increased rapidly. Civil society was coined "the best way forward for politics in the post-Cold War world" and the "single most viable alternative to the authoritarian state and the tyrannical market" (Edwards 2004, 2). Civil society became a type of society characterized by liberal democratic norms that should become the model for countries around the globe which had not yet become democratic. Besides conceiving of civil society as a *goal*, civil society also was perceived an *instrument* to achieve this goal. Successful examples in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil and Chile) and Eastern Europe (Poland) where CSOs such as churches, trade unions and human rights groups led the democratic transition, supported the idea that strong civil society could foster political change and overthrow authoritarian regimes (Aarts and Cavatorta 2013, 5; Al-Sayyid 2013, 210; Baker 1999, 3).

This transformative power of civil society, to mobilize and foster democratic change, was recognized in the policy-making community. The US and Europe (also referred to as western states or western democracies) drafted foreign policy plans in line with this assumption. For instance, between 1991 and 2001, the majority of US democracy-building aid for the Middle East, went to projects labelled as "civil society strengthening". The money was specifically dedicated to pro-democracy organisations (Hawthorne 2004, 15). Empowering the people to 'push out' dictators became an important instrument in the democracy-promotion toolkit of western states. For example, Kubba claimed that strengthening CSOs would lead the Arabs to "the promised land of democratization" (2000, 84-90; Aarts and Cavatorta 2013, 5).

The transitology school assumed there was a linear path from authoritarianism towards democratic rule and attributed great significance to the role of civic activism in helping countries to move along this path (Aarts and Cavatorta 2013, 3-5). Those believing in the "people power model" assumed that citizens who embraced democratic values bound together to fight authoritarian rule (Hawthrone 2004, 5). Civil society was expected to have certain functions that allowed it to play a role in developing democracy. Diamond (2004) outlines several of the functions that civil society carries out in the development of democracy. According to him, civil society can limit and control the power of the state by raising public awareness about power abuse and demanding access to government documents. Civil society also has an educational function. It teaches people about their rights and promotes political

participation. Additionally, civil society establish dialogue between the government and groups representing people's values and interests. As such civil society can generate ideas which are different from those presented by the state.

The End of the Transition Paradigm?

Nowadays, the world continues to be made up of a range of different types of states, not only containing liberal democracies. In 2002, Carothers described how the transition paradigm had ended and some countries had become stuck on their way towards democracy (2002, 9-10). This meant that many called into question the transformative capacity of civil society. In most Arab countries for example, the growth of CSOs has not brought about democratic change (Kienle 2011, 147). It has been asked whether the transitology school was too optimistic about the power of civil society which resulted in the false assumption that civil society is always an agent of democratization (Al-Sayyid 2013, 211; Baker 1999, 3).

After the Arab Spring, there was another upheaval of CSOs aiming for political change. Most of these groups received the support of western donors. However, they turned out to be unsuccessful in achieving democratic transition (Cherif, 2018, 16). Illustrating the post-2011 situation in the Middle East, Ottaway describes how "the presidents have left, the regimes are still here" (Ottaway 2011). Explaining similar phenomena in the region, Hawthorne argues that it is a myth to believe that "civil society consists of latent democratic forces simply awaiting activation by western donors" (Hawthorne 2004, 19). Al-Sayyid argues that 'success cases', such as the way civil society helped bring democratization in Poland, were exceptional. He argues that civil society was able to push for democracy in these instances because in the 1980s these regimes were vulnerable and lacked the strength to oppose civil activism (Al-Sayyid 2013, 210-211). Those observing the lack of transitional power of civil society also questioned the extent to which it functions in the absence of official institutions and legal frameworks that support democracy (Baker 1999, 3; Skapska 1997, 158).

During recent decades civil society has mostly been viewed as consisting of voluntarily associations that could limit the power of the state and hold them accountable. Furthermore, CSOs were seen as having the ability to educate people about their rights and generate ideas, conveying ideas from society to the state. After 1989, a radical capability was added to civil society's toolkit. This radical or transformative function implied that civil society could change states into liberal democracies Additionally, it was generally expected that civil society in non-western, authoritarian states would function in the same way as it did in western societies. It was presumed that in these authoritarian regimes, civil society could function as the key to

unlock democracy. This assumption, that civil society was the "democratic ingredient" (Cavatorta 2010, 218) which would liberate people from authoritarianism, proved false. The transformative power of civil society was overestimated.

Civil Society in Non-Western Authoritarian States

The vast majority of civil society studies are based on empirical studies of civil society in liberal democracies (Stigum Gleiss and Sæther 2017, 8). There is a lack of studies focusing on civil society in non-western states. An explanation for this could be that people assume that authoritarian states, without a pluralist political culture, cannot host civil society (Baker 1999, 7). Civil society is seen as being incompatible with authoritarianism. Others see civil society as a specific result of the nation-state and capitalism. They therefore reject the belief that civil society is a universal expression of collective civil action (Edwards 2004, 3). Those studies that did research non-western civil society argue differently. They believe that civil society in authoritarian states does exist, albeit in a different form. Heydemann, for example, argues that Arab states have upgraded their authoritarian rule by allowing some forms of civil society (2007, 1-3).

The most important characteristic of civil society in western society is that it is a part of society that is *separate* from the state. In non-western authoritarian states, civil society does not necessarily operate separate from the state. In these authoritarian states, civil society is co-opted by the state which has sufficient capacity to regulate these organisations (Kienle 2011, 155) According to Lewis (2013, 328-329) there are three reasons for this: first, in authoritarian states the majority of CSOs share the dynamics of the host state, including its authoritarian structure and also its corruption. They therefore adopt the undemocratic features of the state instead of challenging it. Second, CSOs can only survive as long as they carry out activities complementary to those of the state. Consequently, civil society strengthens instead of weakens the state by partly taking over its responsibilities. The state is regarded as a source of resources to achieve certain goals and considered to be an ally, not an opponent. Third, these states are known for their fierce repression of groups that develop discursive activities and/or make democratic claims. According to Spires, CSOs in authoritarian states can only survive as long as they do not make any democratic claims (2011, 36).

Following the above, a distinction can be made between two kinds of civil society in non-western states. The first are organisations that work with the government. The second kind, which form a much smaller portion of civil society, are those organisations carrying out activities that are not in line with government policy. Some label this distinction as one between

political and non-political civil society (Al Sayyid 2013, 212). On the contrary, this research uses a distinction in which civil society's relation to the state, and not its function is leading, as it does not necessarily agree that separate civil society is only that which is engaged in political issues. The definitions formulated are 'controlled' or 'state-sponsored' and 'separate' civil society.

Controlled or State-Sponsored Civil Society

Controlled civil society consists of groups that carry out activities that do not question the legitimacy of the state. In authoritarian states, organizations are established that do not operate independently from the state and not fulfil political functions, but that do call themselves civil society. These Government Organized Non-Governmental Organisations (GONGO's) are often presented by the government as being a civil society in order to increase the domestic and international legitimacy of authoritarian regimes (Lewis 2013, 328-329; Heydemann 2007, 8-9). Service providing organisations offer educational assistance, job training, loans and community development, and sometimes substitute government services. Other organisations that are part of this controlled civil society are entrepreneurial organisations that care more about things other than establishing democracy and accommodate themselves to the authoritarian structures (Al-Sayyid 2013, 211-212). Charity organisations are also part of controlled civil society. These range from professional organized groups to neighbourhood communities providing aid. It is not possible to define exactly what functions controlled CSOs are allowed to carry out and what activities are forbidden. This is left to the discretion of the government in a particular state to determine.

Separate Civil Society

Separate civil society consists of organisations promoting human, civil, and political rights (Kienle 2011, 147; Kanie 2012, 52; Lewis 2013, 332). These groups often face repression as they present a counter discourse instead of enhancing the legitimacy of the state. A such they 'threaten' the regime. The regime often dedicates a lot of resources to controlling the discourse and silencing alternative political voices. As repression is very likely, these separate CSOs are often marginalized and lack mobilization power. Social media has recently emerged as an effective tool for the expression of social, cultural, and political protest. During the last decade, a large part of separate civil society has established itself online. Al-Sayyid refers to these groups as "groups out of control" as they can escape government dominance. He states how

"the new media [has] offered young people several ways to escape their governments' hold over the minds of their fellow citizens" (2013, 218). Whilst social media offers a platform to express critical voices, it also enables the government to spread its discourse.

The Radical Role of Civil Society

To conclude this conceptual analysis, CSOs work under a label [civil society] that has its origin in European intellectual debate and has become a reference point for political change. Consequently, CSOs in non-western authoritarian states, especially the organisations working separate from the government, are expected to act in a certain way: form a critical counterbalance to the government and aim for a democratic form of rule. There is a tendency of western democracies to pinpoint these groups as 'change agents'. However, existing studies do not take the activists perspective into account. Is this group of separate activists indeed aiming for political change? The next section of this thesis research aims to answer this question with a case study of civil society in Saudi Arabia. It describes how activists in the country work under the label 'civil society' which makes them both foreign agents and/or agents of change.

Chapter 2: Civil Society in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is primarily known for three things: oil, its strict form of Islam, and an authoritarian and illiberal political culture. The country possess 16 percent of the world's proven petroleum reserves, which makes it the second biggest oil producer in the world. Domestically the oil wealth 'modernized' the country in only a few decades. Internationally, it led to strong relations with other countries, who depend on Saudi oil (Boer 2005, 11-13).

The rise of capitalism was not accompanied by social and political transformations. As a result of an eighteenth-century alliance between the first Al-Saud king, Muhammad bin Saud and the Muslim leader Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, Wahhabism was adopted. Wahhabism is a form of Salafism that advocates the return to those practices existing within the Muslim community at the time of the Prophet Mohammed. This translates into a conservative society which opposes reforms and in which strict gender segregation rules are applied (Meijer and Aarts 2012, 4-5). Since its establishment in 1932, Saudi Arabia has been a monarchical autocracy without a constitution, political parties, and protected unions. Saudi citizens can only influence the decision-making process through the Shura council (*Majlis al-Shura*) which contains government appointed members that fulfil an advisory role (Montagu 2015, 3). Consequently, political participation is almost non-existent, and the Al-Saud have a monopoly on decision-making (Meijer and Aarts 2012, 8).

Revenues from oil and gas enable the Saudi authorities to govern without relying on taxes. This grants them a high level of independence. The government uses its oil money to provide a high living standard for the indigenous Saudi population, conciliate social uprisings and a public that otherwise would demand greater representation. This is also called the "rentier effect" (Ross, 2001, 332-335). For instance, whilst in several Arab countries political dissatisfaction led to the Arab Spring, the Saudi government gave an enormous amount of money to the people to prevent unrest from escalating (Utvik 2016, 3).

Socio-Economic Problems

Serious challenges faced by the Saudi government are a fast-growing population, a high unemployment rate, and an economy that is almost fully dependent on oil (Roelants and Aarts, 2016; Gregory Cause 2015, 13). The unemployment rate, especially among young Saudis, is very high. This high unemployment rate is caused by a rapid population growth, the lack of proper education and inadequate training of the national workforce, and the unwillingness of many Saudis to work in the private sector, a phenomenon known as the *Mudir Syndrome*

(Champion 2003, 200). Another worrisome development was the decline in the global oil price in 2014, which has had a big impact on the Saudi welfare system. The petroleum sector accounts for 42 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and 87 per cent of its budget revenue (Forbes 2017). A decline or stagnating oil price affects government provided subsidies such as those for water and electricity (Roelants and Aarts 2016).

Attempts have been made to restructure the economy and reduce the unemployment rate. Since June 2017, Mohammed bin Salman is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. He has been attempting to make the private sector the engine of the economy, diversify the Saudi economy and encourage the national population to take on jobs in the private sector (Elliott House 2017, 20). These plans are outlined in Saudi Arabia's economic diversification plan, Vision 2030 (Vision 2030 2016).

Phases of Reform and Repression

In Saudi Arabia there always has been a high level of restriction on civil society. The more the state opens up to civil society, the harder it becomes to sustain its autocracy. Saudi Arabia has witnessed a few periods where society was allowed to make political demands, but these were often followed by fierce repressions. Public criticism usually arises when the authorities appear unable to solve problems faced by many Saudis (Aarts 2011, 30-31). Next section covers 'waves' of reform that have taken place since the 1990s, focusing specifically on the post-2014 period.

1991-2014

The first wave of reform (and repression) took place in the aftermath of the Gulf War (1990-1991). University academics, lawyers, businessmen and religious scholars wrote a "Letter of Demands" to the state in which they requested political reforms in the country. The texts were a mixture of Islamic and liberal criticism and called for more freedom of expression, the end of corruption, and the establishment of a consultative council. The government responded with some political reforms such as the implementation of the Basic Law in 1992 and the establishment of the Shura council in 1993 (Aarts 2011, 32). Alongside these reforms, the government also responded with a "comprehensive campaign of mass arrests" against the reformists who had demanded change (IHRC 2011, 4).

After 9/11, and the fact that fifteen of the nineteen hijackers directly responsible were Saudi citizens, international pressure on Saudi Arabia increased. Foreign governments,

especially the US administration, took a fierce stance against the political culture of Saudi Arabia which they described as a "breeding ground for terrorism" (Aarts 2011, 33). A wide variety of activists, including Islamists, Shias and liberals, saw this as a window of opportunity to call for social, political, and educational changes. After 2001 there was a period of 'opening up': the power of the Shura council was extended, two human rights organisations were established, and municipal elections were held in early 2005 (Aarts 2011, 33).

In 2003, Saudi Arabia faced its own version of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when a series of attacks were committed by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The government responded with a counterterrorism operation which also eliminated peaceful opposition to the government, in effect ending the reformist atmosphere that had developed (IHRC 2011, 5-6; Meijer and Aarts 2012, 6).

A third wave of reforms took place in 2009 when King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz appointed a number of progressive ministers and judges. Furthermore, a woman was appointed to the position of Deputy Education Minister. However, at the same time the municipal elections were postponed for two years and the situation for women, despite frequent demands for reform, remained the same (Aarts 2011, 34-35).

Post-Arab Spring

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the Saudi government again hardened its stance towards activists and effectively suppressed dissident voices. A statement by Al-Rasheed illustrates this well: "Fearing a domino effect from the Arab uprisings in 2011, the Saudi regime adopted multiple strategies to stifle dissent in the Kingdom" (Al-Rasheed 2016). In February 2014, the Saudi government issued a new counterterrorism law as a response to Saudi citizens engaging in terrorist activities. Terrorism was defined as any act deemed to "insult the reputation of the state," "harm public order," or "shake the security of society" (HRW 2014). Under this law, the promotion of human rights is also regarded as a terrorist activity as it is believed to harm public order. Consequently, the Anti-Terrorism Law is mainly used to prosecute human rights defenders and suppress all forms of political opposition (Azoulay 2014). From 2014 onwards, the Saudi government has prosecuted almost all activists in Saudi Arabia's terrorism tribunal using a specialised criminal court (HRW 2016). According to an activist from Saudi Arabia, the government, afraid of a revolution on its own soil, uses the law to prevent activists from organizing protests. In this way, it avoids a second Arab Spring (Interview 2). Another activist argues that the Saudi government uses 'legit' actions against corruption and terrorism to attack human right defenders (Interview 1).

Bin Salman's Rise

After the death of King Abdullah in 2015, his brother Salman bin Abdulaziz became king. Shortly after this, King Salman assigned some important positions to his son Mohammed bin Salman. Mohammed bin Salman was made Minister of Defence, Minister of State, and Chairman of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs. With these portfolios Mohammed bin Salman had broad powers over the economy and foreign affairs. In June 2017, his father named him Crown Prince and broke with the traditional line of succession. The younger generation was enthusiastic about the appointment of Mohammed bin Salman as they hoped he would reform Saudi society, modernize its economy and fight the high youth unemployment. Others have criticized Mohammed bin Salman who as Minister of Defence, played an important role in the start of the Yemeni war in 2015. This war has currently become the world's worst humanitarian crisis (Nikbakht and McKenzie 2018). Furthermore, in June 2017 Saudi Arabia, together with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, and Bahrain, ended all diplomatic and economic relations with the neighbouring country of Qatar. Additionally, in November 2017, Mohammed bin Salman shocked the world by arresting several important businessmen, four ministers and eleven princes in an anti-corruption operation. Amongst these was the billionaire Al-Waleed bin Talal, who is regarded by many as a reformer. As such one can question the 'real' intentions behind Mohammed bin Salman's actions. The anti-corruption operation, the fierce blockade on Qatar, and the ruthless war in Yemen show an impulsive, assertive, and aggressive Mohammed bin Salman, who takes anyone out who stands in his way (Daragahi 2017).

Mohammed bin Salman hates to be criticized and does not allow anyone to raise questions or concerns about his plans. This hard stance against critical voices also affects civil society (Observatory 2018, 4; Interview 7). Some of the interviewees argue that under Mohammed bin Salman people are even more afraid to be active in unsanctioned activities (Interview 1-3). One interviewee stated that "MbS is the worst dictator" (Interview 1). This wave of repression is possibly even more 'dangerous' than before because Mohammed bin Salman's reformist ideas mask his reprisals. For example, Mohammed bin Salman has spoken openly about his Vision 2030 with key media outlets in the western world. In this way the Crown Prince presents himself as a promising ally who brings forth modernization and fights Islamism (Interview 3).

Influencing the discourse about the country has become an important tool for Saudi authorities to counterbalance critical voices and portray itself as an agent of modernization and reform (Interview 3). An example is the ban on women driving that was lifted in June 2018.

This reform measure is presented as an example of the mercifulness of the Salmans. However, it is rarely mentioned that as long as the guardianship system (*mahram*) stays in place, women are only allowed to drive if allowed to do so by their male guardian. As stated by one interviewee, there is a clear lack of "real change" (Interview 7).

NGO Law

Another example of an ambiguous policy is the NGO Law issued in 2015. The law came into effect in 2016 (Observatory 2018, 22). For a long time, Saudi Arabia citizens had awaited a law that would specify the role and rights of civil society, the right of freedom of expression, and the freedom of association (ICNL 2017, 1-6). Until the law's arrival in 2016, the only reference to human rights was in Article 26 of the Basic Law. This said that "the state shall protect human rights in accordance with Islamic Sharia" (ICNL 2017, 5). With the NGO law, a legal framework for the organisation, operation, and supervision of associations and foundations in Saudi Arabia was established, which until then was forbidden (ICNL 2017). Initially, people were enthusiastic about the law, which would mean organisations were regulated and would allow CSOs to operate legally. Nevertheless, many wonder if this law really marks a step forward (Interview 1) and some believe the situation was better before the law was implemented (Interviews 6 and 7).

The legislation characteristics are in line with many civil society laws implemented worldwide. Several concerns about the NGO law which have been frequently expressed regard the broad concepts used in the law, the limited activities CSOs are allowed to carry out, the far-reaching involvement of the government, a long bureaucratic application process, and the restrictions on cooperation with foreign actors (De Haes 2018, 14-16).

Many human rights defenders remain imprisoned for activities that are deemed permissible under the new NGO law. The law did not correct the cases of those already sentenced for establishing organisations without permission (Interview 3). For instance, Mohammad Al-Qahtani and other founders of Saudi Arabian Civil and Political Rights Association (ACRPA), a human rights organisation, remain imprisoned. Furthermore, the law does not allow activists to start an organisation that focuses on human rights or other activities that are deemed politically 'incorrect'. Many interviewees have stated that organisations that address issues that are not in Vision 2030 are turned down (Interviews 1, 2, 6, and 7). According to one interviewee, establishing an organisation that focuses on human rights is "absolutely unthinkable" (Interview 6). Another interviewee stated that "if you do establish an organisation without permission, you risk jail time and sometimes even your life" (Interview 4).

Various motives are given to clarify why the Saudi government implemented the NGO law. Some point to pressure from the international community which had demanded the authorities to draft a law allowing CSOs to register (Interviews 2 and 3). The current socio-economic situation is also cited as motivation for the law. A stronger civil society could take on those welfare tasks that the government might not be able to fulfil in the future (Interview 3). Finally, it has been argued that the NGO Law was implemented to give the impression that there are liberal reforms occurring in the country. In this way, Saudi Arabia may be "upgrading authoritarianism" by talking in democratic language (Heydemann 2007, 1-3). As such the NGO law can be interpreted as a formality that is being taken in order to meet international standards (Interview 3).

Since the law does not allow CSOs to operate separate from the government, it is seen as a "cosmetic change" and part of the 'PR show' of Mohammed bin Salman (Interviews 4 and 7). One activist argues that if Mohammed bin Salman is sincere in his reforms he will give the people the right to express their views, the right to assemble, the right to move, and the right to self-determine things through an elected parliament (Interview 4)[3].

The State of Saudi Civil Society

Due to the enormous power that the Saudi government has over society, organisations operating independently from the government or market are rare. A large proportion of the CSOs work under the wing of the government and can be regarded as an extension of the state. Restrictions and fierce repression mean the proportion of civil society separate from the state is small and marginalized. Consequently, many scholars have questioned the existence of civil society in Saudi Arabia (Thompson 2017, 842). However, a broader definition of civil society might also be adopted. This definition takes civil society to include a wider range of associations and networks, such as charities and those organisations providing social services. If this definition is adopted, then a different image of civil society emerges. This is the image that is argued for by Montagu. She claims that "the domestic voluntary sector in Saudi Arabia is broad and deep" (2015, 6).

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[3] For more extensive research into the NGO Law and its impact on civil society in Saudi Arabia see: De Haes, Emilie. 2018. **"**Civil society cooperation in Saudi Arabia."

Controlled or State-Supported Civil Society

The biggest part of Saudi civil society consists of charities (Kanie 2012, 44). *Zakat* or charitable giving is an important pillar of Islam (Montagu 2015, 26). In recent years the charitable sector has increased enormously, growing from 200 organisations in 2008 to 950 in 2015 (Montagu 2015, 17). These charities provide services such as education, housing, and health and disability provision (Kanie 2012, 44; Montagu 2010, 74). They are either licensed by the Ministry of Social Affairs or established by Royal Decree and are not allowed to operate outside of the scope of their pre-defined tasks (Montagu 2010, 78). Most charities are connected to elites within Saudi society who often use these organisations to gain prestige. These charities are usually named after the members of these families (Kanie 2012, 44; Interview 1).

A second form of organisation falling under this broader definition of civil society is the business community. This provides financial support to groups in need and focuses on the (economic) empowerment of society. This sort of cooperation is referred to as "corporate social responsibility" (Kanie 2012, 45).

A third form of CSOs are specialized or professional organisations operating under governmental entities. Al-Dosari a Saudi human rights activist and writer mentions patients' service-oriented CSOs licensed by the Saudi Commission for Health as an example of these kind of organisations (Al-Dosari 2015). Also, orphan care groups and groups helping poor people are part of this third category. These organisations are presented as civil society by the Saudi government (Interview 3).

A fourth type of CSOs are the NGOs that have been established by the government, which are also known as GONGOs. An example of a human rights organisation directly related to the government is the National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) an organisation which was created in 2004 (Kanie 2012, 52). The NSHR presents itself as being independent, but human rights defenders question its independence and 'real' commitment to human rights. Many suggest the organisation is there to divert attention away from 'real' and 'independent' activists in the country (Observatory 2018, 23; Interview 2). According to one human rights activist, Saudi Arabia showcases the NSHR as an organisation separate from the state, but this is not the case. The NSHR was founded, is supported by, and works under, the government (Interview 2). Generally, the NSHR follows government policy and avoids issuing critical statements about cases of human rights violation. For example, the NSHR supported rather than condemned the execution of 47 people for terrorism, including the prominent Shia cleric Sheikj Nimr Al-Nimr, in January 2016 (NSHR 2016).

In sum, controlled civil society makes up an enormous part of civil society in Saudi Arabia. The line between these CSOs and the state is often blurred or even non-existent.

Separate Civil Society

The second kind of civil society actors in Saudi Arabia comes closer to what is known as civil society in a western context, forming a sphere independent from the state. In Saudi Arabia, people have no influence on the political decision-making process, apart from through the Shura council which fulfils an advisory role. Reprisals against citizens demanding political and social rights are high. An example is the Saudi Arabian blogger Raif Badawi who was arrested in 2012. As punishment for starting an online forum for public debate, he received 1,000 lashes and was sentenced to 10 years in prison followed by a 10-year travel ban (Amnesty International 2017). Because they face such severe repression, only a small group of people continues to openly call for political reforms.

The Saudi activists belonging to this second group of separate civil society mainly focus on human rights and women's rights (Kanie 2012, 52; Interviews 1-7). Human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia are involved in activities such as documenting violations of human rights, combating impunity, and offering legal support to fellow human rights defenders. Others oppose discrimination against religious minorities, including the Shia Muslim minority. Furthermore, activists demand rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and women rights (Interviews 1, 2, 4, and 5). Many women's rights defenders demand the end of the male guardianship system which makes them second class citizens. The government sees human rights as a form of criticism and people demanding these rights face repression (Interview 1). However, these individuals focusing on rights are in no position to establish substantive political change and their impact is limited (Kanie 2012, 54; Interview 2). An example of a Saudi organization demanding political rights was ACPRA founded in 2009 (Al-Rasheed 2015, 55). The members of ACPRA asked for political reforms and documented human rights violations committed by the Saudi government (ADHRB and BIRD 2016, 29). ACPRA received support from the conservative Islamist camp in the country which made them a serious threat to the monarchy (Azoulay 2014, 4). By 2016 almost all the founders of ACPRA had been imprisoned (HRW 2017). Another example are the eleven people connected to the Saudi women's rights movement, who were arrested in May 2018 for opposing the guardianship system and collaborating with foreign entities. According to local media reports these activists face sentences of up to 20 years imprisonment (Haynes 2018).

Fierce repression of activists has created a "culture of fear" and people are afraid to start unsanctioned activities (Interviews 5 and 7). A form of civil society that is still very active has established itself online (Interview 6). Social media, especially Twitter, is very popular in Saudi Arabia and the country has the highest percentage of Internet users active on Twitter worldwide. Thompson describes the popularity of Twitter in Saudi Arabia by stating that: "Everyone from King Salman down has an account" (2017, 842). Activists use social media to publicise cases of human rights violations (MFA 2013, 15). For instance, a Twitter protest under the hashtag *#thisiswhywedefendrights* went viral within 48 hours and received a lot of support among Saudi Twitter users[4]. Private messaging applications give people the chance to connect and communicate with each other without the restrictions that they face when meeting physically. Online, people can share ideas and organize activism (Al-Sayyid 2013, 218). Most people use anonymous accounts as they do not feel safe taking part in online activism under their own names (Interviews 2, 3, and 4). As stated by one Saudi activist: There is no legal umbrella that protects us, so we put ourselves, as individuals, at great risk every time we go public" (Interview 6). Besides human rights defenders, social media is also used by government loyalists, religious clerics, and prominent intellectuals, who therefore also influence the discourse on different topics (Thompson 2018, 301).

The 'political impact' of social media is hard to determine, but it appears to provide a space where Saudi citizens can express their opinions and get alternative information from that provided by the government (Thompson 2018, 301; Al-Sayyid 2013, 218). According to one activist: "A lot of people in Saudi Arabia consider Twitter the only parliament". It is a platform where they can present their views, something they cannot do in 'real life' (Interview 4).

A final group of activists that critically opposes the Saudi government are those living in exile. Some of them have established organisations with which they monitor human rights violations and showcase these violations to make sure the international community is aware of what is happening in Saudi Arabia. Living in exile in Europe or the US, gives them the opportunity to express their critique and tell the stories of those peaceful dissidents silenced by the Saudi government without risking being arrested. Nonetheless, as a result of their activism abroad these individuals in exile cannot return to Saudi Arabia without facing long prison sentences. For this study I interviewed several of these overseas activists in order to gain insight into whether Saudi activists are influenced by the civil society label.

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[4] The original hashtag in Arabic was #لهذا_ندافع_عن_الحقوق

<u>Coping with the Tension? Being Saudi Civil Society</u>

Most civil society activists spoken to for this research consider civil society to be organisations that operate separate from the government (Interviews 1-4). This includes NGOs, human rights organisation, independent charities, independent media, and trade unions (Interview 1). Additionally, civil society is referred to as a sphere where people can express their opinion without facing harassment (Interview 2), organize themselves (Interview 4), lobby for their community, demand certain rights (Interview 3), participate in their society, and critical reflect on the work of the government (Interview 5). All the interviewees said they believed that at the moment civil society in Saudi Arabia is virtually non-existent. Some argued that civil society groups are completely supressed by the government and there is no room for real civil society (Interviews 1-5). According to one interviewee: "In Saudi Arabia the people do not have a voice, they cannot participate, contribute, criticize, or build a society" (Interview 5). When asked about CSOs supported by the state, the interviewees responded with scepticism. According to one: "There is no such thing as civil society co-opted by the state, this is just an entity that gives the oppression credibility" (Interview 4).

One of the very few means to express your independent voice is online (Interviews 2-4). On the Internet people have demanded that the government provides greater gender equality, that it provides sufficient jobs and housing, and that it releases people imprisoned. According to one person interviewed, the Internet has enabled the people to become the leader of their own change, instead of waiting on the government to organize things. For instance, a Saudi citizen started an online forum where community leaders could give their opinion on various social issues. Certain initiatives are not necessarily sanctioned by the state. The Internet therefore is one of "the only available spaces for civil society agents to work inside Saudi Arabia" (Interview 3). Furthermore, one interviewee expressed the view that civil society does not necessary consist of well organized groups. When the need arises, people do come up with their own kind of work, often without revealing their identity, but willing to help others and work towards change (Interview 3). As such civil society, even when not active in its full capacity, can find a way to support others. These people are also important resources for civil society activists in exile, allowing them to gain awareness of the situation in the country.

Apart from the diminished civil society inside the country, four out of five of the interviewees asked saw themselves as being part of Saudi civil society, in this case civil society in exile (Interviews 1-4). They continue the struggle from outside the country. People inside Saudi Arabia can follow them on social media. Some of the interviewees in exile have established human rights organisations to document abuses and aim to promote their work

inside Saudi Arabia (Interviews 1 and 2). Furthermore, most of the interviewees seek publicity and publish (online) statements to make people aware of what is 'really' happening inside Saudi Arabia. Due to their work, even when being severely repressed, Saudi civil society will arguably never cease to exist in some form.

Goals of their Activism

When asked about their goals, the interviewees made a distinction between long term and short term goals. A long term goal for example to bring in a representative government in Saudi Arabia. A short term goal might be to reduce government violence. Many of those interviewed believed that any change that improves people's quality of the life, no matter how small, is important. The goals of these activists can be grouped in three categories:

First, in the long term, many interviewees said they aimed to bring a representative political system to Saudi Arabia. At the moment, the government chooses who represents the people. Some activists demand elections and a government in which the people are politically represented (Interviews 3 and 4). When asked if they aimed for a system resembling western democracy, one interviewee said there was no perfect example of a democratic system. This interviewee argued that every society should create their own democracy, one suite to the country's values and principles (Interview 5). All the interviewees believed that values like human rights and democracy were universal, and the only reason that the government and the religious establishment refer to them as 'western' values was to stop Saudi citizens demanding them.

A second goal which was mentioned was to educate Saudi citizens about various things. One interviewee stressed the importance of the universal values of freedom, equality, and justice (Interview 4). Another wanted to educate Saudi people about their rights as citizens and make them aware that living without political representation and rights is not normal. According to this interviewee, civil society is for everyone and the Saudi people need to become aware of this (Interview 5). This interviewee described how many Saudis think that values like freedom of speech are not applicable to their society, because this is what the government tells them. Therefore, it is important to create awareness of values and rights before a society can change (Interview 2). In the long term, education might change the prevailing cultural mindset. One interviewee described how, even since Saudi Arabia was first established, the people have been fully dependent on the government to give them everything. People's salaries, education, and health care are all provided by the government. This, the interviewee said, has made Saudi

Arabia a culture of followers. To change this, it is important to educate the citizens and enable them to take things into their own hands (Interview 5).

Third, almost all interviewees said they wanted to provide a different narrative from the one presented by the government. The state media is very powerful in influencing the people. Civil society in exile aims to protect Saudi society from being misled by the state (Interviews 2 and 3). Two of the interviewees have started a human rights organisation to tell the people inside Saudi Arabia a different story from the one the government is telling (Interviews 1 and 2). Another activist said they aimed to "protect the Saudi community from being brainwashed by the government" (Interview 3). For example, the women activists arrested in May 2018, including Al-Hathloul, Al-Yousef, and Al-Nafjan, where labelled as traitors because they had been in touch with foreign entities. Many of those interviewed considered it important to tell the story of what these women wanted to achieve and provide a different picture. By presenting a counter narrative, these activists aim to make the people aware of what is 'really' happening (Interviews 1, 2, and 5). As such, activists in exile can start a discussion inside the country (Interview 1). Activists also aim to convince the international community of the worsened situation inside the country. They hope outside pressure can contribute to a decrease in the government's violations.

Delegitimization by the State

The activists in exile are seen as a threat because they tell the truth about what is happening in the country. Activists can change the perceptions of the public towards the leadership and affect the government's reputation. The government is afraid that the people will follow the activists and start demanding rights. The activists interviewed believe that once the state grants these rights, such as freedom of speech, people will start demanding explanations for government spending and the country's foreign policy. They will criticize the lack of freedom and those things that are imposed on them, such as Wahhabism (Interviews 1-6). One interviewee described the potential impact of this on the government, arguing that "freedom of speech is completely dangerous for them" (Interview 1).

In order to delegitimize the work of activists, the authorities threaten the people by stating that change will lead to chaos. They claim that if change occurs in Saudi Arabia, the country will end up like Syria and Yemen (Interviews 1, 3, and 5). As a result, the interviewees feel that Saudi people "are held hostage under this government narrative" (Interview 3).

The Saudi government also refers to civil society actors as foreign agents. They are labelled as working for Iran, Russia, Turkey or Qatar. This is done in order to degrade their

activities and accuse them of treason. With certain statements, the government in Saudi Arabia hopes that it can limit the influence of activists and take away their credibility (Interviews 2 and 4).

Finally, as mentioned above, the government claims that human rights and democracy are western values and are incompatible with Islam. The government uses the religious establishment to make these claims. As such the government has the monopoly over all the definitions and it is hard to convince the people inside the country that the claims made by the government are false (Interview 3).

Although the Saudi government is annoyed by activists in exile because they are harder to suppress then those people living inside the country. It is an overstatement to say that the government is afraid of them, or challenged by them. The power of activists in exile is limited and as long as the government continues to determine the dominant narrative, people are held hostage under government policy.

Vision of Saudi Society on Civil Society

Another topic discussed with the interviewees was the views which Saudi society has of civil society. It was asked if the interviewees received support for the work they were doing. One interviewee validly remarked that it is hard to determine what a society thinks when there is no freedom of speech (Interview 3). However, based on the interviews, it can be argued that a division should be made between the older and younger generations in Saudi Arabia.

The older generation is more inclined to follow the government. They are most loyal to the government which moved them out of poverty and gave them jobs and stability. The younger generation is expected to respect the older generation and like them obey the government.

However, parts of the younger generation want to escape the control of both the older generation and the government and make their own decisions. To a certain extent, social media has changed the mentality of young Saudis. They are better aware of what is happening in the world and more inclined to respect the human rights language. Whilst the older generation relates activism with chaos, the young, especially the well exposed and educated, see the urgency of activism. This younger generation is affected by the bad Government policies of recent years which have caused high (youth) unemployment. They are therefore less satisfied with the government (Interview 3). Some of the interviewees said they received a lot of support from young people on social media (Interviews 1, 3, 4, and 5).

Nevertheless, in the last couple of years there has been an increasing number of restrictions on Internet use and people have become more afraid to publicly support activists (Interviews 1 and 4). According to one of the activists: "Expressing your view can be as risky as death" (Interview 4). Alongside receiving support on social media, activists have also received death threats from people who support the government (Interviews 4 and 5). Finally, the cultural norm of 'obeying your parents', combined with the fear of ending up in prison, makes the younger generation more reserved when expressing their support for activists.

Impact of Being Civil Society

In Saudi Arabia, civil society can be seen as being simultaneously: a *space* for civic action and engagement, which mostly occurs online; a *part* of society, where people support each other outside the realm of state; and a *type* of society in which values of trust, non-violence and cooperation are very important. According to the interviewees, CSOs can be active in a wide variety of activities, as long as they are separate from the state. Furthermore, civil society is not necessarily well organized. The Saudi government wants to restrain civil society separate from the state as much as they can. To delegitimize the claims made by separate civil society, the authorities give it negative connotations and label these separate CSOs and activists as being 'western', 'foreign agents' or 'traitors'. The older generation is more inclined to relate activism with chaos and disapproves of activities that go against the state and the nation. However, the younger generation sees the importance of civil society. A questions that remains is, how do civil society actors see themselves under the 'civil society' label?

As stated before four out of five people interviewed see themselves as being a part of civil society. When asked what impact the label of being part of civil society had on their legitimacy, interviewee 1 clearly stated that it only affected him in a positive way. Interviewees 2 and 4 were more hesitant, but saw also the benefits from the word and the larger human rights discourse of which it is part. Interviewee 3 argued that the term civil society has both positive and negative effects. In part, the label gave legitimacy, the name itself being an act of redefining and reclaiming the right to engage in public affairs. However, they said the term was also presented by the authorities as being one and the same of treason (Interview 3).

All the interviewees rejected the idea that they were 'western agents'. As mentioned before, they believed that the values they promoted were universal rights and not specifically western in nature. Furthermore, they all stated that they represented Saudi citizens. It can be argued that intensified repressions under Mohammed bin Salman have made many activists more sceptical about western support. For example, the western response to the executions that

have occurred has been limited. Most of the interviewees showed appreciation for the western support given by bodies such as the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, but they felt they could not rely on these organisations to achieve change.

   The majority of the interviewees considered themselves agents of change (Interviews 1-5). Interviewee 6, even though not asked about change specifically, stated that they aimed for any small change. Even though their goals sometimes differ, all activists want to bring change to Saudi Arabia. Civil society is branded as something negative by the government. However, these activists want to change Saudi society, and not create chaos. Their primary goal is to create a government that represents the people and can be held accountable for its actions. Furthermore, they want to make the people aware of their rights and create values in order to allow the people to live together peacefully. Western democracy is not necessarily the end goal, they just want to give the people the right to have a representative political system. As such, it can be argued that civil society in Saudi Arabia does aim for change. It is however a failure to only focus on the end goal of change (democracy) instead of the change process. As claimed by six interviewees, every little bit of change for the Saudi people makes a lot of difference (Interviews 1-6).

Conclusion

Saudi Arabia is changing, but at whose expense? The climate for civil society in the country, which always was hostile and narrow, has come under an increased pressure since the adoption of both counterterrorism and civil society legislation, as well as following the rise of Mohammed bin Salman to a position of power. Through conceptual analysis and interviews, this thesis sought to provide a comprehensive answer to this thesis' research question: "How do Saudi activists cope with being labelled as 'change agents' and / or 'foreign agents'?".

Following a case study of civil society in Saudi Arabia, it becomes clear that civil society can exist in every society, even when there is little or no room available. Civil society can adapt in form and function. However, it is only civil society as long as it operates separately from the state. Even though civil society's relations with the government can vary, it needs to be a separate entity. State-sponsored civil society, no matter how beautiful it might sound, is not really civil society. It is controlled by the state and just a way to justify oppression.

In Saudi Arabia, civil society has established itself online and in exile. When asked if they see themselves as western agents or change agents, civil society actors are uniform in their response. They do not see themselves as western agents because the things they aim for, such as democracy, human rights and freedom of speech, are universal rights and are not specifically western. They also feel that they represent the Saudi people and not foreign governments. The Saudi civil society actors do however perceive themselves as change agents. Change does not necessarily imply overthrowing the government, a meaning that is often expected when this term is used. Certain revolutions will only lead to chaos and are therefore undesirable. Activists aim to improve the lives of their fellow Saudi citizens who are still living in the country. They aim to bring these improvements through the creation of institutions in which citizens can participate and by teaching the Saudi citizens about values important to live together peacefully. Indeed, civil society actors fulfil their expected role as bringers of change. However, in Saudi Arabia activists are so marginalized that they have no transformative power. They are not the key that will simply 'unlock' democracy. Additionally, change is far more diversified and complex than only change of regime. It is about change of mindset, change of values, and sometimes even change of society.

Via internet, activists in exile try to make the Saudi people aware of their rights. By providing information activists aim to liberate the Saudi people who are held hostile under the government's narrative. As such they cope with being labelled as simultaneously a change agent and foreign agent. Change not necessarily equalizes chaos, the rights activists strive for are universal, and the only people they feel to represent are the Saudi people. Using the internet

as a way to escape the government narrative seems to work towards the younger people, who generally are more supportive of the activists in exile.

Limitations of this Research

This research was not easy to conduct and constrained by several limitations. First, due to ethical restrictions, it was not possible to speak with activists living in Saudi Arabia. A second limitation was that all the interviews conducted needed to be in English, as the researcher's Arabic was not sufficient to use this language. Consequently, interviews only spoke with those respondents who had a strong level of English. A third limitation was time. It takes a lot of time to establish contact with activists who are willing to speak about their work. As a researcher you cannot expect all your respondents to fully trust you from the start. It takes time to build trust. Furthermore, the interviews involved discussion of sensitive topics that were not without risks for the interviewees. The arrest of Loujain Al-Hathloul last May is a good example of how dangerous it can be for activists to speak their mind, even if they do not live in Saudi Arabia. All this resulted in a limited sample of activists.

Rigorously following, the ethical process and considering the vulnerability of the interviewees taught me, as author of this thesis a great deal.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended that fellow researchers continue studying civil society in non-western states, as this has proven a fruitful area for research. Since this study is only limited to Saudi Arabia, additional country studies are necessary to get a more complete picture of how civil society actors work in non-western authoritarian states. The foreign policies of many EU countries and of the US are based on the idea that civil society can bring change from below. The desired end goal of this change is liberal democracy. But does the receiving party (i.e. the civil society actors in different states) want to establish change? Furthermore, what are the relations between civil society and the state, as well as between civil society and wider society, in specific countries?

Moreover, it is questionable to what extent western governments are indeed committed to supporting civil society actors when their economic and security interests are at stake. This was a topic that was not covered extensively in this thesis, but could form a good starting point for further research.

Regarding Saudi Arabia specifically, further research might focus on voluntary organisations and explore to what extent democratic values are visible in organisational structures of these organisations. For example, a vote held for the new director of a soccer club might be seen as the way in which democratic values are employed in everyday practices. In this way, Saudi citizens can become familiar with democratic values in places that are not forbidden by the government. Wider research into the normative values held by members of Saudi society and how these are changing would be extremely valuable.

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Appendix 1: Protocol for Retrospective Interviews

The procedures followed during the project "Partners under Pressure: civil society in Dutch Human Rights Policy".

Student: Emilie de Haes

Student: S2092816

Date: 15.05.2018

Introduction

In preparing this retrospective ethics protocol I used the *EU Horizon 2020 ethics issue table checklist"*, "*EU Horizon 2020 Guidance*" and the "*VSNU Dutch Code for Academic Integrity"*. Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU research and innovation programme and the Horizon 2020 Guidance contains guidelines that are designed to help applicants in getting their proposal 'ethics-ready' for the Horizon 2020 funding. Throughout this protocol I will refer to the specific sections of the ethics checklist. Please consult the document "*ethics issues table checklist*" to see which checklists applied to this research. For more information see "*Horizon 2020 Guidance – the Framework programme for research an innovation*" on http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_eth ics-self-assess_en.pdf

The Research

From November 2017 until March 2018 I carried out a research project from the Leiden Asia Centre (LAC), a research centre affiliated to Leiden University. This research project consisted of three country studies in which I carried out the research into Saudi Arabia. The research involved sensitive personal data collection and processing. This document outlines the procedures followed when gaining this data, elaborates on how the data was used and reveals how the data was kept. Furthermore, it explains how the contact with the respondents was established and in what way the interviews were conducted.

　　For this research I have spoken with twelve individuals. Four interviews were conducted in person, three via Skype, two via Phone, one via Telegram and one via Signal (both Telegram and Signal are messenger applications). All the interviews were conducted on voluntarily basis and the respondents did not receive any payment or something similar in return as stated in the Horizon 2020 Guidance and ethics checklist (Horizon 2020, checklist section 2).

Vulnerability of the Respondents

Some of the respondents are in a vulnerable position, therefore this section provides details on the type of vulnerability as stated in the ethics checklist (checklist section 2). The activists spoken with are either expressing themselves in a critical way or engaged in activities that might be illegal under Saudi law. Even though most activists spoken to left the country, they might still have relatives living in Saudi Arabia, this increases their vulnerability. The vulnerability of those activists still living in the country is even bigger. For others, such as Western policy makers, revealing their identity could harm their work or the work of their successors.

Step 1 Establishing Contact:

With 10 out of 12 respondents I established contact via email. In some cases, their email address was available online. In other cases, I received their email address from or was introduced to them by other respondents. During my first email I would always introduce myself, the research project and mention what I would like to talk about. The ten respondents I emailed gave their consent for a conversation in advance in writing (checklist section 2).

Step 2 the Interview:

I would start every interview/conversation by introducing myself, the research project and elaborate on the project and the questions and topics I would like to discuss with them.

Thereafter I would ask them if they would be okay with me recording the conversation. I told them that they could, at any moment ask me to stop the recording.

Additionally, I expressed respect for their personal wellbeing and asked them to let me know if there was anything they would not like to talk about as stated in the Dutch Code for Academic Integrity section 1 point 2 (VSNU I.2).

Furthermore, I would ask them if I could mention their name in the report or if they wanted to be treated anonymously, I added that they did not had to make a decision immediately. When I was finalizing the report, I asked every respondent that had agreed on mentioning their name, again if they were okay with this.

At the end of every interview I would tell the respondent that I would send them a list with the references made to our conversation in the report.

The respondents I spoke to where professional activists in Saudi Arabia, working in this arena for a long time and very well familiar with the risks. I assumed the respondents knew the risks, but as I was personally not an expert on this field I first spoke with an expert on Saudi

civil society based in the west. This person told me about the risks that arises when conducting certain interviews, to make sure I was familiar with the effects my interview could have on the respondents and to get a better impression of their situation.

Step 3: Writing the Report

When I finalized the report, I told every respondent that I wanted to send him or her a list with all citations, mentions and references to our conversation. Some of them asked me to discuss this with them over the phone or messenger applications instead of sending it by email. They could ask met to remove or rephrase every reference, statement or citation from the conversation we had. I honoured all their wishes/requests.

Step 4: Publishing the Report

The final report was published on the website of the LAC on March 12, 2018, see link http://leidenasiacentre.nl/en/mensenrechten-china-rusland-saudiarabie/. In the following weeks I notified all the respondents that the document was online, and I provided them with a digital copy if they wanted to.

Step 4: Saving the Interview Material

Until April 24, 2018, I kept all the interview material on my computer, locked with a password only I knew. On April 24, I spoke with the thesis supervisor coordinator from the Master International Relations at Leiden University who told me that it would be best to anonymize all the data, including the conversations with those respondents mentioned 'by name' in the report of the LAC. Additionally, he asked me to remove all interview material from my computer and put it on a separate drive. In the two weeks that followed I took the steps as where advised by both the thesis supervisor coordinator and my thesis supervisor. I have anonymized all the material, including the recordings. Sometimes I have removed references that might reveal the identity of the respondent and in these cases I put in a note explaining that I took this step as explained in the Dutch Code for Academic Integrity section II point 1 and Horizon 2020 Guidance (VSNU II.1; Horizon 2020, 8). Furthermore, I have archived the email contact with the respondents and removed it from my mail inbox. After I noticed the information was possibly not kept safe enough, I tried to the best of my ability to change this as mentioned in the Dutch Code for Academic Integrity section I, point 10 (VSNU I.10). At the moment, the

only reference to the real identity of the respondents is written down in a notebook that is in my possession.

Sources:

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Partners under Pressure? The future of civil society in Dutch human rights policy. Retrieved from http://leidenasiacentre.nl/en/mensenrechten-china-rusland-saudiarabie/

Related Documents
1. Ethics issues table checklist.
2. Protocol for prospective interviews.

Appendix 2: Protocol for Prospective Interviews

Student: Emilie de Haes

Student number: S2092815

Date: 15.05.2018

Introduction

For my Master Thesis International Relations, I would like to conduct interviews to get an insight into how Saudi activists understand the western constructed notion of civil society and how they perceive themselves as operating under this label and within this field of activity. As conducting these interviews will involve human beings (Horizon 2020, checklist section 2), protection of personal data (checklist section 4) and third countries (checklist section 6) I have written this protocol for prospective interviews to outline the procedures I will follow to make this research 'ethics-proof'. When drafting the procedure, I have followed the guidelines as presented in the "*EU Horizon 2020 ethics issue table checklist*", "*EU Horizon 2020 Guidance*" and the "*VSNU Dutch Code for Academic Integrity*" to explain how I will deal with the ethical issues that arise when conducting this research. Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU research and innovation programme and their guidance contains guidelines that are designed to help applicants in getting their research proposal 'ethics-ready' for the Horizon 2020 funding. Please find attached the "*ethics issues table checklist*" to see which checklists apply to my thesis research. For more information see "*Horizon 2020 Guidance – the Framework programme for research an innovation*" on

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf

The Research

During an earlier research for the Leiden Asia Centre (LAC) a research centre affiliated to Leiden University, which took place from November 2017 until March 2018, I established contact with various activists from Saudi Arabia. Some of the data collected during this earlier research can be used for my Master thesis with explicit permission of the respondents for secondary use. To view the primary use of this data, see the research report "*Partners under pressure? The future of civil society in Dutch human rights policy*" on http://leidenasiacentre.nl/en/mensenrechten-china-rusland-saudiarabie/   and   for   more

information about the ethical protocol that was used in practice when carrying out this research see the document "*protocol for retrospective interviews*".

I would like to conduct some more interviews in order to write my thesis. However, conducting these interviews would mean collecting further sensitive personal data as part of the research process (checklist section 2, 4 and 6). The respondents involved are vulnerable individuals and their information must be treated with the greatest care as explained in checklist section 2 and the Horizon 2020 Guidance (checklist section 2; Horizon 2020 Guidance, 8). I have written this protocol to show that I am aware of the ethical issues that arise when conducting this research, that I will try to the best of my ability to deal with these issues and that I am capable to conduct this research. This document outlines the procedures I will follow when conducting interviews and safeguarding the data. The aim of this all is to limit the impact on the respondents concerned.

The Respondents

In liberal democracies the primary "duty bearer" for protecting interviewees in a scientific investigation is the state, however in the case of Saudi Arabia the state is the main perpetrator of gross and systematic human rights violations. With this knowledge, the responsibility to protect anyone who provides information for this thesis is heavy and it rests with the researcher. Protecting the respondents therefore means eliminating the exposure factors that increase their vulnerability. All the Saudi respondents were associated with activism in the past and most of them have issued statements about their activism which are openly available. Nevertheless, protecting the respondents is the most important of all. Additionally, there will only be interviews with adult respondents and all the interviews will be on voluntarily basis (checklist section 2). While I can assume that there is individual responsibility for self-protection, that individuals are able to make their own choices about which risks they believe to be acceptable with consideration to potential consequences, this does not absolve myself of professional responsibility, foremost to do no harm.

Establishing Contact

When I (re)establish the contact with the respondents, I will explain to them (via email or private messenger applications) what the research is about, and that it is separate from the earlier research I conducted for the LAC. I will also inform them of the risks the interview might impose on them. Before the interview I will tell them where the questions will be about and

tell them that I respect their personal wellbeing as mentioned in the Dutch Code for Academic Integrity section I, point 2 (VSNU I.2, Horizon 2020 Guidance, 7). Furthermore, I will ask them for a written consent as stated in the ethics checklist section 2 and the Horizon 2020 Guidance before conducting the interview (checklist section 2; Horizon 2020, 6, 16, 18). Additionally, I need to (re) establish contact to ask them if I can reuse the information of previous interviews, this will refer both to content already published as well as material that did not make it or was not used in the LAC publication. Finally, I will notify the respondents that all conversations will be anonymized both on collection, storage and in publication. I will also tell them that I will email them an overview of the references I make to our conversation in my thesis.

The introductory paragraph will be as follows:

Dear …

I hope this email finds you well.

We spoke with each other for an earlier research I conducted for the LeidenAsiaCentre (LAC) into the increasing pressure on Saudi civil society following recent implemented legislation as for instance the Law on Associations and Foundations (NGO Law). Besides the fact that I considered the LAC research very interesting to conduct, I find it important to write about this challenging environment where some Saudi activists find themselves in and which is constantly changing. As I believe there are still many questions to be answered, I decided to write my Master Thesis about a topic closely related to my earlier research. For this new research I try to get insight in the notion of civil society and the western construction thereof. Among other things I would like to ask you about your activities and the primary and secondary goals you want to achieve with your work. Furthermore, I would like to ask you how you would relate your activities to the label of civil society, and if you are aware of the western construction of the concept or if you consider this to be irrelevant.

Following the above, with this email I would like to ask you two questions. First, I wonder if you would like to speak with me again and give me the opportunity to ask you these questions. Second, I was wondering if I could use the information you provided me with during our previous conversation about the increasing pressure on Saudi civil society for my Master thesis research. I would like to ask you for your consent for both the content already published as well as material that did not make it or was not used in the LAC publication All the data I

will use for my thesis will be anonymized and before finalizing it I will email you an overview of the information that I derived from both our conversations and that is used in my thesis.

Finally, I wanted to add that I respect your personal well-being and that if you prefer not to talk about certain topics I fully understand this. Furthermore, I wanted to notify you that this conversation might impose risks on your own safety and the safety of people close to you. I will treat all the information with the greatest care, but nevertheless I feel obliged to mention this.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions or if something is unclear.

With best regards,

Data Collection: the Interview

Before starting the conversation, I will tell the respondents that I respect their personal wellbeing and notify them that if they do not want to answer some of the questions I fully understand this. If the conversation is conducted via phone or Skype I will ask them if I can record the conversation. I will tell them that they can ask me at any time to stop the recording if necessary. I will take care not to record any details that reveal their identity, but if something does emerge I will anonymize it or delete the recording after transcribing it.

Anonymizing the Data

The interview transcripts can include personal data which relate to an identified or identifiable natural person as outlined in the Horizon 2020 Guidance (Horizon 2020 Guidance, 15-16). Therefore, I will after I have received the data, anonymize it and remove information that might reveal the identity of the respondent, if this occurs I will put in a note explaining that I took this step as explained in the Dutch Code for Academic Integrity section II point 1 and the Horizon 2020 Guidance (VSNU II.1; Horizon 2020, 8).

Data Storage

I will keep the recordings and anonymized transcripts on a separate drive. Besides the transcripts on the drive there are no copies of this material. The identity of the respondents will be written down in a notebook, that is only in my possession and kept in a different household

then the external drive containing the transcripts. All the email correspondence will be archived and removed from my mail.

Processing the Data
After the information is received it will be processed, transcribed and categorized in order to use it for the research.

Sources:
De Nederlandse Gedragscode Wetenschapsbeoefening: Principes van goed wetenschappelijk onderwijs en onderzoek. Retrieved from
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Partners under Pressure? The future of civil society in Dutch human rights policy. Retrieved from http://leidenasiacentre.nl/en/mensenrechten-china-rusland-saudiarabie/

Related Documents
1. Ethics issues table checklist.
2. Protocol for retrospective interviews.

Appendix 3: Ethics Issues Table – Checklist

Annex 2:　ETHICS ISSUES TABLE - CHECKLIST

DISCLAIMER: This document is intended as useful information for applicants. The applicants have to check with their local structures (ethics committees, data protection officers, ethics experts) for relevant and detailed guidance.

This document summarizes potential ethics issues that a proposal could raise, as well as guidance on the information to be provided in the proposal (Part B section 6) in order to complete the ethics self-assessment. The last column of the table focuses on the documents to be provided – when relevant, should the proposal be selected for funding.

Section 1: HUMAN EMBRYOS/FOETUSES		YES/NO	Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?[1]		☐ ■			
If **YES:**	- Will they be directly derived from embryos within this project?			*Research cannot be funded.*	*Research cannot be funded.*
	- Are they previously established cells lines?	☐ ☐		Origin and line of cells. Details on licensing and control measures by the competent authorities of the Member States involved.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals.
Does your research involve the use of human embryos? **If YES:**		☐ ■		Origin of embryos. Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals. Informed Consent Forms. Information Sheets.
Does your research involve the use of human foetal tissues / cells? **If YES:**		☐ ■		Origin of human foetal tissues/cells. Details on informed consent procedures.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals. Informed Consent Forms. Information Sheets.

Section 2: HUMANS		YES/ NO	Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research involve human participants?		■ ☐		*Please provide information in one of the subcategories below:*	
If **YES:**	- Are they volunteers for social or human sciences research?	■ ☐		Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals. Informed Consent Forms. Information Sheets.
	- Are they persons unable to give informed consent?	☐ ■		*Information above **plus**:* Details on the procedures to obtain approval from guardian/ legal representative. Details on the procedures used to ensure that there is no coercion on participants.	*Documents as above.*
	- Are they vulnerable individuals or groups?	■ ☐		Details on the type of vulnerability. Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures. This must demonstrate appropriate efforts to ensure fully informed understanding of the implications of participation.	*Documents as above.*
	- Are they children/minors?	☐ ■		*Information above **plus**:* *Details on* the age range. Details on children/minors assent procedures and parental consent.　This must demonstrate appropriate efforts to ensure fully	*Documents as above.*

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		YES	NO	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
				informed understanding of the implications of participation. Describe the procedures to ensure welfare of the child/minor.	
	- Are they patients?	☐	■	Details on the nature of disease/condition/disability. Details on recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria and informed consent procedures Details on policy for incidental findings.	*Documents as above.*
	- Are they healthy volunteers for medical studies?	☐	■	*Information as above*	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals.
Does your research involve physical interventions on the study participants?		☐	■		
If **YES:**	- Does it involve invasive techniques (e.g. collection of human cells or tissues, surgical or medical interventions, invasive studies on the brain, TMS etc.)?	☐	☐	Risk assessment for each technique and as a whole	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals.
	- Does it involve collection of biological samples?	☐	☐	Details on the type of samples to be collected. Details on procedures for collection of biological samples.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals.
If your research involves processing of genetic information, please also complete the section "Protection of Personal Data" i.e. Section 4.					

Section 3: HUMAN CELLS / TISSUES		YES/ NO		Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research involve human cells or tissues? (Other than from "Human Embryos/Foetuses" i.e. Section 1)		☐	■		Details of the cells and tissue types involved.	
If **YES:**	- Are they available commercially?	☐	☐		Details on cell types and provider (company or other).	Any relevant import licences　　2
	- Are they obtained within this project?	☐	☐		Details on cell types.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals or regulatory licences. Copies of examples of Informed Consent documents.
	- Are they obtained within another project?	☐	☐		Details on cell types. Provider of the cell types. Country in which the material is located.	Authorisation by primary owner of cells/tissues (including references to relevant licences or ethics approval and evidence of consent for secondary use). Copy of any Material Transfer Agreement.
	- Are they deposited in a biobank?	☐	☐		Details on cell types. Name of the biobank. Country in which the biobank is located	Details of the biobank, the legislation under which it is licenced, criteria for access and its data protection policy including any Material Transfer Agreement.

Section 4: PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA[2]	YES/NO		Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research involve personal data collection and/or processing? *It should be noted that:* *1. "Personal data" can be defined as identifiers: any information that could, in any way, lead to the specific identification of one unique person, such as name, social security numbers, date of birth, address, mails IPs etc.* *2. Any data that you are using should be taken into account, regardless of the method by which they are/were collected: for example, through interviews, questionnaires, direct online retrieval etc.* *3. Processing should be understood not to only include data usage, but also merging, transformation, transfer and, more generally, as all actions using data for research purposes.*	■	☐			3

4

	YES/NO		Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
If YES: - Does it involve the collection and/or processing of sensitive personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)? *It should be noted that this involvement applies, whatever the research topic or Programme. The above list is only indicative. If the type of data that you will be handling in your research is not included the list, it does not mean you should not take into consideration the subject of data processing.*	■ ☐		Details of the data safety procedures (compliance with privacy by design and protection of privacy/confidentiality). Details of procedures for data collection, storage, protection, retention, transfer if any, destruction or re-use. Explicit confirmation of compliance with national and EU legislation.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals for the collection and/or processing of personal data. If relevant, Informed Consent Forms or other consent documents (opt in processes, etc.). If relevant, Information Sheets or other terms and conditions, factsheets, etc. If relevant, notification to, or authorisation from, the relevant Data Protection Authority/Officer. If relevant, a copy of authorization to merge the data sets in order to create a novel data set.
- Does it involve processing of genetic information?	☐ ■		*Information as above.*	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals for the processing of genetic information.
- Does it involve tracking or observation of participants? *It should be noted that this issue is not limited to surveillance or localization data. It also applies to Wan data such as IP address, MACs, cookies etc.*	☐ ■		*Information above plus:* Details on methods used for tracking or observing participants.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals for the collection and/or processing of personal data.
Does your research involve further processing of previously collected personal data (secondary use)? **If YES:** *It should be noted that this question is threefold. If you answer YES to any of the 3 questions below, you fall within its scope:* *1. Are you planning not to collect any data directly but rather to use pre-existing other data sets or sources and/or does your research involve further processing of previously collected data?* *2. Does your research involve merging existing data sets?*	■ ☐		Details of the database used or to the source of data. Confirmation of open public access to the data or of authorisation for secondary use. More specifically, detail how this consent was obtained specifically in case of public archives usage (automatic opt in, etc.).	Explicit confirmation of open public access to the data (e.g. print screen from Website) or authorisation by primary owner(s) of data. If relevant/applicable, copies of Informed Consent Forms or other consent documents (opt in processes, etc.). Copies of relevant permissions and description of procedures.
3. Are you planning to share data with non-EU member states?			Permissions from the owner/manager of the data sets. A mitigation procedure to avoid private appropriation of the data. A mitigation procedure to avoid the unforeseen disclosure of personal information (i.e.: mosaic effect). Explicit confirmation of compliance with national and EU legislation. Conformity to Safe Harbour, if applicable.	If data transfer to USA/Canada: confirmation of compliance with safe harbour. If data transfer to non-EU country, affidavit of compliance with EU legislation.

Section 5: ANIMALS[3]	YES/NO	Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research involve animals?	☐ ■		Details on implementation of the Three Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement). Justification of animal use and why alternatives cannot be used. Details on species and rationale for their use, numbers of animals to be used, nature of the experiments, procedures and techniques to be used	Copies of all appropriate authorisations for the supply of animals and the project experiments. Copies of training certificates/ personal licences of the staff involved in animal experiments. Confirmation of compliance with relevant EU and national legislation.

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		YES	NO		Information	Documents
					in a chronological order.	
					Details on procedures to ensure animal welfare during their lifetime and during the experiment and how its impact will be minimised.	
					Details on severity assessment and justification.	
If **YES**:	- Are they vertebrates or live cephalopods?	☐	☐		*Information as above.*	*Documents as above.* (See Art. 1.3 of Directive 2010/63/EU.)
	- Are they non-human primates (NHP)?	☐	☐		*Information above **plus**:* Confirmation of compliance with Art. 8, 10, 28, 31, 32 (Directive 2010/63/EU). Discussion of specific ethics issues related to their use.	*Documents as above.* Personal history file of NHP (See Art. 31.2 of Directive 2010/63/EU.)
	- Are they genetically modified?[4]	☐	☐		Confirmation of compliance with relevant EU and national legislation and details as for non-genetically modified animals above.	Copies of all appropriate authorisations for the supply of animals and the project experiments, copies of GMO authorisation and evidence of compliance with GMO Regulations, and supporting documents as for other experimental animals. Copies of training certificates/ personal licences of the staff involved in animal experiments
	- Are they cloned farm animals?	☐	☐		*Information as above*	Copies of all appropriate authorisations for the supply of animals and the project experiments as for other experimental animals.

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		YES	NO		Information	Documents
						Copies of training certificates/ personal licences of the staff involved in animal experiments. Copies of specific authorisation for cloning, if appropriate.
	- Are they an endangered species?	☐	☐		*Information above **plus**:* Discussion of specific ethics issues related to their use.	Copies of all appropriate authorisations for the supply of animals and the project experiments as for other experimental animals, including CITES. Confirmation of compliance with Art. 7 - Directive 2010/63/EU.
Please indicate the species involved (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)						

Section 6: THIRD COUNTRIES	YES/ NO		Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research involve third countries? *Countries:*(Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)	■	☐		Details on activities carried out in non-EU countries.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals from EU country host and non-EU country (double Ethics Review).
Do you plan to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)? If **YES**:	☐	■		Details on type of local resources to be used and modalities for their use.	If human resources are involved, copies of relevant Ethics Approvals, as above. If animals, plants, micro-organisms and associated traditional knowledge are involved, documentation demonstrating compliance with the Convention on Biodiversity (e.g. access permit and benefit sharing agreement)
Do you plan to import any material, including personal data, from non-EU/third countries into the EU? *If your research involves importing data, please also complete the section*	☐	■		Details on type of materials or data to be imported.	As above (use of local resources) and: Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) and copies of any authorisations.

		YES	NO		Information	Documents
"Protection of Personal Data" i.e. Section 4.						
If **YES**:	Specify the materials and countries involved (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)					
Do you plan to export any material, including personal data, from the EU to third/non-EU countries? *If your research involves exporting data, please also complete the section "Protection of Personal Data" i.e. Section 4.*		☐	■		Details on type of materials or data to be exported.	Authorisation for export from EU. Material Transfer Agreement (MTA).
If **YES**:	- Specify material and countries involved (maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)					
If your research involves low and/or lower-middle income countries, are any benefit-sharing actions planned?		☐	■		Details on benefit sharing measures. Details on responsiveness to local research needs. Details on procedures to facilitate effective capacity building.	As above (use of local resources) and narrative document describing benefit sharing, responsiveness to local research needs and capacity building.
Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the research at risk?		■	☐		Details on safety measures that will be implemented, including personnel training.	Insurance cover

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Section 7: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY	YES/ NO		Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to the environment, animals or plants? If **YES:**	☐	■		Details on safety measures to be implemented.	Safety classification of laboratory. GMO authorisation, if applicable. Confirmation of compliance with national/local guidelines/legislation.
Does your research deal with endangered fauna and/or flora /protected areas? If **YES:**	☐	■			Specific approvals, if applicable. Confirmation of compliance with national/local guidelines/legislation.
Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to humans, including research staff? If **YES:**	☐	■		Details on health and safety procedures.	University/Research organisation safety procedures. Safety classification of laboratory.
Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to humans, including research staff?	☐	■		Details on health and safety procedures.	University/Research organisation safety procedures.
If **YES** Does your research involve harmful biological agents?[5]	☐	☐			Safety classification of laboratory. Confirmation of compliance with national/local guidelines/legislation
Does your research involve harmful chemical and explosive agents?[6]	☐	☐			
Does your research involve harmful radioactive agents?[7]	☐	☐			
Does your research involve other harmful materials or equipment, e.g. high-powered laser systems?	☐	☐			

Section 8: DUAL USE [8]	YES/NO		Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research have the potential for military applications?	☐	■			
If **YES** Does your research have an exclusive civilian application focus?	☐	☐		Explanations on the exclusive civilian focus of the research	Confirmation that the inclusion of military partners and technologies relates to civilian applications e.g. in the context of law enforcement activities.
Will your research use or produce goods or information that will require export licenses in accordance with legislation on dual use items?	☐	☐		Details on what goods and information used and produced in your research will need export licences	Copies of relevant approvals from national export control authorities, if applicable.
Does your research affect current standards in military ethics – e.g., global ban on weapons of mass destruction, issues of proportionality, discrimination of combatants and accountability in drone and autonomous robotics developments, incendiary or laser weapons?	☐	☐		Details on how the research might affect current standards in military ethics.	A detailed description on what risk mitigation strategies will be implemented to avoid negative implications on military ethics standards outlined in international humanitarian law.

Section 9: MISUSE	YES/NO		Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Does your research have the potential for malevolent/criminal/terrorist abuse?	☐	■			
If **YES** Does your research involve information on/or the use of biological-, chemical-, nuclear/radiological-security sensitive materials and explosives, and means of their delivery?	☐	☐		Details on the legal requirements of the possession of such items and proposed risk mitigation strategies.	Copies of relevant Approvals, if applicable. Copies of personnel security clearances, if applicable
Does your research involve the development of technologies or the creation of information that could have severe negative impacts on human rights standards (e.g. privacy, stigmatization, discrimination), if misapplied?	☐	☐		Details on measures to prevent malevolent abuse. Details on risk mitigation strategies.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals, if applicable.
Does your research have the potential for terrorist or criminal abuse e.g. infrastructural vulnerability studies, cybersecurity related research?	☐	☐		Details on measures to prevent malevolent abuse. Details on risk mitigation strategies.	Copies of relevant Ethics Approvals, if applicable. Copies of personnel security clearances, if applicable.

Section 10: OTHER ETHICS ISSUES	YES/ NO		Page	Information to be provided	Documents to be provided
Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration? Please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)	☐	■		Any relevant information.	Any relevant document.