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CHAPTER 1: PROFILE

Introduction

Present-day Saudi Arabia has been populated for more than 6,000 years and today’s Saudis are descended from ancient nomadic peoples. One tribe, members of the Saud family, rose to prominence in the 16th century and by the early 19th century ruled much of the Arabian Peninsula. Rivalries forced the Saud tribe out of power, exiling them in the harsh desert lands of the Rub al-Khali, or Empty Quarter, in the southern region. Eventually the Saud family moved to Kuwait; but in 1901, Abd al-Aziz bin Abd al-Rahman al-Saud, the Lion of Nejd, recaptured the Arabian Peninsula. In 1902 he controlled the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia’s present capital. From there, he united the peninsula into a single country, and on 23 September 1932 officially declared his tribal confederation the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The new nation was born.

Known to the ancient Romans as *arabia felix* or “light-hearted Arabia,” today the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a devout and insular country. Its economy is driven by oil exports. Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, and the geographic center of the Islamic world. The region is endowed with huge oil reserves but plagued by unresolved interstate conflicts, weapons proliferation, and outdated political systems. On 11 September 2001, 15 Saudi men were among the 19 terrorists who planned and executed the attack on the United States.

Area and Borders

With an area of 2,149,690 sq km (830,000 sq mi), about one-fifth the size of the United States, the Kingdom of

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Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the gulf region. The nation shares its borders with seven countries. To the north are Iraq (814 km/506 mi), Jordan (744 km/462 mi), and Kuwait (222 km/138 mi). To the east are Qatar (60 km/37 mi) and United Arab Emirates (457 km/284 mi). Oman (676 km/420 mi) and Yemen (1,458 km/906 mi) are on the southern border. The Red Sea forms the nation’s western border and the Persian Gulf lies on the eastern border separating Saudi Arabia from Iran.

### Geography and Topography

Much of Saudi Arabia is desert. With no permanent lakes or rivers, it is one of the driest countries on earth. The country consists of five contrasting natural regions: Hejaz and Asir (the western highlands), Nejd (the rocky central plateau), al-Hasa or the Eastern Province (the coastal plain along the Persian Gulf), Rub al-Khali or the Empty Quarter (the southern desert), and al-Nafud (the northern desert).

#### Hejaz and Asir

The Kingdom’s western region, along the Red Sea coast, consists of coastal plains and mountain ranges. The mountains gain in elevation from the northern Hejaz region to the southern Asir range; the coastal plains widen in the south.

#### Nejd

The central region, Nejd, includes the capital of Riyadh (the traditional home of the ruling Saud family). Nejd consists mainly of plateaus with a few isolated deserts. This arid region is hot and dry during the summer months with temperatures exceeding 45°C (113°F). In winter, the temperatures are cold, often dropping below 5°C (41°F). This area

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12 Catherine Broberg, Saudi Arabia in Pictures (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications, 2002), 6, 8.
contains many oases (fertile areas caused by underground water in otherwise barren desert) and large salt marshes (sabkah), and is home to a growing agricultural industry.  

*Al-Hasa*

The eastern region along the Persian Gulf contains Saudi Arabia’s vast oil reserves and is home to several major cities built around oases. During the late spring and early summer months, this region is subject to the *Shamals*, or northwest winds. The southern region extends along the southern Red Sea to the nation’s border with Yemen. The most fertile areas of the country are in this region near the coastal mountains. Rainfall is sufficient to support crops and other vegetation, including Saudi Arabia’s only forest areas. This region is densely populated, largely because of the agricultural potential.

*Rub al-Khali*

The Rub al-Khali (Empty Quarter) in the south occupies nearly 25% of the country. One of the driest places on the planet, this sand desert, roughly the size of France or Texas, is the largest in the world. It has no permanent residents and receives almost no rain.

**Climate**

In general, Saudi Arabia is hot and dry but the climate varies significantly by region. In the summer (from June to August), temperatures in some parts of the country reach 54°C (130°F) during the day. Temperatures are highest in the northern and central regions. Although the temperatures along the Red Sea coast are generally lower, the humidity is oppressive. Temperatures in spring and fall are more moderate—averaging around

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29°C (84°F).\textsuperscript{33} In the south near the Sarawat Mountains, temperatures frequently drop to 10°C (50°F).\textsuperscript{34}

Winter (from December to February) is cooler with a country average temperature of 23°C (74°F).\textsuperscript{35} In the interior and in the north, daytime temperatures rarely fall below 0°C (32°F).\textsuperscript{36} Evening temperatures can be much cooler, falling below freezing in the western mountains and in the extreme north.\textsuperscript{37}

The rainy season is long, stretching from October to March, but the rainfall is erratic. Some parts of the country may get only one or two downpours a year. In the Asir region along the western coast of the Red Sea, monsoons typically bring 30 cm (12 in) of rain and may bring as much as 50 cm (20 in).\textsuperscript{38, 39, 40}

**Bodies of Water**

*Wadis*

Saudi Arabia has no permanent lakes or rivers but has numerous *wadis*, which carry water from seasonal rains.\textsuperscript{41} Most of the kingdom’s water comes from underground sources and desalination projects. Nearly 467 km (290 mi) of pipelines carry desalinated water between Jubail and Riyadh.\textsuperscript{42}

*Red Sea*

The Red Sea separates Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. In addition to being the kingdom’s western border, it serves as a maritime border for Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, and Yemen. It extends to a maximum depth of 3,040 m (9,974 ft), to a length of 1,900 km (1,200 mi), and at its widest point, across an area of 306 km (190 mi).\textsuperscript{33, 43} The Red Sea


\textsuperscript{34} Hunt Janin and Margaret Besheer, *Cultures of the World: Saudi Arabia* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2003), 11.


\textsuperscript{40} Catherine Broberg, *Saudi Arabia in Pictures* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications, 2002), 12.


connects to the Gulf of Suez in the northwest and to the Gulf of Aqaba in the east. The Sinai Peninsula lies between the two gulfs. To the south, the Red Sea narrows in the Bab al-Mendab Straits, and then merges with the Gulf of Aden, part of the Arabian Sea.\textsuperscript{45}

**Persian Gulf**

The Persian Gulf is Saudi Arabia’s eastern maritime border separating the Arabian Peninsula from Iran.\textsuperscript{46} The Persian Gulf borders Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman.\textsuperscript{47} It is approximately 990 km (615 mi) long with a width ranging from 55 km (34 mi) to 370 km (230 mi).\textsuperscript{48, 49, 50} The depth of its waters ranges from 50 m (164 ft) to 90 m (295 ft).\textsuperscript{51} The water temperature is warm and the water salinity level is as high as 40%—a result of a high rate of evaporation and low inflow of fresh water.\textsuperscript{52} Oil from the Gulf States travels through the Persian Gulf, making it one of the most strategic waterways in the world. The Persian Gulf has more than 700 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and nearly 45% of the world’s natural gas reserves.\textsuperscript{53}

**Major Cities**

**Riyadh**

Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, is located near an oasis in the Nejd region.\textsuperscript{54} A small backwater village of mud brick houses until the discovery of oil in 1973, Riyadh has recreated itself as a booming modern metropolis, and is one of the fastest growing cities in the world.\textsuperscript{55} Its population of approximately 4.72 million is nearly triple that of the 1970s.\textsuperscript{56, 57} Riyadh functions as the financial and governmental center of the country.

\textsuperscript{54} Catherine Broberg, Saudi Arabia in Pictures (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications, 2002), 17.
\textsuperscript{55} Hunt Janin and Margaret Besheer, Cultures of the World: Saudi Arabia (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2003), 15.

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Approximately one-third of the city’s population is non-Saudi. Asians, mostly from India and Pakistan, make up half of this population; the remaining non-Saudis are mostly from Egypt and Yemen except for a small group of Europeans and Americans. People under the age of 20 represent the largest group in the city (50%). Only about 20% of the population are over the age of 60.

This modern metropolis, with its high-rise buildings and numerous shopping centers, is a conservative one. People honor Islamic traditions including segregation of the sexes. The city is extremely hot in the summer with temperatures climbing into the low 40s °C (low 100s °F) but in the winter, temperatures are much cooler, averaging in the low 10s °C (low 50s °F).

Once a trading center, by the middle 1600s Riyadh was a small fortified village located along Wadi Hanifah. Water and the ability to cultivate crops significantly influenced the city’s growth and development. In 1824, it became the capital of the emirate and remained the base for Saud family rule until 1881, when they were driven out. In 1902, a young Abd al-Aziz returned from exile and regained control of the city. He then acquired the territory that comprises present-day Saudi Arabia, which he founded in 1932. In that same year Riyadh was named the capital of Saudi Arabia.

**Jeddah**

With a population of nearly 3.25 million people, the ancient commercial port city of Jeddah is the nation’s second largest city. A major port city on the Red Sea, Jeddah is the point of entry for most visitors who come for the hajj, or pilgrimage. Part of an ancient trade route, visitors passing through have made Jeddah Saudi Arabia’s most cosmopolitan city. Jeddah, unlike the more conservative Riyadh, has a more relaxed feel and is decidedly less conservative. Jeddah was the kingdom’s diplomatic capital until

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The city’s economy has diversified in recent years and now includes heavy industry, manufacturing, and cattle-raising. Nevertheless, the city’s largest revenue source is from pilgrims travelling to Mecca.\(^69\) \(^70\) \(^71\)

**Dhahran-Dammam-al-Khobar**

Dhahran-Dammam-al-Khobar is a combined metropolitan area in the oil-producing Eastern Province that borders the Persian Gulf. The 1938 discovery of oil there resulted in rapid growth and expansion of the city. Today it is home to the Saudi Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco). Saudi Arabia’s largest military air base, used by U.S. air forces during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, is located in Dhahran. The kingdom’s largest seaport on the eastern coast is in Dammam.\(^72\) \(^73\)

**Mecca (Makkah)**

Nearly 1.5 million people live in this cosmopolitan city nestled in the hills approximately 70 km (42 mi) from Jeddah.\(^74\) Mecca is the most sacred Muslim city in the world and only the Islamic faithful can enter the city. Each year millions of Muslims make the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca during the 10th month of the Islamic calendar. Mecca is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the center of the Islamic world.\(^75\) \(^76\) Islam’s holiest shrine, the Ka’aba, is in the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Believed to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael, the Ka’abah is mentioned in the Old Testament. Each pilgrim on the hajj is required to walk around the Ka’aba seven times touching the Black Stone located in the eastern corner of the shrine.\(^77\)

Temperatures in Mecca can soar to 45°C (113°F) in the summer months. Although Mecca gets little rain, it is vulnerable to flash-flooding because of its low-lying position, particularly during the summer.\(^78\) The region has little farming and industry; the city’s livelihood depends primarily on revenues from pilgrims to Mecca for hajj.\(^79\)


Medina

Called Al-Medina al-Munawara (the Enlightened City), this second holiest city in Islam was a place of refuge for the Prophet Muhammad after he fled from Mecca.⁸⁰ Here he built a power base of new converts to Islam. Eventually, Muhammad returned to Mecca with a formidable army and forced residents to convert. Like Mecca, only Muslims can visit Medina. Today, the Prophet’s Mosque and several other mosques in Medina are visited by pilgrims on the way home from Mecca.⁸¹, ⁸² Medina is also home to the famous King Abdul Aziz University and its collection of 37,000 religious books and rare copies of the Quran.⁸³

History

Early History

The Arab Peninsula, including the area of modern-day Saudi Arabia, has been inhabited for thousands of years. As early as 1000 B.C.E., there was a highly developed civilization in the region. People lived largely in small independent city states or kingdoms and were often at war with each other. This political fragmentation persisted through the mid-6th century C.E. when the unification of the peninsula began.⁸⁴, ⁸⁵

The history of the region, and indeed the world, changed dramatically in 570 when the Prophet Muhammad was born in the city of Mecca. Muslims believe that around 610 Muhammad began receiving revelations from God. By 613, Muhammad began to make his revelations public and by 618 he had sufficient followers to concern regional authorities. Forced to leave Mecca, Muhammad and his followers travelled throughout the region, gaining converts to the new religion of Islam. Upon Muhammad’s death in 632, most of Arabia was loyal to the Prophet and his new religion. His successors, the caliphs, quickly gained control over a vast empire and united Arabs against their Roman and Persian enemies. The Arabs soon had control of an area that extended from Spain to Pakistan.⁸⁶, ⁸⁷

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Although the caliphs ruled the empire of Islam until 1258, authority was not always located in Arabia. In 656, the third caliph was assassinated and in 660 the fourth caliph, Ali, was also killed. After Ali’s death, the Umayyads established their own hereditary line of caliphs ruling from Damascus until 750 when they were overthrown by the Abbasids who ruled from Baghdad. The power of the Abbasids gradually declined until they were overthrown by the Mongols in 1258 and all heirs were murdered.88, 89

 Origins of the Saud Family (1450–1765)

Following the Abbasid defeat, the Ottoman Turks began expanding their empire, eventually gaining control of the Hejaz region of Saudi Arabia. Over the next years, they launched various campaigns to subdue their Arab territories. Throughout this period, the central region of Arabia was plagued by war, pestilence, and famine.90

By the early 16th century, three towns in the region were competing for dominance: Diriya, Uyaina, and Hufuf. Diriya, in the Nejd region near present-day Riyadh, is the original hometown of the Saud family. The actual history of the town is not entirely clear, but it is known that the town began as the village settlement of Duru. The area was given to the earliest known members of the Saud clan, Mani al-Muraidi and his son Rabia. In the mid-15th century and, within two generations, the clan became recognized leaders of the settlement and the Diriya.91, 92

Rabia’s son, Musa, failed in an attempt to assassinate his father but did succeed in gaining control of the chiefdom. He was succeeded by his son Ibrahim. Markhan, the youngest son of Ibrahim, became emir of Diriya and was succeeded by his oldest son, Rabia. Rabia’s son Markhan was murdered by his cousin Watban in 1654 in order to strengthen his own authority as leader. This began a family blood feud that had profound consequences. Watban’s plans for leadership were foiled when Markhan’s brother,

Muhammad, became emir and ruled the city until his abdication in 1693. Muhammad’s son, Nasir, became emir but was assassinated by Watban. Watban’s son, Markhan ibn Watban, seized leadership until he was murdered by his brother Ibrahim in 1690. In 1685, Muhammad ibn Miqrin’s son, Saud, established the royal line that still rules the nation today.93

Six emirs were assassinated between 1694 and 1720. Two more emirs ruled between 1720 and 1726 when Muhammad ibn Saud became emir and ruled until his death in 1765. During his rule, he forged a partnership with conservative cleric Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, which began the unification and conquest of the nation.94, 95

**Rise of Wahhabism**

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabi Islam, believed there was only one God in whom all powers rested. This unitarian view sparked opposition, especially among the Shi’a who had long revered their imams (prayer leaders). Seeking support for his views, Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab headed for Diriya having met Emir Muhammad ibn Saud earlier. The al Saud family supported al Wahhab and promised to work together to advance Wahhabi Islam. As part of this religious mission, al Saud forces attacked regional villages and towns with the intent of wiping out popular Shi’a practices that were contrary to the new ideas. By 1765, the Saud family controlled most of the Nejd.96, 97

With the death of Muhammad ibn Saud in 1765, his son, Abd al-Aziz, continued the cause. By 1773, Riyadh fell to Abd al-Aziz’s forces and by 1800, the Saud family and Wahhabism controlled the entire region.98 The victories and expanding control of the Saud forces brought the Saud Empire into direct conflict with the rest of the Muslim world, challenging the practices of both Shi’a and popular Islam. As the Saud-Wahhabi forces destroyed many of the shrines and monuments of Muslim saints, opposition to their rule mounted. Eventually the resistance prevailed and in 1818, the Wahhabis were defeated, thus ending their rule in the Saudi state of Diriya.99, 100

**Founding of the Modern State (1900–1953)**

The modern Saudi Arabia owes much to the power and personality of King Abd al-Aziz. Having watched his family driven out of their territory and into exile in British Kuwait, he recognized the value of an alliance with the British as early as 1904. Two years after his small army had recaptured control of Riyadh, Abd al-Aziz’s authority was solidified by the 1915 Anglo–Saudi Friendship Treaty in which the British recognized Saudi control of Nejd, Hasa, Qatif, and Jubail.101, 102

Aided by British material support, his control over Hejaz was secured by 1925 and Abd al-Aziz declared himself king. This resulted in a new treaty with the British. The treaty included a pledge that he was to respect other British client-states on the Arabian Peninsula. In 1932, Abd al-Aziz proclaimed the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.103

The longevity of the monarchy depended on establishing a royal lineage that would produce future kings. In this regard, Abd al-Aziz saw the advantage of strategic marriages to women from all the major Saudi tribes. The King is alleged to have taken as many as 100 wives who produced about 160 offspring, 34 of which were sons who survived him.104, 105

On 14 February 1945, King Abd al-Aziz met President Franklin Roosevelt aboard the U.S.S. Quincy anchored in the Great Bitter Lake, north of the Suez Canal. Roosevelt, on his way home from the Yalta Summit, had given great thought to the energy needs of postwar America. Developing new energy sources was a matter of national security.106

King Abd al-Aziz proved a receptive audience. Oil, discovered in the kingdom in 1938 by American geologists, was his primary source of revenue. This revenue was important given that his other source of revenue, income from the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, had dried up during the war.107

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King Saud and King Faisal (1953–1975)

King Abd al-Aziz reigned until his death in 1953, when his oldest son, Saud, took over. For the next 20 years, the monarchy was plagued by rivalries and factionalism from within and without. King Saud spent lavishly; he kept a court of 5,000 people in addition to harems and slaves. His brother, Faisal, sought control of the state treasury as a way to curb reckless spending and create a sound national economy. As huge profits from oil flowed through the treasury, the government became increasingly corrupt and anti-Western sentiments began to grow.

Illegal opposition movements cropped up throughout the kingdom calling for a constitution, an end to foreign domination, and an expansion of civil rights. The government responded by announcing a return to traditional values and the dismissal of foreign influences. Large-scale protests resulted in a brutal response from the king; the army and national guard were expanded.

King Saud tried to promote Arab unity by forging strong ties with Egypt. Relations with the United States weakened during King Saud’s early rule although they warmed considerably in 1957 when the King visited President Eisenhower in the United States. As ties with the United States became more cordial, those with Arab states worsened. Senior members of the royal family became increasingly frustrated with King Saud’s appointment of his inexperienced sons to important government positions. It was feared that the king would try to alter the rules of succession. This, combined with his continued reckless spending, prompted the Saud family to urge King Saud to relinquish power to his brother Faisal who had long been considered the more pragmatic and pious of the brothers.

Faisal assumed executive powers in March 1958 and immediately introduced a series of extreme economic measures. His policies were successful in balancing the budget and stabilizing the currency. Continued disputes with Saud prompted King Faisal to resign in 1961. In 1964, the ulama, a body of Muslim clerics, issued a fatwa deposing King Saud and making his brother Faisal king. King Faisal devoted himself to modernizing the nation throughout his 11-year reign.

Recent Events

Khalid became king following King Faisal’s death in 1975. The more liberal king strengthened ties with Arab neighbors. Following the takeover of the Grand Mosque by Saudi dissidents in 1979 and problems with Shi’a in the Eastern province in 1980, the government formed a consultative assembly, the *majlis ash shura*.\(^{115}\)

Crown Prince Fahd, Khalid’s half brother, became king in 1982 when Khalid died. Facing a 20% reduction in oil revenues, the government quickly reduced the number of foreign workers in the country in a bid to “Saudize” the labor force. Growing class divisions helped fuel anti-Western sentiment and discontent with corruption. The government was being pressured by moderate liberals but seemed more worried about the growing criticism from conservative clerics who were opposed to Saudi rule. All of these problems were heightened when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.\(^{116, 117}\)

King Fahd allowed U.S. forces to be garrisoned within Saudi territory, a move that prompted serious criticism. During the Kuwait invasion, members of the king’s family fled the country adding to national insecurity about the government. Besieged by the moderates and the conservatives, King Fahd announced three major reforms in 1992. These included an emphasis on the Islamic monarchy and changes to the rules of succession. Along with the reform announcements, the government initiated a severe crackdown against dissidents. Following a stroke in 1995, King Fahd relinquished much of the day-to-day government operations to his half brother Abdullah. Abdullah continued in this caretaking role until Fahd’s death in 2005.\(^{118, 119}\)

In recent years, the government has dealt with terrorist attacks including attempts to bomb a major oil-producing facility in 2006, murders of foreign tourists in 2007, and al-Qaeda activity in the region. King Abdullah is trying to balance the concerns of his conservative clerics with increased demands for political reform and greater human rights.\(^{120}\) King Abdullah is aging (87 years old in 2012) and his heir apparent is 75-year old Crown Prince Salman bin Abd al Aziz al Saud. Prince Salman was promoted to crown prince after the sudden death of Prince Nayef in June 2012. The Crown Prince,

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currently serving as defense minister, is likely to continue the policies of the current king.\textsuperscript{121}

**Government**

The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a monarchy ruled by the sons and grandsons of the founding king, Abd al-Aziz al Saud. The king’s powers are broad but not absolute. His role is to maintain Shari’a law, observe Saudi traditions, and maintain consensus within the royal family and the nation’s religious leaders.\textsuperscript{122}

The Council of Ministers and the Consultative Council (\textit{Majlis al Shura}) advise the king and create legislation that is then ratified by royal decree. The Consultative Council has 150 members appointed by the king to four-year terms.\textsuperscript{123, 124}

The judiciary is a system of religious courts. The highest judicial authority in the land is the Supreme Court, which has authority to establish and abolish courts and to name judges. By law, the judiciary is independent although the king can hear appeals and retains the power to pardon offenders if punishment is not in agreement with the Quran.\textsuperscript{125}

**Media**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has one of the most repressive media environments in the Arab world. On the press freedom index, Saudi Arabia ranks 158th (out of 179 countries).\textsuperscript{126, 127} All news and information is controlled by the royal family. Nearly all of the domestic broadcast outlets are operated by the state-run Broadcasting Service of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is overseen by an administrative body chaired by the Minister of Culture and Information. Private TV stations are prohibited from operating within the country but pan-Arabian programs are available via satellite and pay-TV.

Newspapers are created by royal decree and more than a dozen daily publications are available. Pan-Arab newspapers, though censored, are available.\textsuperscript{128} There are no codified restrictions on freedom of expression but there are serious consequences for anyone who questions Islam or voices opposition to, or criticism of, the government in general or members of the royal family in particular.\textsuperscript{129} Journalists who publish material that is critical of the royal family, religious establishments, or Islam, can be fined or imprisoned.\textsuperscript{130} Approximately 11.5 million Saudis access the internet, which is heavily filtered and censored. Strict filters prohibit the viewing of pornographic, non-recognized Islamic movements, human rights, and political sites.\textsuperscript{131, 132}

**Economy**

Oil accounts for about 80% of the kingdom’s revenues, nearly 45% of GDP and 90% of export earnings.\textsuperscript{133} Recognizing the danger of such heavy reliance on the petroleum sector, the country is working to diversify the economy, especially in the fields of power generation, telecommunications, natural gas, and petrochemicals. The government is working hard to create more jobs for Saudi nationals.\textsuperscript{134} In 2010, an estimated 80% of private-sector jobs were filled by foreign workers.\textsuperscript{135} With its unemployment rate hovering around 11%, the government is investing considerable money into education and programs to reduce unemployment, which is particularly high among the youth whose skills do not meet the needs of the private sector.\textsuperscript{136, 137} The Ministry of Labor announced a new plan (\textit{nitaqat}) to reduce Saudi dependence on foreign labor. Industries

\textsuperscript{128} BBC News Middle East, “Saudi Arabia Profile: Media,” 17 January 2012, \url{http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703480}
\textsuperscript{130} Freedom House, “Freedom of the Press 2011: Saudi Arabia,” 17 October 2011, \url{http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,FREEHOU,,SAU,,4e9bec2fc,0.html}
\textsuperscript{132} BBC News Middle East, “Saudi Arabia Profile: Media,” 17 January 2012, \url{http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703480}
\textsuperscript{135} Harsco Baroom, “On Target: Supplier Profile,” 2012, 60, \url{http://cm.harsco.com/Uploads/Files/HarscoBaroomSupplierProfile.pdf}
\textsuperscript{136} Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Saudi Arabia,” 30 December 2011, \url{http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3584.htm#econ}
failing to hire a set number of Saudis will face penalties and the inability to renew expatriate labor licenses and contracts.\textsuperscript{138}

Industry employs 21% of the population while accounting for nearly 68% of GDP. Approximately 72% of Saudis are employed in the service sector, which contributes 30% to GDP. The remaining 7% of the labor force is employed in agriculture, which accounts for 2% of GDP.\textsuperscript{139}

The current economic outlook is good. Saudi Arabia will see increased oil revenues and a lower national debt.\textsuperscript{140, 141} One cloud on this positive horizon is the likelihood that inflationary pressures will continue. Current annual inflation is about 5% with food and rent being the hardest hit. To help ease the rapid rise in real estate prices, a result of a housing shortage, the government has promised to build half a million new homes.\textsuperscript{142, 143}

\section*{Ethnic Groups}

The tribes of Saudi Arabia consider themselves pure “Arabs” based on their ancestry in the indigenous tribes of the peninsula. Yet, over the centuries other ethnic groups have migrated to the peninsula and settled there. Estimates of ethnicity are largely uniform—Arab 90\% and Afro-Asian 10\%.\textsuperscript{144} Among the native tribes, regionalism plays an important role and tribal territories are well known and demarcated. Some people in the Hejaz region are the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and are referred


to as *Ashraf*. Other groups trace their lineage to the ancient Arab tribes who populated the region. Still others have Arabic origins, but these lines came from beyond the Arabian Peninsula.¹⁴⁵ Such distinctions do not create profound differences among the people.¹⁴⁶

There are, however, many immigrants who are neither Arab nor Muslim. These groups comprise the African and Asian minorities. Asians are predominantly from Indonesia, Pakistan, Republic of the Philippines, South Korea, and India.¹⁴⁷, ¹⁴⁸ Most Africans and Asians are part of the huge foreign labor force in Saudi Arabia. The cultural, religious, and linguistic differences between these groups and the Saudi nationals sometimes cause class divisions and tensions.¹⁴⁹


Chapter 1 Assessment

1. The Red Sea forms the western border of Saudi Arabia.
   True
   The Red Sea separates Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, in addition to being the kingdom’s western border.

2. Most pilgrims on hajj enter the kingdom through the city of Jeddah.
   True
   A major port city on the Red Sea, Jeddah is the point of entry for most visitors on their hajj.

3. Riyadh is the main city in the oil-producing Eastern Province.
   False
   Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, is located near an oasis in the Nejd region. Dhahran-Dammam-al-Khobar is the major metropolis in the oil-producing Eastern Province.

4. The king of Saudi Arabia has the right to overrule any decisions made by other governmental agencies.
   True
   The king appoints members to the Council of Ministers and judges. The Council drafts resolutions that must be ratified by royal degree.

5. Most Saudis are employed in the private sector.
   False
   In 2010, an estimated 80% of private-sector jobs were filled by foreign workers, which has lead to a lack of jobs for Saudi nationals.
CHAPTER 2: RELIGION

Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and of Islam. Many Saudis, who are followers of the conservative movement Wahhabism, view themselves as the “true” Muslims. The influence of religion on the nation and daily life is sweeping. From the opening words of all government documents to dress and interaction, the influence and direction of the Quran are ever present. Islam is not only the state religion, it is the only religion that can be practiced openly in the country.

Saudi Arabia is a theocratic state and the legitimacy of the government derives from religion. Saudis consider the Quran to be the national constitution. Located at the geographic center of the Islamic world with Islam’s two holiest sites, Mecca and Medina, the country is by admission purist and conservative. The King carries the secondary title, khadam al-haramain al-sharifain or “custodian/servant of the two holy mosques.”

Overview of Islam

Islam is the second-largest religion in the world with about 1.6 billion followers. The religion was founded in the seventh century by Muhammad, a trader in the town of

156 Executive Planet, “Saudi Arabia: First Name or Title?” 5 December 2006, http://www.executiveplanet.com/index.php?title=Saudi_Arabia:_First_Name_or_Title%3F
Mecca who established Islam as a comprehensive way of life.\textsuperscript{158} The religion spread through the country and the broader region.\textsuperscript{159}

One hundred percent of Saudis are Muslims.\textsuperscript{160} The majority are Sunnis but a significant minority (15\%) are Shi’ites, most of whom are located in the eastern regions of the country.\textsuperscript{161, 162} Relations between Sunnis and Shi’ites are tense and have sometimes escalated to violence.\textsuperscript{163, 164} Regardless of their political differences, all Muslims adhere to the five pillars of faith. The first is the shahada (the basic declaration of the faith) expressed by repeating the phrase “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet.” The second pillar is salat (prayer): Muslims face Mecca and pray five times a day at appointed hours (dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and mid-evening). The third pillar is zakat (the giving of alms). The fourth pillar is sawm (fasting) during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan. The fifth pillar is performing the hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca) once in a lifetime for those who are physically and financially able to do so.\textsuperscript{165, 166}

Muslims regard the Quran as a sacred text. If copies become old or are damaged they should be disposed with care. Texts should not be burned with trash or other items. But they may be buried. Before burying the text, it is wrapped in something pure and then buried where people do not walk.\textsuperscript{167, 168}


\textsuperscript{164} Toby Matthiesen, “Saudi Arabia’s Shiite Problem,” Middle East Channel, 7 March 2012,\url{http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/07/saudi_arabia_s_shiite_problem}


\textsuperscript{167} Allison Keyes, “How to Properly Dispose of Sacred Texts,” National Public Radio, 24 February 2012,\url{http://www.npr.org/2012/02/24/147321213/how-to-properly-dispose-of-sacred-texts}

Sunni and Shi’a Islam

The Sunni sect is the dominant majority, but approximately 15% of the world’s Muslims count themselves as Shi’ites, adherents of Shi’a Islam. After Muhammad’s death, political disagreements among his followers about who would succeed him led to divisions that persist. At the time, his closest companions felt that his successor should come from their circle, but others felt that only a family member could be the legitimate leader of Islam. Even later, a third group called the Ummayyads, the leaders of Muhammad’s tribe, sought to be the only determiners of his successor. Muhammad’s associates were able to choose his advisor, Abu Bakr, as the first caliph or successor. Those who favored Ali, a cousin to Muhammad and the husband of his daughter Fatimah, were only finally able to make Ali the fourth caliph. Just before opposition to his caliphate culminated in war, he agreed to mediation. His passivity later caused disappointed followers to murder him. Those who believed in his right to the caliphate became the Shi’a, “the party of Ali.” About two decades later, his son Husayn attempted to claim his hereditary caliphate. Husayn was killed in battle and his head taken to the ruling caliph. Shi’ites commemorate Husayn’s death each year through ritualistic self-flagellation and mourning called the Ashura. These beliefs about succession later developed into religious rather than simply political differences, expanding the gap between the two groups.

Another major disagreement between the Shi’ites and the Sunnis involves the Shi’a attribution of divine qualities to their imams. The Sunnis view this as a severe violation of the Islamic belief in only one god. There are various Shi’a sects but the largest, known as “twelvers,” believe that their 12th imam, known as the Mahdi or messiah, was taken into hiding by Allah and that he will return at the end of the world.
Islam in Saudi Arabia

The form of Islam embraced by Sunnis in Saudi Arabia and by the government is Wahhabism. This movement grew from the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who in the 18th century wished to return to a pure form of Islam and focus on its belief in a unitary god, and thus rid Islam of some polytheistic tendencies that had become practices over the centuries. Facing opposition to the views of Wahhabism, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab aligned with the house of Saud, a regional power. The Saudi rulers swore an oath of allegiance promising to establish a state governed according to strict Islamic principles. When Abd al-Aziz, the founder of the modern nation of Saudi Arabia, attempted to consolidate his power and unite the kingdom under his rule, he enlisted the support of the Ikhwan, who were strict Islamists with no tolerance for adaptations of 20th-century life to the principles of Islam. Conflicts with the Ikhwan eventually escalated into war, which Abd al-Aziz conducted with the approval of the strict clerics of the ulama (custodians of tradition). To maintain the support of the ulama and to appease the Ikhwan and their conservative supporters, Abd al-Aziz created a strict fundamentalist state rooted in Quranic principles.

For over 200 years, this austere form of Wahhabi Islam has been the dominant faith of the nation. It demands a literal interpretation of the Quran. Strict Wahhabists consider followers of all other religions, including other forms of Islam, as heathens and enemies of Islam. As a consequence of adherence to Wahhabism, Saudi Arabia is one of the most conservative countries in the world.

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Religion and Government

Saudi Arabia is a theocracy with no separation of church and state. With the Quran serving as the nation’s constitution, religion is evident in government regulations and actions.\textsuperscript{186} The government bans all religious practices except its interpretation of Sunni Islam, prohibits buildings of worship for any other forms of religion, and requires the inclusion of Islamic teachings in the school curriculum at all levels.\textsuperscript{187} Imams are required to espouse government views of Islam. In 2011, the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs announced plans to retrain 30\% of the nation’s imams to maintain certainty that they met the qualifications of a cleric. In practice, this meant that the government viewed these clerics as espousing beliefs that ran counter to the official view of religion.\textsuperscript{188} Non-Muslims practicing their faith in private have consistently had their rights violated by the government. Although private religious services are currently legal, they continue to be monitored and frequently raided by authorities.\textsuperscript{189} Education stresses obedience to the nation and loyalty to Islamic law.\textsuperscript{190} Government-approved textbooks continue to teach religious intolerance to the point of advocating violence in certain situations.\textsuperscript{191, 192, 193, 194}

Shi’a Muslims face restricted employment opportunities. Both Shi’a and Ismaili Muslims are often harassed and treated more severely in courts. Testimony of non-Wahhabí Muslims can be legally disregarded.\textsuperscript{195, 196} Children from other Islamic sects are forced to study government-sanctioned Sunni Islam in schools.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{190} Peter North and Harvey Tripp, Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Saudi Arabia (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2009), 73.
Women routinely face government-sanctioned discrimination. Women’s rights to seek medical care, access to education, freedom of movement, and equality under the law are restricted based on the official interpretation of Islam. Recently granted the right to vote, women will not be allowed to exercise that right until 2015.198

Influence of Religion on Daily Life

Saudis are a devoutly pious people adhering strictly to shari’a law and the rules of the Quran. Aspects of the religion permeate virtually every aspect of social life.199 In this conservative country there are no movie theaters, bars, nightclubs, or discos.200, 201, 202 The consumption of alcohol and pork are prohibited. Even one’s choice of clothing is highly regulated.203, 204 Women are required to wear the veil and the abaya (a long, flowing black garment covering all but the hands and feet). The most traditional women wear the niqab that covers the entire face except for the eyes. Less conservative women wear the hijab or headscarf, covering the hair.205, 206 Men are obligated to be modest in their dress. Men are prohibited from wearing shorts, tight pants, or transparent clothing. Even the choice of underwear is prescribed by Islamic law. Although the specific garment may vary, underpants must be loose-fitting and extend from the navel to the middle of the thigh or calf. Men are required to wear a t-shirt under the traditional thobe, or long gown.207, 208

Daily life in Saudi Arabia is regulated by the five daily calls to prayer when everything comes to a stop for the faithful, who pause to face Mecca and pray. All shops, restaurants, and other places of business must close for approximately half an hour during each call to prayer. The *mutaween*, or religious police, patrol the streets to make sure that rules are followed. Prayers take place around dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and mid-evening. Exact prayer times are listed in newspapers and published on television for the convenience of Muslims and the guidance of foreigners.

Most of Saudis’ social interaction takes place within strictly gender-segregated groups, beginning with gender-specific schools. Sitting next to or speaking with a man who is unrelated can potentially be seen as violating a woman’s honor, leading to severe consequences, regardless of age. Public displays of affection, even among married people, are inappropriate. Women are largely confined to the home, unable to go out without a male relative or guardian. Women can work outside the home but must work only in female-appropriate occupations and only with female clients or students. Women are not allowed to drive, to ride a bicycle, or to be in a car or taxi with unrelated males. Dining establishments are also strictly segregated and women who attempt

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to enter a restaurant or other eating establishment are often turned away. Some shopping centers prohibit men from entering certain floors reserved for women.

Females are not allowed to participate in sports in the state-run schools. Fitness centers and health clubs for women are illegal. This enforced inactivity of women has led to rising rates of obesity among the female population: nearly half of women are obese.

**Religious Holidays and Events**

**Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha**

Saudi Arabia recognizes two Islamic holidays: the *Eid al-Fitr* (Festival of Breaking Fast) and the *Eid al-Adha* (Feast of Sacrifice). *Eid al-Fitr* marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. *Eid al-Adha* is the feast of slaughter that celebrates the end of the pilgrimage season. The official calendar of the country is the Islamic lunar calendar, which is 13 days shorter than the Western solar calendar. Thus, these festivals occur at different times each year and the timing of each depends on the moon phases.

**Exchange 1: Will you be celebrating Eid al-Fitr?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Will you be celebrating Eid al-Fitr?</th>
<th>raaH tiHtafloon b'eed il fuTir?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes!</td>
<td>na'am!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ramadan**

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is the holiest month in the Islamic calendar. It is a time when Muslims fast and abstain from sex, drinking, and smoking from sunrise to sundown. Children, pregnant women, and those who are sick are exempt from fasting. Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, self-restraint, and the

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practice of generosity. Additional prayers, known as *tarawih*, are offered during Ramadan. At the end of Ramadan, Muslims give alms to the poor as required by the *zakat*. Shops and banks will usually have shorter hours during the day but in Saudi Arabia, many malls open at night to large crowds of people. After sunset, many Saudis celebrate by shopping and dining in restaurants. Many Saudis reportedly gain weight during this month of fasting. Foreigners and non-Muslims are required to observe all the regulations of Ramadan in Saudi Arabia.

**Hajj**

All Muslims who are able are required to make the hajj at least once. The purpose of the hajj, which takes place between the 8th and 13th days of the Arabic month of Hajj (*dhul hajjah*), is to create unity among the world’s Muslims. Each year nearly 2.5 million Muslims travel to the holy city of Mecca where they put on simple white garments, erasing all signs of wealth and status. For 5 days pilgrims perform a series of specified rituals renewing their sense of purpose.

**Places of Worship**

The Muslim place of worship is the mosque. The most sacred mosque in the Muslim world, the Masjid al Haram, is located in Mecca. In the center of the mosque is the *Kaaba*, a small building covered in black cloth. Muslims circle this building seven times during the hajj. The second-most sacred mosque, Masjid al Nabawi, is located in the city of Medina. Only Muslims are permitted to enter these mosques in Mecca and Medina which, like all mosques in the country, are not open to non-Muslims.

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A non-Muslim should not attempt to enter or peer into prayer places.\textsuperscript{239} Both males and females are allowed to worship in mosques but, except for the Great Mosque in Mecca, males and females have segregated prayer areas.\textsuperscript{240}

Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Saudi Arabia is the center of the Islamic world and contains its two holiest sites, Mecca and Medina.
   **True**
   Saudi Arabia is at the geographic center of the Islamic world with Islam’s two holiest sites, Mecca and Medina.

2. Abd al-Wahhab and his followers promoted innovation in Islam.
   **False**
   Wahhabism was founded in the 18th century by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who wished to return to a pure form of Islam and focus its belief in a unitary god, thereby ridding Islam of the polytheistic tendencies that had become practices over the centuries.

3. During the month of Ramadan, non-Muslim foreigners are allowed to eat and drink in public during the daytime.
   **False**
   Although non-Muslims are not required to fast during the day, foreigners are not allowed to eat, drink, or smoke during daylight hours in public or in the presence of Muslims.

4. Muslims face the holy city of Mecca when they pray.
   **True**
   During daily prayers, Muslims face Mecca and pray.

5. Shops, businesses, and restaurants close for approximately half an hour during each of the five calls to prayer.
   **True**
   Saudi Arabia is regulated by the five daily calls to prayer when everything comes to a stop. All shops, restaurants, and other places of business must close for approximately half an hour during each call to prayer.
CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONS

Introduction

Saudis are the descendents of the fiercely independent nomadic tribes that once roamed the peninsula. Tribalism is still central to life in the Kingdom, and loyalties to family and tribe often trump national loyalty. Family is the cornerstone of Saudi life. Much of one’s daily interaction takes place within the context of the family. Saudis tenaciously guard their privacy and homes and, compared to other Arab cultures, have far fewer social spaces. Saudis are generally shy and more introverted than many of their Arab neighbors, perhaps as a result of centuries of the relative isolation of their nomadic ancestors.

Religion is a central feature of Saudi life and identity and permeates every aspect of life. Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and of Islam. Most Saudis are pious Muslims and many consider themselves the “true” Muslims. The conservative Wahhabi form of Sunni Islam is not only the national religion but the ideological foundations of its people. There is a strict segregation of the sexes, particularly in the capital of Riyadh. Alcohol is prohibited, polygyny permitted, and penalties for crimes severe—and sometimes public.

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Honor and Values

Honor is a central value and affronts to honor are taken seriously. Honor killings still occur in Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{250, 251} Respect and the preservation of “face” are central in the lives of most Saudis.\textsuperscript{252}

In spite of the Islamic duty to be gracious hosts, Saudis have a cautious attitude to foreigners. This tendency toward privacy and the need to protect the purity of Islam often compete with obligations of hospitality toward visitors. Westerners are likely to be treated with respect, especially Americans. While some people still view the United States as the “Great Satan,” they are careful to make distinctions between individuals and the government. On the other hand, Saudis often harbor a deep disrespect for people from the East, especially Asia. Classism is obvious in their treatment of Asian residents whom few Saudis regard as their equals.\textsuperscript{253, 254}

Greetings and Introductions

Between Muslims in Saudi Arabia, a firm handshake, along with the phrase, “\textit{al-salam alaykum}” (peace be upon you) is the most common form of greeting. The proper response is, “\textit{Wa alaykum al-salam}” (and upon you, peace). Males who know each other well commonly follow the handshake by extending the left hand to the other’s right shoulder and kissing the right and left cheeks.\textsuperscript{255, 256} Women follow a similar protocol

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
when meeting other women. One to three kisses on the cheek are common. Kisses should alternate cheeks beginning with the left. Western men should not offer their hand to a woman they do not know well.

**Exchange 2: How are you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How are you?</th>
<th>wish lonak?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Fine, very well.</td>
<td>bKhayr, Tayib.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 3: Hi, Mr. Mohammed.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Hi, Mr. Mohammed.</th>
<th>marHaba aKh imHamad.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Hello!</td>
<td>ahlayn!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>Are you doing well?</td>
<td>'asaak ibKhayr?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, by God.</td>
<td>ee wal laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using first names in Saudi Arabia connotes a greater level of familiarity and intimacy than in the West. Lacking a term equivalent to “mister,” Saudis often use titles such as doctor, sheik (chieftain), mohandas (engineer), and ustadh (professor). The title “sheikh” should only be used with first names and never with family or last names.

**Exchange 4: Good morning.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Good morning.</th>
<th>SabaHk al laa bil Khayr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Good morning.</td>
<td>SabaHk al laa bin noor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Direct eye contact is appropriate between members of the same sex. Between members of the opposite sex, however, eye contact should be avoided.\textsuperscript{262}

**Exchange 5: Good afternoon.**

| Soldier: | Good afternoon. | masaak al laa bil Khayr. |
| Local:   | Good afternoon. | masaak al laa bin noor. |

**Exchange 6: Good evening!**

| Soldier: | Good evening! | masaak al laa bil Khayr! |
| Local:   | Good evening! | masaak al laa bin noor! |

Saudi’s are comfortable with less personal space than Americans and commonly stand slightly less than an arm’s length apart. Space between men and women, however, is generally much greater.\textsuperscript{263}

Greetings often include asking about a person’s family and health.\textsuperscript{264, 265}

**Exchange 7: How is your family?**

| Soldier: | How is your family? | shlon ahalk? |
| Local:   | They are doing fine, thank you. | maa 'aleyhum, Taybeen. |

**Exchange 8: Good night!**

| Soldier: | Good night! | tiSbiH 'ala Khayr! |
| Local:   | Good night! | tiSbiH 'ala Khayr! |

Male/Female Interaction

The laws of Saudi Arabia provide for strict segregation by sex. Unrelated males and females should not interact with each other in either individual or group settings. Sitting next to or speaking with a man who is unrelated can potentially be seen as violating a woman’s honor leading to severe consequences, regardless of age. Even chatting on social networking sites such as Facebook can bring serious harm to women; a father recently beat and shot his daughter to death for chatting with a man on Facebook.

Public interaction between male and female family members is also restricted. Any public display of affection is inappropriate, even for married couples. Although some Saudi women are employed outside the home, they are employed in settings where their interactions are limited to other women, e.g. women’s universities, banks that cater to women, and women’s markets.

Hospitality and Gifts

Because Saudis value and protect the privacy of their homes and families, most socializing is done in restaurants, particularly when entertaining foreign guests. In most cases, males and females will be in separate rooms.

When invited to a Saudi house, arrive on time and remove your shoes. If sitting cross-legged on the floor to dine, it is considered a great offence to show the soles of one’s feet to another. Wait for the host to give specific instructions. Usually, guests are seated

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after the host or oldest male. Always allow the oldest members to enter the dining room before you do.\textsuperscript{275}

Do not show excessive admiration or interest in something belonging to someone else, because the host may feel obligated to give it to you and will likely be offended if the offer is refused.\textsuperscript{276}

Gifts are not commonly given in Saudi culture and are normally reserved only for close friends. Receiving a gift from an acquaintance is embarrassing and offensive to most Saudis. Whatever the gift, it should be the best available for an affordable price. Avoid gold jewelry or silk clothing for men because both are seen as effeminate. Platinum is acceptable, but silver is a safer gift. Make sure that the silver is appropriately marked by a government authority.\textsuperscript{277} Gifts are not normally opened in front of the giver.\textsuperscript{278}

Flowers from a man should be avoided but women could give them to their hostess. Alcohol is probably not acceptable as it is a violation of Muslim traditions.\textsuperscript{279}

\textbf{Exchange 9: This gift is for you.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>This gift is for you.</th>
<th>haaThee hadeeya lik.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>I cannot accept this.</td>
<td>magdar aaKhîTh haa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Exchange 10: I really appreciate your hospitality.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>I really appreciate your hospitality.</th>
<th>mashkoor 'ala iDh Dhiyaafa.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>It is nothing.</td>
<td>wajibkum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saudi hospitality usually means that the meal offered to guests will be large, with more food than it is possible to eat. Hosts may press guests to eat more, but it is acceptable to decline. There is little after-dinner conversation, so once the dishes have been removed, it is time to leave.  

**Eating and Types of Food**

*Cuisine*

Saudis generally eat three meals a day. A light breakfast is eaten around 8 a.m. and often consists of cheese, yogurt, eggs, jam, and bread. The midday meal, eaten around 2:30, may consist of mutton or chicken and rice dishes, with a variety of side vegetables, salads, and fresh fruits. The evening meal is eaten after 8 p.m. A common dinner begins with soup and a green salad followed by rice, vegetable dishes, meat, and fruit or dessert. According to Muslim tradition, Saudis neither eat pork nor drink alcohol.  

Food varies by region, reflecting tradition and history. Dishes in the Eastern Province tend to have a wider variety of spices, including cardamom, turmeric, cloves, cinnamon, saffron, cumin, and coriander. This province is also home to a distinguished tradition of seafood dishes and special rice dishes. Basmati rice is often flavored with raisins, onions, rose water, and a variety of spices.  

**Exchange 11: The food tastes so good.**

| Soldier: | The food tastes so good. | al-akil Tayib. |

---

Local: Thank you. mashkoor.

Exchange 12: This food is very good.

| Soldier: | This food is very good. | haaTha al-akil Tayib. |
| Local: | It’s Aseeda. | haaThee ‘aSeeda. |

Meccan food, from the area just east of Jeddah on the Red Sea Coast, is famous for its flavorful meat dishes. Popular dishes include mabshur (finely ground lean lamb pressed into kebabs and grilled) and mulukhiyyah (chicken or meat in a soup-like mix served with bread or rice). Other common dishes include shikamba (a creamy lamb meatball soup), kufteh (ground meat patties), kabsa (a chicken and rice dish flavored with tomato paste), and waraq ‘unab (stuffed grape leaves).

Exchange 13: What is the name of this dish?

| Soldier: | What is the name of this dish? | wish isim hal akla? |
| Local: | This is kabsa. | haaThee ismaha kabsa. |

Exchange 14: What ingredients are used to make kabsa?

| Soldier: | What ingredients are used to make kabsa? | wishee mukaweynaat al kabsa? |
| Local: | Lamb meat, rice, tomato paste, and mixed spices. | laHam ghanam wu riz ma’ SalSat TamaaTim wu ibharaat imKhalaTa. |

---

Common drinks sweet black or mint tea, fruit juices, soft drinks, and coffee. Coffee is more than a beverage in Saudi Arabia, playing an important role in social interaction. The coffee ceremony (gahwa) follows ancient rules of preparation etiquette. The beans are ground using mortar and pestle and flavored with cardamom. Coffee is brought to a boil three times, each time in a different pot. Cups are filled only halfway, and custom dictates that one accept no more than three cups. Shaking the cup from side to side means you have had enough. Inviting someone to coffee or tea is a great compliment. Refusing the invitation is an insult.

Dining Etiquette

Much of the dining etiquette in Saudi Arabia differs from that in the United States. It is common to offer a toast as the food is served. Guests should offer the Saudi equivalent of “bon appetit” by saying, “Sahtain,” or, “Bismillah.” After the meal, guests should say, “Daimah,” meaning “may you always have plenty at your table.”

Saudis often eat with their hands. Be sure to wash your hands before sitting to eat. Many restaurants have special sinks for this purpose. Always use the right hand to pick up, pass, and eat food. Never use the left hand—it is regarded as unclean. Keep your left hand at your side and never rest it on the table. Men and women usually dine separately, but if dining together, women should avoid directly touching any food being served to a Muslim male other than her immediate relatives.

When using utensils, the spoon is more important than the fork. Keep the spoon in the right hand, putting it down to switch to the fork when needed. Never use the left hand, even when using utensils. Left-handed people should eat with their right hands.

Etiquette normally requires that the most honored person sit at the middle of the table. The next most honored person is commonly seated at the head of the table.

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considered rude to stare at others while they are eating; the safest way to avoid offense is to look at your own plate while eating.\textsuperscript{300}

**Dress Code**

Though many Saudi men wear western-style clothing, traditional garb is quite common. Men often wear an ankle-length cover known as a *thobe*. A headscarf, or *gutra*, is worn over a cap (*taiga*) and secured with one or two cords called *egals*. Together these represent the national dress for Saudi men.\textsuperscript{301} Footwear is generally sandals or open-back shoes with socks.\textsuperscript{302}

In public, Saudi women must wear a black *abaya* or long loose-fitting dress. Anything may be worn under the *abaya*, including tailored dresses or jeans and T-shirts. Many *abayas* are reversible, black on one side and blue on the other. Women may reverse the *abaya* and wear the blue side while at home. The material from which the *abaya* is made often indicates a woman’s social status.\textsuperscript{303, 304}

**Exchange 15: How should I dress?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How should I dress?</th>
<th>wish albas?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.</td>
<td>ilbas malaabis fiDhfaaDha tighaTee jismak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 16: Is this acceptable to wear?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this acceptable to wear?</th>
<th>haaTha magbool libsa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Very conservative Muslims wear a veil (niqab) covering the entire face except for the eyes. Others, particularly in more relaxed Jeddah, may wear veils covering only the lower half of the face or even a simple scarf (hijab) covering the hair. Full face veils in Jeddah are normally an indication that the woman is a visitor from other parts of the kingdom.

Dress codes for both men and women are most strictly observed in the conservative capital of Riyadh. Western women in the more conservative regions of the country should wear an abaya and at least a scarf covering their hair. In many places, foreign women are not required to cover themselves completely.

Foreign men are expected to dress in clothing appropriate to their home countries. In most cases, those working in offices should wear suits. Although most Saudis will wear sandals, foreigners are not required to do so. It is inappropriate to wear tight pants, short sleeves, or shorts.

**Non-Religious Holidays and Celebrations**

*Al-Yaom al-Watany*

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded on 23 September 1932. National Day (al-Yaom al-Watany) is a celebration of unity and progress. The day is usually spent with family though the holiday itself is centered on national pride. Some young men paint their cars green or wave the Saudi flag while driving around honking.

*Ras al-Sana al-Hijra*

New Year’s Day is celebrated on the first day of the Muslim calendar. One of the most significant events on the lunar calendar, the day has different meanings for different people. The nation’s Shi’a Muslims observe the day as the beginning of the month of mourning in honor of Imam Hussain. For Sunnis, it is considered the anniversary of the death of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr. For everyone, it is a time of renewal. Many Saudis exchange gifts and cards.

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Jinadriyah Camel Races and National Festival of Folklore and Culture

This is the country’s only non-religious festival. It is held annually in February in Mecca. Organized by the National Guard under the supervision of the Crown Prince, the two-week long celebration features camel races and other types of cultural performances.313

Do’s and Don’ts

- Do respect Saudi Arabia’s strict rules for gender segregation.
- Do remove your shoes when you enter a Saudi home.
- Do remember that Saudis do not refer to their own religion as Wahhabism; instead, they refer to themselves as Muslims.
- Do accept any invitation to tea or coffee. Refusing is likely to be perceived as an insult.
- Do dress modestly.

Don’t show the soles of your shoes or feet to another, especially while sitting or when crossing your legs.
- Don’t use your left hand for any public activity, especially eating.
- Don’t try to make eye contact with women.
- Don’t attempt to photograph mosques.

Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Handshakes between men are not commonly used.
   False
   Between Muslims in Saudi Arabia, a firm handshake, along with the phrase “al-salam alaykum” (peace be upon you) is the most common form of greeting.

2. Gifts are a common and important element of Saudi hospitality.
   False
   Gifts are not commonly given in Saudi culture and are normally reserved only for close friends. Receiving a gift from an acquaintance is embarrassing and offensive to most Saudis.

3. The Saudi practice of segregating the sexes is seen as a practical means of maintaining the honor of women.
   True
   The Saudis see the practice of segregating the sexes as the most practical means to maintain public order.

4. When dining with utensils, it is acceptable to use the left hand to hold a fork or spoon.
   False
   Never use the left hand for eating, even when using utensils. When using utensils, the spoon is more important than the fork. Keep the spoon in the right hand, putting it down to switch to the fork when needed. Left-handed people should eat with their right hands.

5. Full face veils (niqab) in the city of Jeddah are usually an indication that a woman is a visitor.
   True
   Full face veils in Jeddah are normally an indication that the woman is a visitor from another part of the Kingdom. Jeddah is a less conservative city and many women wear veils covering only the lower half of the face or even a simple scarf (hijab) covering the hair.
CHAPTER 4: URBAN LIFE

Introduction

Over the past three decades Saudi Arabia transitioned from a mainly rural tribal society to a predominantly urban one. About 86% of Saudis now live in urban areas. As recently as 1960, the capital city of Riyadh was an oasis-based, mud-brick dwelling community of less than 60,000 people. Today, Riyadh is home to over 4.72 million people, and ranks among the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the world.

The traditional nomadic lifestyle, once characteristic of life in Saudi Arabia, has mostly been replaced by a settled urban lifestyle. Each of the nation’s major metropolitan areas serves a specific function, including religious, administrative, or economic. Some of the massive urban growth is due to the influx of the more than 8 million foreign workers living in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia is attempting to change the face of its urban spaces and to more carefully manage urban growth by creating six new “economic” cities located throughout the nation. These cities are designed to help diversify the economy, attract foreign investment, provide employment for the growing population of young people entering the labor force, and help distribute development and services. The largest of these is King Abdullah Economic City in Rabigh. The city is north of Jeddah and will be home to 2 million people.

Projections of continued rapid population growth and the young age of the nation’s population are strong motivators as the nation works to devise and promote sustainable growth.

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urban growth. The unprecedented growth has put a strain on national resources and the environment, particularly water resources. Managing current and potential problems, including housing demand, employment, and environmental quality, is important to quality of life and stability within the nation.

**Urban Problems**

Air pollution is a growing problem. According to the World Health Organization, Saudi Arabia is now the fifth most polluted nation in the world. Poor air quality is mainly the result of pollutants from the oil refineries operating near urban areas. Other industries such as desalination plants also contribute to diminished air quality. Vehicle emissions add to the problem.

Urban water and wastewater management can not keep pace with the population expansion. For example, because nearly two-thirds of Jeddah’s residents lack access to the central sewage system, sewage is collected in vaults and then hauled away by truck. This is believed to have contributed to contamination of the area’s ground water supplies. Sewage spills caused by uncontrolled flooding near Jeddah killed more than 120 people during the hajj in 2009.

Poverty is a growing urban problem. Estimates suggest that there may be as many as 3 million people living in extreme poverty—nearly 2% of Saudi families. Other statistics suggest that as many as 30% of all Saudis could be considered poor. As much as 16% of Saudis live in shanty towns or slums that have sprung up around the urban

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fringe. Some of the urban poor cannot afford basic services such as electricity. A shortage of available housing adds another dimension to the problem.

Employment

Approximately half of the Saudi workforce is expatriate workers. Nearly 8 million foreigners work, mostly in the private sector. The prevalence of such a large expatriate workforce places additional pressures on employment within the kingdom. In 2010, nearly 11% of Saudis were unemployed but for those between the ages of 20 and 29, the situation was far worse. Around 27% of these youth were unemployed, but some studies put the youth unemployment figures over 50%.

For years, government jobs in public administration have been the Saudi ideal. Such jobs are now in short supply. At the same time, technical jobs in the private sector cannot be filled by Saudis because most lack the necessary skills. It may well take time for the old views of the ideal job to mesh with the current realities. The government is worried that unemployment among university graduates will continue to grow, especially among young urban workers with limited skills. Unemployment is anticipated to increase as new high school graduates and more women seek jobs.

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332 Duraid Al Baik, “Education Key to Tackling Problem of Saudi Poverty,” *Gulf News*, 9 October 2008,

333 Mona Serageldin et al., “The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition” (report by the UN Human Settlements Programme, 2012), 26,

334 Kim Murphy, “Saudis’ Quicksand of Poverty,” Information Clearinghouse, 16 May 2003,
http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article3412.htm


337 Mona Serageldin et al., “The State of Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition” (report by the UN Human Settlements Programme, 2012), 27,

338 Walter Russell Mead, “Could Youth Unemployment be the Saudi Achilles Heel?” *The American Interest*, 11 April 2012,


Young urban Saudis live in a prosperous nation with the manifestations of wealth all around them. Angry at not receiving what they perceive as their fair share, many will not take available jobs because such jobs do not pay enough or are not prestigious enough. Expectations about work and pay are not always in line with job prospects. Currently, most Saudis are employed in public sector jobs by the government but the real prospects are in the private industry where few Saudis are employed or have the skills to gain employment.\(^{341, 342}\)

The rising unemployment among young urban workers represents a potential threat to stability as dissatisfaction and frustration rise.\(^{343, 344}\) To increase the number of jobs available for Saudi nationals, the government has instituted a series of measures designed to “Saudize” the workforce. These measures require that at least 75% of private company staffs are Saudi, and limits the number of visas for foreign workers.\(^{345}\)

**Healthcare**

According to a 2000 report by the World Health Organization, the Saudi healthcare system ranked 26th in the world, placing it ahead of both Canada and the United States.\(^{346}\) The two-tier system, managed predominately by the Saudi Ministry of Health (MOH), provides basic services free of charge through health centers and clinics.\(^{347}\) The second tier consists of hospitals and specialized care facilities. These are supplemented by some private facilities and operators.\(^{348}\) Nearly 60% of all health services are provided

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through the MOH, while the remaining 40% are supplied by other governmental agencies and the private sector.\textsuperscript{349} Health clinics and centers are responsible for providing basic care while hospitals represent a second tier of care for specialized treatment. Most of these second-tier facilities are located in urban areas.\textsuperscript{350} Generally, public hospitals are available only to Saudi nationals. Expatriates do not have access to public hospitals and must rely on private healthcare facilities.\textsuperscript{351} Private facilities, which often have more luxurious conditions and shorter wait times, are available to anyone able to pay the cost.\textsuperscript{352}

In major cities, the standard of medical care is generally very high both in public and private facilities.\textsuperscript{353} Many of the doctors, especially in the private facilities, are foreigners who may not speak Arabic. English is the operating language in hospitals throughout the nation although Arabic translators are available.\textsuperscript{354, 355} Most of the nation’s private hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies are located in urban areas.\textsuperscript{356} Saudi Arabia has the lowest number of doctors, nurses, and available hospital beds of all the Gulf nations, leading to serious shortages of medical personnel throughout the country. About one-fifth of all doctors practice in Riyadh hospitals.\textsuperscript{357}

Ambulance and emergency response is also limited. Riyadh, for


example, has only 14 ambulances staffed with fewer than 30 EMT personnel.  

Education

The government provides free public university education for its citizens. Primary education for children ages of 6–15 has been compulsory since 2004. Education is strictly segregated. Public education includes six years of primary school, three years of middle school, and three years of high school. The government also operates schools for special needs children and some adult literacy programs. The curriculum for girls emphasizes religious and Arabic language studies while the one for boys has broader options.

All education stresses obedience to the nation and loyalty to Islamic law. Recent textbooks continue to teach religious intolerance to the point of advocating violence in certain situations. Religion is part of curriculums, including the post-secondary secular college curriculum, and enrollment in religious studies is compulsory for all students.

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School enrollment is lower in Saudi Arabia than in other Arab states. In 2004, only 59% of Saudis were enrolled in primary school and 52% in secondary school. Access to education for males and females is uneven. In 2009–2010, there were 4,130 boys’ schools compared to 3,780 girls’ schools although girls represented approximately 47% of intermediate school students. Dropout rates are high for boys and girls, equaling nearly 3.5% of the population. Rates increase over the educational levels with approximately 13% of primary students dropping out, 18% of intermediate students, and 37% of secondary students.

Exchange 17: Is there a school nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Is there a school nearby?</th>
<th>fee madrasa gareeba min hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 18: Do your children go to school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Do your children go to school?</th>
<th>'indik 'eeyaal bil madrasa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many Saudi students earn degrees in theology, history, literature, and social studies rather than in technical skills like engineering. As a result, the job market for humanities is saturated and many Saudis do not have the technical skills necessary to be competitive. Current educational reforms are focused on ensuring that education provides more marketable skills, especially for the private sector. Many of the nation’s 43 universities have been built since 2000 and now emphasize technical and vocational skills. Enrollment in universities is expected to double by 2017.

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Restaurants

Major Saudi cities have all manner of trendy restaurants serving a variety of international cuisine. Dining establishments enforce strict rules of gender segregation. This does not mean a family cannot dine together in public. While single men must go to the men’s section, married men may dine with their wives and children in the family section. Women who enter a restaurant unaccompanied by a male relative are often denied admittance.

Exchange 19: I’d like some hot soup.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>I’d like some hot soup.</th>
<th>mumkin shoraba.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Sure.</td>
<td>Tayib.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 20: Are you still serving breakfast?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are you still serving breakfast?</th>
<th>baagee itgadmoon fuToor?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restaurants generally close during prayer times. According to Saudi law, when the prayer call is given, all businesses have 5 minutes to close their doors. In the case of a restaurant, this means that new guests cannot be admitted until prayer has finished (usually about 20 minutes). Guests must wait until prayer is finished before they can leave.

Exchange 21: May I have a glass of water?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>May I have a glass of water?</th>
<th>mumkin ti'Teeenee kaas maya?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, right away.</td>
<td>hal Heen ajeeba.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 22: Do you have a dessert?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you have a dessert?</th>
<th>'indikum Hala?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, we have lokmat.</td>
<td>ee, 'indana ilgeymaat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Saudi women normally eat while sitting with their faces to the wall. Men sit with their back to the wall. Some tables in the family section may be sectioned off with curtains to ensure privacy.  

**Exchange 23: Can I have my total bill, please?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can I have my total bill, please?</th>
<th>mumkin ta'Teenee il iHsaab?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, of course.</td>
<td>ee, Tab'an.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 24: Where is your restroom?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where is your restroom?</th>
<th>wayn al Hamaam?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>That room to your left, over there</td>
<td>al ghurfa ilee 'ala yisaarak, hnaak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typically, the person who issued the invitation is expected to pay the bill. Tipping is neither required nor expected in most restaurants because most restaurant bills include a service charge.

**Exchange 25: I would like coffee or tea.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>I would like coffee or tea.</th>
<th>abee shaay aw ig-hawa.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Sure.</td>
<td>Tayib.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 26: Put this all in one bill.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Put this all in one bill.</th>
<th>Khalaha kilaha 'ala iHsaab waaHid.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Okay.</td>
<td>Tayib.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Marketplace and Shopping**

Saudi Arabia has a variety of shopping options including modern malls, Western supermarkets, and the traditional marketplace, or suq, where the price of nearly everything is negotiable. In some shopping centers, such as the Kingdom Shopping Centre in the capital, men are barred from entering certain floors reserved exclusively for women. A 2012 policy change now allows single men to visit malls during peak hours on evenings and

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weekends. Some of the most popular suqs in Riyadh include the Al Bat-haa known for electronics and watches; Al Deira, best known for men’s clothing, antique accessories, and spices; and Al Zel, best known for rugs, antiques, and ancient swords.  

**Exchange 27: Is the market nearby?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is the market nearby?</th>
<th>as soog igrayib min hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, over there on the right.</td>
<td>ee, 'ala il yimeen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 28: How much longer will you be here?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How much longer will you be here?</th>
<th>ilmita raayiH tabga hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Three more hours.</td>
<td>il thalath saa'aat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malls offer an alternative to the traditional suq. Malls frequently open around 9 a.m. but close around 1 p.m. They usually reopen around 4 or 5 p.m. Malls close for approximately half an hour during prayer times.

**Exchange 29: Please, buy something from me.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local:</th>
<th>Please, buy something from me.</th>
<th>takfa, ishir minee.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>Sorry, I have no money left.</td>
<td>mit-asif, maa biga me'eeloos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 30: Do you sell shomaghs?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you sell shomaghs?</th>
<th>tbee' shamugh?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

386 Agence France-Presse, “Riyadh Eases Ban on Single Men in Shopping Malls,” 22 March 2012, [http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gf3KKxxR8wr1FvSFHPWYjPqHdCM2A?docId=CNG.52747391d01822f26d635ca87e46f5f1b11](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gf3KKxxR8wr1FvSFHPWYjPqHdCM2A?docId=CNG.52747391d01822f26d635ca87e46f5f1b11)


Bargaining has a long tradition and is considered an honorable way of doing business. Serious bargaining is time consuming and following certain rituals, including refusing the merchant’s “lowest offer” at least a couple of times.390

**Exchange 31: Can I buy a carpet with this much money?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can I buy a carpet with this much money?</th>
<th>agdar ashtiree sijaada ibhal mablagh?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 32: Do you have any more of these?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you have any more of these?</th>
<th>buga 'indik min haThayn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Merchants often put one item on display, but have a larger selection of different colors and sizes in a nearby storeroom. One should ask if there is a broader selection in the store room.

**Exchange 33: May I examine this close up?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>May I examine this close up?</th>
<th>mumkin ashoof Thee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Sure.</td>
<td>Tab'an.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Money and Credit Cards**

Purchases are transacted in the national currency, the Saudi riyal. Customers should carry sufficient currency. Modern shopping centers and boutiques frequently accept international credit cards; traditional markets prefer cash and usually do not accept credit cards.391

**Exchange 34: Do you accept U.S. currency?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you accept U.S. currency?</th>
<th>taaKhThoon floos amreekeya?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No, we only accept Saudi riyals.</td>
<td>laa maa naKhiTh ilaa reeyalaat su'oodeeya.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


Exchanging currency is relatively easy. Most commercial banks have exchange counters. Banks are generally open from 8 a.m. to noon and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Hours for women’s banks differ, generally opening at 9 a.m. and closing at 3:30 p.m.

Exchange 35: Can you give me change for this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can you give me change for this?</th>
<th>tagdar ta'Teeenee faka il Thee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transportation**

**Cars**

Rapid population growth in Saudi Arabia has increased the number of cars on the roadways. The fatality rate from automobile accidents is high. Drivers are particularly erratic in the Eastern Province; drivers need to be extra cautious. To increase travel safety in major cities, the government has implemented an automated traffic control system (saher) consisting of digital cameras that monitor accidents and violations.

Men temporarily in the country can drive with a U.S. driver’s license. Men employed in the country are required to obtain a Saudi driver’s license. All parties involved in a vehicle accident may be taken to the police station and can be held for several days pending a determination of responsibility. Once reparations have been paid, the responsible party can be released.

Exchange 36: Where can I rent a car?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where can I rent a car?</th>
<th>wayn agdar asta-jir sayaara?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Downtown.</td>
<td>wasT al madeena.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Exchange 37: Is there a gas station nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a gas station nearby?</th>
<th>Holakum maHaTat banzeen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women are prohibited from driving or riding bicycles on public roads throughout Saudi Arabia.\(^{399}\) Saudi women are prohibited from riding in vehicles with unrelated men. Non-Muslims may not enter the cities of Mecca or Medina.\(^{400}\)

Exchange 38: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?</th>
<th>Holakum mekaneekee zayn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public Transportation

Taxis are easy to find in Saudi cities. In unmetered taxis, fares should be negotiated beforehand.\(^{401}\) Taxis are either yellow (ordinary taxis) or white (limousines).\(^{402}\)

Exchange 39: Where can I get a cab?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where can I get a cab?</th>
<th>wayn alga sayaarat ijra?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Over there.</td>
<td>hnaak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 40: Can you take me there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can you take me there?</th>
<th>tagdar twadeenee hnaak?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, I can.</td>
<td>ee, agdar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SAPTCO, the national bus company, operates a large fleet of air-conditioned buses that connect all major cities with rural points throughout the nation. The service is punctual, efficient, and inexpensive. Women and children have special sections in which they must ride. 403

**Exchange 41: Will the bus be here soon?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Will the bus be here soon?</th>
<th>al baaS beyeejee gareeb?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passenger train service is currently only available to and from Riyadh and points east, e.g., Hofuf and Dammam. Women are required to ride in designated compartments segregated from men. 404

**Exchange 42: Is there a train station nearby?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a train station nearby?</th>
<th>fee maHaTat giTaar gareeba min hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traveling distances between major cities are often long, making air travel the most practical option. Saudi Arabian Airlines has regular service to domestic airports. 405 Service between cities is regular and reliable. However, only those travelers with a passport or iqama (national residence permit) are permitted on board an airplane. 406 Be advised that during the month of Ramadan, airlines will hand out packaged food, but the food cannot be eaten on the plane during daylight hours. Passengers should take the food with them and eat it after dark. 407

**Exchange 43: Which road leads to the airport?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Which road leads to the airport?</th>
<th>ay Tareeg yewadee 'al maTaar?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>The road heading east.</td>
<td>aT Tareeg alee raayiH sharg.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

406 Saudia, “Traveling Documents,” 2012, [http://www.saudiairlines.com/portal/site/saudiairlines/menutem.d9a467d070ca6e65173ff63dc8f034a0/?vgnextoid=ca76a56c361a9110VgnVCM1000001f64e80aRCRD](http://www.saudiairlines.com/portal/site/saudiairlines/menutem.d9a467d070ca6e65173ff63dc8f034a0/?vgnextoid=ca76a56c361a9110VgnVCM1000001f64e80aRCRD)
Exchange 44: Is there a hospital nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a hospital nearby?</th>
<th>fee mistashfa gareeba min hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, in the center of town.</td>
<td>ee, fee wasT al madeena.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crime and Solicitation

Crime rates, although increasing, are relatively low, ranking well below that of the United States. 408, 409 Nevertheless, Westerners have reported incidents involving robbery and attempted robbery. Women commonly report being harassed, stalked, or followed by local men. Popular outdoor markets and traditional older markets are frequently the venue of petty nonviolent crime, e.g., theft of mobile phones and valuables left in unsecured vehicles. 410

Exchange 45: Did these people threaten you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Did these people threaten you?</th>
<th>haThoola an naas yehadidoonak?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Begging, unheard of a generation ago, is now common. Many are professional beggars, including children. 411 Others are young girls with disabilities. 412 Still others are children who have been sent to Saudi Arabia to beg after being kidnapped by gangs operating out of Yemen. 413, 414 The number of beggars typically increases during the holy month of Ramadan because expectations of charity, in accordance with Islamic tenants, are higher. 415, 416

---


Exchange 46: Give me money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local:</th>
<th>Give me money.</th>
<th>'aTnee floos.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>I don’t have any.</td>
<td>maa 'indee shay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4 Assessment

1. The capital of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, has grown from less than 60,000 to over 4.72 million people in 50 years.
   True
   In 1960 the capital city of Riyadh was an oasis-based, mud-brick dwelling community of less than 60,000 people. Today, Riyadh is home to over 4.72 million people and ranks among the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the world.

2. Saudi Arabia has one of the lowest levels of air pollution in the Middle East.
   False
   Saudi Arabia is the fifth most polluted nation in the world. Poor air quality is mainly the result of pollutants from the oil refineries. Other industries, such as desalinization plants and vehicle emissions contribute to the problem.

3. Due to the wealth created by oil, there is little poverty in Saudi Arabia.
   False
   Poverty is a growing urban problem. As many as 3 million people (2% of Saudi families) live in extreme poverty. About 30% of Saudis could be considered poor and as much as 16% of the population live in shanty towns or slums in or near the urban fringe.

4. Estimates of unemployment among urban youth range as high as 50%.
   True
   Around 27% of urban youth are unemployed, but some studies put the youth unemployment figures over 50%.

5. Women, including foreign women, are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia.
   True
   Women are prohibited from driving or riding bicycles on public roads throughout the Kingdom. Saudi women are prohibited from riding in vehicles with unrelated men.
CHAPTER 5: RURAL LIFE

Introduction

Once a largely rural society divided into tribal groups, only about 18% of today’s Saudis live in rural areas. Following the discovery of oil, many Saudis migrated to urban centers during the 1970s. This migration to the cities led to major changes within the society, including a severe reduction in the number of Saudis employed in agriculture, an increase in literacy, and a decrease of tribal influence within the country.

The nation’s few remaining desert dwellers fall into two basic groups: the authentic Bedouin (inhabitants of the desert) who continue to live, in ever-shrinking numbers, as nomadic shepherds; and the fellahin (subsistence farmers) who lead a settled life year round on the edge of the desert. The Bedouin nomads, unlike the fellahin, take up residence in the desert during the rainy winter seasons and then migrate back to the desert’s edge during the summers.

Tribal Distribution

The largely urban society of contemporary Saudi Arabia retains strong ties to its tribal roots. Although tribal autonomy and traditional structures have eroded in the years since nationhood in 1932, tribes remain an important source of social identity.

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Tribal affiliation is a significant feature defining relations between individuals and the government. For example, the government designates tribal leaders to represent tribal members in interactions with governors and other district officials. In some cases, tribal affiliation determines membership in organizations such as the national guard. Most tribes have some affiliation with the ruling house of Saud through marriage.

Today, there are approximately 20 major tribes in the country, each with more than 100,000 members. Each tribe is subdivided into smaller groups. One of the major tribes is the largely nomadic Anazah from which the ruling house of Saud is descended. Other important tribes include the Ad-Dawaser, the Hail, the Harb, the Mutair, and the Qahtan, all of whom are located mainly in the Najd region. Also from the Najd are the mainly nomadic Otaibah, reputed to have the strongest tribal bonds, and the Shammar, rulers of Arabia before King Abd al-Aziz. Historical feuds and disagreements between the ruling Saud and some tribes continue. The Shammar, Mutair, and al-Aidh tribes still harbor a grudge against the royal family. The main tribe in the Hijaz region is the Bani Malik. The Bani Yam, a largely Shi’a tribe who fought with the Saudis in 1933-1934, dominates the Asir region. The al-Murrah tribe, with whom Ibn Saud found refuge when exiled during his youth, lives in the desert regions of the Rub al-Khali.

Land Distribution

Historically, land tenure was secured through tribal affiliation. Each of the desert tribes claimed ownership over their homeland (*dirah*). These homelands were usually based on habitual use and included oases or watering holes. A royal decree ended this system of tribal ownership in the 1950s. In 1968, the Public Lands Distribution Ordinance was passed, further eroding communal control of land. Under the ordinance, the government allocated between 5 and 100 hectares (12 to 247 acres) of free land to individuals, up to 400 hectares (988 acres) to companies and organizations, and 4,000 hectares (9,884 acres) for special projects. The new owners could assume full title to the land if they developed 25% of it within a two- to five-year period. By 1989, more than 1.5 million hectares (3.7 million acres) of land had been redistributed, with the bulk of it (57%) going to special agricultural projects.

Exchange 47: Do you own this land?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you own this land?</th>
<th>hal arDh milkik?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saudi Arabia’s vast oil fields are managed by Saudi Aramco, the state-owned oil company, though they remain under the control of the royal family. The government recently granted foreigners the right to own property in the kingdom.

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Rural Economy

Approximately 7% of Saudis are employed in agriculture, which accounts for only 2% of GDP. Women made up only 5.7% of the agricultural workforce in 2010. Less than 2% of the nation’s land is arable. Approximately half of the cultivated land relies solely on rainfall, while 30–40% uses irrigation, often from underground water sources. The irrigated areas are concentrated in the Riyadh and al-Qasim districts and al Sharqiyah province. Major crops include wheat, barley, tomatoes, melons, and dates. Saudi Arabia has the largest dairy livestock herd in the world; major products include mutton, chicken, and eggs.

At the nation’s founding, agriculture was based largely on subsistence farming. In order to stimulate the rural economy, the government heavily subsidized rural development programs. The success of these efforts is evidenced in the fact that Saudi Arabia is now a wheat-exporting country and has achieved food sufficiency in some fruits and vegetables, eggs, and poultry.

Exchange 48: Where do you work, sir?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where do you work, sir?</th>
<th>wayn tishtighil?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>I am a farmer, sir.</td>
<td>anaa imzaari'.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The situation, however, does not look favorable for the future. The Saudi wheat harvest is dropping as the major aquifer feeding the fields dries up, forcing the government to look elsewhere to meet the country’s food needs. Currently, the government is buying and leasing land in other countries, including South Africa, Ethiopia, and Sudan, hoping to augment its agricultural efforts at home. As decreasing fresh water supplies put increased pressure on agriculture, the government is looking at developing fish farms and aquaculture, especially along the nation’s Red Sea coast.

Rural Transportation

Of more than 221,372 km (137,554 mi) of roadways in the kingdom, 21% (47,529 km/29,553 mi) are paved. Most rural roadways are well-maintained and in good repair. Remote villages are reasonably well-connected to the main transportation network by a series of feeder roads. Cars are available for rent at various locations, but women are not allowed to drive cars in the kingdom. The risk of being involved in a fatal accident in rural areas is among the highest in the world.

Exchange 49: Is there lodging nearby?

| Soldier: | Is there lodging nearby? | fee findig gareeb min hina?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

456 Gert van Rensburg and Joyce Letswalo, “Country Market Study: Saudi Arabia” (report to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: Sub-directorate; Europe, Russia and Middle East, March 2010), [http://www.nda.agric.za/docs/researchp/marketstudysaudi.pdf](http://www.nda.agric.za/docs/researchp/marketstudysaudi.pdf)
457 Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, “Agricultural Achievements,” n.d., [http://www.saudiembassy.net/print/about/country-information/agriculture_water/Agricultural_Achievements.aspx](http://www.saudiembassy.net/print/about/country-information/agriculture_water/Agricultural_Achievements.aspx)
Bus service is generally reliable and safe. Bus service provided by SAPTCO serves some rural locations. Buses have separate sections for female passengers, usually located at the front of the bus. Women are not allowed to board intercity buses unless they are accompanied by a male relative.

**Education**

Saudi Arabia invests vast resources providing rural citizens with education and health care. Schooling is free and primary education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 15. The Ministry of Education has made efforts to increase access to basic education through the secondary level in rural areas in recent years.

Women in rural areas have much higher rates of illiteracy and lower levels of educational attainment. One reason for this is that girls tend to get married younger in rural areas and leave school earlier, resulting in lower educational achievement. Efforts to improve women’s education include revising the curriculum so that it is roughly equivalent to that for boys, though some fields of study remain limited to boys.

Rural schools can lag behind their urban counterparts in terms of materials and facilities, such as computers and science labs. Rural teachers lack professional support due mainly to a lack of other experienced teachers in the schools. Teachers are sometimes required to teach subjects with which they have limited familiarity, potentially leading to a lower quality of education for rural students.

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469 Tareq Abdulali Al-Silami, “A Comparison of Creative Thinking and Reflective-Impulsive Style in Grade 10: Male Students from Rural And Urban Saudi Arabia” (PhD dissertation, School of Education,
Healthcare

Rural healthcare facilities can take care of routine procedures, but for more serious needs, it is necessary to seek attention in hospitals located in one of the major cities. Private facilities require payment upfront. Rural residents often have to wait longer for healthcare than those in urban areas, especially the elderly, adolescents, and those with special needs. Facilities in remote rural regions and along the border areas are particularly sparse.

Exchange 50: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a medical clinic nearby?</th>
<th>fee ’iyaada garæeba min hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, over there.</td>
<td>ee, hnaak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 51: Is Dr. Khalid in, sir?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is Dr. Khalid in, sir?</th>
<th>ad diktor Khalid mawjood?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural access to healthcare facilities is difficult for several reasons, including poor road conditions, lack of transportation, and long travel times. To improve access, the government has established a system of mobile clinics. These mobile vehicles have enough working space for a doctor and a nurse and contain basic clinical equipment and a lab for routine tests. long distances to reach clinics in rural areas is a particular problem for women who must rely on male relatives for transportation to and from the clinics. A male guardian’s

Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia, July 2010), 122,
http://vuir.vu.edu.au/16016/1/Al_Silami_PhD.pdf


http://applications.emro.who.int/emhj/V17/10/17_10_2011_0784_0793.pdf

http://applications.emro.who.int/emhj/V16/10/16_10_2010_1085_1090.pdf
permission is required for women to be admitted to a hospital, and women cannot give consent for some medical procedures. 473

**Exchange 52: My arm is broken, can you help me?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>My arm is broken, can you help me?</th>
<th>eedee maksoora tigdar itsaa'idnee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, I can help you.</td>
<td>ee, agdar asaa'idk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who’s in Charge?**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is divided into 13 provinces (minqat), each ruled by a governor appointed by the king. Most of these governors are members of the ruling house of Saud. In 2003, new regulations permitted the creation of consultative councils (majlis) at the municipal level. Half of the municipal council members are elected by popular vote, but the president is appointed by and reports to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs under the auspices of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA). 474, 475

**Exchange 53: Do you know this area very well?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you know this area very well?</th>
<th>ti'rif hal manTiga zayn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the founding of the nation in 1932, tribalism has weakened but not completely disappeared. Much of the influence wielded by tribes is evident when there is a conflict with national authorities. People still consult with their tribal chiefs to mediate on their

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behalf, particularly on issues related to moderating criminal penalties, securing work, or funding social projects such as hospitals.  

Exchange 54: Does your leader live here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Does your leader live here?</th>
<th>shayKhakum ye'eesh hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 55: Can you take me to your leader?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can you take me to your leader?</th>
<th>tagdar twadeenee ilshayKhakum?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Saudi government has the right to designate tribal leaders who act on behalf of their tribe members. The leaders work through district emirs and governors to deal with issues affecting their tribes. Political allegiances between the ruling house of Saud and the various tribes are still consolidated through marriage.  

Exchange 56: Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Respected leader, we need your help / advice / opinion.</th>
<th>yaa Tuweel al 'umur, nabee musaa'adatkum / naSeeHatkum / raayakum.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nomadic Pastoralism on the Arabian Peninsula

Traditionally, the Bedouin of Saudi Arabia roamed widely in their search for sufficient camel pasture. They pitched large tents made from goat hair and sheep wool.

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wherever they found water and grazing land. The animals provided them with everything they needed to survive (i.e., meat, milk, butter, and wool for weaving). 479

When King Abd al-Aziz unified territories in the first quarter of the 20th century, he changed the traditional system of tribal grazing and water rights. As a consequence, tribal warfare, especially in border regions, was reduced. After the establishment of the Kingdom in 1932, the allocation of grazing and water rights became a matter of government policy, though new restrictions were difficult to enforce. 480 By 1980, most nomads had adopted a settled lifestyle, with only 5% of Saudis characterized as truly nomadic. 481 Although the lifestyle has now largely disappeared, the influences of Bedouin nomadic culture remain an important thread in Saudi culture. 482, 483

Border Crossings and Checkpoints

Saudi Arabia has land border crossings with Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. 484 The Saudis are in negotiation with the Sultanate of Oman to open a border crossing in 2012 in the Rub al-Khali. 485 Conditions at border crossings are variable due to a number of factors, including political activities in the region. 486 Violence occasionally erupts in border areas, especially along the Saudi-Yemeni border. 487

Exchange 57: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where is the nearest checkpoint?</th>
<th>wayn agrab nigTit tafteesh?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>It’s two kilometers.</td>
<td>ba'ad ithnayn keelo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numerous checkpoints operate throughout Saudi Arabia where travelers are required to present identification papers. Saudi authorities routinely check traveler identification at checkpoints within cities and on intercity highways.488, 489

Exchange 58: Please get out of the car.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Please get out of the car.</th>
<th>law simaHt inzil min is sayaara.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>OK.</td>
<td>Tayib.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beginning in 2012, Saudi women will be deployed at border crossings to facilitate the passage of women into the country.490

Exchange 59: Show us the car registration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Show us the car registration.</th>
<th>warana istimart as sayaara.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>OK.</td>
<td>Tayib.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 60: Is this all the ID you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this all the ID you have?</th>
<th>haaTha il-ithbaat al waHeed alee me'ik?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Violent confrontations between demonstrators and security forces have occurred at some checkpoints. In the area of Qatif, several civilians were killed or wounded in one such episode in 2012.491

Exchange 61: Are you carrying any weapons?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are you carrying any weapons?</th>
<th>me'ik asliHa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Movement in border regions is particularly dangerous because of the existence of anti-personnel mines and other ordinance from the Gulf War era and earlier. In 1991, during operation Desert Storm, Saudi Arabia used cluster munitions in attacks against Iraqi forces. Significant numbers of unexploded ordnance remain in the battle area near al-Khafji and along Kuwaiti border with Saudi Arabia.492

Exchange 62: Is this area mined?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this area mined?</th>
<th>hal manTiga imlaghama?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 5 Assessment

1. King Abd al-Aziz implemented rules on grazing lands and water rights in the early 20th century.
   **True**
   When King Abd al-Aziz unified the territories in the early 20th century, he changed the traditional rights of tribes over grazing lands and water. These changes reduced tribal warfare, especially in border regions.

2. The tribal chieftain is an important contact in any rural administration.
   **True**
   Tribalism has weakened but not completely dissolved. People still consult tribal chiefs to mediate on their behalf, particularly on issues related to moderating criminal penalties, securing work, and funding social projects such as hospitals.

3. Approximately one in five Saudis live in a rural setting.
   **True**
   Once a largely rural society divided into tribal groups, Saudi Arabia today has only about 18% of people living in rural areas.

4. Tribalism is no longer a significant factor in Saudi life.
   **False**
   Although tribal autonomy and traditional structures have eroded since 1932, tribes remain an important source of social identity. Tribal affiliation is a significant feature defining relations between individuals and the government.

5. Agricultural fields rely almost exclusively on irrigation to water crops.
   **False**
   Approximately half of all cultivated land relies on rainfall. Only about 40% of the cultivated land is irrigated, often from underground water sources.
CHAPTER 6: FAMILY LIFE

Introduction

The family is the most important social group in Saudi Arabia and the center of life. The family is the foundation of personal identity, a source of support, and the focus of loyalty. Saudis are more guarded about their families and homes than most Western societies. Saudi families prefer to live in self-contained residences where members are protected from outside influence and contact with outsiders is limited. Relations among family members are often close.

Marriages traditionally took place between cousins, and while this practice continues, it has fallen somewhat out of favor. Marriages are still arranged between families, but legally speaking no one is forced to marry; an individual may reject an intended spouse but social pressures may override legal escapes. Because of the centrality of family to Saudi culture, most people will eventually marry. Men are allowed by law to have as many as four wives at a time. In practice, however, few have more than one wife at a time. In spite of the value placed on family, the divorce rate in Saudi Arabia is one of the highest in the world.

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Families are patriarchal, with men having the undisputed authority as head of the household and provider for the family’s needs. Women are largely confined to the roles and duties of wife and mother.\textsuperscript{505} The demands of modern life have changed these roles only slightly, and many men and women continue to resist change, holding fast to traditional gender roles.\textsuperscript{506} In the face of modernization and urbanization, families remain largely intact and stable, serving as anchors for their members.\textsuperscript{507}

**Typical Household**

Historically, households often included three or four generations living under one roof. However, this family structure is no longer the norm, especially in urban areas where young married couples prefer to move into their own homes.\textsuperscript{508} Although the total fertility rate of the country (2.26 children per woman) indicates modest population growth, the size of the average family has been declining in recent years. The average family size is now 5.8 people per household.\textsuperscript{509, 510}

The structure of the family is patriarchal, with the oldest male exercising authority over the household. Women have no formal decision-making authority although they may some wield influence in certain matters.\textsuperscript{511} Saudi society is much more collectively oriented with the needs and desires of the family trumping those of individuals.\textsuperscript{512} Most social activity takes place within the family, often within the confines of the home.\textsuperscript{513, 514}


\textsuperscript{506} David E. Long, Culture and Customs of Saudi Arabia (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 40.


\textsuperscript{508} Hunt Janin and Margaret Besheer, Cultures of the World: Saudi Arabia (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2004), 63.


\textsuperscript{511} Hunt Janin and Margaret Besheer, Cultures of the World: Saudi Arabia (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2004), 63.

\textsuperscript{512} Hunt Janin and Margaret Besheer, Cultures of the World: Saudi Arabia (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2004), 65.


\textsuperscript{514} Nicolas Buchele, Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture: Saudi Arabia (London: Kuperard, 2010), 60-62.
Exchange 63: Did you grow up here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Did you grow up here?</th>
<th>tarabayt hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Families are obligated to take care of each other and to support each other. Family loyalty is a source of great pride for the average Saudi.  


Exchange 64: Do you have any brothers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Do you have any brothers?</th>
<th>'indik iKhwaan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since unmarried females are not permitted to live alone or without male protection, households generally include unmarried daughters.  

Historically, it was unusual for Saudis to remain unmarried. However, a new study shows that nearly 6.3% of women over the age of 32 are single, and by 2015, that number could rise to 24%. One reason for the increased number of unmarried women is that unemployment is causing young Saudi men to postpone marriage. Another reason is the housing shortage. In some cases, male guardians refuse to allow marriages because the prospective husband is unsuitable or because they wish to retain the salaries of their employed female charges.  


Exchange 65: Does your family live here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Does your family live here?</th>
<th>ahlik ye'eeshoon hina?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exchange 66: Are these people part of your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are these people part of your family?</th>
<th>haThoola min ahalk?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of Women

Saudi Arabia’s Basic Law does not guarantee gender equality. Males in the kingdom enjoy a higher status than women. Saudi Arabia is one of the least gender-equal nations in the world, ranking 135 out of 146 countries. Women’s activities are highly regulated and a strict segregation of sexes is followed in all aspects of Saudi life. Under Saudi law, women are treated as minors, requiring the permission of a male guardian or relative to travel, attend school, work, leave the home, or engage in many other daily activities.

Women are not permitted to drive cars or vote, though the king recently promised that women would be allowed to vote in municipal elections beginning in 2015. Women’s access to public places, including libraries and museums, is restricted and frequently confined to specified times.

In legal proceedings, the testimony of a woman is worth only half that of a man. Women must generally have a male relative speak on their behalf, particularly in matters related to the family. Women have the legal right to own property and are allowed to inherit, but their share is generally about half that of male relatives.

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Status of Elderly and Children

With age comes respect in Saudi families, and the tradition of respect for age and seniority is still strong.\textsuperscript{528} Islamic principles specify that the duty to care for one’s parents is second only to the obligation of prayer. The obligation to care for and respect one’s parents and the elderly means that there are no homes for the elderly.\textsuperscript{529}

The oldest male in the household is owed respect and wields power in deciding the course of action for other family members. The oldest woman, though without such authority, often wields informal influence, particularly on issues of marriage.\textsuperscript{530} Elders do not relinquish their leadership roles as early as they did in the past. This means the most powerful authority figure for a young wife may not be her mother-in-law, but her husband’s grandmother. A generation has now come of age which finds itself stymied in carving out an autonomous sphere within the multi-generational extended family.\textsuperscript{531}

Children are highly prized in Saudi society and can do no wrong in the eyes of adults.\textsuperscript{532, 533} There still exists a clear preference for boys. Boys are breast fed longer and doted on by the female members of the family. Once boys reach the age of seven, they enter the more disciplined world of their fathers. Girls learn their roles and proper demeanor from an early age. They remain with the women, preparing for their futures as wives and mothers.\textsuperscript{534}

Saudi law prohibits children under the age of 13 from working, except in family business and domestic labor. Nevertheless, approximately 1.5% of children are in the labor force, mostly in the Eastern Province.\textsuperscript{535}

\textsuperscript{528} David E. Long, \textit{Culture and Customs of Saudi Arabia} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 38.

\textsuperscript{529} Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, “Understanding Islam,” 2012, \url{http://www.saudiembassy.net/about/country-information/Islam/understanding_Islam.aspx}


\textsuperscript{531} missing footnote?

\textsuperscript{532} Fiona Moss, “My Life Inside the Saudi Kingdom,” \textit{Telegraph}, 4 June 2004, \url{http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3618333/My-life-inside-the-Saudi-kingdom.html}


Marriage and Divorce

Marriage

In Saudi Arabia, marriage is not a sacrament but a civil contract. Under Islamic law, the contract consists of two parts: the offer (ijab) and the acceptance (qabul), both of which occur in a single meeting. A woman is required to have a legal guardian conclude the contract for her. Many marriages are arranged, but forced marriages are no longer legally permitted. Either party can reject an intended future spouse. Saudi women are prohibited from marrying a non-Arab unless given special dispensation from the king.

Exchange 67: Is this your wife?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this your wife?</th>
<th>haaThee zojtik?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The specific rights and obligations of spouses are outlined by shari’a law. The husband is obligated to provide the wife with necessities, including food, clothing, and shelter, according to his financial status. The wife is expected to live in the home, which must be private and not include other relatives.

Exchange 68: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are you the only person in your family who has a job?</th>
<th>int ash shaKhS al waHeed ib'a-a-iltik ilee 'inda 'amal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

According to Islamic law, a man can take up to four wives. Each wife and family, however, must be treated equally. The financial obligations of supporting multiple households largely limit polygamous marriage to the wealthy.

Exchange 69: Are you married?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are you married?</th>
<th>int mitzawij?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 70: How many people live in this house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How many people live in this house?</th>
<th>kam huma ilee ye'eeshoon ibhal bayt?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Ten.</td>
<td>'ashra.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no official minimum age for marriage in Saudi Arabia, and child marriages are not uncommon. Girls as young as eight years old have been married, often to men much older.

Exchange 71: Is this your entire family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this your entire family?</th>
<th>haaThee 'eltik kilaha?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consanguineous marriages, or marriages between blood relatives (usually a first or second cousin), are still widely practiced among Saudi tribes. The practice is one way of

---

limiting outsiders’ access to family wealth. However, over time the practice can result in physical weaknesses in the offspring.\textsuperscript{548} Estimates suggest that between 25\% and 42\% of all marriages in Saudi Arabia are between cousins.\textsuperscript{549}

**Divorce**

Divorce in Saudi Arabia is much easier for men than for women.\textsuperscript{550} Under shari’a law, men have the right to divorce a wife by repudiation (\textit{talaq}) which requires the utterance of the phrase, “I divorce you.” This procedure can be carried out either by the husband or his agent with power of attorney.\textsuperscript{551, 552} Since \textit{talaq} does not require the wife’s consent, some women are unaware they are divorced and continue living with the husband. A proposed new law requires divorced spouses to be informed that they have been divorced.\textsuperscript{553}

Women have the right of divorce by \textit{talaq} only if it was specifically included as a right in the marriage contract. The divorce may be revoked during a waiting period (\textit{iddat}). Normally, the waiting period is approximately three months during which time the wife is required to stay in the home. During \textit{iddat}, a husband may require the woman to have sexual relations with him regardless of her consent.\textsuperscript{554}

Under the rules of mutual divorce (\textit{khula}), a wife is required to compensate her husband. The \textit{khula} requires two male witnesses, and the wife is required to follow the rules of the \textit{iddat}.\textsuperscript{555}

A third type of divorce, the \textit{tafriq}, is a judicial ruling following a court petition. Even if the divorce is granted, women must observe the \textit{iddat}.\textsuperscript{556} Divorces obtained in secular


\textsuperscript{554} Kristine Uhlman, “Overview of Shari’a and Prevalent Customs in Islamic Societies: Divorce and Child Custody,” January 2004, \url{http://www.expertlaw.com/library/family_law/islamic_custody-2.html#61}


\textsuperscript{556} Kristine Uhlman, “Overview of Shari’a and Prevalent Customs in Islamic Societies: Divorce and Child Custody,” January 2004, \url{http://www.expertlaw.com/library/family_law/islamic_custody-2.html#63}
courts and Islamic divorces granted outside of the country are not recognized in Saudi Arabia. 557

After divorce, husbands are the natural guardians of the children. Mothers, on the other hand, have the right to physical custody until age nine for girls and seven for boys, at which time the father assumes custody. 558, 559

Divorces are common, and Saudi Arabia’s divorce rate of 35% is the second highest in the world. 560 Rates are even higher in the cities. In 2011, the divorce rate was 39% in Riyadh and 60% in Jeddah. Rates in the eastern regions of the country were among the lowest—around 18%. 561

Weddings

Before a wedding, the prospective groom must pay a bride price, or mahr, which becomes the sole property of the woman. In the case of divorce, the mahr remains the women’s property. 562 The mahr must be paid in full before the marriage takes place. Under certain conditions, payment can be delayed until a specified time following the marriage. 563

Modern weddings are still sometimes held in the home, but more frequently they are held in hotels or wedding halls. Wedding parties and the wedding ceremony itself, like all else in the country, are segregated. 564, 565 Both the bride and groom wear white. The groom wears a long white covering, or bisht, and the traditional head scarf. Traditionally, the bride would wear a traditional zaboun dress and a face veil embroidered in silver thread (yashmak). 566, 567

Exchange 72: Congratulations on your wedding!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Congratulations on your wedding!</th>
<th>mabrook iz zuwaaj!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>We are honored you could attend.</td>
<td>sharaftana biHDhoorak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exchange 73: I wish you both happiness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>I wish you both happiness.</th>
<th>atamanaalakum as sa'aada.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>We are honored.</td>
<td>tisharafna.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The party for the groom is generally celebrated with a lavish feast, including a whole roasted sheep or baby camel. After the meal, the groom and his family join the women’s party, which often involves singing and dancing to traditional music. When the groom arrives, around midnight, the bride and groom are led to a dais with more singing and dancing. The couple is then escorted to their new home, signaling the end of the wedding.\(^{568}\)

A reception with traditional foods follows the wedding ceremony. Each guest commonly receives five pieces of almond symbolizing health, happiness, wealth, fertility, and longevity.

The final wedding party, or *sabaa*, occurs seven days later. Similar to the American bridal shower, only women attend the *sabaa*, bringing gifts for the new bride.\(^{569, 570}\)

Funerals

For strict Sunni Muslims, all people are considered equal in death.\(^{571}\) Public displays of grief for the deceased and the visiting of graves are frowned upon. The body of the


deceased is washed and placed in a shroud before being placed in a grave. No coffins are used and the body is carefully placed facing Mecca. By convention, the dead are buried before sunset of the day after death.  

**Exchange 74: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.</th>
<th>'aDham al laa ajrak.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>May God preserve you.</td>
<td>jizaak al laa Khayr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exchange 75: Please be strong.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Please be strong.</th>
<th>towakal 'ala al laa.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>God willing, we will try.</td>
<td>insha al laa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women are not allowed to attend funerals. Only men may attend funerals, whether the deceased is male or female. To do otherwise would contravene the requirements of segregation between the sexes.  

**Naming Conventions**

It is common in Saudi Arabia to string together a long series of first names using the words “bin” (son of) or “bint” (daughter of). Saudis may choose to go back many generations resulting in very long names. Saudi prince Faysal bin Turki bin Abdallah bin Mohhamad bin Saud’s name extends back to his great-great-grandfather.  

Four-part names are common and consist of a child’s given name, the father’s name, the grandfather’s name, and the name of the tribe. The tribal name (e.g., Harbi, Qahtani,  

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Ghamdi) can be shared with as many as half a million people. A representative male name is Ali bin Ahmed bin Saleh al-Ghamdi. He would be known as Ali to his close friends and family. He is the son of Ahmed who is the son of Saleh. Al-Ghamdi is his family name, reflecting membership in the tribe of Ghamd. His children would be given their own first name, followed by “bin Ali” or “bint Ali” (for males and females), followed by the grandfather’s name and then the tribal name. Ali’s son would be Hasan bin Ali bin Ahmed al-Ghamdi. His daughter might be Nadia bint Ali bin Ahmed al-Ghamdi. Names are sometimes shortened by leaving out “bin/bint”. In the example above, one might see Hasan Ali Ahmed al-Ghamdi. Women keep their names when they marry and do not adopt the name of the husband.

Exchange 76: Are these your children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are these your children?</th>
<th>haThoola 'iyaalik?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>na'am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, Saudis may choose to reference future, rather than past generations. A man, may prefer to be known as the father of his son. Persons using this convention are often referred to as “abu” followed by the name of the son. For instance, “Abu Mohammad” would be the father of Mohammad. Women would use the term “oom” so the mother of Mohammad would be referred to as “Oom Mohammad.”

CHAPTER 6 ASSESSMENT

1. The key social unit in Saudi Arabia is a man and his circle of male friends.
   False
   The family is the most important social unit in the country and the center of Saudi life. The family is the foundation of personal identity, a source of support, and the focus of loyalty.

2. Although Islamic law allows a man to take up to four wives, most men typically have only one wife.
   True
   In practice, the financial obligations of multiple households limit the number of polygamous marriages. Multiple wives are common only among the wealthy.

3. Marriages to cousins, which were once traditional, are now considered improper.
   False
   Marriage to first and second cousin is common among the Saudi. Estimates suggest that between 25% and 42% of all marriages in Saudi Arabia are between cousins.

4. Saudi nationals typically use three-part names comprised of a first name, a middle name, and a family name.
   False
   Four-part names are common and consist of a given name, the father’s name, the grandfather’s name, and the name of the tribe.

5. In Saudi Arabia, marriage is a civil matter.
   True
   In Saudi Arabia, marriage is not a sacrament but a civil contract.
FINAL ASSESSMENT

1. Saudi Arabia is approximately half the size of the continental United States.  
   True / False

2. The Rub al-Khali (Empty Quarter) is roughly the size of Texas.  
   True / False

3. Even in winter, temperatures in Saudi Arabia never dip below the lower 80s Fahrenheit.  
   True / False

4. The Saudi government has recently placed restrictions on the hiring of foreign workers in order to create more jobs for Saudi nationals.  
   True / False

5. Some people in the Hijaz region are direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.  
   True / False

   True / False

7. Most Saudis are Shi’a Muslims.  
   True / False

8. The only proper way to dispose of the Quran is to bury it.  
   True / False

9. Non-Muslims are prohibited from entering a mosque in Saudi Arabia.  
   True / False

10. Wahhabi Islam is a conservative form of Islam.  
    True / False

11. Many Saudis see themselves as the “true” Muslims.  
    True / False

12. Westerners are likely to be treated worse than Asians.  
    True / False
13. Females are prohibited from any social interaction with unrelated males, including social networking sites such as Facebook.
   True / False

14. Coffee plays a significant role in social interaction in Saudi culture.
   True / False

15. Saudis are less reserved than many of their Arab neighbors.
   True / False

16. Expatriates comprise nearly half of the Saudi workforce.
   True / False

17. The majority of Saudis are employed in the private sector.
   True / False

18. Women may enter a restaurant and eat alone.
   True / False

19. English is the operating language in Saudi hospitals.
   True / False

20. Education in Saudi Arabia is free and compulsory through high school.
   True / False

21. Tribal leaders can be selected by the Saudi government.
   True / False

22. Saudi Arabia is buying land in other countries, including Ethiopia and South Africa, to increase its food output.
   True / False

23. Due to poor grazing lands, there are few cattle and livestock in Saudi Arabia.
   True / False

24. There are approximately 40 major tribes in Saudi Arabia.
   True / False
25. To cement his authority in the nation, King Abd al-Aziz married a daughter from each tribe.  
   True / False

26. The leadership roles within a family are filled by the eldest members until their sons mature and marry and then take over as family leaders.  
   True / False

27. After being granted a divorce, a Saudi woman must return to her husband’s home to live for at least three months.  
   True / False

28. The right to divorce by *talaq*, or repudiation, is available only to men.  
   True / False

29. Prospective grooms are required to pay a bride price (*mahr*) to the bride.  
   True / False

30. Women are allowed to attend funerals but only of close relatives or other women.  
   True / False
Further Readings


