

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Twitter Posts on The Perspectives

of Women Driving in Saudi Arabia

by

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## ABSTRACT

The issue of women driving remains to be highly debated in Saudi Arabia. Recent developments on its legalization have sparked conversation and discourse, particularly in social media sites like Twitter. Several hashtags have been used to indicate either support or criticism towards the movement.

Examining Twitter tweets and hashtags, the study explored how the discourse on women driving had been executed, particularly in between genders. The study analyzed a sizeable number of tweets as well as their context via linguistic corpora analysis. Following Norman Fairclough's framework, the two opposing perspectives were investigated both at a level of textual analysis. The selected tweets were representative of the three hashtags that emerged on the heat of the discourse regarding the issue of women driving in Saudi Arabia: #Women\_car\_driving, #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15, and #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15.

The results showed, among others, that tweets with the hashtag #Women\_car\_driving presented a tremendous support towards the movement. On the other hand strong opposing reactions emerged from the hashtags #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 and #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Background

While the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been involving women in many domains including, politics, business and education, driving remains an ongoing issue between the progressives and the conservatives. Women's driving has been a highly debated issue in Saudi Arabia. Although there is no official law banning women to drive, it is known that they are not allowed to drive. However, while there is no actual law that bans women from driving, there is a law that requires all drivers to get their licenses first, and this is banned for women in Saudi Arabia (Baeshen, 2017). The struggle of Saudi women to drive goes back to November 6, 1990, where 47 women protested by driving 15 cars in the capital city, Riyadh. These women were arrested and suffered many consequences for participating in this rally. They were fired from their government jobs, and banned from traveling outside the country. Their names were blasted through the Mosques, to warn the country against their western ideas that will poison the minds of the other women. It's important to note that, after they spoke of their struggles to the king, they were given their privileges back after two and a half years of the movement. An order was given to the mosques to stop blasting their family names. Their struggles were documented and detailed in a book written by some members of the movement. The book entitled *The sixth of November-Women and driving 1990*, was published in 2013.

Two decades later, in June 17, 2011 a group of women started a campaign through social media called, Women2Drive. This campaign encouraged women to take action and start to drive and film themselves. Many women from different cities of the



country participated and posted their driving on YouTube, which ended with some of the women being arrested. Although this campaign didn't result in lifting the ban, it still gained local and international attention.

Recently, a similar attempt called for women to go behind the wheel on October 26, 2013. The campaign was arranged through social media to reach out to as many women as possible. However, before the start of this campaign a statement was released by the Ministry of Interior warning women activists against any participation. Although this campaign didn't go through all the way, social media users still debated and comment on it.

On April 25, 2016, Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman unveiled his "Saudi Vision 2030" to reduce the kingdom's reliance on oil. The reform program did not include ending the ban on women driving although it would save a lot of money and help women seek more opportunities (Saudi Vision 2030: Winners and Losers). Many women were anticipating mention of lifting the ban in the near future when the vision was announced. The Prince was later asked by the reporter and replied, "The community is not convinced about women driving, women driving is not a religious issue as much as it is an issue that relates to the community itself that either accepts it or refuses it." His statement suggested that women's driving is a social matter, and not so much about religion. It also suggests that the Saudi society is still not ready. The vision and the prince's statements prompted the supporters of the women driving to argue that society is, in fact, ready and is only waiting for the ban to be lifted. The Twitter hashtag #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 has trended as a result of the Vision announcement released on April 25, 2016. Their demands were protested by the other camp who argued

against women's right to drive in the hashtag #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 . The pro driving and the con driving debate was circulated and debated through these two twitter hashtags. In my dataset, I focus on these two hashtags created to debate this matter after the April 2016 vision announcement and one hashtag created before the announcement.

## **Overview**

Women in Saudi Arabia have found new means to express themselves as a result of the rapid developments in information technology. Social media platforms offer alternative venues for women to share their ideas, approval, or dissent on certain policies that tend to marginalize them. For example, Odine (2013) observed that social media empowered women in repressive regimes. However, regulations and restrictions on Internet use in Saudi Arabia are major barriers that prevent women from fully utilizing social media to voice their opinions regarding issues that matter to them. Anything that counters the fundamental principle of law, Islam, public decency, or the government is strictly censored (Odine, 2013).

Notwithstanding the barriers, Saudi women discovered a means to express their views while maintaining anonymity through social media. New technology has altered a traditionally private sphere into a powerful medium of self-expression for Saudi women (Guta & Karolak, 2015). As of June 2012, Internet users in Saudi Arabia reached 13 million, and of these users, 5.5 million used Facebook and 67% were between 15 and 29 years old. Meanwhile, women users comprise 30% of all users of social network in Saudi Arabia (Guta & Karolak, 2015). The number of active bloggers in Saudi Arabia is equally

distributed between men and women (Guta & Karolak, 2015). Approximately half of Saudi blogs are written by women aged between 18 and 30 years old. Given the shield of anonymity, Saudi women have found social media as a perfect place to express themselves, which would have been disallowed in the public sphere (Guta & Karolak, 2015).

Aside from Facebook, Twitter use has gained considerable popularity in Saudi Arabia in recent years. “Twitter is most popular among 18 to 24-year-olds in Saudi Arabia, followed closely by users in their late 20s to early 40s and its usage is split roughly between men and women” (Westall S. & McDowall 2016). Saudis under 35 years old access the platform through their mobile phones (Sreberny, 2015). Without a doubt, women have gained equal access and contributed to public discourses as a result of Internet access, which would be otherwise impossible because of the traditional conservative values. In the virtual world, blogs such as “Saudi Eve, Saudiyat, Saudiwoman’s weblog and women2drive campaign” are some efforts of women bloggers to initiate change to their status in Saudi society (Guta & Karolak, 2015, p.116). The voices of Saudi women are becoming relevant particularly when they challenge the state for the recognition of their rights as political citizens, consumers, and interest groups (Sreberny, 2015).

## **Literature Review**

Discourses and opinions expressed on social media have been investigated in past literature. Various analytical methods have been employed to fully understand the implications of these posts on social media on social and political policies. Newsome and

Lengle (2012) examined how Arab feminist activists utilized social media to initiate social change. Included in their analysis was how these women develop, disseminate, and share knowledge resources online. The aim of this study was to determine how discourses of activists were relevant at the local and international levels. The study employed a digital reflexivity framework to analyze gender and online activism. Activist engagement and citizen journalism communicated through various stages of communication were investigated using a system to produce and consume information. The scholars further examined how local knowledge has been transformed into global knowledge, and how the messages could be biased and manipulated at various stages of communication. The study particularly focused on Tunisian and Egyptian women who participated in the Arab Spring uprising.

In the stages of information flow, individual voices of women were analyzed. Although the concerns of the Arab Spring uprising were on democratic reforms, free suffrage, and to counter dictatorships, they were not focused on rights of women in particular. Nevertheless, gender equality issues were more specifically raised in the street protests in Egypt and Tunisia. In the second stage, individual voices may be reinterpreted to fit the requirements of others. At this stage, gender differences were more pronounced and important in analyzing how women were confronted with challenges when they employed social media. Newsome and Lengel (2012) found that the efforts of Arab women to express their opinions were only acknowledged globally when they fit Western narrative norms. By contrast, non-western models of dissent such as that of Naglaa Ali Mahmoud of Egypt could be construed as a type of “contained empowerment” (p.37). Although such “contained empowerment” has the potential to create new concept of

power to a broader audience, this power is limited because of its indirect impact on power structures. Therefore, women need to negotiate within this sphere to gain recognition and acceptance. The limited sphere in which Arab women could express their opinions is further complicated because they have to seek a forum separate from the mainstream and patriarchal structures. Hence, the ability to express themselves through social media has limitations and is deemed as contained empowerment because these sites waive normative rules to embrace alternative ones (Newsome & Lengel, 2012).

Guta and Karolak (2015) investigated how Saudi women employed social media to negotiate and express their identities using qualitative methods to understand the perspectives of the informants regarding their lived experiences in their daily lives. This research particularly addressed the “experiences, meaning construction, and interpretation” of the respondents, which might be challenging if researchers only employ observation alone (p.119). Seven undergraduate female students participated in the study. Selection criteria include determining whether potential informants were Internet users. The interviews were conducted in English and Arabic for a minimum of 30 minutes to one hour. The study confirmed the seven participants were active Internet users, spending approximately four to six hours a day and using social networking sites to connect with people, receive news and information, share religious content, participate in worthy causes, or express themselves through writing or sharing photographs. All respondents indicated Facebook as a main choice for social networking platform followed by Twitter and Tumblr. The main themes that emerged from the analysis of the responses include the social limits and regulations, online negotiation rules, and the effects of social media on social change. The results revealed that the respondents benefitted from the anonymity

and privacy provided by social networking sites to enable them to negotiate cultural and social regulations. Social media provided a venue for these women to contribute their voices and negate the image that they are victims of an oppressive patriarchal regime. Virtual spaces enable these women to negotiate their identities or alter traditional views regarding their offline roles in society. The lack of strict gatekeepers online enables women to express themselves freely and establish identities which may counter traditional patriarchal views (Guta & Karolak, 2015).

One of the more popular women's movement in Saudi Arabia is the demand of women to be granted them the right to drive automobiles. Sahly (2016) investigated how women activists framed the discourse on the right to drive in Saudi Arabia as expressed on Twitter. Using framing theory as a framework for the study, Sahly investigated how cognitive, emotion, and religious and moral language was employed on the discourse on women driving as expressed on Twitter. Moreover, the study also identified the relationship between these linguistic attributes on Twitter and retweeting behavior to determine the extent of influence these messages on Twitter affect society. The researcher captured relevant tweets from January 24 to February 24, 2016 using NVivo software. To specify the search for particular tweets, Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) was employed to narrow the search for specific content. APT was employed to include time frame (January 24 to February 24), location (Saudi Arabia), and the phrase "woman driving" (Sahly, 2016, p.37). Data were filtered to remove duplicate tweets. To process the data, translation from Arabic to English was employed followed by manual and computer-assisted coding. Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count Software (LIWC) was employed to code and analyze the tweets in an objective and

systematic manner. The software also has an analytical program with pre-set dictionaries. The results indicated that cognitive language was often used on social media, and most tweets that contained cognitive language were more likely to be retweeted than the other linguistic characteristics. Nevertheless, emotional language expressing anger was a strong predictor of retweeting behavior.

Similar to Sahly (2016), Almahmoud (2015) also examined Twitter posts to determine the “intersection of framing and intertextuality in computer-mediated communication” (p.iii). This researcher also employed tweets related to the demand of Saudi women to drive, as well as tweets from men clerics who opposed the movement. The researcher divided the analysis of the framing of two opposing views on the driving campaign and the intertextual means both actors used to shape their arguments into three sections, namely, describing the main frames that express the views of men and women on the Women2Drive campaign, the use of hashtags to develop these frames, and other linguistic features of users in framing their tweets. Tweets from women activists and opposing male clerics posted from October 23 to 27, 2013 were examined using content analysis. Four recurrent frames from men and women were identified. The use of hashtags was examined for how the participants utilize the platform to establish their positions within the larger conversation. The results revealed that both groups derived their opinions from prior experiences and shared ideologies to establish the campaign on Twitter. Both parties observed the regulations imposed by the government regarding tweets. Women tend to tweet in both Arabic and English to widen their campaign to include the international community, whereas men tend to use Arabic only in their tweets to enable them to assert status quo and contain the argument within the local community.

The exclusive use of Arabic by men framed their conspiracy arguments regarding the campaign; that the campaign has foreign influences intended to undermine established Saudi ethical and political system (Almahmoud, 2015).

Alharbi (2016) also examined a corpus of online posts written only by Saudi women to discuss the right to drive in Saudi Arabia. To provide a contrastive critical analysis, the study drew on Fairclough's theoretical framework which is based on the text, discursive and sociocultural practice. His findings included the construction of ingroup and outgroup categorization throughout the data.

Yuce and colleagues (2014) mined twitter data to determine the emerging trends and behaviour of people who participate in online collective action (OCA). Focusing on the twitter data associated with 'Oct26Driving', data were collected from September 25, 2013 to November 14, 2013 using Tweet crawling and scraper wiki. The researchers considered several hashtags associated with the campaign, such as '#oct26driving' and '#قيادة\_26\_اكتوبر'. Then, the tweets were indexed and filtered based on hashtag usage, and further classified based on their inclusion in either or both hashtags. The study was able to identify the cross-cultural characteristics of the hashtag networks. Arabic hashtags are dedicated for local consumption, whereas English hashtags elevate the campaign at the international level to gain support from international organizations such as human rights and women's rights groups. The use of particular hashtags also revealed particular tweeting behavior. Individuals who tweet in English were 80% more likely to use or associate another English hashtag within the same post. Meanwhile, individuals who tweet in Arabic were 90% more likely to use another Arabic hashtag within the same post (Yuce et al., 2014).



The studies examined in this review employed qualitative means to examine social media posts and behavior. Sahly (2016), Almahmoud (2013), and Yuce and colleagues (2014) employed computer-assisted means to examine, index, and characterize tweets or posts of individuals to determine their influence or impact on users and society in general. Their methods require the assistance of software to enable researchers to sift through thousands of posts. Without these analytical tools, it would be impossible to establish a trend or identify themes. By contrast, Guta and Karolak (2015) employed a simple qualitative method that involves a small number of respondents and face-to-face interviews. Although the methods of the previous three scholars appeared to employ massive datasets, the use of interviews created a more focused and direct view on how Saudi women use social media to advance their causes.

### **Emergence of Critical Discourse Analysis and its Definitions**

The study of critical discourse analysis can be traced during the 1990's where it gained substantial attention from many researchers in the fields of Linguistics, Socio-Psychology, Literary Studies, and Applied Linguistics among many other related areas. The development of CDA evidently was rooted in interests and explorations in discourse analysis.

Proponents of CDA offer various definitions of the term to help understand the concept. Ruth Wodak for instance, gives a broad perspective of the approach by stating that Critical Discourse Analysis is “a problem-oriented interdisciplinary research program, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agendas” (Wodak, 2011, p. 38). Wodak implies that the

interweaving elements that make up a critical discourse analysis is that is bound by areas relating to semiotics, identity and cultural change in society (Wodak, 2011). The same definition is supported by Kress where he defines the concept by asserting the intention of CDA that it aims to unravel different facets of power, social order, and its effects through text (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 1995, p.15). A detailed but simpler definition is given by Fairclough in which he states that CDA involves “integrating analysis of text, analysis of processes of text production, consumption and distribution, and sociocultural analysis of the discursive event” (Fairclough, 1995, p.23). As Fairclough suggests, the definition of Critical Discourse Analysis is realized in terms of its components. An important component is text, which pertains to “either the spoken or written discourse” (Fairclough, 1995). Critical Discourse Analysis hence, focuses on the use and processing of text in the social context, which means interpretation and interaction are important. This study of “text and talk” (Van Dijk, 1995) is important in revealing information necessary to determine the sociocultural roles language has taken.

Language is conveyed through text, and language use is not only an important element in communication but it also provides pieces of evidence to show identities, relationship, power, and social status. By studying language use, important discursive patterns are revealed which are important in identifying and establishing the use or abuse of societal power, domination, or resistance to power. CDA uses a three-dimensional framework to show a systematic and strategic means of analyzing the text and language use. This involves: “analysis of language texts, analysis of discourse practice and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice” (Fairclough, 1995, p.2). Texts contain important content which become vehicles for social interaction. So

the first step to CDA is the production of the text. Social media is an easy and convenient medium to find texts. Twitter as a form of social media limits characters and uses hashtags to send ideas and messages. This becomes an interesting digital communication platform which allows an active community of involved communicators to send, receive and react to messages posted on the social app. This has also become a freedom space for many Saudi women who wish to express themselves in such a way that they do not necessarily have to reveal who they are, as their identities remain anonymous.

The second element in the CDA Framework is analysis of discourse practice. Differences in culture equate to differences in interpretations and meanings. Thus, it leads to challenges in various effects such as “social classes, women and men, and ethnic groups through the ways in which they represent things and position people” (Wodak, 2011, p. 40). In this sense, CDA rationalizes arguments and ideas by digging deeper than what the surface meaning offers. Discourse practice consequently ties with discursive events in such a way that it is precisely these events that provide historical details to show how and why texts were produced.

### **Why Critical Discourse Analysis**

Interestingly, with the advent of the internet and the trend of social media becoming an important vehicle to express ideas and concerns, it has become categorically an important area to investigate how social power and identity are used. People have become more involved with many social and individual events that social media is a

place to see how culture and ideas converge in the internet world without fully needing to reveal oneself.

The researcher has found that Critical Discourse Analysis is suited to the study because it primarily underscores the social use of language which is the central focus of the study. More particularly, the interest is prompted by the idea of Saudi women and society's perception of these women being allowed to drive. The social media platform Twitter allows users to freely express themselves without the bounds dictated by the society and laws. This freedom provided by Twitter is what motivates and supports production and use of authentic language or "naturally occurring" language by real language users instead of a study of abstract language systems and invented examples" (Wodak, 2011, page 36). Given the historical background, cultural and social context of Saudi women, tweets reveal more than just a message being sent to a social network. It provides clues to how women are continually perceived and their attempt to venture away from the perception and social expectations that have marked their identity and gender for many years. Twitter became an venue for many women, most especially the issue of Saudi women being banned from driving as a social and cultural concern. Thus, this reflects that an increasing awareness from these women who have realized that there is so much more they can do as equally important members of the society, than the expectations given to them by their own culture. In relation to this, tweets present important data that relate to "the study of the functions of (social, cultural) contexts of language use".(Wodak 2011, page 36). One of the defining features of CDA is that the approach uncovers important information from the text or tweet exchanges to show

linguistic and social variables and ideologies. By linking tweets with other related tweets, a reference to the social context and discourse strategies may be determined.

CDA as an approach to analyze texts addresses the relationship between language and society. In the case of the researcher's study, the attention is placed on the discourse of Saudi women's right to drive in their own social contexts on Twitter. It also aims to draw in the idea of social power abuse, dominance and inequality presented in the texts which are found in tweets about Saudi women who drive.

### **Twitter and Hashtags**

One of the most popular social media that continues to be relevant is Twitter, a microblogging site that limits messages to 140 characters. In the recent years, people have taken advocacies and social campaigns to social media. Because social media is an efficient way to disseminate or spread information, it has become a forum for initiating awareness and a digital place for inciting situations or ideals. Twitter effectively uses hashtags as channels for quick links and searches. What hashtags do is categorize ideas with the same theme or content so that it becomes easily found within Twitter searches. Twitter gave the pound or number sign (#) is given a new definition and function. "Twitter has many communication conventions (e.g., retweeting, favouriting, @replies), but the hashtag is arguably its most powerful" (Konnelly,2015,p.2).The main fact that hashtags provide easy search and classification of concepts is what makes Twitter an ideal tool to initiate a forum or find people with similar interests, such as that of Saudi women who have begun with their intentions of being heard and allowed to express

themselves. In this study the researcher will investigate three hashtags. These hashtags fall under what Konnelly (2015) described as “the Cause Hashtag”, which defines a hashtag that was the venue for posts relating to social struggles and issues.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine and contrast data from tweet posts with the hashtags related to the June 15 campaign on Saudi women’s right to drive which used the opposing hashtags #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15, #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 and the pre campaign existing hashtag #Women\_car\_driving as a baseline. The messages will be analyzed using the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis as proposed by Fairclough.

### **Research Questions**

To meet the purpose of the study, the research questions are designed at addressing how the two campaigns use discourse to discuss and represent the Saudi women’s right to drive and the protests against the ban on driving. More specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What do the tweets reveal about the male and female perspectives on driving?
2. How do the tweets from the opposing campaigns construct the social culture and beliefs of the idea of Saudi women driving?
3. What linguistic strategies or references are utilized in the campaigns about women driving?

To answer the main questions and the construction of the in and out groups is achieved linguistically through these sub-questions using Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework. The two opposing campaigns tweets were investigated both at a level of textual analysis:

1. What type of referential and nomination strategies are utilized in the two campaigns tweets on women driving?
2. What types of predicational strategies can be identified in the tweets discourse on women driving?
3. What types and functions of intertextuality can be identified in the tweets?

## 2 DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, a detailed discussion of how data were collected for the research and what methodology was used in analyzing the collected data is presented. The data gathered for the study was focused on the Twitter posts about Saudi women's right to drive. These Twitter posts were collected from three different hashtags, namely:

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15; #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15; and #Women\_car\_driving.

In this regard, Twitter posts (tweets) with the above hashtags were collected. Since Twitter does not allow automated software tools to collect tweets that are more than two weeks old, Twitter's advanced search option was used to collect the tweets manually. Using advanced search options, only tweets in Arabic were retrieved to comprise the corpora for this study. Further, only tweets were selected for this study and not their tweet replies. However, tweet replies were used in determining tweets written for mockery purposes, as well as to clarify their stand on the issue should it appear to be ambivalent.

The researcher was able to extract 150 tweets from each hashtag which were then compiled into an Excel document. Each Excel sheet was organized according to the hashtags where the tweets were posted. Columns on the Excel sheet included: (a) a column for the tweet (b) a column for translation; (c) a column for the user name and ID; (d) a column for the user's gender; and (e) a column for how the researcher defined the gender, and the factors considered in labelling and identifying the gender. In doing this, the researcher first, checked how the Twitter users presented themselves in their accounts by looking at the names or ID, and bio. If the information could not clearly be defined by



the first factors, the researcher checked the users' timeline feed. Accounts whose gender could not be identified were labeled as *unknown*. There were two additional columns used on the Excel sheet. One indicated whether the Twitter posts were for or against the campaign. The last column indicated whether a photo or link was attached to the text.

Considering that the tweets were written in the colloquial instead of the standard Arabic, a hybrid approach (e.g. Google Translate tool ) could not be implemented. Hence, the Tweets were translated as accurately as possible so that they still conveyed the same meaning despite the cultural and structural differences between the two languages.

### **Hashtags Examined in the Study**

#### **#Women \_car\_ driving**

The first Saudi online campaign in 2011 incited the launching of many driving hashtags in subsequent years. #women\_car\_driving, which was first used on May 2012, continues to be used by activists and others who use it for relevant issues and demands relating to the progressive view of women's human rights, such as requesting a cinema or dropping the male guardianship. Evidently, like other hashtags, it is also used by Tweeters who oppose these campaigns and awareness issues, because some Saudi citizens see these requests as an offense to the conservative Saudi Arabian culture.

The search period for this hashtag was from March 8-27, 2016. The date was strategically chosen because March was the month prior to the Prince's Saudi Vision announcement that became a cause for the June 15, 2016 campaign and debate, since there was no mention of women being allowed to drive in the Vision statement.

This hashtag was included in the study to observe its usage before the campaign to ascertain a more authentic, organic volume of women driving sentiments on Twitter.

Having a non-campaign hashtag provides a baseline for the discourse and twitter positions on women driving independent from the influence of a campaign.

### **#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15**

This hashtag was created and trended on May 8, 2016. According to the BBC News, it gained more than 40,000 tweets in its first 24 hours. Accordingly, BBC News declared that the hashtag became a valuable platform that “served both as an opportunity for Saudi women to express their will to drive, whatever the norms of their country, and for Saudi men to offer their support” (Taylor, 2016). The data were collected from the time the hashtag was created and trended on May 8, 2016, through May 9, 2016.

### **#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15**

This hashtag was first seen on May 8, 2016 as a response to the previous hashtag, #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15. Saudi activists initiated opposition to the hashtag, with some commenting that the “reasons for rejecting women are that it contradicts customs and traditions since the ancient times and that this is not what they are called to do” (Controversy on Twitter, 2016). Like the hashtag *#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15*, the collected data were taken from the time the hashtag was first posted on May 8, 2016 to May 9, 2016.

## **Methodology**

This section of the chapter presents the analysis tools that were used in analyzing the tweets gathered on Twitter containing the three hashtags previously noted. First, the study drew on Fairclough’s (1995) theoretical framework. Thus, in the study the Twitter posts related to the hashtags mentioned in the data collection section were examined, as were the texts based on the discursive features connected to them. To obtain the answers

needed in the study, the researcher employed textual analysis of the tweets related to the hashtags. The data were analyzed using three elements: (a) referential and nominalization strategies, (b) predicational strategies, and (c) intertextuality. The purpose of the analysis was to answer the following research questions: (a) What type of referential and nomination strategies are utilized in the two campaigns tweets on women driving? (b) What types of predicational strategies can be identified in the tweets' discourse on women driving? and (c) What types and functions of intertextuality can be identified in the tweets?

### **Textual Analysis**

The tools used for textual analysis are referential and nomination strategies, and predicational strategies. Textual analysis is “a methodology used to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live” (McKee, 2005). The said tools were used to illustrate patterns of positive self-images (ingroup) and negative images (outgroup) from the tweet posts created before and during the campaign.

#### **Referential and Nomination Strategies**

Using referential and nomination strategies, it was attempted in the present study to identify the strategies used in the tweets posted for and against women's rights to drive. These strategies were used to determine the ingroup and outgroup categories of social actors. Additionally, the information established the relationship of the Tweet campaign with other social actors referred to in the texts. Referential strategies as part of discursive strategies, identify “features or characteristics selected and foregrounded to represent the group and frequently involves negative evaluation” (Blackledge, 2009).

The results of the referential and nomination strategies were arranged into different categories that are explained thoroughly later in this thesis.

### **Predicational Strategies**

Predicational strategies, on the other hand, involve assigning qualities to persons, animals, objects, events, actions, and social phenomena ( Wodak and Reisigl , 2001).

The study showed the predicational strategies determined how the users expressed either opposition against women driving or their support of women driving.

### **Discursive Practice**

The discursive practice entails analyzing intertextuality. This is an important aspect of the study because intertextuality necessitates looking at the utterance (in the case of this study, tweets) as one that is related historically to other texts. Additionally, intertextuality is an “emphasis on the heterogeneity of texts, and a mode of analysis which highlights the diverse and contradictory elements that make up a text” (Fairclough,1992,p.104). In other words, the relationship of texts with other texts is what is carefully analyzed in this section of the study.

### 3 DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the analysis of the tweets written in three hashtags by users who either supported the campaign or advocated for women’s right to drive and those who opposed the campaign and lifting the ban. The corpus consisted of 450 tweets that were gathered from three different hashtags. The tools used to analyze the data were: (a) referential and nominations strategies; (b) predicational strategies; and (c) and intertextuality, a discursive practice tool. Thus, the analysis revealed answers to the following research questions: (a.)What type of referential and nomination strategies are utilized in the two campaigns tweets on women driving? (b.) What types of predicational strategies can be identified in the tweets’ discourse on women driving? (c.) What types and functions of intertextuality can be identified in the tweets?

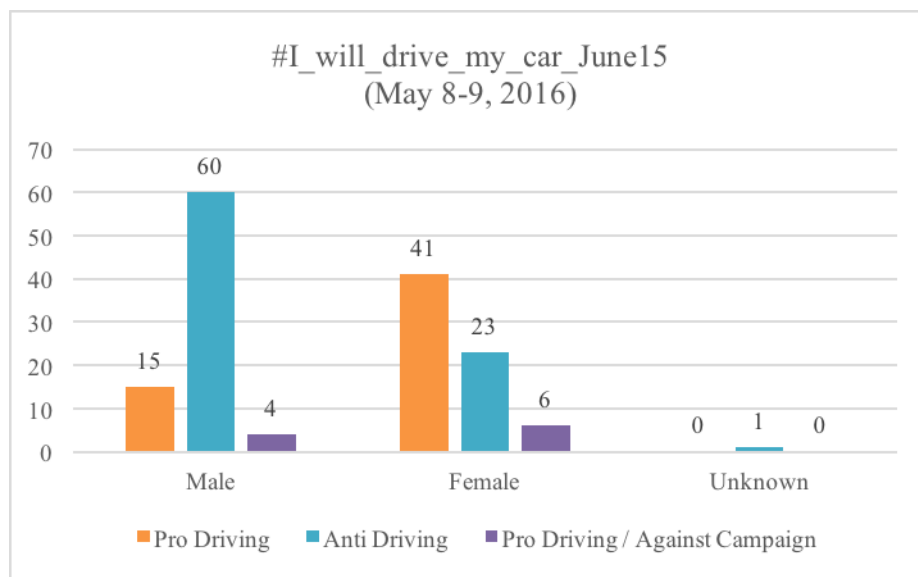


Figure 1: Gendered positions on women driving for the #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

Before identifying the strategies used in the two campaigns about Saudi women driving and to answer the research questions, the researcher identified the percentages of

males and females supporting and arguing against driving in each of the hashtags. Figure 1 illustrates the result of the #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15:

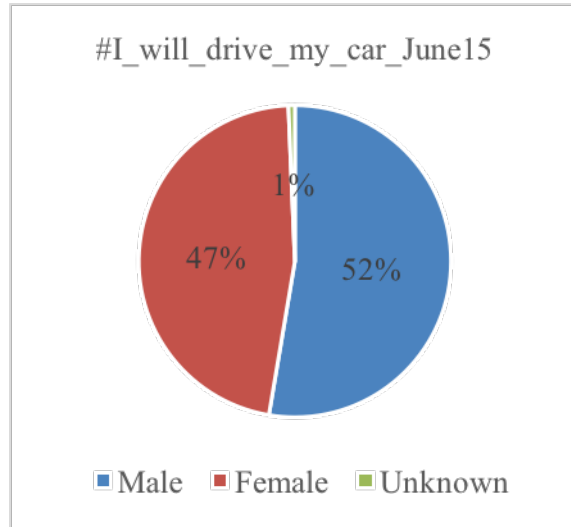


Figure 2: Gender distribution in #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

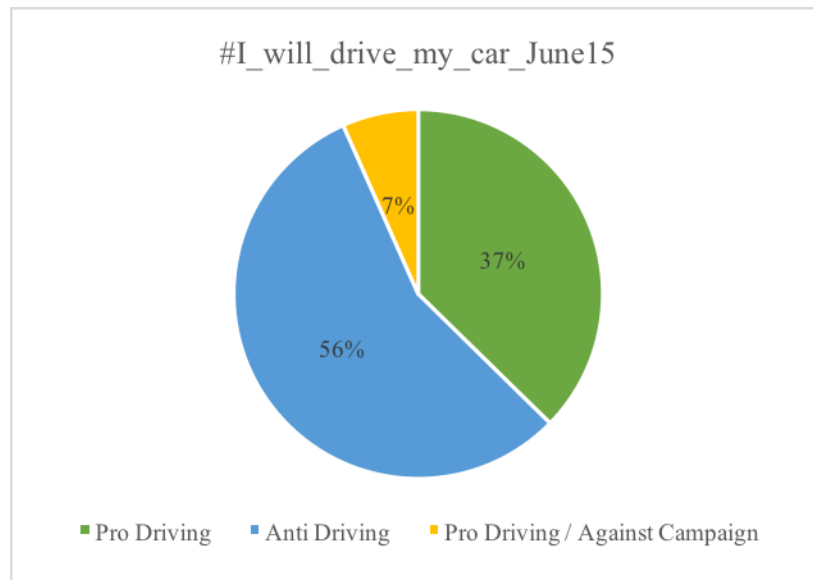


Figure 3: Positions on women driving for #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the gender distribution of the study’s subjects who used the hashtag “#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15”. Overall, there were 52% male tweeters, 47% female, and 1% unspecified subjects. From the male subjects as in Figure 1 a majority of 60 subjects were anti-driving, 15 were pro-driving, while four supported the women’s right to drive but opposed going about it with a campaign. The one gender-unspecified subject leaned towards an anti-driving rhetoric. From the female subjects, a majority of 41 subjects were pro-driving, 21 were anti-driving, while six were pro driving but against participating in the campaign on June 15, 2016. Figure 3 shows that 56% of the subjects regardless of gender posted anti-driving tweets, 37% wrote pro-driving tweets, and 7% were pro-driving but against the campaign. However, users of this hashtag apparently had more critics than supporters.

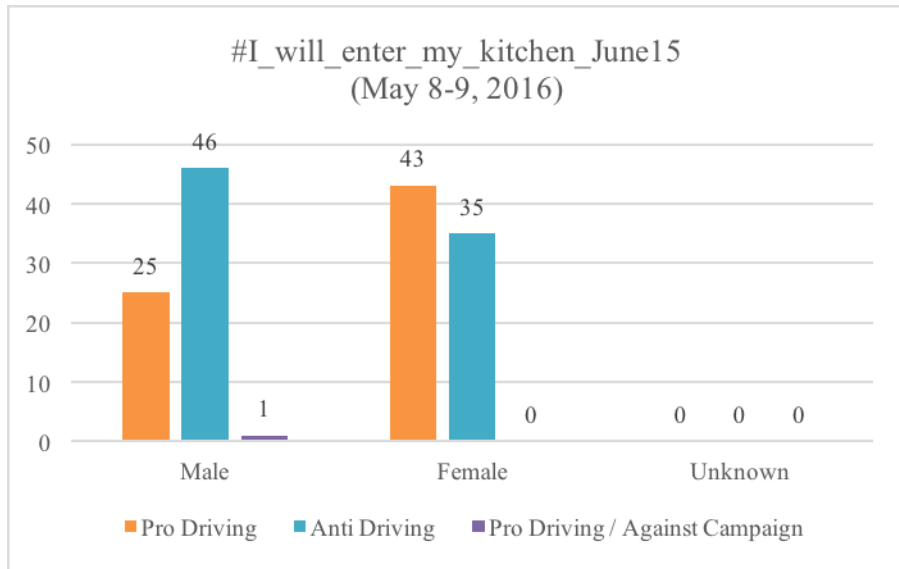


Figure 4: Gendered positions on women driving for the #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

Figure 4 and Figure 5 illustrate the gender distribution of the study's subjects who used the hashtag "#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15". Subjects who used this hashtag were composed of 52% males and 48% females. Figure 4 reports their positions, from among the male population, 46 subjects were against driving, while 25 were for driving and one tweeter was for driving but against the campaign. Among women, 43 subjects were pro-driving while 35 were against driving. In general as illustrated in Figure 6, the majority of them were against driving. 54% of this hashtag users were anti-driving while 46% were pro-driving.

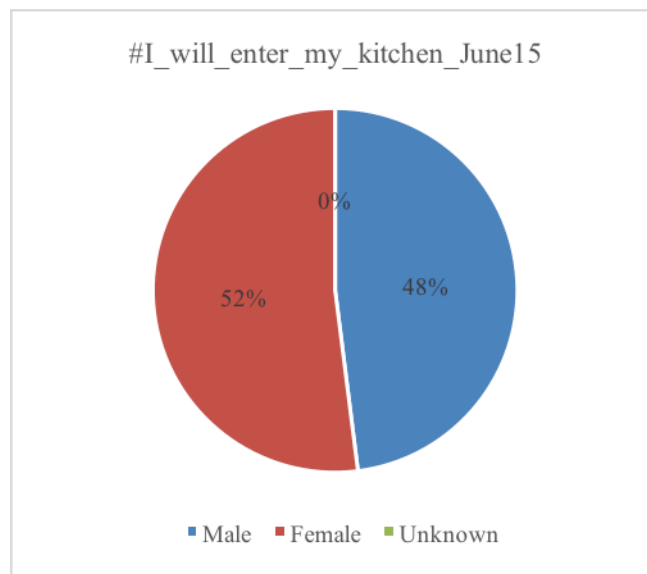


Figure 5: Gender distribution in #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15



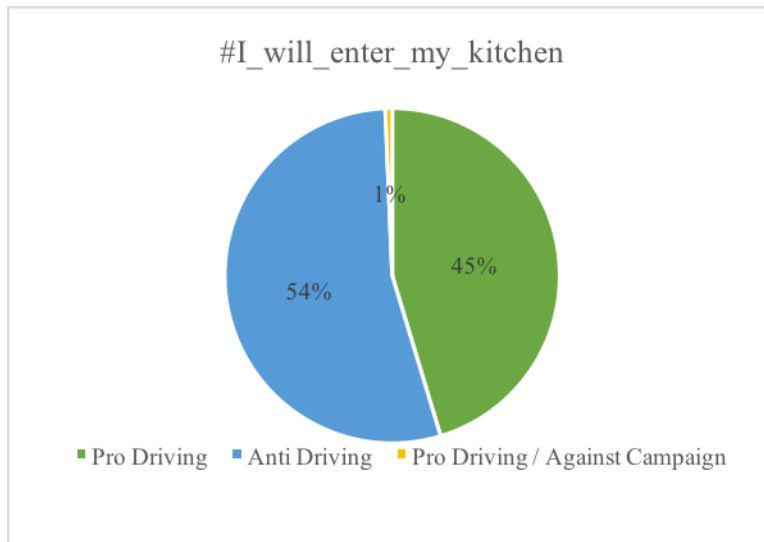


Figure 6: Positions on women driving for #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

Lastly, Figure 7 and Figure 8 represent the gender distribution for the users of the hashtag "#Women\_car\_driving." Users of this hashtag were comprised of 59% females, 38% males, and 3% gender-unspecified subjects. From the male population, 37 subjects were pro-driving, 17 were anti-driving, while two had neutral positions as shown in Figure 9. Among females, 38 subjects were pro-driving, and three each were against driving and had neutral positions. Five gender-unspecified subjects were pro-driving. In general, 83% of them were pro-driving, 14% were anti-driving, and 3% were neutral as shown in Figure 9. While most of the respondents had a clear inclination for their support or criticism against women driving, a small part of the population took a neutral position on the issue, seemingly not affected by the matter at hand.

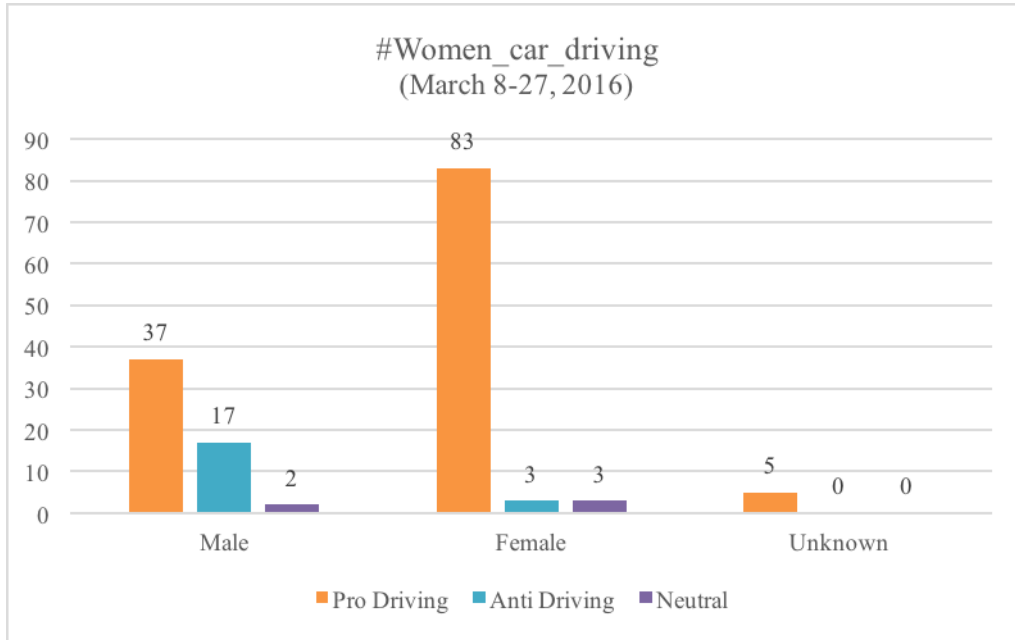


Figure 7: Gendered positions on women driving for #Women\_car\_driving

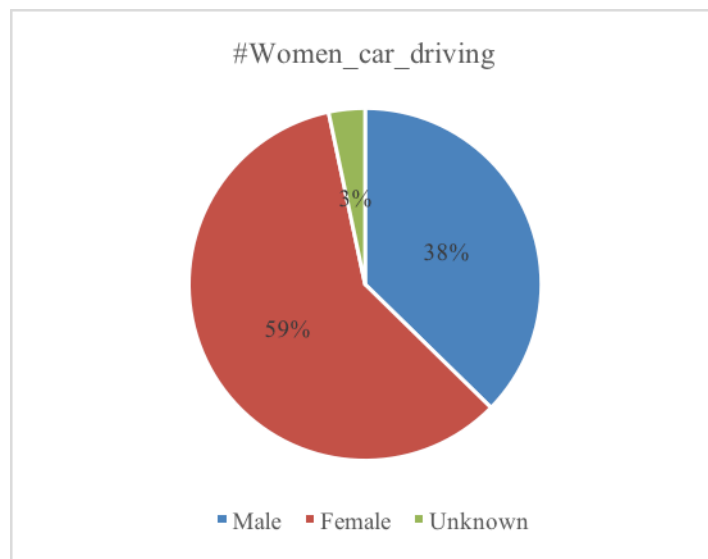


Figure 8: Gender distribution in #Women\_car\_driving

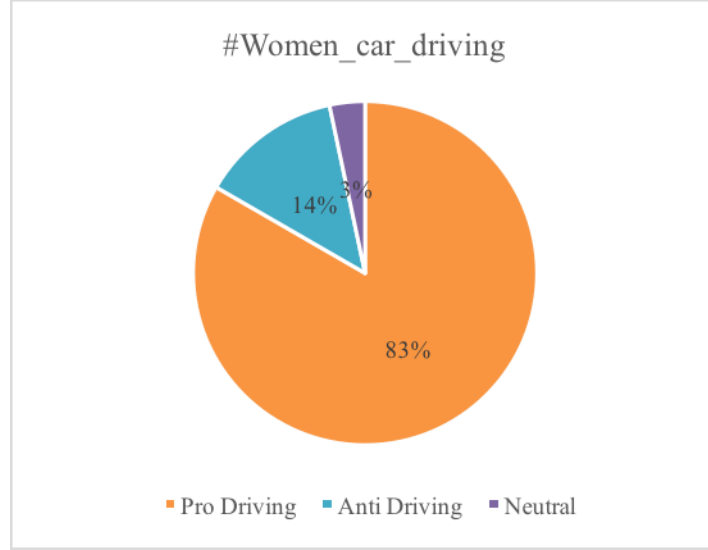


Figure 9: Positions on women driving for #Women\_car\_driving

Compared with the first two hashtags, the users of this hashtag had more supportive views on women driving.

A large number of the tweets posted by these users, exactly 51 tweets (34% of all tweets from this hashtag) with 10.0% males, 23.3% of females and 0.7% unknown, shared their personal experiences and financial struggles they underwent from the driving ban. The two Examples below demonstrate some of the tweeters struggles:

- F اتمني الي مو موافق يطيح في موقفي ويجرب جاني تسمم حمل وزلال وضغطي مرتفع وبنتي ماتت بسبب ما حد راضي يرفع رجليه ويوديني #قيادة\_المرأة\_للسيارة

I hope that those who are disagreeing would undergo what I encountered recently. I have been subjected to pregnancy poisoning, Albumin and hypertension. My daughter has died as nobody helped picking me up to the hospital #Women\_car\_driving

- F اكثر شيء يغيبن : غياباتك بتخلص تبيين تداومين ويروح عنك السواق ! نعم 🥰❤️ خلاص اعلن

انضمامي لحزب #قيادة\_المرأه\_للسياره

What's most frustrating: your sick leave is almost used up; you want to go to work but your ride leaves without you. This is it 🥰❤️, I announce joining the party #Women\_car\_driving.

## **Textual Analysis**

### **Referential and Nomination Strategies**

The analysis showed essential information with regard to the referential and nomination strategies used by the ingroup and outgroup categorization of social actors. These were important elements in the study as they provided a basis for understanding the relationship with other social actors who are referred to in the texts. The analysis of the referential and nomination strategies revealed these categories, which were taken from the frequencies of words: (a) Proper names, (b) the use of the lexical term “Queen,” (c) words referring to the driving campaign supporters, and (d) those referring to the driving campaign opposers.

In the present study, analysis of the referential and nomination strategies revealed the frequency of use of one proper name and the use by both groups of the lexical term “Queen” to refer to Saudi women who are in support of the ban against women driving. Although each group used this term to address a different reference and meaning, nonetheless it was used by both groups. Another lexical term frequently used by the group opposing driving to refer to and label the supporters of the driving campaign was “*liberals*,” and the lexical term “*atheist*” was applied to whomever started the first hashtag # I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15, which started the June 15 campaign and debate.

The analysis done in this chapter also includes an examination of the terms used by each group to refer to the other group. The analysis showed a significant use of negative terms from the tweeters opposing the campaign when referring to the other group who are driving advocates and vice versa. A significant use of negative terms was

also used by the tweeters who supported the campaign and the act of driving in general when referring to the group opposed the campaign and the lifting of the ban.

The analysis begins with an analysis of the proper names that appeared in the against-driving data set, followed by an analysis of the proper names that appeared in the pro-driving data set. Next is an analysis of the lexical term “Queen/Queens” that was used in the data by both groups to refer to Saudi women. The aim in this analysis was to help understand how each group identified its relationship with the social actor(s) referred to as “Queen/Queens”

The lexical terms used to refer to the driving campaign supporters are the next to be analyzed. Apart from the lexical terms used to refer to the driving campaign supporters, also analyzed, based on their frequency of use were the lexical terms “Liberal/Liberals and Atheist” that were used in this category. Finally, the lexical terms used to refer to the driving campaign opposers were analyzed. Table 1 shows the proper names and identities of individuals mentioned in the tweets.

**Table 1: Proper Names**

	1.#I_will_drive_my_car ...		2.#I_will_enter_my_kitchen ...		3.#Women_car_driving	
	Pro	Against	Pro	Against	Pro	Against
1.Lujain Alhathloul (Saudi woman activist)		7		5		3
2.King Salman		1		1	2	
3.Mohammed bin Salman ( crown prince)	1	1				
4.Manal Alsharif (Saudi woman activist)		1				
5.Suaad Alshammri( Saudi women activist and a liberal leader)		1		1		
6.Maysaa Alamoudi (Saudi woman activist)		1				
7.Abdo Khal (Saudi writer)		1				
8.Abdullah Aldawood (religious writer & preacher)	1					1
9.Alfouzan(religiou s cleric)	1					

### ***Data Analysis of Proper Names That Appeared in Tweets Against Driving***

The analysis of proper names in the data provided revealed that one dominant name was used in the texts. The name of Saudi woman activist, Lujain Alhathloul appeared 15 times in all three hashtags. Lujain is a controversial Saudi woman activist and social media personality. It is interesting to note that her name only appeared in the tweets opposed to women driving. No mention of her name appeared in the tweets of those who supported women driving. However, considering the contexts in which her name appeared, it was evident that mention of her was for the purpose of criticizing her and her motives. The examples that follow Table 2 show the negative connotations that appeared with her name. Table 2 provides details of her name's appearance compared to King Salman's name, which was only mentioned four times in all three hashtags. The other proper names were also used only once or twice in the tweets.

**Table 2: Most Mentioned Proper Names**

<b>Proper Nouns Used</b>	<b>Number of Tweet Mentions</b>
Lujain Alhathloul ( Saudi woman activist)	15
King Salman	4

Examples (1)-(5) show the negative connotations that appear with Lujain's name:

- (1) M #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو لجين الهذلول درست بالخارج ورجعت تطالب بالقيادة شكله بعد كم سنة بتطلع وحده ونفس القصة تطالب بمحاربة النقاب والحجاب



# I will drive\_ my car\_ June\_ 15 Loujain Alhathloul studied abroad and returned demanding to drive, it seems after a couple of years we are going to have a similar case of one girl demanding women take off the veil.

(2) M #لجين\_تشارك\_في\_فيلم\_يسيء\_للوطن\_احد\_المنابر\_الليبرالية\_التي\_اخذت\_مخططاتها\_من\_امريكا  
وظلت\_تحارب\_الدين\_باسم\_#\_الحرية\_و\_#\_قياده\_المراه\_للسياره  
# Loujain\_Alhathloul\_is taking part\_in a movie\_degrading  
\_the\_homeland: She is one of the key liberal platforms who took her  
schemes from America and remained fighting religion in the name of  
freedom #Women\_car\_driving

(3) M عن\_ماذا\_تبحث\_#لجين\_الهدلول\_ليس\_الهدف\_الوحيد\_من\_حديثها\_السلبى\_عن\_#السعودية\_في\_كل\_مكان  
هو\_من\_اجل\_#قياده\_المراه\_للسيارة\_الموضوع\_اكبر\_بكثير  
What is # Loujain\_Alhathloul looking for? Her negative talk about  
#Saudi\_Arabia everywhere is not for the sole purpose of  
#Woman\_car\_driving. It's much bigger than this.

(4) F سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو\_يا\_زين\_صياح\_اللي\_يطالبن\_بالقيادة\_..\_امعات\_لجين  
#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 It's fun listening to the cries of those  
demanding to drive.. Loujain's puppets

(5) F لجينات وسعادات مو عاجبكم الهاشتاق لا تدخلونه 🤔🤔. #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

Lujains and Suads, if you don't like this hashtag, don't participate in it 😂.

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

Example 1 illustrated indirectly how Loujain's campaign for women driving was initiated by her study abroad and how an opponent feared her influence will show up later, when another girl coming from abroad will similarly request to take the veil off. The user equated the request to drive with the request to take the veil off in an attempt to reveal how studying abroad has negative impacts on women, leading them to want to leave their religious beliefs. In Example 2, the user labeled Loujain as one of the proponents of the liberal platforms who was influenced by America, where she studied abroad, and, in the name of freedom, she is fighting the Islamic religion. Example 3 questioned Loujain's motives by using the two phrases: "what is Lujain Alhathloul looking for" and "It's much bigger than this," which implied that her campaigning for women driving goes beyond the request to drive and has an agenda behind it. Loujain was not directly referred to in Example 4, but the women who support being allowed to drive are labeled as her puppets in an attempt to demonstrate that they are brainwashed by her ideas. In Example 5, the supporters of this campaign were called by the names of two famous women activists, "Loujain Alhathloul and Suad Alshammri," with an emoji of a laughing face to mock the tweeters who object to this hashtag #I will enter my kitchen June 15.

### ***Data Analysis of Proper Names Used in Tweets Supporting Driving***

It can be seen in the data shown in Table 1 that proper names were used with less frequency by the group supporting women driving than were used by the group opposing

women driving. Most names used by the supporting group were limited to one occurrence. The two times the religious clerics' names were used was for the purpose of making fun of their claims as to why women should not drive. The other proper name used twice in the pro driving data set was that of the king, one to plead with him to allow women to drive and once to offer a transportation allowance since driving is prohibited. It's also important to note that Loujain Alhathloul, whose proper name was overwhelmingly referred to in the con driving data, is not mentioned in the pro driving data set. One possible argument would be that supporters do not want to be associated with the negative connotations and labels attributed to her name.

***Referring To Saudi Women with the Lexical Term “Queen”***

The aim in this section was to reveal the frequency of use of the lexical term “Queen” by both groups to refer to Saudi women who are in support of the driving ban. Although each group used this term with a different meaning, nonetheless it was used by both campaigns. Table 3 provides details about the use of the word “Queen” by males, females, and those whose gender cannot be determined:

***Table 3: The Use of the Lexical Term “Queen”***

Gender	#Women_car_driving		#I_will_enter_my_kitchen_June15	
	Pro	Against	Pro	Against
Male		1	4	3
Female	5	1	3	3
Unknown	1			
Total	8		12	

The lexical term “Queen” is a term used by the conservatives and religious clerics in their speeches to refer to Muslim women in general and, more specifically, to Saudi women. It is a word used to demonstrate how women are respected and catered to; hence, each woman has a guardian to take care of her needs and a driver to take her around. The lexical term “Queen” was used by both groups. It can be observed from Table 3 that no mention of this lexical choice was made in the third hashtag, #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15. The term was used by both genders in the hashtag #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15. In the data from the #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15, there is an insignificant difference between the number of males and females using the term. On the other hand, in the first hashtag, #Women\_car\_driving, more users in support of the women driving campaign used the lexical term. However, the analysis suggested that users supporting the women driving campaign used this term with the sole intention of mocking or refuting the claim that the Saudi woman is considered a queen. On the other hand, the tweeters against women driving referred to women as queens to assign a positive attribute to women who do not drive and to support the ban on women driving.

*The Use of the Term “Queen” by Users Who are Against Driving*

Examples 6-9 contain tweets from those opposed to women driving :

(6) F انا ملكه في بيتي وأسرتي مكرمه لماذا تريدون لي الإهانة #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

I am an honorable queen in my house and among my family, why do you wish indignity upon me? I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

(7) F سيكون يوم احتفل به فأنا كريمه يقود سيارتي اخ ثم زوج ثم ابن ثم سائق فأنا عزيزة قومي ،يخدمني ويحميني ولي امري انا ملكه #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

It will be a day I will celebrate, I have dignity by having a brother then a husband then a son then a driver drive my car, I'm spoiled. My guardian protects and caters to me. I'm a queen. I will enter my kitchen June15

(8) M #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو الملكة والأميرة لاتقود السيارة

Queens and princesses don't drive. #I will enter my kitchen June15.

(9) M حق لنا أن نفخر بملكات الطهر بنات الحرمين رقي وذوق ووعي ودلال ولا عزاء لمن قصر من رباها فذرفت من لسانها ماحواه عقلها #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

We are so proud of queens of chastity, girls of the Two Holy Mosques for their elegance, tact, awareness. As for the ones not raised properly her mouth spews what her mind is full of. #I will enter my kitchen June15

In Examples 6-7 it can be seen how women opposing the women driving campaign refer to themselves as queens and how they do not consider driving themselves an honorable act. As a matter of fact, they see it as an act that would take away their honorability; hence, the use of the word “indignity” and “I have dignity.” Example 8 was written by a male user who objected to women driving by using queens and princes as an example of why women should not drive, since queens and princes don't drive themselves, but have drivers. In Example 9 it can be seen how positive attributes were

projected onto the women who oppose the women driving campaign by describing them as elegant, tactful, and aware. The women who support the women driving campaign were labeled as not having been raised properly, which led them to calling for removal of the ban on women driving. Examples 10-14 are tweets from those who support women driving.

### *The Use of the Term “Queen” by Tweepers Supporting Women Driving*

Examples 10-14 contain tweets from those supporting women driving :

- (10) M يوهمون المرأة بأنها ملكة ودرّة مصونة ولكنهم في الحقيقة يعاملونها ك عبدة مملوكة... قرارها مقرر لها ومصيرها مكتوب لها #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

They (the opponents) delude women as being queens and protected pearls but, in fact, they treat them as possessed slaves whose decisions are decided for them and their destinies is written for them.

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

- (11) M فقط عندنا المرأة تولد "ملكة" ناقصة عقل ولا تعرف مصلحتها، ويجب على الرجل ان يقرر لها ماذا يجب ومالا يجب ان تفعل. #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

Only here is a woman born as a "queen;" yet, with an immature brain who doesn't know her best interest. Men therefore should decide for her what they should and should not do. #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

- (12) M #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو 🤪 قال لها لن تقودي فالملكه لا تقود.. فقالت وأيضا الملكة لاتطبخ !! #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15. He told her "You won't drive because a

queen does not drive." She replied: "A queen does not cook either!!"

- (13) F #يوم\_المراه\_العالمي نعم انا تلك الملكة التي(تتحاشر)مع 8 ملكات في سيارة تتسع ل5 اشخاص  
بسبب جشع الرجال #شكرا\_ياوطني #قيادة\_المرأة\_ للسيارة  
#International \_Woman's\_ Day, Yes! I am the queen who is (stuffed) with 8  
queens in a car designated just for 5 occupants due to men's greediness.  
#Thanks\_my\_country. #Woman\_Car\_Driving

- (14) F الى متى تقفز الملكة السعودية من سيارات السائقين بسبب التحرشات لاهم سامحين  
ب#قيادة\_المرأة\_ للسياره ولافيه قانون تحرش!  
Until when will the Saudi queen jump from cars due to drivers harassment?  
They are neither allowing #Women\_car\_driving nor are they enacting  
harassment law.

In Examples 10-11, it is observed that tweet posts from people supporting the campaign used the lexical term “Queen.” which is used to refer to Saudi women by the opposing campaign, for the purpose of assigning negative attributes to the driving campaign opposers using this term. The user in Example 10 used the verb “delude” and, in Examples 10 and 11, “decide for them/her” to demonstrate how that contradicts her being a queen and making decisions for herself, as queens do. In Examples 12-13, the term was used as a mockery. The tweets also contained statements of examples from their daily lives. In Example 13, we see a tweet from a user sarcastically referring to herself as a queen to demonstrate her struggle with riding in a car taking too many girls to

school because the owner was greedy and, instead of taking 5 girls he packed the car with 8 girls to get a higher fee, without taking into consideration that the space in the car was not sufficient for more than 5 occupants. Example 14 referred to an incident where it was rumored a woman jumped from a taxi because she was being harassed by the driver. These tweets implied the term “Queen” was used by the campaign supporting women driving to mock those who oppose the women driving campaign and to demonstrate that women should be allowed to drive.

### ***Referring to the Driving Campaign Supporters***

The analysis done for referential strategies also investigated the lexical choices used to refer to both the supporters of the campaign and its opposers. These lexical terms were important because they showed how the opposers used negatives attributes when tweeting about the supporters of the women driving campaign while assigning positive attributes to themselves. The reverse happened in tweets from the campaign supporters.

The analysis of the opposers’ tweets also showed the frequency of use of the lexical term *Liberals/liberal* in referring to the supporters of the women driving campaign and the word “atheist” in referring to whomever started the campaign. Also in this section, the opposers’ use of negative referential terms about the social actors in the supporters campaign will be analyzed.

### ***Negative Naming and Referring Terms Assigned to the Supporters of the Campaign***

In these examples that were taken from tweets opposing the driving campaign, the analysis showed a significant use of negative terms referring to women in support of the



campaign, whereas women opposing the campaign were given positive attributes, which included being “*sensible, great, and chaste*” as shown in Examples 15-17.

(15) F      #الهيئة\_امان\_ياملكتنا\_سلمان\_أجزم\_ان\_90%\_من\_السعوديات\_العفيفات\_لايردن\_القياده\_الا\_من\_كان  
لديها\_خلل\_في\_الدين\_والفكر\_#سأقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو

#The\_Committee<sup>1</sup>\_is\_safety\_King\_Salman, I am sure that 90% of female chaste Saudis don't want to drive, except those whose religious beliefs and intellects are defected #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

(16) M      هذا\_الوسم\_#ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو\_ليس\_مطلب\_المرأة\_السعودية\_العاقلة\_بل\_مطلب\_من\_يريدون  
سهولة\_الوصول\_إليها

This hashtag #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_june15 is not the request of the sensible Saudi woman, instead it's the request of those who want easy access to her.

(17) M      #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو\_هذا\_الهاشتاق\_مخصص\_للنساء\_العظيمات\_اللاتي\_يعرفن\_أن\_أعظم  
ما\_يفعله\_في\_الحياة\_تربية\_الأبناء\_ورعاية\_المنزل\_،\_تحية\_لكن

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 this hashtag is designed for the great women 😍, who know that raising kids and taking care of the house is the greatest thing they do, I salute them.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice

While, in Example 15, women supporting the #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 are referred to as being *defected religiously and intellectually*, their women opposers who are supporting the opposite hashtag #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_june15 are referred to as being “the great women,” in example 17. Examples 18-20 illustrate how negative referential terms are applied to supporters of the women driving campaign and the #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 by the opposers of the campaign.

(18) M ساقود سيارتي\_ ١٥\_ يونيو شعار يتردد من سنوات يدعمه زوار السفارات ويروج له الساقطين  
فكراً وخلقاً ووطنية، نتمنى محاسبة الداعمين والمروجين له

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 This is a motto that has been repeated for years supported by the visitors of foreign embassies, and promoted by those who are intellectually, morally and patriotically corrupt. We hope those who support and advocate this hashtag are being held accountable.

(19) M ساقود سيارتي\_ ١٥\_ يونيو، هذه دعوته للفوضى و شق صف المجتمع نطالب حكومتنا بمحاسبه  
خفايش الظلام الذين يقفون خلف هذه الدعوه

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 This hashtag calls for chaos and breaking the unity of the society. We demand our government to question the bats of darkness that are behind this campaign.

(20) F هنا يتدخل وعي المجتمع ،، لاتسمحوا للمحرضين بجذبكم للوحل ،، مصلتهم وحلمهم رؤية بلادنا  
متفككة متفرقة اصحى يا الانام # ساقود سيارتي\_ ١٥\_ يونيو

Here is where society awareness comes into play, don't allow for the

instigators to drag you into the mud, their interest and dream is to see our country separated and divided, wake up sleepy

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

In Examples 18-20, opposers of the women driving campaign refer to its supporters as being corrupt intellectually and morally, bats of darkness (implying they are hidden and not known), and instigators. In these three examples, supporters of the women driving campaign are accused of wanting to create chaos and divide the country and opposers urge that they be held accountable for their actions in advocating and supporting the driving campaign.

***The Use of the Lexical Term “Liberals/Liberal”***

The frequency of the lexical term Liberal/liberals in the con driving data set is presented in table 4 in all it’s different word formations:

**Table 4:** *Frequency of the word “Liberals/Liberal”*

Gender	#I_will_drive_my_car...	#I_will_enter_my_kitcken...
	Against	Against
Male	5	9
Female	2	3

The word “liberals” was mentioned 21 times in the data, nineteen times in the opposition to the driving group and twice in the pro driving group to refute the claim of being a liberal. The lexical term was used to refer to the people supporting the driving

campaign, and in Examples 21-28, the contexts of the terms were attached to negative connotations and it's obvious from the examples how this lexical term was referred to more by males than females as proven in the table above.

- (21) M #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو رائحة #الشيعية تفوح بهذا الهاشتاق عندما يجتمع #الشيعية والليبراليين والعلمانيين بموضوع معين فاعلموا أن قائدهم واحد

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_june15 This hashtag reeks of Shia's (a Muslim group) smell. When Shias and liberals and seculars are united at something then you must know, they share the same leader.

- (22) M ليس هذا الوقت المناسب وايضاً اغلب من يكتب في هذه الهاشتاق هم في خارج المملكة وتغلب عليهم الليبرالية وتأكدوا بأنفسكم #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو

This is not the appropriate time, also most of the people writing in this hashtag are from outside the country and are mostly liberals and you can check that yourselves. #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_june15

- (23) M #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو في ذلك اليوم العظيم سأسجد سجود الشكر بان ربي حمى بلدي من كيد المفسدين والليبراليين الذين يريدون إخراج المرأة من أمان البيت

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 At that day (June 15th), I will do Prostration of Thankfulness for protecting my country from the conspiracy of the corrupt and liberal people who seek to get women out of the security of their homes.

- (24) M #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو\_الليبرالين\_اصبحوا\_خطر\_عالدوله\_يحتاجون\_لربطهم\_بالميادين\_العامه  
وكل من مر من عندهم تقل بوجيهم اين انتم منهم؟!  
#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 Liberals are becoming a danger to the  
country, they need to be chained in public arenas and every passer should  
spit on their faces.. Where are you from them?
- (25) M لن يفيدك السكرجي للبيرالي #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو  
The drunken liberal will not benefit you #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15
- (26) F #الليبراليون مرضى نفسيين يجب علاجهم لكي يعودوا الى الواقع #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو  
Liberals are psychos and need to get therapy so that they get back to reality.  
#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15
- (27) M ودت الزانية لو أن النساء كلهن زواني هذا حال الليبراليات، اختي والله ان عزتك في دينك لا تلتفتي  
إلى دعاة الشر والرذيلة #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو  
A prostitute would like all women to be prostitutes. This applies exactly to  
female liberals. My dear sister, your dignity is in your religion. Therefore,  
neglect the advocates of viciousness and vice.  
#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15
- (28) M بل #لن\_أخرج\_من\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو\_و لن أقود سيارة و لن أعصي ربي و ولي أمري و  
سأكون متقيدة بالنظام و لن أرضخ للبيرالين! #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

Instead, #I\_will\_not\_get\_out\_of\_my\_kitchen\_June15 and I won't drive and disobey my god and authorities and I will be law abiding citizen and not submit to the liberals #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

In Examples 21 and 22, liberals are accused of being people outside the country or influenced by outside sources: “they have the same leader” “from outside the country.” Examples 23-26 refer to liberals as being corrupt, a danger to the country, and drunks, and psychos who need therapy. In Example 27 “liberals” are called advocates of viciousness, vice, and prostitution. Interestingly in Example 28 the writer is a male talking on behalf of a female who views the driving act as an action wanted by liberals and refuses to submit to their wants.

***The Use of the Lexical Term “Atheist/Atheists”***

The frequency of the lexical term “Atheist/Atheists” in the con driving data set is presented in table 5.

***Table 5*** Frequency of the lexical term “Atheist/Atheists”

Gender	#I_will_drive_my_car_June15	#IwillentermykitckenJune15
	Against	Against
Male	5	1
Female	1	0



malignity. Therefore, let's stand against him together.

- (31) F #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو من يقود الحملة القناة القذرة mbc و ملحد لبناني عسى ربي ينتقم منكم  
أشر انتقام وما يتحقق لكم غاية ، والشعب واعى لكم

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 This campaign is led by the disgusting channel MBC and a Lebanese atheist. May Allah take a severe revenge on you all so that your purposes are not achieved. Moreover, our community still aware of you.

- (32) M ملحد ينشئ هاشتاق لقيادة المرأة السعودية والغريب أنه أختار توقيت الحملة في خير الشهور  
#رمضان #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو

An atheist creates a hashtag for Saudi women driving, the strange thing is that he chose this campaign to take place in the best months #Ramdan  
#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

Moreover, the tweeter of Example 32 referred to the hidden agenda behind the intentions of the launcher, “an atheist,” by using the phrase “the strange thing is that he chose this campaign to take place in the best months #Ramadan.” It should also be noted that the atheist was referred to in Example 30 and 31 as being Lebanese to emphasize the outside influence, which can be interpreted as not having the best intentions and to warn the supporters that this campaign is not coming from the inside.



In conclusion, it can be noted that the referential term “atheist” tends to appear in a context associated with negative connotations. These negative connotations emphasize the notion of “conspiracy.”

### ***Referring to the Driving Campaign Opposers***

In this section, the lexical choices used by supporters to refer to the opposers of the women driving campaign are examined. The analysis of the lexical choices showed that naming and referring terms can be divided into two groups: (a) female opposers and (b) religious opposers. A significant use of negative terms to refer to women opposing the driving campaign was visible in the tweets. The negative terms included accusations of being puppets of the masculine society, disabled, stupid and slaves, whereas positive attributives were given to the supporters who were labeled as being free and healthy women, as shown in examples 33-37.

(33) F #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو اي شيء يخدم المرأة هنا لازم المجتمع الذكوري والامعات يستमितوا في الرفض.

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 Whatever serves women here (in this country) you will find the masculine society and the women puppets refusing strongly.

(34) F #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو اللي تعتقد نفسها معاقه تعتمد على سواق وشغالة أما صحيحة البدن تدخل مطبخها وتسوق سيارتها لا تعارض إلا في أذهان الأغبياء.

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 Whoever considers herself to be

disabled relies on a driver and a maid, whereas healthy women can still drive cars and enter their kitchens at the same time. There is no contradiction in this case except in stupid people's minds.

(35) M #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو صحيح يوم ١٥ يونيو ستبقين في مطبخك يا جاريه، الحرات فقط من سيظالبون بحقوقهم في ذات اليوم

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 You, slave, will remain in your kitchen. Only free women will demand their rights at that day.

(36) F احس الهاشتاجات ذي وراها ناس غير احرار...الحر لا يرضى ان يسلب منه حق ولو كان عند البعض رفاهية #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

I feel that behind these hashtags are people who are not free. A free person does not allow for his right to be taken away even if it's considered as luxury to some. #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

(37) M صحيح لو امطرت السماء حرية لرأيت بعض العبيد يحملون المظلات #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

It's true if the sky rained freedom you'll see some slaves carrying umbrellas #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

In Examples 38-39, the analysis showed that supporters of women driving considered those opposing driving on a religious basis to be ultra conservative, as seen in Example 38

(38) F للأسف حقوقنا مسلوبة من مجموعه هم اقرب للدواعش من المعتدلين امرنا بيد حفنه جاهله متخلفة  
يهمها العادات #قيادة\_المرأة\_ للسيارة

Unfortunately, our rights are lost to a group who are closer to ISIS than they are to moderates. Our lives are dominated by a handful of backwards and ignorants, who care more about customs and traditions.  
#Women\_car\_driving.

In Example 38, the tweeter linked those opposed to women driving to a group known for its terrorism and extreme views. The tweeter also described the supporters of the campaign as *moderates* in contrast to the *extremist* opposers. Those opposers are described as “a handful,” which implied that they are a minority who are ruling the majority (supporters). The opposers are also described as being backward and ignorant individuals who object to the act of driving based on custom, rather than on religion, as they had claimed in their objection tweets.

(39) F قيادة\_المرأة\_ للسيارة لو ترك أوصياء الدين المرأة شهرين،، لاكتشفوا أن الدين اجمل وأرقى  
وأعز وأكمل وأشمل وأرحم وأعلى من هوسهم بـ #قيادة\_المرأة

#Women\_car\_driving If religion guardians spare women for two months,

they will discover that religion is much better, more superior, more perfect, more comprehensive, more precious and more merciful than their obsession with #Woman\_Driving

In Example 39, those opposed to lifting the ban on women driving are referred to as “religion guardians” who are obsessed with the topic of *women driving* and object to it.

In sum, the analysis showed the negative naming and referring terms that were used in the data to refer to both female opposers and the opposers who try to negate the campaign based on religious reasoning. The strategy of emphasizing negative attributes is an indicator of the negative perception of the social actors (opposers) who object to women driving.

In conclusion, analysis of the data involved finding the referential and nominal strategies of the tweets posted on the issue of Saudi women driving. The frequency of use of the name of the famous woman activist, Loujain Alhathloul, in the con driving tweets, seems to suggest that the attempt was made to question her credibility. However, a prominent reoccurring proper name did not appear in the pro driving data set. The lexical term “Queen” that was used by the opposers to refer to Saudi women was used to give a positive outlook to why she cannot drive and to prove the ban was to honor her not to discredit her rights. On the other hand, tweeters supporting the campaign used the same lexical term in order to contradict and negate the statements of the opposers. Also, the lexical terms “Liberal/Atheist” were analyzed based on their frequencies in the con driving data set. The analysis showed the negative labeling and attributes associated with these two terms. The analysis also emphasized that the negative labeling and attribution

of the social actors on both sides of the campaign was used by both the supporters and opposers of the campaign.

### **Predications**

Predication is an important feature of textual analysis. To offer an analysis of this feature each group was analyzed separately. Each group dealt with different themes that could be identified in the data. Each theme is thoroughly discussed in the following.

#### ***Anti-driving Group***

The analysis of predicational strategies helped to see how tweeters who oppose this driving campaign and are against women's right to drive describe the campaign and the action of women driving. The two themes of this group are (a) Conspiracy/Hidden agenda and (b) Unreligious/Unethical.

#### **Conspiracy/Hidden Agenda**

The message of predications in this group is that the supporters of the campaign are groups involved in a conspiracy to create chaos in the country and implement their own political agendas. They are either foreign sources like westerners who seek to corrupt the country and tarnish its image or inside sources like the country's liberals who want to dissuade the country from its conservative values to more open and Western-like values. Therefore, the texts were analyzed to see what terms the opposers used to describe the campaign and its social actors.

The opposers assigned negative predications to this campaign to cast doubt on its legitimacy and intentions. In examples 40 and 41, the negative image of the campaign created by the negative representation of the campaign as a call for disruption and chaos and the claim that it is a campaign awaited by the enemy in example 40, instigated by the

West in example 41, and Americans in example 42. Throughout the data this campaign is also described as a call for westernization, as seen in example 43. Moreover, the same is true in example 45 where the tweeter aimed to show the ulterior motives of the “West and our liberals” by simply asking “*did you get the message?*”

(40) F لن اقود السيارة لأغضب عدوي لن اشارك بحملة تثير زعزعة وطني لن اشارك بحملة يترقبها العدو #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو

I will not drive my car so that I can irritate our enemy. I will not participate in any campaign that destabilize our security. I will not participate in a campaign that is being expected by our enemies.  
#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

(41) M #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو الدعوة للحرية: معناها دعوة للانفلات والفضى والهمجية وهذه الكلمة سلاح الغرب التي اضررت بمعظم الدول المسلمة فاحذروهم

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 Calling for freedom means calling for breakout, chaos, and barbarity. And this term [freedom] is the West’s weapon that negatively affected most of Muslim countries. Therefore, be aware of them.

(42) M سبحان الله اذا عرفت من خلف هذه الحملات (امريكان) ستعرف ان الهدف ليس قضية قيادة #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو

Glory be to Allah! Once you know who is behind these campaigns

(Americans), you will recognize that the case is not related to card driving. #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

(43) F #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو من أجل ديني لن أقود السيارة وسألتزم ببيتي! من أجل مجتمعي  
لن أقود السيارة وسأطيع أهلي! لن تغرينا دعواتكم التغريبية!  
#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 For my religion, I will not drive a car  
and I will be committed to my house! For my society, I will not drive a  
car and I will obey my family! Your western callings will not tempt us!

(44) M #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو الغرب وليبراليتنا تركيزهم على قيادتها ضاربين بالعانسات-  
المعلقات-الأرامل-اليتيمات-المطلقات عرض الحائط! وصلت الرسالة?  
#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 the West along with our liberals are  
focusing on women's' driving, ignoring the issues of spinsters, separated  
wives, widows, orphans and divorcees issues! did you get the message?

In sum, the predication message of this group described or implied that this campaign is a conspiracy aimed to destabilize the country and /or westernize it.

**Table 6:** *Conspiracy/Hidden Agenda Theme*

Hashtag	M	F	U/k	Total
#I_will_drive_my_car..	16.7%	5.3%	0.7%	22.7%
#I_will_enter_my_kitchen..	9.3%	2.7%	0.0%	12.0%
#Women_car_driving	2.0%	0.7%	0.0%	2.7%

For the hashtag “#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15”, tweets were mostly reflective of a speculation regarding a conspiracy or hidden agenda as expressed by 22.7% of the subjects, 16.7% from males, 5.3% from females and 0.7% from unknown. For the hashtag “#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15”, views implicating conspiracy or hidden agenda with 12.0% subjects, with 9.3% males and 2.7% females. Lastly, for the hashtag “#Women\_car\_driving,” subjects who saw driving with conspiracy/hidden agenda undertones comprised 2.7% of the entire subjects, with 2.0% males and 0.7% females.

### **Unreligious/Unethical**

The predication message of this group is that the act of women driving is either unreligious or an act that would lead to unreligious behaviors and sins, such as women taking their veil off eventually. Religion and ethics are intertwined, as ethics is defined by religion in Saudi Arabia. So, while some claim that Islam does not prohibit women driving, they still think it is forbidden because its negative consequences outweigh the benefits in their minds. Apart from it being unreligious, some opposers think it is unethical for women to drive because it will devalue women’s femininity and exposes women to harassment. They think it is a masculine activity and that women are created vulnerable and need their guardians’ protection. They think driving was not meant for females, who would not know how to react if her car broke down.

In this group, tweeters made the argument that the ban was justified by associating it with negative representations such as *throw my veil, expose myself to danger, and open the door for evil*, as shown in Example 45. It can also be observed from Example 46 how driving was once again associated with taking the veil off with



*weak-willed people who might ask women to go unveiled.* Moreover, it can be observed from Example 47 that some people who are against this campaign are asserting their belief that driving is not prohibited in itself. However, it is prohibited because of the many issues that arise around it, issues and problems that involve being seduced and being more liberal.

(45) F #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو وارمي حجابي واعرض نفسي للخطر وافتح مغاليق الشر واجعل  
بلد الحرمين ومهبط الوحي ارض ضحلة لكل قدر حاقد ليعيث فيها فساد

# I will drive\_ my car\_ June \_15 and throw my veil, endanger myself,  
open the door for evil, and let the country of the two holy mosques and  
the land of revelation, a shallow land for each filthy spiteful individual to  
spread corruption!

(46) M #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو ولو قادت المرأة لا سمح الله بتكون هناك طلبات من ضعاف النفوس  
مثل نقترح نزع النقاب اثناء القيادة لسلامة المرأة وو.، إلخ

# I will drive\_ my car\_ June \_15 If women were allowed to drive, God  
forbid, they will be prone to the calls of weak-willed people who might  
ask woman to go unveiled while driving for her safety etc...

(47) M القيادة ليست محرمه ب أصلها ولاكن المحرم لما تجلبه من الفتن والتحرر والمشاكل لذا فنحن نخاف  
عليك من الوقوع في تلك الشبهه #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو

The act of driving itself is not prohibited, but it is prohibited for the  
seduction, liberalism, and troubles which it brings, thus, we are afraid that  
you will be prone to such suspicious matters. # I will drive\_ my car\_ June \_15

This negative image was also shown in Examples 48 and 49 by associating the calls for women driving with another negative quality: that it is against women's nature. In Examples 48 and 49, women's driving was described as *a retrogression of the human nature, stripping of the modesty, and the problem is when roles are swapped*.

(48) F كل حرّة وبنت رجال ما ترضى تسوق لحالها لأنها تعتبر فعلها انتكاس للفطرة وتجريد من الحيا  
اللي امر به ديننا #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

A free woman and a daughter of a real man would not accept to drive alone because she would consider this to be a retrogression of the human nature and stripping of the modesty that our religion demanded.

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 .

(49) M #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو لو كل انسان عرف دوره في الحياه كان الدنيا بخير المشكلة في تبادل  
الأدوار عمر الحمامة ما تصير صقر

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 If every person knew their role in life, it would've been a better world, the problem is when roles are swapped. A pigeon can never be a Falcon.

**Table 7: Unreligious/Unethical Theme**

Hashtag	M	F	U/k	Total
#I_will_drive_my_car..	12.0%	4.0%	0.7%	16.7%
#I_will_enter_my_kitchen..	10.7%	8.0%	0.0%	18.7%
#Women_car_driving	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

For the hashtag “#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15”, women driving as unreligious / unethical emerged within 16.7% of the population; 12.0% of males, 4.0% of females, and 1 unidentified gender believed it was against their moral/ ethical beliefs. For the hashtag “#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15”, 18.7% viewed women driving as unreligious/unethical, with males accounting for 10.7% while females with 8.0%. Lastly, for the hashtag “#Women\_car\_driving,”, no one discussed women driving within unreligious/unethical grounds.

### ***Pro-driving Group***

The analysis of predicational strategies helped to see how tweeters who support this driving campaign, or women’s right to drive, describe the campaign and the main social actor of this campaign: women. They were presented with negating the use of negative predications or lexical items that hold negative connotations described by the opposers. The main theme of this group is: Religious/Ethical

### **Religious and Ethical**

The message of predication in this group is that the act of women driving is not a violation of anything religious or ethical, but is only a violation of tradition. In their posts, they negated the opposers’ negative predications associated with driving. The posts in Examples 50 and 53 used the negative verbal process to “force” and “involve” to indicate it is not how it’s supposed to be.

- (50) F #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو القيادة مطلب ملح.. يؤسفني أن يكون منهجي سلفي ويُصنف مطلبي بالليبرالي.. بسبب العادات التي أقحمت كل أمر بالدين

# I\_will\_drive my\_car\_June15 Women driving is an urgent demand .. It saddens me that although I follow the Salafi approach, my demand is labeled as liberal, because customs have injected (forced) everything into religion.

- (51) F ليش لما أطلب بحقي في قيادة السيارة يزجونني بعض المغردين يعتبروني رافضيه أو عاهرة أو فاجرة أو زانية، أنا ما ضريرتهم بشي #قيادة\_المرأة\_للسيارة
- Why is it when I call for my right to drive, some tweeters annoy me by calling me Shia or prostitute or obscene or adulterer, although I didn't hurt them. #Women\_car\_driving

- (52) F #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو يؤسفني أن تُقحم الأخلاق في أمر لا علاقة له بالخلق ولا بالدين .. فما الرابط بين أن أقود سيارتي وبين أخلاقي
- # I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 It saddens me how morals are involved in a matter unrelated to ethics or religion... what's the correlation between driving my car and my morals.

- (53) F #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو المرأة السعودية ما طلبت شيء حرام ويعارض الدين كل الي تبيه تسوق سيارتها وساتره نفسها بسيارتها لحالها
- # I\_will\_drive my\_car\_June15 The Saudi woman did not ask for something forbidden that goes against religion, all she's asking is to drive her car alone while being modest and covered.

(54) F #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيوالاسلام يقول:السواقه مو حرام والطبخ مو الزامي ل النساء

هذا الدين هذا القرآن 🖐️ انتم لكم دين لحالكم علمونا عنه؟؟

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 Islam does not prevent women from driving, nor does it consider cooking obligatory for women.

This is Islam. This is Quran 🖐️ You have your own religion, tell us about it??

Three examples particularly reported instances of discrimination, indicating that “*tweeters annoy me*” (51); “*my demand is labeled liberal*” (50); and “*what’s the correlation between driving my car and my morals*” (53). Example 51, for instance, was even a Salafi, who apparently belongs to the same group that discriminates against her for her beliefs. Users in Examples 50 and 51 are emphasizing their religious affiliation to the Sunni doctrine. The same is true with the woman in Example 51, who was also labeled *prostitute*, *obscene* or *adulterer* along with being a *Shia*. Example 52 reported her experience with a personal pronoun *my*, indicating her gender by affiliating herself as discriminated by the experience. The word *religion* also appeared in the five examples with four instances besides for example 51.

The tweets also took the discussion to the rhetorical level in what they saw as non-sequiturs. The sentiments are particularly summarized in Example 52: “*what’s the correlation between driving my car and my morals.*” Example 54 also explained that “*Islam does not prevent women from driving, nor does it consider cooking obligatory for women,*” emphasizing a false dichotomy present in the rhetoric of anti-driving groups.

These tweets aim to show anti-driving groups the errors in their arguments against driving. Example 53 simply states their case: “*all she’s asking is to drive her car alone while being modest and covered.*”

To sum it up, the five examples shown above discuss how they are being discriminated against for their pro-driving beliefs. They also pointed out the errors of anti-driving arguments, which they saw as the solution to counter the discrimination and put up a resistance. The question of being correct in the interpretation of religion also figures prominently in these tweets. Examples 50, 51 and 53 had been told that what they believed in was wrong, as evident in their reported discrimination and labeling. On the other hand, examples 53 and 54 maintained that there was nothing “*forbidden that goes against the religion*” by women driving. Example 54 had even challenged pro-driving groups about their interpretations, taunting, “*You have your own religion, tell us about it??*”

The analysis also showed that the messages of this theme were conveyed in the tweets written by male users as well. The examples below 55-57, present similar perspectives to the examples seen previously 50-54.

(55) M استقحار واهانة للمرأة وحقوقها. بكل وقاحة وانحطاط  
حبيبي، السواقة ليست دعارة او ما شابة اعتبروها ركبت بعير  
وخلص#سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو

This is nothing but humiliating and degrading of women and their rights.

This is such a mass of impertinence and degeneration. My dear, driving a car is not prostitution or something similar. You can simply consider her

riding a camel! #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15

(56) M

#ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو سؤال منطقي

ايش الفرق بين مشي المرأة بالسيارة و مشيها على قدميها

انا اشوف السيارة استر لجسمها

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 A reasonable question

What's the difference between women driving their car or walking on their feet?

I find that the car is more modest for her body

(57) M

#سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو دخولك المطبخ ليسا عيبا وقيادتك السيارة ليس حراما فكل امراه

تختار ما تحتاج اليه

#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 Entering the kitchen is not shameful and driving a car is not (haram) prohibited as every women chooses what she needs.

Example 57 states that “*driving a car is not (haram) prohibited as every woman chooses what she needs.*” It called for a religious reference to Islamic *Haram* prohibitions, to which driving a car is apparently not included. Examples 55 and 56, on the other hand, provided ethical points. Driving a car is likened to driving a camel in Example 55, explaining that driving “*is not prostitution or something similar.*” It expresses an analogy of simply using cars in modern times as vehicles like how camels were used then. In Example 56, a mere rhetorical question was posed: “*What's the*

*difference between women driving their car or walking on their feet?".* It was answered that it would be more modest for a woman to drive a car since it does not expose her body. Both tweets clarified women driving to be a non-issue from an ethical standpoint.

In conclusion, the analysis shows how supporters of driving viewed it to be nothing related to religious or ethics. They made sure to emphasize their religion affiliation, as well as their intentions of modesty while driving, to refute what they were accused of by the other camp.

**Table 8:** *Religious/Ethical Theme*

Hashtag	M	F	U/k	Total
#I_will_drive_my_car..	2.7%	5.3%	0.0%	8.0%
#I_will_enter_my_kitchen..	4.0%	4.7%	0.0%	8.7%
#Women_car_driving	4.0%	3.3%	1.3%	8.7%

For the hashtag “#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15”, the view of driving as a religious/ ethical act is supported by 8% of the respondents; 2.7% males and 5.3% females. For the hashtag “#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15," a group of subjects saw driving with religious/ ethical views accounted for 8.7%, with 4.0% males and 4.7% females. Lastly, for the hashtag "#Women\_car\_driving," 8.7% of the subjects viewed driving to be ethical and unreligious related ; with 4.0% males and 3.3% of females.



### **Intertextuality in the Pro and Against Tweets**

In this section, intertextuality was analyzed to see what reports are referenced by each group. The analysis of the data showed that supporters and opposers of the campaign show evidence of intertextuality for a couple of reasons. The tweeters made reference to other texts to reveal ideas that supported their arguments. The analysis of the supporters showed that supporters used intertextuality to report the type of attacks and name calling they've been receiving from the opposers and to mock the religious clerics' claims of why women shouldn't be allowed to drive. The analysis of the opposers showed that the opposers used intertextuality to criticize and attribute negative qualities that emphasize the hidden agenda behind the driving campaign. Moreover, the Crown Prince's interview that was held to discuss the vision 2030 was reported by both groups. However, each group reported the interview in accordance with their ideology.

The controlling data that support the arguments of the pro/con driving tweets were emphasized in (1) Mohammed Bin Salman's interview and the (2) Saudi 2030 vision. Additionally, a strong opposing element was represented by (3) a Saudi cleric who declared that driving hurts the ovaries of women, and (4) a poll conducted via Twitter to collect people's positions on the June 15 campaign. In this regard, these four concepts shall be analysed against each other to determine how these statements have driven opposing opinions and views on the issue of Saudi women driving.

The idea that Saudi women should be allowed to drive is based on varying factors. Support and recognition from the government is one of the key changes that drive many women to see more of their value in the Saudi society.

In this section of the analysis, a look was taken at the ingroup citations on the issue that contributed to the idea and spread of the awareness of women's rights and instigated the campaign hashtags. Particularly important was the action of Mohammed Bin Salman, the Crown Prince, who, in an interview, mentioned and stressed what his stand was on the idea of women driving in Saudi Arabia.

Mohammad bin Salman's statements at a press conference held to discuss the Vision of 2030, were referenced in some of the tweets in the data. When the prince was asked about women driving, he declared that driving is not a religious matter, and was subject to the readiness of society.

#### Con-driving Tweet:

(58) M      وبعدين مع لوك لوك شوية هالعيال!! كلام الامير محمد بن سلمان كان واضح ومقنع!! او  
الموضوع بالنسبة لكم تحدي؟ #سأقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو

How long are we going to hear this non-sense!! the crown prince

Mohammed bin Salman statements were very clear and convincing!! Or is

it just stubbornness on your behalves? #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

#### Pro-driving Tweet:

(59) F      #سأقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو  
١-لأنه ليس حرام  
٢-لأنه ليس عيب  
٣-لان الأمير محمد بن سلمان قال بأنه امر راجع للمجتمع وانا من المجتمع

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15:

(1) because it is not haram (illegal),

(2) because it is not shameful, and

(3) because prince Muhammad Bin Salman (the deputy crown prince of Saudi Arabia) said: "this issue is decided by the community, and I am part of this community."

In the above examples 58 and 59, it can be observed that the tweeters are reporting the prince's statements to give their positions an authoritative voice. Each group considered the statements to self-represent their ideology. The tweeter in Example 58 described what the prince said as "*clear and convincing*," although what the prince stated did not give a clear refusal or agreement to the driving matter. On the other hand, the pro driving tweet cited the prince to emphasize that his statements represent her position because she is "part of the community." Thus, analysis of the intertextuality revealed that the writers of the posts reinforced and strengthened their arguments by using statements from a credible source like the Prince to support their claims and provide reasons as to why they should or should not be allowed to drive

The Saudi vision 2030 was also mentioned in the pro driving data by one user. She mentioned it to show her disappointment at waiting for the Visions Statement's release only to be surprised that there was no mention of the women driving issue in it. She also referred to the conspiracy theory given by the opposed group who view the call for driving a conspiracy from outside sources and liberals.

- (60) F #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو أنا بهذا الهاشتاق أقف دقيقة صمت وحداد للعقل البشري ولد #الرؤية التي نلثت وراءها ومازال هناك من يثرثر عن المؤامرة

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 With this hashtag, I show a one-minute silence and mourning for the human mentality and for the #vision for which we have been seeking for, and there are some people who are still babbling about a conspiracy.

Additionally, the first women activists who drove their cars in 1990 (mentioned earlier in the literature review section) were also mentioned, as seen in Example 61, to show the negative attributes given to them by the other group and to show how the same name calling continued to occur from the opposing group in their campaigning in 2016.

- (61) M قائمة النساء السعوديات المطالبات #قيادة\_المرأة\_للسيارة في 6 نوفمبر 1990م ويلاحظ تسميتهم بالمساقطات الداعيات إلى الرذيلة

This is the list of Saudi women who demanded #Woman\_Car\_Driving, on Nov. 6, 1990. It is noted they were labeled as morally corrupt who call for vice.

Also in observing the intertextuality in the pro driving data, it can be seen that the ovary claims by Sheikh Saleh bin Saad Al-Lohaidan, a religious cleric stated that:

If a woman drives a car, not out of pure necessity, that could have negative physiological impacts as functional and physiological medical studies show that it automatically affects the ovaries and pushes the pelvis upwards... That is why we find those who regularly drive have children with clinical problems of varying degrees”(Waxman, 2013)

Noticeably, this was an attempt by Al-Lohaidan to discourage women from driving. Three religious clerics who made claims on why women should not be allowed to drive, were reported in the pro driving data set. Although Saleh Al-Lohaidan was not mentioned by name, his “ovary and pelvic statements” were reported in the pro driving tweets. Saleh Al-Fouzan and Abdullah Al-Dawood’s claims were also mentioned. The latter preacher is known for making claims that driving is unethical and that liberals along with the west are pushing for it to serve their own hidden agendas to westernize the kingdom’s females. It is also important to note he was also mentioned once in the con-driving data set by a user to promote his interview, entitled *Who Stands Behind the Conspiracy of Women’s Driving?* In the pro driving data set, four tweets referred to and mentioned the Al-lohaidan statements, one tweet referred to Abdullah Aldawood’s claims and one tweet referred to Saleh AL-Fouzan fatwa, for the sole purpose of mocking and ridiculing the other position’s statements and reasonings behind their requests to never lift the ban as seen in example 62.

(62) M                      #قيادة\_ المرأة\_ للسيارة تؤثر على المبايض.. أما قيادتها للسيارة خارج البلاد فلا يسبب تأثيراً ، اقنعني أن الديك يبيض وسأقنعك بتحريم قيادة النساء .

#Women\_car\_driving affects ovaries.. while her car driving overseas has no affect. Convince me that a rooster lays eggs, then I will convince you of that woman car driving is prohibited (haram).

On the other hand, the users of the anti-driving group kept mentioning an Arab Channel called “MBC”. This channel had published a poll via Twitter, in the midst of the

June 15 Campaign debate, asking followers if they support or oppose allowing women to drive. However, the poll was later deleted due to the public uproar that it was perceived as an instigation for women to go against their society and participate by driving on June 15. It is important to note that the poll showed that more people (78%) voted against women driving. MBC was mentioned 10 times in the data. It appeared 10 times in the con driving data set and only one time in the pro driving data set. However, MBC was criticized, and it was attempted to show that MBC acted as an instigator both for corruption and to push women to go against their country and their belief system. In the examples below 63-67, we can see the negative connotation attached to MBC.

(63) M #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو حذف MBC1 التصويت علماً بأن الوقت الذي حددته لم ينتهي ولكن لأنها صدمت بشعب لا زال سليم الفطرة ضد الدعوات المشبوهة  
#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 #MBC1 has deleted the poll results even though the poll's deadline wasn't due because it was shocked by people who still have pure-instinct that resists any suspicious campaigns.

(64) M ديننا وعقيدتنا وأخلاقنا ليست محلاً للاستفتاء، ومع ذلك جاء مخيباً لآمال الجالية الليبرالية خاطفي  
إعلامنا، فاضحاً جرائمهم #ساقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو  
Our religion, belief, and ethics are not subject to polling; however, the results came out disappointing to the hopes of the liberal community who hijacked our media, and exposing their crimes.  
#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15

(65) M لا بارك الله في الساعه الي بعثنا فيها عيالنا #سأقود\_سيارتي\_١٥\_يونيو  
#mbc\_تحرض\_ضد\_الدولة

May God not bless the time we sent our kids to study abroad

#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15 #Mbc\_is\_instigating\_against\_the\_country

(66) M ردأ ع حملةMBCالخبييه للقيادة  
سعوديات يطلقون حملة #سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو' علماً ان mbc نزلت تصويت و ٧٠٪  
معارضين وتم حذفه بعد فشلهم

Saudi women are creating ##I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15 campaign  
as a response to the stupid driving campaign MBC started, although MBC  
did this poll with 70% against the driving which they deleted after their  
failure.

(67) F #MBC#تحذف\_تصويت\_قياده\_المراه\_#سادخل\_مطبخي\_١٥\_يونيو وللمرة المليون اقول ان  
قيادة السيارة تدعو للفتنة ورح يعم الفساد في بنات مجتمعا

#MBC deletes the women driving poll #I\_will\_enter\_the  
kitchen\_june15,For the million time, allowing women to drive will result in  
Fitnah (Temptation), and corruption will become widespread.

Users in Examples 63, 66, and 67 made sure to mention in their tweets how the  
MBC Poll was deleted before its completion to give their position a stronger point and  
emphasize the failure of the MBC poll. MBC's poll, in Example 63, was called a  
*suspicious campaign*. MBC was also categorized as a *liberal media*. The user viewed the

poll having more people voting against driving as evidence of the people being aware of their agenda and moral crimes.

To conclude, analyzing intertextuality shows how each group used the Crown Prince's statements in the interview to support their argument and give an authoritative voice to their position. The data of the con driving tweets also showed how the MBC channel was represented negatively as instigators and a liberal media who were humiliated with the poll results that proved that the opponents and opposers of driving had the strong position.

The analysis of the intertextuality of the tweets supporting the driving campaign used intertextuality for two purposes. The first purpose was to mock and ridicule the statements made by the religious clerics' ideas that suggested that driving would complicate a woman's health and pregnancy and that driving is pushed by liberals who want to detach women from their moral values. The second purpose was to report the harsh attacks the women activists of 1990 received from those who opposed women driving.



## 4 CONCLUSION

The study aimed to explore how posts about the issue of women driving was expressed discursively and how genders differed in their participation on the issue of women driving their own vehicles. Analyzing a portion of corpora from the social media Twitter, the study selected a number of tweets representative of the three hashtags that emerged on the heat of the discourse regarding the issue: *#Women\_car\_driving*, *#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15*, and *#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15*.

The analysis of the tweets generated some valuable insights that responded to the research questions: Several themes emerged from the study of the corpora of tweets regarding the driving ban:

- For the hashtag “*#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15*”, 56% of the subjects were anti-driving, while 37% were pro-driving and 7% were pro driving/against campaign. The most present theme in the tweets using this hashtag perceived that the issue of women driving was an elaborate cover for a conspiracy or hidden agenda.
- For the hashtag “*#I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15*”, 54% of the subjects were anti-driving, while 46% were pro-driving and 1% were pro driving/against campaign. The most present theme in the tweets using this hashtag thought that women driving presented an unreligious or unethical activity.
- For the hashtag “*#Women\_car\_driving*,” 83% of the subjects were pro-driving, 14% were anti-driving, while 3% had uncertain positions on the issue. A huge portion of these subjects thought of their personal experiences and struggles when it came to driving and considered these as their basis for their support towards the

issue. The hashtag "#Women\_car\_driving" differed by detailing personal stories and experiences, which can be considered as pieces of evidence for the subject's respective positions on the issue. In fact, the themes of conspiracy/hidden agenda and unreligious/unethical rated very low towards the bottom of the "#Women\_car\_driving" tweets and vice versa. The least supported theme in the other two hashtags was regarding personal struggle, with only 5.3% females espousing the idea in the tweets using the hashtag #I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15, and only 1.3% of the subjects in the tweets using the #I\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15.

It is interesting to note that the hashtag "#Women\_car\_driving" had phenomenal support especially from females, as provided for by the tweets using this hashtag. The other two hashtags attracted strong reactions with more opposing views. As such, it's apparent that negative support for women drivers was reflective in the hashtags "#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15" and "#i\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15". It was designed to create a resistance ahead of the movement on June 15. In other words, the opposing tweets from "#I\_will\_drive\_my\_car\_June15" and "#i\_will\_enter\_my\_kitchen\_June15" were merely tweets that resulted for a need to act based on the steady gain of influence and message by supporters who were calling for female drivers to take the streets on June 15. "#Women\_car\_driving" hashtag is less threatening to anti-driving advocates therefore, there is less of them participating in this hashtag.

Another interesting implication of this study was; an “us vs. them” mentality. In one way or another, most of the tweets expressed disdain for one view just because it opposed another, thereby creating ingroup and outgroup categorization. The analysis of the referential and nomination strategies in the con driving data set, showed that negative connotations were associated with Lujain Alhathloul’s name, whose proper name was referred to the most in the data. Positive qualities were attributed to women supporting the ban such as being sensible, great and chaste. Negative qualities were attributed to the supporters of the campaign such, instigators and morally and ethically corrupt. The lexical terms Liberal/Atheist were also analyzed, based on their frequencies in the con driving data. They were used to refer to the supporters of the campaign or women’s right to drive and were only associated with negative connotations and accusations such as setting ulterior motives while setting a different issue affront.

The analysis of the referential and nomination strategies in the pro driving data set, showed the low frequency of proper names. The findings also showed the positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. While Positive qualities were attributed to women supporting the right to drive such as being free and healthy, negative naming and referential terms were used to refer to the women opposing the right to drive such as being slaves and puppets. Also, negative naming was used to refer to those opposing based on religious beliefs, such as being backwards and ignorant.

The findings of intertextuality emphasized the existence of two ideological ways of perceiving women’s right to drive. Tweeters from both sides, tended to report the crown prince’s statements that implied that the issue of driving is a social matter to add more positive support to their position. For those who opposed the women driving

campaign, they believed that MBC was a liberal media who instigated the campaign, and was embarrassed by their weak poll results that apparently showed strength for the opposition. On the other hand, those who supported the driving campaign used this tool to add more negative attributed to those opposing their demands to drive. This was emphasized by reporting the harsh criticisms of women activists who also advocated women driving in the 1990's. They also refuted the claims of religious clerics regarding women not being able to drive with mockery tweets.

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APPENDIX A  
IRB APPROVAL





EXEMPTION GRANTED

Karen Adams  
English  
480/965-3013  
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Dear Karen Adams:

On 3/27/2017 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Critical Discourse Analysis of twitter posts on the right to drive in Saudi Arabia
Investigator:	Karen Adams
IRB ID:	STUDY00005929
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• edited version, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 3/27/2017.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Rayya Aljarallah  
Rayya Aljarallah