

Social Mobility and Economic Development in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract:

This paper asks how does diversifying economic resources empowers social solidarity and develops new forms of class and social mobility in 21st century Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, historically dependent on oil revenues, is undergoing a profound economic transformation. Through Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is not only pursuing economic diversification but also aiming to reshape its social structure. By moving away from oil dependency and investing in sectors such as tourism, technology, entertainment, and renewable energy, Saudi Arabia is fostering new avenues of social mobility and economic inclusion. This diversification catalyzes social solidarity and creates new classes and occupational identities, reshaping traditional norms. With initiatives like NEOM, the Red Sea Project, and the expansion of fintech and digital infrastructure, new employment opportunities are emerging in regions and sectors previously underdeveloped. Programs like the Monsha'at (General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises) enable Saudis, especially youth and women, to start their own businesses, fostering an entrepreneurial middle class. Recent reforms allowing women to drive, work in mixed-gender environments, and hold leadership positions are transforming gender roles and enabling upward social mobility. The paper traces the emerging and new forms of social solidarity and class mobility in Saudi Arabia, and the resultant conflicts, compromises and changes.

Keywords:

Economic Diversification– Social Solidarity– Change.