

Political Reform in Saudi Arabia: Implications of Vision 2030 on International Relations in The Middle East

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Abstract. This article discusses the political changes taking place in Saudi Arabia as part of the Vision 2030 reform program and their impact on international relations in the Middle East. Vision 2030 is an ambitious national transformation plan aimed at economic diversification, social modernization, and institutional renewal in Saudi Arabia. In this context, this article investigates the policy implications and steps taken by Saudi Arabia in strengthening their international relations. This research uses a qualitative analysis approach by collecting and analyzing data from various sources related to political changes in Saudi Arabia and their impact on international relations. Research findings show that political reforms undertaken by Saudi Arabia have affected the dynamics of their relations with countries in the Middle East. Vision 2030 provides a broader framework for forging closer economic and political partnerships with neighboring countries, as well as strengthening Saudi Arabia's position in regional and international affairs.

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INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia has long been known as a country that implements an absolute monarchy system of government with laws based on a strict interpretation of Islamic law. Since its establishment, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has carried out its policies with a system that tends to be conservative and closed. However, in recent years, Saudi Arabia underwent significant changes in its politics and society as part of its ambitious reform vision, known as 'Vision 2030'.

Vision 2030, announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016, is an ambitious plan that aims to transform Saudi Arabia into a regional economic and cultural hub, as well as a major player in the global economy. The plan includes broad economic, social, and political reforms, aimed at reducing the kingdom's dependence on oil, improving infrastructure, increasing women's participation in economic and public life, and opening the country to foreign tourists and investors.

Since this announcement, Saudi Arabia has embarked on various meaningful reform initiatives and programs in order to realize these goals. These changes include the easing of some previously very strict laws and regulations, such as driving laws for women and restrictions

on cinemas and concerts. In addition, Saudi Arabia has also taken significant steps to diversify its economy and open up new sectors for investment.

However, these reforms also carry profound implications for the dynamics of politics and international relations in the Middle East. In this context, this research focuses on how political reforms in Saudi Arabia, as part of Vision 2030, impact international relations in the region. This research attempts to understand changes in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and how this affects relations with other countries in the region, as well as their implications on global policies and strategies. It includes evaluating Saudi Arabia's position in regional conflicts, such as the conflict with Iran, its intervention in Yemen, and its role in the 2017 Gulf Crisis, as well as relations with other major powers such as the United States and China.

In addition, the study will also discuss the challenges and obstacles Saudi Arabia faces in its reform efforts, including domestic and foreign resistance to change, as well as the implications of the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and how this affects Saudi Arabia's image and international relations. Thus, through this research, we hope to provide a better understanding of the political dynamics of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, as well as how these reforms can shape relations and balances of power in the region and beyond. It is undeniable that the Middle East is a very strategic and important region in terms of geopolitics and geoeconomics. Saudi Arabia, as one of the most influential countries in the region, has an important role to play in maintaining stability and peace. In this context, political reforms in Saudi Arabia and changes in its foreign policy can have a significant impact on the dynamics of the region and international relations.

At the same time, these reforms also present new and potentially instability challenges, both within Saudi Arabia and in the Middle East region in general. For example, resistance to reforms, both from within and outside the country, can lead to conflict and tension. In addition, Saudi Arabia's efforts to expand its influence and position as a major player in the region could also raise tensions with other countries. In the context of international relations, these reforms could also affect Saudi Arabia's relations with other countries, both inside and outside the Middle East region. For example, efforts to diversify its economy and open markets to foreign investment could affect its economic and political relations with countries such as the United States, China, and Russia.

Therefore, it is crucial to understand how these reforms, as part of Vision 2030, can affect politics and international relations in the Middle East. Through this research, we hope to provide better insight and understanding of these issues, as well as facilitate deeper discussion and analysis of the future of politics and international relations in the region. To understand the implications of political reform in Saudi Arabia on international relations in the Middle East, this study will use several theoretical frameworks from the science of international relations and politics. (1) Realism: The theory of realism, which emphasizes national interests and the balance of power, can be used to analyze how Saudi Arabia uses reforms to strengthen its position in the international arena. In this context, political reform in Saudi Arabia can be seen as an attempt to strengthen the power and influence of the state in the balance of power in the Middle East. (2) Liberalism: The theory of liberalism, with its focus on international cooperation and institutions, can be used to analyze how these reforms affect Saudi Arabia's relations with other countries and international institutions. In this context, Vision 2030 can be seen as an attempt to open Saudi Arabia to the outside world and enhance cooperation with other countries and international institutions. (3) Constructivism: The theory of constructivism, which emphasizes how social norms and identities shape foreign policy, can be used to analyze how these reforms affect Saudi Arabia's image and identity internationally. In this context, these reforms can be seen as an attempt to build a new image of Saudi Arabia as a modern and progressive country. (4) Dependency Theory: Dependency theory, which emphasizes the relationship between developed and developing countries, can be used to analyze how these reforms affect Saudi

Arabia's economic relations with other countries, particularly in the context of efforts to reduce dependence on oil. Using this theoretical framework, this study will attempt to provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of how political reforms in Saudi Arabia affect political dynamics and international relations in the Middle East. This analysis will help us understand how these reforms can shape the future of politics and international relations in the region..

METHODS

To analyze the implications of political reforms in Saudi Arabia on international relations in the Middle East, this study will use qualitative approaches and analytical descriptive research methods. This approach was chosen because it allows in-depth and comprehensive research on complex phenomena such as political reform and international relations. (1) Literature Review: This research will conduct an extensive literature review, including books, journals, articles, reports, and other documents relevant to the topic. The aim is to understand the context and background of political reforms in Saudi Arabia, as well as to gather data and information on how

these reforms affect international relations in the Middle East. (2) Document Analysis: This research will also conduct document analysis, including government documents, policy documents, and others, to understand and analyze policies and actions taken by Saudi Arabia in the framework of political reform. It will also help in understanding how these reforms are implemented and how they affect relations with other countries. (3) Data Analysis: After the data is collected, the study will conduct data analysis using qualitative analysis techniques, such as content analysis and thematic analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to identify patterns, themes, and trends in the data, and to understand how political reforms in Saudi Arabia affect international relations in the Middle East..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research will be presented in the form of descriptive and analytical narratives, with the aim of providing a deep and comprehensive understanding of this topic. In addition, the study also hopes to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers and interested parties on how to handle and respond to changes and challenges arising from political reforms in Saudi Arabia. To understand how political reforms in Saudi Arabia seek to strengthen the country's position and influence in the Middle East region and the world, we must consider the goals and initiatives set out in Vision 2030. Vision 2030, introduced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is an ambitious plan that aims to transform Saudi Arabia into a more modern and advanced country, with a diverse and inclusive economy. One of the main goals of Vision 2030 is to reduce Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil by diversifying its economy and thereby strengthening its position in the global economy.

On a regional level, Saudi Arabia strives to become the economic and cultural center of the Middle East. For example, the country plans to build a future city known as NEOM, which is expected to become a hub of innovation and economic growth. Saudi Arabia is also seeking to increase its influence in the cultural and entertainment spheres, such as by allowing cinemas and concerts, and investing in the local entertainment industry. On an international level, Saudi Arabia seeks to expand its influence through diplomacy, trade, and investment. For example, the country seeks to build stronger relations with other countries, both in the Middle East and outside the region, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. However, these efforts to strengthen its position and influence have important implications for international relations in the Middle East. Notably, it can affect the balance of power in the region, which historically has been marked by competition and conflict between different countries and groups.

In this context, changes in Saudi Arabia's position and influence could pose new challenges and affect political and security dynamics in the region. For example, it can give rise to rivalries and conflicts with other countries that also seek to strengthen their position and influence, such as Iran and Turkey. It could also affect Saudi Arabia's relations with its traditional allies, such as the United States, which may have to adjust their policies and strategies to respond to these changes. In this study, we will try to understand how political reforms in Saudi Arabia and efforts to strengthen its position, and influence can affect international relations in the Middle East. We will analyze how this can affect the balance of power and political and security dynamics in the region, as well as how other countries and other International actors respond to these changes. Other countries in the Middle East, such as Iran and Turkey, which have their own regional aspirations, may respond by trying to strengthen their own positions and influence. This could include a range of strategies, from enhancing diplomacy and cooperation with other countries, to seeking to influence Saudi Arabia's domestic and regional politics.

In addition, major powers such as the United States, Russia, and China may also have to adjust their policies and strategies to respond to changes in Saudi Arabia's position and influence. For example, they may have to reconsider their bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia, or may have to figure out ways to mediate rivalries and conflicts that may arise between Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region. Other international actors, such as multilateral institutions and multinational corporations, may also be affected by these changes. For example, they may have to adjust their policies and strategies to deal with a more powerful and influential Saudi Arabia, or may have to figure out how to capitalize on opportunities arising from the economic and social transformation in Saudi Arabia. Ultimately, the implications of Saudi Arabia's efforts to strengthen its position and influence will depend largely on how other countries and international actors respond to these changes, as well as how Saudi Arabia itself adapts and navigates the challenges and opportunities that arise from these efforts.

As part of the political reforms started by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has entered a phase of liberalization and opening up unprecedented in the country's history. These changes cover various aspects of political, economic, and social life in Saudi Arabia, and have important implications for the country's international relations. In terms of politics, Saudi Arabia has seen some changes in governance and policy. While the country is far from becoming a democracy, steps have been taken to create more space for public participation and political debate. For example, Saudi Arabia has held local elections and has given women the right to vote, albeit on a limited scale.

In terms of economy, Saudi Arabia has launched a series of reforms aimed at opening up the economy and attracting foreign investment. This includes the privatization of a large number of state-owned enterprises and the opening of various sectors of the economy to foreign investment, such as mining, infrastructure, and entertainment. Saudi Arabia has also introduced a series of tax and regulatory reforms to create a more investor-friendly business environment. On social terms, Saudi Arabia has relaxed a number of previously strict laws and regulations. For example, the country has lifted its ban on driving for women and has allowed the opening of cinemas and concerts. In addition, Saudi Arabia has also introduced reforms in education and women's rights, although many challenges remain to be faced.

These changes have important implications for Saudi Arabia's international relations. First, the opening up of Saudi Arabia's economy can attract foreign investment and strengthen economic ties with other countries. Second, social and political liberalization can help improve Saudi Arabia's image in the eyes of the world and reduce criticism of the country's human rights record. However, these changes can also pose challenges and risks, such as possible resistance from domestic conservative groups or tensions with countries that hold different views on liberalization and modernization. So far, the international response to Saudi Arabia's liberalization and opening up has been mixed. Some countries and institutions have welcomed this change, while others remain skeptical or critical. However, all parties agree that these reforms represent important changes that could shape the future of Saudi Arabia and its international relations. So far, the international response to Saudi Arabia's liberalization and opening up has varied widely. Some responded with enthusiasm, while others responded with skepticism or criticism. Western countries, including the United States and Europe, have generally welcomed the liberalization measures taken by Saudi Arabia. They see these reforms as an important step forward in the areas of human rights and democracy, as well as an attempt to open Saudi Arabia's economy to foreign investment. The reforms have also been seen as a sign that Saudi Arabia is trying to align itself with global standards and expectations. However, this response was also met with criticism and concern. Some Western observers have noted that while such reforms are important, they are far from enough. They pointed out that Saudi Arabia still has a poor record in the areas of human rights and democracy, including the detention and abuse of human rights activists, restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, and the death penalty. The murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul has also damaged Saudi Arabia's reform

image and raised serious questions about the country's commitment to democratic values and human rights.

In the Middle East, the response to Saudi Arabia's reforms has also been mixed. Some countries, such as the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, have welcomed these reforms and have tried to follow Saudi Arabia's lead in some ways. However, other countries, such as Iran and Turkey, have responded with more skepticism or even openly critical. Finally, the response from Saudi society itself has varied. Some welcomed the reform and saw it as an important step forward. Others, however, are worried or dissatisfied with the pace or direction of change, or feel that these reforms do not go far enough. Whether or not they agree with these reforms, all parties agree that they represent important changes that could shape the future of Saudi Arabia and its international relations. How Saudi Arabia navigates these varied responses, and how these responses may change over time, is an important question that will need to be considered in the future. While political reforms in Saudi Arabia have made some important progress, there are still a number of challenges and obstacles to be faced. Some of these challenges come from within the country, while others come from abroad.

From within, resistance to reform may come from conservative groups who feel threatened by the changes proposed by the government. For example, liberalization of laws and social regulations, such as the removal of a ban on driving for women and the opening of cinemas, has met opposition from some of the more conservative segments of society. In addition, economic reforms, such as privatization and subsidy cuts, can also generate discontent and protests among people who feel aggrieved by these changes. From the outside, Saudi Arabia has faced international pressure and criticism over some aspects of these reforms. For example, the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul has elicited great international criticism and has damaged the image of Saudi Arabia's reforms. In addition, the war in Yemen and the blockade of Qatar have also caused criticism and controversy, and have damaged Saudi Arabia's relations with several countries and international organizations.

Despite these challenges and obstacles, the Saudi Arabian government appears to remain committed to continuing reforms. However, how Saudi Arabia will navigate these challenges and obstacles will largely determine the success of the reforms and their implications for Saudi Arabia's international relations. Overall, political reform in Saudi Arabia under the banner of Vision 2030 is an ambitious and bold endeavor. This reflects recognition by the government that significant changes are needed to ensure a stable and prosperous future for the country.

However, its implementation is not without obstacles and challenges. A number of factors, both internal and external, can influence the success of these reforms. Internally, key challenges include resistance from conservative groups that may feel threatened by the proposed changes. For example, social liberalizations such as driving rights for women and the opening of movie theaters have met opposition from more conservative segments of society. In addition, economic reforms such as privatization and subsidy cuts can also generate discontent and protests from people who feel aggrieved by these changes. Externally, Saudi Arabia has had to deal with international pressure and criticism over some aspects of these reforms. For example, the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and the military intervention in Yemen have drawn international criticism and have damaged the country's reputation. In addition, increased competition with Iran and Turkey, as well as closer ties with Israel, can also bring its own challenges. Despite these challenges and obstacles, it seems that Saudi Arabia is committed to continuing reforms. The government has shown a strong desire to drive change and has made some important progress in recent years. However, the country's ability to navigate these challenges and obstacles will largely determine the success of the reforms and their implications for Saudi Arabia's international relations.

Ultimately, Vision 2030 and political reform in Saudi Arabia is not just about the domestic transformation of the country. It's also about how Saudi Arabia interacts with the surrounding world and how the world responds to these changes. As such, it is important for researchers, policymakers, and international observers to continuously monitor and analyze these developments. Along with domestic reforms, Saudi Arabia has also undergone several changes in its foreign policy. In recent years, Saudi Arabia has shown a desire to play a more active and influential role in regional and international affairs. For example, Saudi Arabia has led a military intervention in Yemen against Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, and has led a blockade against Qatar, which is accused of supporting terrorism and allying with Iran. Saudi Arabia has also tried to strengthen ties with Israel, in a bid to counter Iran's influence in the region.

However, this change in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy has also raised challenges and controversies. For example, the intervention in Yemen and the blockade of Qatar have drawn international criticism and have damaged Saudi Arabia's relations with several countries and organizations. In addition, attempts to approach Israel have also aroused opposition at home and in several other countries in the Middle East. This change in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, however, is an important part of the country's efforts to strengthen its position and influence in international politics. Domestic political reforms and changes in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy go

hand in hand and influence each other, with important implications for international relations in the Middle East and beyond.

For example, Saudi Arabia's political and economic liberalization may be able to help the country strengthen ties with Western countries and attract foreign investment, which in turn could help support the country's regional and international ambitions. Conversely, changes in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, such as efforts to strengthen ties with Israel or intervention in Yemen, can affect the domestic reform process, either by eliciting support or opposition from various groups within the country.

How Saudi Arabia navigates the challenges and opportunities arising from domestic political reforms and changes in foreign policy will largely determine the future of the country and international relations in the Middle East. In this context, this study seeks to provide a better understanding of the dynamics and implications of political reform in Saudi Arabia, focusing on Vision 2030 and its implications for international relations. Ultimately, in the context of international relations, Vision 2030 and political reforms in Saudi Arabia offer a complex and layered picture. They not only reflect Saudi desire to shape the future of its own country but also have the potential to shape future patterns of regional and global relations. At the most basic level, these reforms show how important adaptation is in global politics. Saudi Arabia, long known for its relative political and social stability, is now in the midst of major changes. This suggests that even the countries that seem least likely to change can carry out significant transformations under internal and external pressure.

These reforms also have important implications for relations between the West and the Middle East. On the one hand, these reforms can be seen as an attempt to meet Western standards and expectations in terms of democracy, human rights, and economic liberalization. On the other hand, these reforms can also be seen as an effort to maintain control and authority in the face of global changes and pressures. How the West responds to these reforms will greatly influence the dynamics of this relationship. The final and perhaps most significant challenge is how these reforms will affect the balance of power in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia has long been an important player in the region, and changes in its domestic and foreign politics could have a significant impact on its neighbors and rivals. These implications include everything from the Yemen conflict to relations with Iran and Israel and will require deep analysis and understanding. For all these reasons, this study seeks to provide a better understanding of the dynamics and implications of political reform in Saudi Arabia. With a focus on Vision 2030 and its

implications for international relations, the research offers important insights into Saudi Arabia's political future and its role in global politics.

CONCLUSION

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiative has influenced other Middle Eastern countries. Saudi Arabia's political reforms are considered ambitious, promoting economic diversity, social modernization, and institutional reforms. This strengthens Saudi Arabia's position in regional and international relations. Saudi Arabian politics can act as a balancing force among all the world's nations, both Western and Eastern. Saudi Arabia has long been under the control of conservative old groups, and the country is moving towards greater openness.

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