Oil Wealth and Politics, Comparative study of the Middle East. (Saudia Arabia, UAE and Qatar)

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ABSTRACT: This article will analyse how the wealth of petroleum has influenced the construction of rentier-state structures and the way they have exercised their power within the Arab Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar). In response to their discoveries of great oil and gas reserves; each of these countries created a rentier economy, in which an overwhelming majority of revenue generated by the government is received directly from petroleum exports, with little or no reliance on taxes paid domestically. These new forms of economic activity had profound impacts on state-society relations, systems of governance, and the means of exercising political authority. The theory upon which this research is founded a Rentier-State Theory. According to this theory, states relying on the revenues produced from oil sales can provide for their citizens economically by distributing income and other benefits, providing subsidies and social welfare programs to help reduce the amount of pressure placed upon them by their citizens demanding greater political rights and freedoms. In addition, this paper seeks to explore how oil wealth affects a state's foreign policy decisions, its relationships with neighbouring states, and how it exercises its influence in terms of geopolitical power politics throughout the entire Gulf region.

KEYWORDS: Freedom, Explore, Pressure, Influence, Neighbouring Gulf Region

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Introduction

Beginning with an explanation of the transformation of the political and economic base of Gulf Societies, due to the discovery of petroleum and natural gas in the Arabian Peninsula, the Arab Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait) were able to become some of the richest countries in the world based on their huge hydrocarbon reserves. External revenue from exportation of oil allowed governments in these states to develop economies reliant solely upon oil "rents" instead of taxes. The economic model developed by these countries became known as the "Rentier State System" (Tsui, 2011). As part of International Political Economy (IPE), the Arab Gulf States are commonly studied using Rentier State Theory. According to this theory, a government relying on external rents can maintain its authority politically without being accountable to the population it governs. For example, unlike tax-based economies where citizens expect to be represented politically in exchange for paying taxes, rentier economies significantly diminish the dependency of the state upon society. Social welfare benefits, subsistence, public employment, and economic distribution means are thus often used by ruling elites to consolidate their power (Collier, 2007).

Further, oil has been a strong factor in the development of regional and international power politics. The availability of the Gulf states' financial resources can enable their military expansion, foreign policy, strategic alliances, and expanded geopolitical footprint. This strategic significance of these states' energy dynamics in the global market has established their growing relevance in the international political arena and in international economic stability (Anderson, 1987). Although there are benefits that are linked to oil riches, there are certain contemporary problems of the Rentier system. This encompasses, among others, a decline in oil prices, worldwide conversion to renewable energy sources, economic diversification initiatives (e.g., Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia), and increasing socio-political expectations among the young. The pressures are placing strain on traditional forms of governance. Thus, there exists a need to address the potential long-term viability of rentier economies and authoritarian political systems within the Gulf region. This research project aims to investigate the connections between oil wealth, the development of rentier state systems, and political power in the Arab Gulf states.

Theoretical Framework

Rentier State Theory is used to help understand how states are shaped by oil wealth. This includes states such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Kuwait, where oil revenue is the primary source of income. Governments in these types of states have less need for taxes to finance their activities. Therefore, the normal 'taxation- representation' link between government and citizens can be weakened. Ruling elites use this weakness to limit their responsibility to citizens.

This theory explains how oil wealth affects governance structure within the Arab Gulf region. The increased stability of regimes, decreased pressure on democracy, and strengthened elite power over political and economic assets are all consequences of an increase in oil wealth (Luciani, 1987).

Scope of Study

The political economy of oil wealth and its effects on governmental structures in the Arab Gulf region is the topic of this study. There is only a geographical focus on four major rentier states: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. The countries selected meet the criteria of having some of the most prominent oil-dependent economies in the world and serve as a solid foundation for comparative analysis of rentier state behaviour. This time frame (2000–2023) includes key political and economic developments, including dramatic fluctuations in global oil prices, post-9/11 geopolitical shifts, and recent diversification strategies (Vision-type reforms) in Gulf states. It is also the time frame of this study that will permit analysis of stability and admitted potential changes in rentier systems. The effects of oil rents (as a share of GDP), political stability, democratic development, and political participation will be explored as key variables in the study.

Research Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between oil revenue and political power within the context of the Rentier State theory in the Middle Eastern states. (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar).

Rentier State Theory

Beginning with Rentier State Theory, Rentier States depend on foreign revenue primarily through oil sales rather than taxing their own citizens to fund government activities (Mahdavy, 1970). The theory is particularly useful in explaining the politics and economics of the Arab Gulf monarchies (Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia). A primary characteristic of a Rentier State is that it generates significant amounts of money from the sale of natural resources (oil), creating a surplus of funds beyond what is required to pay for government services. Since the government has access to a virtually unlimited supply of money (from oil), it can operate independently of the taxpaying citizenry. For example, unlike democratic countries where taxpayers hold politicians accountable, there is little pressure for a rentier state to be transparent in its spending practices or to respond to public demands. In fact, since the rentier state is self-funded through oil exports, it does not need to seek public approval for actions taken by the government. Instead of using elections or other forms of participatory democracy to establish legitimacy, the ruling elite distributes wealth generated from oil revenues to the population. Commonly distributed items include subsidized food, housing, education, healthcare, and employment in the public sector. In turn, citizens have an economic interest in maintaining good relations with the governing body. Consequently, economic dependency creates a stable environment for authoritarian rule.

Research Objectives

Primary Objective

1. This study aims to assess the linkages of oil wealth, rentier state structures, and political power in the Arab Gulf States.
2. The research goal is to explain the impact of petroleum dependence on systems of governance, political power, and power dynamics of the Government and society in the Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar).

Research Questions

Based upon the prior stated objectives, the following research questions will guide the analysis of oil wealth, rentier states and political power in the Arab Gulf Region:

1. In what way do mechanisms utilized by rentier states to distribute petroleum rents (subsidies, social welfare programs and government expenditures) promote or inhibit opportunities for citizens to participate politically?
2. To what extent does reliance upon petroleum revenues serve as a means of sustaining authoritarianism in Gulf States?
3. How does oil revenue affect political stability and regime survival in the Gulf States?
4. Is there a correlation between reliance upon petroleum revenues and development of democracy in the Gulf States?

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative case study method to investigate the intricate political economies of change in the context of resource management within the Middle East, specifically analyzing the influence of Rentier State Theory (RST) on state structures shaped by hydrocarbon revenues. Utilizing a descriptive and analytical framework, this research examines how resource wealth, technological competition, and geopolitical rivalry reinforce authoritarian rule through rent-seeking behaviour, while evaluating the degree to which Gulf States have weakened the correlation between taxation and representation. To assess how a state's fiscal independence from domestic tax sources protects state institutions from citizenry demands, this qualitative approach relies on a comprehensive synthesis of both primary and secondary data. Primary data is gathered from official national policies, economic decrees (such as Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030), formal policy statements, and public speeches, while secondary data is systematically collected from macro-level statistical reports by the IMF and World Bank, alongside peer-reviewed academic literature, journals, and institutional policy briefs.

Literature Review

In addition to the other ways that international political economy addresses the relationship between oil wealth, state power, and governance (such as through rentier state theory), an important foundation for our research is the volume edited by Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani called "The Rentier State" (1987). They argue that because many oil-rich states receive so much revenue from outside their borders (i.e., they are dependent upon external rents), they are forced to generate very little or no revenue internally via taxes (Luciani, 1987).. In doing so, this rent-based fiscal structure undermines the linkage between taxpayer representation and government accountability. Additionally, it allows ruling elite groups to control most of the political authority. Following the above framework, Ross' (2001) work entitled "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" empirically supports Ross' argument that states reliant on oil will be less likely to develop democracy.

Ross identifies several mechanisms that demonstrate why oil-dependent states are unlikely to evolve into democracies. Some of these include, but are not limited to, reliance on non-taxation-based funding models for governments, an increase in government spending, and strengthening of coercive apparatuses, both of which contribute to limiting citizen demands for greater political freedom (Ross, 2001).

As noted previously, F. Gregory Gause III wrote about oil monarchy systems in general. Specifically, he analysed Gulf monarchies including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates in his book entitled "Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States" (1994) (Gause, 2015). In his analysis of the Gulf monarchies, Gause identified methods used by ruling families to ensure domestic stability. One method included providing citizens with various forms of financial support, creating patronage networks, and establishing strong internal security structures. All three of these methods were funded using monies generated by oil sales. Also studied Gulf political economies and found that while there have been some limited political and administrative reforms made since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the overall structure of most Gulf political economies continues to remain largely the same (i.e. as a rentier system where citizens are allowed minimal political participation and are largely controlled by the ruling elite).

Research Gap

Oil wealth (percentage of GDP represented by oil rents) is the independent variable of this work which can affect the political stability, political participations, democratic development and regime durability.

By means of increased government expenditures, subsidies and better social welfare, oil wealth enables governments to build positive relationships with their citizens by improving public services. These contributors to reduced levels of citizen demands for taxation and enhanced political accountability. Thus, high dependence on oil rents should generate less democratic development while generating more politically stable authoritarian regimes.

History (Oil Wealth in the ARAB States of the Gulf)

In the early years of the twentieth century, oil was found throughout the Arabian Peninsula, as well as in many other areas of the Middle East. Prior to this time, most of the economic activity in all Gulf societies consisted of pearl diving, fishing, small-scale trading, and agriculture. Economically, they had few resources; politically, most of the power rested with tribal leaders or traditional systems of government.

Before WWI, no significant oil finds existed in the Gulf area. However, Bahrain became one of the first places where a large quantity of oil was discovered (in 1932), followed shortly thereafter by Saudi Arabia (in 1938), then by smaller quantities in Kuwait, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and other Gulf territories. It is accurate to say that the discovery of oil created a very wealthy society out of what were previously relatively poor desert communities. At the end of WWII, the demand for oil greatly expanded, placing the Gulf Region in a position as one of the largest suppliers of energy to industrialized nations. (Anderson, 1987).

During the 1950's and 60s, Gulf Governments received an increasing amount of money from their oil exports. They used the revenue to develop their infrastructure, such as roads, airport facilities, hospitals, schools, and cities. In addition to developing their physical infrastructures, the Gulf Governments were able to create several social programs using their oil revenue. They provided free education and health care services to their populations and assisted them financially through programs that included housing assistance and job placement within the public sector. (BP, 2023). The rapid increase in oil revenues during the 1970's, especially after the 1973 oil embargo, significantly increased the amount of revenue available to Gulf Governments. With extremely high oil prices creating enormous amounts of wealth for Gulf Government coffers and strengthening their ability to affect both economically and politically, the relationships between oil wealth and governance have been studied extensively. As a direct result of this research, Rentier State Theory has emerged. According to this theory, once a country receives large sums of money from foreign sources, it becomes less reliant upon taxes. When a country is less reliant upon taxes, there are fewer pressures to allow its citizenry to be represented politically (Collier, 2007).

Case Study: Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is one of the world's key oil-producing countries, and a major player in the energy markets. In the 20th century, Saudi Arabia became a major economic player within the region and internationally due to the vast oil reserves being discovered in the Kingdom. The Saudi economy shifted to one centered on oil exports and continues to depend on oil revenues as the income of the government (BP, 2023).

The country's political and economic development has been influenced by the oil wealth. Oil money provides the funding for big projects, public services, and welfare plans for the Saudi government. The citizens enjoy free health care, education, housing support and subsidies. These can have an important impact on the standard of living and consequently on poverty rates. Saudi Arabia has a monarchical system of government with the Saudi royal family wielding the major power. Oil money has boosted the state's capacity for political stability with fewer taxes. An increase in financial independence thus means less pressure for political participation and democratic reforms, according to Rentier State Theory.

The Saudi government also works heavily on modernization and economic diversification under a plan called “Vision 2030”. The objective of this reform program is to diversify away from oil-related revenues and foster industries like tourism, entertainment, technology, and renewable energy. The government intends to overhaul the nation's economy, and projects like NEOM are a sign of its ambition. Political participation in Saudi Arabia is still restricted, despite the economic development. Political institutions are strictly controlled, and political opposition is curtailed. But the state still makes economic development, national security, and social stability priorities (Colgan, 2013).

Case Study: United Arab Emirates

The UAE is one of the most successful cases of economic diversification in the Middle East Gulf countries. While the revenues from oil and gas continue to be significant, the UAE has a diversified, globalised economy, and has made rapid moves to diversify away from its oil and gas-driven natural resources. (Collier, 2007).UAE has 7 Emirates; the most important among them is the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, which houses most of the oilfields, and the Emirate of Dubai, which is one of the world's leading cities for trade, tourism, finance, and real estate. Rapid infrastructure, education, health, and urban development were a foundation on oil revenues in the beginning. In the longer term, it was the government's use of the revenues to invest in non-oil sectors to lessen future reliance on hydrocarbons.

Dubai city has emerged as an emblem of diversification, with significant investments having been made in aviation, tourism, luxury services and international business. Abu Dhabi has also been investing a lot in renewable energy projects, financial institutions and cultural projects. The UAE's strategies have contributed to it becoming an economic hub globally. The UAE is a federally constituted monarchy, in which each of the seven emirate families wields considerable power. The federal government makes policy decisions at the national level, and the UAE Emirates have autonomy in many areas. Politically, oil wealth has helped to secure a politically stable state, allowing the Government to deliver good public services and achieve strong economic results. (World Bank, 2023).

Case Study: Qatar

Qatar is one of the richest countries in the world when it comes to per capita income. The exploitation and export of hydrocarbons brought to Qatar a strong economic and development potential and turned it into a strong 'influential' state globally.

The Qatari government provides for a generous welfare state, a high level of infrastructure development and public services with energy revenues. The citizens enjoy free education and the freedom to enjoy healthcare, housing facilities, and employment in the public service. These advantages lead to a high standard of living with excellent stability of social life. (Yates, 1996). Qatar has also leveraged its financial resources to increase its global reach via investment, diplomacy and internationally based media. Among its major draws are the International Institutes, Business Forums, sports events, etc., promoting its international image. Human capital has been developed with big investment in education and research activities, including joint work with foreign universities.

Relationship Between Oil Wealth and Political Development

The connection between oil wealth and political development has been one of the political science and international political economy's most hotly debated issues. The oil-rich (Arab) Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., Qatar, and Kuwait are countries where the oil factor has decisively influenced political institutions, the governance system, and relations between the state and society. However, when oil was discovered over the last century, the countries were poor, desert societies that were transformed into some of the richest in the world (Crystal, 1990)

The governments of these countries have been able to offer people a wide range of 'freebies' - free education, healthcare services, housing assistance, subsidies and jobs in the public-sector - with the proceeds of the oil boom. The advantages include the maintenance of social stability and firming up of popular support for ruling authorities. Thus, governments can maintain their political legitimacy without engaging citizens in democracy. Rentier State Theory offers an explanation: States with high external rents, like oil, have special political institutions. In these, governments identify groups of citizens to whom they transfer wealth, and they also exert tight control over political institutions. Citizens depend on the state for money and thus are less likely to seek political reform (Anderson, 1987). Meanwhile, oil wealth has enabled the Gulf governments to invest heavily in infrastructure, technology, transportation, and in the modernization of themselves. Economic development and living standards have been enhanced by modern cities, advanced airports, and world-class public services. Hence, oil wealth can be said to bring both positive and negative consequences on political development.

Oil Wealth and Taxation

Another key element of Rentier State Theory is the connection between oil wealth and taxation. Governments depend on taxes to fund citizens' services and government activities in most countries. This taxation process often establishes a relationship of this sort, a political one, where people want to be represented, accountable, and transparent in exchange for paying taxes. The situation in many Arab Gulf states is quite different, however, as governments' revenues are generated far more from oil exports than from domestic taxes.

As per Rentier State Theory, the low tax policy has significant implications for politics. Governments that don't depend on citizens for many revenue sources have less incentive to establish political representation and democratic participation. It would be less relevant to state "no taxation without representation" in the rentier economy where citizens contribute relatively little to state finances through taxes. Oil-funded governments have the means to keep their governments legitimate without increasing political rights. The citizens are provided free education, health care, housing aid, subsidies, and jobs. Such benefits can lessen needs for political changes as many citizens believe the government provides adequate economic support.

Lack of comprehensive taxation also influences the evolution of state institutions. For an economy to run on taxes, an effective system of revenue gathering, financial accountability, and citizen participation must be developed. States with oil resources, for instance, might have less to do with citizens and more to do with resource revenue (Herb, 2009).

But the recent economic changes have led some Gulf governments to consider implementing new tax system structures. Some countries in the Gulf have already introduced value-added taxes (VAT) and other fiscal sources for revenue generation, for instance. The changes come as part of a broad-based efforts to diversify the economy away from oil money.

Oil Wealth and Political Stability

Political stability is when a government can maintain order, legitimacy, and continuity without significant political crises, violent conflicts, or changes in regime (Colgan, 2013). In the Arab Gulf states, oil wealth has been one of the most important factors contributing to political stability. OPEC oil exporters like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar have applied oil money to shore up their political institutions and social stability (Okruhlik, 1999).

The consequences of oil wealth on political stability have been mainly linked to the dispersal of economic gains. Oil money plants free education, free health care, and even housing assistance; citizens receive subsidies, and governments find jobs for citizens. The rewards increase the standard of living and lessen public discontent. If citizens do not feel they are deprived of economic security and services, they tend to be less inclined to engage in a political protest or opposition movement. Governments are also able to react to economic and social issues rapidly within an oil revenue economy. In times of economic turmoil, governments can fund increased levels of public expenditure, financial support, and welfare programmes to ensure social stability. Such financial flexibility helps to ensure that economic crisis does not turn into a political crisis (Ross, 2001).

Oil Wealth and Authoritarianism

Political scientists and international political economy scholars have long explored the link between oil and authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is a political system that has power vested in a small elite, and there is limited political participation, competition, and opposition. Oil wealth has imposed authoritarian political structures in many Arab Gulf countries. In this relationship, Rentier State Theory provides an important explanation. According to the theory, governments that receive large revenues from natural resources such as oil are less dependent on taxation. They are not very dependent on the citizens for financial resources, so they are not pressured to increase citizens' participation or political accountability (Colgan, 2013).

Oil wealth gives the governments tremendous economic power, which can be leveraged to consolidate political hold. Oil revenues give governments the money they need to pay for big bureaucracies, security services and administrative structures. These are establishments that support political continuity and deter opposition politics. Welfare distribution is another oil-driven mechanism that leads to the support of authoritarianism. Oil-generated profits are deployed by governments to offer economic services to citizens, such as public sector employment opportunities, health services, education, housing assistance, subsidies and more. These benefits help to raise the standard of living and lower the motivation for political mobilisation. Those relying on public welfare benefits from the state may have less interest in challenging the political status quo (Colgan, 2013).

Oil Wealth and Democratization

Democratization is the process of making the political system more democratic by broadening political participation, consolidating representative institutions, assuring civil liberties, and enhancing government accountability. Issues surrounding the relationship between oil and democratization in the Arab Gulf States have been one of the more debated issues in the study of these areas. Most scholars believe that oil can harm or reduce the chance of successful democratization. Rentier State theory states that non-tax-dedicated governments are less likely to be pressured for democratic reforms; specifically, governments reliant on oil over taxes face less pressure for democratic reforms. Citizens bear a relatively small share of the economy's income in the form of taxes, so the demand for political representation may be lower in tax-based economies (Anderson, 1987). With oil, governments can sustain themselves by means of economic performance, not democracy. Oil money provides welfare, public jobs, health care, and education for citizens. Such perks tend to diminish people's grievances and curb demands for political change (Geddes, 1999). further factor that affects democratisation is the role of state institutions. This fiscal power of oil-rich governments helps to endow their administration, security structure, and public services with resources. Both the development and strengthening of state capacity can bring stability but can also strengthen centralized political power. In the Arab Gulf states, it has been seen that economic modernity does not necessarily pave the way to the development of democracy.

Discussion

This study's results are like those already in the literature about the relationship between oil and authoritarianism. The findings clearly confirmed Rentier State Theory, which says that oil revenues can decrease tax dependence and erase citizens' dependence on the state. This means a low level of accountability is possible, allowing governments in the Arab Gulf to secure political power to a lesser degree.

The study also fits neatly into the discussion of scholars, including Michael L. Ross, that oil wealth leads to less democratic development because of its strengthening effect on the state and curtailment of political competition. Likewise, in the case of the Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, one finds a focus on economic distribution based on oil revenues, which is a major factor in the legitimation of the regimes and political stability.

Some of the drawbacks of the traditional rentier model are also discussed. However, the political economy of the Gulf is undergoing some limited change over time, with increased economic diversification plans, global trends toward renewable energy, and political awareness among the younger groups. The changes seem to indicate that oil wealth brings stability, but this may be as a mechanism of authoritarianism and may become less durable over time.

Conclusion

This research has explored the links between oil wealth and rentier state structures and their effects on political power in the Arab Gulf region, particularly Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Kuwait. The study relied on data that was both quantitative and from international sources, with an analysis that was based on Rentier State Theory.

The study, at the same time, pinpoints the new threats to the rentier system. The politics of the region are slowly changing, with economic diversification policies, global energy transitions, changing oil prices, and an enhanced youth's socio-political awareness, all found to influence the politics of the region. These developments indicate that oil continues to be a major determinant of political power but may come under a lot of pressure to sustain the basis of government in the long term. In conclusion, the study suggests that, overall, oil wealth has always remained a major factor in determining political power in the Arab Gulf states but that the relationship between state, society and political power in the future will be defined by structural economic and social changes.

Application of Theoretical Framework

The theory of the Rentier State is pertinent to our studies of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait since each of these countries derives a considerable part of its national revenue from exportation of petroleum products (oil & gas) and natural resources as opposed to taxation. External Rents allow states sufficient financing of governmental expenditures to enable them to forego heavy taxation of their citizenry; thereby reducing demands for political representation and accountability. For example, in Saudi Arabia, the state's ability to finance extensive public services, subsidies, and employment opportunities through the sale of its oil has served to strengthen both the legitimacy of the state and political stability (Collier, 2007). Additionally, in the case of the UAE, the country's oil wealth has allowed it to build world-class transportation infrastructure, modern cities, and generous welfare programs while simultaneously ensuring political stability. Kuwait is another country that clearly fits into this model; as such, the country's massive oil revenues serve to fund social welfare programs, free education, health care, housing assistance, and public sector employment for its citizens (BP, 2023).

Recommendations

- First, Gulf countries still must keep going, and more, with their drive toward economic diversification, which will lessen their reliance on oil. Political systems are at risk due to overdependence upon hydrocarbons and long-term energy transitions because of fluctuations in global energy prices.
- Second, the focus should be on enhancing transparency and accountability of governance. Greater transparency of institutions, as in rentier systems, can contribute to a more trusting and effective administration.
- Thirdly, investing in education and youth involvement is key. Governments should provide bigger and more inclusive spaces for political interaction and engagement, at a time when the younger generation of countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates is increasingly aware of its political voice.

Limitations

- Despite its being a systematic quantitative analysis of oil wealth and political outcomes in the Arab Gulf region, this study suffers from some shortcomings. Firstly, the research will be based on secondary sources comprising documents from bodies like the World Bank, IMF, and Freedom House, whose internal political dynamics are not fully addressed, such as in the cases of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. The lack of primary data collection, including interviews and/or field surveys, hampers more in-depth analysis of political behaviour and elite decision-making.
- Second, the study predominantly looks at macro-level measures such as oil rents, political stability, democracy indicators, etc. There are micro-level factors influencing political systems that it does not adequately consider, such as the social, cultural, and institutional contexts. This can limit the in-depth analysis of the results.
- Third, the research has a comparative cross-country design but is only conducted in four Gulf states. Thus, the results might not be fully applicable to other countries with rents and resources outside the Arab Gulf area.

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