

Abstract

This qualitative single case study examines the role of women in Saudi Arabia's ongoing reforms, employing the lenses of modernization theory and normative feminism to offer a comprehensive analysis of this socio-political and economic transformation. Considering the complexity of the topic and the uniqueness of the monarchical political and social system of Saudi Arabia, this thesis provides a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping women's participation and agency within the reform process. The thesis uncovers the complex interplay between modernization and gendered norms in Saudi Arabia through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and participant observation. The findings reveal that women's increased participation in the labor market, education, and political representation, contributed to the nation's broader developmental goals under Vision 2030. Finally, it offers valuable insights into the evolving roles of women within Saudi Arabia's reform process, illuminating the importance of addressing structural and normative barriers to gender equality. By highlighting the potential for change and the challenges, this thesis underscores the need for continued efforts to promote women's empowerment and dismantle patriarchal norms to foster sustainable development and inclusive growth.

Keywords

Feminism, Gender mainstreaming, Women Empowerment, Vision 2030, Women participation, Modernization, Normative Feminism, Saudi Arabia