

Summary of "Diversity and Social Cohesion in the United Arab Emirates" by S.Z. Al Oraimi Introduction

The article explores the impact of cultural diversity on social cohesion in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a federation of seven emirates established in 1971. With a population of approximately 10 million, Emirati citizens constitute only 10% of this demographic. The UAE's oil wealth has facilitated significant human, social, and economic development, but this has also led to a reliance on external labor forces, resulting in a complex demographic landscape.

Demographic Changes and Cultural Dominance

Historical Context: The UAE's population has grown dramatically, particularly after the global economic downturn in 2008, leading to an influx of skilled and unskilled labor from various countries.

Cultural Landscape: Over 200 nationalities reside in the UAE, predominantly male migrant workers. This demographic shift has led to cultural domination by international cultures, overshadowing local traditions.

Social Tensions: The imbalance between Emirati citizens and foreign workers has fostered feelings of disharmony and social tension, prompting many Emiratis to relocate from urban centers to suburban areas.

Research Methodology The author utilized qualitative methods, conducting face-to-face interviews and group discussions with a diverse sample of Emirati citizens, including government employees, teachers, and students, to gather insights on their perceptions of cultural diversity and its effects on social cohesion.

Economic Context The UAE's economy is heavily reliant on the oil industry, trade, and logistics. Globalization has positioned the UAE as a hub for international business, attracting a continuous flow of migrants. The article notes that the demographic changes have led to a significant increase in the immigrant population, affecting social structures and interactions.

Cultural Hegemony and Social Interaction Cultural Hegemony: The article draws on Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony to explain how dominant cultural groups can shape societal norms and values. In the UAE, the majority of migrants exert a form of cultural influence, despite being politically and economically marginalized.

Social Segregation: There is a notable lack of social interaction between Emiratis and immigrants, with both groups often residing in separate neighborhoods and engaging primarily in work-related relationships.

Concerns of Emirati Citizens Emirati citizens express various concerns regarding the demographic imbalance: Identity and Culture: Many Emiratis fear losing their cultural identity and traditions as they become a minority in their homeland. The younger generation is particularly worried about the influence of global lifestyles on their cultural heritage.

Social Issues: Participants noted an increase in social problems, such as crime and bullying, which they associate with the presence of immigrant workers.

Health and Environment: Concerns were raised about the health implications of a large immigrant population living in poor conditions, leading to potential public health crises.

Government Response and Future Prospects The UAE government has recognized the challenges posed by this demographic situation and has initiated policies aimed at promoting tolerance and social acceptance. However, the article suggests that these measures may not be sufficient to address the underlying social tensions and may require a reevaluation of immigration policies and strategies to foster genuine social cohesion.

Conclusion The article concludes that the UAE faces a significant dilemma regarding its demographic structure, where the majority of the population consists of immigrants. This situation complicates the preservation of national identity and social cohesion. While the government promotes initiatives for tolerance, the deep-seated cultural and social divides pose ongoing challenges that require

careful consideration and strategic planning. Key Terms Cultural Diversity Social Cohesion Demographic Imbalance Cultural Hegemony Immigration Policy This summary encapsulates the essential themes and findings of the article, emphasizing the complexities of cultural diversity and its implications for social cohesion in the UAE.