

Policy Report

No 71
08/23

Emirati Women on the Rise:

The Impact of Globalisation and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

Gina Bou Serhal, Rahaf Al Khazraji, Dr Kristian Alexander, Leonardo Jacopo Maria Mazzucco

The rapid economic transformations experienced by the Gulf states over the past three decades resulted in exponential growth in various economic sectors including oil and gas, construction, healthcare, and hospitality. This accelerated development led to a reliance on migrant labour, creating a radical imbalance in the country's demographics with expatriates accounting for nearly 90% of the UAE's population of 10 million in 2021. This disproportion inadvertently led to a surge in social modernity conflicting with the UAE's traditional values and norms. Additionally, an increase in oil rents triggered a construction boom, spurring migration from rural areas to city centres. Today, nearly 75% of the UAE's population resides in urban neighbourhoods, creating a multicultural fusion of the liberal and capitalist tendencies of the West alongside the conservative practices of the Arabian Gulf.

Should the trend towards globalisation continue, further integrating world economies, societies, and ideas, there is the potential for undesirable cultural outcomes relating to transnational interdependence. In particular, globalisation has brought about changes in how family dynamics are perceived and fulfilled in Arab culture, altering¹ the traditional roles and responsibilities assigned to male and female figures within the family unit. The traditional Emirati family unit is bound by tribal kinship and culturally driven family values, including arranged endogamous marriage. Such arrangements have long been considered the norm, not necessarily the rule, for many *Khaleeji* families in the region. Yet studies have concluded that arranged marriages are a leading contributor to divorce throughout the GCC. Several studies point to the limited opportunities prospective couples have to become acquainted with each other prior to signing a marriage contract as the main cause of high divorce rates in the Gulf states.

As today's younger generation is faced with increased accessibility to information, including multiple social media platforms and messaging applications, the virtual world is upending traditional means of socialisation and courtship. This digital freedom challenges the Emirati family unit as the primary source of values and culture for today's youth. According to Frances Hesso, Associate Professor of Sociology at Oberlin College and author of *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East*, such modern forms of connectivity have created "new opportunities for private socialising, unsupervised gender mixing outside of family circles, and virtual and nonvirtual romantic or lustful trysts" that are typically difficult for conservative parents or family members to control. Today's generation relies less on immediate family members to arrange opportunities for socialisation and matchmaking, and more on

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

technology such as dating forums and virtual communities. This has shifted the boundary between the private and public domains while disrupting the primary role of the patriarchal Emirati family. Expanded opportunities for social interaction outside the tribal structure have led to increased autonomy among today's youth, who aim to defy social expectations while seeking out relationships based on personal choice. Marriages based on love and those across different religious denominations, and marriages between Emiratis and foreign nationals are all on the rise in the UAE.

Mixed Marriage: A rise in nuptials between Emirati citizens and foreign nationals

Data published by the UAE's Ministry of Justice regarding marriage contracts registered in federal courts in four Emirates (Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, Fujairah) between 2010 and 2019 have shown that mixed marriages are gradually increasing across the UAE. Across the four Emirates, 5530 marriage contracts were registered in total between Emiratis and non-Emiratis throughout the nine years. Such data indicates Emirati males are more likely to marry non-Emiratis than Emirati females, accounting for more than twofold of the registered contracts, as shown in figure 1. The data also indicates mixed marriages are more prevalent in urban than rural areas in the UAE.

Table

Emirate	Ajman	Fujairah	Sharjah	Umm al-Quwain	Total
Emirati female to non-Emirati male	349	139	724	90	1302
Emirati males to non-Emirati female	1500	437	2042	249	4228
Total	1849	576	2766	339	5530

Figure 1. Source: UAE's Ministry of Justice.

From 2016 to 2018, more than 500 of 1836 cross-national marriages in the four Emirates were polygamous in nature. Primarily these involved married Emirati males seeking non-Emirati females as second wives. In comparison, 471 of 7957 endogamous marriages during the same time period were Emirati females accepting to be second wives.² The majority of the non-Emirati females were single at the time of marriage, while more than half of Emirati females were divorced.

The latest statistics by the Ministry of Justice reveal a 14% increase between 2019 and 2020 in mixed marriages in Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, and Fujairah. Sharjah recorded the most number of mixed marriages with 254 marriages, followed by Ajman with 226 marriages.³ In Dubai 522 of the 3198 or 16.3% of marriages were cross-national in the first nine months of 2020.

Mixed marriages between an Emirati and a foreigner are not novel to Emirati society and have been taking place since the country's formation. However, the negative connotation attached to such marriages has not diminished. Throughout the years, governmental officials, members of the UAE Parliament, religious figures, media outlets, and citizens have expressed their concerns over cross-national marriages, going as far as calling for decrees to be passed preventing mixed marriages.⁴ The concern, according to Federal National Council member, Hamad Al Rohoomi from Dubai is that an increase in mixed marriages (i.e. an Emirati marrying a foreign national) affects the country's overall

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

national identity. Mr. Rohoomi's issue is that if Emirati men, for example, continue on a path of opting for non-national wives, young Emirati women will be left with a diminished pool of eligible males to wed; stating his point is not a critic of expatriates, but rather a matter of demographics.⁵

The UAE government response

Considering the average price of hosting an Emirati wedding can cost anywhere from AED 295,000 (USD 80,000) to AED 495,000 (USD 135,000)⁶ with the groom's family covering the majority of expenses, such exorbitant fees have often been portrayed as the justification for UAE nationals marrying someone outside Emirati society.⁷ To help alleviate the financial burden while also encouraging marriage between Emirati nationals, the UAE government subsidises the cost of weddings by providing marriage grants through a one-time lump sum of AED 70,000 to eligible couples.⁸

In 2021, the ministry distributed AED 190.8 million in marriage subsidies, an 11% increase from the previous year and the largest sum distributed since the grants were first introduced. Over 2,700 young Emirati citizens benefited from the 2021 incentives, 252 more than the previous year. While marriage grants assist couples in financing their wedding expenses, to qualify for such a grant both the bride and groom must be Emirati citizens.⁹

Likewise, to further lessen economic pressures associated with Emirati marriage, the UAE's Ministry of Community Development often arranges mass weddings and hosts frequent awareness campaigns to educate Emirati youth on the importance of marriage and commitment, including sound financial planning. "[This helps prepare them to] assume their marital responsibilities and raise awareness on the importance of psychological and social harmony to achieve marital happiness," according to the Minister of Community Development, Hessa Buhumaid.¹⁰

Nonetheless, the UAE is home to nearly 200 diverse nationalities with expatriates accounting for nearly 90% of the population. UAE nationals would inevitably consider marriage outside Emirati society to a foreign national. Furthermore, as more Emirati women enter the workforce, mixed-gender spaces have become the norm for Emiratis of both genders, though Emirati women continue to face cultural and social scrutiny including legal hurdles that Emirati men do not when it comes to mixed marriages outside Emirati society.

Should an Emirati woman wish to marry a non-Emirati, for example, she must obtain consent from her parents or legal guardian.¹¹ Additionally, she may also face obstacles in obtaining citizenship for her children born to foreign fathers. Amendments were made to federal law in 2017 that granted children of Emirati women married to non-Emirati men the right to become citizens after the age of six, however, despite this legal framework, the citizenship process requires years of waiting. It is also a process that Emirati men are not subject to. UAE federal family laws, which are based on Sharia Law, designate a mother as the primary custodian of her child, meaning she is "responsible for keeping, raising, and caring for the child"¹² while the father remains the child's legal guardian. In 2022, UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued a directive granting children born to Emirati mothers and foreign fathers the same access to government-issued healthcare and education as children born to Emirati fathers.

Sheikha Jawaher Al Qasimi, wife of Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah, tweeted on more than one occasion calling for the country's dire need to reconsider the naturalisation of children of Emirati mothers and their current status quo. In January 2021, she tweeted that the naturalisation of children of Emirati mothers is a necessity.¹³ The children, born and raised in the UAE by Emirati mothers, often

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

speak of loyalty and patriotism to the country being raised with Emirati values and customs, yet their official documents reflect otherwise serving as a reminder that they do not legally have a sense of belonging. While the process to obtain citizenship after the age of six is possible, the procedure can be “long, confusing and complicated, requiring many approval processes, and is by no means guaranteed to succeed,”¹⁴ according to Emirati mother, Rasha Abu Baker, UAE editor of the *Khaleej Times*, who is married to a non-national in the UAE.

The Impact on Fertility Rates

To many UAE citizens, an increase in mixed marriages is a sign of concern as it dilutes the national identity, weakens local customs, and alters the population balance.¹⁵ Many Emirati parents believe that as their daughters grow older their prospects for an appropriate match lessen.¹⁶ As a result, parents champion early weddings, hoping their daughters avoid “spinsterhood” (*anousa* in Arabic), a term used to label unmarried women in their late 20s or older.¹⁷ The number of so-called spinsters in the country, however, has hit a staggering high.¹⁸ Likewise, “marrying late” was once a socially and culturally demoralising decision for Emirati women, however today it has become a viable solution to assure autonomy in choosing a husband, particularly as the social expectations of a “traditional” wife are renegotiated in the culture.¹⁹

As a result of the evolving perception of gender equality and traditional family roles in Emirati society, including the emergence of more Emirati women taking on professional roles in the workplace, the birth rate in the UAE has dropped considerably over the past few decades. In the last 30 years alone, the fertility rate in the UAE dropped from 5.9 births (per woman) in 1980, to 1.5 in 2020,²⁰ more than double the global average.²¹ The UAE currently ranks 174th out of 189 countries analysed in relation to birth rates.²² While prevailing health issues, lifestyle choices, increased access to birth control, and dietary habits are factors, Reema Sabban, associate professor of sociology at Zayed University accredits such a decline to the “pressures of the fast-moving modern society on the younger generations.” Younger generations of Emirati women are “not interested in having too many children, and are more focused on finding a job and pursuing their career,” she adds. “Having a professional life, self-achievement and satisfaction are the main reasons for the drop”²³

Underlying Factors of the UAE's Increasing Divorce Rates

Marriage and family are revered as both a religious and moral duty in the Islamic religion.²⁴ Reconciliation over differences is typically encouraged for couples with divorce regarded as a last resort. Since the establishment of the state in 1971 the UAE government has promoted marriage between nationals in light of its demographic imbalance as well as concerns from citizens regarding the declining political and economic functions of the tribal structure.²⁵ For the state, marriage also functions as a means to preserve moral and social norms, and women are traditionally expected to pass Islamic values to their children.²⁶ To further facilitate the nation-building process, the UAE government has long prioritised the empowerment and education of women, with nearly 77% of all Emirati women enrolling in secondary school while accounting for 70% of all university graduates in 2020.²⁷ Further compounding this skewed distribution, a 2013 study found that nearly 35% of male Emirati students drop out before finishing high school.²⁸ Additionally, Emirati men face increased family and cultural pressures to serve as the family breadwinner early on while also carrying the burden of saving money in preparation for marriage. In stark contrast, young Emirati females are encouraged to pursue higher education as low-level skilled jobs are rare for uneducated women in Emirati society.²⁹

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

Such educational strides have resulted in a gender imbalance, tipping the scale of traditional gender roles in the Emirates. In addition, the role of the patriarchal family continues to evolve through the introduction of the increasing number of women in the workplace. Divorce and non-traditional family forms including single parents are incrementally becoming more acceptable in society.³⁰ Furthermore, women who have chosen to delay or forgo marriage altogether to prioritise their careers as well as those viewed as the breadwinners are “manifestations of change in family functions and values”³¹

Today's generation tends to favour postponing nuptials until they are much older, often choosing to concentrate on their education before settling down with a partner. Throughout the region, the rate of early marriage has continued to drop drastically with the UAE witnessing the fastest pace of decline. According to the Social Research Centre at the American University in Cairo, “...the percentage of women aged 15 to 19 who were married dropped from 57% in 1975 to 8% in 1995.”³² As of 2019, the median age of marriage for Emirati females in Abu Dhabi was 26.3 years.³³ While deviations in traditional marriage patterns reflect the social and demographic shift the region has experienced in such a short period of time, increases in higher education enrolment and the redefinition of a woman's role in society also factor into the decision-making of Emirati women who choose to delay marriage at a young age.

An escalation in early divorce rates is an increasing trend causing concern throughout the Emirates. In 2021, nearly 62% of Emirati marriages ended in divorce within the first four years in Abu Dhabi alone.³⁴ Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts surveyed 200 recently divorced couples in the UAE and discovered a correlation between the rising divorce rates in the Emirates and social issues at home,³⁵ with 54% of the participants citing “family interference in their personal affairs” as a reason for seeking a divorce. Traditional cultural norms could contribute to this interference. Many traditional Emiratis live in multi-generational households, for example, in some cases with both sets of families. It is also customary for newlyweds to reside with the husband's family following their nuptials.

The study also concluded that the lowest divorce rates in the Emirates occurred among those with the least amount of education, mainly illiterate women (7.5%) and illiterate men (7%). Conversely, the highest rates of divorce occurred among individuals who obtained higher education, including 39.5% of female divorcees and 30% of male divorcees holding secondary degrees at the time of their divorce.³⁶ Expanded participation in the workforce allows women more control over their own wealth and family spending while decreasing dependency on their spouses. Newfound financial liberty makes women more conscious of their rights and future aspirations and less likely to accept a less-than-equal position within the family unit.³⁷

Social media also plays a role in the decline in marriage as celebrities and influencers promote unrealistic expectations of the “ideal partner” on popular platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram.³⁸ This is compounded by the sheer volume of time that UAE users spend online per day: Emiratis average eight hours of screen time daily, including three hours a day on social media.³⁹ This online addiction provokes distance between couples, minimising the opportunity for meaningful interaction according to Dr. Saeed Al Darmaki, director of family guidance and alternative solutions at the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department. “We are seeing many cases of family disputes that often result in divorce because of lack of proper communication between spouses, caused by excessive use of social media,” he noted.⁴⁰

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

Sustaining the Emirati woman's role in society

The late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the United Arab Emirates originally fostered the notion of female empowerment. "Islam affords women their rightful status, and encourages them to work in all sectors, as long as they are afforded appropriate respect," he said.⁴¹ Today, virtually a third of the country's ambassadors are female. Likewise, nearly 28% of the UAE government's ministerial roles are held by women — one of the highest proportions in the region.⁴² The UAE ranked first in the Middle East in a recent World Bank study that measured women's economic opportunities across 190 countries using parameters such as pay, entrepreneurship, mobility, and pension.⁴³ From 2018 to 2022, 44,000 licenses were allotted to female businesswomen in the UAE with 58% issued to Emirati entrepreneurs.⁴⁴ Nationwide, the UAE is home to 32,000 Emirati businesswomen who manage ventures worth \$10.9 billion.⁴⁵

In a recent speech during a United Nations Security Council meeting, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned the goal of gender equality is "300 years away," arguing a lack of education and employment opportunities are partly to blame.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the UAE government remains a global outlier in terms of prioritising the advancement of women through such initiatives as the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Women. Launched on International Women's Day in 2015, the policy provides a framework for both private and public sectors to ensure a decent living is provided for women including opportunities to increase female participation in the sustainable and developmental fields.⁴⁷

The establishment of the Gender Balance Council in 2015 was tasked with the mission to reduce the gender gap across employment in UAE government sectors, particularly in decision-making positions,⁴⁸ and to establish the Emirates as a global benchmark in its gender equality endeavours. In 2019, the Council assisted in passing historic reforms intended to increase gender equality in Emirati society and enhance women's economic empowerment. Article 37 of Federal Law 17 of 1972 concerning passports and nationality was amended to allow women the freedom to apply for a passport in the same manner as a man without the consent of her husband.⁴⁹ Other legislation passed allowed for women to be considered "head of household," removing the legal obligation for a woman to "obey" her spouse,⁵⁰ as well as introducing critical legislation criminalising domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Following suit to support gender equality, the UAE Central Bank announced in 2019 all UAE banking and financial institutions would be required to provide equal services to customers and businesses of both genders without discrimination, including loans and credit facilities. The decision was undertaken to ensure women maintain unrestricted access to financial opportunities, which in turn allows the UAE to be "better prepared for future economic, health, and social crises."⁵¹ Further reinforcing women's economic empowerment and protection, amendments were made to Article 32 of the UAE Labour Law ensuring women receive equal pay for equal work compared to their male counterparts.⁵²

Such legislation underscores the long-term priority the UAE places on female empowerment and its intent to lead globally in the promotion of gender equality. The rapid socio-economic growth experienced by the UAE in the last half century has resulted in a vast transformation of Emirati society spearheaded by the UAE leadership's vision prioritising the significant role Emirati women will play in shaping society for decades to come.

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

Gina Bou Serhal is a Researcher at the Strategic Studies Department at Trends Research & Advisory, Dubai, an independent think tank in the United Arab Emirates.

Rahaf Al Khazraji is a Researcher at the Strategic Studies Department at Trends Research & Advisory, Abu Dhabi, an independent think tank in the United Arab Emirates

Dr Kristian Alexander is Senior Fellow and Head of the Strategic Studies department at Trends Research & Advisory, Dubai, an independent think tank in the United Arab Emirates.

Leonardo Jacopo Maria Mazzucco is a Researcher who focuses on security affairs of the Gulf region.

-
- 1 "Population and Demographic Mix," UAE Government Portal, Information and Services, 2023, <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/social-affairs/preserving-the-emirati-national-identity/population-and-demographic-mix>
 - 2 "Marriage statistics according to marital status at marriage," UAE's Ministry of Justice. <https://bit.ly/3ZJyo4O>
 - 3 Mowaffaq Mohammed, "14% increase in the marriage of citizens to foreigners in 2020," Al-Bayan, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3s91wEl>.
 - 4 "Marrying a foreigner, a solution or a problem?" Al Khaleej, 2012, <https://www.alkhaleej.ae/>, and "Woes of mixed Marriage" by Adel Arafah, Khaleej Times, 25 December 2008, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/article/woes-of-mixed-marriage>
 - 5 Haneen Dajani, "FNC form committee to investigate rise in mixed Emirati marriages," The National, April 20, 2016, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/fnc-form-committee-to-investigate-rise-in-mixed-emirati-marriages-1.139259/>
 - 6 "Counting the cost of romance in the Gulf region," Arabian Business, March 10, 2017, <https://www.arabianbusiness.com/abnews/415079-counting-the-cost-of-romance-in-the-gulf-region>
 - 7 Jane Bristol Rhys, "Weddings, Marriage, and Money in the United Arab Emirates," Anthropology of the Middle East, March 2007, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jane-Bristol-Rhys/publication/233504794_Weddings_Marriage_and_Money_in_the_United_Arab_Emirates/inks/59d47614aca2721f436e8bf4/Weddings-Marriage-and-Money-in-the-United-Arab-Emirates.pdf
 - 8 "Financial Support," The United Arab Emirates Government Portal, 2023, <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/social-affairs/marriage/financial-support>
 - 9 "UAE ministry disburses highest ever marriage grants last year: Over Dh190 million," Khaleej Times, February 6, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3CXR3j1>

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

-
- 10 Sherouk Zakaria, "36 initiatives, 72 centres to support Emirati families," *Zawya*, March 25, 2018, <https://www.zawya.com/en/life/36-initiatives-72-centres-to-support-emirati-families-htp7woda>
 - 11 "Marriage: Special cases and provisions," The United Arab Emirates Governmental Portal, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3Jq0R7O>
 - 12 "Interfaith marriages in the UAE," Bin Eid Advocates and Legal Consultants, 2023, <https://bineidlawfirmuae.com/interfaith-marriages-in-uae/>
 - 13 Kateryna Kadabashy, "UAE Grants Added Benefits to Children Born to Female Citizens," *Yahoo News*, June 30, 2022, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/uae-grants-added-benefits-children-091835113.html>
 - 14 Rasha Abu Baker, "In waiting: Children of Emirati women," *Khaleej Times*, February 23, 2022, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/emirati-wise/in-waiting-children-of-emirati-women>
 - 15 Mark Mackinnon, "Rise in number of spinsters as Emiratis marry foreigners," *The Globe and Mail*, June 7, 2022, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/fondness-for-foreign-wives-alarms-uae/article4136049/>.
 - 16 Doaa Zeitoun, "Spinsterhood still high in country," *Gulf News*, November 16, 2001, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/spinsterhood-still-high-in-country-1.430229>.
 - 17 Samyah Alfoory, "The UAE's Thirty Year Battle against Out-Marriage: A Gendered National Project," 2014, https://www.academia.edu/19511459/The_UAEs_Thirty_Year_Battle_against_Out_Marriage_A_Gendered_National_Project.
 - 18 "Single female, over 30 and 'too old' to marry in UAE," *NDTV*, July 5, 2012, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/single-female-over-30-and-too-old-to-marry-in-uae-491154>.
 - 19 Mira Al-Hussein, "Re-examining Women's Empowerment in the Gulf," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 22, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/86691>.
 - 20 "Fertility rate, total (births per woman) – United Arab Emirates," *The World Bank*, 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=AE>
 - 21 Jennifer Bell, "Infertility on the rise in GCC countries due to diets, lifestyle choices: Experts," *Al Arabiya*, August 11, 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2022/08/11/Infertility-on-the-rise-in-GCC-countries-due-to-diets-lifestyle-choices-Experts>
 - 22 Haneen Dajani, "UAE has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world, study finds," *The National*, January 28, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3vn532o>
 - 23 Jumana Khamis, "Fertility rate of Emirati women drops," *Gulf News*, April 12, 2016, <https://gulfnews.com/going-out/society/fertility-rate-of-emirati-women-drops-1.1709374>

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

-
- 24 Dr. Meraj Ahmad Meraj, "The importance of marriage in Islam," *International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah*, vol. 6, no. 11 (2018): pp. 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v6.i11.2018.1082>
- 25 Lulwa Abdulla Al-Misned, "Understanding the Evolution of the Khaleeji Identity," *Gulf Affairs* (Autumn 2016), Oxford Gulf & Arabian Peninsula Studies Forum, https://daphnis.wbnu-system.net/~wbplus/websites/AD2902892/files/commentary_al-misned.pdf
- 26 Laure Assaf, "Who is the Right One? The Meanings of (Marital) Love in the United Arab Emirates," in *Reinventing Love? Gender, Intimacy and Romance in the Arab World*, eds. C. Fortier, A. Kreil, I. Maffi (Bern: Peter Lang, 2018).
- 27 "UAE Women FAQ's: Education," UAE Gender Balance Council, 2020, <https://www.gbc.gov.ae/facts.html>
- 28 Suchitra Bajpai Chaudhary, "Why Are UAE Boys Dropping Out of School?" Al Qasimi Foundation, 2013, <http://alqasimifoundation.com/en/news/115/why-are-uae-boys-dropping-out-of-school>
- 29 Natasha Ridge, "Why women graduates outnumber men in the UAE," *Gulf News*, April 14, 2011, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/education/why-women-graduates-outnumber-men-in-the-uae-1.790849>
- 30 Rima Sabban and Asma Mohamad, "UAE Family Under Global Transformation," Fellowship Program Final Report, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zayed University, June 15, 2014, https://www.zu.ac.ae/main/en/research/publications/_books_reports/2014/UAE-Family-Under-Global-Transformation.pdf
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Rashad Hoda, Osman Maged, and Roudi-Fahimi Farzaneh, "Marriage in the Arab World," Population Reference Bureau, 2005, https://www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2005/12/MarriageInArabWorld_Eng-1.pdf
- 33 *Statistical Yearbook of Abu Dhabi 2020*, Statistics Center of Abu Dhabi, 2020, https://www.scad.gov.ae/Release%20Documents/Statistical%20Yearbook%20of%20Abu%20Dhabi_2020_Annual_Yearly_en.pdf
- 34 "Department of Community Development, Family Development Foundation Launch Pilot Phase of Tegahwa Initiative," Department of Community Development, 2021, <https://www.addcd.gov.ae/Media-Center/News/DCD-and-FDF-Launch-Pilot-Phase-of-Tegahwa-Initiative>
- 35 Fakir Al Gharaibeh and Muneera Majed Al Ali, "The Voices of the Divorced: Reasons for Early Divorce among Emiratis in Abu Dhabi," *Journal of International Women's Studies*: Vol. 24: No. 5, Article 23 (2022), <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol24/iss5/23>
- 36 Ibid.

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

-
- 37 Layachi Anser. "Divorce in the Arab Gulf Countries: A Major Challenge to Family and Society," in *Contemporary Issues in Family Studies: Global Perspectives on Partnerships, Parenting and Support in a Changing World*, Eds., Angela Abela and Janet Walker, (London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2013)
- 38 Marc C. Thompson, *Being Young, Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), doi:10.1017/9781316882801
- 39 "UAE Social Media Statistics 2023," The Global Statistics, 2023, <https://www.theglobalstatistics.com/uae-social-media-statistics/>
- 40 Ismail Sebugwaawo, "Is social media addiction breaking up marriages in UAE?" *Zawya*, April 14, 2019, <https://www.zawya.com/en/life/is-social-media-addiction-breaking-up-marriages-in-uae-m4umyegx>
- 41 "UAE marches ahead in women's empowerment," *Emirates News Agency*, November 19, 2015, <http://wam.ae/en/details/1395288204314>
- 42 "UAE Women FAQ," UAE Gender Balance Council, 2023, <https://www.gbc.gov.ae/facts.html>
- 43 "Women, Business and the Law," The World Bank, 2023, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/105265e8-311a-4b39-a71b-e455a86dd0ba/content>
- 44 Jamal Sanad Al Suwaidi, "How the UAE has empowered its women," *Gulf News*, September 16, 2022, <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/how-the-uae-has-empowered-its-women-1.90603719>
- 45 Shireena Al Nowais, "UAE is putting women in the boardroom and in space, minister tells UN meeting in Geneva," *The National*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/government/2022/06/23/uae-is-putting-women-in-the-boardroom-and-in-space-minister-tells-un-meeting-in-geneva/>
- 46 Brian Bushard, "U.N. Chief Says World Is '300 Years Away' From Gender Equity And Women's Rights Are 'Vanishing Before Our Eyes,'" *Forbes*, March 6, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brianbushard/2023/03/06/un-chief-says-world-is-300-years-away-from-gender-equity-and-womens-rights-are-vanishing-before-our-eyes/?sh=3dd2e3446fd6>
- 47 "National Strategy for Empowerment of Emirati Women," UAE Government, 2023, <https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/strategies-plans-and-visions/strategies-plans-and-visions-untill-2021/national-strategy-for-empowerment-of-emirati-women>
- 48 "About The UAE Gender Balance Council," UAE Gender Balance Council, 2023, <https://www.gbc.gov.ae/about.html>

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

49 "Legislation and Gender," UAE Gender Balance Council, 2023, <https://www.gbc.gov.ae/legislations.html> <https://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/gender-reforms-united-arab-emirates>

50 Iva Hamel and Gharam Alkastalani Dexter. "UAE: The sky is the limit for gender reform," The World Bank, 2021, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/gender-reforms-united-arab-emirates>

51 Khoder Nashar, "Advancement of gender balance is a long-standing priority for UAE: Hessa Buhumaid," Emirates News Agency, September 13, 2022, <https://wam.ae/en/details/1395303083095>

52 "Article 4 of Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021," UAE Government Portal, 2023, <https://u.ae/-/media/Documents-2022/Federal-DecreeLaw-No-33-of-2021.ashx>

Emirati Women on the Rise: The Impact of Globalization and Higher Education on the Key Social Institutions of Marriage and Family in the UAE

Contact

Philipp Dienstbier
Director
Regional Programme Gulf States
European and International Cooperation
philipp.dienstbier@kas.de

Imprint

Published by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2023,
Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany

This publication was published with financial support of
the Federal Republic of Germany.

This publication of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V. is solely intended for information purposes. It may not be used by political parties or by election campaigners or supporters for the purpose of election advertising. This applies to federal, state and local elections as well as elections to the European Parliament.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung or its Regional Programme Gulf States.