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## Cleron, J.P. Saudi Arabia 2000: A Strategy for Growth. Abingdon: Routledge, 1978.

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“Any global strategy of economic development is based upon political choices. Thus, Saudi Arabia is faced with two essential choices: the choice of the level of crude oil production and the choice of the type of economic development” it will pursue, writes Jean Paul Cleron (p. 105) in his book *Saudi Arabia 2000: A Strategy for Growth*. Although Cleron’s volume was written in the late 1970s, those choices are as critical today—if not more so—than they were at the time of publication. Indeed, the Kingdom’s ambitious *Saudi Vision 2030* initiative, called the National Transformation Plan, publicly launched by the influential Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in April 2016, aims to decrease Saudi Arabia’s dependence on oil while simultaneously attempting to diversify its economy. Certainly, as findings from Cleron’s research project were first published in 1978, the text should be read in the historical context, as the political and economic landscape of Saudi Arabia has changed considerably since the volume was first published. However, this does not diminish the book’s relevance. Indeed, the text and its research findings can be utilized as part of a comparative analysis of the Saudi politico-economic environment in the late 1970s with the contemporary one. This would constitute an area of interest for scholars of either Saudi political-economy and/or Saudi socio-energy issues. Interestingly, part of the original research for this book was conducted at the University of Petroleum and Minerals (since renamed—and better known as—King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals) in the oil-producing Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

The book’s preface explains that the text is concerned with the economic aspects of Saudi Arabian development in the three decades following its publication (pp. 9-11)—that is, from the late 1970s to the early 2000s. A dynamic simulation model, which the author admits is rather technical, was used to assess long-term “strategies of development on the basis of assumptions referring to policy decisions, structural changes and [behavioral] patterns.” Cleron stresses that the model should not be interpreted as a forecasting tool but rather as a planning one. In addition, this model is illustrated by means of a large number of figures, tables, and equations (which are explained further in the two appendices). For the general reader, many of these figures, tables, and equations might not be of great interest; nevertheless, the accompanying text provides pertinent observations regarding critical issues such as the Saudi labor force as a key variable in the long-term development of the economy (pp. 47-53).

Part II of the text may be of greater interest to the general reader, as it is less technical. This section also provides analysis and comment on results from the simulations of the model. For example, when discussing oil production (p. 110), Cleron raises the issue of whether Saudi Arabia is willing and able to maintain large petroleum reserves for future domestic use. In fact, since the time of writing, this issue has become of paramount importance to the Saudi government, as domestic energy consumption has sky-rocketed; hence, it is thought-provoking to consider this question within the historical context. Undoubtedly, socio-economic concerns such those discussed by the author continue to constitute important factors in the Kingdom’s politico-economic development, and these are therefore, highly relevant to political-economists of Saudi Arabia and/or the wider Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. In fact, Cleron reasons that “long-term planning is indeed of extreme importance in Saudi Arabia.” Once again, this is as true today as it was when this research was conducted as it relates directly to

socio-economic and political policies, as advocated by *Saudi Vision 2030* (and by extension, to those outlined by linked *Saudi Vision 2030* consultancies such as McKinsey).

Following the preface, *Saudi Arabia 2000: A Strategy for Growth* is divided into two main sections: Part I discusses *The Anatomy of the Saudi Arabian Economy* in seven chapters: Introduction; The Oil Sector; The Non-Oil Sector; The Factors of Production; The Mechanism of Domestic Inflation; The National Accounts and the Balance of Payments; and The Structure of the Economic System. Of interest to scholars of Saudi oil production would be the section on the oil sector, which includes statistics provided by Saudi Aramco, OPEC, and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy. Part II looks at *The Strategies of Economic Development* in three chapters: The Development Process; The Management of the Economic Development; and Conclusion. Cleron believes that one of the most important sections of Part II is concerned with policies regulating the oil sector, including production policy and pricing. Again, this would be of interest to scholars studying Saudi government oil pricing policies from the 1970s to the present. The book ends with a short bibliography, appendices, and index.

This volume provides an important historical snapshot of major Saudi politico-economic and oil-related issues in the late 1970s. Not only does it constitute a notable historical document, it raises questions that continue to be asked today. For example, at the conclusion of Part II, Cleron argues that “the economic future of Saudi Arabia is bright, but the task of the national leaders is arduous” (p. 150), noting that the leadership must seize every opportunity to develop the Kingdom’s human resources, as the government is in charge of “the most valuable energy source of the twentieth [and, thus far, the twenty first] century: oil.” What is noteworthy is that the essence of Cleron’s statement, although written in 1977, continues to be discussed by Saudi Arabia’s predominantly young and increasingly well-educated population. While the Kingdom’s economic future is uncertain in early 2017, Cleron’s argument about the development of domestic human capital is at the heart of what many young Saudis believe should be the driving factor for *Saudi Vision 2030*. Today, the central question is whether the government has the political will to wean itself off oil-dependency by creating a politico-economic infrastructure and environment that will allow its young population to diversify the Saudi economy from the bottom-up.

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