

The "Khadama Dependency Syndrome": Determinants and prospects for the future of domestic work demand in the United Arab Emirates

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Summary:

This paper examines the future roles and determinants of foreign domestic workers living in United Arab Emirates (UAE) society as well as the implications of their work on local Emirati families. Using in-depth interviews with 30 local employers in the UAE, we argue that the structural dependency on domestic workers (henceforward referred to as “khadama dependency syndrome”) will not only intensify due to complex micro- and macro-level factors, but also transform into a long-term dependency, given the changing demographic and family structures in the context of rapid globalization. This empirical study situates the perceptions of local UAE families on the determinants of foreign domestic work, and their complex and multiple effects on UAE society, culture, and economy. The study also conceptually examines the globalizing effects of long-term structural dependency on foreign domestic workers.

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