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2009, a start of a Revolution in UAE's Innovation Model: A Deep Dive into the Virgin Galactic Investment

Aqeel Zaman

Interdisciplinary Studies
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Abstract

In 2009, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) marked a significant discontinuity (Foucault, 1966), or paradigmatic shift, with their \$280 Million investment into Virgin Galactic (VG) in exchange for almost 1/3 ownership (Dziuban, 2019). The VG transaction was driven by unique regional entrepreneurial and strategic geopolitical risk calculus which ultimately led to a futuristic national innovation paradigm in 2020.

In this transaction, the UAE used their massive Oil revenues in a cannibalistic innovation pivot (Harrigan & Porter, 1983) through a series of critical innovation architects (Jones, 2020). The UAE was influenced by Moonshot Theory (MT), which underpinned their own national economic transition to an innovation economy.

*This paper will explore the 2009 VG transaction, through some of the key players at the time. It will be contrasted through a markedly similar 2006 space project, which was laughed at. Utilizing an Exploratory **Sequential Validation research** model (Hai-Jew, 2015) through Case Study protocols (Yin, 2018), I will seek to interview key stakeholders between the two dates. I wish to explore how the UAE team crossed a Foucauldian and Kuhnian (Frank, 2019) chasm (Mention et al., 2019); (Moore, 2014) and explore this 3 year discontinuity.*

Keywords: Innovation, SWF, UAE, Moonshot

The Problem: Thesis Statement and Methodology

In 2020 (Zaman, 2020), a new UAE cabinet revealed, which was a significant change from the past, with its heavy influence on **innovation** (Harrigan & Porter, 1983). The embers of this change were ignited in 2009, which heralded an intellectual discontinuity (Foucault, 1966, 1994), or a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 2012), from predominant “petrochemical” thinking. It encouraged “innovation thinking” as a new economic model for the UAE, the Persian Gulf region, and other resource based Sovereign Wealth fund (SWF) nations. This thinking bled into a new innovation SWF portfolio management strategy (Engel et al., 2016). My core research objectives are to document the metrics of this transition (intellectually, financially, organizationally) in the 2009 VG transaction and the the 2006 reactions.

In 2006 the author presented a business plan for a \$25 Million UAE space tourism company (Zaman, 2006) to three mainstay UAE entities. Their reaction epitomized the then dominant petrochemical analysis paradigm: rejection and mocking. Three short years later (2009), a strikingly similar space tourism hub was enthusiastically embraced with a \$280 Million US investment (Dziuban, 2019). Additionally, many changes were antecedent for this 180-degree shift. My thesis will first document this shift; secondly put an academic artifice around it; and thirdly explore the enabling infrastructure that was prototyped as a post hoc government Public-Private Partnership with a focus of self-reliance.

I will employ research approach. This mixed method model uses quantitative results augmented by qualitative data (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). The quantitative data has not yet fully matured, and provided a unique opportunity to backstop those gaps with qualitative analysis provided by ESV. ESV is ideal to address sociocultural highlights to explore working hypotheses. Having worked extensively in the region for 15+ years, and presenting a similar space project, I feel uniquely qualified to contrast the before and after. Or I refer to as embedded field work to help identify multiple socio-cultural lines of inquiry in hypothesis creation (exploration) and triangulation (theories, researchers, technologies) (Lune & Berg, 2016).

I will collect data from financial data bases, press repositories, government documents, academic sources, 3rd party analytics, research groups, my personal LinkedIn contacts, etc. and verify through stakeholder interviews. Prof. Jerome Engel and his team utilized a similar exploratory model (Engel, 2014) in their search for global models for Cluster Innovations. Unfortunately, in 2014 study, the UAE was glossed over as it did not pass his filter threshold for inclusion at that time. I will attempt to contrast that temporal oversight, as there were many things that were not openly visible from the government but were accessible from an internal perspective. I believe the UAE innovation model was being prototyped in a meaningfully meaningful manner from 2009 onwards. I seek to connect these contrasting data points.

So why is? The UAE was FORCED into a cannibalistic shift in the 1950's when their main economic engine (1508-1950) was desimated by a Japanese innovation (cultured pearls). This resulted in traditional pearl diving being existentially jeopardized almost overnight (Morton, 2016). Paradoxically, this time, the UAE as one of the top six petrochemical producing nations of that time, willingly initiated a long-term cannibalistic pivot towards an innovation economy.

Thesis Structure

As an Interdisciplinary, I will analyze my problem statement through 3 major disciplines. In my case the most meaningful disciplines to understand this transition are: 1) **Innovation** (Moonshot Theory) – Discourse Analysis; 2) **Finance** (SWF) – Organizational Structures; 3) and **Sociology** (Persian Gulf) - Social Movements as illustrated in Figure 1. Each overlapping intellectual filter provides differing domain acuity to fully understand my research problem. Sociology provides the socio-cultural history of the region, Finance provides the funding mechanism, and Innovation provides the overarching structure for why this investment at this time.

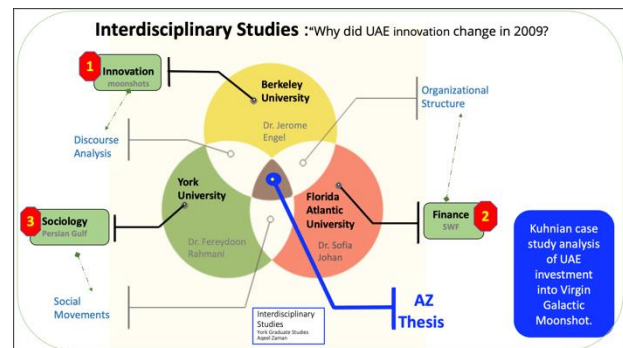


Figure 1: Interdisciplinary Approach and Supervisors

These disciplines interreact through connective tissues between the interplay of Figure 1 and Figure 2. Interdisciplinary approach harnesses multiple ideas, connections, epistemologies and rationalities to understanding complex problems that go beyond uniform anatomies. Interdisciplinary recognize the complex interplay of nature, society, and our own psychologies.

In short the complexity of the globalized work place and Systems thinking ((Repko et al., 2022) As the “dean of science fiction” (Booker & Thomas, 2009) wrote, humanity’s need are essentially complex, “Specialization is for insects.” (Heinlein, 1973). My disciplines are united by the connective tissues demonstrated in the Skeleton Conceptual Map Figure 2.

This thesis will use an exploratory approach to scrutinize the 2009 Virgin Galactic transaction (phenomena). We will develop a single, but rich case study of UAE innovation to divulge possible structures, processes, and partnerships. I will avoid predictive analytics or empirical testing of causal relationships, due to limitations of UAE's SWF transparency matrix (Curzio & Miceli, 2010), analytical challenges, and the constraints of limited data.

Validation interviews will be sought through authorized corporate marketing channels. Approvals will be difficult at best (i.e., ongoing investments, national and competitive strategies, project confidentiality, geopolitical risks, and government security rating protocols). I have sought York funding for in person interviews where possible. As a fallback, reigning technologies (i.e. Zoom, MS Teams, Google Meets, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality, etc.) (Nehls et al., 2015) have become ubiquitous in the UAE business community. Where interviews are not approved, I will rely on secondary sources (Media, Financial Databases, white papers, government mission statements, public filings, and public information etc.).

Background:

As a management consultant from 1996-2015, I worked in the UAE for approximately 15 years.

In 2004, I worked on a Abu Dhabi (AD) Ministry of Economy (MoE) feasibility study for a special Petrochemical City. This was a projected \$10 Billion-dollar joint venture between MoE, and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), both parts of the AD government. MoE and ADNOC had to agree on a revenue sharing joint venture (JV) partnership. Unfortunately, the JV was never approved, and the project fell to the wayside.

The concept of Peak Oil (Deffeyes, 2001) worried some in the rarified apex of AD petrochemical decision making. They were playing chicken with their national economy utilizing mixed Nash Equilibrium strategies – a long term strategic win vs continued existent petrodollar revenues (Hinfelaar et al., 2019) In 2009, they ultimately “swerved” with a strategic innovation pivot.

In 2006 I too swerved. I presented a white paper and business proposal for a space tourism hub for Arab astronauts (Figure 3) to three of the more relevant and powerful UAE entities. The project included Paul Allen and Burt Rutan's company Scaled Composites (SC) and its prototype SpaceShipOne fresh from its success in the 2004 X-prize award to build a reusable rocket (Figure 3).

Unbeknownst to me, Richard Branson initiated conversations to license SpaceShipOne and incorporate Virgin Galactic as a space tourism company only months after SC's win of the X-prize. Why did Branson immediately see an opportunity (Schilling, 2018), but the UAE bureaucrats responded with quiet mocking refrain “We don't do space!?” The UAE eventually bought

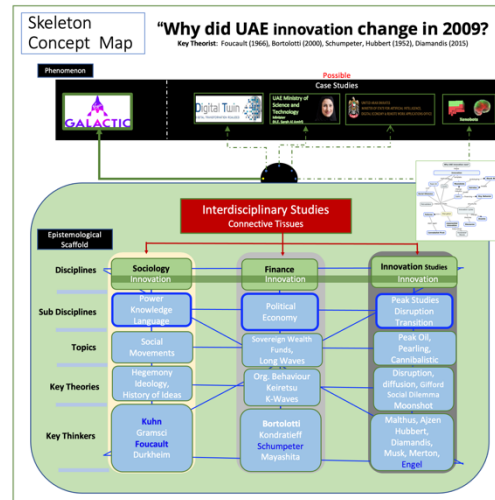


Figure 2: Skeleton Concept Map and Epistemological Connective Tissues



Figure 3: Launching into Space proposal UAE 2006

32% stake of Virgin Galactic for \$280 million, becoming one of their then major shareholders three years later!

I hypothesize the VG deal was the crest for breaking the proverbial Bannister “4-minute mile boundary” (Robinson, 2021) for UAE moonshot projects. Interestingly, after Bannister thousands of other runners crossed that tipping point (BRANNEN, 2018)

Moonshot Theory and Cannibalistic Innovations

Formally, moonshot theory attempts to solve industry changing challenges often requiring 20+ year visions, cumulative financing, setting “big hairy audacious goals (BHAG)”, and “inspiring action towards” experimentation, (Diamandis & Kotler, 2016). It’s important to stress the term “moonshot” need not **only** imply going to the Moon, but any massive combined efforts needed to accomplish a challenging goal (Risen, 2019) . You will notice my analytical framework biases long term analytic windows (i.e. Kondratieff waves, Schumpeter creative destruction, Diamandis X-Prizes, Musk Disruption, with long deep pools of capital (SWF) along the lines of Engel clusters of innovation, etc.). My own Cannibalistic Innovation Hypothesis (theconreview, 2020) borrowed from Steve Jobs’ strategies at Apple (Figure 4) (Kinnunen, 1996).

Key Questions.

While I worked in Abu Dhabi (AD), I puzzled over the difficulty of gaining any traction to my space project. What I saw was a cavernous gap of discontinuity outside UAE’s hegemonic projects in petrochemicals or real estate. I wanted to better understand that process, so I have leaned heavily on Foucault, 1966, 1994; Keeley, 1990; Kuhn, 2012; Pirozelli, 2021; Thiele, 1991).

Was it because:

1. AD lacked appropriate knowhow outside of petrochemicals or Real Estate?
2. AD’s entrepreneur risk calculus was too conservative for anything other than Petrochemicals or Real Estate?
3. AD’s risk financing pool was non-existent outside their comfort zone?
4. AD lacked the right partnerships?
5. AD lacked confidence regarding product/market fit?
6. AD team lacked access to the right decision makers?
7. AD lacked appropriate innovation infrastructure?
8. AD lacked imagination?
9. AD decision makers were afraid to suggest non-petrochemical or real estate projects?
10. AD only got second tier projects? the best deals went outside (Dubai, Saudi Arabia, etc.),
Additionally
11. The space project was much more mature in 2009 vs 2006?
12. Why Did Richard Branson see the immediate business Opportunity, but AD UAE bureaucrats failed?
13. Why was the 2009 Virgin Deal approved?

My working hypothesis is all these factors played some role, but I will calibrate their relative importance in looking at the 2006-2009 transition for the Virgin Case Study.

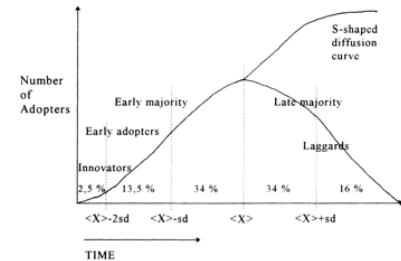


Figure 4: Kinnunen S-Shaped Diffusion Curve (Kinnunen, 1996:439).

So What? What is the Significance of this thesis?

My thesis presents a case study for economic transition informed by the cannibalistic Innovation Pivot. My thesis will validate the first real-world example of how one of the larger petrochemicals producing nations voluntarily decreased their own reliance near the height of the petrochemical industries growth cycles. They then took a huge risk and pivoted towards a truly renewable economic driver – Innovation. Such an exposition of a renewable framework can assist other national economies reduce antecedent petrochemical collateral costs like energy blind spots, failure to transition, growth of alternative energy options, climate change and its forerunner costs, moving beyond paradigmatic frameworks, long term and strategic ROI calculations, increased competitiveness,, nuclear options, (International Energy Agency, 2018) space exploration, etc.

Literature Review

There have been few academic writings on UAE innovation with a focus on Virgin Galactic investment. This paper benefits from the theoretical, conceptual frameworks and connective tissues that criss-cross across the epistemological edifice presented in Figure 2. Core Subdisciplines are : Power, Knowledge, Organization Theory, and Peak studies (Deffeyes, 2005) that accentuate previously hegemonic thinking (Adamson, 2014)) around petrochemicals.

We explore the socio-cultural institutions that developed to protect those hegemonic institutions. Ironically those same structures were used to undermine that reigning orthodoxy. Moon Shot Theory crashes violently with the old regime replacing acculturation of innovation thinking and removal of cognitive dissonance.

ARCHEOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE, MICHEL FOUCAULT (FOUCAULT, 1966)

Foucault is difficult, appears contradictory, imprecise, and prone to equivocation while having deep penetrating insights. I am only comforted that better scholars also agree “... while it is clear that Michel Foucault had something to say, it was equally clear that he made it as difficult as possible to find out what it was” (Kennedy, 1979, p. 269). Thomas Kuhn and Michel Foucault as contemporary interdisciplinarians anchored their similar projects in history. While the overlap was critical, their differences are germane.

AZ thesis: Understanding Peak Oil discontinuities.

THE STRUCTURE OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS, THOMAS KUHN (KUHN, 2012)

Thomas Kuhn, in 1962 during the dawning of a new scientific revolution: Crick and Watson’s eponymic announcement of their structure of DNA wrote what Ian Hacking called one of the greatest books in the 20th century: “*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.*”

Kuhn, a physicist argued that science did not develop in a linear piecemeal process of acculturation of facts, theories, methods, discourses, or pedagogic tools. Kuhn like Foucault added obstacles, disorderly connections, discontinuities, errors, superstition, and myths (2) – cumulatively a paradigm. If paradigm complexity grew faster than accuracy, a crisis ensues (69).

AZ THESIS: Peak Oil Paradigm shifts

DURKHEIM AND INNOVATION, DENES NEMEDI

Prof. Nemedi’s paper on *Durkheim and innovation* was posthumously published after his 2010 death. His main thesis is that through a process of equivocation Durkheim obscures social innovation and individual innovation (Némedi, 2010). Durkheim recognized that rapid social change was deleterious and lead to a sense of *anomie* (5). “*Once a social type is fixed it is no*

longer indefinitely plastic; a limit is soon reached which cannot be passed.” (Durkheim 202:334). There are limits to its plasticity, some change must inure to combat anomie. (Durkheim1947:257). He understood this through a Darwinian moral density filter. In a circular fashion this led to “greater violence” through an existential struggle (Durkheim1947:257). Forced change was manageable if it was gradual (6).

AZ THESIS: UAE Canabalistic Innovation transition VS Kinnunen S-Shaped Diffusion Curve (Kinnunen, 1996)

PURSING INNOVATION: SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUNDS AND TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT, ENGEL ET AL

Engel *et al*'s prescient discernment of a monument structural shift in SWF investing is a core pillar for my advancement of a meaningfully meaningful innovation model from the UAE. Engel *et al* identified the 2016 Uber allocation of \$3.5 billion by the largest Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) – the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia (PIF) as a pivotal use case to venerate a SWF transition strategy to venture-based Technology, Media, Telecom (TMT) assets from previous legacy assets classes. That year, the Sovereign Wealth Center identified 47 TMT annual deals, a 400%, increase from previous annual deals (8). Eighty-five percent of SWFs noted they had increased their investment into technology over the last 5 years (2) circumventing Gulf Cooperation Country (GCC) government spending inefficiencies (10) as the 6th Kondratieff Wave signaled productivity increases driven by technology (10). Much of these funds came from: unsophisticated TMT money – like the 2000 Dot. Com dumb money bubble (8); increase in growth equity; money redirected from legacy asset class losses and SWF partnership deals with experienced venture funds. Engel *et al* did not opine about possible rationale for this underlying transition other than the IMF suggested GCC focus on structural reforms linked to Schumpeterian innovation as the key engine to increase productivity (10).

AZ THESIS: Role of SWF Innovation Investments in the Persian Gulf

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SCHUMPETERIAN SWARMING OF INNOVATIONS, ALFRED KLEINKNECHT,

Analyzing 120 innovations in “Schumpeterian industries” (Figure 5) Alfred Kleinknecht & Clark *et al* contend that economic downturns can aid in clustering innovations (293). Kleinknecht correlated new industry clusters in the 1800s, concomitant with economic downturns (Clark *et al.*, 1981:4). This is contrasted with contemporary economic thinkers concluding the reverse regarding innovation cycles which are only associated with Boom times(294) (Kleinknecht, 1981).

AZ THESIS: Innovation Curves attached to past transitional shifts.

302 Observations on the Schumpeterian swarming of innovations

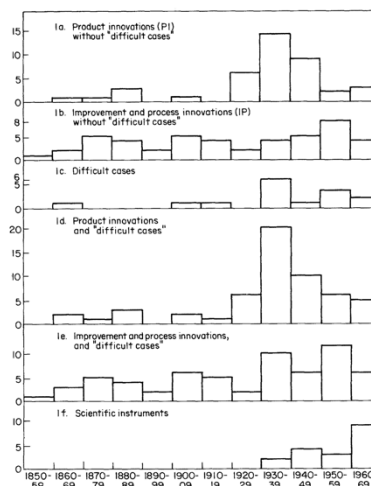


Figure 5:: Schumpeterian Innovation Swarming (Kleinknecht, 1981)

GLOBAL CLUSTERS OF INNOVATION: ENTREPRENEURIAL ENGINES OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, J. ENGEL

Prof. Engel identified a cluster of innovation with a group of computer related companies that took over the world (Apple, Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Cisco, Intel, etc.) (51) from Silicon Valley. He later mapped the substructure of his wave theory, to the enabling infrastructure – the Integrated circuit. In Figure 6 (pg. 67) he unveiled the Foucauldian “city beneath the city” (Foucault, 1966, p. 131), but through the Kuhnian scientific revolution (Kuhn, 2012, p. 135) that led to that tech cluster of innovation. Kondratieff wave analytics neglected tracing such a process.

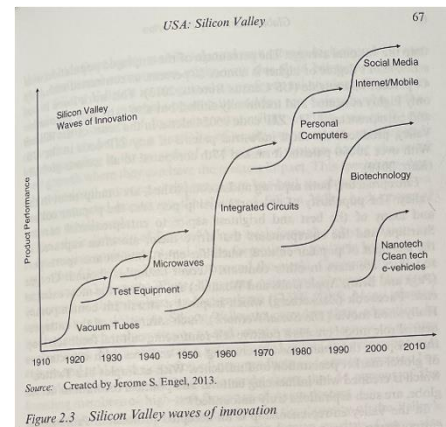


Figure 6: Waves of Innovation Silicon Valley (Engel, 2014:26)

AZ THESIS: Cluster of Innovation paradigm attached to Gulf SWFs.

1. HUBBERT'S PEAK: THE IMPEDING WORLD OF OIL SHORTAGE, KENNETH S. DEFFEYES

The concept of peak oil was first introduced by Marion King Hubert, a geologist at Shell petrochemicals in 1956, who projected the terminal decline of Oil by the 1970' (Deffeyes, 2005, 2008, 2009:133; Holme, 2009; Michael Greer, 2013).

However, after its projected peak, oil did decline nearly every year until 2008, with reversals brought on by new drilling or tracking technologies (Deffeyes, 2009). This led to years of confounding correlation vs causation (Barnatt, n.d.). Henceforth, Hubert's forecasts were continually pushed down the road, ignored or dismissed. He was clearly mistaken on his initial time frames, as he had grossly miscalculated the rapidity of technological progression and innovation in fidelity, exploration, extraction, and refining systems unveiling new oil reserves (Inman, 2016; Strahan, 2016).

AZ THESIS: Peak Oil paradigm shift along Cannabalistic Innovation Pivot.

THE SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND DISCOUNT: EVIDENCE FROM PUBLIC EQUITY INVESTMENTS, BERNARDO BERTOLOTTI,

Prof. Bernardo Bortolotti, Director of the Sovereign Investment Lab (SIL), University of Turin, Italy. SIL monitors the role of the state in global economic activity through Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs). SWFs as public investment vehicles amassed over \$2.5 Trillion dollars (SIL - Sovereign Investment Lab / Baffi Carefin, 2015).

AZ THESIS: SWF as public investment vehicles and growth toward innovation asset classes.

QUIRKY: THE REMARKABLE STORY OF THE TRAITS, FOIBLES, AND GENIUS OF BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATORS ..., SCHILLING

Schilling presents case studies on Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin, Elon Musk, Dean Kamen, Nikola Tesla, Marie Curie, Thomas Edison, and Steve Jobs to describe “quirky” characteristics for this cohort of serial entrepreneurs.

She lists: social detachment, faith in their ability to overcome obstacles, intelligence, discipline, passionate work intensity, perseverance in the face of criticism or failure, eidetic memories,

rebellious behavior, family background, travel in youth, phobias, respect for authority, earliest achievements, family background (networks, financing, advantages), parenting, education, luck, sleep patterns, number of hours worked, self-schooled, rule breaker, detachment and isolation, self-efficacy, weaknesses, biases, alterity (3-14).

AZ THESIS: History of Break through innovators including Richard Brandson, and how they may relate to the Innovation architects in the UAE

ASTRO TELLER (MOONSHOT INNOVATIONS)

Dr. Astro Teller was the CEO of Google Alphabet's X Moonshot factory to build Big Hairy Audacious ideas into reality. Dr. Teller has a Master of Science in symbolic and heuristic computation, from Stanford University, and a Ph.D. in artificial intelligence from Carnegie Mellon University. Dr. Teller taught at Stanford University as an engineer and researcher. Prior to Google Dr. Astro was the founder of a hedge fund utilizing predictive statistical machine learning tools.

He believes the best way to predict the future is to create it (Teller, 2019). The moonshot was first coined by President Kennedy in 1962 in Houston (Awati & Bernstein, 2022; Duffy, 2016; Salter, 2019; Welch, 2012).

AZ THESIS: Does Moonshot theory as an innovation paradigm work in the culture of the UAE?

BOLD: HOW TO GO BIG, CREATE WEALTH AND IMPACT THE WORLD, PETER DIAMANDIS

The X-prize is an analog from the 18th Century Longitude incentive competition (244) which created a unique cluster of innovation in 1714 (258). Peter Diamandis' first prize was the 2004 Moonshot for the private company to launch a reusable sub-orbital rocket to space twice within a 2-week window. Diamandis announced Scaled Composites (SC) from California was the winner and their design was brusquely licensed by Richard Branson at Virgin Galactic (96).

AZ THESIS: The intellectual infrastructure of Virgin Galactic and the original X-Prize

PROPHET OF INNOVATION: JOSEPH SCHUMPETER AND CREATIVE DESTRUCTION, THOMAS K MCCRAW

Joseph Alois Schumpeter (1883-1950) was "one of the greatest economists..." (McCraw, 2007). Innovations "... "increase productivity... as the mainstay of capitalism", and as such recognized its dialectic cycles: innovation, entrepreneurship, business strategy, to creative destruction. The entrepreneur was the cornerstone of capitalism. He recognized Adam Smith's genius lay in packaging words from a pre-industrial era while appreciating Marx's industrial analysis (42).

This dialectic (3) was imbedded in his Interdisciplinary views on history, sociology, psychology, mathematics, and law. His core definitions have become almost ubiquitous in today's business world (x). He identified innovation with periods of prosperity. The clustering of such innovations led to long-term cycles of economic change (1). "The History of capitalism is studded with such violent bursts and catastrophes". The construction of a railway (1840) where none existed, "upsets all economic conditions" (255) and were moonshots of their time which involved colossal funds, took years, massive credit (263), and unique organization.

AZ THESIS: Canabalistic Innovation and Schumpeterian Creative Destruction in the UAE

Conclusion:

I have finished most of my background research and awaiting feedback from my interviewees. My ethics department have cleared my interview protocols. My supervisors have warned me my potential list is challenging just due to the logistics alone, but likewise would be as impressive as it would likely add considerable data to the published writings and the Interdisciplinary nature of my research. This is my ideal partial list:

	Company	Interviewees	
1	X-Prize	2X	
2	Virgin Galactic	2X	
3	Space Tourism Competitors	5X	
4	UAE Gov't innovations	2X	
5	UAE Space Organization	2X	
6	Saudi Space Organization	2X	
7	Aabar	2X	
8	Mubadala	2X	
9	ADNOC (Ab Dhabi National Oil Company)	2X	
10	UAE Pearl Transtion (1950) academics	2X	
11	Google X - Moonshot Factory	2X	
12	Russian Space Federation	2X	
13	Pre VG Astronaut Tourists	2X	
14	UAE Partnerships	5X	
15	UAE Innnovation Architects	5X	
16	Scaled Composites	2X	
17	MIT Media Lab (Space)	2X	
18	Oil Consultants	3X	

The nature of the groups I am seeking to connect with are world class executives and extremely busy. I recognized that A masters students thesis may not move them. For some of my interviewees, my research topic may still be a legitimate concern bound by legal, national regulatory, or personal considerations.

My reliance on **Exploratory Sequential Validation** (ESV) will highlight the paucity of mature quantitative data, and ironically provided a backstop to explore some of them with qualitative gaps through my interviews. One of the key data points is to try to understand the intellectual transition that occurred between 2006 to 2009. The latter will clearly be augmented with my 15+ years “field work” in the region.

An area of future research will be the gap in Jerome Engel’s innovation cluster model (Engel, 2014) as it relates to the UAE. The UAE provide a unique model with the role of UAE SWFs acting as pseudo government giant pools of risk capital. While my Thesis correlates some anecdotal data to suggest a model shift may be afoot. The 2009 VG investment suggest additional work is mandated to explore it as a positive prescriptive model that can be emulated by others in the region, if not globally.

Future research must also collect a group of Moonshots in the UAE, as opposed to a single case study, to compare and contrast their impetus as it relates to the the Kuhn paradigm shift (Kuhn, 2012), and how it relates to a “Moonshot Factor” (Nast, n.d.).

I have also concluded that a paradigm shift is possible in the fullest Kuhnian sense. In that case trying to extract ourselves from dominant petrochemical paradigm is not only possible, but apparently viable. The UAE provides a “special” case study for others, only due to their current unique financial capabilities. For others they have demonstrate the intellectual paradigm shift is possible, while the operation structures (which may not look like the UAE) need to be operationalized.

VG and Blue Origin have respectively flown about 30 passengers each. VG started at \$200,00 (2005) per passenger, and now is closer to \$450,000. They claim to have over 800 people who provided a deposit. It will take about 200 flights to clear the current wait list. They expect monthly launches which will take then just under 4 years to clear (*Virgin Galactic Flies Its First Tourists to the Edge of Space* / *Space News* / *Al Jazeera*, 2023).

Finally, VG has validated the question of where space can or should be privatized, by their very successful waiting lists of commercial astronauts.

Conflict Statements:

The genesis of this thesis began while I worked for a management consulting company in the UAE between 1996-2012. The author has received no additional remuneration for any of those projects referenced herein since at least 2006, either directly or through any 3rd party partnerships, nor does he have any equity interests in any of the same projects. The Author has received scholarship and Funding from interdisciplinary Program at York University based on previous academic work, preceding acceptance of his current research proposal.

The Author was executive director of the original management consulting firm, which closed in 2012 and was replaced by a Social Seating Transportation Start up, after receiving a USA Patent in Aviation.

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Challenges and Progress of Women's Political Participation in Pakistan within the South Asian Context

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Abstract

The topic “Women empowerment” always remains under consideration of almost all major governments’ planners and policy makers globally. Due to the development of the socio-economic sector and the growing priorities of the education sector, the countries of South Asia are now ensuring the participation of women in the political and economic sphere. South Asian countries today guarantee women's rights in their constitutions, despite traditional cultural norms. South Asian communities are now creating opportunities to empower women in society. Islam restored women's dignity and their position in society as human beings who contribute to the building of their society. It also proclaimed that women are an essential factor in the development and prosperity of nations. Islam has also given women the right to have independent. Women empowerment discusses approximately to the development of self-determination of choice and action to shape one’s life. “The idea of empowerment manifests itself at all levels of societal interaction. Pakistan is the second largest country in South Asia after India; women have played a wise role in the country's development throughout history. So, the study will examine the empowerment status of women in South Asian countries especially in Pakistan. Through the descriptive analysis of qualitative measures study will observe that Pakistani government has taken many measures to enhance the participation of women in political sphere of life.

Keywords: South Asia, Islam, women empowerment, right, protection, Pakistan

Introduction of Women Empowerment in South Asia

South Asia is consisted on eight states especially with the three Islamic republics (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Maldives). South Asia is a unique region with two democracies with Buddhist majority (Sri Lanka and Bhutan), two secular democrats (India and Nepal) and one secular democracy with Muslim majority (Bangladesh). South Asian region comparatively become more open than past within global evaluations presently, it is the fastest rising region in the world. In the past there were many legislative and decision-making actions concerning gender issue in South Asian countries but still females are facing different kinds of discriminations in South Asian culture. The main reason is the male-controlled mentality, cultural and traditional configurations and customs of South Asian culture always holding their old patterns still when the needs of females as well as society’s are changed significantly. Therefore, education for women is an important key to develop society and used as sign of women empowerment. Governments of all South Asian countries there have many judicial laws and special developments regarding empowerment and gender issue but still females are facing all types of discriminations in South Asia. The women empowerment is a route by which women gain power of making decisions of their own life and of their possessions. It is a process of being powerful from the position of powerlessness (Nazneen, Hossain & Chopra, 2019).

“Women's political participation is considered a pivotal moment in their empowerment. Women’s political empowerment entails their capacity and freedom

to exercise their right to vote, run for office, participate in political protests, and make decisions. Political participation for women was restricted than men in Pakistan. Female low literacy rate was among the reason that could prevent casting a vote but at the same time female with better literacy rate vote casting was 20 percent lower than illiterate males". (Mumtaz, 2007)

Political participation of women in South Asia

In South Asia, Quota system was familiarized to female presenters in legislation. Earlier, there was no definite quota for female till 2001 in whole South Asia. Village women are also banded from balloting, and they did not take part in the politics. Gradually the situation improved but there are still a number of holes that need to be complete while giving the socio-economic and political freedom to women on practical grounds (Kayser, 2013). Now the steps have been taken to eliminate the obstacles for women contribution in politics (Bano, 2009). In 2018, 17 percent reserved seats for women quota in Pakistan and Nepal has 33% quota for women parliamentarians however Afghanistan has 27% women quota in parliament. India has 11% seats at panchayat level for women till 2018 (Nizamani, 2018).

Percentage of women in parliament	
Nepal	: 33.2% (594:197),
Afghanistan	: 27.7% and 21.6% (242:67 and 102:22),
Pakistan	: 22.5% and 17.0% (338:76 and 100:17),
Bangladesh	: 18.6% (345:64),
India	: 11% (543:58),
Bhutan	: 8.5% and 24% (47:4 and 25:6) ,
Maldives	: 6.5% (977:5),
Sri Lanka	: 5.8% (225:13)

Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316801997>

Historical background of women's Political Participation in Pakistan

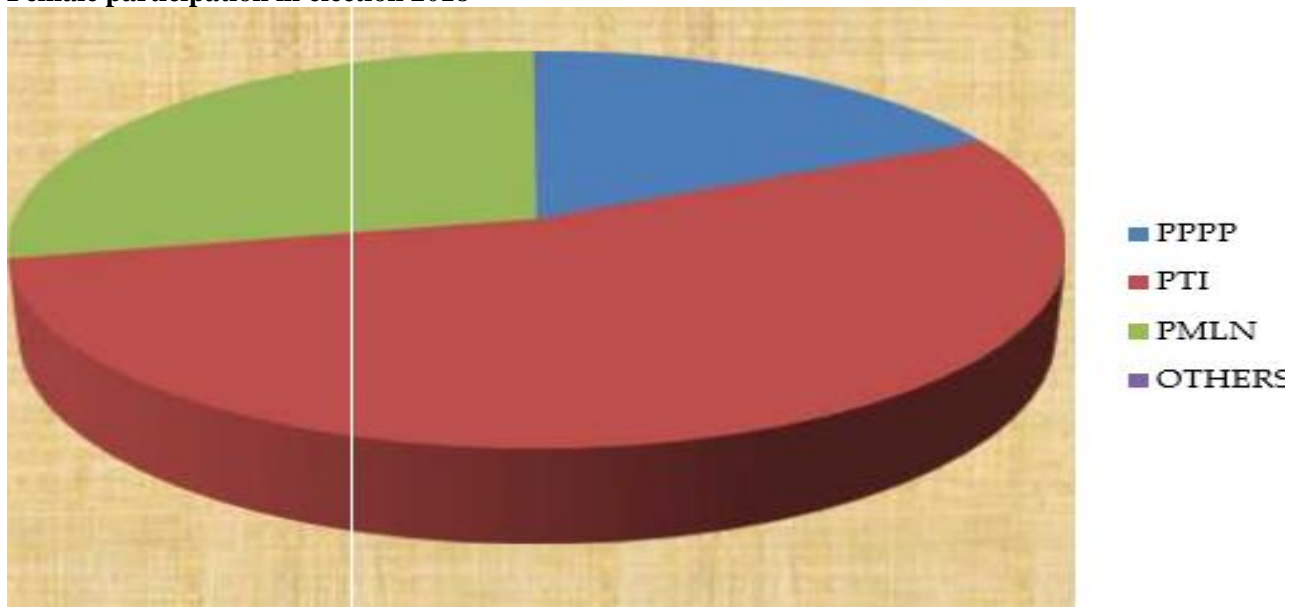
Pakistan became progressively progressive for female participation in politics during the Ayub regime because he was heavily trusting on establishment for managing political configuration of females. General Yahia Khan replaced Ayub Khan and ruled Pakistan for more than two years because Political system and Political parties of any country are reflected significant role for the effective modern Govt. Pakistan also belongs to that type of countries who have unsuccessful to reach their goals for political development with female participation (Khalid, 1966). In election 2013, four hundred and ninety female candidates appeared in the competition on their approved seats and campaigned in Pakistan. PPP issued the highest number of tickets to both male and female in in provincial national assembly of Sindh, Pakistan (Nizamani, 2018). Those elections 2018 also showing the same results where female candidates succeeded on eight seats while the said seats were 60 for contesting general seats in election of 2018 see graph below.

Women Position in National Assembly in 2018 Elections

Party Percentage	General Seats	Reserved seats	Total
PTI 48	3	29	32
PPP 16	3	8	11
PML (N) 25	1	16	17
Others 12	1	7	8

Source: (Free and Fair Election Network, 2018)

Female participation in election 2018



<https://election.result.pk/na-71-election-candidate-result-2018-pakistan/>

Hypothesis

There is need to empower women in South Asia especially in Pakistan and need to effective policies and to improve their status to participate in politics. Education is playing a key role to empower the women in all over the world. It is essential to improve decision making process regarding their education and participation in Politics.

Objectives

Following objectives are to explore the reality about women empowerment, family politics, the political participation of women in politics as well as this study also provides policy based recommendations with author's view to improve female empowerment and participation in South Asia especially in Pakistan. The detailed objectives:

1. To evaluate women empowerment in South Asia
2. To describe the female participation in the politics of Pakistan.
3. To get rid of family politics and chance for new comers in Pakistan.
4. To secure the female rights and protection after joining parties

Methods

In this paper the qualitative mode has been adapted by using different types of “secondary sources” like papers, articles, govt. documents, reports, and websites and findings of the study highlights the dependency of women empowerment, illiteracy, gender discrimination, man dominance, traditions, economic problems, lack of female awareness, right to participate in political system.

Women empowerment in Pakistan (A Discussion)

Women empowerment can be successfully secure through socio-cultural changes. Women are socially and economically permitted through a top-down approach. Present signs women empowerment in politics is completely on a filter down through a hierarchical structure in which they can see only be influenced by legislative procedures by dominants. So, it is essential to secure and strengthen the women's empowerment or women's roles in Pakistan or other countries of South Asia; they should also be given more attention through and social levels and through educational awareness and bottom-up changing is also needed. Here is also need to change the society's perception of male dominance as well as the traditional role of women in society and removing barriers to movement. Additionally, lacks of educational capabilities are hindrance in the way of women empowerment. Social awareness is more important reasons to increase women's participation in politics. In Pakistan, Women have to tackle many domestic challenges due to lack of support from connected families, (husband, brothers) education, awareness, man dominance and "Baradari" system. In this way women cannot actively participate in politics and at all levels of decision-making alone due to above mentioned barriers.

“There is also a need to institutionalize the party system to include women and reduce their perception of being 'politically invisible' Effective participation of women in the political system and structure should also be enhanced through changes in normative practices at the local, state and national levels” (Begum, 2023).

Women are belong to urban and rural areas of the country have different status even though women that belongs to urban areas have more educational chances and are playing role in several departments in society like education, health but the social domination for women due to discrimination based on feudalism, race, gender discrimination, domestic violence and cultural and religious issues has lessened women's role in politics (Jathol, 2023). Many organizations are working and playing role in encouraging and promoting the rights for women in the field of political, economic and social. They are still only incompletely effective in safeguarding equivalency in society and for the welfare of women (Najam & Yusuf, 2013)

Economic growth is driven by shared (often competing) narratives about political conflict and gender-based violence. The contributions here make parallel observations about the nature of South Asian-style patriarchal markets and inherited models for public institutions and civil society and their impact on women's citizenship. The rise to power of the religious right in contemporary South Asia has turned gender ideologies into a dark axis of regional conflict, using women's rights and freedoms as a critique of opponents and a pretext for state violence. Focusing on the stories of the region, we are interested in both the shared legacy of political and cultural history, as well as the different political and economic pathways that have created or constrained women's space and power struggles (Noreen, Zakar, Ali & Yousaf, 2019).

It is considered that the political participation of women is the freedom to express, gather and assistant; the capability to take decisions and take part in public matters: in this way women gain an opportunity to mark as a party agent to a campaign for party. After election an office allotted to work for society from government. It is considered also that Woman participation in politics means an ability to consistently

donate to society in all resolution. It is the revolutionary mark for female empowerment to take part in politics, also an ability to work for Female freedom to examine their selection and right for vote as well as join any party as a candidate in the election process or election campaign. In Pakistan, the representation of women in political matters has progressively better in the 21st century. Main cause for this is the increase of seats for female in the parliaments, then it should also be noted that most of these women have many years of political experience. However, the remarkable thing is that the power passes from the father to the daughter and not only to the sons. This is an important political progress in Pakistan's male-controlled and male-dominated society (Yasin, Jathol & Muzaffar, 2021).

Political participation of women in Pakistan (Some examples and threats)

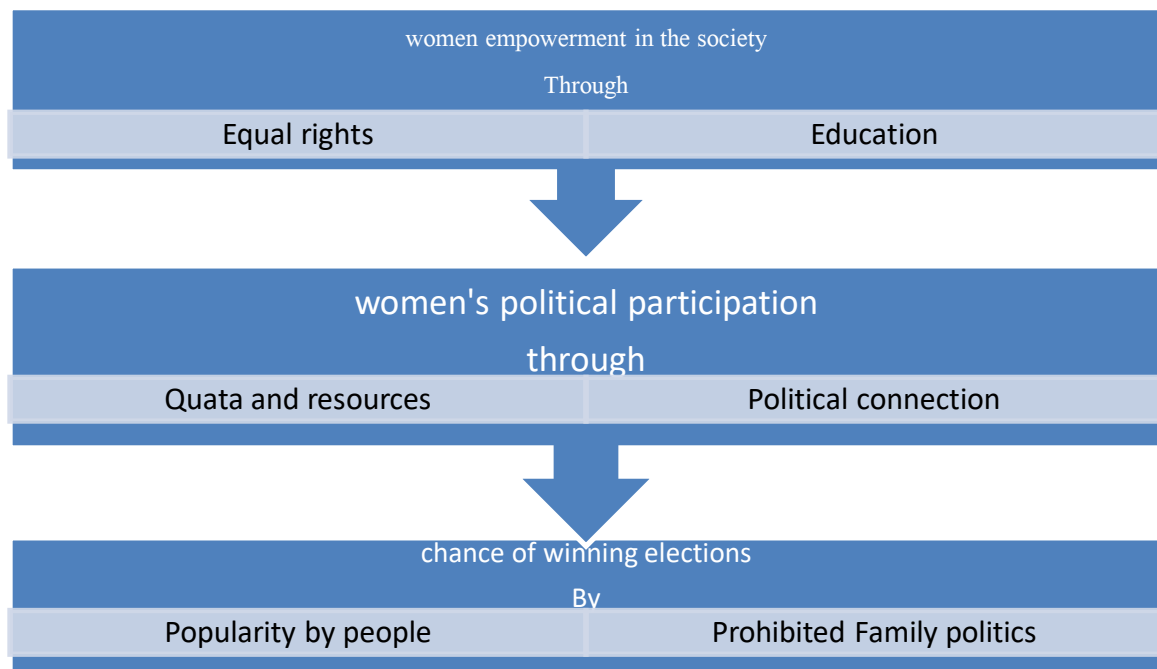
1. Fatima Jinnah served as first leader of the opposition in 1960 to 1967.
2. Benazir Bhutto was elected as a first woman PM in 1988 in Pakistan and also was the 1st Muslim female Prime Minister in Muslim countries as well. She won two times. She was died in terrorist attack.
3. Zill e Huma was electes Minister in Punjab, Zille Huma for social welfare and was murdered by Maolvi Ghulam sarwar being a female politician in 2007.
4. After election 2008, Dr.Fehmida Mirza appointed as a speaker of national assembly in the Parliament of Pakistan.
5. Hina Rabbani Khar has served as a Minister of state of foreign affairs she was the first women to have held that position.
6. Sherry Rehman is also a leader of opposition and has served as Minister
7. Maryam Nawaz is also Politician and faced many obstacles in politics.

Conclusion

Education plays an important role in the development of society. Education is an added value for every citizen because it allows everyone to know their rights and responsibilities. Education also plays an important role in empowering women. Women with higher education are more active and aware than women without education. At the end the findings of this study shows that financial dependency, educational deficiency, illiteracy, gender discrimination, male dominance, tradition, financial difficulties and incomplete knowledge of politics and political rights as well as social, cultural customs and religious interpretations are the greatest tasks for this society. Pakistan women are facing challenges' right from the birth of Pakistan but present it has been seen significantly change in politics for empowering women. Overall, there is much more to be done for women in Pakistan because just gender equivalence is not only an important progress but is also directly linked to financial progress. Essentially, women in Pakistan must have a sense of self-worth, equal access to opportunities, "the power to control their personal lives inside and outside the home, the right to make their own choices, and their ability to influence change society. Collaboration between political parties, the education sector and the media are essential to promote a better understanding of women's empowerment. Gender perspectives should be emphasized in the areas of security, development and trade" (Jathol, 2023).

Author's view/ Male-dominated Political System

1. In Pakistan history, Women were remaining at the front line with man at the time Pakistan movement and took part in all matters as well as stood side by side with men in the struggle in sub-continent for a separate homeland (Pakistan) for Muslims. At that time, women were controlled by the leadership of Miss Fatima Jinnah and played a vital role in the Pakistan movement for freedom. Though, that political interest did not explain into effective political participation for a long time. Women had given the right to participate in politics in the Pakistan's first Constituent Assembly which was functioned from 1947 to 1954 but had only two women out of 79 members. There is a need for a better gender perspective by reorganize gender roles for the meaningful empowerment of women in society. The use of national quotas is limited in South Asia. Only Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan have legislation guaranteeing women's political participation.
2. South Asian political structure, culture and practices are male dominated. They undermine a woman's will to join politics. Even highly educated women who have both skills and resources are not interested in politics because of their nature and perception of it. The value of the general majority is dominated by patriarchal ideologies that encourage men to control resources and compete for representation in the population, thereby limiting candidates' opportunities because women are believed to have fewer resources and political connections. Men are preferred candidates because they are more likely to win the election.
3. Politics in Pakistan are prepared in such a way that they reflect family politics, so that the rest of the Pakistani people have no chance to assert them and to win an election democratically. The political parties therefore lack the support of the majority, which led to greater discontent among the population. Pakistan politicians need to look beyond the narrow interests of religion and social affiliation. Voters must also be informed of their rights and obligations.



Source: Diagram by the author

Recommendations

Women's participation will lead to better policymaking regarding gender-sensitive rules and principles in various areas, including teaching, health, society and work mean all walks of lives.

1. There is needed to increase possible mechanisms for women's participation in politics.
2. Restructuring of political parties their quotas and other forms of necessary action.
3. Education and Training is needed to develop women's skills and gender sensitivity.
4. Political parties should work with women's sections and for the welfare of women
5. It is the need of the new era to develop women's political organizations.
6. party support can strengthen women empowerment and women participation in politics
7. Social and financial support can increase the participation for women in Politics.
8. increase access to political networks or political connection
9. Through education and awareness can promote women's leadership and position in parliament.
10. Electoral system should be transparent
11. Women should be protected from threats as mentioned in paper about Zill e Huma
12. women should continue their struggle for empowering herself especially in political system

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