

## **DR. MARK C. THOMPSON**

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- Nationality: British

### **ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Ph.D. in Arab and Islamic Studies**

**2008-2012**

**Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS), University of Exeter, UK**

Thesis Title: Emerging Socio-Political Representation in Saudi Arabia:

Direct and Indirect Consequences of the Saudi Arabia National Dialogue

#### **Master's Degree (MA) in Middle East Policy Studies with Distinction**

**2005-2007**

**Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK**

##### **Core Modules:**

Multilateral Institutions and the Middle East

Political Economy of the Middle East

State and Society in the Middle East

Academic Research Methodology

Modern Standard Arabic II (MSA)

#### **Master's Degree (MA TEFL) in Applied English Language Studies**

**1991-1992**

**University of Wales, College of Cardiff, UK**

##### **Core Modules:**

Description of English Grammar

Phonetics of English

Teaching Methodology

Applied Linguistics

### **SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

Dr. Mark C. Thompson is Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Socioeconomics Program at King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS) in Riyadh. He was previously Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, (2012-2019) where he taught undergraduate courses in International Relations and Globalization.

Mark has lived and worked in Saudi Arabia since 2001 for diverse institutions such as Saudi Arabian Airlines, the Saudi Arabian National Guard, and Prince Sultan University. Mark holds a Ph.D. from the Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK, where he also taught a course on Political Reform in the Gulf. Mark also runs his own consultancy business that offers an objective perspective of contemporary Saudi sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and cultural issues.

His principal research areas are Saudi socioeconomic development and societal transformation, and he has published on topics such as Saudi youth issues and challenges facing Saudi women leaders in publications such as the British Journal of Middle East Studies, Journal of Arabian Studies, Asian Affairs, Middle Eastern Studies, Middle East Policy; POMPEX Studies, Chatham House, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies and Gulf Affairs. In addition, he published a book with I.B. Tauris "Saudi Arabia and the Path to Political Change: National Dialogue and Civil Society" (2014). Mark is also the co-editor of the IB Tauris Bloomsbury book entitled "Policy-Making in the GCC: State, Citizens and Institutions" (2017) with Dr. Neil Quilliam from Chatham House based on their Gulf Research Meeting workshop in 2015. In October 2019 Mark published his Cambridge University Press book "Being Young Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom" about societal issues and change from the perspective of young Saudi men. He also published two other co-edited books with Dr. Neil Quilliam "Governance and Domestic Policy Making in Saudi Arabia: Transforming Society, Economics, Politics and Culture" (IB Tauris Bloomsbury 2022), and "Saudi Youth: Policies and Processes" (Springer Nature 2024). In addition, Mark is

researching and writing his second Cambridge University Press book “Male Youth Issues and Everyday Life in Saudi Arabia” as well as an edited book “Realizing Saudi Vision 2030: Governance, Institutions, Human Capital Development” (Bloomsbury IB Tauris). Mark collaborates with diverse Saudi institutions and makes numerous presentations at international conferences, workshops, and seminars every year as well as providing chapters on Saudi Arabia for edited books such as “Saudi Vision 2030: Repurposing Ministries and Creating New Institutions”, with Neil Quilliam in Sfakianakis (ed), *The Economy of Saudi Arabia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Oxford University Press, July 2024.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Book:** *Youth Issues and Everyday Life in Saudi Arabia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK, forthcoming 2026.

**Book:** *Realizing Saudi Vision 2030: Governance, Institutions, Human Capital Development*, Bloomsbury IB Tauris, forthcoming 2025.

**Book Chapter:** “Saudi Vision 2030: Repurposing Ministries and Creating New Institutions”, with Neil Quilliam in Sfakianakis (ed), *The Economy of Saudi Arabia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Oxford University Press, July 2024.

**Book:** *Saudi Youth: Policies and Processes*, edited by Mark C. Thompson and Neil Quilliam, Gulf Studies Series, Springer Nature, May 2024: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-99-9867-8>

**KFCRIS Dirasat:** “Better Jobs Tomorrow: The Appeal and Increasing Relevance of Alternative Credentials in Saudi Arabia” with Dr Hanaa Almoaibed, King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies, April 2023, available at: <https://kfcris.com/en/view/post/407>

**Book Chapter:** “Societal perceptions of the Saudi government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic”, in Brunn, and Gilbreath (eds.), *COVID-19 and a World of Ad Hoc Geographies*, Springer, September 2022.

**Book:** *Governance and Domestic Policy Making in Saudi Arabia: Transforming Society, Economics, Politics and Culture*, edited by Mark C. Thompson and Neil Quilliam, I.B. Tauris Bloomsbury, London, UK, April 2022.

**Journal Article:** “The Impact of Vision 2030 on Saudi Youth Mindsets”, *Asian Affairs*, 12 November 2021, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03068374.2021.1992202>

**KFCRIS Dirasat:** ““Good Jobs and Bad Jobs”: Employment Attitudes, Perceptions, and Priorities in Saudi Arabia” with Dr Hanaa Almoaibed, *King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies*, November 2020, available at: <https://kfcris.com/en/view/post/350>

**Article:** “Saudi Youth Concerns Post-Covid-19”, *Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore*, Insight 259, May 2021, available at: <https://mei.nus.edu.sg/publication/insight-259-saudi-youth-concerns-post-covid-19/>

**Book Review:** “Tweeted Heresies: Saudi Islam in Transformation”, *Asian Affairs*, Volume 52, Issue 1, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, January 2021.

**KFCRIS Commentary:** “Sustainability in Saudi Arabia: The Question of Food” with Dr Hanaa Almoaibed, *King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies*, November 2020, available at: [www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/316](http://www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/316)

**Article:** “Saudi Vision 2030: The Importance of Being in Riyadh”, *Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI)*, 10 September 2020, available at: [www.ispionline.it/it/publicazione/saudi-vision-2030-importance-being-riyadh-27323](http://www.ispionline.it/it/publicazione/saudi-vision-2030-importance-being-riyadh-27323)

**KFCRIS Commentary:** “Ramifications of Coronavirus Disruption to Saudi Education: Student Concerns”, *King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies*, June 2020, available at: [www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/298](http://www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/298)

**KFCRIS Weekly Coronavirus Reports:** Issues 1-8, Edited by Saud Al-Sarhan & Mark C. Thompson, *King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies*, June 2020, available at: [www.kfcris.com/en/view/86](http://www.kfcris.com/en/view/86)

**Journal Article:** “The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Socioeconomic Future of Young Saudis”, *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, August 2020, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2020.1808375>

**Article:** “Where do Saudi Arabia’s youth stand amid COVID-19?”, *Castlereagh Associates*, May 2020, available at: <https://castlereagh.net/where-do-saudi-arabias-youth-stand-amid-covid-19/>

**Article:** “Saudi Arabia’s vision for SMEs”, *Castlereagh Associates*, April 2020, available at: <https://castlereagh.net/saudi-arabias-vision-for-smes/>

**Article:** “Being Young, Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom”, *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington DC (AGSIW)*, March 2020, available at: <https://agsiw.org/being-young-male-and-saudi-identity-and-politics-in-a-globalized-kingdom/>

**Article:** “Tomorrow’s workforce: Boosting employment of Saudi nationals”, *Castlereagh Associates*, March 2020, available at: <https://castlereagh.net/tomorrows-workforce-boosting-employment-of-saudi-nationals/>

**Journal Article:** “Inherent contradictions in the Saudi rentier state: distributive capacity, youth employment preferences, and attitudes to education”, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 47, 2020, Issue 1: Revisiting Rentierism: The Changing Political Economy of Resource-Dependent States in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, January 2020.

**Book:** *Being Young Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, October 2019.

**KFCRIS Commentary,** “What Can Be Done to Align the Skills and Expectations of Saudi Students with Employer Requirements?” with Dr. Makio Yamada, *King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies*, September 2019, available at: [www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/233](http://www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/233)

**Journal Article:** "The Impact of Globalization on Saudi Male Millennials' Identity Narratives", *Asian Affairs*, Volume 50, Issue 3, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, UK, July 2019.

**Article:** “How Can Young Saudi Men Be Brought into the Private Sector?” with Neil Quilliam, *Chatham House*, 10 June 2019, available at: [www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/how-can-young-saudi-men-be-brought-private-sector](http://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/how-can-young-saudi-men-be-brought-private-sector)

**KFCRIS Special Report:** “Can Young Saudis Acquire Skills for Future Jobs?” *King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies*, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, February 2019, available at: [www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/207](http://www.kfcris.com/en/view/post/207)

**Article:** "The Saudi 'Social Contract' Under Strain: Employment and Housing", *Social Policy in the Middle East North Africa, POMEPS Studies 31*, Project on Middle East Political Science, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Middle East Initiative, October 2018, available at: <https://pomeps.org/2018/10/19/social-policy-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/>

**Journal Publication:** "State, Citizens and Institutions: Policy Making in the GCC", with Dr. Neil Quilliam, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, Autumn 2018, available at: <https://mepc.org/journal/state-citizens-and-institutions-policy-making-gcc>

**Article:** "The growing problem of divorce for young Saudi men", *Gulf Affairs: Gender (Im)balance in Gulf Societies*, Oxford Gulf & Arabian Studies Forum (A Publication based at St Anthony's College), Issue 8, Spring 2018.

**KFCRIS Commentary:** "Addressing the Key Challenges Facing the 'Entrepreneurial Streak' in Young Saudis", *King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies*, Riyadh, 04 January 2018, available at: <http://kfcris.com/en/view/post/161>

**Book Chapter:** "Civil Society and Natural Resource Management: The Case of Saudi Arabia" in Overland, I. (ed.) *Public Brain Power: Civil Society and Natural Resource Management*, Palgrave Macmillan, December 2017.

**Book Chapter:** "Re-evaluating the Saudi Social Contract: The Perspective of Saudi Male Graduates", in Jones & Sofiane (eds.) *The Future of GCC Labour Market Reform: Towards a Multi-Disciplinary, Evidence-Based and Practical Understanding*, Gerlach Press, September 2017.

**Book:** *Policy Making in the GCC: State, Citizens and Institutions* edited by Mark C. Thompson and Neil Quilliam, I.B. Tauris Bloomsbury, London, UK, August 2017.

**Journal Article:** "Saudi Vision 2030: A Viable Response to Youth Aspirations and Concerns?" *Asian Affairs*, Volume 48, No. 2, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, UK, May 2017.

**KFCRIS Commentary:** "Youth Perceptions of Uneven Globalization in Saudi Arabia", *King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies*, Riyadh, May 2017, available at: <http://kfcris.com/en/view/post/135>

**Journal Publication:** "Societal Transformation, Public Opinion and Saudi Youth: Views from an Academic Elite" *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 53, No. 5, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, UK, April 2017.

**Book Review:** "Saudi Arabia 2000: A Strategy for Growth", *Journal of International and Global Studies*, Routledge, April 2017.

**Book Review:** "Saudi Arabia: A Kingdom in Peril", *Journal of Arabian Studies*, Volume 6, Issue 2, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, November 2016.

**Article:** "Opening up the Decision-Making Process in Saudi Arabia", *Gulf Affairs: Energy and the State - The Impact of Low Oil Prices*, Oxford Gulf & Arabian Studies Forum (A Publication based at St Anthony's College), Issue 3, Summer 2016.

**Article:** "Saudi Students Welcome Vision 2030", *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington DC*, July 2016, available at: [www.agsiw.org/saudi-students-welcome-vision-2030/](http://www.agsiw.org/saudi-students-welcome-vision-2030/)

**Book Chapter:** "Self-Motivation, Career Aspirations and Work Responsibilities: The Perspective of Saudi Male Undergraduates at KFUPM" in Kropf & Ramady (eds.) *Employment and Career Motivation in the Arab Gulf States: The Rentier Mentality Revisited*, Gerlach Press, September 2015.

**Book Review:** "Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East", by Simon Mabon in *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Volume 26, Issue 3, 2015.

**Journal Article:** "Saudi Women Leaders: Opportunities and Challenges", *Journal of Arabian Studies*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, August 2015.

**Book:** *Saudi Arabia and the Path to Political Change: National Dialogue and Civil Society*, I.B. Tauris Bloomsbury, May 2014.

**KFCRIS Special Publication:** "A Decade of the Saudi National Dialogue: 2003-2013", Masarat, April 2014, *King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies*, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

**Journal Article:** "Saudi Youth: Challenges for the Future", *Orient IV*, 2012.

**Journal Article:** “Assessing the Impact of Saudi Arabia's National Dialogue: The Controversial Case of the Cultural Discourse”, *Journal of Arabian Studies*, Vol. 1 Issue 2, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, December 2011.

**Article:** "Saudi Arabia: time for reform?" *Conservative Middle East Council*, September 2011, available at: <http://cmec.org.uk/blog/saudi-arabia-time-for-reform/>

**Article:** "Saudis debate impact of petroleum culture", *Gulf States Newsletter*, Issue 900, 13 May 2011.

**Article:** "Saudi Arabia braces for unrest but pins hopes on King's promotion of dialogue and debate", *Gulf States Newsletter*, Issue 896, 11 March 2011.

## **EMPLOYMENT RECORD**

### **April 2020 - current**

**King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:** Senior Research Fellow, Head of the Socioeconomics Program

### **April 2017 – April 2020**

**King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:** Senior Associate Fellow.

### **August 2012 – December 2019**

**King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals (KFUPM), Dhahran, Saudi Arabia:** Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies (Undergraduate courses taught: International Relations and Globalization).

### **February 2011- current (part-time)**

**Consultant for multiple companies:** Saudi Arabia analyst / contractor

### **December 2010-January 2011**

**King Faisal Center for Research & Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:** PhD visiting researcher

### **October 2010 – December 2010**

**Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK:** Instructor Political Reform in the Gulf, 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate module

### **July 2011 / 2010 / 2009 – September 2011 / 2010 / 2009**

**International Study and Language Centre (ISLC) University of Reading, UK:** English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Instructor on 12 and 8-week pre-session courses (postgraduate and research students)

### **October 2009 – July 2010**

**Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:** EAP Instructor on university foundation course

### **September 2007 – September 2008**

**GPT Paradigm Sangcom, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:** English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Instructor, Saudi Arabian National Guard School of Signals (Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam).

**CV September 1983 - September 2007 available on request**

## **Additional Information**

Member & Trustee Saudi–British Society

Member Tomouh Community of Leaders

Member Chatham House

Member Association for Gulf & Arabian Studies (AGAPS)

