Review of: "Wasta: The Culture of Nepotism on the Arabian Peninsula"

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1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: Although the article introduces a novel concept of wasta as hybrid socio-cultural capital, the discussion on nepotism and corruption reiterates themes already well covered in existing studies. The article lacks concrete practical solutions to address the challenges associated with wasta. To enhance its originality, the article could propose specific policy recommendations or comparative case studies from countries that have successfully mitigated the effects of nepotism within informal networks.

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: The article primarily focuses on parallels with guanxi in China and jeitinho in Brazil, but it overlooks more recent research on public policy and modernization efforts within the GCC region. The article could incorporate more specific studies on the impact of modernization initiatives or anti-tribalism policies in countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to provide a more comprehensive literature review.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: While the combination of Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) and hermeneutic methods is innovative, the approach may be too complex for some readers. Additionally, using social media data from Reddit and YouTube introduces a potential bias, as these platforms do not reflect the entire population's perspectives. The author should offer a clearer justification for focusing only on Reddit and YouTube. It could also enhance the robustness of the findings by incorporating interviews or field surveys for triangulation.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper? The results section focuses heavily on public perceptions of wasta but does not assess the concrete impacts on career opportunities or economic development. Additionally, the article only briefly touches on generational or ethnic differences, missing the opportunity for a more nuanced analysis. I think a deeper analysis of demographic factors, such as differences in perception based on age, gender, or educational background, would enrich the findings and provide more detailed insights into the phenomenon of wasta.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the

body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: The discussion on the practical implications for public policy or business practices remains vague, and the article does not sufficiently bridge theory with practice. The long-term social impact of wasta on building meritocracy is mentioned only in passing. The article could offer more actionable recommendations for policymakers and businesses in the GCC region. For example, it could explore specific strategies for mitigating nepotism in organizations or provide advice for expatriates on adapting to local cultural norms.

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: Some sections, particularly the methodology, are overly technical and may be challenging for non-specialist readers. The use of jargon without adequate explanation can reduce readability. To improve clarity, the article could include visual aids, such as diagrams or tables, to summarize key findings. Additionally, providing more detailed explanations for technical terms would make the article more accessible to a wider audience.