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### Abstract

This is a study of labour migration in Kuwait and based primarily on fieldwork carried out in Kuwait. The central argument suggests that the socio-economic position of immigrant labour has to be examined within the context of Kuwait's transformation from a producer of surplus, in the period of pre-oil society to a consumer of capital and consumer goods based on the use of oil revenues. However, such a transformation could not have taken place without Kuwait's structured integration into the global economy. As a result Kuwait became one of the major markets for the consumption of capitalist consumer goods. The approach is to examine Kuwait's underdevelopment and dependency through the study of international migration in the Middle East, using Kuwait itself as an example. The thesis argues that labour migration to Kuwait and to other Arab Gulf countries is not generated by a surplus of capital and a poverty of human resources on one side, and a paucity of capital and surplus of human resources on the other. Instead it suggests that it is a consequence of changing historical conditions in the accumulation of capital in the western countries. Such changes as have occurred facilitate the reproduction of western capital in a more profitable way and bring about new ways in which the 'Third World' countries are further integrated into the reproduction of global capital. This thesis, also attempts to show that the manner in which Kuwait and most of the other Gulf countries have been integrated into the world capitalist market have produced simultaneously certain forms of socio-economic structures which influence the course of events far beyond the boundaries of the countries concerned. In other words, developments in the Gulf region are crucial in determining changes in other Arab and Third World societies which export labour.

Empirically, this thesis shows that problems which are confronted by immigrants are also confronted, albeit to a lesser extent, by the indigenous population. The examination of such problems concentrates on housing, education, vocational training, and working conditions. It is also argued in this study, that the government's discriminatory policy with regards to more than half of Kuwait's population, namely migrant labour, is used by the regime in order to overcome the problem of legitimacy and rally the indigenous population behind it as well as a means of weakening the

bargaining position of both the indigenous and the immigrant population vis-a-vis the ruling class. Moreover, the study also demonstrates that immigrant labour constitutes an integral and central part of the production system. Politically it may pose (especially in the case of Arab labour) a potential threat to the regime; economically it sustains the recycling of petro-dollars back to the economies of the West.

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*"To my parents and all  
the members of my family".*

ASPECTS OF LABOUR MARKET BEHAVIOUR IN  
AN OIL ECONOMY: A STUDY OF  
UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND IMMIGRANT  
LABOUR IN KUWAIT

by

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
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## INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Two particularly important features constitute the central characteristics of the Arab region during the last decade. On the one hand, the division between capital-rich/labour-poor and capital-poor/labour-rich countries, and, on the other, the effects of the oil price increases in the autumn of 1973. These features, though important in themselves, achieve their socio-economic and political significance in regional transformations when articulated with the emergence of a New International Division of Labour since the mid-1970s. The clearest expression of such an articulation can be observed in such events as: the INFITĀH, open-door, policy adopted by the Sadat regime in Egypt after the October War of 1973, and followed by other countries such as Sudan; the growth of "free-trade" and "off-shore" trade zones in such countries as Dhubai, Egypt, Sudan; a considerable increase of Western investments in the Maghreb countries, Egypt and in some of the Gulf states; the massive movement of labour to and within the Arab countries.

A particularly important aspect of this articulated process is the nature of the relationship between the European Community and the Arab region. For example, European Community exports to the Arab world have increased considerably. The proportion of export receipts to import payments actually rose from 41.7% in 1973 to 78.3% in 1975. Exports to the major oil suppliers at the time rose at a particularly impressive rate, from a mere ECUS 420 million in the case of Saudi Arabia in 1973 to over ECUS 5659 million by 1978. In general, the rate of



European exports to the Arab countries rose from ECUs 2190 million in 1958 to ECUs 22137 in 1980.<sup>1</sup> This means that the Arab world, in relation to the world economy, is one of the few zones in the world to display such a dynamism at a time when the world economy is in crisis. Furthermore, the types of imported goods, which mainly comprised of capital goods and supplies for the construction of industry, was to the advantage of the countries which export such goods, namely the developed capitalist countries.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that while the western capital is directed towards the Third World countries, the surplus from oil revenues of the Arab oil producing states are directed towards the western countries and America. Between 1974-1980, Arab capital invested in Europe amounted to \$3187 billion, of which \$2761 billion is owned by Saudi Arabia (91%) and Kuwait (9%).<sup>2</sup> These sums were either invested in real-estate or in the stock market and constituted important aspects of the recycling of oil money and its role in the performance of the western economies.

Another significant feature of this articulated process is the manner in which the amount of oil revenues located in the Arab oil-producing countries, namely the Arab Gulf countries, has enabled them individually to start an "ambitious" development plan for "infrastructure" and "industrialization". The so called new industrial zones in the Gulf, such as the zone of aluminium factories in Bahrain, <sup>3</sup>Umma Sa<sup>c</sup>id in Qatar, Jebel <sup>c</sup>Ali in Dubai, Ruwais in Abu Dhabi, are all industrial enclaves with no connection to the local economy except for their utilization of some local inputs (energy, water, and free services).<sup>3</sup> The labour employed in these enclaves is brought from other Arab and non-Arab countries, it

is recruited on a temporary basis and replaced when the work contract is completed. Indigenous labour may be recruited, but only on a small scale as any large-scale recruitment of national labour is seen as constituting a potential threat. Similarly, there is no observable transfer of technology despite the euphoric claims made by the local elites and government officials and echoed by European firms involved in the projects. The technology used in these projects is either quite simple and manned by foreign workers or in some cases where it is quite sophisticated it is completely dependent on the expertise of European specialists and managers.<sup>4</sup>

In considering these two aspects together it becomes clear that recent developments in the Arab region are giving expression to new forms of capital accumulation. In particular, they are enabling global capital to take advantage of the existence of an abundance of cheap labour, in such regions as Asia and the Middle East, and to employ "productively" the over-abundance of capital in the Arab oil producing states. In other words, whereas it is not an attractive proposition to employ Asian labour in situ, it is particularly profitable to employ them in the Gulf region.<sup>5</sup> From such a perspective, therefore, labour migration to the Gulf region can be seen as a concrete manifestation of both the emergence of a new articulation between oil capital and the New International Division of Labour, and new forms of capitalist accumulation. In fact, it could be argued that labour migration to the Gulf region is one of "central pillars" upon which was constructed the New International Division of Labour and the process of internationalization of production during the second half of the 1950s and into the 1960s.



It is within such an analytical framework that labour migration in the Arab region can be seen to constitute a most distinctive feature of regional economic developments and socio-political transformations during the last decade. This, of course, is in addition to the implications derived from the sheer quantity of labour that has moved to and within the Arab world. For example, by 1975, the major oil producing countries in the region relied on 1.3 million migrants and the figure is expected to reach 2.8 million by 1985. Furthermore, the Arab labour-exporting countries provided 5.4% of their combined labour force by 1975 and are expected to contribute 3% of their combined labour force by 1985.<sup>6</sup>

It should be pointed out that this form of economic development in the Arab region has done little to bridge existing dichotomy between capital-rich/labour-poor and capital-poor/labour-rich countries. In fact, as a result of this massive labour migration new problems have emerged which only help accentuate the inequality and dichotomy in the Arab world. For example, in the labour-exporting countries, important shortages have been observed in agricultural labour markets and other sectors, the sexual division of labour has been distorted, the nature of work has been dramatically changed, inflationary trends have been aggravated, consumption patterns transformed, and social malaise has emerged in areas where it was not present before. The combination of these factors has highlighted socio-economic and political differences within the Arab region.<sup>7</sup>

The overall implication of such transformations for the whole Arab region are very pessimistic. This new pattern and form of international capital accumulation, and within which the Arab region plays a central role, suggests that: First, a weakening of any collective bargaining

position by the Arab countries vis-a-vis the industrialized western powers. Consequently, the Arab region has reportedly failed to extract any concessions from the West; Lebanon and the Palestinian issue are particular aspects of this situation. "Some states with exceptional and perhaps temporary economic advantages will do better than others, but (structural dichotomy) will limit both the intraregional and extraregional relations of its states to a network of bilateral deals".<sup>2</sup> Second, radical forces in the region have been undermined and in many cases destroyed. Sadat's emergence and his policies are a particularly acute manifestation of this process which all but brought an end to Nasserism in Egypt and the Arab region as a whole. Of course, such a situation has enhanced the Western presence and influence in the region.<sup>3</sup>

Given the importance of the transformations experienced by the Arab region during the last decade and the centrality of labour migration it is not surprising that this issue has attracted considerable academic interest. During the last few years, and especially since 1975, a series of conferences, seminars and research projects have focused on the question of development and labour movement into and within the Arab region. It is beyond the scope of this introduction to present an adequate summary of these contributions. Nevertheless, it is necessary to highlight some of the major trends that can be observed in the existing studies. In general, these studies can be divided into two broad categories: those which adopt an "economic determinant" as a mode of explanation, and those which attempt to present a "political context," of labour migration in the region.

An important contribution of the "economic determinant" type is that of J.S. Birks and C.A. Sinclair, International Migration and Development in the Arab Region, (Geneva I.L.O., 1980\*), and Arab Manpower: The Crisis of Development (1980). These studies focused on the movement of labour in the Arab region directly after the increase of oil prices in autumn 1973. They studied the waves and sources of labour migration and also paid special attention to the nature of the labour market in every Arab country. These studies, unlike the previous ones, have managed to bring together a large amount of published and unpublished data on the movement of labour and nature of the labour market in the Arab world up to 1975. Birks and Sinclair, estimate that the total number of migrant labourers with their dependents had reached in 1975 around 3.5 million; of these, 1.82 million were breadwinners. The studies also bring to the scene for the first time countries which until recently had attracted no attention within the migration debate, such as Syria, Iraq, and Oman. Finally, the studies pay special attention to the future labour requirements of the labour importing countries up to 1985. Nevertheless, the studies provide no data for the period after 1977, which in fact witnessed a considerable change in the direction of the movement of labour as well as the behaviour of the labour market in both labour exporting and importing countries. In general, these studies and others alike, have explained the migration of labour in the Arab world according to the attraction or what they called "surplus of capital" in the labour importing countries.

\* This study was first published in a regional working paper of each Arab Middle Eastern country by the International Labour Organisation and the University of Durham between 1978 and 1980.

The second most important study in this category is the World Bank report on "International labour migration and manpower in the Middle East and North Africa". The report is based on a project that was carried out over a number of years, and involved a number of people who had already participated in previous I.L.O. projects such as Birks and Sinclair. This study, unlike the previous ones, was expanded to consider the growth and requirements of labour in both labour exporting and importing countries between 1975 and 1985. It also projected the requirements of labour by economic sector and occupation. The report also highlighted some of the socio-economic implications of labour migration in the Arab region. It is important to note that the amount of information made available to the project team, either by the World Bank itself or the labour importing countries, in addition to the technical potential of the team members, have enabled it to produce the most comprehensive coverage of labour migration to date. The study also suggests that foreign labour, especially Asian, is expected to increase considerably. It notes that the share of Arab labour in the total foreign labour force in the labour exporting countries will drop from 65% in 1975 to 51.9% in 1985. Consequently, the proportion of the contribution from the major Arab labour exporting countries would decrease. For example, the contribution of Yemen, Jordan and Egypt in the total migrant labour in 1985 would not exceed 36.2% as against 51% in 1975. In contrast, Asian countries would increase their migrant labour in the same period, for example, by 170% in the case of Pakistan and 157% in the case of Indian labour. It also estimates that the numbers of migrant labour and their dependents will jump from 3.1 million in 1975 to 10.9 or 9.5 million, in the case of high or low rate of growth respectively in 1985.

It is important to note that the above studies have attributed, partially at least, the increase of non-Arab labour in the oil producing countries, to the failure of the Arab labour exporters to meet the demand for certain types of labour, especially in the skilled and highly skilled categories. However, the available data on Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates reveal that the majority of the newly recruited labour, unlike the popular claim, are non-skilled and semi-skilled. For example, the majority of the work permits issued for the first time in Kuwait in 1977 (67.7% or 43135) and 1981 (61.9% or 31242) were absorbed by production workers - non-skilled and semi-skilled workers. Moreover, an examination of the monthly wages of the newly recruited labour shows that 75.7% in 1977 and 63.4% in 1981 earned less than K.D. 150 (\$500) per month. Of these, 56.5% in 1977 and 33.2% in 1981 earned less than K.D. 100 (\$200) per month. In U.A.E., it was found that 52% of the non-national labour force in 1980 were either illiterate (30.8%) or could only read and write (21.5%). This means once more, despite the Mirks and Sinclair and World Bank claims, that the majority of this labour is non-skilled and semi-skilled and recruited for such sectors as construction and services, which also reflect the nature of the path of development underway in the region.

The second category of work, although limited in number, could be regarded as a first attempt to study the problem from a broader economic and political framework. Such an example is the study by Nadir Fargani on North Yemen, The Affluent years are over: Emigration and Development in the Yemen Republic, E.L.O., Working Paper, 1980). The study tried to examine the emigration of Yemeni workers and their remittances in the light of dependency theory, and the role of Saudi Arabia as a centre. The other studies which tried to adopt similar theoretical frameworks are: the

study of Makram Eadir and Gilbert Beauge, Social and Economic Determinants of Movement of Labour in the Arab Region, (Arab Planning Institute, 1981) and the study of Saad Eddin Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order, (1982). While both of these studies tried to examine the implications of the increase of oil prices on the Arab world, the former also attempted to articulate the economic recession in the west with the prominent emergence of the oil producing countries into the political and economic scene of the Arab world, and the latter, studied the impact of oil on the changing balance of power in the Arab world by considering Egypt and Saudi Arabia as a case study.

It should be noted, however, that none of these studies dealt with the issue of the socio-economic position of immigrants in the recipient countries. The only studies which touch on this matter, to a minor extent, are those of Shamlan Al-Essa, The Manpower Problem in Kuwait, 1981; Tawfic Farah et al., "Alienation and Expatriate Labour in Kuwait", (1980), and Faisal al-Saleem and Ahmed Dhafer, Expatriate Labour in the Gulf, (1982). The last of these three, though devoted to such issues has failed to reach its goals because of the way in which the research was conducted and the failure of the authors to comprehend the nature of the problem. The study was carried out on about 22,883 migrants from different nationalities, but none of these nationalities were mentioned. Although a questionnaire was used as the tool of the study, the results gave no clear indication of the problems confronted by immigrants as in contrast to the indigenous population. The study also concluded that immigrants are satisfied with their position and tend not to want change. In other words, it suggested that the immigrants as well as the indigenous population are satisfied with their present social relations and tend to not want to bring about any transformation.

It is within such a theoretical and substantive context that the present thesis is being written. In other words, with the context of serious limitations in the existing literature and dramatic transformations in the Arab region itself. It has such a background which is structured the nature of this thesis and suggested the areas and questions that need to be examined. For example, given the almost total absence of any data on the particular socio-economic conditions of migrants it was felt necessary to use a questionnaire and make an initial contribution to this area of research. Furthermore, given the important socio-political changes experienced by the Arab region and the concomitant failure of most studies to incorporate them in their analytical frameworks this thesis attempts to suggest some general parameters that could constitute a contribution to the formulation of a more comprehensive paradigm for the study of labour migration in the Arab region. Given that many aspects of this thesis constitute "new departures" in the study of labour migration in the Arab world, it is necessary to highlight some of the major concerns around which the data has been organised.

In looking at migrant labour in Kuwait I am, in fact, dealing first, with two major migrant groups:- Arab and non-Arab migrants, and second, with four sub-groups: Arab, Asian, Far Eastern, and European migrants. Although there are differences between various migrant groups, important similarities exist. In this work I shall describe some of these similarities as they have been observed in the subordinate position of the first three groups in relation to the Kuwaitis by looking at the wide spread prejudice of the Kuwaiti population vis-a-vis migrants and the discriminatory practices of the government institutions, for example, poor access to government services, accommodation, education, health, social allowances, etc.

These similarities, I argue, suggest that despite their different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, migrants form a distinct part of the class structure of Kuwaiti society.

In this work I also depart from previous sociological studies that dealt with the problem of migrant labour in the labour importing countries in Europe and elsewhere in two ways. First, I am not looking at the problem of migrants and government discriminatory policies as such, rather I am examining these as: a) a reflection of Kuwaiti socio-economic transformation and b) Kuwait's integration in the world economy. Second, I attempt to understand labour migration in the Arab region, in general, and in Kuwait, in particular, within the context of the accumulation of Western capital in parts of the developing countries.

It seems relevant at this point to note some of the hypotheses of the study:

- 1) Migrants are of long-term importance to the development of Kuwait society. They are structurally an integral part of the national economy in Kuwait.
- 2) Although there are significant social and economic differences between migrants, they come at the bottom of each class. On the other hand, migrants as a group form a social category in relation to their Kuwaiti counterparts (due to government discriminatory practices).
- 3) The presence of migrant labour is of great importance for the national and international bourgeoisie in two ways. First, the presence of migrant labour on a large scale consolidates and legitimizes the power of the ruling class by fostering the feeling



of superiority among the indigenous population vis-a-vis migrants due to governmental discriminatory practices. In addition the different ethnic and cultural identity of the workers reduce any possibility of solidarity and unity between them. Second, the presence of immigrants not only keeps the machine of production operating, but it also assists in recycling the petro-dollars to the economies of western industrial countries. This happens either through the huge expenditure on the infrastructure and industrial projects (roads, schools, hospitals, ...etc. in Kuwait) or through the migrants' remittances being used to purchase capital goods or enhancement of the consumption pattern in the labour exporting countries.

4. The manner in which the Arab region is integrated in the new international division of labour is different from that of other Third World countries.
5. Oil and labour migration, during the 1970s, were used by international capital to restructure the political and economic structure of the Arab region, and hence to further the integration of the area with world monopoly capitalism, and to weaken, if not to abolish, the radical nationalist forces in the region.

As a means of highlighting both the substantive and theoretical dimensions of this thesis and in order to attract attention to the points and issues made above the thesis is organised in the following manner:

Chapter One is devoted to an examination of the mechanisms of labour migration in the Middle East before and after the increase of oil prices in 1973. It also examines some of the theoretical perspectives of migration and their adequacy in explaining the present state of labour

migration in the Arab region. The second chapter, attempts to present an alternative explanation of the problem through an examination of the political development of nationalist movements in the Arab world and the location of the Arab world in a global context.

Chapter Three, is devoted to the socio-economic transformation of Kuwaiti society, and Chapter Four gives an account of the history of labour migration to Kuwait between 1930-1981, and the demographic characteristics of the migrants. Such an account is necessary in order to explain the development of socio-economic forces since the discovery of oil in the 1930s.

Chapters Five and Six concentrate on the socio-economic position of migrants and problems of adaptation, as observed in daily social life. Some other aspects such as housing, education and vocational training and income sources are also discussed here.

Chapter Seven focuses on the world of work, channels of recruitment, social relations in the workplace, wages, hours of work, productivity of labour etc. While, Chapter Eight shows the lack of political rights not only for migrants but also for the society as a whole, with particular reference to trade unionism. It also examines how trade unions have been used to exert a constantly restricting influence on workers and to perpetuate the divisions in society.

NOTES

1. Glavanis, Pandeli et al., A Report on the Economic Aspects of The Euro-Arab Dialogue: in Khader, Bichara (ed.): Co-operation Euro-Arabe Le Centre d'Etude et de Recherche Sur Le Monde Arabe Contemporain de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, 1982, pp.17-18.
2. Mohammed, K, The Place of the Arab Nation in the Hierarchy of the International Division of Labour, Journal of Social Sciences, special issue, Spring 1983, p.41.
3. Some of these projects were either by the state capital such as Umm Said in Qatar and Yanbo and Jubail in Saudi Arabia, others were either joint projects run by foreign and state capital such as the case of Bahrain Aluminium Factories, or completely run by foreign capital as in the case of Jebel Ali in Dubai. These companies are manned by foreign labour and directed by European managers.
4. It has been found that although BAPCO (Bahrain Petroleum Company) was started in operation in Bahrain more than 50 years ago, more than 70% of the company's key positions are still held by the European specialists and managers.  
See B. al-Wajjar, Employment and Development in the Gulf Societies, Commerce Review, a monthly magazine, No. 185, September-October, 1981.
5. E. Hill, The International Division of Labour, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, Journal of Social Sciences, Spring, 1983, p.145.
6. See, for example, 1. Glavanis, Ibid.
7. See, for example, 5. Hill, Ibid.
8. Waterbury, John and Ragai ElMallakh, The Middle East in the Coming Decade, London, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1980, p.11.
9. See, for example, Glavanis, Pandeli, The Peripheral State and Economy in the International Division of Labour: The Sadat Era in Historical Perspective, in Journal of Social Science. Ibid.

Chapter I

LABOUR MIGRATION IN THE ARAB REGION:  
THE DILEMMA OF INTERPRETATION

"At the bottom of the pile - beneath Pakistanis and Palestinians, beneath even the Egyptians - are the silent, uncomplaining Yemenis ...they come without their families, they have nothing to offer but muscle and endurance".<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Labour migration has become one of the most significant and controversial social phenomena in the Middle East, and by 1980 it had affected the lives of approximately three million workers and their dependents.<sup>2</sup> Though international migration to the Arabian peninsula first started on a limited scale in the 1940's and 1950's, and earlier in this century Arabs of the Levant and North Africa emigrated to the advanced countries of Europe and America, the recent phase of migration within and into the Arab region has taken a very different form. It is between capital-rich countries with poor human resources and capital-poor countries which are overpopulated and with limited economic resources. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, until recently, relied heavily on Arab labour while the rest of the Gulf countries were entirely dependent on Asian labour. Since the increase of the oil prices in 1973, however, most of the oil producing countries of the Arab Gulf, including to some extent Iraq and Libya and even labour exporting countries like Jordan and Yemen, have increased the absolute number and the share of Asian labour in their labour market. It has been estimated that the share of Asian labour in the Gulf countries rose from 25.8% in 1970 to 45.7% in 1975, and clearly far beyond this in the 1980's.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the nature and character of labour migration in the Arab region, the factors affecting the process of migration in its most recent stage (the migration of Asian labour) and finally the adequacy of available explanations.

#### A.1 The Nature and Characteristics of Labour Migration<sup>4</sup>

The timing and socio-political circumstances in which labour migration to the Gulf countries has taken place have made it unique in its nature and characteristics, especially when compared with any other migration process which has occurred in other parts of the world. First, in contrast to the classic migration that took place in the fifties and sixties between different socio-economic formations where labour moved from the less developed countries of Europe and the third world to the advanced industrial economies, migration into and within the Arab region is taking place between societies occupying similar positions in the international division of labour, i.e. underdeveloped peripheries. Secondly, while labour migrating to Western Europe occupied unskilled and low-paid positions in particular sectors of the economy the migrant workers in the Gulf countries are spread over a diverse number of economic sectors and occupations and form, in more precise terms, the backbone upon which the economies of these countries operate. A highly placed official in the Ministry of Planning of the United Arab Emirates is quoted as saying that:

"...were the Egyptians to be removed, many of the school systems would have to close; were the Palestinians to be forced to leave, the media would cease to function; were the British, Jordanians, Pakistanis and Baluchis soldiers and police men to be expelled, the defence and internal security network would collapse; were the Iranians, Baluchis and Pathans who make up the bulk of the labor force to be sent back to

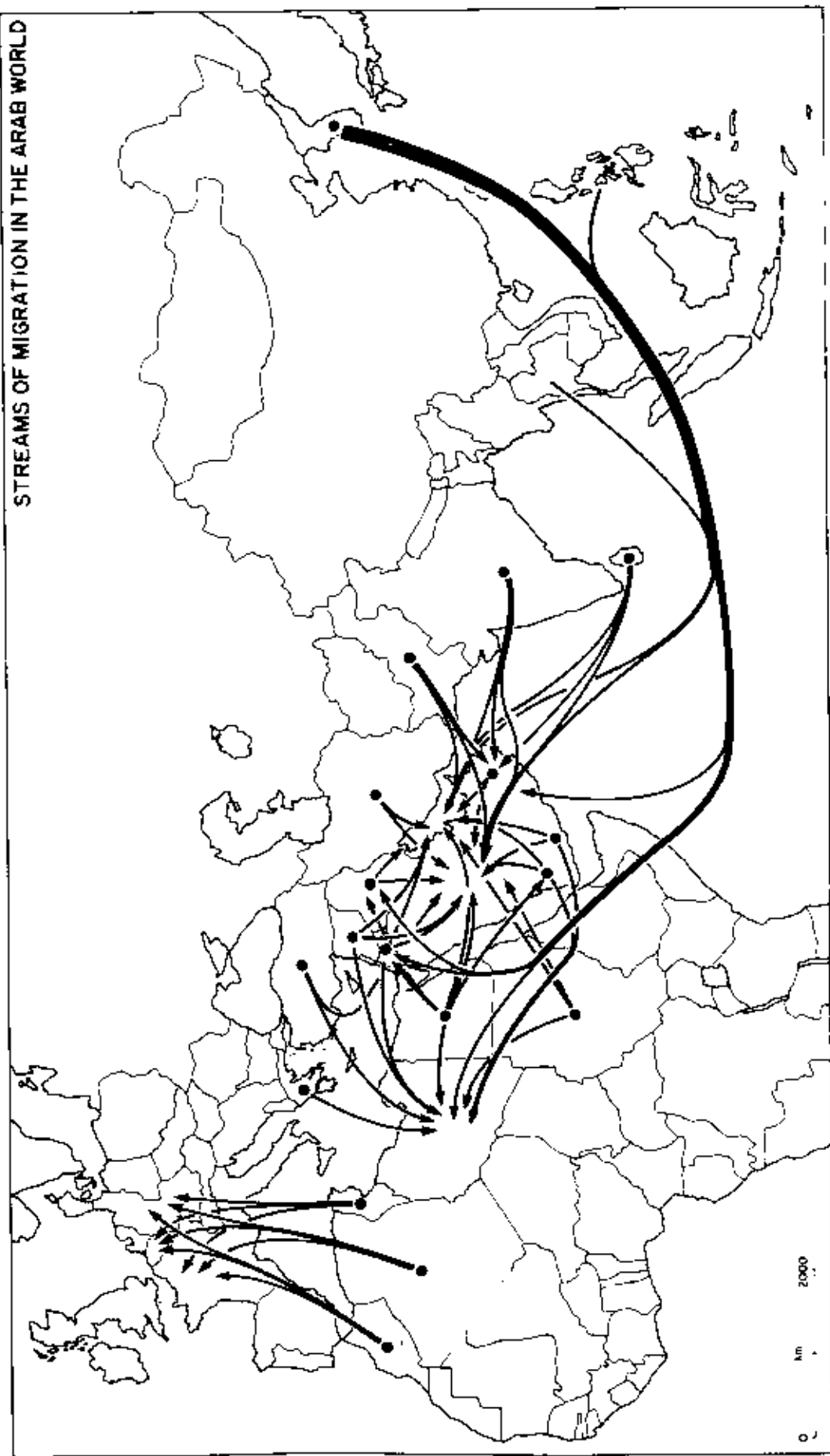


Figure 1.1

STREAMS OF MIGRATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

their homelands, progress of such vital projects underway as the building of roads, ports, irrigation schemes, housing projects, schools and medical clinics would all come to an abrupt halt.<sup>5</sup>

Available data (Table 1.1) on the distribution of the labour force according to the major economic activities indicates that: 1) immigrant labour is spread over all economic activities; 2) in manufacturing, construction, and the service sectors, in all of the countries concerned, immigrant labour constitutes the overwhelming majority; 3) in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, in contrast to the other labour importing countries, immigrant labour forms the majority in all of the country's economic sectors; and 4) the distribution of the labour force showed that even in a country like Bahrain, a heavy concentration of the workforce is in the service and construction sectors. For example, these two sectors absorbed in 1980 64.2% and 67.9% of the labour force, in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait respectively, 55.7% of the Bahraini labour force in 1981. Such a biased concentration of labour reflects the development model that has been adopted in this area which favours the non-productive sectors of the country's economy. In addition, it is interesting to note that in all of the Arabian Gulf countries there is no data on the proportion of immigrants in the armed forces and police. It is no secret, however, that most of the Gulf countries recruit non-indigenous bedouins of Iraq, Jordan and Syria for their security forces.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, table 1.2 demonstrates that the proportion of nationals in the general total of the labour force of the Gulf countries is surprisingly small and it is most noticeable in the case of the United Arab Emirates (9.8%) and Qatar (16%). Even in a country like Bahrain which enjoyed a



Table 1.1

## Sectoral Distribution of labour force by nationality in selected labour importing countries

Sector	1973 <sup>1</sup>		1973 <sup>2</sup>		1975 <sup>3</sup>		1980 <sup>4</sup>		1980 <sup>5</sup>		1981 <sup>6</sup>	
	Saudi Arabia		Libya		Oman		Kuwait		United Arab Emirates		Bahrain	
	National	Migrant	National	Migrant	National	Migrant	National	Migrant	National	Migrant	National	Migrant
Agriculture	37.1	62.9	89.5	10.5	n.a.	n.a.	3927	5221	4676	20936	2473	1272
Manufacturing & processing	38.2	61.8	65.5	34.5	64.1	35.9	5588	42315	3217	54164	7461	8704
Construction	52.4	47.6	35.4	64.6	33.4	66.6	1209	95835	1497	153483	3902	25358
Gas, Water & Electricity	78.3	21.7	84.3	15.7	80.5	19.5	2070	6101	n.a.	n.a.	1825	999
Commerce	47.2	52.8	90.3	9.7	54.0	46.0	4592	54153	3976	70452	5836	12671
Transport & Communication	53.9	46.1	95.6	4.4	81.4	18.6	7849	22327	3144	38894	8657	4524
Civil Services & Defence	n.a.	n.a.	96.1	3.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Services (education, health, banking, etc.)	43.7	56.3	81.3	18.7	36.0	64.0	78263	154656	37838	165043	25242	26990
Activities not adequately defined	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3245	979
TOTAL	57.0	43.0	78.0	22.0	66.0	34.0	103498	380608	54248	502972	64636	81497

Sources: 1, 2, 3, derived from: Ibrahim, Saad Eddin, "The New Arab Social Order, London, Croom Helm, 1982, p.40

4, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Office, Annual Statistical Abstract 1982, Kuwait, Kuwait Government. Printing Press, 1982, p.104

5, Compiled from Al-Faris, Abdul Razaq; "Reasons of Widespread of non-Arab labour in the Gulf: case of U.A.E.", paper Presented at a conference on Non-Arab Labour in the Arab Gulf, (in Arabic) Kuwait, January, 1983, p.4

6, Compiled from Cabinet Affairs, Directorate of Statistics, Bahrain Census of Housing and Housing, 1981, Bahrain, Arabian Printing and Publishing House, 1982, pp.104-109.

Table 1.2

## Employment in the Arab Gulf Countries by Nationality

	1965	%	1970	%	1975	%	1980	%
Kuwaitis <sup>1</sup>	43,050	23.4	65,369	27.0	86,971	29.0	103,498	21.4
Non-Kuwaitis	141,280	76.6	176,827	73.0	211,444	70.9	380,608	78.6
Total	184,330	100.0	242,196	100.0	298,415	100.0	484,186	100.0
Bahrainis	31,230 <sup>2</sup>	58.6	37,950 <sup>3</sup>	63.0	46,180 <sup>4</sup>	66.0	57,178 <sup>5</sup>	41.4
Non-Bahrainis	22,040	41.4	22,350	37.0	30,180	39.0	30,714	58.6
Total	43,270	100.0	60,300	100.0	76,950	100.0	137,892	100.0
Qataris			8,200	17.0 <sup>6</sup>	12,500	19.0 <sup>7</sup>	18,910 <sup>8</sup>	15.5
Non-Qataris			40,000	83.0	53,800	91.0	102,763	84.5
Total			48,200	100.0	66,300	100.0	121,673	100.0
U.A.E. (Nationals)			33,800 <sup>9</sup>	43.2	45,000 <sup>10</sup>	15.1	54,248 <sup>11</sup>	9.7
Non-Nationals			44,270	56.8	251,520	84.9	502,972	90.3
Total			78,070	100.0	296,520	100.0	557,220	100.0
Omanis					98,500 <sup>12</sup>	54.8	153,000	51.3
Non-Omanis					81,250	45.2	145,000	48.7
Total					179,850	100.0	298,000	100.0
Saudis	712,859 <sup>14</sup>	74.7*			1,026,400**	57.0		
Non-Saudis	240,397	25.3			773,400	43.0		
Total	953,256	100.0			1,799,800	100.0		

Source: 1 Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.101.

2, 3, 4, Birks, J.S. and C.A. Sinclair, Arab Manpower, London, Croom Helm, 1980, p.74

5 Cabinet Affairs, Directorate of Statistics, Bahrain Census of Population and Housing, 1981, op.cit., p.152.

6, 7, Birks, J.S. and C.A. Sinclair, op.cit., p.68

8 al-Kuwari, Ali, Toward better understanding for the reasons of imbalance population in the Gulf Case of Qatar; paper presented in seminar on Development Studies in the Arab Gulf - Qatar University, 1982, p.3 (in Arabic).

9, 10, Birks, J.S. and C.A. Sinclair, op.cit., p.75

11 al-Faris, Abdul Razag, op.cit., p.4

12 Birks, J.S. and C.A. Sinclair, op.cit., p.186

13 Sullamate of Oman. The Second Five Years of Development: 1981-1985, Mascat Board of Development.

14 Birks, J.S. and C.A. Sinclair, op.cit., p.107

high proportion of nationals in its labour force during the sixties and early seventies, the participation of the indigenous labour force, according to the latest population census in 1981, dropped from 62.9% and 60.8% in 1970 and 1975 respectively, to 41.5% in 1981.<sup>7</sup> In Kuwait, which witnessed an increase in the participation of the indigenous population in the labour force during the sixties and early seventies, this proportion has decreased from 30.2% in 1975 to 21.4% in 1980.

In concluding this section it should be noted that migration to the Gulf countries has coincided with increasing restrictions over labour immigration in European countries, and the search for new areas of the third world which have "surplus" labour, like South East Asia<sup>8</sup> (Korea, the Phillipines, etc.). Simultaneously, the large influx of foreign labour in the Gulf, especially since what may be termed "the new oil epoch", has been characterized by an increasing percentage of Asian labour, notably Indians and South East Asians. This point and the significantly high rate of labour turnover amongst Asian labour will be discussed later in this chapter

#### A.2 Pull-push Factors Affecting Labour Migration in the Arab Region:-

It has been stressed by many writers of labour migration in the Arab region, that several social and economic factors have operated in the labour exporting and importing countries to generate such a massive migration of labour. Some of these factors were seen in the wage differentials, the high rate of overemployment and unemployment in the countries of origin, and the scarcity of qualified labour in the recipient countries.<sup>9</sup>

#### A.2.1 The Economic Factors:-

It has been assumed that the decision of the individual to emigrate is usually the result of wage differentials between countries. Migrants usually move from low to high wage countries in an attempt to improve their standard of living when they return home. In other words, the international migration within and into the Arab region has been determined, in one way or another, by the economic differences between "capital-rich", and "capital-poor" countries, and the personal motivation of individuals to improve their living conditions. A recent study carried out by Amr Mohie Eldin, on the emigration of Egyptian university professors and school teachers found that the differences in wages and the individual motivation are the important factors of emigration. For example, Mohie Eldin found in his study that the maximum salary for a full professor was LE 150 a month in Egypt, and the earnings from the salary throughout the thirty years of an academic life would be LE 48,600. At the market exchange rate for 1980, the same professor on secondment to Kuwait would earn LE 1,750\* per month in addition to free accommodation and free annual tickets to the country of origin, so that earnings in four years of secondment, the standard length allowed by Egyptian authorities, would amount to LE 84,000. In other words, an Egyptian professor would earn in only four years twice as much as would be earned in thirty years of an entire professional career in Egypt.<sup>10</sup> It has been noticed, also, that while some of the university professors and school teachers on secondment stay in the country of employment longer than the actual years allowed, others resigned from their actual jobs in the country of origin, in order to stay a longer period in the country of employment.

\* 700 Kuwaiti Dinars or E1400. In 1983 the basic salary of a full professor started with K.D. 850 (41700).

Furthermore, Egypt's economic expansion of the fifties and early sixties came to a halt in the late 1960's. The major, but not the only factor in halting Egypt's socio-economic development was Nasser's defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Sadat's emergence as Egypt's "strong man", especially after May 1971, marked a turning point in Egypt's internal and external economic and political policies. A new economic policy was adopted. Its aim was to minimize the government involvement in socio-economic development, which was to be left to the private sector, be it Egyptian, Arab, or foreign. The new orientation reflected itself in law No. 43 of 1974, law No. 132 of 1977, and numerous other decrees, which together came to be called "al-infitch" or the "Open Door Policy".<sup>11</sup> Such a policy tried to solve Egypt's economic problems by attracting "western and oil-rich investors" and by easing the regulations imposed on the emigration of Egyptian labour. The Egyptian authorities hoped this easing of regulations would minimize the rapid population growth, assist in reducing the unemployment problem and capture a share of the oil revenue boom in the form of wages and remittances. It was believed that the latter would have a multiplier effect since "it would earn for Egypt badly needed foreign currency and thus ameliorate the balance of payments, the remittances were to enhance the sagging rate of savings and boost the process of capital formation".<sup>12</sup>

The Egyptian case, in some form, was reproduced in the other labour exporting countries. A recent study conducted by the World Bank on Bangladesh found that the migration of Bangladeshis to the Middle East could be attributed to the country's economic difficulties.

"The major manpower problems in Bangladesh are the huge unemployment and underemployment among the youth, the high rate of labour force, and low capacity of the economy to produce jobs and the failure of the first five years plans to create

the 4-1 million jobs forecast. Because of the deteriorating unemployment situation labour migration to the Middle East started almost automatically.<sup>13</sup>

As far as the labour importing countries are concerned, the immigration of labour was necessitated by the shortage of manpower; the huge accumulation of oil revenues; the attempts of these countries to complete the building of basic infrastructure (roads, airports, power stations etc.); and the expansion and consolidation of the social services administrations (schools, hospitals, accommodation etc.); and finally, the attempts of the oil producing countries of the Gulf to create a modern state based on an industrialized economy.

#### A.2.2 The Socio-political Factors:-

It is necessary to note that labour migration is not only attributable to the above indicated economic factors but is also the result of:

- 1) individuals moving from over populated areas with low economic resources such as India, Egypt, Pakistan and the far Eastern countries to the under populated areas of the Gulf and Libya;
- 2) can also be ascribed to cultural affinities such as a common language, religion, and blood relations.

This latter factor is clearly indicated in the large presence of an Arab labour force in the recipient countries. For example, in 1975 despite the decline in the share of the Arab labour which decreased from 69.5% in 1975 to 60% in 1980, Arab labour still constituted the majority of the country's total labour force. Libya is also an important importer of Arab labour as it employs between one-fifth and one-quarter of its total labour force from the Arab countries.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, for many of the conservative regimes of the labour exporting countries, the emigration of labour is an important factor for stabilizing the existing political system. Thus many active members of the opposition groups in Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Pakistan, etc. found themselves amongst the immigrant labour in the Gulf countries. Considering the wealth of the Gulf countries, many of those who were active in the political opposition have turned from the field of politics to the field of business. Saad Eludhin Ibrahim in his study of the emigration of Egyptian labour observed the following:

"The presence of Egyptian political dissidents in neighbouring oil countries is a mixed blessing for (the) regime. In one sense, their absence from the Egyptian scene weakens the internal opposition. The regime would no doubt welcome such a development if these dissidents concentrated on "making money" instead of "making revolution". Some of them have in fact turned away from politics and rechanneled their energies into business and professional activities outside Egypt. Quite a few, however, have been vocal in criticizing (the) regime and have found easy access to the mass media of the host countries".<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, this means that emigration removes a real social and political threat to the political system in the countries of origin, by easing the access of emigration for those who desire to escape from the social and political pressures of the existing regimes and those who are willing to improve their standard of living.<sup>16</sup>

For the individual, work in the oil producing countries may seem like the only way to solve certain social problems such as marriage which necessitates the purchase of a flat and consumer goods, that are not available in the country of origin, or if available are extremely expensive. A study carried out on the motives for the emigration of Sudanese professionals found that the need to build a "decent" house is a dominant factor of emigration:

"a certain obsession with housing also emerges. Indeed, all financial gains are viewed as a means to one end: building a 'decent' house on (or before) returning home".<sup>17</sup>

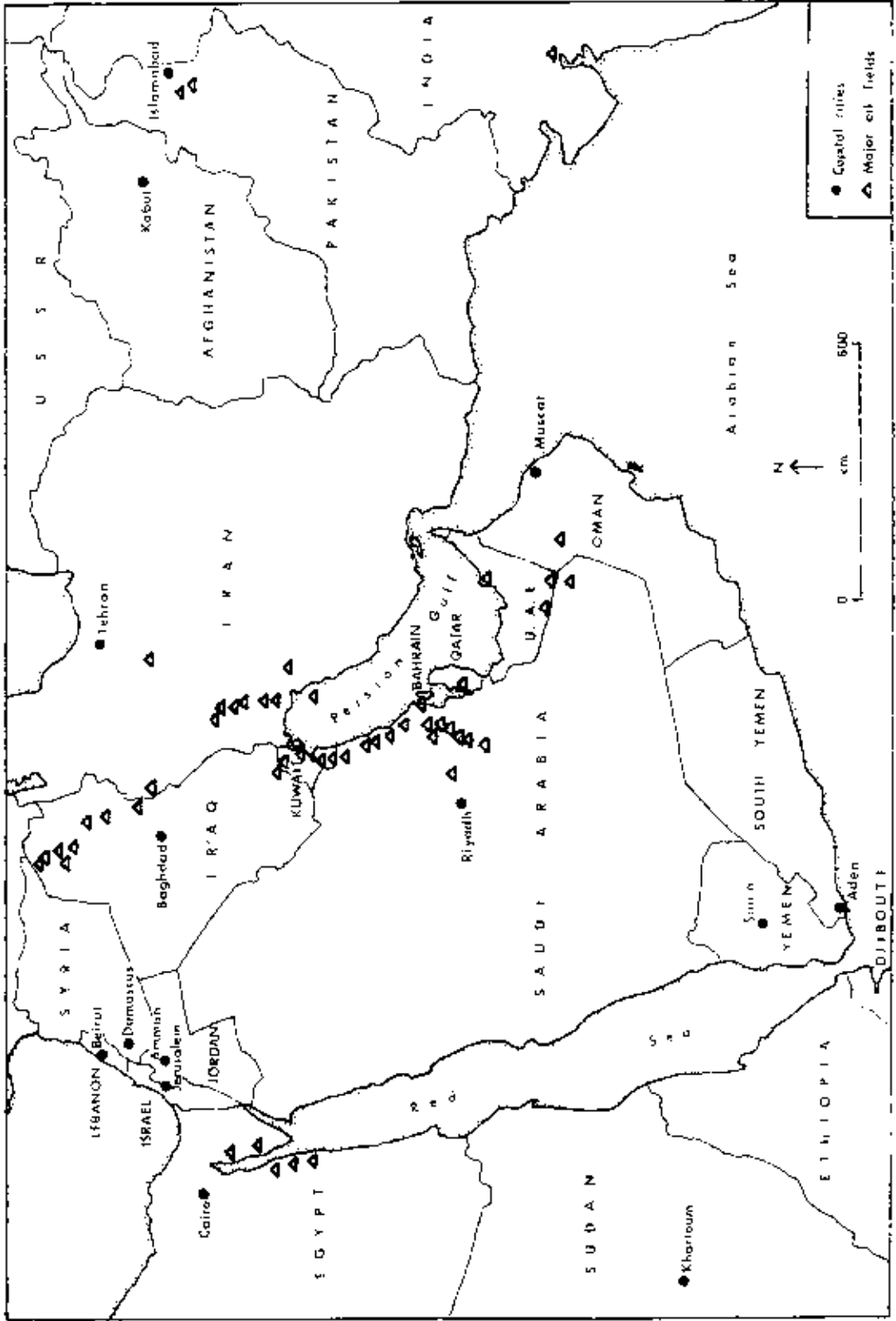
On the other hand, the available data on the participation of the indigenous population in the country's labour force in the recipient countries of the Arab Gulf reveals a low level of economic activity among the population. This is primarily due to women who as a result of traditional and cultural values are generally not active in the formal economic sectors outside the home and family institutions<sup>18</sup>. For example, the participation of all women in the labour market of the U.A.E. was estimated at 5.3% in 1975 while the figure for Kuwait was 12.8% in 1980 and for Bahrain it was 13.2% in 1981. It should be noted however that the indigenous participation of females in the labour force is far smaller. For example, in Kuwait only 2.8% participated in 1980 and in Bahrain 8.3% in 1981.<sup>19</sup> For socio-historical reasons the participation of Bahraini women in the labour force is the highest among the other Gulf states.<sup>20</sup> A further reason for the low participation in the economy is the youthful nature of the population of these countries where the largest proportion is aged under 15 years. For example, in Qatar 60,300 or over 44% of the total population were aged less than 15 years in 1970, and the figures are also high in Saudi Arabia where it amounted to 48% in 1975 and in Kuwait it was 40% in 1980.<sup>21</sup>

#### B. The Change of Migration Patterns:-

Social, economic, and political changes in the Arab Gulf Emirates since the discovery of oil in the thirties, exemplify the changes in the pattern of immigration in this region. It has varied according to the social and political culture of the recipient countries. For example,



Figure 1.2 Countries of the Arab Gulf.



Source: Jim Hildner, "Social and Economic Development in the Arab Gulf, London, George Allen, 1980, p. 11.

the modern administration introduced by Britain in Bahrain and Kuwait in the twenties and thirties, and the operations of the oil companies in the Gulf were staffed mainly by Europeans, skilled and semi-skilled Indians; non-skilled and semi-skilled Iranians, and a very few non-skilled Arabs. In general, Asian labour was predominant in the Gulf Emirates during this first phase of modern migration.<sup>22</sup> In the fifties and sixties, the political events witnessed in the Arab region, especially the influence of Arab nationalism, forced some of the Gulf countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to meet their manpower shortages by importing Arab labour, particularly Palestinians, Egyptians and Yemenis. Asian labour, however, maintained its higher share of the non-indigenous labour force in Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Qatar.<sup>23</sup> Generally, it was estimated that in 1975 there were 1.7 million migrants in the Middle East where the Arab share accounted for 73%, Asians 20% and the remaining 7% were Europeans and other nationalities.<sup>24</sup>

The increase in oil prices since the autumn of 1973, and the recession of the world economy has restructured the labour market in the region. A massive emigration of Asian labour in different forms and from different sources came to the region; while a shortage of labour has emerged in Jordan, Egypt and Yemen. This period has also seen the emergence of organised recruitment channels.

Historically speaking, there are two waves of Asian immigration to the Gulf region. The first wave was one in which most of the emigrants involved were South Asians\*, and were concentrated in certain countries.

\* South Asians are Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans.

The second and contemporary wave, which has increased the share of Asians in the local labour market of all the Gulf countries is the one where the emigrants come from the Far East and Asia as well as the traditional sources of Asian labour.

The rapid increase of Asian labour was partly a result of abundant supplies in the Asian labour market. These were made available for recruitment through various recruitment channels such as: the bilateral agreement between the labour exporting and importing countries; licenced recruiting agents; individual efforts, persons obtaining jobs and visitors' permits through the assistance of relatives and friends already in the Middle East; foreign missions touring the supplier countries for recruitment; and finally, through the Asian firms working in the region, such as the workers of the Korean and Indian companies.<sup>25</sup> In general, the recruitment of far eastern labour takes place through the second and the last of the above channels. As to the sub-continent emigrants they are recruited through mutual agreement of the recruitment agencies, missions touring the sub-continent, recruitment agents and personal efforts, though the majority were recruited through their own individual efforts. A recent study carried out on the Bangladeshi migrants in the Middle East found that 58% of them were recruited through individual efforts, 34% through the mutual agreement of the two concerned countries, and only 8% of them were recruited through the recruiting agencies.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless it has been noticed that the recruitment of Asians in general, especially in the case of those who sought employment by their own efforts or by small local enterprises, came through arrangements made by some kind of recruiting agent operating in the labour exporting countries. Above all,

the recruitment of Far Eastern labour is more organised than that of South Asians, and usually passes through the official channels. The South Asian governments only intervene in some cases that arise from the abuse of human rights experienced by labour recruited through private channels in the country of employment. However, the way in which the recruiting agents exploit the labour in the countries of origin is no less severe than the exploitation of labour in the countries of employment. M.S. Naseem who wrote on the Pakistani emigrants in the Middle East comments on the work of these agencies as follows:

"Recruitment agencies and travel agents go direct to the rural areas in many parts of Pakistan and extract huge sums of money from poor peasants who sell or mortgage their land, live stock and other belongings or borrow money to pay the price on the promise (often false) to be transported to an unknown land and to get a lucrative job."<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, data concerning the number of Asians in the receiving countries is scarce due to the growing concern over the increasing number of Asian workers in the Gulf countries.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless up to 1980, the South Asians alone were estimated at two million in the whole Middle East region. In 1979 the Pakistanis accounted for 1,246,000 (see table 1.3), the Indians numbered 507,746 (see table 1.4) and the Bangladeshis numbered 100,000 in 1979.<sup>29</sup> There is no accurate estimate of the Far Easterners living in the Middle East, and the only available statistics for the Koreans who were estimated to number 160,893 in 1981, constitute only 10.1% of the total Korean emigrants in that year.<sup>30</sup> In general, the World Bank estimation suggests that in 1975 there were 205,000 Far Easterners living in the oil producing countries, and assuming a high growth rate they are expected to reach 370,000 by 1985.<sup>31</sup>

Table 1.3

Pakistani emigrants in the Middle East until 1979

Country	Rural		Urban		Pakistan	
	%	Million	%	Million	%	Million
Saudi Arabia	39.5	0.446	24.6	0.162	34.0	0.608
U.A.E.	20.0	0.236	18.5	0.122	20.0	0.758
Other M.E.	14.0	0.138	18.5	0.122	15.0	0.290
Total M.E.	74.4	0.820	61.6	0.406	69.0	1.656
All other countries	25.6	0.289	38.4	0.255	30.4	0.540
TOTAL	100.0	1.129	100.0	0.661	100.0	1.796

Source: Gillani, Ifaz, et al., Pakistani Emigration to the Middle East: A Cost Benefit Analysis, Islamabad, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 1980, p.23.

Table 1.4

No. of Indians living in the Middle East until 1979

Country	No. of persons	No. of those who accept the foreign citizenship
Bahrain	26,000	125
Iran	20,800	920
Iraq	20,250	10,000
Kuwait	65,000	100
Oman	60,000	5
Libya	10,000	-
Qatar	30,000	125
Saudi Arabia	100,000	2,000
U.A.E.	152,000	2,000
Yemen (North)	3,000	300
Yemen (South)	17,440	17,000
Other Countries	2,756	172
TOTAL	507,746	32,747

Source: Weiner, Myron, Indians in the Gulf: The beginning or the end of A Diaspora?, Washington, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1980, p.180.

The increasing number of Asians over the last ten years has coincided with a growing concern felt by the indigenous population that they are going to be "swamped" culturally as well as socially by the non-Arab immigrants. The solution adopted by policy planners is to separate physically the new industrial districts and the single immigrants' accommodation from existing urban areas. By this method it is thought that what is culturally or socially undesirable could be avoided or at least minimized. Examples of such "enclave" areas are becoming numerous in the Gulf countries: Shu'ayba, in Kuwait; Ham 'Aid in Qatar; Jebel <sup>C</sup>Ali in Dubai; Ruwais in Abu Dhabi and Yanbo and Jubail in Saudi Arabia.<sup>32</sup> Some studies concerned with Asian migration, especially in its latest phase tried to construct theoretical hypotheses of the reasons prompting labour exporters to strengthen the influx of Asian migrants. Some have explained it in terms of "peaceful colonialization", an attempt at the indirect conquest of the region.<sup>33</sup> Others have seen the "enclave areas" and in particular the Asian communities in the Gulf countries as alien bodies:

"If the Asian labour - especially the Far Easterns who are living and working in an enclave form of development - are allowed to develop, they are going to form a kind of alien body. Consequently, this will create a community of ethnic and religious minorities, which will, on the one hand, effect the development and stability of these societies and obstruct the process of cooperation and integration on the other".<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to these arguments, highly placed officials in the Gulf countries always emphasise that Asian labour has little social and political impact, and since it could be deported at any time, it does not take the form of permanent and familial immigration.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the anxieties and criticisms that are attached to the immigration of Asian labour several questions need to be discussed. Is present policy an adequate one to protect the receiving societies from being swamped? Is the reason behind the adoption of the export package of Asian labour an attempt to minimize its social impact on the host societies? And finally, can the host countries reach the stage of industrialization by adopting such an approach to development?

Once more, it can be argued that the recent current of migration in the Gulf could be attributed primarily to the growing influence of the private sector in the economy of the oil producing countries. This economic sector prefers Asians because their wages are low, they will work in bad conditions, and show a high standard of workmanship. An authority in one of the private enterprises in U.A.E. was quoted as saying:

"Labour in the Middle East is no longer cheap. The Asians are cheap, work hard, obey orders and have no ambition for equal treatment with the indigenous workers as the Arab workers do".<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, most of the Gulf states prefer to recruit Asian labour because they are less militant and are not influenced by the political events in the Arab world. They have little contact with the indigenous population and therefore in the short-term they have no political impact on the national population. In other words, it was clear from the beginning that having such huge numbers of workers physically separated from the urban areas and sharing neither language nor culture was due to, on the one hand, an attempt to control the movements of foreign workers and thus minimize their 'undesirable' impact on the nationals, and on the other, to prevent any possibility of the emergence of a strong working



class. This is clear in the use of immigrant workers as "a reserve army", in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, or as a means of undermining the strength of the national working class in the case of Bahrain.<sup>37</sup>

The questionable value of some of the economic projects underway in the whole region is another factor to be considered. For example, two economic projects underway in the United Arab Emirates, Ras al Khaima and Jabal Ali, would need as many as 400,000 workers by 1985, which is equivalent to the total population of Dubai in 1977.<sup>38</sup> Similar situations exist in the other Gulf countries where economic development has been conducted in such a way as not to meet the essential needs of the society. Rather it has been conducted so as a means of absorbing large oil-revenue surpluses and thereby perpetuate the dependency of these countries in two different ways. dependence upon the countries of the centre from which they import the advanced technology and the economic projects, and dependence upon the third world countries from which they recruit the labour force. This matter which is examined elsewhere in this thesis suggests that the oil money has been used as a means of further integrating labour exporting and importing countries into the world capitalist structure.<sup>39</sup>

Given the magnitude and the nature of the labour migration phenomenon and the complexity of the problems involved it is now necessary to turn to a preliminary discussion of the theoretical and conceptual matters that might facilitate our analysis in this thesis.

### C.1 Labour Migration: A Theoretical Perspective

Most of the contemporary demographic, economic and sociological studies of labour migration have failed to improve our understanding of the process since they tend to seek the causes of migration in individual factors. More precisely they suggest that individuals migrate for a number of different reasons; the desire to escape oppression or famine, financial ambition, family reunification, or the education of children. In general, nothing is easier than to compile lists of such "push" and "pull" factors and present them as a theory of migration. Such static and limited methodologies for conducting research has led to an inadequate conceptualization of migration. The main argument is that of an unidirectional flow that "empties" certain regions while filling others. This assumption does not take into account phenomena such as the return migration, the division of time between urban and rural employment, and the displacement to third places.<sup>40</sup> Other scholars, however, have dealt with migration in the context of broad economic and political forces, and of course there is some agreement on the fact that labour migration is a response to structural inequalities between nations and regions.

Various paradigms compete, however, for an explanation of the dynamics and consequences of migration. The early equilibrium explanation of migration was put forward by John S. Mill as he argued that migration is a way of restoring equilibrium between spatial units. In other words, migration minimises the pressure of population in low-growth areas and meets the labour demands of the growing units, thus helping restore a balance between human and capital resources.<sup>41</sup> In addition, conventional economists suggest that migration is a self-regulating process

through which spatial differences in labour demand and supply adjust themselves. The high wages in urban or industrialized areas, for example, generate migration from the remote rural areas.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the international trade theory assumes that two nations with unequal resource endowment or productive capacity can enjoy a bilateral increase in economic well-being by freely exchanging capital goods and labour. Economic benefits could come from the fact that one country can utilize the other's capital or labour more productively, or that one nation has a comparative advantage over its trading partner in the production of certain goods. Allowing trade and migration to be thus increases the output available in both countries.<sup>43</sup>

A different style of equilibrium paradigm exists in the field of sociology under the general title of modernization. It suggests that migration is the logical result of the dichotomy of the value system in the country of origin.<sup>44</sup> It restores equilibrium by those more attuned to advanced civilization, emigrating to advanced countries, leaving the traditional population behind. The modernization apologists also argue that the exposure to western style values, "westernization", and consumption patterns, produces a split in the population of underdeveloped countries. Those attracted to ways of the past are called "traditional" while those willing to adapt themselves to the new kinds are labelled as "modern". Or, using the words of Daniel Lerner, "empathy" is the inner mechanism which enables newly mobile persons to operate efficiently in a changing world, and to Lerner "high empathic capacity" is the predominant person style only in modern society.<sup>45</sup>

Once again, these theories, which are based on the experience of labour migration to Europe argue in beneficial terms for both the receiving and sending countries, Ray Crest has summed up this argument as follows:

"It was a situation in which there were to be no losers. The individual migrant received training in the host country, earned good wages and could eventually return home a skilled worker ready to assist in the development of the mother country. The host country received the labour of the migrant without having to make the investment in the social infrastructure of the country."<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, the pro-migration scholars either in the labour exporting or importing countries, tend to assert that emigration alleviates population pressure in over-crowded regions. This occurs in two ways: 1) The unification of the migrant family in immigration countries brings about a permanent reduction in the number of inhabitants in the emigration area; 2) when the young men go abroad to work for a few years their marital age is raised if they are unmarried, or they do not procreate as much as usual due to the family separation if they are married. A report published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development goes along with this argument. For example, it suggests in the case of Algeria that the birth rate for families where the father has emigrated was reduced by 25 per cent, the average number of children was reduced to 3.5 from 4.7, and thus, the report concludes, that there is "a reduction of at least 12,000 births which would otherwise have occurred each year".<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, it should be noted that the relatively small number of families who settle permanently in the country of employment cannot be considered as a significant factor in contributing to the population reduction. In addition, emigration as such has no important effect in populated countries such as India, Pakistan, Turkey and Algeria.<sup>48</sup>

The effect of emigration on the labour market was valued as being very important. Unemployment is one of the most frequent motivations for migration. Officials too are in favour of emigration because they view it as a way to reduce their own countries' unemployment problem. This may eliminate the surplus of labour while on the other hand, as Kindleberger has stated, it would speed up the growth process "through removing the impediments to the effective operation of the price system in factor markets".<sup>49</sup> Lutz (1961) went even further and assumed that labour emigration was "a necessary pre-condition" for the industrial expansion of labour exporting countries of Southern Europe. Only when a substantial proportion of the surplus population had left, she maintained, would incomes rise sufficiently to generate demand for industrial goods.<sup>50</sup>

Actually, we find no convincing case among the labour exporting countries that supports the previous claim. On the contrary, the countries of emigration have sometimes found themselves forced to stop emigration from certain areas.

Greece is an example of the kind of disquieting effects to which one-sided emigration may lead. Out of a population of 8.5 million, 500,000 young and active workers are abroad, nearly 200,000 of them in the Federal Republic. As a result whole areas in Northern Greece have been de-populated of their young men and there are difficulties in maintaining communal services in these areas. The Greek Government was therefore compelled to grant recruitment contracts to people in Southern Greece and the Greek Islands too.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, the emigration of labour is in actual terms a real loss to the country of origin if the total cost of raising them from being a child until working age has been taken into consideration. Costles and

Kosack goes on to quote wide ranging estimates of such costs, which have one fact in common - that all are high. In addition, the surplus of labour does not exist as a pool, but rather is a result of the type of policies that an economy adopts.<sup>52</sup>

The third advantage, regarded as one of the most important potential benefits for emigration countries is the acquisition of vocational training and industrial skills by migrant labour. Nevertheless, after two decades or so of massive migration, a different picture has emerged. Suzanne Pain summarized research projects which study the level of skill of immigrant workers in Europe both prior to departure and while on the job. The data shows that in Germany, which employed the majority of Turkish migrants, only a very small proportion of unskilled workers from rural areas have indicated a slight rise in skills.<sup>53</sup> Or as Narnin Abadan Unar points out:

"compared to the vast number of Turkish workers abroad, few indeed have had an opportunity to undergo any formal training. Skills acquired are unlikely to assist development of Turkish economy significantly. Many Turkish workers in Europe are performing jobs demanding less ability than the work they did before migration. In general it appears that the balance of skills lost and found during external migration is negative."<sup>54</sup>

Finally the amount of money sent home by immigrant workers is the most controversial issue. It is often regarded as a major benefit of emigration. A pre-cited report of the O.E.C.D. on the countries of the Maghreb asserts that:

"The overall contribution made by emigrant workers to the balance of payment is all the more important when other resources, especially oil are scarcer. In Algeria, remittances from emigrants were alone sufficient to cover the trade deficit prior to the increase in oil prices, amounting to the total savings by Algerian households. In Morocco, the contribution of foreign exchange from migrants continues to be essential to the balance of payment and to the financing of development".<sup>55</sup>

Nermin Abadan Unat in her study of emigration of Turkish labour approaches the question of remittances with great caution. She concedes that the remittances have improved the living standards of the poorest section of society, eased Turkey's trade deficit, boosted the consumption problems but hardly participated in productive investment.<sup>56</sup> Generally, we may accept the idea that remittances could contribute to the living standard of the immigrant's family left behind, but even this will not last long since the emigration of labour is not permanent and it is ultimately dependent on the development of the economic labour importing countries. The same argument could be extended to the balance of payments. No evidence was found that the immigrants remittances are invested productively, since the channels employed are private ones over which the government has no control.

In summing up the pro-migration views, however, it should be pointed out that virtually all the arguments rest on economic theory unsupported by any empirical vindication. In other words, these approaches concentrate largely on the individual factors and deal with the problem as an isolated aspect and therefore have failed to reach a satisfactory explanation of the problem. Having said that, we do not intend to neglect the importance of these factors, but to try to relocate the problem in a much larger

and more comprehensive context. More precisely, sustained labour migration implies the penetration of the political and economic system of the dominant countries into the subordinate one. This penetration creates imbalances between the institutions and sectors of the underdeveloped countries, which leads eventually to labour displacement. "Imbalances are induced from outside, but become internal to the structure of the weaker societies."<sup>57</sup>

#### C.1.1.1 The Emergence of Critical Approaches

The negative social, political and economic experiences of the labour exporting countries lead some scholars of the third world to put the question of migration in a much wider socio-economic framework that takes into account the political economy of both labour sending and receiving countries and their status and role in the world market.

This perspective on migration was initially popularised by Gunnar Myrdal under the label "cumulative causation". 'Backwash' by which surplus is drained from underdeveloped countries is not self-regulating but cumulative, leading to an ever-greater impoverishment and depopulation of these areas. In a similar manner to Mills, Myrdal portrayed population and capital resources as flowing in the same direction and from identical resources. During the 1950's, however, these flows did not originate in the centre, but in the periphery and did not operate in a manner to develop peripheral countries, but instead to perpetuate their underdevelopment.<sup>58</sup>



Paul Baran and other dependency scholars elaborated this idea. Their argument was that trade relationships and the flow of investment capital from advanced to peripheral countries did not lead to a narrowing of the gap between them but rather to a progressive subordination of the weaker countries.<sup>59</sup> Baran was first to argue that the advanced countries became developed by expropriating economic surplus from overseas countries with which they first traded and which later colonized, while the overseas areas became underdeveloped by aiding the ascendancy of the west. Furthermore, Andre G. Frank expanded and developed this substantive theme into a theory of underdevelopment promising three laws of motion of the process of development and underdevelopment and coining the twin concept "metropolis satellite" to characterise the nature of imperialist economic relations. He went beyond Baran's contribution when he pointed out that attention to international (external) factors needed to be supplemented with an analysis of internal processes.<sup>60</sup>

The benefit that migration studies gain from these writings is that they provided a unifying framework for the causes of superficially diverse processes. With regard to the dependency school the international labour migration reflected the exploitation of the underdeveloped countries and their continuous loss of resources to the countries of centre.<sup>61</sup> Castles and Kosack (1973) in their popular book "Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe", see it as a neo-colonialism in the form of migrant workers being a development aid given by underdeveloped countries to the western ones:

"Today, neo-colonialism extracts capital from the underdeveloped countries in various ways, the main one being trade on terms fixed by the developed countries. The transfer of human resources in the form of migrant workers is an important part of this transaction. Migration belongs to neo-colonialism's system for exploiting the wealth of the Third World".<sup>62</sup>

This exploitation of third world human wealth, is present in another study with reference to the Algerian case:

"Emigration appears clearly as a tie of dependence vis-a-vis France and developed capitalist countries. The freeing of labour which is liable to emigrate is a general facet of the relation between dominated countries and imperialist countries."<sup>63</sup>

Generally speaking, the approach of the dependency school to the question of migration does not make it clearly perceptible how existing conditions can change. This approach is partially static as it ends with the image of an entrenched and essentially unalterable system of exploitation. The process of labour migration, as it is experienced all over the world, indicated that the migration of labour has changed significantly and will continue to do so under capitalism.

Recent studies provide a promise for overcoming the difficulties of the cumulative causation and dependency school without returning to the limitations of conventional equilibrium perspectives. These studies argue that labour migration, such as related exchanges, does not occur as an external process between two separate units, but as part of the internal dynamics of the same overarching unit. This unit, the world-capitalist system, is constantly changing according to forces that permit its components to modify their relative position without changing the basic dynamics of the accumulation process.<sup>64</sup>

D. Internationalization of Capital

Capitalism is the first mode of production to remake the globe in its own image: to penetrate every corner of the world, and to incorporate most societies into a global capitalist mode of production. As a system it is based on the accumulation of capital and by its nature, capital is self-expanding. The process of self-expansion of capital, however, is not a smooth one; it moves through distinct periods, each of which is characterised by specific features and dynamics. In turn, the dynamics of each era gives rise to certain specific contradictions whose resolution requires the transformation of the system and the emergence of a new set of dynamics. In its expansion, capitalism transforms non-capitalist societies and subjugates them to the logic of capitalism. The history of underdeveloped countries therefore, is the history of the penetration of capitalism and its confrontation with pre-existing modes of production which invariably leads to the internationalization of capital.<sup>65</sup>

Thus the formation and development of the capitalist mode of production and its outward spread is conceived as a process taking place on global scale. It is precisely this process which is seen as the most important factor determining the course and form of development in the "Third World". Bourgeois-liberal apologists argue that the development of the Third World could be achieved by narrowing the gap between the advanced and developing countries, which should permit "Third World" societies to enjoy the same benefits of capitalist development, such as a decrease in the population growth, an increase in per-capita income, the accumulation of capital, a growth in health standards ... etc. In other words, for the modernization theorists, the underdevelopment of the Third World countries is due to poor resources endowment, and their low participation in world economic relations, either as efficient producers and exporters

of resources and commodities or both. Thus in order to bridge the gap between the developed and developing countries they have to travel in the path of the Western countries. They clearly maintain that obstacles to development are not related to the nature and logic of the global capitalist system of which the "Third World" is but a part. In contrast, radical social theory, and especially Marxism, observes capitalism as a system which essentially reproduces inequality on an expanded scale. It interprets the present plight of "Third World" societies as a result of the expansion of capitalism overseas which also helps to postpone crisis in the centre. It argues that the modernization programmes deepen the already existing patterns of economic and technological domination and subordination, and in this way the uneven development of an international scale means rapid growth of the countries of the first world and stagnation or decay of Third World countries.

Radical social theory suggests that once monopoly capitalism appears in some societies, it subordinates the pre-existing mode of production to the logic of its own reproduction. In addition, Marxist theory explains the development of capitalism within a broad historical process.<sup>(6)</sup> For example, the most outstanding features of the history of the Third World since the rise of capitalism, have been the continuous process of economic and political subjugation by international capital. Once more, while this process produced impoverishment and underdevelopment in the Third World, it extended the accumulation of capital in the countries of the centre. In short, the internationalization of capital is explained as follows:

Underdevelopment is not just a sign of backwardness or stagnation, but on the contrary, is the product of a specific development - closely connected with the rise of the world

economy and is a direct result of it. Therefore it is only the analysis of the development of the capitalist economy that can provide the key to an understanding of the present state and growth problems of the underdeveloped countries."<sup>67</sup>

The Dependency School argues that the effect of the international capitalist system on 'developing countries' has been to prevent the growth of modern industry, i.e. that their external dependency on multinational corporations, imperialist powers for aid etc. is fused with their internal structures of extreme inequality and class domination which in turn distorts the process of industrialization.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the solution for "Third World" countries is a radical break with the world capitalist market. In its strongest form the dependency school argued that the Third World was in a "blocked development" situation due to the outward spread of capitalism. In this respect, Samir Amin's model of "Third World blocked development", is a well-known and often cited example. Amin argued that the basic relation between the developed and under-developed countries was that of a system in equilibrium. In the core countries of the west, the capitalist mode of production eliminates other modes, and generates a process of development of the sort analysed by the classical marxists. In the developing countries the capitalist development is 'blocked' by the competition of the more advanced industries of the centre, so that pre-capitalist modes persist for a long time and an economic social structure different from that of the centre arises.<sup>69</sup>

The substantial industrialization that has taken place in the developing countries during the sixties and seventies has made the analysis of this paradigm from the dependency school less popular. Neither the "break with the world market" nor the "blockage" theory is based on

the analysis of the changing dynamics of the world capitalist system. The former theory implies that the bourgeoisie of 'developing societies' could 'industrialize' if only they wanted to; i.e. that industrialization depends on the will of the bourgeoisie, not on the laws of the capitalist mode of production. The latter theory assumes that capitalism has no dynamics: if imperialism once blocked the industrialization of the 'developing societies', then imperialism will always block that industrialization.<sup>70</sup>

#### D.1. The New International Division of Labour:

The emergence of the capitalist industries in the western countries of Europe structured world trade on a new basis. According to this, the world is divided into two fundamental groups of countries: the developing countries supplying the primary commodities and acting as markets for manufactured goods from the centre, and the producers of manufactured commodities. Most of the "developing countries" during the nineteenth century and up to the nineteen sixties were characterized by the increasing export of agricultural commodities and raw materials and increasing exportation of manufactured consumer goods. From the point of view of international capital, some "developing countries" were seen as a market for machinery and a site for potentially profitable investment, Brazil, Mexico, Far Eastern countries, while the others were only seen as a source of cheap raw materials, such as African and Asian countries.

As previously mentioned, capital regards the whole world as an arena for profitable investment and consequently capital becomes international. Money capital flowed to the "developing countries" to establish industries to produce cheap, labour-intensive manufactured goods to be exported to

Europe in exchange for more advanced capital-intensive goods. The flood of western capital in Third World societies during the 1970s occurred because it can be employed at a higher rate of profit, and politically it assisted in crushing the traditional classes and indigenous nationalist opposition groups. As such it also consolidated the position of the local bourgeoisie, and contributed to the further integration of these countries in the world capitalist market. Such changes have been isolated as the first important step towards an understanding not only of the restructuring of the political and economic aspects of developing countries but also of the world economy as a whole.

Although many writers tend to suggest that the current crisis of the world economy is a product of the "oil crisis" of 1973,<sup>71</sup> the above suggests along with Andre Gunder Frank, that "the problem of the western economies goes back earlier, it was much deeper and had another origin, and that the petroleum crisis was just another consequence, and not the cause of the general crisis".<sup>72</sup> The more important features of the crisis of the world economy, especially in the mid 1970s, have been observed in the increasing rate of unemployment in the western countries. The closing down of industries has not only led to high rates of unemployment but the labour-force is also losing its skills as a consequence of rationalization schemes. In addition, western countries are experiencing low investment and a long-term fiscal crisis of the state. High unemployment (over 3 million in the U.K.) and short-term working have driven the state to increase its expenditures while tax receipts have fallen because of high unemployment, producing serious social and political problems.<sup>73</sup>

These problems in western economies, however, are happening in the context of high capital turnover and profits on a world-wide basis, by individual companies. It has been reported that even in the years of the world recession these companies through the relocation of production have managed to operate successfully.<sup>74</sup> It is argued that during the colonial period the geographical expansion permitted capitalism time and again to overcome its problems of narrowing production relations by encroaching and dominating "fresh" pre-capitalist societies. What characterizes the present crisis is that there are simply no more "fresh" pre-capitalist societies available for further geographical expansion. So capitalism has to overcome its present crisis by a restructuring of the world economy. This can be observed in the adoption of the "open door policy", the growth of "free-trade zones" and the relocation of production in the Third World. One form of this relocation is the closing down of certain types of industries in the western countries and the subsequent installation of these parts of the production process in the foreign subsidiaries of the same company.<sup>75</sup> This means that the economic crisis in Western Europe has led to new forms of the internationalization of capital from the core of western countries by means of capital flowing towards the Third World countries to find new areas of investment and new markets.

In other words, the changing of the historical conditions for capital accumulation in the industrialized countries since the 1960s have led to new ways in which the Third World countries are integrated in the reproduction of the centre's capital.

The consequence of this process is an increased difference not only between developed and developing countries but also between countries in the periphery.



Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that despite the growth of industrialisation in the developing countries, the main role of many of them in the world capitalist market is still as suppliers of raw materials. The new international division of labour as much of the preceding discussion showed is an order which is still emerging,<sup>76</sup> but necessary as part of the analytical framework for this thesis.

#### E. Labour Migration and the Economic Crisis in the West in the 1970's.

The adoption by the Western countries, since the early 1970's, of a restricted policy in terms of immigration, is a result of the development of the foreign labour movement in the west, and the structural crisis of the capitalist economies. This is clearly seen in: 1) the politicization of the immigrant labour all over Europe; as witnessed on the 1st May, 1973 strikes and demonstrations in France and the strike of the Ruhr-area in West Germany in 1973. These strikes are a milestone in the history of the immigration labour movement.<sup>77</sup> It was the first time in the Western countries that the immigrant workers went on strike on their own for reasons other than wage increases or improvement of working conditions. Such political consciousness is a result of their social existence. This, however, raised the fears of western governments and as was pointed out "the social and political disadvantages of immigration had become greater than its economic advantages so far";<sup>78</sup> 2) the pressure of the increasing amount of immigrant labour on an inadequate infrastructure; 3) the oil crisis of 1973 and the changing of the historical conditions upon which the third world was integrated in the world capitalist market. In other words, the decline of the Western economies since the late 1960's; the oil crisis in 1973 and since then, the demand for further increases in oil prices, all had led to new forms of internationalization of capital

or the emergence of "the new international division of labour".<sup>79</sup> From Europe, capital is now directed towards the peripheral countries in order to find new areas of investment and new markets.<sup>80</sup> The recent world recession - as reflected by a high rate of inflation; a high rate of unemployment which estimates that more than 31 million workers in the O.E.C.D. nations are now out of work;<sup>81</sup> and, an increased closure of a considerable number of production units in the West - has led the multinational corporations to relocate the production units in order to maintain their domination over the global economy by various means.

"This new international division of labour is an 'institutional' innovation of capital itself, necessitated by changed conditions, and not the result of changed development strategies by individual countries or an option freely decided upon by so-called multinational companies. It is a consequence and not a cause of these new conditions that various countries and companies have tailored their policies and profit-maximising strategies on these new conditions."<sup>82</sup>

Once again, despite all of this, it is important to emphasise that the need of the European economies for migrant labour is not a temporary problem, as it was once believed. It is a result of structural changes in the late capitalism of Europe. It has been estimated that the number of foreign workers in Europe in 1980 reached more than 22 million.<sup>83</sup> These workers are necessary to keep the capitalist machine working despite the increasing unemployment among the native labour price. They constitute a necessary "reserve army" that ensures the functioning of capitalism. In addition, immigrant workers have a significant socio-political function for capitalism; by creating a split between immigrant and indigenous workers along national and racial lines and offering better conditions and status to indigenous workers.<sup>84</sup> Thus, it can be argued that the

international migration of labour is a structural characteristic of the capitalist mode of production since the reproduction of capitalist relations of production has become dependent on importing labour power from outside national territories.

F. Labour Migration in the Arab Region: Search for an Explanation:

The notion of the "employment market", in most of the recent writings on the issue of labour migration into the Gulf countries has started to assume growing importance. These writings suggest that the demand for labour was generated by the surplus of capital in the Gulf oil producing countries which are rich in terms of their oil wealth and poor in terms of their population. In other words, the wide range of migration within and to the Arab region, in comparison with any other country in the world, has been treated by most of the existing literature as a consequence of a surplus of capital in the labour importing countries. Such an approach is exemplified by Birks and Sinclair who state that:

"The direction, volume and pattern of international migration for employment in the Arab world are determined essentially by an uneven distribution of oil resources, and the investment of royalties in the domestic economies of oil rich states, have led to wide disparities of economic development and per capita income between Arab states. It is this range of per capita incomes which has determined the fundamentals of international labour movements."<sup>17</sup>

In terms of the labour exporting countries, however, there are still those who would argue that labour emigration is of great benefit to the labour senders, as is expressed in the case of Egypt:

"The opportunities for increased exports of labour appeared particularly fortuitous to Egypt. It provides a means of reducing pervasive unemployment, while the remittances sent home by the migrants help alleviate the shortage of foreign exchange, a constant constraint upon Egyptian development."<sup>86</sup>

From the above discussion, however, an explanation that is largely centred on the mechanisms of supply and demand fails to provide adequate answers. For example, why does European capital flow to the third world countries despite the co-existence of labour and capital and a high rate of unemployment in the West? Or why do countries like Jordan and Yemen, the major labour exporters, import labour? Or why does oil capital not flow to the countries of surplus labour instead of labour flowing to the capital rich country? Why do Western companies operating in Egypt and Yemen, for example, use Asian labour rather than indigenous workers? Such questions show the inadequacy of an analysis not attuned to the social, political and economic elements that operate on the internal as well as external levels to create the problem. In particular, the emergence of merchant groups in the Arab Gulf countries as an influential faction that has a relative autonomous role, politically and economically, corresponds with the large influx of oil money as a result of the increase in oil prices.<sup>87</sup> This coincided also with: 1) the swift development of multinational corporations and the new international division of labour; 2) the economic crisis of the Western countries; 3) the end of Nasser's national model of development - which laid emphasis on the expansion of heavy industrialization, agrarian reform, nationalization of foreign companies and the wide utilization of the national labour force in internal development - and the inauguration of Egypt's new economic policy known as "infitah" "open door"; and 4) the emergence of

the Palestinians as an important political and military force in the Middle East particularly in the Arab-Israeli conflict (1967-1982)<sup>82</sup>. All these elements have contributed, in one way or another, to the restructuring of the political and economic structure of the Arab world in which migration is but one aspect of the emergence of a new socio-political order in the region.

It is for this reason that the next chapter will attempt to examine briefly changes in the political economy of the region as a means of formulating the analytical framework that would be used in this thesis.

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## Chapter II

### NATIONALISM AND ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENT: POLITICS AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Instead of seeking to conciliate or support Nasser, we should do our utmost to counter him and uphold our true friends. We should seek increased support for the Baghdad pact and its members. We should make a further attempt to persuade the United States to join the Pact. We should seek to draw Iraq and Jordan closer together. We should try to detach Saudi Arabia from Nasser by making it clear to King Saud the nature of Nasser's ambitions.

Selwyn Lloyd<sup>1</sup>  
British Foreign Secretary during  
the 1950s.

### Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, the type of interpretations provided by conventional migration theories have failed to offer adequate explanations of labour migration within and into the Arab region. This is primarily due to their failure to examine the wider developments occurring in the region. The political and economic events that took place before and after the large increase of oil prices in 1973, and the "epoch of migration" after 1974-75, indicate that oil prices and labour migration are but two aspects of a larger process. A process, it might be added, which implies: the political and economic restructuring of the Arab world and accordingly, furthering its integration into the global capitalist market and the undermining of nationalist forces which are then replaced by conservative, religious and tribal forces. The aim of this chapter is to provide an explanatory framework for the phenomenon of international labour migration in the Arab region which is based on a political understanding of the problem. In fact, this framework will consider as central, the manner in which "oil wealth" and "labour migration", within and into the Arab countries,



operated so as to deal a serious blow to the nationalist forces, epitomised by Nasserism in Egypt and elsewhere, and thereby practically reducing its influence in the Arab region. This chapter, therefore, will start with a discussion of issues related to the problems and dilemmas confronted by post-colonial states and the role of nationalism in general in the Third World and as they are experienced in particular by the Arab region. It is hoped that such a discussion will provide an adequate context for a political-economic type of explanation of the phenomenon which constitutes the main concern of this thesis - labour migration in the Gulf region.

#### A. The Dilemma of the Post-Colonial State

The nation state as a form of socio-political and economic organisation in most of the third world, developed during and at the end of the colonial era. Despite the many differences in the course of this development, from one country to another, there are some common features which can be used to characterise the post-colonial state in the third world. These features constitute the focus of an important debate within the social sciences and have been summarised by Ziemann and Lanzendörfer under three headings: (1) the overdeveloped state, as postulated by Hamza Alavi and John Saul; (2) the new and relatively autonomous economic role of the state; and (3) the important ideological role of the peripheral state.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the first feature it is argued that the state apparatus developed in the colonial era has continued in the post-colonial period. Alavi in his study of Bangladesh and Pakistan notes that:

It might be said that the superstructure in the colony is therefore "over-developed" in relation to the 'structure' in the colony, for its basis lies in the metropolitan structure itself from which it is later separated at the time of independence. The colonial state is therefore equipped with a powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus and mechanism of government which enable it through its routine operation to subordinate the native social classes. The post-colonial society inherits that overdeveloped apparatus of the state and its institutionalized practices through which the operations of the indigenous social classes are regulated and controlled.<sup>3</sup>

John Saul adopts a similar approach in his discussions of East Africa but places greater emphasis on the weakness of social classes and notes that the overdevelopment of the state had arisen primarily from a "need to subordinate pre-capitalist, generally non-feudal social formations to the imperatives of colonial capitalism."<sup>4</sup>

By placing the burden of an explanation of the "overdeveloped" state on the colonial capitalism, however, Alavi and Saul ignore internal contradictions. Furthermore, if the overdeveloped state is "inherited", how can we explain the nature of the state in countries which have been politically independent for a considerable length of time. Many Latin American states, Egypt, and India, for example, have political systems which cannot be easily traced directly to the colonial period. There is also the problem of societies such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, to name but a few, that were not colonised in any formal sense. With regard to this, Ziemann and Lanzendörfer point out that:

The question is, what does the 'overdeveloped' state thesis imply? Does it mean that the state wields a 'strength' greater than is necessary to ensure the social reproduction? Or does it assume that, in

proportion to the structure, the superstructure is not too top heavy, but nevertheless very large ? ... For so long as a state is fitted for its main function, to secure the societal reproduction, the extent of its influence on society is neither too great or too small, but adequate.'

It is important to note, therefore, that the 'overdeveloped' apparatus of a state like Saudi Arabia, which was never colonised, or some of the small Gulf countries, is a product of an articulation of internal and external factors. The need of the ruling families, in this area, to maintain their strong links with traditional allies force them to appoint such persons as managers or directors of newly established government institutions that are central in the process of consuming the bulk of the oil wealth. Similarly, the ruling families maintain the allegiance of the rest of the indigenous population by appointing them in the lower echelons of such governmental institutions. This, of course, has the additional advantage of making lucrative government employment and access to state social services dependent on inter-personal bonds within the indigenous population. A situation which allows a clear demarcation between them and immigrant labour, which occupies positions in the less lucrative sectors of the state apparatus. Nevertheless, even these less lucrative occupations necessitate a form of patronage with "leading indigenous persons" which in turn gives these oil-rich states considerable political influence in the country of origin. This is particularly so in the case of Arab labour-exporting countries such as Egypt, which sends many "professionals" that do constitute an important segment of the "politically" active population. The "overdeveloped" state apparatus, therefore, plays an important role in the socio-political restructuring of the region, as well as constituting an essential element in the reproduction of international capital. For the rapid expansion of the infrastructure or the "overdevelopment" of

the state apparatus of these societies reflects the growth and dominance of their ruling class who use such a mechanism to exert political influence in the labour-exporting countries and to consolidate their links with the global capitalist market.

The second feature indicated above usually implies that the state in post-colonial society appropriates a very large part of the economic surplus and uses it in bureaucratically directed economic activity in an attempt to promote national economic development.<sup>6</sup> In most post-colonial states in the third world this means that the state sector expands at the expense of the private sector in the name of promoting "socialism".<sup>7</sup> However, Meillassoux commented on this attempt, as it has been observed in the Malian case, as a way for the state to gain certain positions of control in the modern economy and to eliminate opposition spreading from the historical classes. His comments on their attempts "to infiltrate the national economy through the creation of a nationalised economic sector" point out that:

This was done under the label of 'socialism' which provided them with a convenient ideology to bring the economy under their control, supposedly of course on behalf of the entire population. 'Socialism' permitted them to put the bureaucracy into the position of a managerial board of a kind of state corporation.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the economic experience of the peripheral territories during the colonial era has shaped the economy of these societies even in the post-colonial period in such a way so as to be export-oriented or to be specialised in the production of one major product, as cotton in Egypt and the Sudan or sugar in Cuba. Such a specialisation determines their position in the international division of labour and

is reflected directly in the performance of their economies. This was pointed out by Hein and Stenzel with regard to the case of Latin America when they noted that the socio-economic formation of these countries was a result of a continuous adaptation process by these societies to their exploitation by the advanced capitalist countries. This adaptation comprised the growth of an export-oriented economy, and the production and exportation of very few goods, according to their location in the international division of labour which alters and evolves according to the changing historical conditions for the accumulation of capital in the advanced capitalist nations.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, this process led to an ever increasing, economic political, and ideological infiltration by the western countries through metropolitan capital organisation and culture. Thus such penetration perpetuated the dependence on external events and decisions and the inability to act politically according to their own developmental needs.<sup>10</sup>

Many students of the third world who focus on the nationalist petit bourgeoisie that is usually involved in the struggle for independence, argue that political independence was the essential preliminary to a fundamental restructuring of the colonial economy, and the removal of the hegemony of the coloniser. Nevertheless an examination of the economics of third world countries reveals that there are very few examples to validate such an assumption. Generally, the efforts of development in the third world have followed two paths, especially in the field of industrialisation: First, industrialisation which is directed totally from the outside, by western capital or is directed locally by multi-national corporations such as the case of Iran, Brazil, and South East Asia, to name but a few. Of course, such an approach to industrialisation is determined by the needs of the external metropolitan bourgeoisie, and exposes the country's

economy to world economic fluctuations. James Petras points out that "the greater the degree of externally induced industrialisation, the more fragmented becomes the economic activity, and the greater its vulnerability to external fluctuations"<sup>11</sup>. Secondly, due to the limitations of the externally directed model of industrialisation it has been rejected in many third world countries in favour of a nationalist, state-capitalist model.

This model tends to devise various patterns of industrialisation linking different phases of industrialisation, from technological innovation, through assembly plants within the boundary of the nation state, such as the experiments in Algeria and Egypt. This approach of development usually borrows a 'socialist form' in order to accomplish a capitalist end, namely the realisation of profit within a class society.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the experience of the nationalist-state in the third world, such as developments in Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Ethiopia, has brought about three areas of socio-economic change: (a) a major effort was made to transform the economy of the country from agro-export to national industrialisation; (b) the introduction of agrarian reform, which in some cases aimed to limit or eliminate the political power of the landlord class; and (c) nationalisation or control over national resources and the appropriation of the surplus to be used in the national development projects. Nevertheless, the question that still remains is the following: has the nation state, which in most of the cases was led by a "military-bureaucratic" oligarchy, managed to bring about substantial changes in the relations of production in these countries? In other words, has the transfer from the foreign and local bourgeoisie to state ownership occurred without any radical changes in the social relations of production, market determination of labour,

or in some cases profit calculations?

The seizure by the national bourgeoisie of power in the third world does not necessarily imply a fundamental transformation of the conditions of exploitation of labour, but usually represents a shift in the source of exploitation and possibly a change in the disposition of the surplus. As a matter of fact, the experience of Nasserism in Egypt does not differ much from that. The social and economic reforms introduced by the government were the way in which the nationalist state won the support of the masses, and used the nationalisation of foreign and local private enterprises to eliminate the political and economic power of the local traditional bourgeoisie, thereby replacing them by the newly emerged power of the military and bureaucracy.<sup>13</sup> It may be suggested therefore that the failure of the model of development adopted by the national-state is due to the class nature of the ruling class or the segments of class, and the gradual integration of these countries into the new stage of the international division of labour.

The third and the final feature of the state is the importance of the ideological role of peripatral societies, which is no doubt an attempt to deal with the problem of legitimation in these societies. Ideology could be found in the form of material actions, controlled by practices and rituals that are inserted into apparatuses. These are always ultimately subject to the ideological requirement for the reproduction of the dominant mode of production, to the requirements of the dominant relations of production, and hence ultimately to the ideological forms within which the class or fraction of class governs the production and distribution of the surplus product and lives in relation to the real world.<sup>14</sup> This means that the role and function

of ideology in the industrialised countries is to symbolise the unity of the social formation, seeming to transcend any narrow class or sectional interests and this helps to legitimise the status quo<sup>15</sup>. As far as the peripheral societies are concerned we find it possible to agree with Ave's thesis that the 'Third World' is a unique museum of the most incredible examples of how the ideological apparatus tries to cover up peripheral capitalist's lack of legitimacy<sup>16</sup>. The examples of Arab nationalism in Egypt during Nasser, the conventional and ethnic differences, (Sunna and Shia and pure tribal and non-tribal origin in the case of Arabia), the role of religion in most of the Muslim countries are but a few examples of how the ideological apparatus has been used in such a way so as to legitimise the existing regimes. Therefore the aim of the following section is to highlight the importance of the ideological dimension of the nation state as it is observed in the radical-nationalist forces in the Arab world, namely Nasserism.

### B. Nationalism and the Third World

The rise and development of the nationalist movement in third world countries varies from that of the nation-state in European countries. Nationalism as it has been observed in third world countries is a strong factor in the process of social change, and on the other hand it emerged as a radical political force vis-a-vis western colonisation<sup>17</sup>.

Nationalistic ideologies and movements are clearly important features in the politics of "under-developed", "developing", "third world" and "modernising" countries. In studies of particular situations, clear account has to be taken of the "nationalist" parties and movements which are involved as political forces.<sup>18</sup>

It is evident that colonial domination is involved in setting up



the context of nationalist politics in the third world, but equally clearly it can not by itself be advanced as an explanation of these movements<sup>19</sup>. The spread of modern education, the emergence of the new urban educated middle class, the increased integration of the third world countries in the capitalist economy, the increasing class contradictions between the dominant groups, the traditional rulers and the colonising forces, and the rest of the population, and, of course, the impact of direct colonisation, were all serving to create the necessary basis for a strong nationalist movement especially in the years following the second world war. Indeed many of the early responses to colonial expansion were clearly not 'nationalist' movements. For instance, religious revivalist movements such as the Mahdiyya in the Sudan, and the various tribal or lineage based revolts in parts of Africa<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, the nation-state model for various reasons\*, is the only one that was available for post-independent statehood, and as experience of independence in the third world showed "the end of colonialism had to bring with it nationhood"<sup>21</sup>.

#### B.1. Nationalism and the Nation-state: The case of the Arab region:

The emergence of nationalism in the third world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mobilised the development of the social and economic formations of these societies on the one hand, and accelerated the increased economic integration of the region in the world capitalist market on the other. More precisely, the emergence of nationalism in the Arab world represents, the development of the productive relations and forces - the emergence of the national

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\* The call for nation-state, as history shows, brings about various social and political forces, which in the end constitute the most powerful force in the country that can not be replaced or overpassed in the question of independence.

bourgeoisie, ruling class, urban middle class, ... etc.; and the change of conditions that determine the relations between the periphery, the colonised countries, and the centre, the colonising countries<sup>22</sup>, or, as Haim points out:

The origins of nationalism are not located in the folk nor in the individual's repressed passion for some sort of wholeness or identity, but in the machinery of world political economy.<sup>23</sup>

The early emergence of what may be called 'Arab Nationalism' in the nineteenth century can be traced to the Christian merchants of Lebanon who suffered from the discrimination of the Islamic regime of the Ottoman Empire, and the events of the civil war in 1860, and who needed to show their opposition to the idea of the Islamic League proposed by Sultan Abdul-Hamid<sup>24</sup>. It is the thoughts of this group that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, were adopted by the returning intellectuals from the west and some of the members of the privileged classes in the urban areas of the Levant, such as 'Abdul-Rahman al-Kawakibi - Rashid Rida ... etc.<sup>25</sup>. Indeed, the thought of 'Abdul-Rahman al-Kawakibi' may be the best example of Arab demands at this period, which called for the decentralisation of the Ottoman administration, and to offer an increasing role for the Arabs to govern their countries within the Ottoman state, or in more precise terms, the call for autonomy in the Arab region<sup>26</sup>. It is clear that the thought of Arab leaders at this period was affected by their Islamic orientation and their socio-economic condition in the state<sup>27</sup>. Their concept of Arab nationalism was a combination of Islam and being Arabs. Thus their demands sought to reform the Turkish administration rather than to call for Arab political independence. It was at the Paris conference of 1913 that the Arabs called clearly for their total

political independence and the West came to help the Arabs to gain their 'independence' from the Ottoman state with the aim to undermine the Ottoman state from inside and to divide its territories amongst themselves, the West supported the call of Arab Nationalism. The Arabs on the other hand, saw the West as a friend with no colonial designs in the region<sup>28</sup> and it was only after the first world war that their hopes of political independence were dashed when they came under the occupation of new foreign forces.

Instead of granting the promised independence, the Mandate powers arrogated the right to supervise or more often, to govern directly. Instead of promoting unity they artificially split the area up into fragments ... Furthermore, part of the region was exposed to foreign immigration by Zionists who made no secret of their intention to set up their own state.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to Arab nationalism the period between the two world wars can be divided into two sub-periods. First that which followed the first world war and up to 1930 when the Arab world was characterized by an almost complete silent deep frustration<sup>30</sup>. The new foreign domination consolidated its power internally through the new administrations that had been introduced and the collaboration of the traditional ruling class. Second that from 1930 until the second world war which witnessed two important factors which quickened the nationalist movement in the Arab world: the deterioration of the political situation in Palestine, caused by the constant immigration of Jewish people and the resultant revolts against British rule during the period 1936 to 1939; and the change that had taken place in the content of the nationalism from its early religious orientation toward secularism.

The latter had emerged as a result of an accumulation of writings

on the issue of Arabism - one of the earliest such texts that attracted an audience was that by Edmond Rabbata, in the thirties, who was followed by two Lebanese writers: Constantin Zurayq, in 1938, 'Abdullah Al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Alāyili and Saṭi<sup>ʿ</sup>ul-Hisari in the early forties<sup>31</sup>. It is the thoughts of these that later made an excellent basis upon which many nationalist parties and organisations were founded. They also provide a theoretical foundation for parties that were to engage in direct political activity, such as the Ba'ath and the Arab Nationalist Movement as well as in some other cases for a party or group that had already seized power, such as Nasserism in Egypt<sup>32</sup>. In general, the basis for Arab nationalism moved during this period from the traditional notable families to the newly emergent middle classes, who in contrast to the former had managed to attract a large audience from other classes, and to have a strong influence on them. Furthermore, the increasing tension between the foreign forces and the ruling classes, on one hand, and the masses on the other, marked the appearance of the new stage in the Arab nationalist struggle against foreign domination.

The defeat of the Arabs in Palestine in 1948, and then the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland marked a turning point in the relations between the Arab world and the foreign dominant forces. On the other hand the impact of the crisis created a spirit of pessimism among Arab intellectuals. Constantin Zurayq described the consequences of the failure in Palestine as follows:

Over and above the material disaster, there was a moral one reflected in the lack of confidence of the Arabs in their governments and in their leadership.<sup>33</sup>

He also went further to note that many of them "had doubts about their own selves and their capabilities as a nation"<sup>34</sup>.

The answer to the mood of despair that engulfed the Arab region after the 1940 defeat was counteracted by the establishment of the new nationalist parties and organisations, such as the Ba'ath<sup>35</sup> and by the number of political struggles that were fought for independence and the constitution of new nation-states as in Syria, Lebanon and North Africa. This led to military coups which ousted the traditional ruling families and established nationalist governments such as the case of Egypt and Iraq. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Egyptian revolution of 23 July 1952 and the eventual seizure of power in November 1954 by Nasser accelerated the course of events in the Arab region. The degree of change that the Egyptian revolution managed to precipitate in the whole Arab world vis-a-vis the western presence in the region and the conservatives regimes should not be underestimated. Maxime Rodinson summed up some of Nasser's effects on the Arab countries as follows:-\*

From 1955 onwards events were to increase Nasser's popularity and the power of the idea he represented: gradually more and more states were brought into line with popular opinion.<sup>36</sup>

Understanding Nasser's role in the Arab region requires some knowledge of Nasser's role in Egypt and the implication of that role on the Arab countries. This is necessary both in order to bring out the significance of the impact of Nasserism on the Arab region and because Nasserist strategy in Egypt was to be understood as a major constituent factor of Nasser's impact on the Arab world.

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\*It is interesting to note that the Egyptian mass media (newspapers, magazines, films, radio ... etc.) in addition to the Egyptian and other Arab immigrant workers, notably the Palestinians, played a very important role in introducing Arab nationalist ideas and which in conjunction with the indigenous Arab Nationalists constitute pressure groups within the conservative regimes of Arabia, Jordan and Morocco.

The amount of changes that Egypt experienced during the Nasser regime cannot be summarised in a few pages. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this chapter the major changes that took place in Egypt since July 1952 can be summed up under the following headings:

(a) Redistribution of the National Wealth

The social and political heritages of the monarchical regime were the first test of actual propensity of Nasser's regime to institute change. This propensity in changing the previous social and political system that had maintained the interests of a minority was witnessed only three months after the revolution. For example, as a result of the September 1952 Agrarian Reform Law, the large estates, which accounted for over one million feddans and owned only by 2,000 people, disappeared, thus reducing to some extent the degree of inequality in land ownership for the first time in the contemporary history of Egypt<sup>37</sup>. The second step came in 1956, when Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal as a reaction to the western boycott in the financing of the project of the Aswan Dam. Furthermore, the Suez war made Egypt take firm action against western investment in the country<sup>38</sup>. Thus a wide process of nationalisation of western manufactures, banks and insurance companies took place<sup>39</sup>. It is worth noting here that Egypt's stand with regard to western interests in the country was crystallised in a steady way only after the war of Suez in 1956. Moreover, measures against the large investment of the Egyptian bourgeoisie did not take place until July 1961, when the government introduced the Law of Socialisation. This law allowed the government to nationalise all the large remaining banking companies, industries owned by the Egyptian bourgeoisie<sup>40</sup>. The aim of these measures can be seen in the light of the intention of the Egyptian regime to minimise and limit the political and social power of the local

bourgeoisie and once again to win the support of the masses. Furthermore, as a means of preventing these from gaining their economic power, the government introduced a new tax law which increased the tax to 99% in the case of the high income categories. The government also passed legislation to improve the conditions of the majority of the population, such as the legislation of 1961 that prevented government employees from holding multiple posts and the rent legislation which decreased rents by 50%<sup>41</sup>.

The aims behind these socialist reforms introduced by the Egyptian regime, were to narrow the gap between different classes and construct an independent and viable socio-economic system. Producing such a system inevitably required the elimination of any elements that might prevent the regime from achieving its goals. These elements could be seen primarily in the economic and social groups from the previous regime, whose interests lay politically and economically in maintaining and consolidating links with the international economic system and thereby preventing Egyptian society from having an independent national economy. Furthermore, such groups hoped to increase the purchasing power of the urban-based middle classes, by extending western consumerism, and hence widening the gap between the social classes.

(b) Expansion of Social Services

The Nasser regime succeeded in providing such a wide range of social services, such as health, education, housing, which the previous regime had failed to do. For example, since the revolution, free education became available for all the population, and the number of students who enrolled in education jumped from two millions in 1955

to six millions in 1975, which represents an increase of 300%<sup>42</sup>.

During the same period real public expenditure per capita on education is estimated to have increased at an annual average rate of 4.9% per annum<sup>43</sup>.

In the field of health the improvement could be seen in the form of higher per capita consumption of calories and protein, which increased from 2,344 and 347 respectively in 1952 to 2,930 and 490 in 1964<sup>44</sup>. The number of doctors jumped from 5000 in 1952 to 18,000 in 1970, and the average death rate decreased from 18 to 13 in a thousand for the population as a whole and from 150 to 120 amongst children between 1952 and 1970<sup>45</sup>.

(c) Nasser and the Economic Development of Egypt

Most of the debate and controversy over Nasser's economic policy in Egypt 1952-70, was based on figures, produced or reproduced in a way so as to show either the success or the failure of this policy. Very few studies went beyond these figures in an attempt to understand them in the light of the mechanisms of the regional and global political economy. In general, a study of Egypt's economy during Nasser's rule, reveals that a considerable growth was achieved, especially during the second half of the fifties and the first half of the sixties. For example, the average growth per annum was 1% during the period 1913 to 1928, 5% between 1929 and 1939, and during the second world war and the years that followed up to 1950 the average had declined to 2.5%. However, from the second half of the fifties Egypt witnessed a wide expansion in government industrialisation projects which enabled the government to maintain its economic growth so that average growth per annum reached 5% during the years 1956/57 and 1970/71. This clearly means that



the average per capita income during Nasser's period underwent a significant improvement which amounts to 2.0% per annum, in contrast to 0.1% in the previous period<sup>46</sup>. Such growth no doubt marks the years of 1956/57 as a turning point in the contemporary economy of Egypt<sup>47</sup>. Of greater importance, however, is the fact that Nasser's economic policy was based on the idea that having such a wide expansion in the field of industrialisation would enable Egypt to meet the needs of the Arab world and hence play a significant political role in the region. Such a policy was seen in the west as a real threat to their political and economic interests in the Arab countries and their continuous monopolisation of those markets. Therefore, no effort was spared directly or indirectly to prevent or at least undermine the process of industrialisation initiated by Egypt<sup>48</sup>.

### C. Egypt and Arabism

One of the major aspects which distanced Nasser from previous Egyptian leaders was that he managed to bring Egypt again into the core and centre of the Arab world<sup>49</sup>. Previous Egyptian leaders who also espoused nationalist ideals - Urabi, Sa'ad Zaghlul, etc. - were usually preoccupied by the problems of Egypt. Nasserism, however, did not only affect the politics and economy of Egypt, but its implications went further to affect the direction of the course of events in the Arab region as a whole. The position of Nasserism in regard to the political and economic independence of the region as reflected in the case of Palestine, Algeria, Arabia, Sudan, and Syria are but a few examples which showed the amount of changes brought about by Nasserism<sup>50</sup>.

### C.1. Palestine

The question of Palestine is the core upon which the ideology and strength of Arab nationalism was developed and enhanced. Therefore, speaking about Arab nationalism as it is understood by various nationalist factions would lead us to talk about the position of these in regard to the Palestinian question. For Nasserism, it is the main factor that helped to bring about the revolution of 1952, as the war of June 1967 was used to destroy Nasser's power in the Arab region and to weaken the movement of Arab nationalism. This, of course, opened the way for the emergence of new social and political forces in the Arab political arena, namely, the Gulf Oil Countries and the Islamic groups who started to reshape the course of political events in the region<sup>51</sup>.

### C.2. Nasser's Involvement in North Yemen

Nasser's involvement in Yemen implied support for the struggle of the south to gain its independence from Britain and to stabilise the republicans of the north. Egypt aided Abdula al-Salal's regime, while Saudi Arabia assisted Imam Badir in his quest to gain his throne in North Yemen. More clearly the war in Yemen is an indication of the growing challenge between the major competing forces of Arab politics in the 1950s and 1960s: the Arab nationalist forces led by Nasser, and the conservative monarchies led by Saudi Arabia<sup>52</sup>.

There is no doubt that without Egypt's military aid the republicans would not have been able to stand against Imam Badir and his loyal tribes. One third of the Egyptian army was committed in the "civil war" in the Yemen and the cost of the war was too high for an economy like that of Egypt. In human terms the loss was 15,195 men, between

October 1962 and June 1964, and the daily cost from 1962-65 ranged between \$500,000 to \$1,000,000<sup>53\*</sup>.

### C.3. Arab Nationalism in the Gulf Region

The strategic geo-political location of the Gulf and its immense oil wealth are but a few of the prime reasons that attract the western powers to the region. Britain colonised it for more than a century and it was also an area where the conflict between the European rivals took place, before and after the British colonisation. In general, the West considered the Gulf one of the most important areas in western strategy due to its huge oil reserves. Thus, throughout the years of their direct or indirect domination they have tried to isolate it from the rest of the Arab region, or at least to prevent any political currents that may cause any changes in the traditional hierarchy of the area. As early as the 1920s and 1930s the British authority in the region tried to prevent any possible ramifications of the pan-Arabist movement which was acute in the Levant, Iraq and Egypt. This was more clearly seen in the British policy in Bahrain and Kuwait. Arab teachers were deported as they were accused of agitating against the British authority and propagating pan-Arabism. For example, Major Galloway, who was in Kuwait in the late 1930s, wrote on 28th June, 1939:

I ought to mention the necessity of cultivating in the school-children a proper feeling of patriotism, and by this I mean a patriotic feeling for Kuwait, rather than for the Arab world as a whole. I was sorry to find many of the boys at all the four schools, using exercise books which bore on their covers the portrait of a foreign leader and the name of a foreign state.

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\* or £450,000 to £750,000 at marked rate exchange in August 31st, 1963.

This should be absolutely forbidden and if any portrait is to be placed it should be that of Kuwait.<sup>54</sup>

Later on, the same issue was taken up by Sir Charles Belgrave who wrote during the 1950s that "The Egyptian teachers became fervent missionaries preaching the dangerous gospel of Nasserism."<sup>55</sup>

The movement of pan-Arabism had its impact as well in the reform movement in Kuwait, Bahrain and Dubai in 1938. For example, the Al-Zuhur radio in Baghdad and the local Iraqi newspapers, which called for the idea of pan-Arabism, had its impact on the direction of the reform movement in Kuwait.<sup>56</sup>

Nevertheless, the popular awareness of Arab nationalism in the region started to grow only in the 1950s due to the events that were taking place in the Arab region: (1) the partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel in 1948; (2) the revolution of 1952 in Egypt and the emergence of Nasser as a charismatic leader and the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1955 which was followed by the Suez War in 1956; and (3) the impact of the Egyptian mass media. These were articulated with changes indigenous to the region such as (1) the spread of modern education; (2) the contact with the outside world; (3) the return of the newly educated students influenced by the ideas of nationalism from Baghdad, Cairo and Beirut, and (4) the influx of Arab immigrants, especially Palestinians and Egyptians. The result of this articulation was reflected, for example, in the conflict that occurred in Bahrain during 1954-56, which was led by the Committee of National Unity, Lajnat al-ittihād al-Wataniyah. Among the main demands of the movement were the dismissal of Sir Charles Belgrave

from his post as British political agent in Bahrain, the calling for Dr. <sup>57</sup>Abdul Paziq Al-Sanhouri, the Egyptian legal expert, to study the codification of civil and criminal law, and the need for a legislative council<sup>57</sup>.

During the late fifties and early sixties, a number of nationalist organisations were set up in the region and were divided between Nasserist and other nationalist groups such as the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Ba<sup>58</sup>ath Party. Unlike Saudi Arabia where the Nasserists were the powerful opposition group, this branch of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) tended to be the most active political organisation in the small Gulf countries. It launched the armed struggle against Said Bin Taimur and British domination in Oman in 1964, it led the revolt of March 1965 in Bahrain, and it played an effective role as an opposition party inside and outside the Kuwaiti parliament, especially during the period of 1962-67<sup>58</sup>. During this period the ANM was primarily composed of Nasserites who formed a coalition with what may be called the National Bourgeoisie in Kuwait<sup>59</sup>.

In Saudi Arabia the Nasserite group, led by <sup>60</sup>Said Nasser, was the most active organisation during the sixties, and it claimed responsibility for the bombs which exploded throughout the country in 1966. Their support was to be found in the army and among those opposed to the house of Sa<sup>60</sup>ud. On the other hand, the Ba<sup>60</sup>athists constituted only a small group who were active among the inhabitants of the Eastern province of the kingdom, and in particular among the Shi<sup>60</sup>ite intellectuals and some of the Aramco workers. It is reported that in 1969, the opposition groups attempted two

military coups: the first in June, involving air force officers, workers of the oil companies, and intellectuals and which was aborted only a few hours before being executed; and the second a few months later, was instigated by some of the powerful reformist families of Hejaz in conjunction with high-ranking retired army officers<sup>61</sup>. As a consequence the government arrested a large number of nationalists and executed some others in an attempt to put an end to the nationalist groups. This, of course, coincided with the decline of Nasserism in the Arab region.

It is important to note that the presence of large Arab communities in the Gulf countries, and to a lesser extent in Bahrain, has played a significant role in activating the nationalist organisations in these countries. The immigrant Arab communities in the Gulf, however, have always been viewed by the regimes of these countries as unstable elements with regards to political events. In every internal protest or revolt the Arab immigrants have been blamed and repression against them is usually carried out from time to time to 'purge' them from 'undesirable' elements. The best examples of this were the wide arrests and deportations of Arab immigrants in Kuwait in 1964 and 1966 and in Saudi Arabia in 1955, 1966 and in 1967 for being members of nationalist groups or as collaborators with Nasser's regime<sup>62</sup>. Generally, despite the different arguments, the nationalist movement in the Gulf region, with some relative differences from one place to another, has constituted a very powerful political force which is always seen as a real threat to the continuous existence of the monarchical regimes and their western alliances.

## Conclusion

Much of the preceding discussion on the phenomenon of labour migration in the Gulf oil states, the dilemma of the post-colonial state and its manifestation in the form of Arab nationalism in the same region were aimed at setting the background within which the analytical framework of the rest of this study will be elaborated. As indicated, labour migration within the Arab world is taking place primarily from the countries of the Levant and Egypt, which up to the late sixties were the main challengers of western supremacy in the region. Furthermore, these were the countries which made various efforts to engage in some form of socio-political and economic development but still found that they had to export labour to the countries of the Gulf which until the late sixties were not known for their "development drive". Similarly, the Gulf states were also known for their pro-Western policies which, of course, articulated with their strong antipathy for all nationalist movements in the area. This can be interpreted to mean that not only did socio-economic development fail in such countries as Syria or Egypt, but it is also a reflection of how the failure of the economic development of the sixties indicates a change of political weight in the Arab region. More precisely, the increase of oil prices immediately after the October war, 1973, has resulted in both the increasing economic importance of the Gulf countries, and the move of "Arab political weight" from the countries of the Levant and Egypt to the countries of the Gulf.

The major effects of these changes, on the Arab world as a whole, can be highlighted by reference to three areas of concern: First,

the socio-economic development underway in such countries as Egypt has received a dramatic blow due to the increased emigration of its skilled labour which hinders even further the proposed industrial projects, and thus also undermining Egypt's leading political role in the Arab region. A role, it might be added, which in the sixties (1956-1967) constituted a major potential threat to the Gulf conservative regimes and their regional and international allies; secondly, the undermining of the radical nationalist forces has permitted tribal and religious forces to have a major influence in contemporary Arab politics; and thirdly, the weakening of indigenous nationalist economic and political forces has allowed metropolitan (Western) forces to encourage the restructuring of Arab economic and political systems thus furthering their integration into the world capitalist market. Ironically, while Nasserism in the fifties and sixties used the emigration of Arab workers to introduce the ideology of nationalism in the Arab Gulf countries, the immigration of Arab, or even South Asian workers, has been used to weaken the economic and political bargaining position of the labour exporting countries vis-a-vis the international bourgeoisie.



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## Chapter III

KUWAIT: ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

"Like camels in the desert, killed by  
thirst, while water on their backs  
is borne."

Poem said by an unknown  
bedouin of Arabia.<sup>1</sup>

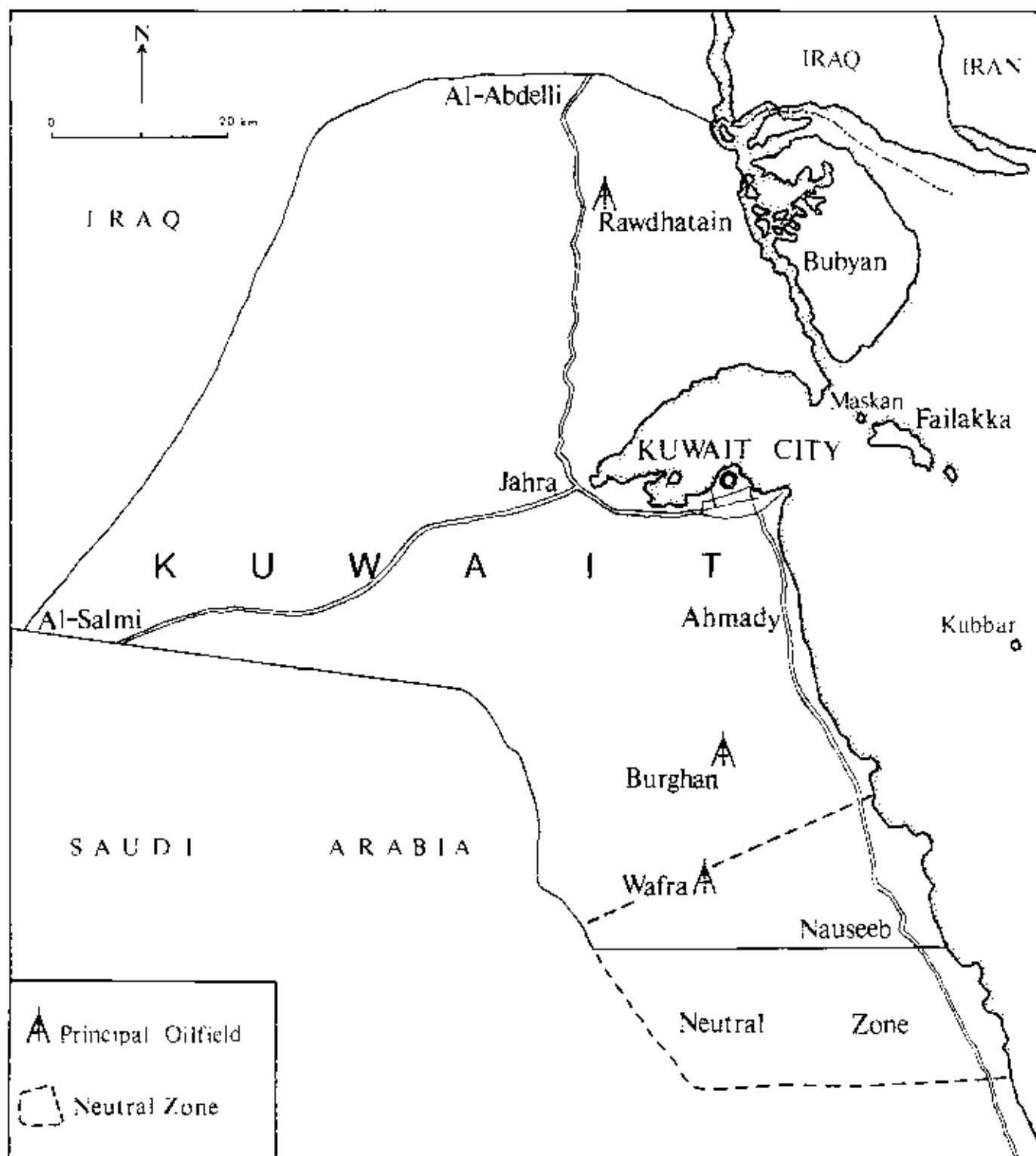
### Introduction

Kuwait is a small Arab state located in the north west of the Arabian Gulf. The religion of its population is Islam. The state is bounded by Iraq to the north, Saudi Arabia to the east and south, and by the Arab Gulf to the west. The size of Kuwait is 6,200 square miles, excluding the neutral zone which consists mainly of desert and nine off-shore islands (see map). Saudi Arabia shares this neutral zone with Kuwait and it is administered jointly by the two countries, recently the upper half of the neutral zone was added to Kuwait and this has increased the size of Kuwait by 868 sq. miles. The resources of the neutral zone are shared by the two countries.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Kuwait's creation is relatively recent and probably goes back three hundred years although the lack of historical data makes it impossible to ascertain the exact date of Kuwait's foundation. However, some historians and travellers noted that there was a small fishing centre in the seventeenth century where small bedouins had settled around the "Bani-khalid" castle, which was mainly built to house the ships that used the port. Bani-khalid, the ruling family of Al-Bahra, the central part of the eastern coast of Arabia extended their authority all over the eastern coast, particularly from Qatar in the south up to Kuwait in the north.<sup>3</sup> The country's political system passed through a tribal



Figure 3.1 State of Kuwait



confederation stage, and an autocratic stage, and since 1962 the country has been governed by a "constitutional system". The development of the modern history of Kuwait, passed through two stages, the stage that dates from the nineteenth century until the discovery of oil and that which followed the discovery of oil and through which Kuwait, as well as the other Gulf states, have been further integrated into the world capitalist market.

#### A. Pre-oil Kuwait: The Structural Developments

The development of Kuwaiti social structure during the pre-oil era has been affected by three main factors: the British penetration; the prosperity of maritime trade and the pearl industry; and finally the immigration of non-tribal and non-Arab people. These will be discussed in turn.

##### A.1. British Control in the Region:

It has been suggested that the direct political involvement of the British in the Arabian Gulf did not take place until the later years of the eighteenth century, although they had been long established as a commercial power throughout the Gulf. The main reason for this involvement was an attempt to secure the British trade routes to the East. In particular India and the countries beyond were of main concern as well as a means of preventing the French, Dutch and Portuguese powers from gaining a foothold or commercial advantage in the area. No one needs to be reminded of the fate of the great Omani empire in the Gulf and East Africa

(Zanzibar). It is here that Britain in 1795 persuaded the Imam of Muscat to enter into an agreement allying himself with them, thus denying the other European powers any political or commercial advantage in the area.<sup>4</sup> This agreement, regarded as the first political relation between one of the Arabian Gulf Sheikhdoms and the British, was then followed by similar treaties with the other Gulf Emirates.

In its very beginning, Kuwait was an insignificant, sparsely populated port. The Persian siege of Basra in 1775, however, was a turning point in the relations between Britain and Kuwait. Because Britain transferred to Kuwait the dispatch of their 'Gulf to Aleppo mail' which according to Lorimer was continued during the Persian occupation of Basra until 1779.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, members of the "British Factory"\* and officials of the British East India Company at Basra appear to have maintained friendly relations with the ruler of Kuwait, and in 1793, as a result of the dispute between the "British Factory" and the Pasha of Baghdad the "British Factory" was removed to Kuwait until August 1795.<sup>6</sup> Britain quickly realised Kuwait's important geo-political location and it strengthened its presence while British commercial representatives consolidated their position and thus they started interfering in the local affairs of the Sheikhdom.<sup>7</sup> Eventually the British successfully gained control over the whole Gulf by driving away the Ottomans and other European powers. This process was facilitated by certain political events in the Sheikhdom itself which ended with Mubarak's coup d'etat in 1896<sup>8</sup> and contributed to Kuwait signing a "secret" protection treaty with Britain in January 1899. This treaty was signed by Sheikh Mubarak and was to apply to his heirs and successors. The treaty noted that Mubarak was:

\* The "British Factory" was the name given to the administrative head quarters of the East India Company.

"...not to receive the Agent or Representative of any power or government at Kuwait, or at any other place within the limits of his territory, without the previous sanction and successors not to cede, sell, lease, mortgage or give for occupation or for any other purpose any position of this territory to the government or subjects of any other Power without the previous consent of Her Majesty's Government for these purposes. This engagement also to extend to any portion of the territory of the said Sheikh Mubarak, which may now be in the possession of the subject of any other government."<sup>9</sup>

It should be noted that Kuwait's treaty with Britain marks the start of its integration into the British Imperial system. It was a colonialization, however, that did not result from Britain's search for slaves, spices and gold, as was the case in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but from a concern to protect existing trade routes. Kuwait's importance to Britain and other European countries was increased later as the exploration for oil showed some signs of prospective wealth. The protection treaty between Kuwait and Britain therefore was a particular form of colonialization which left the social structure relatively unaltered as traditional economic activities were allowed to continue with only some reforms in the pearl industry.<sup>10</sup> It was only the discovery of oil in the thirties which marked Kuwait's early transformation into a peripheral capitalist structure when wage-labour was first introduced into the oil industry.<sup>11</sup>

#### A.2. The Traditional Economic Activities

Both external and internal factors have contributed to Kuwait's growth as a trade centre. First, the favourable geographical location of the country which allowed the Kuwaitis to become one of the foremost traders in the Gulf region. Secondly, the emigration of Uthbi merchants

from Zubara in Qatar.<sup>12</sup> Thirdly, the low taxes which were imposed on the merchants, in addition to the Persian stage of Basra, encouraged the merchants of other countries, such as those from Basra, to move their activities to Kuwait. Finally, the immigration of Bahrainis, who were famous in the ship building industry.<sup>13</sup>

The main economic resources in Kuwait were the pearl industry and maritime trade. The trading season was divided into pearling during the summer months and other commercial activities for the rest of the year.<sup>14</sup> There is no adequate information on the contribution of each of these activities to the total economy, however, it could be said, that pearl diving and commerce have contributed enormously to the total economy and to the accumulation of capital among some of the notable merchants.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of the pearl industry merchants usually financed the building of the ships, or the pearling voyage, that if neither the mukhadim (the captain of the ship) nor his family owned the ship. The yields of commerce were divided on the basis of shares and wages and the accounts were maintained by double entry book keeping based on a highly rational system of calculation. The profits were sub-divided into four categories: 1) the sailors' wages given to the sib (sailor) and ghawas (diver); 2) the mukhadim's (ship's captain) share; 3) the tawaḥh's (merchant) share; and 4) the tax per sailor or pearl-diver known as ghulayḥ.<sup>16</sup> The pearl season commenced in May and closed in September. A large proportion of the Kuwait working male population was absorbed by pearl diving. Before a diver went to sea he received an advance from the mukhadim which enabled him to buy the necessities for his family, which invariably did not meet his family's needs. This advance was called,



salāf. Similarly, on his return, the diver would get the second advance which was supposed to help him through the slack season. All these cash advances were recorded against the diver's name in the tawāsh's (or nukhadāh's) log book. It was very rarely that the diver managed to cancel his debt, the amount outstanding being carried forward to the following year and interest charged upon it. Once a diver was in such a situation he was compelled to work for the captain or "tawāsh" (the owner of the means of production) throughout the following season or until he repaid his debt. The death of the diver did not bring an end to the debt-bondage agreement as his debt was carried on to his son or his brother who were forced to work in the pearl diving trade unless they had property or money with which to clear the debt. Some of the more inhuman "nukhadāh" or "tawāsh" would insist on marrying the diver's widow as payment for his debts.<sup>17</sup>

### A.3. Population of Kuwait: early immigration

The Arabian Gulf as a whole can be regarded as a multi-cultural region. It combines on both of its coasts different ethnic and cultural groups. Arab tribes emigrated to the Persian coast as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well as Persians who due to economic and religious difficulties moved and settled in the western coast of the Gulf in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As far as Kuwait is concerned, there was no massive immigration from other areas in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the rise of Kuwait as a commercial centre had encouraged other people to

move and establish their own separate communities. The Bahārih\*, in addition to the tribal families living in Kuwait towns, who were mostly sunni, were the first shi'ā group to migrate to Kuwait. There is no available data on the date of their arrival and their number, but certainly they moved to Kuwait after the al-Khalifa conquest of Bahrain in 1783, which forced many of the Bahraini shi'ā to emigrate and to form their own communities in many parts of the Gulf and who have retained their distinctiveness up to recent times. This stream was followed later by a group of Eastern Arabian shi'ās mainly from al-Ḥaṣṣa and al-Qatīf who moved to Kuwait after the invasion of the wahābi and defeat of the Bani-Khalid rule on the Eastern Coast in 1793-1800. Wahābiism considers shi'āism as a form of heresy and consequently missed no opportunity to oppress the original shi'ā inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, from Persia both sunni and shi'ā emigrated to Kuwait in the second half of the nineteenth century due: 1) to increase commercial relations between Persia and Kuwait; 2) the change of trade routes from the Eastern to the western coast of the Gulf, and 3) the increase in pearl production in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>19</sup>

Once again, the notable families who were the first settlers, and who owned the means of production of the traditional economy were and still are the most powerful group in a political and economic sense. The continuation of the al-Sabah family in power was dependent on the taxes that were imposed on the merchants. Relations between Kuwait rulers and the notable merchant families has been strained at times, especially, when the Sheikh tried to increase the amount of taxes imposed upon the merchants.<sup>20</sup>

\* Generally, term used widely in the Gulf to identify Arab Shi'ā who originally came from Bahrain.

At the same time, the need for new allies had led Kuwait's ruling family to encourage bedouin immigration to Kuwait. The bedouins are indeed important pillars of support for the ruling family. For example, this can be seen in the recent situation where bedouins constitute the majority in the police and military forces. The nomadic values and the similar tribal background have kept these groups in a long alliance with the ruling family. Nevertheless, the nomadic and settled bedouins are not fully incorporated into the prevailing state system and their traditional tribal loyalties are gradually weakening. Members of the ruling family therefore, have endeavoured to maintain their loyalty by marriage, in the early period, or by granting them generous subsidies, as has been the case in recent times.<sup>21</sup> As to the non-tribal Arabs and non-Arab early immigrants they were basically involved in commerce and manual jobs. Of these, the merchants became one of the powerful factions - in an economic and political sense - of the big bourgeoisie and because of this power they have had an influence on the national decision making.

#### B. Oil and Structural Change:-

The discovery of oil in the Arabian Gulf marked the turning point for the countries of the Gulf and for the external powers. The breakdown of the traditional economy, however, started sometime earlier in the second and third decades of the twentieth century as the British authority in the region attempted to reform the terms of some of the traditional economic activities, and in particular the conditions of the pearling industry. In fact, this sector was very static up to then



being based on a system of social relations which hindered internal change, but which was to prove vulnerable to external influences. Production was organised in a way which alienated the ghawāq (divers) so that his life was not his own.

Furthermore, the decline of the pearling industry coincided with the competition from Japanese cultured pearls, and the world of economic crisis in the thirties. This led to a decline in dhow boat building and dhow trade. Generally the collapse of the traditional economy and the discovery of oil brought the region as a whole closer to the interests of western countries. This is clearly seen in the case of Kuwait where oil was discovered in 1938, after about twenty years of exploration, but production did not start until June 1946, when the first commercial shipment of crude oil was exported.<sup>23</sup> The agreement signed between the Sheikh and the Kuwait Oil Company (K.O.C.) granted the company exclusive ownership of all petroleum produced within the state of Kuwait and it stated that the period of the concession would be for 75 years. In December 1951, the original agreement was revised in order to conform with the Saudi Arabian agreement with the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) of 1950, which provided for the equal division of profits from production before payment of foreign income tax. It was only later, 1970-71, that the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (O.P.E.C.) held negotiations to increase the posted oil prices which also guaranteed their increase in the following years. O.P.E.C. went a stage further in 1972 when they began to negotiate for participation in the running of the oil industry in their respective states. It was in October 1973 - as a result of Algeria's nationalization of the two French oil firms (C.F.P. and E.R.A.F.) which had dominated the economy\* - that Kuwait and other Gulf countries began

\* After negotiations Algeria took a step back by taking 51% control of French oil interests that controlled 70% of Algerian Crude production.

negotiating with the oil companies operating in their region. Under the new arrangement the Government companies were to get an immediate 20% share in local operations and this was to rise to 25% in 1975 and by 5% in each successive year, so that by the first of January 1982, local participation would reach 51%.<sup>23</sup> For the governments of the Gulf countries, Kuwait included, participation was an alternative option to that of nationalization which, due to the political and economic situation in the Gulf at that time, seemed impossible. Ironically, while participation was considered by Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf countries as a great victory, the Kuwaiti parliament, in contrast to the government's position rejected it and asked for full nationalization. Accordingly, at the beginning of 1974, Kuwait reached a new arrangement with the K.O.C. raising the government share from 51% to 60%. In May 1974 the Kuwaiti parliament accepted the new formula and this encouraged the government to impose such arrangements upon other operations of oil companies in the state. In May 1975, the Kuwaiti government decided to nationalize all the shares of the oil companies operating in its boundaries,<sup>24</sup> which included the Kuwait national petroleum company in which the Kuwaiti private sector held a 40% share. The changing of the government standing with regard to the oil industry from that of participation to full nationalization can be seen as the first step taken by the ruling class, and in particular the ruling family faction, to regain the economic power and hence the political power that had been lost during the preceding fifteen years. Their loss of power had been the result of the concentration of power of the traditional merchants, "the Kuwaiti chamber group" and the new emerging social classes. Nevertheless, it should be noted, that increased state involvement and the nationalization of the oil industry does not imply a change in the actual process of production and marketing

which still remained in the hands of the multinational corporations.

B.1. Characteristics of the Kuwait Economy:-

Discussion of the economy in most of the Arabian Gulf countries inevitably implies the role of oil. The economy of Kuwait consists of three sectors: the oil sector; the non-oil sector which comprises of manufacturing and services; and finally income derived from surplus oil revenues invested abroad. The largest of the three sectors is that of the oil sector which continues to occupy a dominant position in such a way that on the one hand, it has affected the development of the other sectors and on the other, it has characterized Kuwait's economy, as in the other Gulf States, as a one resource economy. Having such an economy has resulted in a sharp sectoral imbalance in the country. In other words, the non-oil sectors are weak and their contribution to the economy as a whole is low. The importance of the oil sector can be seen in its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.) which accounted for 36.5% in 1968/69, 77.1% in 1974/75 and 61.6% in 1981/82, (see table 3.1). As far as government revenues are concerned the oil sector contributed 86.6% in 1970/71, 97.1% in 1975/76, and 96.5% in 1981/82.<sup>25</sup> The problem with such a heavy reliance on one product stems from the fact that oil is an uncertain source of income and a finite resource, and its prices are largely fixed by external circumstances and in particular the circumstances of the western powers.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, this locates the oil producing countries of the Gulf at the mercy of the multinational corporations which, on the one hand, control internally the production of oil through the sophisticated technology they provide and through the highly qualified European labour which has access to this technology, and on the other, they monopolize internationally the marketing of oil.<sup>27</sup>

Table 3.1

Sectoral Contribution to G.D.P. 1968/9 - 1981/2.

Sector	1968/69 <sup>1</sup>	1969/70 <sup>2</sup>	1970/71 <sup>3</sup>	1971/72 <sup>4</sup>	1972/73 <sup>5</sup>	1973/74 <sup>6</sup>	1974/75 <sup>7</sup>	1975/76 <sup>8</sup>	1976/77 <sup>9</sup>	1977/78 <sup>10</sup>	1978/79 <sup>11</sup>	1979/80 <sup>12</sup>	1980/81 <sup>13</sup>	1981/82 <sup>14</sup>
Agriculture & Fishing	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.1	3.8	3.6	4.6	5.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	8.5	5.9	5.5
Electricity & Water	3.3	3.7	4.1	3.5	2.3	2.0	1.8	2.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.4
Construction	4.4	4.0	3.5	3.0	1.3	1.0	0.6	0.9	3.2	4.0	4.1	3.4	2.9	3.9
Wholesale and Retail Trade	8.9	8.6	8.4	6.7	6.8	5.3	4.1	5.8	8.0	9.2	9.3	6.5	6.3	7.5
Transport and Communication	3.9	3.5	3.8	3.0	3.8	3.1	1.9	2.6	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.5	2.0	2.1
Banking, Insurance & finance	1.8	1.8	2.0	1.6	7.9	6.4	3.3	4.6	5.5	6.0	6.9	5.1	5.4	7.1
Public Administration & other services	17.8	17.5	6.0	11.8	13.9	9.9	6.4	8.5	8.3	10.0	10.0	6.4	8.5	11.3
Crude Oil and Natural Gas	56.5	56.7	67.0	67.0	59.9	68.5	77.1	70.0	66.3	62.0	59.9	66.0	68.5	62.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1,2,3, The Planning Board; Central Statistical Office, The Kuwait Economy, 1969/1970, Kuwait, December, 1970

4,5,6,7,8, Ministry of Planning, An Analytical Study of the National Account of Kuwait Economy, 1970/71-1975/76, Kuwait, July, 1977

9,10,11,12,13,14, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract 1980, Kuwait Central Statistical Office, 1981.

15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50,51,52,53,54,55,56,57,58,59,60,61,62,63,64,65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73,74,75,76,77,78,79,80,81,82,83,84,85,86,87,88,89,90,91,92,93,94,95,96,97,98,99,100,101,102,103,104,105,106,107,108,109,110,111,112,113,114,115,116,117,118,119,120,121,122,123,124,125,126,127,128,129,130,131,132,133,134,135,136,137,138,139,140,141,142,143,144,145,146,147,148,149,150,151,152,153,154,155,156,157,158,159,160,161,162,163,164,165,166,167,168,169,170,171,172,173,174,175,176,177,178,179,180,181,182,183,184,185,186,187,188,189,190,191,192,193,194,195,196,197,198,199,200,201,202,203,204,205,206,207,208,209,210,211,212,213,214,215,216,217,218,219,220,221,222,223,224,225,226,227,228,229,230,231,232,233,234,235,236,237,238,239,240,241,242,243,244,245,246,247,248,249,250,251,252,253,254,255,256,257,258,259,260,261,262,263,264,265,266,267,268,269,270,271,272,273,274,275,276,277,278,279,280,281,282,283,284,285,286,287,288,289,290,291,292,293,294,295,296,297,298,299,300,301,302,303,304,305,306,307,308,309,310,311,312,313,314,315,316,317,318,319,320,321,322,323,324,325,326,327,328,329,330,331,332,333,334,335,336,337,338,339,340,341,342,343,344,345,346,347,348,349,350,351,352,353,354,355,356,357,358,359,360,361,362,363,364,365,366,367,368,369,370,371,372,373,374,375,376,377,378,379,380,381,382,383,384,385,386,387,388,389,390,391,392,393,394,395,396,397,398,399,400,401,402,403,404,405,406,407,408,409,410,411,412,413,414,415,416,417,418,419,420,421,422,423,424,425,426,427,428,429,430,431,432,433,434,435,436,437,438,439,440,441,442,443,444,445,446,447,448,449,450,451,452,453,454,455,456,457,458,459,460,461,462,463,464,465,466,467,468,469,470,471,472,473,474,475,476,477,478,479,480,481,482,483,484,485,486,487,488,489,490,491,492,493,494,495,496,497,498,499,500,501,502,503,504,505,506,507,508,509,510,511,512,513,514,515,516,517,518,519,520,521,522,523,524,525,526,527,528,529,530,531,532,533,534,535,536,537,538,539,540,541,542,543,544,545,546,547,548,549,550,551,552,553,554,555,556,557,558,559,560,561,562,563,564,565,566,567,568,569,570,571,572,573,574,575,576,577,578,579,580,581,582,583,584,585,586,587,588,589,590,591,592,593,594,595,596,597,598,599,600,601,602,603,604,605,606,607,608,609,610,611,612,613,614,615,616,617,618,619,620,621,622,623,624,625,626,627,628,629,630,631,632,633,634,635,636,637,638,639,640,641,642,643,644,645,646,647,648,649,650,651,652,653,654,655,656,657,658,659,660,661,662,663,664,665,666,667,668,669,670,671,672,673,674,675,676,677,678,679,680,681,682,683,684,685,686,687,688,689,690,691,692,693,694,695,696,697,698,699,700,701,702,703,704,705,706,707,708,709,710,711,712,713,714,715,716,717,718,719,720,721,722,723,724,725,726,727,728,729,730,731,732,733,734,735,736,737,738,739,740,741,742,743,744,745,746,747,748,749,750,751,752,753,754,755,756,757,758,759,760,761,762,763,764,765,766,767,768,769,770,771,772,773,774,775,776,777,778,779,780,781,782,783,784,785,786,787,788,789,790,791,792,793,794,795,796,797,798,799,800,801,802,803,804,805,806,807,808,809,810,811,812,813,814,815,816,817,818,819,820,821,822,823,824,825,826,827,828,829,830,831,832,833,834,835,836,837,838,839,840,841,842,843,844,845,846,847,848,849,850,851,852,853,854,855,856,857,858,859,860,861,862,863,864,865,866,867,868,869,870,871,872,873,874,875,876,877,878,879,880,881,882,883,884,885,886,887,888,889,890,891,892,893,894,895,896,897,898,899,900,901,902,903,904,905,906,907,908,909,910,911,912,913,914,915,916,917,918,919,920,921,922,923,924,925,926,927,928,929,930,931,932,933,934,935,936,937,938,939,940,941,942,943,944,945,946,947,948,949,950,951,952,953,954,955,956,957,958,959,960,961,962,963,964,965,966,967,968,969,970,971,972,973,974,975,976,977,978,979,980,981,982,983,984,985,986,987,988,989,990,991,992,993,994,995,996,997,998,999,1000

Furthermore, this sector of economy has not been socially useful in terms of employment. Its share of the total employment dropped from 4.1% in 1970 to 1.4% in 1980 and of these the Kuwaitis were only 19% and 36.7% respectively.<sup>28</sup> Such facts put the oil sector "outside" the Kuwaiti economy since it has created no productive activities in terms of employment and recent research confirms this by noting that:

The oil which is the dominant sector and the engine of the economy could be considered a sector outside the (national) economy as far as its direct relevance to the productive activities of the population are concerned. It has largely left Kuwait labour untouched since its share of the labour force in absolute numbers as well as proportionally was originally small, and keeps dropping.<sup>29</sup>

Given the existence of such social, economic and political structure in Kuwait it is necessary to pose the following question: Can Kuwait, as an underdeveloped country escape from such structural problems and diversify its economy? The experience of the last fifteen years, however, suggests not.

Kuwait attempted to diversify its economy by following three directions; investments were made in agriculture, manufacturing, and commercial and financial services. The government's attempt to create an agricultural sector is limited because of adverse climatic, geographic and oil related conditions. Only 8.6% of the area is cultivable and the bulk of the cultivable area is taken up by pastures. The main open-field cultivation takes place on about 732 hectares of land irrigated for crop production, distributed into 471 agricultural holdings, and irrigated with deep-well brackish water, thus requiring a relatively large volume of water to flush out the salt from the roots.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, this sector absorbed around 1.7% in 1970 and 1.8% in 1980

of the labour force, and its share in the G.D.P. averaged only 0.4% and 0.2% in 1970 and 1981 respectively.<sup>31</sup> Apparently the agricultural sector is difficult to develop and any initiatives that have been taken in this field appear to be failing.

In the mid-sixties and early seventies manufacturing was seen by the Kuwaiti national bourgeoisie as the only alternative to create a stable economy,<sup>32</sup> while the government stood against such attempts. Given the scarcity of indigenous labour the importation of a foreign labour force thus creating overnight a large working class, despite its ethnic and cultural differences, was seen by the government as a potential threat to the stability of its regime. Furthermore, the government feared that this would jeopardise its policy to absorb local tension by the expansion of the government sector. The national bourgeoisie, however, argued that having a large number of foreign workers would in the end expand the local market thereby increasing the demand for commodities which no doubt would have the effect of strengthening the national bourgeoisie position vis-à-vis the ruling family and its allies.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, in the mid sixties the government responded to the pressure of the Kuwaiti parliament by entering into joint ventures with private enterprise in the field of industrialization, such as the establishment of the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (K.N.P.C.), Kuwait National Industries Company (K.N.I.C.), and Petrochemical Industries Companies (P.I.C.). In addition an industrial law was decreed in 1965, and an Industrial Bank of Kuwait (I.B.K.) was formed in 1974. Furthermore, government subsidies to the manufacturing sector continued in the form

Table 3.1

Allocation of Banking Credit among Main Economic Sectors in million K.D.

Years and Months	Trade	Industry	Constr- uctive	Agriculture & Fishing	Financial Services & Others	Personal	Total Credit
<u>1977</u>							
March	308.8	39.0	178.2	14.2	163.9	177.3	851.5
June	329.7	38.4	187.3	14.7	181.5	214.0	965.6
September	362.5	38.7	200.2	16.5	205.8	215.2	1038.9
December	375.6	49.2	199.4	20.0	215.8	212.6	1072.6
TOTAL	1376.6	165.3	765.1	65.5	767.0	819.1	3952.6
<u>1978</u>							
March	340.2	50.0	208.6	15.9	200.1	195.6	1010.4
June	338.8	47.4	213.2	16.8	261.2	202.7	1103.0
September	362.9	53.4	231.5	17.8	267.2	202.0	1195.7
December	400.2	65.7	254.4	25.1	309.4	199.2	1374.5
TOTAL	1442.1	216.5	907.6	75.6	1037.9	1000.0	4683.6
<u>1979</u>							
March	453.4	70.0	364.5	26.4	336.6	380.5	1511.4
June	449.7	76.1	283.5	28.3	381.4	420.6	1639.6
September	422.8	78.3	334.3	29.6	428.5	490.0	1832.5
December	523.5	89.8	332.2	30.6	421.3	520.1	1917.5
TOTAL	1989.4	314.2	1214.5	113.9	1567.8	1801.2	8723.6
<u>1980</u>							
March	535.7	106.3	351.2	33.2	487.0	514.9	2028.3
June	551.8	109.5	343.7	31.8	513.9	524.3	2075.0
September	580.0	125.3	372.0	40.6	611.8	700.2	2257.9
December	671.7	158.2	408.0	40.0	520.0	620.7	2418.6
TOTAL	2539.2	499.3	1474.9	145.6	2132.7	2160.1	8779.8
<u>1981</u>							
March	720.2	139.2	433.9	37.1	574.7	636.0	2540.7
June	735.6	166.6	438.3	39.5	607.1	703.0	2690.1
September	805.7	162.5	467.4	39.3	674.7	736.0	2886.5
December	843.2	173.5	523.2	40.2	702.4	800.3	3172.8
TOTAL	3105.1	641.8	1861.8	156.1	2558.9	2966.2	11290.1

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.252.

of meeting the annual deficit incurred, the provision of land and site facilities at nominal cost, the supply of energy at subsidised rates, and the supply of capital at a concessional interest rate of 4% (raised to 5% in 1980) by the Industrial Bank of Kuwait. Since its establishment until 1980 the I.B.K. has financed 181 projects involving a total investment of KD 303 million.<sup>34</sup> It can be suggested that through such an involvement the government has the power to influence the direction of investment which in the end saves the interests of the ruling class of which the ruling family and private enterprise are but a small fraction.

As to the direction of this investment it has been found that most of these loans have gone to the non-productive sectors. For example, industry received KD 250,000 in 1965/66 and KD 239,000 in 1971/72, while the real estate received KD 2 million in 1965/66 and KD 7 million in 1971/72.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, only 4.1% in 1977 and 5.6% in 1981 of Banking credit was allocated to the manufacturing sector whilst the highest percentage of loans in 1977 went to trade (34.7%), personal (20.6%) and financial services (19.3%) and in 1981, these percentages were 27.5% , 26.2% , and 22.6% respectively, (see table 3.2). A factor which may explain the disproportionately small share of investments allocated to manufacturing - given the original call for industrial development by the bourgeoisie is the cost of such projects. It has been shown in most of the Gulf countries that, despite the "advantages" of an abundance of cheap imported labour, the total cost of any industrial project initiated in the area, exceeds by 50% to 100% or sometimes more, any similar project in the industrial countries or even in some third world countries.<sup>36</sup>



Finally, the two largest and most important non-oil G.D.P. sectors are trade and financial services. Their contribution to the G.D.P. has averaged at 7.5% and 7.1% in 1981 respectively (see table 3.1) and their share of the labour force was 12.1% and 2.6% in 1980 respectively, (see tables 1.1 and 3.1). The importance of these sectors have not stemmed from their share in the G.D.P. or their labour force which is relatively low but rather from the internal and external circumstances within which these have evolved and changed. These sectors are largely dominated by the traditional notable families, like al-Nusif, al-Ghanim, al-<sup>6</sup>Qadir, al-Khurafi, al-Marzooq, and the traditional Kuwaitized merchants, of Persian origin, like Behbehani, al-Awazi, Ashkanani, etc. The indirect deep involvement of the ruling family in these sectors and the expansion of the consumer market for commodities from the capitalist world has resulted in the subordination of this financial and commercial class to the hegemony of the western metropolitan classes. Thus generating a propensity to shift investments from the field of industry in Kuwait to the monetary and real estate sectors in western countries. It may be concluded, therefore, that the existence of monopoly capitalism on the international level and Kuwait's peripheral status in this system has made the likelihood of industrialization in Kuwait rather doubtful.

The direction of the growth of the economy of Kuwait since the discovery of oil has not been random. Rather it has been a natural result of a specific set of circumstances which were greatly influenced by Kuwait's particular location in the world economy. For once an under-developed country has become a place of investment for the capitalist economy its social and economy formation becomes an integral unit of the global capitalist system and its reproduction follows the logic of this system.

C. The Development of the Political Systems

The Kuwaiti political structure was patriarchal in character. Historically it has been a monarchy ruled by an absolute ruler who is usually the head of the ruling family, namely the al-Sabah family.<sup>37</sup> The political as well as the legislative powers were concentrated in the hands of the ruler. Some have argued that the rulers were limited both by custom and by checks imposed by the strong "oligarchy" which consisted of notable families, prominent figures of minority communities, such as Shi'as and Persians and the religious leaders of the society.<sup>38</sup> However, there is no evidence to show that such groups were actually participating in the making of major political decisions. They may have been consulted on the matters that concerned their own families or their groups but not on national policy. As to the legitimacy of the ruling family in the pre-oil period, it was inherited from tribal descendants.

As to the loyalty of individuals it usually went to a person or persons who belonged to the dominant tribe and such loyalty could be changed according to the capacity of a ruler to gain the support of the tribes through marriage, the economic distribution of his limited wealth, and the amount of political and material power he had in hand. In short, the ruler's control over the country's affairs was often consolidated by awe and sometimes by affection. This indicates that the political structure of the country operates both within and between the tribes. There is no doubt that the execution of policy was normally the exclusive province of the ruler. However, as it was mentioned above, the ruler, especially before 1896, tended to consult some of the prominent figures in the society, notably the merchant class, since the ruler was highly dependent on their financial support. Mohamed al-Rumaihi summed up the situation not just

for Kuwait, but in the Gulf region as a whole by noting that:

"The political power in the traditional society of the Arabian Gulf was concentrated in the hands of the Sheikh (the ruler). It was an autocratic model of state, operating vertically from the minority, "the upper class" to the majority "the lower class". The ruler could impose taxes, raise or lower tariffs in his Emirate, and he could hold agreement with other countries without consulting anybody."<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, the rule of the al-Sabah family did not proceed peacefully, challenges were posed on more than one occasion by the powerful merchants of the notable families, such as the conflict between Sheikh Mubarak (the ruler of Kuwait) and three of the prominent merchants in 1913, as a result of the ruler's attempt to increase the rate of taxes from 4% to 10% imposed upon the merchant community at that time.<sup>40</sup> The other two serious challenges to the rule of al-Sabah emerged when some members of the notable families raised the idea of forming a legislative council for the first time immediately after the death of Sheikh Salem al-Sabah in 1921. The purpose of setting up a consultative council in 1921 was noted by one of its members who said that "it was aimed to help the ruler to run the affairs of the state and not to permit the ruler to make any important decisions without the endorsement of the council".<sup>41</sup> In addition, the council worked to reform the "House of Al-Sabah" in order to eliminate any tension between its members in choosing the ruler of the country. Nevertheless, this attempt was ended only a few days after it started due to the division that emerged between its members.<sup>42</sup> There is no doubt that this attempt at political reform indicates the anxiety among the notable families concerning the continuous monopoly of power by the Al-Sabah family and the attempts of the former to seek a say in the country's political process.

The third challenge posed by the notable families was in 1938. This movement in contrast to the previous one, was much better organised, attracted a large number of the population, and corresponded with several political events in the Arab world, notably, the National Movement of Palestinians in 1936, and the call for pan-Arabism. The Iraqi mass media and education was at that time a source of pan-Arabism propaganda which influenced the current of the political events in Kuwait particularly the demand for legislative reform and political participation.<sup>43</sup> The British political agent wrote during the reform movement, on the 11th October 1938, of his concern about such increased influence of the Iraqi mass media and education by pointing out that:

"From what I have seen of the result of Iraqi education I deplore the idea that any more Kuwaiti boys should go to Baghdad. There is inculcated not a healthy patriotism, but what I can only call "half-baked, anti-British, and virulent, nationalism."<sup>44</sup>

On another occasion such concern was raised in a letter sent to the British Ambassador in Baghdad on the 3rd November, 1938:

"As you know it is H.M.G. policy to prevent any increase in Iraqi influence in Kuwait, and personally I think it would be a mistake to let the Iraqi Government imagine that just because their frontier matches with Kuwait, they are in a special position to interest themselves at large in that state."<sup>45</sup>

The legislative council which was elected from only 150 notable families, and headed by Sheikh Abdula Al-Sabah, pursued its duty for six months and was dissolved by the end of 1938. The opposition came from the ruler Sheikh Ahmed al-Jabir, who saw the council as an obstacle toward spreading his ultimate authority over the country; from the British authority who found in the "Majlis" (the council) a barrier to their continuing interest in the region, especially when the council insisted

on opening a debate over the Kuwait oil concession; and finally from the other ethnic and religious communities (shiā's, Kuwaitis of Persian origin, and non-tribal Arab immigrants) who were banned from taking any part in the reform movement. Furthermore, it was clear from the beginning that the British acceptance of an elected council did not mean that they were ignorant of the extent to which such a council could affect their interests in the region. This, in fact, happened and they collaborated with the Sheikh to bring an end to this experiment.<sup>46</sup> The class position of the movement's leaders whose main target was to re-assert their right to be consulted in the country's serious matters, rather than a reform movement aimed at the whole population despite their ethnic and religious background gave the movement limited capacity to counteract the British and ruling family alliance.

C.1. Oil and the operation of the political system:-

The exploitation of oil and hence the accumulation of its revenues made the path of modernization possible for the Sheikhdom of Kuwait. However, the fundamental issue that confronts the ruling family, not only in Kuwait but all over the Gulf, is that they seek modernity but in their traditional social and political framework. As Stockes states there was a fundamental problem typical of a changing society, a conflict between value systems, "old against new and various brands of new against one another. The conflict may occur between social structures which embody different values, as when progressives compete with conservatives, or it may occur within the individual psyche, when transitional man does not know whether he should follow tradition or his reason."<sup>47</sup> Such a duality was observed in the case of the Gulf countries as Bassim Sarhan stated:

The problem of most of the Gulf Sheikhdoms was that they wanted modernization and development without any real change in political structure of power, and with minimal changes in the old social structure and the old social relations.<sup>48</sup>

In Kuwait, as in the other Gulf states, high advanced technology in different economic fields and modern education and administration came up against the traditional political system which operated on the unwritten tribal laws rather than on the basis of modern rationality. The operation of the laws depends on the flexibility and the power of the ruler rather than the laws themselves. For example, Kuwait during the rule of Sheikh Abdula al-Sabah (1951-1965) enjoyed a relatively more democratic regime than in the former period, but such a state of affairs was seen by some of the educated members of the ruling family as a source of instability.

Therefore, the external and internal circumstances within which Kuwait attained its independence, the widespread influence of the Arab Nationalist Movement that was demanding public participation in the country's affairs, the merchant community and notable families demand for a share in the country's politics, the Iraqi claim to Kuwait in 1961-62, and the regime's intention to rally all the political and social groups behind it, were all pushing the regime to adopt a political formula that could: maintain the ruling family's ultimate power; satisfy to some extent the merchants and notable families; contain and pull ground from the political opposition, in particular the Arab Nationalist Movement; and finally to win political recognition on the regional and international levels.<sup>49</sup> In other words, the ruling family and their

allies would only accept a political formula that would bring no radical changes to the inherited political structure, and maintain and protect the class interests of the ruling class. Walid Mubarak in his study on Kuwait observes the operation of the political system as follows:

"The Emirate was transformed in 1962 into a hereditary democratic state, under which sovereignty resides with the people, the source of all power. Although the Constitution invests the right of succession in the descendants of the late Mubarrak al-Sabah, a check and balance system is instituted. Accordingly, the Emir and a Council of Ministers are invested with executive powers, legislative power is shared by the ruler and a 50-man assembly elected every four years by adult male suffrage; and judicial power is exercised by an independent judiciary linked to the Ministry of Justice. The Constitution reserves a broad range of powers (which invested in) the Emir...The Emir is declared to be (impartial) and his person inviolable. As head of state, he is the supreme commander of the armed forces, he is empowered to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and members of the Cabinet, representatives abroad, and all civil and military officials".<sup>50</sup>

Now, Kuwait has modernised its political system and the power of the al-Sabah family is no longer dependent on tribal loyalty. The regime has introduced the National Assembly and other modern institutions to gain the support of both the old and the newly emerged social classes. This has been paralleled with other governmental measures such as land speculation, the expansion of the government bureaucracy as a major employment sector for Kuwaitis, and finally the emergence of Kuwait as an oil-based welfare state. In other words, the establishment of a national assembly in 1962 was not an attempt to establish a genuine representative body, but a pragmatic response necessitated by the development of economic forces and Kuwait's further integration in the world capitalist market.

Nevertheless, the Kuwait parliament lasted for only 13 years. On the 29th of August, 1976, the Amir (Ruler) invoked his constitutional power and announced the dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of four articles of the constitution. The action was described as both necessary and temporary in order to correct certain deficiencies in the experiment. The official explanation was that the National Assembly had delayed action on important legislation and vital issues. Ironically, on the 20th of July, 1976, the last day of the dissolved Council, the crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad,\* in his speech to the council said that "We thank the deputies for their work and help throughout this year which resulted in achieving a large number of successful programmes" and he went on to celebrate "the fruitful cooperation between the government and the council, which will help to inculcate the principles of democracy in our country".<sup>51</sup>

The National Assembly remained closed for four years. On the 18th of February, 1981, elections were held for the parliament and 447 candidates campaigned for 50 seats. The electoral districts were changed so as to ensure the election of bedouins sympathetic to the government and merchant allies. Thus, the council has 24 members with bedouin backgrounds and loyalty to the ruling family. Moreover, the opposition groups such as the Shi'as and the Arab Nationalists were substantially diminished.<sup>52</sup>

The dissolution of the Kuwait National Assembly in August 1976, in addition to the attempt to revise the constitution in a way so as to consolidate the ultimate power of the ruling family indicates the actual attitude of the ruling family and its historical allies, merchants and

\* Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad became ruler of Kuwait in 1977.



bedouins, to representative democracy. It is important to emphasize, that the development of the economic relations as a consequence of the exploitation of oil, and subsequently, of Kuwait's further integration in the world capitalist market, were the mechanisms within which the Kuwaiti political system vis-a-vis the base structure has evolved and changed.

D. Problematic issues of the Class Structures:

Class is one of the controversial issues as far as the social structure of the Gulf societies is concerned. Some scholars tend to argue that the concept of class as it has been used in the study of western and some third world countries is inadequate.<sup>53</sup> When postulations of that sort are made, however, they usually take class in a narrow and trivial sense.

Marx and the conventional Marxists place emphasis on three fundamental elements that determine class: 1) the individual's relation with the means of production; 2) the class consciousness of the individual involved in the production process; and 3) the individual's attempt to be organized politically in an organisation so as to defend class interests. Accordingly, the ownership of the means of production will lead to unequal social relations between those who own the means of production and those who own nothing but their labour power.<sup>54</sup> Poulantzas, however, in his turn, reduced the determinants of the social class to one: the ownership of the means of production especially in the pure capitalist mode of production, but he insisted that the significance of the other two determinants normally vary from society to society, and their causal weight could not be derived without a thorough empirical investigation.

In the case of the Gulf societies the ownership of the means of production seems to be the most decisive determinant of the social system. In addition, class consciousness has not been taken as a fundamental issue, since its emergence depends on the availability of expressive channels: newspapers, magazines, theatre, T.V., radio etc. and the possibility of individuals being organized politically, in parties, organisations and groups that defend their interests.<sup>5</sup> Social explanations based on class do not neglect the fact that although the prime-social conflict is between the two major social classes, the owners of the means of production and the workers, marginal contradictions also exist within each of these. For example, those between the Shia and the Sunni bourgeoisie, that between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti bourgeoisie, and likewise the contradiction between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti workers, or between Arab and non-Arab workers. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that once the people are denied any kind of free and legal expression, the alternative will be sought within the religious, tribal and ethnic background of the individual. Given that such segregation is also manipulated by governmental involvement its overall effect is to hinder the emergence of class consciousness within the concerned population.

#### D.1. The traditional social stratification

The Kuwait pre-oil social structure was formed around the main traditional mode of production of the pearling industry, maritime trade, and to a minor extent, pastoralism. While the first two economic activities developed in Kuwait city itself and among the urbanized beduin and the settlers, pastoralism developed inside the Kuwaiti desert among the nomads. This means that two patterns of social organisation have co-existed in

the traditional economy, each of these with its influence on the political structure. At this stage in the development of Kuwaiti society the social stratification was more or less based on the social division rather than the class division, the distinction between the inhabitants existed according to the tribal, religious and ethnic background rather than their actual economic potentiality.

Vertically, the society was divided into two main social groups: the notables and the commoners. The former were composed of the ruling family, notable families, notable tribes and the high members of religious groups. The first strata were integrated by kinship, marriage, tribal origin and sharing common social and economic interests, while the merchants' section was dependent on trade and the pearling industry as its source of income. The ruling family have depended on the tax revenues they have imposed on the merchants for their livelihood and the proportion of tariff, which varied between one ruler and another. Some of the ruling family's members were involved in commercial activities, and by virtue of being a member of the ruling family they were free to import anything duty free. Such concessions were a cause of discontent among the merchants community upon which the ruling family maintained its power.<sup>57</sup> The ruling family was and still is in the person of Amir, (the ruler) the owner of land. The land, at that time, was of little economic or financial value, but since land speculations in the late 1950's, it has brought tremendous wealth to the ruling family and notable landowners.<sup>58</sup>

The commoners who had little wealth and political power comprised the lower ranked clergymen, who were serving in the traditional schools "al-Kutāb", pearl divers, ship builders, a very small number of peasants and manual workers, such as blacksmiths, carpenters etc., most of these have had no tribal

origins of from the lower strata tribes. There were also the warriors and the pastors of the lower strata tribes, and from them the ruling family formed its defence forces. However, the loyalty of these people has fluctuated between the Bin Saud and al-Sabah families as it depends on who could win their support first, either by economic incentives or through marriage and kinship.

It has been assumed that there were several gradings and sub-groupings within each of these two fundamental strata in society but they do not represent a significant variation in the general pattern of stratification. Upward and downward mobility is also present, but most of the mobility was within each strata rather than between strata.<sup>50</sup>

D.2. The Social stratification of the oil era: The emergence of class structure

The economic transformation that followed the exploitation of oil represents a move towards the development of class division. Khaldoun Al-Nageeb, in his study on the social stratification of Kuwait society noted that the transformation process went through three identifiable phases:-<sup>60</sup>

1) The years leading to 1953 which witnessed the rise of commercial enterprise in anticipation of the great potential of the "oil economy".

2) The years between 1953-1961 during which the emergence of a modern state and a powerful financial oligarchy took place. The manning of both bureaucracies necessitated the large-scale importation of foreign labour and trained personnel.

3) The years from 1961 to the present were devoted to political stabilization and the stabilization of entrepreneurial activities, which resulted in the emergence of a discriminatory welfare state. During this

period and henceforth, a discernable pattern of stratification due to the process of structural mobility began to crystalize and became evident.

In fact, the transformation of Kuwait was not the result of a steady or long process of social change; it is simply attributed to the oil revenues which have put a huge amount of wealth into the hands of the ruling family. Since the first oil concession signed by Sheikh Ahmed al-Jabir in the thirties until 1962, there was no distinction between public expenditure and the personal purse of the ruler. The British Authority throughout the rule of Sheikh Ahmed al-Jabir (1921-1950) tried to persuade the Sheikh to follow Bahrain's example with regard to the expenditure of oil royalties. Such an attempt was described in 1940 by the British political resident in the Gulf as follows:

"I was certainly not aware that the Sheikh did not spend a penny out of the oil receipt on the state. I think the best thing to do at this stage is for you to tell him that the ruler of Bahrain only retains one-third of oil royalties for himself (spends one-third on the state and one-third being placed in reserve), and that even this one third has already been the subject of bitter criticism. Although at the moment there is no agitation in Kuwait, yet it will surely come as the news spreads that very large sums are being received by him and that he would be advised to meet it in advance by ear-marking a substantial proportion for public purposes. We should not agree to anything more than one-third of his oil revenues being spent on himself, as experience has already shown in Bahrain that this amount is excessive, and if he does not take the hint we must observe loudly from time to time "you are warned".<sup>61</sup>

Since 1950 an amount of oil revenues has been distributed in a way so as to heal the rift in the camp of the dominant class. Some of these rifts were already mentioned above. Such a process has taken two forms. The most important one was land speculation and state compensation. The lion's share of these has gone to the dominant class, members of the ruling

family, notable families and the traditional merchants. The government bought land at prices higher than real values which meant that the traditional dominant group gained the greatest advantage since they are on good terms with the ruling family and owned the most land in the best locations. In addition, the notables' complete domination over the Kuwait municipality, has influenced government plans over land purchasing and has allowed them to know in advance about the purchasing plans and the lands that are going to be purchased. In cases where the land was owned by others the members of the ruling and notable families would arrange its purchase at a cheap price and then sell it at a good profit to the government. Thus, the result was that most of the funds that were spent on land speculation went into the hands of the traditional dominant class.<sup>62</sup> It was estimated that between 1957 and 1974 more than K.D. 727 million (around £1454 million) was spent this way.<sup>63</sup>

As has been pointed out previously, this strategy was designed by the ruling family to heal the rift within the traditional dominant class. On the other hand, the collapse of the traditional economic activities has reduced the economic and hence the political power of the notables. In fact, despite the differences, the ruling family maintained their power in the pre-oil era because of the support of the notables. Thus, this action was an attempt to regain the support of the traditional allies. In addition it has come to consolidate the position of notables vis-a-vis the new rising social classes in the society.

Another way in which some of the oil wealth has been dispersed, is through the wide expansion of bureaucratic institutions. These institutions as the time passed became the largest employers of the indigenous Kuwaiti labour force, 45.1% in 1981, and they employed 27.1% of the total

labour force in Kuwait. On the other hand, the services sector alone employs around 48.1% of the total labour force. Finally, wealth diffusion has also been through the wide ranging provisions of the free social services: health, education, social security benefits, etc. Such a policy, it has been argued, meant that Kuwait has emerged as one of the leading "welfare states" in the Gulf, thereby giving Kuwaitis an additional reason to rally around their government.<sup>64</sup>

In fact, the emergence of the government sector as the largest employer of Kuwaiti labour, the wide expansion of the services sectors, and the diversification of the government services, has resulted in a large influx of foreign labour. This has consequences in: 1) the expansion of the construction sector to meet increasing housing needs, 2) the expansion of the consumer market for western commodities. For example, in 1965 there were 0.1 cars for every person, by 1970 0.24,<sup>65</sup> in 1975 0.27 and by 1980 there were 0.31 cars for every person.<sup>66</sup> Generally, these expansions functioned as ways to recycle the oil revenues back to the western countries who produce these commodities while the local bourgeoisie's role was responsible for regulating and maintaining such a process. Of course, their relatively autonomous economic role was designed in a way not to contradict with the increasing interests of multinational corporations in the region. Such a role has endowed this class with increasing political power that has influenced the course of political events not only in the sub-regional level (Kuwait and the Gulf region) but also in the regional Arab world level. Such attempts at social and economic accommodation were set in motion by the supplementation of the traditional economy and society by modern capitalism and its new set of attendant class relations.

As far as the class structure in Kuwait is concerned we have witnessed the rise of three distinct social classes: the dominant class (the owner of means of production), the middle class and what may be called the "nascent working class". The features of the dominant class could be observed in: 1) its domination of the means of production; 2) its dominant role in organising and distributing surplus value; 3) its attempts to strengthen the dominant role of bourgeois ideology and 4) its complete domination of political decision making. This class is composed of two main factions where the ruling family constitutes the leading faction and works in cooperation with traditional and new merchants deeply involved in the fields of business, investment, and finance. By virtue of its domination of the state apparatus, the ruling family controls a tremendous surplus which has made its lifestyle far out of reach of the average Kuwaiti.<sup>67</sup> The Sheikh's personal income from oil returns in 1973, for instance, was K.D. 5 million. Since the distinction between private and public revenue in 1961, members of the ruling family started receiving a large share of oil revenue in the form of permanent salaries. These amounted to 8% of oil revenue in 1975.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, al-Diwan al-Amiri\* alone has absorbed around 2.2% and 1.3% of the state expenditure in 1977 and 1981 respectively.<sup>69</sup> The ruling family has its own council which meets regularly to discuss the difficulties facing the family in its running of the country. The suggestion to form this was made for the first time during the reform movement in 1938,

\* An institution which specialised in running the personal affairs of the ruler.



"The idea of the family council first arose during October 1938, when the family property in Iraq came up during the reform movement in 1938. This council is suggested to be headed by the Shaikh Abdula".<sup>70</sup>

However, the idea did not come into existence until recently as a result of the growing challenges posed by the new emerging social classes. The purpose of this council is to unify and clarify the stand of the ruling family in opposition to other social classes or sub-classes and the country's economic and political problems. Throughout the rule of the al-Sabah family they have opened channels of cooperation with various ethnic, tribal and religious groups. Their closest allies are the notables, with whom they take the lion's share of oil revenues and the Shi'a group, before the Iranian revolution in 1979. Also there are the bedouin groups from whom they recruit their army and police, and with their substantial presence in the national assembly they support the council resolutions. Ahmed Baz in his recent study of the Kuwaiti political system has observed the following:

"A mutual dependency had emerged between al-Sabah and the bedouin. In Parliament al-Sabah had relied on bedouin support as a counter weight not only against the opposition but also against the urban merchants who, on a number of occasions had exhibited sympathetic support for Arab Nationalists."<sup>71</sup>

An inquiry into the composition of the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers indicates that while the al-Sabah family had the most important posts the other posts were filled from members of notable families, urban merchants and long career public civil servants, and the emergent middle class.<sup>72</sup>

The other important fraction of the dominant class are the merchants and entrepreneurs. This segment is divided into two sub-groups: Kuwaitis who are the most powerful sub-group, and non-Kuwaitis who are, due to their weaker legal position, more restricted. The non-Kuwaiti merchants are, in actual terms, those who run the enterprises for the Kuwaitis. The Kuwaitis are in their turn divided into: traditional notable merchants and urban merchants on the one hand, *sunn* and *shaykh* on the other. The *sunn* merchants, in particular the notables, are the dominant group in the political and economic sense. Generally, they are engaged in business, real estate, construction and, in cooperation with the government, they invest a part of their wealth in the west, and internally, they dominate the importation of western commodities. For example, it was estimated that 4.6% of the merchant community in the mid-1970's owned around 37.9% of all commercial agencies.<sup>73</sup> In actual fact such merchants were the agents of multinational cooperations. Furthermore, politically, they are divided into two fractions: liberals and conservatives. The former believe - to some extent - in representative democracy, liberal social life, and call for sub-regional (Gulf level) and regional (Arab world) economic cooperation.<sup>74</sup> As a whole the merchants have become more concerned with the stability of the political system because the more the government spends on its social and economic programmes such as the construction of schools, hospitals, etc. the more it will bring lucrative contracts to the merchant faction.<sup>75</sup>

Generally, despite the differences between the various fractions of the dominant class, it does present itself as a unit vis-à-vis the other emergent social classes who demand more just distribution of the national wealth and political power. The internal economic and political interests

of this class however, have been maintained through its subordination to the international bourgeoisie. So its designated role is to reproduce capital in a peripheral capital-surplus country like Kuwait.

The emergent middle class is composed of bureaucrats and civil servants. It has been argued that these do not constitute a class but a distinct social category determined by the fact that they are agents of the state apparatus and prefer to function for it. In fact, the bureaucracy can have diverse origins and yet preserve an internal unity and can also serve the interests of classes other than those to which they belong or from which they have come.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, there are several determinants such as: its tremendous political influence on political decision-making - a large proportion of its members are either organised in illegal political organisations and professional trade unions and the fact that it has its own channels of expression, suggests that it is a class moving towards coherence.

This class is the largest one in numerical terms. For example, the government sector directly or indirectly employs more than 90% of the total labour force in Kuwait,<sup>77</sup> and it has been estimated that 59.9% of the Kuwaiti labour force belong to this class. Of these, Kuwaitis are only 29.4%.<sup>78</sup> The non-Kuwaitis, who occupy a lower status are also divided according to ethnic and religious differences amongst them. The Arab members of this group are more politicized and play an effective role in the Arab Nationalist Movement in the country and in other political organisations which operate in the Arab world. The Kuwaiti segment of this class, in comparison to other segments of the Kuwaiti population have experienced modern education for a long time and are engaged in political activities in Kuwait and in the Arab region. Thus

the educated category from this class has functioned as an effective social force, influencing the political events and intervening in the class struggle with a weight of its own. Al-Nageeb reached similar conclusions when he stated:

"That the bureaucrats, the civil servants and other of this (class) have created claims for power and influence, is evident in the tendency towards greater unionization as an expression of the corporate interests of these groups. Thus the crystallization of the interests of professional and lower strata into union and professional organizations and and the political pressure exerted consequently developed into a major social and political force, the utilization of the numerical strength as a source of power. 79

Finally, the "Kuwait" working class is composed of non-skilled and semi-skilled workers. It constitutes a new social group, but its ultimate position in the social structure is still unclear. The majority of its members are non-Kuwaiti and the Kuwaiti segment within this class have been promoted to white collar jobs.<sup>80</sup> The majority of non-Kuwaiti are males who are unmarried or married and have left their family behind in the countries of origin. They are fragmented by ethnic religious and cultural differences. Economically, they are concentrated mainly in construction and in a number of manual jobs in workshops and small industries and their living and working conditions are below the Kuwaiti average with the South Asian group being the most exploited. The majority of the Kuwaiti segment of this class are of bedouin origin<sup>81</sup> and their loyalty is first to their tribes and secondly to the ruling family rather than their own class. Such a tendency, in addition to the large wages they receive, the government discriminatory policy between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis and the state welfare system that buffers all the Kuwaiti

population against economic vicissitudes and misfortunes, has eroded the possibility of some kind of class consciousness amongst them. For non-Kuwaitis, the ethnic and religious differences have also served to erode class consciousness by consolidating ethnic cohesion and fragmenting class cohesion.<sup>24</sup> This constitutes a major concern of the remaining five chapters which focus on different aspects of socio-economic conditions of immigrant labour in Kuwait.

NOTES

1. As quoted by Mahir al-Kird, al-<sup>3</sup>Azdhār al-Bā<sup>3</sup>is, (The Poverty of Prosperity), Cairo, Dar al-Taqaḍūm al-Arabi, 1977, p.1.
2. Saudi Arabia used the resources of the neutral zone to exert pressure on Kuwait in the times of crisis or to force it to follow Saudi policy in sub-regional, regional and international levels.
3. See for example: 1. Ahmed Abu-Hakima, The History of Eastern Arabia: 1750-1800, Beirut Khayat Books, 1965. 2. Yousif Bin Essa al-Qinofi, Safahāt min Tarikh al-Kuwayt, (Pages of the History of Kuwait), 4th Ed. Kuwait Government Printing House, 1968. 3. Hussain Khalaf al-Shaikh Khaz<sup>3</sup>āl, Tarikh al-Kuwayt al-siyasi, (The Political History of Kuwait), 5 Vols. Beirut, Dar al-Kutub Printing Press, 1962-1970. 4. Jacquelin S. Ismael, Kuwait: Social Change In Historical Perspective, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1982.
4. Mohamed al-Rumaini, Bahrain: Social and Political Change Since the First World War, op.cit., p.9.
5. J.F. Lorimer, Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, Vol. 1. part 1B, Shannon, Irish University Press, 1970, p.1002.
6. For further details on the Britain penetration in Kuwait, see J. Ismael, Ibid.
7. See for example, Basim Sarhan, Modernization and Underdevelopment: The Case of A Capital-Surplus Country: Kuwait, New York, The American University, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1980.
8. For more details on the Mubarak coup d'etat in 1896, see for example Hussain Khalaf al-Shaikh Khaz<sup>3</sup>āl, Ibid.
9. J.F. Lorimer, Ibid., pp.1048-1049.
10. See for example: 1. Fred Halliday, Arabia Without Sultans, op.cit. 2. Jacqueline Ismael, Ibid.
11. See for example, E. Hill, Modernization of Labour in the Arab Gulf, Cairo paper in Social Science, Vol. 2, February, 1979.

12. Fakhrī Shehab, Kuwait: A Super Affluent Society, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 42, April, 1964, p.462, in Tawfiq Farah, et al., op.cit.
13. See for example, Zahra Freeth and R. Lewcock, Traditional Architecture in Kuwait and North Gulf, London, Flexi Print Ltd., 1978.
14. For more details on the subject of traditional economy activities in Kuwait, see: 1. Mohamed Mahjub, op.cit. 2. Jacqueline Ismael, op.cit.
15. See for example, Khaldoun al-Nasreb, Changing Patterns of Social Stratification in the Middle East: Kuwait (1950-1970) as a Case Study, Austin, The University of Texas at Austin, unpublished Ph.D. 1970.
16. Ibid., p.129.
17. Mohamed al-Rumaibi, The Mode of Production in the Arab Gulf before the Discovery of Oil, in Tim Niblock (ed), Social and Economic Development in the Arab Gulf, op.cit., pp.54-55.
18. For more details on this subject on the Case of Bahrain, see Mohammed al-Rumaibi, Bahrain: Social and Political Change since the First World War, Ibid.
19. For more details on this subject see: 1. J.F. Lorimer, Ibid. 2. J. Umadi, op.cit.
20. An example of this is the conflict between Hilal al-Mutierei, Shanlan Bin Essa and Ebrahim al-Ma'daf on one hand and Sheikh Mubarak, the ruler of Kuwait on the other in 1911. For more details on this subject see, Hussain Khaz'āl, Political History of Kuwait, Vol. 2, Ibid., pp.281-282.
21. John Anthony argues that the reason for such encouragement of beduin migration is that the rulers are themselves of beduin origin and wish to emphasise the "Arabness" of their state. See John Dix Anthony, Arab State of the Lower Gulf, Washington, Capital City Press, 1975, p.11.
22. For more details on the subject of Oil in Kuwait see for example:  
1. A.H.T. Chisholm, The First Kuwait Oil Concession, A record of Negotiation, London, Francass, 1972. 2. Badir Eldāin al-Qasbi, Dirasāt Fi Tarīkh al-Kuwayt, (Studies in Kuwait History), Kuwait, wikalat al-Matbu'āt Press, 1972. 3. Fred Halliday, Ibid.  
4. Ali al-Kuwari, Oil Revenues in the Gulf Emirates, London, Bowker, 1978. 5. Y.S. al-Sabah, The Oil Economy of Kuwait, London, Kegan Paul International Ltd., 1980.

23. Fred Halliday, *op.cit.*, pp.407-408.
24. Mohamed al-Rumaihi, al-Naf't wa al-'Alaqāt al-Du waliyah: wjhat Naḡar 'Arabyāh, (Oil and International Relations: An Arab Outlook), Kuwait, The National Council for Art and Literature, April, 1982.
25. The figures of the years before 1980 were derived from the Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract 1980, *op.cit.*, p.313. And the figures for 1981 were derived from the Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, *op.cit.*, p.240.
26. For an elaboration on this point see for example: 1. Emmanuel, Arghari, Myths of Development versus Myths of Underdevelopment, New Left Review, No. 85, May/June 1974. 2. Hone, Angus. The Primary Commodities Boom, New Left Review, No. 81, September/October, 1973.
27. See for example, Petter Nore and Terisa Turner, *op.cit.*
28. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, *op.cit.*, p.104. The big increase of Kuwaiti participation in the field of oil is due to the programme of Kuwaitization and the replacement of large numbers of Arab workers especially Palestinian.
29. Bassim Sarhan, *op.cit.*, pp.136-137.
30. The World Bank, Kuwait: Long-Term Development, Draft Confidential, Vol. 1, The Report, Country Program Department, July, 1981, p.25.
31. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, *op.cit.*, pp.238-239.
32. For more details on the standing of the national bourgeoisie with regard to the issue of industrialization in Kuwait see for example:
  1. Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Istrātiḡiyāt wa siyasāt al-Tasni' fi al-Kuwayt, (Policies and Strategies of Industrialization in Kuwait), Kuwait, Published by Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1981, pp.3-12.
33. It is interesting to mention that the national bourgeoisie's view of industrialisation especially during the sixties was influenced by the emphasis of Nasserism on the importance of industrialization in the Arab World.



34. The World Bank, Kuwait; Long-Term Development Strategy, *Ibid.*, pp.21-22.
35. Sarhan, Bassim, *Ibid.*, p.141.
36. <sup>6</sup>Ali al-Kawwari, Dawr al-Mashrū<sup>6</sup>āt al-<sup>6</sup>āmmah fi al-Tanmiyah al-Iqtisādiyyah fī Mujtama<sup>6</sup>āt al-Khalīj wa al-Jazīrah al-<sup>6</sup>Arabiyyah. (Role of public sector in the Economic Development in the Societies of Arab Gulf and the Peninsula), Kuwait, National Council for Arts and Culture, June, 1981, pp.67-70.
37. Bassim Sarhan, *op.cit.*, p.79.
38. Abid Al-Marayati et al, The Middle East: Its Government and Politics California, Wadsworth Publishing Comp. Inc. 1972, p.284.
39. Mohammed al-Rawihi, al-Bitwal wal Taqhiyār al-Ijtima<sup>6</sup>iy Fi al-Khalīj al-<sup>6</sup>Arabiyy, (Oil and Social Change in the Arab Gulf), Cairo, Arab Research Institute, 1975, p.115.
40. As a result of tax increases by Sheikh Mubarak in 1911, three prominent Kuwaiti merchants refused to obey their Ruler's command: Hilāl al-Mutairi, Shamian Bin<sup>6</sup>Essā and Ebrahim al-Mudaf. So Sheikh Mubarak punished them through limiting their trade activities. This led the last two of them to submit to the ruler while Hilal al-Mutairi, escaped to Bahrain, with his ships, where he was welcomed by its ruler. This meant a substantial economic loss to Kuwait and an economic gain to Bahrain since Hilāl is the most powerful Kuwaiti merchant in economic sense. Subsequently, Sheikh Mubarak failed to force Hilal to return to Kuwait, he himself went to Bahrain but returned without any success.  
For more details on such events see Hussain Khaz<sup>6</sup>āl, *op.cit.* pp.281-282.
41. <sup>6</sup>A. <sup>6</sup>Aziz al-Rashid, Tarikh al-Kuwayt, (The History of Kuwait), Beirut, al-Hayāt Books Press, (2nd ed), 1978, p.277.
42. *Ibid.*, p.277.  
See also Uthām A. Malik Nidam al-Hūkun wa Ajihzātih Fi al-Kuwayt (The Rule System and its apparatuses in Kuwait), Kuwait, Kuwait University Press, 1977.
43. For more details on the reform movement in 1938 see Chapter II.
44. A letter from British Political Agent in Kuwait to British Political Resident in Bushire, 11.10.1938, I.O.L. R/15/545.

45. A letter from British Political Agent to British Ambassador in Baghdad on 3.11.1938. I.O.L. R/15/1/543.
46. The above interpretation is based on documents in the India Office Library, R/15/1/548  
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47. Frank Stoakes, "Social and Political Change in the Third World: Some Peculiarities", in D. Hopwood (ed), The Arabian Peninsula, London, George & Unwin, 1972, p.190.
48. Bassim Farhan, op.cit., p.80.
49. See for example <sup>6</sup>Abdula al-Nifisi, al-Kuwayt al-Ra'i al-'Akhār. (Kuwait: The other opinion), London, Taha Advertising, 1978, pp.43-50.
50. Walid E. Mubarak, Kuwait's Quest for Security: 1961-1973, Indiana University, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1979, pp.116-117.
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54. Karl Marx, Grundrisse, London, Penguin Books, 1973, p.96.
55. For more details on Poulantzas' views with regards to the social class see for example the Introduction of his book, Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, London, Verso Edition, 1978.
56. Similar definitions were put forward by Muḡhniya al-'Azraq in her study on the emergence of the classes in Algeria. Muḡhniya al-'Azraq, Maḡhū' al-Taḡaqāt Fi al-Jaza'ir. (The Emergence of Classes in Algeria), Beirut Arab Research Institute, 1980.
57. Some of these Stories were mentioned by Sheikh Hatiz Wahbah. For more details see Sheikh Hafiz Wahbah, Arabian Days, London, Arthur Barker Ltd., 1964, p.66.

58. Bassim Sarhan, op.cit., p.88.
59. Khalidounal-Naqib, op.cit., p.35.
60. Ibid., p.136.
61. A letter from the British Political Resident in Bushire to the British Political Agent in Kuwait, on April 25, 1940, I.O.L., (R/5/1/545).
62. Sarhan Bassim, Ibid., p.95.
63. Soud Mohamed Al-Sabah, A Framework for Development Planning in Kuwait with particular reference to the role of the Kuwaiti Female Labour Force, Surrey, The University of Surrey, unpublished Ph.D, March 1982, p.99.
64. Walid Mubarak, op.cit., p.114.
65. Jaqueline S. Ismail, Dependency and Capital Surplus: The Case of Kuwait, in Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 1979, p.162.
66. Figures of 1975 and 1980 derived from Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract 1982, op.cit.
67. Jaqueline S. Ismail, Kuwait: Social Change in Historical Perspectives, op.cit., p.129.
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69. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.242.
70. A letter from the British Political Agent in Kuwait to British Ambassador in Baghdad, November 3rd 1938, I.O.L. R/15/548.
71. Ahmed A.S. Baz, op.cit., p.192.

72. Ibid., p.157.
73. Jassim K. Al-Sadoun, Factors Contributing to Income Equality Distribution in Kuwait, Journal of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies, Vol. III, No. 12, October, 1977, p.87.
74. Mohamed al-Rumaihi, op.cit. p.24.
75. See for example, Ahmed A.S. Baz, Ibid., p.132.
76. Ruth First, Libya: Class and State in an Oil Economy, in Peter Nore and Tersia Turner (eds), Oil and Class Struggle, op.cit., p.139.
77. Jassim K. Al-Sadoun, Ibid., p.89.
78. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, Ibid., p.106.
79. Khadoon Al-Naqeeb, op.cit., pp.148-149.
80. Since the early 1960s, due to the "kuwaitization" programme, a large proportion of Kuwaiti non-skilled and semi-skilled workers were promoted to white collar jobs.
81. Bassim, Sharhan, op.cit., p.94.
82. Jaqueline S. Ismail, op.cit., p.132.

Chapter IV

LABOUR MIGRATION IN KUWAIT:  
AN HISTORICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT

When I came to Kuwait in the late 1940's it was very small, its people were relatively poor, it had one very small market. Now Kuwait has a population of many thousands of people. Some of its people have become very rich, and its market has expanded and it sells commodities from all over the world.

An Arab migrant in Kuwait.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The development of the labour force is one of the major processes that reflects closely the social and economic development of Kuwait over the past fifty years. More precisely, it could be said that the modern history of Kuwait is at one and the same time the history of labour immigration. The importance of immigrants for Kuwait's socio-economic development stems from the significant amount of changes which have taken place, in which immigration has played a significant role. The purpose of this Chapter is to discuss and analyse the history of labour migration to Kuwait, which started in large numbers in the 1930s, to examine the demographic structure of the immigrant community, and finally to establish the nature of the contacts that immigrants have with the countries of origin.

#### A. Labour Migration to Kuwait

The study of labour migration is synonymous with the study of socio-economic development, for each stage of this process indicates at one and the same time the growth of the indigenous social forces, and the integration of this country into the world capitalist market.

A.1. The first stage of Labour immigration: 1930-1950

The immigration of labour, in the case of Kuwait and most of the Gulf countries, goes back to as early as the 1930s, when oil was first discovered. Immigrants were few in number and were restricted to a few limited economic activities, mainly the oil companies and the newly introduced government administration. The sources of labour were India, Iran and to some extent Palestine. Although Indians were used on a wide scale all over the Gulf to run the new administrations, Palestinians were only used in Kuwait and to some extent in Qatar.<sup>2</sup> There is a lack of data on the number and nationality and economic activities of immigrant workers at this time; the only available figures are fragmentary, and indicate only employment in the Kuwait Oil Company (K.O.C.) which was the major employer at that time. The Southern Asians made up the overwhelming majority of immigrants. For example, the K.O.C. employees numbered 364 in June 1937, and of these the Kuwaitis represented 84.6%, mostly non-skilled, Indians accounted for 10.1%, most of them semi-skilled and skilled manual and clerical employees, and the British citizens accounted for 5.21%, the majority being managers and professionals (See table 4.1). In 1942, the number of employees rose to 448, and while the proportion of Kuwaitis declined to 75%, Indians increased to 20%. An examination of the distribution of labour according to the occupational groups reveals that Americans, and in particular, the British, dominated the key positions in the company. Indians, usually occupied the fourth and fifth occupational groups, as semi-skilled and clerical workers and their recruitment was necessitated by their command for the English language and their loyalty to the British authority in the region. Table 4.1 also indicates the total absence of Arab workers or even of Iranians in this early period. The reason could lie in the

4.1 Employees of Kuwait Oil Company by Nationality  
and occupation in 1937 and 1942

Occupation	Kuwaits				Indians				British			
	1937(1)		1942(2)		1937		1942		1937		1942	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Managers									2	10.53	6	27.30
Professional & technical					5	13.51	13	14.44	17	89.47	14	83.61
Clerical & workers related	6	1.94	8	2.38	8	21.62	23	25.55			2	9.0
Service workers	112	36.60	145	43.15	3	8.10	30	33.33				
Production workers	190	61.68	173	51.48	21	56.75	24	26.66				
Total	308	100.00	336	100.00	37	100.00	90	100.00	19	100.00	22	100.00

\*Other nationality number is two American and two Portuguese in 1937.

Source:

1 - Figures of 1937 compiled from I.L.O. P/15/5/249.

2 - Figures of 1942 compiled from I.L.O. R/15/5/253.



fact that the policy of the Kuwait Oil Company, especially in its early years, to employ mainly British subjects i.e. British and Indians. The latter, who were already experienced in the Bahrain Oil Company, showed a considerable tendency to cooperate with the British administration, and had no political impact on the indigenous population.

There was little prospect of employment for the local labour force as anything other than manual workers.<sup>3</sup> This was due to the fact that the Oil Company needed labour with particular skills which were not available locally and which had to be recruited from abroad (See tables 4.1 and 4.2). In addition the oil company, for one reason or another, was not keen to train the native labour. Y.S. Al-Sabah, a member of the ruling family, points out:

It was increasingly felt that the oil companies were not honouring their commitment to the host country in terms of the employment and training of Kuwaitis. Kuwaitis were not being trained or employed in highly important positions within the companies. It is true that Kuwaitis were employed by the companies - but as clerks, guards and drivers rather than as geologists, reservoir engineers, refinery engineers and petrochemical experts...In brief, the oil companies were acting as foreign enclaves, as states within a Sheikhdom, with one main objective: to supply the world market with cheap crude oil and to satisfy the shareholders while so doing.<sup>4</sup>

It was not clear if such an employment policy was deliberate but certainly there were a number of objective reasons around which the company constructed its policy: the lack of qualified local labour and the fact that the company was concerned that if they trained indigenous labour to operate the mechanics of the company they would take it over. Because of his great need for the oil revenues the ruler of Kuwait was not at that time in a position to exert more pressure on the

company. Furthermore, Article B, Clause B of the Kuwait Oil Company's concession agreement, was written in such vague manners as to give the oil company a free hand in importing foreign labour from outside if it could not be met locally:

The company shall employ subjects of the Sheikh as far as possible for all work to which they are suited under the supervision of the company's skilled employees, but if the local supply of labour should, in the judgement of the company be inadequate or unsuitable, the company shall have the right with the approval of the Sheikh - which shall not be unreasonably withheld - to import labour, preference being given to labourers from neighbouring Arab countries who will obey the local law.<sup>5</sup>

However, it is interesting to note that in 1936, the Sheikh of Kuwait complained about the increase in number of Indian traders with whom Kuwaiti merchants thought that they could not compete:

The Sheikh wishes to keep out prosperous Indians desiring to set themselves up as merchants, because he is afraid that owing to their ability to live more cheaply than his own people and their business capacity, they will, in turn, drive many of his own merchants out of business. Moreover much of the profit that the Indians would make they would remit home".<sup>6</sup>

The political agent believed it would not be in the interests of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India "that there should be internal trouble in Kuwait and clearly an influx of Indians would be liable to lead to trouble and to discontent with the Sheikh's rule".<sup>7</sup> They proposed, therefore, to limit the number of Indians entering the country, and decreed that no Indian should carry on business without an equal Kuwaiti partner.<sup>8</sup> In reality however, the number of Indians increased especially in the 1940s. For example, M.T. Audsley has estimated that the number of Kuwait Oil Company employees increased from 1659, in January 1946, to 18046, (See tables 4.2 and 4.3) in January 1949, and of these 236 were Indians in 1947, 1233 by 1948, and 4953 by 1949.<sup>9</sup>

4.2 Employees of Kuwait Oil Company by Nationality and occupation in 1945-1946

Occupational groups and Nationality	September 1945	January 1946 (peak figure)
Senior Staff (British & American)	56	65
Junior Staff (mostly Indians)	54	64
Artisans (Indians, Iraqis or Persians)	20	120
Labour (local if possible)	500	630
Local Contract labour	500	760
<b>Total</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>1659</b>

Source:- Compiled from I.C.L. 9/15/5/251

4.3 Employees of Kuwait Oil Company by nationality and occupation between 1947-1949

Nationality and occupation	January 1947	January 1948	January 1949
British & American	90	670	587
Other staff	153	446	689
Skilled workers	389	3189	5123
Semi-skilled			1440
Unskilled	1269	3573	3450
Workers employed by Contractors:			
Senior staff			1074
Junior staff			189
All other labour			4645
<b>Total</b>	<b>1901</b>	<b>7878</b>	<b>11846</b>

Source:- Compiled from F.O. 371/74942

It should be pointed out that it is not clear how M.T. Audsley obtained his figures since the official statements indicate the total number of workers by December 1949 was only 12,705<sup>10</sup> (See table 4.4). However, the increased number of oil company employees by 1949 was due to the expansion of the company's construction projects and it has been found that the majority of these workers were Kuwaiti and employed on a temporary basis. For example, the number of Kuwaiti labourers decreased from 3909 to 2067 between 1949 and 1950 (See table 4.4).

Until 1949 it was not clear if there were any Arab workers apart from Kuwaitis working in the Oil Company. British authorities in the region, prior to the Palestinian crisis in 1948, did not wish to recruit Arab labour and the official explanations for such a heavy dependency upon Indian labour, stemmed from the fact that "Arabs in general and Kuwaitis in particular would not provide sufficient numbers of employees required for skilled and semi-skilled occupations." This was particularly due to the lack of modern education and vocational training and "general backwardness of the Arab world."<sup>11</sup> Secondly, "the importation of Arab labour in contrast to Indian labour would be fairly expensive."<sup>12</sup> The period 1946-50, witnessed important changes which affected the recruitment policy of the British authorities: first, the beginning of commercial shipments of crude oil in 1946; second, the exodus of the Palestinians who had been uprooted from their homeland by Zionism in 1948, and which gave Kuwait and Saudi Arabia an opportunity to make use of cheap and qualified labour such as skilled workers, teachers, engineers, doctors and civil servants,<sup>13</sup> and finally the arrival of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah to power in February 1950. Sheikh Abdullah was known for his internal liberal policies, and for his enthusiasm for the Arabization of all employment sectors. It is

4.4 Employees of Kuwait Oil Company by Nationality and Occupational Grade in 1949-1950

Nationality	(1) December 1949				(2) March 1950			
	Senior Staff	Clerical & technical staff	Labour	Total	Senior Staff	Clerical & technical staff	Labour	Total
British	1293			1293	1097	1		1098
American	193			193	75			75
Other European	16	3		19	18	5	5	28
Indian		913	1838	2751		879	1573	2452
Pakistan		198	1959	2157		168	1588	1756
Irani		3	933	936		2	718	720
African			11	11		5	8	13
Kuwaiti		62	3009	3971		46	3067	3113
Omani		2	777	779		2	433	435
Iradi		6	334	340		7	299	306
Saudi		1	37	38		1	37	38
Bahrain		4	7	11		3	9	12
Syrian		5	2	7		5	3	8
Palestine		84	9	93		85	13	98
Egyptian		1	1	2		1		1
Lebanon		8	2	10		9	2	11
Somali		1	22	23			27	27
Yemeni		1	58	59			52	52
Other		7	5	12		1	1	2
Total Non-Arab	1502	1112	4741	7355	1190	1060	3692	6142
Total Arab	-	187	5163	5345	-	159	4343	4502
Total	1502	1299	9904	12705	1190	1219	8035	10644

Source:- Compiled from K.O.C. 371/82116

interesting to note that the British authorities in the Gulf, immediately after the Palestinian exodus, attempted to employ some of the qualified Palestinian refugees in the Kuwait Oil Company. This can be seen in a letter sent from the Assistant Manager of the K.O.C. to the political agent which notes that:

We have the honour to acknowledge your letter 17/29(13/9) of the 14th instant, in which you ask if we are prepared to employ Arab Palestinian refugee labour on a long term or short term basis. We write to advise you that we are prepared to employ from 300-500 skilled labourers from the Arab refugee population on the same terms as we employ our Indian skilled labour.<sup>14</sup>

This did not represent a firm policy with regards to the employment of Palestinians. As early as April 1949 the British backed the ruler who was opposed to their being employed as the British argued that "the increased number of Palestinians will agitate public opinion against Britain and there are enough Palestinians whose influence will be directed increasingly against the British connection."<sup>15</sup> Generally the number of Arab workers employed in the K.O.C. increased from none, in the early 1930s, to 1448, by March 1950, and of these 821 were Omanis, 306 were Iraqis and only 188 were Palestinians. (See table 4.4).

A.1.1. Comments on the Working Conditions in the K.O.C.

The status of Indian workers in the oil company is a rather peculiar one. They lived in a social enclave by themselves, considered themselves, especially those first to arrive, superior to the indigenous population and at the same time they were treated as inferior by the European members of the staff. Indians and western employees were never treated on the same terms. For example, while European employees enjoyed many social facilities, free accommodation, electricity and water and high wages,\*

\* Wages of Europeans working in the oil company were kept secret and unknown to the public.

the Indian skilled and semi-skilled workers were paid at rates of Rs. 190\* per month plus a further Rs. 95 living allowance. A junior clerk serving a second or third two year contract would receive a basic wage of Rs. 210 per month together with rent free accommodation and free food.<sup>16</sup> In addition "Indian workers were allowed only four gallons of water a day, were denied proper medical facilities and were forced to take their salaries in Indian currency while the Europeans were paid in the currency of their respective countries."<sup>17</sup> Such differences led the Indian workers to protest against such ill-treatment to the local government, the British authorities and the government of India. In August 1948 Indian workers went on strike demanding improvement in their working and living conditions. The leaders of this strike were deported and were described by the British Chief Officer of the special police, Sgt. F.J. McLintic as "trouble makers, agitators and possible communists".<sup>18</sup> The well-being Indian mission which travelled all over the Gulf Emirates investigating the working conditions of Indian working in the oil fields expressed its concern on the case of Kuwait and recommended that:

"The terms and conditions of employment for Europeans and Indians, doing the same or similar work should be identical in all respects, and that no segregation or race discrimination should be permitted. The Indian workers are living under a fear-complex. They are afraid of the management either singly or collectively, for any one doing so runs the risk of being discharged at a months notice."<sup>19\*\*</sup>

For Kuwaiti labour the situation was much worse, as unskilled labour received less than Rs. 3 a day and they were recruited on a temporary and daily basis.<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to note that from the 1930s until 1964

\* Rupee is the Indian and Pakistani currency. Rs 190 reached approximately £14 in the early 1950s.

\*\* For more details on this strike see Chapter VIII

the year in which the government prohibited the establishment of recruitment agencies for commercial purposes (See the Ministerial decree No. 9)\*, the oil company subcontracted the hiring of labour in Kuwait, and sometimes in India and Arab countries, to local agents, namely: <sup>c</sup>Abdulla Mulla Saleh (Kuwait Contracting Company) and Al-Ghanim (Contracting and Construction Company). These companies had been established to meet the labour demand of the oil company and the government. They would receive the wages of the workers from the employers, and then distribute them to the workers after deducting a substantial commission for themselves. M.T. Audsley, explained the way in which this commission worked in the Al-Ghanim recruitment agency: "all the wages due to the men are paid through his office after authorisation by the Company's pay and wages Department and for this he received a commission of 15% of the monthly amount paid out. In addition he receives 9.5 Dinars (£9.10)\*\* per month of 26 days for each man and his payroll".<sup>21</sup> It has been estimated that during the year of 1948 the 3 recruitment agents were paid by the company the sum of £152,731 as wages of which £22,764 was commission.<sup>22</sup> The recruitment agencies were formed in most of the Gulf Emirates by some members of the notable families, and usually they were backed by the ruler who compelled the official administration and the oil companies to recruit labour through them. One of the purposes of such a labour recruitment structure was to channel some of the oil revenue to the notable families, and thus strengthen the alliance between the notables and the ruling families. As to the oil companies, this was the best way to detach themselves from any legal responsibility towards the workers and it reflected the oil companies' reluctance in most of the Middle Eastern Countries, to increase the employment of indigenous

\* For more details on this subject see Chapter VII

\*\* The exchange rate as it accounted in M.T. Audsley's report in April 1949.



labour or to relinquish operational control to them. This reluctance was well expressed by D. Finnie when he noted that:

Some western oil men feel there is a limit beyond which no company can go in relinquishing operational control to local employees. Since a national of the Middle Eastern Country may find difficulty in being completely loyal to his employer in a dispute with his own country, they maintain, the only safe course is to limit responsibility to a level compatible with the company's own security.<sup>23</sup>

#### A.2. The Second Stage of Labour Migration: 1951-1960

The arrival of Sheikh Abudalla Al-Sabah to power in February 1950 marked a turning point in the history of social and political change of Kuwait. A large proportion of the oil revenues were spent on the expansion and introduction of new modern institutions and hence "an open door policy", in terms of migration, was also adopted.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the period between 1930 and 1950 was characterized by the immigration of non-Arab labour; Iranians and South Asians constituted 42% in 1937-42 and 32% in 1942-47. (See table 4.5). The decade of the fifties, however, was marked by the movement of Arab labour, particularly from Palestine, Iraq and Oman. The available data in the 1950s (Table 4.6), indicated that while immigration from Iran and Iraq continued at high levels, the numbers of Palestinians, Omanis, Lebanese and Europeans arriving had increased significantly. These changes are particularly sharp after 1950, when the Arabs of the Levant, especially Palestinians, began to arrive in increasing numbers. For example, the number of Arab immigrants arriving rose from 1176, in 1950 to 6411, in 1956, of whom 2861 were Iraqis, 1476 were Palestinians and 1294 were Lebanese. It is also interesting to note that the overwhelming majority

4.5 Percentage and numbers of migrants to Kuwait by Nationality between 1917 and 1942/47

Nationality	1917	1917-27	1927-37	1937-42	1942-47
Iraqi	17	30	17	27	29
Iranian	46	48	42	37	37
Omani	2	10	13	16	17
Saudi	21	20	18	12	7
Indian	1	1	1	3	5
Pakistani	1	1	3	2	6
Other	10	10	9	8	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100
No. involved	144	152	507	879	2735

Source: Hill, V.G. Aspects of the Urban Development of Kuwait, Unpublished Ph.D.thesis, Durham University, 1969, p.85.

4.6 Foreign Nationality in Kuwait by individual countries up to 1957. The number of arrivals

Country	Before											Total No.	% of total
	1947	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956		
Iran	1611	185	300	461	625	1345	1590	2024	3348	3795	1470	16754	96
Iraq	2476	190	371	450	513	1426	1304	1593	1999	2415	2361	15086	77
Palestine	665	59	113	139	268	613	1827	2457	2125	3281	1476	13143	72
Lebanon	299	6	20	45	100	319	632	910	1011	1565	1294	6215	31
Oman	917	96	117	156	249	352	434	557	655	1140	861	5629	30
India	244	257	215	192	72	211	462	351	357	427	150	3749	20
Pakistan	354	106	135	87	81	149	213	247	258	363	282	2065	10
Syria	239	6	16	27	34	98	211	227	320	491	451	2120	10
U.K.	99	92	141	136	116	183	250	227	204	301	200	1953	10
Egypt	333	2	5	6	12	76	111	197	355	484	284	1975	10
Other	1038	17	160	144	127	255	386	545	550	762	622	4716	25
Total	8775	1016	1674	1890	2204	5227	2420	5633	1243	1494	9619	72517	100

Source:- Ibid, p.83.

of the arrivals were male. It was in the case of Egyptians and British who showed a more even balance between the number of males in relation to females. This was due to the fact that they, especially the British, were accompanied by their families or in the case of the Egyptians, there were a large number of female teachers.

It should be emphasised that although these figures are some indication of the size of the immigrant population, it should not be forgotten that the administration which produced these statistics lacked efficiency, and that these figures did not include the illegal immigrants who were estimated at 21,000 in 1955.<sup>25</sup> The figures of the 1957 population census remain the most reliable indicators of the Kuwait population structure in the 1950s. The total number of immigrants had reached 92851 in 1957 (See table 4.7) and although the 1957 census did not give details of the distribution of the population in the labour force, we can presume that a large proportion of the immigrants were engaged in economic activities.<sup>26</sup> An examination of the nationality of immigrants in that year reveals that 67.5% were Arabs, 32.5% non-Arabs and the six most numerous immigrant groups were the Iraqis (26035), Iranians (1919), Palestinians (15173), Lebanese (6829), Omanis (6380) and Syrians (2145) (See table 4.7).

The decade of the 1950s also witnessed a number of serious events and attempts by the Kuwaiti government to regulate its own labour market. The transformation and modernisation of Kuwaiti society made a large number of Kuwaitis economically redundant and at the same time unfamiliar with the modern technology being used. This compelled the Kuwaiti government to employ a large number of its citizens in its newly established public administration or in the K.O.C. The government also attempted to

4.7 Immigrant groups by Nationality and the year of census

Country	1957		1965		1970	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Iraq	26035	12.6	25897	5.5	39066	5.3
Palestine	15173	7.3	77712	16.6	147596	20.0
Lebanon	6829	3.3	70677	4.5	25387	3.4
Oman	6380	3.1	19520	4.2	14670	2.0
Saudi Arabia	2002	1.0	4632	1.0	10897	1.5
Syria	2145	1.1	15849	3.5	27217	3.7
Egypt	1734	0.8	13021	2.4	30421	4.1
Other Arab countries	2346	1.6	11271	2.4	17495	2.4
<b>Total No. of Arabs</b>	<b>62650</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>187923</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>312849</b>	<b>42.4</b>
Iran	19919	9.6	30790	6.5	39129	5.3
Pakistan	2551	1.3	11735	2.0	14712	2.0
India	4122	1.9	11699	2.5	17136	2.3
U.K.	2361	1.1	2737	0.5	2736	0.4
Other non-Arab	1166	0.5	2308	0.5	4428	0.6
<b>Total non-Arab</b>	<b>30201</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>59357</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>78341</b>	<b>10.6</b>
Kuwaitis	113622	55.0	220059	42.1	347396	47.0
<b>G.Total</b>	<b>226473</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>467339</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>738662</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source:- Al-Sabah, Amal: Al-Hijra Lil Kuwait (Migration to Kuwait), Kuwait-Kuwait University, Press, 1978, p.147.

train some of its citizens by expanding the K.O.C. training centre, established in 1949, and by establishing the Centre of Vocational Training of the Labour and Social Affairs Directorate in 1955.<sup>27</sup> In addition, and in order to deal with the large influx of foreign labour the government expanded the labour office so as to register workers, issue permits, and to regulate the recruitment of labour. Thus, the government passed a number of labour laws such as: the "Cadre of Government Employees", on the 30th August, 1955, which regulates the recruitment process in the government sector; and "the recruitment cadre of Indians, Pakistanis, and people of Jawa" of 1955 (revised in 1957). What is interesting in this legislation is that it gave the Housing Department the responsibility of organising and recruiting the South Asians and the people of Jawa. Finally, "the recruitment and retirement system", enacted in 1955, to deal with the household servants, private drivers, street sweepers and so forth.<sup>28</sup> It is interesting to note that the "Cadre of Government Employees" did not distinguish between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, and regarded qualifications as the main distinction criteria. This was of course, in favour of Arab labour which was better qualified than Kuwaiti.

### A.3. The Third Stages of Labour Migration: 1961-1971

The course of labour migration to Kuwait during the sixties was affected by the independence of Kuwait in June 1961, the adoption of a form of democracy, the expansion of the Kuwaiti infrastructure, and an increasingly political influence of the nationalist forces.\* Table 4.8 shows that the Kuwaiti population had increased considerably from 206,473 in 1957 to 738,662 in 1970. It also indicates that the share of

\* For more details on these issues see Chapter III.

4.8 Kuwait population by sex in Census year

Years	Population		
	Male	Female	Total
1957			
Kuwaiti	59,154	54,468	113,622
Non-Kuwaiti	72,904	19,947	92,851
Total	132,058	74,415	206,473
1961			
Kuwaiti	84,461	77,448	161,909
Non-Kuwaiti	116,246	43,466	159,712
Total	200,707	120,914	321,621
1965			
Kuwaiti	112,569	107,490	220,059
Non-Kuwaiti	173,743	73,537	247,280
Total	286,312	181,027	467,339
1970			
Kuwaiti	175,513	171,883	347,396
Non-Kuwaiti	244,368	146,898	391,266
Total	419,881	318,781	738,662
1975			
Kuwaiti	236,600	235,488	472,088
Non-Kuwaiti	307,168	215,581	522,749
Total	543,768	451,069	994,837
1980			
Kuwaiti	280,649	264,964	545,613
Non-Kuwaiti	495,990	296,349	792,339
Total	776,639	561,313	1337,952

Source:- Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office,  
Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982. opcit. p.25.

non-Kuwaitis increased from 45% in 1957 to 53% in 1970 and of them 312,849 or 42% were Arabs. Moreover, the distribution of the population by sex indicates that about 78.4% of the non-Kuwaiti population in 1957 were male, but table 4.7 shows that the percentage as well as the actual number of female immigrants increased from 1994 or 21.6% in 1957 to 146,893 or 37.6% in 1970. The population census of 1970 also indicates that around 19.1% of the male non-Kuwaitis were under the age of 15 years (see table 4.20) which means that *prima facie* 56.7% of non-Kuwaiti groups were dependents. This also could be taken as an indication in the shift of the pattern of migration from a predominantly male to a more familial one.

An examination of immigrant groups by nationality reveals that Arab immigrants represent the overwhelming majority. Their share in the non-Kuwaiti population increased from 67.4% in 1957 to 80% in 1970, (see table 4.7). The number of Palestinians living in Kuwait during the years 1957 to 1970 also increased considerably from 15,173 to 147,696, and their share in the non-Kuwaiti groups rose from 16.3% in 1957 to 37.7% in 1970. In the case of the Iraqis and Iranians who had constituted important sources in the earlier periods, the figures indicate that while the increase in their number was sustained in absolute terms, their percentage share, decreased from 28% to 10%, for Iraqis and from 21.5% to 10%, for Iranians, during this period. The share of Egyptians however, increased from 0.8% in 1957 to 6.1% in 1970. The South Asians, another important source of labour in the earlier stages of immigration to Kuwait, kept their proportion during the sixties constant at 4.5%, but their absolute number rose from 6753 in 1957 to 32,078 in 1970.

4.9 Labour Force Growth Rates (1965-1970)  
and factors affecting further growth

	1967	Growth Rate 57-65*	1965	Growth Rate 65-70	1970
Labor Force Total	80,288	11.0	185,291	5.5	242,296
Kuwaiti	24,602	7.5	44,017	8.2	65,369
Non-Kuwaiti	55,686	12.3	141,279	4.6	176,927
Unemployed Total	1,404	17.8	5,194	9.4	8,153
Kuwaiti	678	19.8	2,868	15.2	5,821
Non-Kuwaiti	726	15.7	2,326	0.1	2,332
Wage Earners Total	66,591	10.7	150,420	5.0	191,629
Kuwaiti	17,612	9.3	33,374	8.9	51,164
Non-Kuwaiti	48,979	11.5	117,046	3.7	140,465
Self-employed Total	11,446	9.1	23,649	7.9	34,621
Kuwaiti	5,902	-1.6	5,201	3.1	6,842
Non-Kuwaiti	5,544	16.2	18,448	9.1	28,579
Employers Total	502	32.8	4,512	7.8	6,583
Kuwaiti	228	25.0	1,357	8.6	2,050
Non-Kuwaiti	274	36.0	3,155	7.5	4,533
Unpaid Workers Total	345	4.7	504	19.1	1,710
Kuwaiti	182	2.3	218	6.2	295
Non-Kuwaiti	163	7.3	286	26.0	915

\*1957-1965 growth rate (5-year span). 1961 labor force data not available.

Source: Stanford Research Institute. Social and Economic Impacts of The Kuwait Government Compensation Increase of 1971-72 and Recommended National Compensation Policies. California. Stanford Research Institute. 1974. p.111-46.



Labour figures for the same period indicate that the labour force tripled from 80,290 to 242,510. For the non-Kuwaiti labour force the annual growth rate was higher during the years 1957 to 1965, (12.3%) than during the years 1965-1970, (4.6%). Such a dramatic drop in the growth rate can be attributed to the restrictive immigration policy adopted by the Kuwaiti government, and the considerable increase of immigrants' dependents. On the other hand, the Kuwaiti labour force maintained its growth rate during the same period and in fact increased its annual rate from 7.5% during 1957-65, to 8.2% during 1965-70 (See table 4.9). Generally the labour force, both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti decreased as a proportion of the total population from 60% to 45.2% between 1957 and 1970. This is an important point that a large increase in immigrant labour nevertheless resulted in an overall decrease of the proportion of economically active population. This was particularly due to an increased proportion of family dependents joining their immigrant breadwinners.

The distribution of both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in the various activities shows the high concentration of both groups in the non-productive sectors. For example, the services sector alone was employing approximately 51.7% of the Kuwaiti and 47.9% of the non-Kuwaiti labour force in 1957. In 1970 these proportions had increased in the case of Kuwaitis to 61.7% and decreased in the case of non-Kuwaitis to 38.5%. The decrease of the non-Kuwaiti share in the service sectors is paralleled by the increase in their share in other economic activities. For example, their contribution in the construction and manufacturing sectors, in absolute terms, rose from 9821 to 5582 to 31,481 and 25,982 in 1957 to 1970 respectively. Similarly in the commercial sector where their share increased from 7.1% to 14.7% during the same period.

It is important here to say that the contribution of both the Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti labour force is revealed when the percentages of both segments are translated into absolute figures. It is evident that in those two sectors in which the Kuwaiti proportion is high, they still constitute a minority of the actual labour force involved. In the services sector, for example, the non-Kuwaitis numbered 67,310 and the Kuwaitis only 36,826 in 1970. Similarly, in agriculture and fishing the non-Kuwaitis amounted to 3258 while the Kuwaitis were only 802 and the gap between the two grows wider as we move towards the non-administrative sectors (See table 4.10). The explanation of such a phenomenon lies in the way in which socio-economic development has been conducted. Such a development has marginalized the Kuwaiti labour force and excluded them from the modern productive sectors, thus creating a feeling of superiority amongst Kuwaitis which reinforced traditional cultural values that scorn manual jobs in favour of managerial and more prestigious assignments.

#### A.3.1. Government Attempts to Control the Labour Market

The period from 1960 to 1970 witnessed the introduction of a number of labour and immigration legislations which were aimed at regulating the influx of foreign labour by controlling their lives and distinguishing between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. For example, in 1962 the "No Objection Certificate" *Shihadat 'Adwal-Mukana 'ah* was introduced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and it was normally issued to immigrant labour by the Ministry itself at the request of the employer. It was introduced in an attempt by the government to control the immigration of foreign labour and hence to minimize the rate of unemployment among its own labour.

Table 4.10

Distribution of Combined Kuwaiti and non-Kuwait Labor Force by Economic Sector in 1957, 1965, 1970 & 1975

Economic Sector	1957 <sup>1</sup>						1965 <sup>2</sup>					
	K	N-K	%	Total	%	K	N-K	%	Total	%		
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting & Fishing	603	0.7	460	0.5	1049	1.2	573	0.3	1410	0.8	1983	2.1
Mining & Quarrying	1211	1.3	4198	4.9	5409	6.3	1243	0.8	5643	3.1	6062	3.7
Manufacturing	1079	1.2	3582	6.5	6611	7.7	1825	1.0	16117	9.0	17342	10.0
Construction	378	0.4	9821	11.5	10199	11.9	1264	0.7	27584	15.4	28848	16.1
Electricity, Gas & Water	-	-	-	-	-	-	1645	0.2	5346	3.0	6991	3.9
Commerce	4151	4.5	4071	4.8	8222	9.6	5129	2.9	17916	10.0	21045	12.9
Transport, Storage & Communication	1513	1.8	2053	2.4	3566	4.2	2613	1.5	7412	4.1	10025	5.6
Services	14681	17.2	27625	32.1	42108	49.2	25519	14.2	57015	31.8	82534	46.0
Activities not Adequately stated	4805	5.6	3590	4.2	8495	9.8	749	0.1	675	0.4	924	0.5
TOTAL	26373	31.2	57186	66.8	85559	100.0	40166	22.4	132118	77.6	170284	100.0

Economic Sector	1970 <sup>3</sup>						1975 <sup>4</sup>					
	K	N-K	%	Total	%	K	N-K	%	Total	%		
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting & Fishing	820	0.3	3250	1.4	4060	1.7	3983	1.5	4531	1.2	7514	2.7
Mining & Quarrying	1675	0.7	5496	2.3	7171	3.1	1779	0.5	3080	1.0	4859	1.5
Manufacturing	6104	2.6	25982	11.1	32091	13.7	7758	0.7	22209	7.4	24467	8.1
Construction	2188	0.9	31134	13.4	33672	14.4	1756	0.5	30500	10.2	32256	10.7
Electricity, Gas & Water	2133	0.9	5119	2.2	7252	3.1	2034	0.6	5237	2.0	7271	2.4
Commerce	7298	3.1	25715	11.0	33013	14.1	6327	2.3	33737	11.1	39959	13.4
Transport, Storage & Communication	2362	1.0	9776	4.2	12138	5.2	4567	1.5	14118	5.7	16485	5.2
Services	16026	15.7	67410	28.7	104136	44.4	64365	21.5	102337	34.3	114902	35.3
Activities not Adequately stated	241	0.1	590	0.2	821	0.4	2	-	-	-	2	0.0
TOTAL	59634	25.4	174720	74.6	234345	100.0	86971	29.1	211444	70.9	298415	100.0

1957 figures refers to persons 10 years and over

1965, 1970 and 1975 figures refers to persons 15 years and over

Electricity, Gas and Water for 1957 census are included in Manufacturing

1961 figures are not available

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract 1980, Kuwait, Kuwait Government Printing Press, 1980, p.111.

This system worked until 1967, when as a result of the influx of a large number of Palestinians driven out during the 1967 War and subsequent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by the Israelis, the task was transferred to the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>29</sup> In 1969, a number of Amiri decrees were issued so as to bring the immigration of foreign labour under the complete control of the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>30</sup> The control of labour migration by the Ministry of the Interior, gave preference to security and political considerations over actual conditions and demands of the labour market. It is important to remember that these actions were taken in order to minimize the number of Arab immigrants due to whose large presence in Kuwait the Arab Nationalist Movement had become one of the most powerful political forces in Kuwait.

It is interesting to note that the establishment of the Kuwaiti parliament has also contributed considerably to the practice of discriminations against the non-Kuwaitis. In other words, the substantial domination of tribal and conventional religious deputies in the parliament, and the government attempts to win the support of its population, led to a policy of "legalized" discrimination which was reflected in the practices of the government and Majlis (parliament). Accordingly, discrimination against the immigrant was brought into practice by the substantial support of a legal framework.\* For example, the distinction between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis was brought into practice for the first time by the enactment of the law of Kuwaiti citizenship in 1959.<sup>31</sup> The preference of Kuwaitis over non-Kuwaitis was also reinforced by; 1) what was called at that time *Qanun Insaf al-'umal al-Kuwaitiyyin* (The Law of Kuwaitis Justice) of 1963, which promised to transfer all Kuwaiti

\* Many such attitudes were revealed in the discussions of the Kuwaiti parliament. See for example Kuwait Gazettee Supplement No. 122, 14th November 1967, pp.24-25.

labourers from daily wages to monthly salaries and to protect Kuwaiti pension rights;<sup>22</sup> 2) the Kuwaiti labour law of 1965; 3) the labour law for the oil sector in 1969; and 4) the laws for the Civil Service in 1960, 1971 and 1979. The above are discussed in other parts of this thesis.

#### A.3.2. Features of Migration in the 1960s.

A number of features have characterized the Kuwaiti labour market in the decade of the 1960s. These features are:

- 1) By 1970, Arab immigrants still retained considerable predominance over non-Arab migrants and represented 80% of the total immigrant population. This partially reflected the influence of the Nationalist group in Kuwait which through its domination of public opinion and its substantial presence in parliament drove the government to impose restrictions over the immigration of non-Arab groups, especially the Iranians. Such government policy also enabled the regime to gain the support of Nasser during the Kuwaiti crisis with Qassim of Iraq in June 1961.
- 2) The accelerating increase of non-Kuwaitis, and the imbalance of the competition, in terms of qualifications, between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, drove the regime to take a number of steps to balance out the over-dependence on immigrant labour, such as: a) Education and vocational training were made available for Kuwaitis,\* and b) Kuwaitization, or al-takweit particularly in the cases of key positions that had been held by non-Kuwaitis.
- 3) The large influx of foreign labour and the lack of experience and skills among the Kuwaitis had resulted, for the second time in less than ten years, in the unemployment of some 2,500-3,000 Kuwaitis,

\* For more details see Chapter VI

as estimated in December 1962. This situation was brought before parliament which in cooperation with the government took the following measures in 1963: a) a scheme which paid a monthly stipend of K.D. 30 for single and K.D. 45 for married, unemployed Kuwaitis; b) such unemployed Kuwaitis were to attend a training course made available for them in the technical college of Kuwait; c) the training course should be supervised by the Diwan al-Mawadfin (Employees Department), and should cover areas most in need by the local market; d) in the unskilled occupations within the army and the police force, unemployed Kuwaitis could be hired without any need for training;<sup>33</sup> and e) unemployed Kuwaitis over the age of 50 years could be recruited in the non-skilled occupations within the civil and public sectors.<sup>34</sup>

- 4) Foreign labour which moved into Kuwait in this period either arrived through the private means, or through the local recruitment agencies. Those who were channeled through the recruitment agencies usually suffered from an abuse of human rights and exploitation. A Kuwaiti newspaper described such a situation:

Recruitment agencies usually recruit foreign labour for oil and other large private companies. The salaries or wages of the recruited worker is a bargaining point between the employers and the agencies, the higher salaries were for workers, the more agencies could profit. Usually these agencies deducted around 30% of each recruited workers' salary.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, the lack of adequate legal controls on the recruitment of labour resulted in the so called, "Illusion Recruitment Agencies", where individuals went directly to the labour supplying countries and extorted huge sums of money from poor people who had to sell or mortgage their land, livestock and other belongings or borrow money in order to

pay for the price of a false promise of a job. Such a situation came before parliament during its discussion of the primary draft of Kuwait's labour law on the 6th of June 1964, and the resolution which was adopted is stated in article 11 of the Kuwait labour law and reinforced by the Ministerial decree No. 9 of 1964.<sup>36</sup>

#### A.4. The fourth Stage of Labour Migration:1971-1981

This stage of labour migration to Kuwait can be divided into two sub-stages, 1971-1974 and 1975-1981 as each of these was characterized by different features. The first sub-phase was characterized by the emigration of foreign labour from Kuwait, and the second sub-phase was characterized by the large influx of Asian labour and the tightening up of restrictions over the immigration of particular nationalities of Arab labour.

##### A.4.1. Emigration of Foreign Labour Out of Kuwait:1971-1974

This phase witnessed the lowest rate of growth in the labour force. The tightening up of residential and immigration policies in addition to the emergence of more attractive labour markets in neighbouring countries such as Qatar, U.A.E., and Iraq, drove a substantial number of immigrant workers to emigrate to countries where the salaries and wages were higher and labour and residential legislation were flexible and less discriminatory. For many immigrants the Kuwait labour market was losing its attractiveness as it was facing a problem of retaining highly qualified labour. The problem, which was referred to as "al-Hijra al-Mou<sup>6</sup>akisa" (Migration in the opposite direction) constituted a major issue for people concerned with economic development in Kuwait, i.e. government officials and local newspapers. Foreign labour was emigrating to other

oil producing countries which, as a consequence of oil price increases, were expanding their economic development projects on a large scale. The seriousness of this problem was reflected in the acute shortage of manpower noticed in different economic sectors. For example, it was reported that the construction sector alone lost about 12.9% of its engineers, 7.9% of its technicians, and about 28% of its production workers.<sup>37</sup> A Stanford research team reported the following:

"This study has determined that there is a constant flow of workers and technically trained personnel out of Kuwait. A wide number of variables appear to govern this situation, the most part perhaps being the degree of economic growth occurring in any of the labour demanding countries. Moreover, the more conditions of employment and social life decline for the non-Kuwaiti, the more there will be a basic tendency to look for alternatives elsewhere. The ramifications of its dynamic condition on manpower planning, efficiency and social stability are readily apparent."<sup>38</sup>

Tables 4.11 and 4.12 indicate losses in labour by contrasting the number of arrivals and departures. For example, the number of Palestinians leaving the country in 1970-73 exceeded the number of arrivals; 411,685 leaving compared to 301,793 arriving. The case of the Iraqi is interesting in that the number of departures exceeded that of arrivals by 47,910. But the explanation for the departure of the Iraqis lies in the relatively flexible policy adopted by the Iraqi regime in the seventies, the ambitious economic plans undertaken in that country, and finally the restriction imposed by the Kuwaiti government over the Iraqi community especially after the territorial conflict with Iraq in 1973. Unlike the other expatriate communities, the number of Indians arriving in Kuwait exceeded that of the departures by 1013. Moreover table 4.12 provides further evidence on the considerably decrease in the number of residence permits allowed to all Arab immigrants during the period 1970 to 1973. For example, the number of residence permits in the case of Palestinians



Table 4.11

## Number of arrivals and departures between 1970-1973

		Palestinians	Iraqis	Egyptians	Syrians	Lebanese	Iranians	Indians	Pakistanis	Omanis
1970	Departures	87303	198801	32231	34220	27648	29812	15768	15486	16382
	Arrivals	87884	170870	32422	32650	28536	17915	16050	14031	14897
		541(+)	(-) 27931	(+) 191	(-) 1570	(+) 888	(-) 10897	(+) 282	(-) 1395	(-) 1485
1971	Departures	86934	221808	33298	38586	31857	25909	15892	17973	14609
	Arrivals	94709	215456	37143	39262	30392	16392	16265	13323	12381
		7775(+)	(-) 6352	(+) 3845	(+) 676	(-) 1465	(-) 9517	(+) 373	(-) 4650	(-) 2220
1972	Departures	126528	221582	57111	53879	51581	20015	21757	25373	11818
	Arrivals	105560	203080	43715	49918	24546	13349	21609	21521	8922
		17968	(-) 18502	(-) 13396	(-) 3961	(-) 17035	(-) 6676	(-) 148	(-) 3833	(-) 2894
1973	Departures	110020	153553	43658	46546	41129	29525	1226	49927	1457
	Arrivals	106340	149428	40597	48620	38509	1111	1712	4181	4384
		4080(-)	(-) 15125	(-) 3392	(-) 2074	(-) 2530	(-) 7213	(+) 506	(+) 154	(-) 4463

Sources: Al-Musa, *et al.*, *Strategies of Movement of Labour Force in Kuwait, Kuwait-Beyond Oil*, Plaining, unpublished study, Mar 1975, p. 48.

4.12 Number of permits of residence by nationality issued between 1970-1973

Nationality	Number of residential permits			
	1970	1971	1972	1973
Palestine	30270	12345	5595	5862
Iraq	12184	5560	3415	1223
Egypt	14555	7762	4747	5133
Syria	13001	4820	3327	3676
Lebanon	11518	2929	2584	2327
Iran	4012	4300	3898	5055
India	3278	2923	5561	4600
Pakistan	2129	3293	2235	2672
Oman	6042	3247	1126	762

Source: al-Busa, Ali et al., Strategies of Movement of Labour Force in Kuwait, Kuwait Board of Planning, unpublished study, March, 1975, Table 18A.

decreased from 30,270 in 1970 to 5862 in 1971, and the residence permits issued for the Egyptians decreased from 14,555 in 1970 to 5,133 in 1973. In contrast, the number of residence permits increased for all non-Arab immigrants. In the case of Iranians it increased from 4,012 in 1970 to 5,055 in 1973, and in the case of Indians from 3,278 to 4,600 during the same period.

A special team was established to examine the problem of emigration of foreign labour from Kuwait. The team concluded that a number of factors operated internally and externally to create the problem. These were listed as follows: 1) the lack of data and the absence of a specialized centre made the task of projecting the demand and supply in the labour market impossible; 2) tightened restrictions over entry, work, residence and also the limited amount of education, housing and other social benefits offered to the expatriate communities; 3) the difference in wages, incentives and working hours between the indigenous and immigrant workers - national labour usually worked less hours and received higher wages and allowances; 4) the accelerated increase in demand for labour in countries which were, until then, amongst the main suppliers of labour to Kuwait, such as Iraq and Oman, for example, 14.3% of those who terminated their work and left for home in 1972-73 were Omanis (See table 4.13); and finally 5) the emergence of new competitive labour markets in Qatar, U.A.E. and Libya, which had adopted more or less the same path of economic development and a search for the same types of labour.<sup>39</sup> For example, 53.1% of the foreign labour force in Libya were concentrated in the services and construction sectors in 1972.<sup>40</sup>

A.4.2. The Asian Epoch of Migration 1975-1981

The increase of oil revenues since 1973 enabled the Kuwaiti government to expand its socio-economic development in a very arrogant manner and consequently increased an already great demand for foreign labour. Ironically, while the western capital flowed to the Far East during the same period, Far Eastern labour was being exported to the Gulf countries.<sup>41</sup> Farjani explained the new pattern of migration to the Arab Gulf region by providing three reasons: Profit maximisation driven by the private sector; security consideration by the governments; and the conditions in the Arab labour markets. For the Government the security matter tended to cause considerable concern:

The Gulf governments found it logical and more convenient to use non-Arab labour with a high turnover, because it enabled them to avoid the "trouble" caused by Arab labour which had a tendency to settle down and to influence life in Arab Gulf societies.<sup>42</sup>

While for the private sector the question of profit and passivity of labour were the main concerns:

We prefer Indians because they are cheaper work hard, are completely obedient and do not have the ambitions of the Arab workers.<sup>43</sup>

A.4.2.1. Asian Contribution to the Population and Labour Force

While the absolute number of Asian immigrants has increased steadily their percentage share in the country's population rose very little during the period prior to 1975 (See table 4.14) but their share increased considerably from 9.8%, or 97213, in 1975 to 15%, or 204104, in 1980 (See table 4.14). An examination of their share in the labour force reveals that their contribution to the non-Kuwaiti labour force had increased from 8.9% in 1965 to 15.9% in 1975 (see table 4.15) and to 11.2% in 1980.

4.13 Number of Omanis who terminate their jobs and left the country

All Nationalities	Omanis	% to total	Reasons of termination
895	155	17.3	Not willing to renew the work contract.
347	57	16.4	Resign.
261	35	12.4	Termination of work contract
45	-	-	Death
110	3	2.7	Other reasons
1678	250	14.3	All the reasons

Source: Al-Mousa, Ali, et al, op.cit, p.74

4.13 Contribution of Asian Labour in the Labour force

Nationality	1965	%	1970	%	1975	%
Pakistan	5,550	3.92	6,755	4.04	11,038	5.23
Indian	6,996	4.64	10,438	5.25	21,633	10.23
Other Asian	1,157	0.11	524	0.31	982	0.46
Total	12,697	8.67	17,717	10.6	33,693	15.91

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980 - Kuwait. Kuwait Government Printing Press, 1980, p.127.

4.14 Kuwait Population by sex and groups of countries

Nationality	1970			1975			1980		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kuwaiti	175513	171283	347396	236600	235488	472088	280549	284964	565513
Other Arab	164729	128120	312849	237425	161762	419187	340226	234289	574515
Asian	56010	15907	71917	66568	31245	97813	142356	56148	204104
African	488	188	676	317	123	440	599	702	1301
European	2637	2179	4816	2327	1953	4280	5765	4219	9984
American	434	463	897	422	392	814	1068	929	1997
Others	18	17	35	25	22	47	96	62	158
Not stated	52	24	76	84	64	148	-	-	-
Total	419081	318781	736862	543768	451069	994837	726639	581013	1307652

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit.p.27.

As the 1980 population census gave no detailed information about the nationalities of immigrants, we found the data of labour permits issued by the Ministry of Labour since 1977 the best indication of the changing pattern of migration in Kuwait. Table 4.16 shows that the number of the work permits issued between 1975-1981 had increased from 122,347 to 215,192, which means that around 92,745 workers had entered the Kuwait labour market for the first time. This means that the number of workers increased by 75.8% over the previous six years. Table 4.16 also shows that the year 1977 was a turning point where the number of workers jumped from 122,347 in 1975 to 197,003 in 1977. This was particularly due to the expansion of the construction projects and government social programmes. An examination of the labour permits by economic activity reveals that the majority, during the previous six years, were absorbed by the construction sector (See table 4.17); which accounted for 58.2% in 1977 and 54.6% in 1981 of all permits. The data show that the trend of recruitment, despite its fluctuation from one year to another was increasing in favour of Asian labour. For example, the Asian labourers' share in the labour permits rose from 35.4% in 1977 to 60.7% in 1981. In contrast the contribution of Arab labour was reduced in absolute number from 37,157 or 30.9% in 1977 to 1,768 or 3% in 1981. It is interesting to note that while Asian labour is predominant in the construction sector its share in the other economic activities, though relatively low, has maintained an increase; it rose from 37.5% in 1977 to 51% in 1981.\* This means that although the new trends of Asian recruitment started in the construction sector its "slow penetration" of the other economic activities would lead it to dominate employment in most of the economic activities. The case of U.A.E. is very indicative in this respect, furthermore, an examination of the labour permits granted by nationality

\* For more details on the economic and vocational characteristics of immigrants see Chapter VI.

4.16 Work permits issued between 1975 - 1981

Description	1975 <sup>1</sup>	1976 <sup>2</sup>	1977 <sup>3</sup>	1978 <sup>4</sup>	1979 <sup>5</sup>	1980 <sup>6</sup>	1981 <sup>7</sup>
Permits to enter the labour market	29237	24380	58357	56017	49705	66795	70158
Work permit) issued for the first time.)	74743	86290	63492	43270	62474	56178	50454
Renew work permit)			56337	65397	61185	54905	52332
Cancellation and conversion)		10381	13065	5013	3027	11725	11432
Final cancellation and departure)	14389						
		2731	3348	10527	15619	16890	19428
Businessmen	2841	890	1281	582	194	153	622
All economic activities	1151	1294	1093	991	25	58	766
	122347	125966	197003	166707	174229	206704	216172

Source compiled from:-

1,2,3 and 4. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Annual Report on the use and characteristics of foreign labour, 1978, Kuwait, Directorate of Manpower Planning.

January 1979 - p.2.

5. Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of Foreign Labour, 1979. Kuwait, Directorate of Manpower Planning, 1980-82.

6. Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of Foreign Labour, 1980, Kuwait, Directorate of Manpower Planning, 1981, p.13.

7. Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of Foreign Labour, 1981. Kuwait, Directorate of Manpower Planning, 1982, p.



Table 4.17

Work permits issued for the first time in 1977 to 1981 according to the economic sector and nationality

Nationality Groups	Constructions Sector					Other Economic Sector				
	1977 <sup>1</sup>	1978 <sup>2</sup>	1979 <sup>3</sup>	1980 <sup>4</sup>	1981 <sup>5</sup>	1977 <sup>1</sup>	1978 <sup>2</sup>	1979 <sup>3</sup>	1980 <sup>4</sup>	1981 <sup>5</sup>
Arab Nationals	14299	8331	7198	9365	7358	15253	9330	9736	13165	10326
%	38.6	26.8	27.8	31.9	27.1	57.5	54.3	52.5	49.2	44.3
Asian Nationals	20445	21586	17649	18950	18795	9955	6739	7723	12677	11892
%	55.3	69.4	68.1	64.5	69.0	37.6	39.2	41.6	47.3	51.0
Other Nationality	2362	1173	1077	1083	1051	1308	1106	1091	938	1082
%	6.1	3.8	4.1	3.6	3.9	4.9	6.5	5.9	3.5	4.7
Total	36976	31090	25924	29398	27154	26516	17180	18550	26780	23300
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source compiled from:

1. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of foreign labour, 1980, op.cit., p.21.
2. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of foreign labour, 1981, op.cit., p.26.
- 3,4. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of foreign labour, 1980, op.cit., p.21.
5. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of foreign labour, 1981, op.cit., p.26.

indicates that Far Eastern immigrants were arriving in increasing numbers and South Asians continued to increase to high rates, the number of Egyptians and Iraqis maintained its increase while the number of some other Arab immigrants, especially the Palestinians had decreased considerably (See table 4.18). It was learned, for example, that none of the Palestinians travelling with "a Palestinian travel document" (wathiqat al-Safar al-Philistiniyā) have been allowed to enter Kuwait since 1977. The attitudes of Kuwaiti officials with regard to the immigration of Palestinian refugees in particular, is expressed as follows:

We are not in favour of importing Asian labour and so, in the mean time, we are not against recruiting more Arab workers. The only objection is that concerning importing Palestinian refugees as they are likely to be political trouble makers.<sup>44</sup>

Such attitudes were further consolidated after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982, not only in Kuwait, but all over the Gulf and other Arab countries.<sup>45</sup> These measures have therefore prevented many Palestinian families from uniting or individuals from seeking employment in the Arab region.\*

#### B. Demographic and Social Characteristics of the Immigrants

For a better understanding of the socio-political effects of immigration on the Gulf States in general and Kuwait in particular, it is necessary to know something about the migrants themselves, about the demographic structure of immigrant populations, the length of stay in the country of employment and finally the immigrant's contact with the countries of origin. It is important to note that within each national group of migrants, individuals have different backgrounds, aims and

\* The period of 1970-1980 witnessed a severe restriction over their immigration; for more details see Chapter VII.

4.16 Work permits issued between 1977-1981 by Nationality

Country	1977	%	1978	%	1979	%	1980	%	1981	%
Yemen	412	0.7	372	0.6	273	0.6	327	0.5	286	0.5
Iraq	209	0.3	803	1.4	2248	0.5	278	0.2	1833	3.6
(Jordan	5079	8.7	2808	5.0	1928	4.4	1996	3.5	1647	3.2
(Palestine	489	0.8	52	0.09	46	0.1	42	0.07	75	0.1
Syria	4202	7.2	2010	3.5	1706	3.8	2085	3.7	1687	3.3
Lebanon	2729	4.6	1857	3.3	1281	2.8	949	1.6	955	1.8
Egypt	23776	40.2	13890	24.7	8909	20.	13669	24.2	10720	21.2
Other Arabs	261	0.4	427	0.7	483	1.0	681	1.2	501	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>37157</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>22219</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>16934</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>22530</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>17064</b>	<b>35</b>
Pakistan	5335	10.8	5375	9.5	5092	11.4	5628	10	4400	8.7
India	5630	11.3	8871	15.8	975	2.1	2043	3.6	7051	13.9
Iran	5271	9.0	2077	3.7	6563	14.7	7289	12.9	2086	4.1
Bangladesh)			963	1.7	1501	33.	2092	3.7	3097	6.1
Korea )			9397	16.7	8016	18.	9229	17.1	7511	14.5
Philippine )	1754	3.0	1297	2.3	987	2.2	842	1.4	1582	3.1
Japan )			635	1.1	392	0.8	307	0.5	712	1.4
Other )										
Asian )			1996	3.5	1846	4.1	3297	5.8	4198	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19990</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>30611</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>25272</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>31627</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>30537</b>	<b>60.8</b>
Eastern Europe	164	0.2	417	0.7	358	0.8	430	0.7	349	0.6
Western Europe	1014	1.7	2616	4.6	1730	3.8	1499	2.6	1701	3.3
Other nation- alities	50	0.08	154	0.2	86	0.2	92	.02	53	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1210</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3187</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>2168</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2133</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>58357</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56017</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>44474</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56178</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50455</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Compiled from: 1,2, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of Foreign Labour, 1979, op.cit., p.28.  
 3,4, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of Foreign Labour, 1980, op.cit., p.71.  
 5, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Annual Report on the Use and Characteristics of Foreign Labour, 1981, op.cit., p.127.

other characteristics; all that can be done here is to point out fairly general features, which will contribute to a better understanding of the position of each group in the production process.

B.1. Sex Composition of Immigrants

Sex and age greatly determine the contribution of both indigenous and immigrant population to the labour force. The sex ratio among the immigrant groups is greater than that of Kuwaitis. This ratio which was quite high during the sixties, 236 males in 1965, for every 100 females, decreased in 1975 to 142 males for every 100 females, and then increased again in 1980 to 167 males for every 100 females. This increase can be ascribed to the large influx of single immigrants (males) from Asia and Egypt, and can also be ascribed to the tightening of government immigration policy (See table 4.14). As to sex ratio among Kuwaitis it represented 104 males for every 100 females in 1965; equal proportion in 1975; and 96 males for every 100 females in 1980.

Furthermore the comparative trends of the sex ratio, especially in the first half of the 1970s, show that the non-Kuwaitis, in particular Arab immigrants, are increasingly narrowing the gap between the number of males in comparison to females. It is important to note, however, that Asian immigrants do not usually bring their families with them nor do they establish families in Kuwait. This is why the number of males in comparison with females rose from 213/100 in 1975 to 253/100 in 1980.

Data in table 4.19 indicates that the sex ratio among individual immigrant groups shows that Palestinians more than all other groups have a strong tendency to join their dependents:

The movement of Palestinian workers to the Arab oil countries was different in quality from the movement of other Arabs however. So the movement of Palestinian families to the oil countries exhibited a number of distinctive features: Palestinian labour migration to the Arab oil countries, particularly to Kuwait was distinguishable from its beginning in the early fifties by an insistence on the accompaniment of the household.<sup>46</sup>

The number of Palestinian males in comparison with females decreased from 177/100 in 1965 to 111/100 in 1975, the same could be seen in the case of the Saudis where it decreased from 164/100 to 112/100 and the Lebanese, where it decreased from 159/100 to 114/100 in 1965 and 1975 respectively. In contrast the number of males in comparison to females in the case of Egyptian migrants rose from 110/100 in 1965 to 144/100 in 1975, and is expected to be higher than this in the foreseeable future.

Although the number of males vis-a-vis females has increased from 119/100 in 1975 to 135/100 in 1980, data on individual European groups, especially the British, showed that Europeans have a tendency to bring their families with them in the country of employment. For example, the ratio was 114/100 in the case of the British in 1975 (See table 4.19). This reflects the economic status of European workers in Kuwait, who are highly skilled, receive very high wages, free accommodation, and are not restricted by the many local social laws.

Unlike all other immigrant groups the number of males vis-a-vis females is very high in the case of Iranians; 1644/100 in 1965, and 455/100 in 1975. It is also interesting to note that the number of

Table 4.19

The sex composition among various groups comprising Kuwait Population.

Nationality	1965				1970				1975			
	M	F	T	F/M /100	M	F	T	F/M /100	M	F	T	F/M /100
Kuwaitis	112,559	122,592	220,059	109	275,513	271,983	347,396	102	236,800	235,488	472,088	100
Palestinians	49,744	27,969	77,712	177	79,934	67,762	147,696	117	107,770	96,408	204,178	111
Iraqis	15,762	10,135	25,897	155	21,583	15,483	39,066	152	26,499	18,571	45,070	142
Saudis	2,881	1,751	4,632	161	6,025	4,672	10,697	123	6,620	5,907	12,527	112
Lebanese	17,820	6,027	23,847	159	16,145	11,242	25,387	125	13,228	11,568	24,796	124
Syrian	12,075	4,774	16,849	252	17,180	10,937	27,217	171	24,641	16,321	40,962	150
Egyptians	5,796	5,225	11,021	110	17,392	13,029	30,421	133	35,795	24,739	60,539	144
S.Y.	2,560	75	2,635	343	7,839	765	8,604	102	10,311	2,021	12,332	520
N.Y.	133	11	144	120	2,026	337	2,363	601	3,705	1,076	4,681	340
Omanis	16,848	2,736	19,584	675	12,432	2,238	14,670	199	5,117	2,198	7,315	233
U.A.E.	822	283	1,105	282	2,845	1,590	4,435	178	1,387	1,203	2,590	114
Sudan	329	79	408	429	562	221	773	266	1,339	439	1,553	227
Other Arab	6,584	465	7,049	141	766	554	1,320	136	1,208	1,318	2,526	91
Iranians	29,025	1,765	30,790	1644	35,498	3,631	39,129	977	33,359	7,481	40,842	445
Indians	7,735	3,964	11,699	195	10,510	6,826	17,336	153	16,779	15,326	32,105	109
Pakistanis	7,633	4,307	11,730	166	9,438	5,274	14,712	178	14,990	9,320	24,010	166
British	1,573	1,264	2,837	124	1,400	1,338	2,738	104	1,493	1,130	2,423	114
Other Asians	110	61	171	180	207	55	262	376	1,122	249	1,371	450
Other non-Arabs	1,200	822	2,022	145	2,586	1,612	4,198	160	2,742	1,611	4,353	132
Total	246,122	181,017	467,339	158	419,881	318,791	738,662	111	543,768	451,059	994,817	120

Source: Compiled from Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980, op.cit., 1979-80

males vis-a-vis females in the case of Indians has decreased from 195/100 in 1965 to 109/100 in 1975. Such a decline does not reflect any trends among Indian immigrants to be joined by their families, but it is entirely attributed to the increase of female Indians in the labour force, who constitute the overwhelming majority of household maids.\*

The interpretation of the high sex ratio among the Asian immigrants could be attributed to the following causes: 1) most of the Asian labour are semi and non-skilled labour, receive very low wages, and cannot afford to bring their dependents - in fact many of the Asian immigrants due to the economic difficulties, have sent their families back home; 2) the large presence of illegal Asian migrants who, due to legal and economic difficulties, found it impossible to be reunited with their families; and finally, 3) the introduction of strict immigration laws and the sponsorship system have made it impossible for immigrants to bring their families.\*\*

## B.2. Age Composition of Immigrant Labour

With respect to the age structure of the immigrant population there is a great imbalance between the age groups (see table 4.20). This can be seen, for example, in the fact that while Kuwaiti groups are heavily concentrated in the age group 0-19 years, which accounted for 58% and 60% in 1965 and 1980 respectively, the immigrant groups are heavily concentrated in the age group 20-49 years, which accounted for 59.8% in 1965 and 53.7% in 1980. This decrease can be attributed to the increase

\* For more details see Chapter VII.

\*\* For more details on the subject of sponsorship systems see Chapter VIII.

Table 4.20

Population by sex and Age Group in Census years.

1965, 1970, 1975, 1980

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Age Group	Census 1980			Census 1975			Census 1970			Census 1965			Total	
	Total	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Total	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Total	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Total	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti		
0-4	M	108,242	53,030	55,212	90,949	44,309	46,640	69,161	35,095	34,066	40,776	16,373	22,405	100
	F	104,670	50,987	53,683	88,000	42,704	45,296	67,304	33,504	33,800	39,596	17,843	21,753	100
	T	212,912	104,017	108,895	178,949	87,013	91,936	136,465	68,599	67,866	80,374	36,216	44,158	200
5-9	M	92,906	46,265	46,641	77,762	37,456	40,306	55,667	25,066	30,601	30,201	10,916	19,285	100
	F	89,874	44,333	45,541	75,730	35,658	40,072	53,699	23,862	29,837	28,968	10,418	18,550	100
	T	182,780	90,598	92,182	153,492	73,114	80,378	109,366	48,928	60,438	59,169	21,334	37,835	200
10-14	M	76,225	37,443	38,782	55,403	24,278	31,125	38,331	14,627	23,704	20,564	7,122	13,442	100
	F	73,806	35,377	38,429	53,063	23,060	30,003	35,139	13,084	22,055	17,482	4,975	12,507	100
	T	150,031	72,820	77,211	108,466	47,338	61,128	73,470	27,711	45,759	38,046	12,097	25,949	200
15-19	M	64,269	34,151	30,118	44,835	21,322	23,513	32,843	16,231	16,612	23,137	13,528	9,609	100
	F	55,547	24,519	31,028	41,761	16,404	25,357	28,914	10,639	18,275	16,251	5,663	10,588	100
	T	119,816	58,670	61,146	86,596	37,726	48,870	61,757	26,870	34,887	39,388	19,191	20,197	200
20-24	M	72,464	48,881	23,603	48,417	28,006	20,411	41,661	28,226	13,635	37,777	29,062	8,715	100
	F	51,843	25,278	26,565	40,365	18,826	21,539	31,198	16,756	14,442	18,513	9,453	9,060	100
	T	124,327	74,159	50,168	88,782	46,832	41,950	73,059	44,982	28,077	56,290	38,515	17,775	200
25-29	M	85,696	66,613	19,083	49,534	33,881	15,653	47,344	35,459	11,885	41,190	32,232	8,958	100
	F	52,790	30,815	21,975	40,826	22,614	18,212	30,591	17,125	13,466	18,034	9,330	8,704	100
	T	138,486	97,428	41,058	90,360	56,495	33,865	77,935	52,584	25,351	59,224	41,562	17,662	200
30-34	M	76,196	62,656	13,540	45,957	33,119	12,838	40,196	30,274	9,922	30,465	23,997	6,473	100
	F	44,500	28,214	16,286	31,107	18,209	12,898	20,303	11,435	8,868	11,221	5,675	5,546	100
	T	120,696	90,870	29,826	77,064	51,328	25,736	60,499	41,709	18,790	41,686	29,672	12,019	200
35-39	M	62,842	50,767	12,075	42,535	30,751	11,784	32,730	23,873	8,857	21,706	15,894	5,812	100
	F	33,717	20,456	13,261	24,968	14,073	10,895	15,659	7,841	7,818	8,369	3,583	4,786	100
	T	96,559	71,223	25,336	67,503	44,824	22,679	48,389	31,714	16,675	30,075	19,477	10,598	200
40-44	M	52,257	41,033	11,224	31,089	22,478	8,611	22,053	15,537	6,416	14,047	9,956	4,091	100
	F	25,106	14,850	10,256	16,669	8,949	7,720	9,518	4,492	5,026	5,508	2,019	3,489	100
	T	77,363	55,883	21,480	47,758	31,427	16,331	31,571	20,129	11,442	19,555	11,975	7,580	200
45-49	M	34,282	25,909	8,373	22,236	15,008	7,228	14,592	9,394	5,198	9,239	5,457	3,782	100
	F	16,366	8,817	7,549	11,651	5,770	5,881	6,752	2,548	4,204	4,082	1,346	2,736	100
	T	50,648	34,726	15,922	33,887	20,778	13,109	21,344	11,942	9,402	13,321	6,803	6,518	200
50-54	M	23,066	16,216	6,850	13,900	8,435	5,365	9,846	5,241	4,605	6,597	3,569	3,028	100
	F	11,409	5,469	5,940	8,473	3,391	5,082	6,217	1,907	4,310	4,125	1,142	2,983	100
	T	34,475	21,685	12,790	22,373	11,826	10,447	16,063	7,148	8,915	10,722	4,711	6,011	200
55-59	M	11,962	7,440	4,522	8,084	3,990	4,094	4,975	2,351	2,524	3,301	1,568	1,733	100
	F	7,139	2,847	4,292	5,639	1,952	3,687	3,021	988	2,033	2,017	599	1,416	100
	T	19,101	10,287	8,814	13,723	5,942	7,781	7,996	3,339	4,557	5,318	2,167	3,151	200
60+	M	16,212	5,586	10,626	13,167	4,135	9,032	10,242	2,766	7,476	6,980	1,492	5,488	100
	F	14,546	4,267	10,279	12,817	3,971	8,846	10,413	2,594	7,719	6,806	1,476	5,328	100
	T	30,758	9,853	20,905	25,984	8,106	17,878	20,655	5,360	15,195	13,786	2,968	10,816	200
Not state	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	140	106	34	330	277	53	100
	F	—	—	—	—	—	—	53	23	30	55	13	42	100
	T	—	—	—	—	—	—	193	129	64	385	290	95	200
Total	M	776,639	495,990	280,649	543,768	307,168	236,600	419,881	244,368	175,513	286,312	173,743	112,569	100
	F	581,313	296,349	284,964	451,069	215,581	235,488	318,781	146,898	171,883	181,027	73,537	107,490	100
	T	1,357,952	792,339	565,613	994,837	522,749	472,088	738,662	391,266	347,396	467,339	247,280	220,059	200

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit, p.33.



of the other age groups. For example, the share of age group 0-19 increased from 35.9% in 1965 to 41.1% in 1980 and in terms of absolute numbers it rose from 86,936 to 326,105 during the same years (See table 4.20).

The available data on the age composition of immigrant groups (See table 4.21) reveals that the majority of Arab immigrants 51.3% were concentrated in the age group 0-19 while only 28.7% of the non-Arab immigrants belong to this group. Furthermore an examination of the age groups by individual nationality indicates that the majority of Palestinians (60.4%), the Gulf citizens (54.2%), and Lebanese (53.5%), fall in the first age group (See table 4.21). In contrast the Egyptians and those classified as other Arabs have a tendency not to bring in their dependents, as 48.5% of the Egyptian and 56.8% of the other Arabs fall in the second age group (20-39). This could explain the fact that large proportions of Egyptian labour and other Arabs are male and mostly engaged in low paid jobs in the construction sector and the small private enterprises. Moreover, it is also interesting to note that the Egyptians who moved in the late fifties and early sixties were mostly accompanied by their families. This can be explained in the light of the fact that the emigration of Egyptian labour, especially during Nasser's regime was selective and only the professional and the skilled were permitted to emigrate. Even then, only

a very limited number were accompanied by their families due to their socio-economic status. Unlike the Arab immigrants, non-Arab immigrants especially Asian migrants, usually moved to the country of employment in a single status between the ages of 19 and 40. Amongst these we also find some slight differences between one group and another, where, for example, the majority of those who are classified as 'other Asians' 59.5%; Iranians 56.5% and South Asians 46.2% fall in the second age

4.21 Immigrant population by age group and nationality in 1975

Nationalities	Age Groups						Not stated	Total
	0-19	%	20-39	%	40+	%		
Egypt	18171	30.01	29397	49.56	12960	21.40	6	60534
Lebanon	13272	53.76	7937	32.03	3567	14.39		24776
Syria	19842	48.44	15954	38.94	5158	12.59	8	40962
Jordan & Palestine	123441	60.45	60200	29.48	20518	10.04	19	204178
Iraq	21526	47.76	15052	33.39	8483	18.82	9	45070
Gulf Countries	12952	54.20	7456	31.20	3479	14.55	9	23896
Other Arab Countries	6148	31.09	11232	56.81	2391	12.09		19771
<b>Total Arab</b>	<b>215352</b>	<b>51.37</b>	<b>147228</b>	<b>35.12</b>	<b>56566</b>	<b>13.48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>419187</b>
Iran	11225	27.48	23085	56.52	6532	15.99		40842
South Asians	16667	30.05	25645	46.24	13128	23.67	14	55454
Other Asians	273	17.99	904	59.59	340	22.41		1517
Europeans	1160	27.10	1945	45.44	1175	27.45		4280
Other countries	476	32.40	654	44.52	339	23.07		1469
<b>Total Non Arab</b>	<b>29801</b>	<b>28.77</b>	<b>56233</b>	<b>54.29</b>	<b>21514</b>	<b>20.07</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>103562</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>24153</b>	<b>46.89</b>	<b>203461</b>	<b>36.92</b>	<b>78060</b>	<b>14.93</b>		<b>527749</b>

Source: Compiled from Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980 - Op.cit - pp.52-53.

group (see table 4.21). However, it is important to emphasise that the recruitment and legislation channels through which Asian labourers have emigrated have considerably affected their demographic characteristics as well as their socio-economic features. It can be concluded that in all migratory movements into Kuwait there is a tendency for men to be more numerous than women, and for young adults to be the predominant age group. Of course, this varies from one immigrant group to another, and from one stage of labour migration to another, and in the final analysis it remains similar in its general demographic characteristics to that of the classic labour migration in western Europe.

### B.3. Length of Stay

According to the immigration and residential laws of all the Arab Gulf countries immigrants are hosted in the country of employment on a temporary basis, and are characterized as "transient immigrants" who come to stay only for the duration of their labour contracts. Their emigration from their country of origin was generated in order to meet the demands of Kuwait's labour market. Data available on the average length of stay shows that some immigrant groups have managed to stay in Kuwait for nine years, especially the Lebanese and those from the Gulf (See table 4.21). An examination of table 4.22 reveals that the percentage as well as the absolute number of immigrants up to 1975 indicated that immigrants were intending to stay in Kuwait for a longer period. For example, the proportion of those who stayed in Kuwait for 0-4 years had decreased from 59.6% in 1965 to 12.1% in 1975. Moreover the percentage of those who stayed for 10-14 years rose from 8% to 16.3% during the same years. However, data for 1980 shows that despite the increase in absolute terms, the share of those who stayed for 0-4 years rose to 45.2% and the share of those who stayed for 5-9 years declined from 28.7% in 1975 to 22.5%

4.22 Non-Kuwaiti Population by length of stay

Length of stay	1965 <sup>1</sup>		1975 <sup>2</sup>		1980 <sup>3</sup>	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
0 - 4	147520	59.6	220445	42.1	358698	45.2
5 - 9	67852	27.4	150193	28.7	173724	22.5
10 -14	22121	8.0	85588	16.3	126694	15.9
15+	7506	2.9	66458	12.7	128233	16.1
Not stated	2181	0.8	65	0.01	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>247280</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>522749</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>792339</b>	<b>99.7</b>

Source:- (1) Planning Board, Central Statistical Office, Population Census 1965, Kuwait: Government Printing Press 1966, p.123.  
 (2) Planning Board, Central Statistical Office, Population Census 1975, Kuwait, Government Printing Press, 1976, p.84.  
 (3) Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract 1982, op.cit, p.46-47.

4.23 Non-Kuwaiti Population by length of stay and nationality in 1970

Nationality	1970 Average of stay
Gulf Emirates	7.9
Saudi Arabia	7.4
Lebanon	6.9
Iraq	6.6
Pakistan	6.5
Oman	6.3
N.Yemen	5.2
Jor-Palestine	5.7
India	5.4
U.K.	5.2
Syria	5.0
Iran	4.8
S.Yemen	4.7
Egypt	3.0
Other Western countries	2.6
T.Arab countries	5.8
T.non-Arab countries	5.3
T.non-Kuwaities	5.7

Source: Al-Musa, Ali et al. op.cit., c.51.

in 1980 (See table 4.22). Such a decrease is due to the large influx of new immigrants, especially Asian labour, who increased in numbers from 220445 in 1975 to 358688 in 1980.

A comparison between the two major immigrant groups reveals that up to 1970 (see table 4.23) there was no significant difference between Arabs (5.8 years) and non-Arabs (5.3 years) in terms of their average length of stay. However, while the average length of stay among Arab migrants increased in 1975 to 7.4 years for the non-Arabs it had increased only up to 5.6 years (See table 4.24). This again indicates the high labour turnover amongst non-Arab immigrants.

An examination of individual immigrant groups indicates that people from the Gulf and the Lebanese, for example, stay an average of more than nine years. The average length of stay of the Lebanese and Gulf citizens rose from 6.9 years and 7.0 years in 1970 to 9.3 years in both cases in 1975. Similarly, in the case of Palestinians and Pakistanis it rose from 5.7 years and 6.5 years in 1970 to 8 years and 7 years in 1975. Amongst all immigrant groups, Europeans exhibited the lowest average length of stay which was 3.9 years in 1970 and 4 years in 1975. Data in table 4.24 also shows that the Yemeni migrants in Saudi Arabia have exhibited the highest average length of stay in the country, similarly with the Iranians in the U.A.E. The Yemeni and Iranian communities are of great importance in an economic sense and have an influence over the political life of the United Arab Emirates, especially the Iranian and Imdain migrants in Dubai.

Furthermore, an examination of the length of stay according to the sex of migrants, indicates that male migrants tend to stay in the country of employment for a longer period. However, cases of Iranian and Pakistani women in U.A.E., and Iranian and Egyptian women in Kuwait indicate that women stayed for a period longer, or at least equal to, that of the men. The explanation of this can be seen in the long period of settlement of Iranians and South Asians in the Gulf and in terms of inter-marriage which used to take place between the Shia community or the indigenous people of Persian origin and Iranian women, or between the Gulf merchants travelling to India and Indian women (See table 4.24).

With regard to the relation between the migrants' occupation and duration of residence, data in table 4.25 indicates that migrants of high strata occupations tend to stay longer than those engaged in manual jobs. For example, migrants working in administrative and managerial occupations demonstrated the highest average length of stay in Kuwait (8.7 and 8.5 years respectively). Sales people and production workers stayed for 7.5 years and production workers stayed for 4.3 years on average. However, amongst each of the occupational groups there are considerable differences. For example, those who are engaged in the field of medicine tend to stay in Kuwait longer than the others (See table 4.26). In addition, it has also been noticed that immigrant labour who are actually engaged in some kind of economic activity tend to stay in the country longer than those who are unemployed (See table 4.27).

From the above, it can be concluded that in spite of a stricter immigration policy, some immigrant groups have managed, throughout the last two decades, to establish their own community in the country of employment. For example, the Iranians and Palestinians, who may be

4.24 Length of stay in U.A.E., Kuwait, Saudi Arabia by nationality and sex in 1975

Nationality	U.A.E.			Kuwait**			Saudi Arabia		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Lebanon	2.96	2.84	2.91	9.89	8.69	9.34	-	-	-
*Gulf Emirates	-	-	-	-	-	9.32	-	-	-
Palestine	3.68	3.55	3.63	8.56	7.52	8.07	6.61	6.49	6.64
S. Yemen	3.41	2.92	3.32	7.17	4.55	6.74	7.41	7.51	7.78
Syria	2.25	2.53	2.33	7.00	5.99	6.60	-	-	-
Egypt	2.13	2.47	2.26	4.87	4.75	4.80	3.28	3.47	3.36
Pakistan	3.65	4.51	3.78	7.50	6.31	7.07	5.43	5.69	5.56
Iran	5.55	7.90	6.03	6.88	6.67	6.84	-	-	-
India	3.28	3.53	3.31	7.37	5.30	6.40	-	-	-
U.S.A.	1.80	2.01	1.92	2.73	3.84	3.27	-	-	-
U.K.	2.24	2.30	2.26	4.43	5.04	4.72	-	-	-
Total Arabs	2.88	2.86	2.89	7.49	6.3	7.47	5.82	5.75	5.79
Total non-Arabs	3.30	4.05	3.46	5.75	5.43	5.66	-	-	-
Grand Total	3.70	4.16	3.80	7.61	6.95	6.65	5.14	6.69	5.66

Source: ECWA - Social and Economic Characteristics of immigrants in the Arab Gulf. - Unpublished Study, - Beirut, 1981, p.12.  
 \*\*Ministry of Planning - Manpower in Government Administration, Kuwait, Directorate of Manpower and Planning, July 1976, p.70.  
 \*op.cit pp.52-53.

4.25 Length of residence by occupational groups in 1970

Rank		Duration
1	Administrators and clerks	8.7
2	Managers and businessmen	8.5
3	Salesmen	7.8
4	Production workers	7.3
5	Services workers	6.5
6	Professionals	6.4
7	Ordinary workers	4.3

Source: Al-Mouss, Ali et al. op.cit, p.31

4.26 Length of stay by occupation in 1970

Rank	Occupation	Duration of stay
1	Chemists and medical jobs	9.9
2	Artists and painters	8.3
3	Religious men	7.7
4	Nurses	7.3
5	Medics	7.0
6	Physicists	6.0
7	Teachers	5.7
8	Lawyers	5.6
9	Writers & Journalists	5.6
10	Accountants	5.1
11	Engineers	4.8
	Total	6.4

Source, Al-Mousa, Ali et al - op.cit.p.32.

4.27 Length of stay by sex and employment status in 1970

Duration of residence	Working				Not working			
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%
Less than a year	14357	8.9	1829	12.6	1612	10.1	6053	8.8
1 - 4	57973	35.9	6167	42.6	4189	25.8	26016	37.8
5 - 10	49901	30.9	4080	28.1	4816	30.1	22770	33.0
More than 10 years	39353	24.3	2413	16.7	5452	34.0	14068	20.4
Total	161584	100.0	14489	100.0	16019	100.0	68907	100.0
Average of stay	6.1		5.1		7.0		5.8	

Source: Al-Akhras, Sufūh. Population; Issues of Development and Planning, Ministry of Information and Culture, Damascus, 1980, p.324.



considered as permanent immigrants. Other immigrant communities, such as the Indians and Egyptians, are not regarded as permanent, but due to the way in which this migrant labour replaces its members by others, of similar characteristics, or holding the same position in the labour force, or sometimes even the same job, makes their communities a permanent social group with a rotating membership. Hence their impact on the host society would not be different from those regarded as permanent immigrants.

#### B.4. Family Size

Family size can also be taken as an indication of the family intention to stay for a lengthy period in Kuwait. The available data, shows that in 1965 there were few families consisting of five members or more, and the majority of the migrants' families consisted of four members or less. However, figures for 1970 and 1975 demonstrated an increase in the size of the migrant family. For example, the share of families consisting of 7 members rose from 7.4% in 1965 to 10.1% in 1975. In contrast, the percentage of families consisting of 3 members decreased from 14.3% in 1965 to 11% in 1975 (See table 4.28). This means that many immigrant workers who originally came on their own were joined by their wives and children, or they had established new families in the country of employment. However, the new regulations imposed on the entry of immigrants has driven the single immigrant to look for wives among unmarried female immigrants.

4.26 Households by Size in Census Years -1965, 1970, 1975

No. of Persons	* Census 1975			Census 1970			Census 1965		
	Total	Non-Kuwait	Kuwait	Total	Non-Kuwait	Kuwait	Total	Non-Kuwait	Kuwait
Number of Households by the Nationality of the Head									
1	7142	6318	824	7365	6553	812	4991	4275	766
2	11292	8833	2459	10771	8762	2009	7684	6081	1503
3	12600	8964	3636	11554	8811	2743	8066	5985	2081
4	15900	11173	4727	13222	9663	3559	8736	6055	2680
5	16841	11480	5361	13038	8893	4145	8680	5528	3152
6	15987	10225	5762	12286	7674	4612	7744	4242	3502
7	14265	8245	6020	10846	5967	4879	6605	3104	3502
8	12644	6367	6277	9227	4304	4923	5301	2196	3105
9	10381	4406	5975	7067	2758	4309	4131	1368	2763
10	7779	2617	5162	5533	1756	3567	2997	914	2083
11	5620	1496	3924	3718	946	2772	2019	527	1492
12	3761	754	2997	2542	554	1988	1456	339	1117
13	2466	407	2059	1800	300	1500	1014	235	779
14	1764	257	1507	1207	188	1019	718	166	552
15+	4330	308	4022	3081	348	2733	2321	788	1533
Total	142572	81360	60712	113057	67487	45570	77464	41854	35610
Percentage									
1	5.0	7.7	1.4	6.5	9.7	1.8	6.5	10.1	2.5
2	7.9	10.8	4.1	9.5	13.0	4.4	9.5	14.5	5.2
3	8.8	11.0	6.0	10.2	13.1	6.0	10.2	14.3	6.8
4	11.2	13.6	7.8	11.7	14.3	7.8	11.7	14.4	6.8
5	11.8	14.0	8.8	11.5	13.2	9.1	11.5	13.2	10.4
6	11.2	12.5	9.5	10.9	11.4	10.1	10.9	10.4	11.1
7	10.0	10.1	9.9	9.6	8.8	10.7	9.6	7.4	11.4
8	8.9	7.8	10.3	8.2	5.4	10.8	8.2	5.2	10.2
9	7.3	5.4	9.8	6.3	4.1	9.5	5.3	3.3	9.0
10	5.5	3.2	8.5	4.7	2.6	7.8	4.7	2.2	6.5
11	3.8	1.8	6.5	3.3	1.4	6.1	3.3	1.3	4.5
12	2.6	0.9	4.9	2.2	0.8	4.4	2.2	0.8	3.6
13	1.7	0.5	3.4	1.6	0.4	3.3	1.6	0.6	2.5
14	1.2	0.3	2.5	1.1	0.3	2.2	1.1	0.4	1.8
15+	3.1	0.4	6.6	2.7	0.5	6.0	2.7	1.9	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* Excluded (5753) Public Household. = 71,265 persons

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1978, Kuwait; Government Printing Press, 1979, p.31

### B.5. Contacts with the Countries of Origin

As stated earlier, one of the main features characterising the immigrant communities in Kuwait and other Arab Gulf countries is their temporary presence in the country of employment. The local legislation, in addition to the low possibility of social integration, have rotated the presence of immigrant communities in Kuwait and thus maintained their contact with the countries of origin. For example, 93.7% of the immigrant sample indicated that they have some kind of contact with relatives and friends in their country of origin. The only immigrant groups who have either lost all or most contact with the country of origin are some of the Palestinian refugees - who moved to Kuwait as a consequence of the creation of Israel in 1948, some of the bedouin migrants from the neighbouring countries, Iraq, Arabia, and Jordan, and the Persian immigrants who moved and settled in Kuwait some time earlier this century.

#### B.5.1. Channels of contact

The channels of contact between the immigrants in the country of employment and their relatives or friends in the country of origin can be explored in the reciprocal visits between relatives and friends in Kuwait and the country of origin, the rotating membership of each of the immigrant communities in Kuwait; and finally the sum of money which is sent home by immigrants to their dependents. An examination of the first channel reveals that the tightening policy of immigration has minimized the opportunity of visits from migrants' relatives and friends, thus the only remaining way, especially in the case of the first and second categories of migrants\* is for them to go home once per year. For example,

\* Socially and economically immigrants were categorised in this study into three; the highly qualified and expert immigrants, professional and skilled labour and finally the semi-skilled and non-skilled single immigrants. For more details see Chapter V.

when the immigrants were asked where they spend their annual vacation nearly 60.3% of the sample indicated they spent their annual vacation in the countries of origin (See table 4.29). However, it is important to emphasise that the immigrants' visits to their countries of origin depend on their economic status and labour contract. For example, the labour contract of the semi and non-skilled workers offers only one vacation every two years and a recent study found that the majority of semi and non-skilled Asian workers are permitted to visit their countries of origin once in every two years.<sup>47</sup>

The second way of contact is seen in the form of replacement within each immigrant group, i.e. the replacement of those departing by new immigrants with the same socio-economic character. Such a process inevitably keeps alive and maintains contact between the immigrants and their countries of origin. For example, while 1312 Egyptians, 3396 Indians and 7013 Korean workers have terminated their jobs and left Kuwait in 1980, 10720 and 7051 and 7511 of the same immigrant groups respectively, entered the Kuwait labour market, for the first time in the same year.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, the third channel of contact is maintained through the remittances sent by the immigrants to their families back home. As was mentioned earlier, one of the major intentions of the migrant (67.7%) is to save some money and send it home. However, there is a substantial number (33.3%) who due to economic difficulties or because they have lost contact with relatives in their country of origin remit no money at all.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, it has been found that the high inflation rate in Kuwait tends to absorb most of the migrants' earnings.\*

\* For further discussion on this point see for example Chapters V and VI.

4.29 Immigrants place of spending their annual vacation

Description	%
In the country of origin	41.6
Country of origin and Arab countries	13.5
In Kuwait and country of origin	12.5
In Arab countries only	7.4
In European countries only	7.4
In Asian countries only	3.1
In Europe and country of origin	4.1
In Asia and country of origin	2.1
In Arab and European countries	2.1
In Kuwait and Arab countries	2.1
In Kuwait only	4.1
Total	100.0

4.30 Remittances: Net transfers by Country of Receipt, 1974 to 1978 (U.S. millions, current prices)

Country	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Bangladesh	N.A	15.3	18.1	78.3	115.1
Egypt	268.2	365.5	755.1	896.7	1761.2
India	234.5	414.6	633.8	910.7	-
Jordan	75.4	166.6	411.0	455.3	520.2
Pakistan	178.0	275.6	409.9	866.3	1303.3
Syria	44.5	52.2	53.1	140.2	93.9
YAR	135.5	270.0	676.5	914.3	899.0
PDRY	41.1	55.9	115.2	172.6	254.8

Source: Seragddin, Ismail - Manpower and International Labour Migration in the Middle East and North Africa: World Bank, Washington - June 1981, p.207

Once again, it is worth noting that the amount of remitted money varies within the categories of non-skilled to skilled and highly skilled sectors; from new immigrants to the already established; and from one immigrant group to another. In other words, the remittance of the non-skilled Arab workers is higher than that of the highly skilled, and that of the non-skilled Asian workers is higher than that of the Arab workers of the same category.<sup>50</sup> However, the differences among those could be interpreted by the fact that the skilled and highly skilled immigrants have a high level of expenditure because of their high salary and the wide range of their social and economic needs which are deeply affected by the consumption pattern of Kuwaiti society. In addition, this category has a high propensity to invest their savings in the country of employment or in a third country rather than in their countries of origin.<sup>51</sup> The low propensity of remitting savings of the old immigrants, in contrast to the new immigrants, can be understood by the fact that when the migrant worker becomes more established in the country of employment his social and economic needs expand and thus his expenditure will increase. Finally, the high remittance of the non-Arab workers, especially the Southern and Far Easterners, can be explained in the light of the fact that non-Arab immigrants, in addition to their insecure position, which is worse than that of the Arab workers, have been coming to Kuwait for a shorter number of years, mainly two to three years; thus their tendency will be to spend less and to save more. (See table 4.30).

Furthermore, the amount of money sent by immigrants through the official channels has become one of the most debatable issues. Some writers argue that the rate of remittances has numerous advantages for the poor countries because it is a way of ameliorating the balance of

4.31 Purposes of migration to Kuwait

Description	%
In order to work	28.1
To improve the standard of living	31.2
To join the family	8.3
To join the family and work	18.0
To study	2.0
Born in Kuwait	3.1
Other reasons	9.3
Total	100.0

4.32 Immigrants' intention to have permanent residence permit

Description of intent	%
Yes	8.3
Yes, in order to have a secure position	49.0
No	28.1
Unstated	14.6
Total	100.0

payments and of providing investment capital to assist economic development in the labour exporting countries.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, an examination of the channels of remitted money and its usage reveals that the remittances have contributed in a limited way to the foreign exchange and the balance of payments problems of a few countries like North Yemen. On the whole they have improved the living standards of the immigrants' families, but made little or no contribution to the economic development of the labour exporting countries.<sup>53</sup> In other words, most of the studies carried out indicate that the remitted money was used by the immigrants' families and their dependents to meet some of their unsatisfied needs. In the first place, the money is likely to be spent on better food, clothes, construction and the like. For example, a survey carried out on 15,000 returned workers in Pakistan showed that 63% of their earnings went on such domestic goods as food, clothes, electrical appliances and on marriage ceremonies.<sup>54</sup> In addition, this study revealed that in a number of cases, some workers have returned with televisions, video cassette recorders, and record players to villages which have no electricity.<sup>55</sup> Even the contribution of the remittances to the standard of living of migrants' families is questionable since it is sometimes associated with much unnecessary conspicuous consumption behaviour, and since such well-being is dependent on the continuous presence of the breadwinner in the country of employment. Furthermore, the growth of purchasing power of the migrants' families will increase goods, services and land prices in favour of the merchants and landowners, which consequently will lead to the deterioration of the economic condition of the majority of the population<sup>56</sup> thus pushing more people to emigrate.



In concluding this chapter it might be of interest to examine some aspects of labour migration to Kuwait such as forces behind migration and migrants' intentions to return to the country of origin. The importance of these aspects is that they help to complete the general characteristics of labour migration and thus permit a better discussion of other specific features in the later chapters.

### C. Forces Behind Migration

The purposes of migration to Kuwait vary individually from one migrant to another, and from one immigrant group to another. For example, criteria which could be applied to the highly qualified migrants do not apply to semi- and non-skilled workers, and those which apply to Egyptians, Iranians and Indians do not necessarily apply to the Palestinians, who among all immigrants are in a different position politically. Nevertheless, immigrants share some similarities, in terms of the fact that the economic factors tend to constitute the basis for the movement of labour in the region. More evidence is indicated in the replies of respondents; 28.1% said that they came to Kuwait to work; 31.2% said they came to improve their standards of living; 8.3% came in tending to join the family and 18% came intending to work and join their families. This means that economic factors seem to initiate the movement of almost 77% of the immigrant sample (See table 4.31)

#### C.1. Migrants' Intention to Return Home

Questioning on the migrants' intention to return home revealed that the majority (58%) of the sample have no such intention and those who intend to return home account for only 5.2%. Some other migrants (8.3%) were more precise when they stated that they intend to leave

because of their uncertain position by saying that it was because of tightening restrictions over migration and residence. Moreover, when the respondents were asked if they would prefer to have permanent residence permits almost 57.3% said they would. Among those 49% went further and stated they would prefer this, because it was the only way to secure their presence in Kuwait (See table 4.32). Once again the majority of the sample are intending to stay in Kuwait for a lengthy period. More evidence was given in a pre-cited study where 70% of the sample which was composed of semi- and non-skilled non-Arab workers stated that they intended to stay longer in the country of employment.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand the failure of Kuwaiti society to absorb the immigrant communities, at least those of Arab origin, and the practices of discrimination were reflected in their replies when they were asked if they would like to be naturalized. The immigrants who said yes were only 36.4%, and 43.7% said they would not and 19.7% said they did not know.

Having outlined the general and historical features of labour immigration in Kuwait it is now necessary to proceed with more detailed discussion of actual living and working conditions of migrant labour in Kuwait. The next chapter embarks on this discussion with a presentation of material on the social lives of immigrants in Kuwait.

NOTES

1. Interview carried out by the author, Kuwait, 1981.
2. For more details on early employment in Bahrain, see for example:  
1. Mohamad al-Rumaihi, Bahrain, Social and Political Change Since the First World War, op.cit. 2. Emile Nakfleh, Bahrain: Political Development in a Modernizing Society, London, Lexington Books, 1976.
3. It was estimated that around 35,000 Kuwaitis were made redundant during the early 1930's due to the collapse of traditional economic activities and their lack of modern skills.  
See, Nora al-Falsh, al-Kuwayt Muhawalin Li Fohm al-Bian al-Ijtimai, (Kuwait: An attempt to understand the social structure), paper presented at a seminar on The Intellectual Framework of the Arab Social Work, Arab Planning Institute, Kuwait, September 26-29, 1981.
4. Y.S.F. al-Sabah, The Oil Economy of Kuwait, op.cit., p.21.
5. The First Kuwait Oil Concession, I.O.L. R/15/5/247.
6. A letter from the political agent in Kuwait to the political resident in Bahrain, 16.7.30, R/15/5/201.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. It was also estimated that the number of Indians working in (K.O.C.) soared 4208 in 1950, F.o. 371/74942.
9. F.O. 371/82116.
10. Report on labour conditions in Kuwait, f.o. 371/74942.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. See for example: David H. Finnie, Desert Enterprises, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.

14. A letter from Ass. Manager of K.O.C. to the British political agent in Kuwait. 10.4.1949, I.O.L. (R/15/5/318).
15. I.O.L. (P/15/5/318).
16. F.O. 371/74942.
17. F.O. 371/82130.  
The unfairness of this system of payment stems from the low rate of exchange of the Indian currency.
18. F.O. 371/74942.
19. F.O. 371/74964.
20. al-Tali'ah, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, March 4, 1970, p.13.
21. 371/74942.
22. Ibid.
23. David Finnie, "Recruitment and Training of Labour in the Middle East Oil Industry, Middle East Journal, Vol. 12, Spring No. 2, 1958, pp.141-142.
24. See for example: Ali-Khalifa, Al-Kuwari, Oil Revenues in the Gulf Emirates, op.cit.
25. Amin 'Azz al-Din Um al-Kuwayt min al-Lulu' Lil bitrul, (Kuwait workers from pearls to petroleum), Kuwait, Government Printing Press, 1958, p.15.
26. Amin 'Azz al-Din estimated that around 40628 immigrants were in the labour force. In fact consideration of the age and sex composition of the immigrants in 1957 suggest that a much higher proportion of them were really in the labour force, Ibid.
27. Emirate of Kuwait, Annual Report of Labour and Social Affairs, Kuwait, 1956, p.17.
28. Amin 'Azz al-Din, Ibid., pp.16-50.

29. According to one official report, about three-quarters of all Palestinians in Kuwait come from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. See Walid E. Mubarak, *op.cit.*, p.139.
30. Ministry of Interior obliges any migrant willing to enter Kuwait to obtain one of the following visas: 1. Invitation Visa. 2. Visit Permit Visa and 3. No Objection Certificate Visa. For more details see: a) Hassan al-Hadawi, "al-Jensiyya wa Markaz al-Ajanib Fi al-Qawaniyn al-Kuwaytiyya", (Nationality and Position of Foreigners in the Laws of Kuwait), Kuwait, wekalat AMatbon<sup>at</sup> Press, 1973, pp.239-240. b) al-Ahuya Qanun Iqamat Al-Ajanib, (Laws of Foreigner Residence), Kuwait, Dar Al-Buhuth al-<sup>al</sup>Almiyah, 1969.
31. See for example, Hassan al-Hadawi, *Ibid.*
32. Kuwayt al-yūn (Kuwait Gazette), Supplement No. 12, 16th July, 1963, p.11.
33. Kuwayt al-yūn (Kuwait Gazette), Supplement No. 122, 14 November 1967, pp.24-25.
34. Kuwayt al-yūn (Kuwait Gazette) Supplement No. 123, 31st October, 1967, p.28.
35. Akhbar, al-Kuwayt, A monthly magazine, Kuwait, August, 1963, p.12.
36. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Private Sector Labour Law No. 31, of 1964, Kuwait, Government Printing Press, undated, pp.6-10.
37. <sup><</sup>Ali al-Mousa, et al., Istirātijiyat Harakat al-Quwa al-<sup>al</sup>Amiā Fi al-Kuwayt, (The Strategies of Movement of Labour Force in Kuwait), Kuwait, unpublished study, Board of Planning, March, 1972, p.42.
38. Stanford Research Institute, Social and Economic Impacts of the Kuwait Government Compensation Increase of 1971-1972 and Recommended National Compensation Policy, California, Stanford Research Institute, 1974, p.v-24.
39. <sup><</sup>Ali al-Mousa, et al., *Ibid.*, p.42.
40. *Ibid.*, p.42.

41. See for example: 1. FolkerFröbel et al., op.cit., 2. Henrik S. Marcussen and Jens Erik Torp, op.cit.
42. Nadir Farjani, Dirasat Tanzim Istikhdam al-Aydi al-<sup>6</sup>Amilah al-<sup>6</sup>Arabiyya Fi al-Diwal al-<sup>6</sup>Arabiyyah al-Khalijiyyah, (Study of Organize and Use of Arab Labour in the Countries of the Arab Gulf), unpublished study, Bahrain, Council of the Minsters of Labour and Social Affairs in the Arab Gulf Countries, 1979, p.39.
43. al-Khaliij, a daily newspaper, Al-Sharjah, No. 408, May 17, 1980.
44. An interview with a highly placed Kuwaiti official, December 1981.
45. It has been learned from a reliable source that Jordan, where the overwhelming majority of immigrant population are Palestinians, banned Palestinian document holders, from entering Jordan.
46. Nabil Badran, Palestinian migration trends and socio-economic consequences, Samad Journal, Vol. 4, No. 37, September, 1981, pp.49-50.
47. Arab Planning Institute, Ma<sup>6</sup>lumāt Hawl al-<sup>6</sup>Amāliḥ al-<sup>6</sup>Ajnabiyyah fi al-Khaliij, (Information on Foreign Labour in the Gulf), unpublished study, Kuwait, 1982, p.44.
48. The figures derived from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Annual Report on employment and characteristics of Foreign Labour, 1981, Kuwait, Directorate of Manpower Planning, 1982, p.116.
49. Similar results which were obtained from a study carried out on a sample of non-Arab immigrants in the Gulf discovered that around 60% of them send between 50% to 80% of their salaries home. In the meantime, 80% of those who transmit 20% to 40% of their salaries home save around 25% of them in the country of employment, see Arab Planning Institute, op.cit., p.44.
50. Ismail Serajeldin, et al., op.cit., pp.205-229.
51. Ibid., pp.223-226.

52. See for example: 1. Nawal Saqir, Strategy of exporting the Egyptian Labour, paper presented in a seminar on Population, Employment and Migration in the Arab Gulf States, Arab Planning Institute, Kuwait, December 1978, p.301. 2. Marwān No<sup>o</sup>man, Manpower and Migration in the North Yemen, Arab Planning Institute, Irbid. 3. Bassim al-Sakit Tahwilāt al-<sup>o</sup>Amaliyāt al-Muhajirāh fi al-<sup>o</sup>Urdu, (The Remittances of Jordanian Emigrants), al-Mustaqbal al-<sup>o</sup>Arabi, Vol. 4, No. 39, January, 1982.
53. In the case of North Yemen the remittances have helped to ameliorate the balance of payments for only seven years starting from 1972/73 to 1978/79. For more details see Nadir Farjani, Labour Exporting and Development. The case of North Yemen al-Mustaqbal al-<sup>o</sup>Arabi, Vol. 4, No. 39, January, 1982, p.94. (In Arabic).
54. For more details on the impact of remittances on the labour exporting countries see: 1. J. Swanson, Emigration and Economic Development, the case of the Yemen Arab Republic, Boulder, Colorado, 1979. 2. I. Gillani, et al., Pakistani Emigration to the Middle East (A Cost Benefit Analysis), Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad, 1980. 3. Sayed A. Ali, Labor Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East, World Bank, op.cit. 4. J.S. Birks and C.A. Sinclair, International Migration and Development in the Arab Region, op.cit. 5. Ismail Scrageldin et al., op.cit. 6. Ibrahim Sa<sup>o</sup>d al-Din, The Negative Effects of the income Disparities in the Arab World on the Disparities in the Arab World, on the Economic Development of the poor Arab Countries: the case of Egypt. A paper presented to the Second Conference of the Egyptian Economist, Cairo, March 24-26, 1977 (In Arabic). 7. M.A. Fadil, The Impact of Labour Migration to Oil-Rich Countries on the Disparities in incomes and Expenditure Patterns in the Arab Labour exporting countries, Oil and Arab Cooperation, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1980, pp.87-111. (In Arabic). 8. S. Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order, op.cit. 9. P. Hallwood and S. Sinclair, Oil, Debt and Development, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1981, pp.147-161. 10. Ibrahim Sa<sup>o</sup>d al-Din and Mohamoud Abdul Fadil, Intaqal al-<sup>o</sup>Amaliyāt Al-<sup>o</sup>Arabiyyah, (The Movement of Arab Labour Force: Problems Consequences and Policies), Beirut, Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1983.
55. Dawn: Overseas, a daily newspaper, Karachi, 17 September, 1982, p.10.
56. For more details on this subject in the case of Arab World see: 1. Ibrahim Sa<sup>o</sup>d al-Din & M Abdal Fadil, Ibid. 2. Sa<sup>o</sup>d al-Din Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order, op.cit.
57. Arab Planning Institute, op.cit., pp.43-44.

## Chapter V

### CHARACTERISTICS OF IMMIGRANTS IN KUWAIT: SOCIAL DIMENSIONS



Look at me, I am a problem,  
Oh what a miserable life. They  
call me a minority, a sociological  
problem, But I just want to earn a  
little, to look after my family, I  
did not come to ask for charity,  
All what I want is to work.

from Protestlieder aus aller Welt.  
(Frankfurt, Fischer, 1967) p.60.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present certain social problems. It is not concerned with the difficulties encountered by the immigrants, although that is one of the main themes of this work; rather it is an examination of the government's discriminatory policy as it has been seen in the case of housing, and reflected in the immigrants' experience of socialization and their crime rate. By doing this, we are attempting to throw some light on the general problems encountered by immigrants. It is important to emphasize that these and other similar problems are not only connected, as some tend to suggest, with the ethnic and socio-economic background of the immigrants. Rather they are related to their position in the production process of the country to which they have moved. In other words, these are only indications of the immigrants' class position in the country of employment. It is a natural product of a social, economic, and political system established on a discriminatory basis.

#### A. Housing and Standards of living

Housing has presented, in the last ten years or so, a major problem not only for immigrant groups, but also for the lower classes and the newly emerged middle class. The massive influx of immigrant labour since

the mid seventies created an urgent need for housing. Usually this demand has been met for only a fraction of the eligible population. Immigrants on the other hand, are left to live in overcrowded and poorly equipped accommodation. The main features of the housing crisis are:

- 1) the general shortage of housing for both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis;
- 2) the existence of slum areas, locally called "al-Ashish"; and
- 3) The large increase in the average house rent, especially after 1976.

#### A.1. The General Condition of Housing

The government's first involvement in the field of housing came after the flood of 1954, when it took the initiative to build 2000 houses to accommodate those who lost their homes as a result of the flood.<sup>2</sup> Two years later the government set up the "Directorate of Government Estates" (Dā'irat 'Amlāk al-Houkūma). The main stated purpose of this Directorate was to build and distribute government houses to eligible people.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that the establishment of this Directorate coincided with the government plan to rehouse the population of the old part of the City and the consequent land speculations. The big development in the government's housing policy came in July 1974, when the "General Organisation of Housing" (al-Hai'āh al-'Āmah lil-Iskān) was established. Its activity was expanded to cover the building of government limited-income accommodation, private houses, and large housing complexes.<sup>4</sup> By March 1975, as a result of the increasing shortage of housing among the Kuwaitis, the government responded to the problem by setting up the Ministry of Housing.



The types of housing, either for Kuwaitis or non-Kuwaitis, are as follows. First, accommodation for low income Kuwaitis. The total number of houses built for people defined as being in the A category reached 25,070 in 1981. This type of housing accommodates only a very small proportion of Kuwaiti families, 2.9% and 2.3% in 1975 and 1980 respectively. In 1980, that total number of standard distributed units for residents amounted to 22,334 and reached only 20,000 eligible families, who comprised 28.9% of all Kuwaiti families <sup>5</sup> (See table 5.1). Bedouins in particular seemed to benefit a lot from the government housing programmes since large numbers of them were living in the shanty towns and since their accommodation was closely related by the government's electoral manipulations.

Second, the 'shacks' of the shanty town, located outside Kuwait City, in the desert. They are usually made of wood, and their roofs covered with asphalt to make them waterproof. Most of their inhabitants are Kuwaiti bedouins, immigrants of bedouin origins, plus some illegal immigrants. In 1975, shanty town inhabitants amounted to 92,444, and made up 9.2% of the total Kuwaiti population. Of these the Kuwaitis made up 79,774, constituting 86.5% of the inhabitants (See table 5.2). Nevertheless, a survey carried out by the World Bank in 1977 indicated that 12,990 non-Kuwaiti families were living in shacks. Taking the minimum average family size at 4 persons this would mean that 51,960 non-Kuwaities were living in the shanty towns in 1977. In addition, it is important to note that the bedouin inhabitant considers himself as a Kuwaiti citizen even if he has no Kuwaiti nationality. According to the 1975 population and housing census, the shacks numbered 21,208 and were concentrated in the outskirts in the al-Jahra, al-Sha'adiyya and Sahid al-<sup>6</sup>Awazim areas. These shacks made up around 15.3% of the total housing units (13,204) in the country in 1975.<sup>7</sup>

Table 5.1

Government limited income housing programme between  
1953-67 and 1981

Years	Governorate				
	Capital	Hawali	Ahmadi	Jahra	Total
1953-1967	3825	3456	967	-	8248
1968	-	49	-	-	49
1969	-	764	707	-	1471
1970	1416	73	46	-	1535
1971	-	-	-	-	-
1972	342	-	491	-	833
1973	108	600	-	-	708
1974	-	-	-	-	-
1975	-	381	1436	-	1817
1976	-	287	1104	-	1391
1977	-	-	863	-	863
1978	-	73	422	-	495
1979	1015	1800	563	-	3378
1980	500	296	-	850	1646
1981	1629	919	-	188	2736
Total	8835	8698	6499	1038	25070

Source: Ministry of Planning, General Statistical Office,  
Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, opcit., p.88.

Table 9.2

The Inhabitants of the Shanty towns by Nationality in 1975

Area	Kuwaitis	Non-Kuwaitis	Total
Al-Jahra	14356	855	10211
Sahid al-awzim	40409	2219	42628
al-Shadadiyah	22609	2796	45405
al-warra and Mina Abd All	2600	6600	9244
Total	79974	12470	92444
Percentage	86.5	13.5	100.0

Source: R. al-Jardawi, Housing in Kuwait, Kuwait Khadma  
Company for Publication and Distribution, 1978,  
p. 65. (in Arabic).

The number of shanty town shacks decreased from 25,000 in 1970 to 21,208 in 1975. Such a decrease could be attributed to the government policy of moving the Kuwaiti inhabitants to the newly built government houses, and prohibiting the construction of new shacks throughout Kuwait. The shacks in these areas are over crowded: In some cases, there are more than 4 persons per room, and it can reach up to 6 or 8 persons per room, and the average size of each room is not more than 3 to 4 sq. yards.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, these areas have no running water, no electricity and they are characterised by a total absence of any type of social service such as health and education.

Third, come the apartments and they are occupied primarily by non-Kuwaitis. Apartment complexes are concentrated in Kuwait City, Salmiyya, Hawali, Firasaniyah and new constructed areas like Jalih al-Shaykh and Khabil. The number of apartments increased from 44,500 in 1970 (constituting 40% of all housing units) to 57,636 in 1975 (constituting 41.6% of all housing units). It may be assumed that their number has increased considerably during the last five years due to the large number of construction projects underway between 1976 and 1982 and the large influx of immigrants.<sup>9\*</sup>

The population density in the apartment type housing is regarded as the highest in all Kuwait, as it averages 11,170 persons per sq. km. in Salmiyya and Hawali cities, for example, there are 20,400 and 11,900 persons respectively to each sq. km. This type of housing accommodated 70% of the total non-Kuwaiti population in 1975, and the average number of persons per room increased from 2.3 to 3 between 1970 and 1975.<sup>10</sup> These areas also suffer from a scarcity of shopping centres, and a lack of health and educational services.

\* The latest population and housing census gives no comprehensive figures on the housing situation or the socio-economic characteristics of the population.

Finally, the fourth type is the neighbourhood unit which houses mostly Kuwaitis and the non-Kuwaiti inhabitants of this type of accommodation are either foreign diplomats or upper-class immigrant merchants and businessmen. The quality and quantity of social services provided here vary from one district to another according to the inhabitants' political role and economic status, and sometimes their ethnic origin. For example, the social services provided in Dahiet 'Abdulla al-Salim, al-Shuwaikh and al-Nuzha residential areas for the Kuwaiti ruling class, vary from those of al-Dahiet al-Qadisiyya and Bnaid al-Kar where the inhabitants are either shi'a or lower and middle class Kuwaitis. In most of these areas buildings are designed in the style of a villa, but this also varies from one district to another; villas are most common in Dahiet 'Abdulla al-Salim and al-Shuwaikh residential areas. In other words, the economic and political position of the Kuwaiti population is indicated by their place of residence and their style of accommodation.

In 1970 the number of villas was 10,083 making up 11.3% of total building units. By 1980 their number had soared to 33,392 making up 31.1% of total building units in Kuwait.<sup>11</sup> Such an increase could be ascribed to the establishment of the new Kuwaiti suburb by the government and the expansion of private construction activities. Generally, such areas are the most thinly populated. The population density in al-Da'iyya is estimated at 3,680 persons per sq. km., and in al-'Omariyya it is only 275 persons per sq. km.<sup>12</sup> These areas have more services such as a cooperative food society, better telephones and electricity services, and newly constructed schools and dispensaries.

\* Dahiet 'Abdulla al-Salim and Al-Shuwaikh residential areas are known by their modern architectural designs and their small palaces.



The latest population and housing census (1970-1980) gives no comprehensive information on actual housing conditions. However, the 1957 and 1965 censuses give some indication of the general situation. For example, the number of building units increased from 51,587 in 1961 to 85,900 in 1970 and to 107,181 in 1980.<sup>13</sup> In addition table 5.3 shows that the number of accommodation units increased from 33,748 in 1957 to 72,464 in 1965. In the meantime the number of inhabitants rose from 206,473 to 463,339, and the number of rooms jumped from 89,147 to 195,348. On the other hand, while in table 5.3 we have no details on nationality, the census of 1970 indicates that the average number of Kuwaitis per room (in the case of a one-bedroom house or apartment) is slightly higher than non-Kuwaitis (4.0 to 3.5) (See table 5.4). The explanation of this may be found in the large number of bedouins who are living in the shanty towns, the worst housing conditions of "unproven"\* Kuwaitis, and in the fact that some traditional families despite their incomes, were still living in the old family houses. However, if we take the total housing stock, the average number of Kuwaitis per room was 1.5, while the figure for non-Kuwaitis was 1.9.

Finally the data in table 5.6 shows how serious housing conditions are in Kuwait, particularly for non-Kuwaitis, where it has been found that around 9899 immigrant families, ranging in size from 3 to 15 persons, are living in houses with only one room in 1970.<sup>14</sup>

The housing conditions of immigrant groups are very diverse. What applies to married immigrants does not apply to single immigrants and what may be found in the case of Asians is not necessarily similar to

\* The term "unproven" is used here to refer to those who were born in Kuwait to parents who are non-Kuwaitis that immigrated to Kuwait illegally several decades ago. Such people, have since lost their citizenship in the country of origin, but have not been granted Kuwaiti citizenship. They do have the right of residence and so do their children, but despite the long residence they are treated as non-Kuwaitis.

Table 5.3

Occupied houses and apartments by the residential areas between 1957 and 1970.

Residential Areas	Houses & Apartments	Inhabitable Rooms	Inhabitants	Average	
				Rooms per house & apartment	Inhabitants per room
1957					
Kuwait City	16864	45654	104551	2.7	2.4
Suburbs	3606	9820	21378	2.7	2.2
Hawali	2361	7757	14784	3.3	1.9
al-Salmiyya	682	2153	4075	3.2	1.9
Rest of Hawali City	4611	10160	37256	2.2	3.7
Amadi City	2134	5723	7280	2.7	1.3
Fahahil	1945	4452	8923	2.3	2.0
Rest of Amadi	1545	3428	8226	2.2	2.4
Total	33748	89147	206473	2.6	2.3
1965					
Kuwait City	15743	40887	99609	2.6	2.4
Suburbs	13808	49430	107464	3.6	2.2
Hawali	10863	29342	64542	2.7	2.2
al-Salmiyya	6999	19867	38648	2.8	1.9
Rest of Hawali City	14704	31146	97783	2.1	3.1
Amadi City	3162	11679	18719	3.4	1.6
Fahahil	3657	7766	20782	2.1	2.7
Rest of Amadi	3528	5231	19892	1.5	3.8
Total	72464	195348	467339	2.7	2.4
1970					
Total	113057	341317	570050	3.0	2.2

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980, op.cit., p.84.

Table 5.4

Buildings and inhabitants by Nationality in 1970\*

No of Rooms	Kuwaitis Average Inhabitants				Non-Kuwaitis Average Inhabitants			
	No. of buildings	No. of inhabitants	No. of inhabitants per building	No. of inhabitants per room				
1	829	3310	4.0	4.0	16725	56489	3.5	2.5
2	2895	15910	5.5	2.7	11646	60251	5.2	2.6
3	5870	38605	6.6	2.2	20846	109365	5.9	1.5
4	6522	48493	7.4	1.9	9008	53283	5.9	1.5
5	4821	40425	8.4	1.7	2101	12792	6.1	1.2
6	3032	27756	9.1	1.5	594	4713	6.5	1.1
7	1754	16261	9.3	1.3	222	1505	6.9	1.0
8	1545	14491	9.4	1.2	90	594	6.6	0.8
9	1026	10054	9.8	1.1	37	309	8.3	1.0
10	4851	53677	11.1	1.0	113	737	6.5	0.1
Total	33145	268982	8.1	1.5	61382	301068	3.9	1.9

\* Excluding Collective, Shacks and Provisional Buildings.

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.85.

Table 5.5

Building ownership by nationality in 1979

Description	Apartments		Villas		Traditional Arabic dwelling		Annex		Total	
	K.	N-K	K.	N-K	K.	N-K	K.	N-K	K.	N-K
The Capital	Private	363	5081		5104		9		10577	
	Rented	411	166	212	2000	2096	65	411	2642	10346
	Other	172	611	132	298	1449	21	258	1774	1602
	Total	946	8238	5379	510	8553	95	769	14973	11948
Hawali	Private	772	6691		4994		23		12480	
	Rented	2015	39174	213	489	2486	120	5119	4834	50335
	Other	218	1476	232	242	2116	29	1107	2595	3281
	Total	3005	40650	7136	731	9596	172	6226	19909	53616
Ahmady	Private	157	1300		2538		18		4013	
	Rented	99	2266	16	83	1988	97	602	2200	5018
	Other	95	330	91	459	733	36	167	955	1720
	Total	351	2596	1407	592	5259	151	769	7168	6738
Total	Private	1292	13072		12636		50		27050	
	Rented	2525	49067	395	784	6474	282	6132	9676	65699
	Other	485	2417	455	999	4298	86	1532	5324	6603
	Total	4302	51484	13922	1783	23408	418	7664	42050	72302

Source: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Housing in Kuwait. Kuwait Ministry of Planning, unpublished study, 1980 - (in Arabic). P.22.

Line by household size & rooms number, in 1970

Household	No. of Rooms										Shack	Not stated	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
<b>Non-Kuwaitis Household</b>													
	152	132	99	60	31	10	9	13	4	2	299	1	812
	126	317	404	257	114	45	26	26	12	27	653	2	2,009
	131	363	515	364	219	90	38	34	19	56	911	3	2,743
	102	362	609	546	288	136	72	79	39	90	1,235	2	3,559
	90	399	666	597	346	181	99	72	51	145	1,496	3	4,145
	87	321	714	675	457	233	133	104	62	253	1,571	2	4,612
	61	315	690	781	534	285	160	146	95	317	1,494	1	4,879
	43	242	682	799	595	362	216	171	111	365	1,337	-	4,923
	20	194	504	723	537	407	201	186	121	418	997	1	4,309
	8	112	398	582	468	301	191	175	121	498	692	1	3,567
	6	62	236	411	368	279	175	131	78	502	520	4	2,772
	3	45	149	246	271	208	123	98	90	433	319	3	1,988
	-	15	93	183	186	172	99	77	62	369	244	-	1,500
	-	13	34	99	118	97	71	68	43	281	193	2	1,019
	-	5	77	199	269	226	141	165	118	1,095	430	8	2,733
Total	829	2,897	5,870	6,522	4,821	3,032	1,754	1,545	1,026	4,851	12,391	32	45,570
<b>-Kuwaitis Household</b>													
	3,642	514	608	238	65	24	5	7	2	14	1,424	10	6,553
	3,174	1,363	2,324	644	155	38	23	3	1	11	1,033	3	8,762
	2,658	1,537	2,745	853	178	58	9	4	5	8	749	7	8,811
	2,300	1,734	3,175	1,339	300	72	28	7	2	15	680	11	9,663
	1,822	1,575	3,057	1,395	323	90	37	14	2	7	568	3	8,893
	1,356	1,517	2,693	1,218	302	73	30	14	2	11	455	3	7,674
	896	1,242	2,075	1,035	214	70	26	10	1	9	386	3	5,967
	473	923	1,615	779	166	52	20	8	4	5	256	3	4,304
	207	596	1,064	533	119	24	10	4	1	4	194	2	2,758
	104	363	665	374	98	26	4	8	3	6	113	2	1,766
	46	145	371	217	50	22	8	4	6	1	74	2	946
	28	60	197	156	41	12	6	2	1	5	45	1	554
	10	34	102	82	21	9	9	3	-	4	25	1	300
	8	15	65	50	20	3	4	-	1	1	19	2	188
	1	28	90	95	49	21	13	2	6	12	30	1	348
Total	16,725	11,646	20,846	9,008	2,101	594	222	90	37	113	6,051	54	67,487

the case of Arab immigrants, or even other Asian immigrants. In other words, the housing conditions vary from one group to another because of different occupations, salaries, and legal and political status.

#### A.2. Housing for Immigrants

Kuwait has no regulations which compel employers to provide accommodation or a housing allowance for immigrant workers. However, some employers do offer such facilities for certain categories of immigrants such as the senior employees in both private and government sectors. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that very few immigrants enjoy such facilities. For example, as is indicated by our survey, the majority of the immigrants (89.5%) live in rented accommodation, only 3.1% in private houses owned by their wives or Kuwaiti relatives, and only 7.2% in accommodation provided by the employer. The case of Kuwaitis was different; 72.6% of them were living in their own houses, and only 27.4% were living in rented accommodation. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that immigrants in their search for housing in the private market are in direct competition with each other. The lucky ones get cheap and well-located apartments. This competition was used in the seventies by Kuwaiti landlords to increase the rent and/or evict the tenants. For non-Kuwaitis, housing is the first experience of prejudice and discrimination, which is obvious in various ways: the segregation between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in terms of the area of residence; non-Kuwaitis do not benefit from the government housing programmes; Kuwaitis are not allowed to rent their government accommodation to non-Kuwaitis and according to Kuwait's law of real estate No. 5 of 1959 and the revised law No. 5 of 1962, non-Kuwaitis have no right to own property. However, the non-Kuwaiti Arab may by law own real estate under

the following conditions: 1) The property should be only used as a residence by the owners and his family; 2) The land should not be larger than 1,000 square metres; 3) He should not own other real estate in Kuwait; and 4) The Kuwaitis should be offered the same right in the immigrant's country.<sup>15</sup> In practice, non-Kuwaitis, because of their economic status and the high increase in land prices are not in a position to buy real estate (See table 5.5).

Foreigners cannot own land or speculate. Arab nationals may by law own their own homes and a surrounding plot no bigger than 1,000 square metres but may not rent them or speculate with them. However in practice they find their way through the red tape to do so. If successful, they probably could not afford the incredible land prices. Foreigners are therefore forced on the local market for housing where rents are astronomical.<sup>16</sup>

The astronomical increase in land prices since the early 1970s<sup>17</sup> thus led to a considerable increase in house rents. The average rent for a modest apartment in Salmiya or Hawali, with one bedroom, a sitting room, unfurnished, with electricity, water, and a kitchen would be K.D. 200 (£400) per month, and to rent a centrally air conditioned apartment with two to three bedrooms would cost between K.D. 300-600 per month (£600-1200). Of course, immigrants may get accommodation at cheap rates (between K.D. 100 and K.D. 200-300), but in the outer suburbs like Fāhāil.<sup>18</sup> However, there is no doubt that such high increases in house rents has severely affected immigrant workers. No empirical evidence was found to substantiate the al-Essa argument that accommodation absorbs 40% of the immigrant household budget.<sup>19</sup> In contrast the study of the Planning Ministry on family expenditure, found that, on average the spending of non-Kuwaiti households on accommodation accounts for 14.3%, while it is only 0.6% in the case of Kuwaitis. However, housing could reach as much as 25% of the family expenditure in the case of low and middle income non-

Kuwaitis.<sup>20</sup> Another study carried out by Ruzaini and others found that 56% of their non-Kuwaiti sample paid less than 25% of their monthly expenditure on accommodation, 28.9% spent more than 25%, 11.9% paid 50% of their income on housing and 3.2% spent more than 50% of their monthly expenditure on accommodation.<sup>21</sup>

The total control of the Kuwaiti ruling class of political power, and its complete domination of the private housing market, give it a free hand to make laws that protect its interests vis-a-vis non-Kuwaiti as well as Kuwaiti tenants. We have come across many cases where non-Kuwaitis have been forced to vacate their apartments, either because they cannot afford the new rent or because the landlord intended to reconstruct his building and re-rent it at much higher rents. In one case:

Immediately after buying a building in Hilali Street the landlord raised the apartment's rent. A few months later he asked the tenants for another rise and when they refused to pay, he threatened them to demolish the building claiming that he has official permission from the municipality to do that. The case was put before the court. During that period he used to arrive late in the evening, with policemen, who took the tenants to the police station where they were forced to sign a commitment to evacuate the building within two weeks.<sup>23</sup>

Many immigrants living in buildings with low rents were forced to vacate their places and to move to distant districts lacking any kind of social services. For an immigrant this move does not mean an end to his problem, "fantastic rents were also charged for these buildings that were not worth it. Yet protest to the landlords could only result in orders to quit the premises occupied".<sup>24</sup>



In the case where the landlord for one reason or another failed to get official permission to demolish his building, he forced the tenants in various ways to accept an amount of money which may reach K.D. 1000 (\$2000) to leave their houses, afterwards re-renting it at three or four times the previous rate. The rent increase does not affect the immigrant groups only, or Kuwaiti tenants, it also affects the government, "the complaints about the rent increases have come finally to affect the buildings rented by the government."<sup>25</sup>

It has been argued that the increase in house rents is due to the government involvement in the housing market. The government rents buildings and houses for its various ministries and its foreign employees and many landlords prefer to rent their apartments to the government or companies who will be able to pay high rent regularly, rather than to individuals. It is worth pointing out that this problem would not be as acute if the government had built its own buildings and houses for its administrators and employees.<sup>26</sup> There is no doubt that such explanations neglect the class character of the state in Kuwait. Clearly, the state represents the interests of the dominant class.\* The government policy in the field of housing, as in the field of politics and the economy, is in the end indicative of the class nature of the state. Furthermore, the government's policy of renting its buildings from the landlord rather than building its own, is but another indication of the way by which the local bourgeoisie receives its share from the oil revenues.

\* See Chapter III for more details on the subject of class structure in Kuwait society.

The new immigrants who moved to Kuwait after 1975 found it too expensive to live in the traditional areas of immigrant residence, Hawali, Salmiya and so on. Thus they turned to search for accommodation in the more distant areas like Jalib al-Shuyuk, al-Sabahiya, al-Jahra and al-farwaniyah. These areas, which were originally the districts of Bedouin habitation, have expanded to accommodate the low and limited income immigrants: Egyptian, Sudanese, South Asians. These areas severely lack any kind of social services like health, education and shopping centres.

For married immigrants seeking accommodation in the residential districts of Kuwait, the annex type of housing is the only affordable one. This type of accommodation consists of one bedroom, one bathroom, a very small kitchen and no sitting room. Originally the annex or "al-Diwaniya" was built apart from the main building of the traditional Kuwaiti house, as a sitting room for the male members of the family and their visitors. The immigrant inhabitants of the annex have no right to use the main house facilities, or to receive any visitors without the permission of the landowner. The average rent of the annex reaches around K.D. 125 (£250). It was estimated that in 1979 around 8082 families (94.8% of them non-Kuwaiti) were living in this type of accommodation. (See table 5.5)

Our survey indicates that the earliest immigrants have the least propensity to change their places of living since they pay low rents in comparison to those of the newly built areas and because of the creation of the immigrant group's own community. More evidence as obtained in our survey, for example, 44.7% of the non-Kuwaiti sample, had not changed

their area of residence, 29.1% changed it once, 17.7% changed it twice, 3.2% changed it three times, and only 3.1% changed it four times.

An examination of housing density illuminates the standard of living enjoyed by both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. For instance, it was found that in 1965, 8% of non-Kuwaiti families (46,000 persons) were living in accommodation where more than 4 persons occupied one room, however, a large proportion of immigrant families (41%), around 172,000, lived more than two persons per room.<sup>27</sup> The 1970 and 1975 population censuses give no detailed information, but indicated the better housing condition of Kuwaitis in comparison with non-Kuwaitis. For example, the average number of persons per room amounted to 1.9 and 1.8 in the case of Kuwaitis and 2.5 and 3 in the case of non-Kuwaitis in 1970 and 1975 respectively. (See table 5.7) The average number of rooms per house was 4.1 in the case of Kuwaitis and 2.3 in the case of non-Kuwaitis in 1975 (See table 5.7). The majority of Kuwaitis in our sample (58.9%) were living in accommodation that had five rooms or more and only 4.5% of the sample were living in a house with one room. By contrast the majority of the non-Kuwaiti sample (67.6%) were living in accommodation which had either one or two rooms, 30.1% of them living in houses with 3 to 4 rooms and only 2% of them had five rooms or more in their houses.

The population census also indicated the increased number of persons on average, in the case of a collective household consisting of many people living together, from 11.5 persons per house in 1975 to 16.5 persons per house in 1980. In the case of nuclear families there were no significant changes, numbers having increased from 6.4 per house in 1975 to 6.7 persons per house in 1980.<sup>28</sup> Of course, the upper limit <sup>per</sup> population density does not apply in every case but it remains a problem

Table 5.7

Occupied buildings by Nationality between 1965 and 1975

Descriptions	1965			1970			1975		
	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
No. of buildings	30610	41854	72464	45570	67487	113057	62945	76429	139374
No. of rooms	102830	92518	195348	184698	156619	341317	258074	175787	433861
No. of inhabitants	220059	247280	467339	347396	391266	738662	472088	522749	994837
No. of room per dwelling	3.4	2.2	2.7	4.1	2.3	3.0	4.1	2.3	3.1
No. of persons per room	2.1	2.7	2.4	1.9	2.5	3.2	1.8	3.0	2.3

Source: The Board of Planning, The Second Five Years Development Plan, (1976/77 - 1980/81) - Kuwait, 1976, p.152.

confronting a substantial number of immigrant groups. In many cases, it has been found that more than 8 members of one family were living in a house with one or two rooms.

We are 12 persons, my grandmother, my parents, eight of my sisters, my brother and I living in a flat with two rooms in the Kheitan district. We have been in Kuwait for several years. This is the second place we have moved to, we could not afford the new rent of our previous flat, when it went up from K.D. 65 to 250 (£130-500). Only two members of my family are working: my father and myself. In the evening I can hardly find a place to sleep hence I work the evening shifts so as to make room for the other members of my family to sleep.<sup>29</sup>

It is no secret that many cases of inadequate and overcrowded housing remain unknown to the public and to those responsible for inspecting the conditions of accommodation: the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Housing, and the Kuwait Municipality. We encountered many cases where more than one family were sharing the same accommodation, particularly among the low and limited income immigrant groups from South Asia, Egypt and Palestine, simply because they could not afford the new rises in house rents.<sup>30</sup>

For immigrants housing will remain one of their most severe problems. An aspect of this was revealed in our survey, as the majority of the non-Kuwaiti sample, 54.1% indicated that housing presented a serious problem 41.6% found it "no problem" and 4.1% "didn't know". By contrast, the majority of the Kuwaiti sample (72.7%) were satisfied with their housing situation, and only 25.3% of them said that "housing is presenting a serious problem". It is also interesting to note that immigrants' concern about the problem of housing centred on the increase in house rents, while the Kuwaiti's concern was focussed on the delay in the distribution of

government houses.<sup>31</sup> The location of the house tends to constitute no real problem for non-Kuwaitis. The majority of them (67.7%) were satisfied with their house location.

It can be concluded that the private housing market will remain the only source of accommodation for immigrants. This "free" market implies usually the freedom to reject or exploit the weakest social groups. Several factors hinder any improvement in immigrant housing: the constant increase in the rent of the house; the continuing destruction of the old and traditional houses; the absence of positive government intervention in immigrant housing; and the particular shortage of low and limited income houses. As demonstrated in tables 5.8 and 5.9 about 17,709 (in 1980) and 19,230 (in 1985) housing demands from non-Kuwaiti groups, for various types of accommodation could not be satisfied by the private housing market.

#### A.2.1. Housing for Single Immigrants

For the last five years or so Kuwait has witnessed a considerable increase in the number of single immigrants. Their numbers have jumped from 7,265 persons in 1975 to 17,402<sup>32</sup> persons in 1980. Such an increase was caused by a) the increase in the number of Asian immigrants who are unmarried or married and have left their dependents behind; b) the high increase in the cost of living, and the low wages for most of them, which do not exceed K.D. 150 per month (£300) and have prevented them from bringing their families to join them in the country of employment; c) the wide expansion of the construction sector (it has been estimated that 42%<sup>33</sup> of the single immigrants are working in the construction sector);

Table 5.8

The unsatisfied housing demands of Kuwaitis by levels of income

Description	1980	1980-1985	1985	1985
	Unsatisfied Needs	Demand	Demand	Supply
Shacks				
low-income dwelling	7820	5230	13050	6518
limited income dwelling	892	7506	8400	
middle-income dwelling	3997	8140	12135	7796
high income dwelling		4385	4385	8930

Ibid., op.cit., p.77

Table 5.9

The unsatisfied housing demands of non-Kuwaitis by levels of income.

Description	1985	1985-1990	1990
	Unsatisfied Needs	Demand	Demand
Shacks			
low-income dwelling	14890	5530	29260
limited-income dwelling		8840	
middle-income dwelling	4340	9855	14195
high-income dwelling		6685	6685

Source: Ibid., p.77

and d) the issue of several regulations since 1978 that prevent any immigrant from bringing his family in unless his monthly income is not less than K.D. 400 (£800) in addition to the cost of his accommodation.

Considering the housing conditions of single immigrants necessitates a differentiation between three types of single accommodation. First, the housing of the Far Easterners and some of the South Asian workers that takes the form of "enclave development". This type of accommodation combines work place and accommodation and it was undertaken in the hope of separating the new industrial areas from the existing urban areas in order to minimize the social and cultural impact of the non-Arab immigrants. This type of accommodation is temporary, since at the completion of the construction company's contract the accommodation is demolished and the workers leave.<sup>35</sup> Recently the Kuwait Company for Investments and Trade has constructed what is called "Cities for singles" in al-Jahrah and al-Funtass. These cities accommodate 4000-5000 persons and the main purpose for their establishment was "to control the single inhabitants and to minimize their impact on the host society, especially in terms of crime".<sup>36</sup> The second type is not very different from the married type of housing with a number of unmarried immigrants sharing one flat. Usually a group of single immigrants from the same country, or sometimes relatives, live together in one flat. The third type and the most popular one, is collective accommodation which is discussed below. The immigrant workers are either offered housing in or nearby their place of work, or they seek on their own. It has to be said that the accommodation provided by employers has often proved to be deficient in various ways. Employers house their workers as cheaply as possible. In one case, a construction materials factory in the al-Shuwaikh industrial area, employing 70 workers of three nationalities (Iranians, Egyptians and



Lebanese) accommodated each group in one or two large rooms. Each room (25 sq. metres) contained between 15 and 20 persons and none of the rooms had beds, so that mattresses had to be rolled out on the floor at night. All cooking was done in the rooms on one or two stoves, there was no heating but there was an air conditioning system in each room. There were no cupboards, so the workers kept their things in their suitcases. Each room had a television which was bought collectively by the workers in each room. The workers usually worked from 7.a.m. to 5.p.m. with two hours break at lunch time.<sup>37</sup>

In some other cases, the immigrant workers were either accommodated in temporary wooden huts built close to the construction site, where 10 persons would inhabit a 3 sq. metres a room; or they were forced to sleep on the construction site. The inadequate and dangerous nature of this type of housing usually remained unknown to the public and to those responsible until something drastic happens. In June 1974, a multi-storey car park, which was under construction, collapsed killing scores of workers who were sleeping there; this tragedy passed virtually unnoticed.<sup>38</sup>

Private "group accommodation" is usually sought by the workers themselves, through the assistance of friends, relatives or workmates. Such accommodation is occupied by one immigrant group or perhaps members of the same family living in the same room. For example, in the aforementioned study by the Ministry of Planning it emerges that 48.6% of the sample said that "they live in this house because the majority of the inhabitants are from the same country", 24.1% of the sample said that "they are living in this house because of the existence of some relatives".<sup>39</sup> In other words, nationality and kinship are the most important factors influencing the way single immigrants choose their accommodation.

Collective accommodation is spread all over the non-Kuwaiti residential areas particularly in the old part of the city, Jibleh and Sharq, and in some of the Kuwaiti residential areas located near the centre of Kuwait City, such as al-Shamiyya, al-Faiha and Bnaid al-Kar. These houses are either traditional Kuwaiti houses or old buildings previously used as a school or by the government; later rented by an immigrant, who usually rented more than one house in order to make a profit from sub-letting rooms to immigrant workers.<sup>40</sup> An example of this situation was the case of a Yemeni immigrant who several years ago was working in the Kuwait Municipality. His present source of income comes from renting out Kuwaiti traditional houses and sub-letting them to immigrant workers. His house in the Sharq area accommodates 120 persons. It consists of 9 rooms, 4 of them made of wood, 4 bathrooms and 6 toilets and no kitchen. The nationalities of the inhabitants are Indians, Pakistanis, Egyptians, Ahwazis (Arabs of Khuzestan) and Iranians (some are illegal immigrants). One of the Pakistani groups consisted of 6 persons; father, 2 sons and 3 friends sharing a room of 3 sq. metres. Thus they are severely overcrowded. Their monthly rent totalled K.D. 70 (£140). Another group that I interviewed was the Ahwazis. It consisted of 9 persons sharing a wooden room of 4 sq. metres, six of them used to roll out their mattresses on the floor to sleep in the evening; the other 3 slept outside. So the two groups sleep both inside and outside once the working day has finished. They pay a total of K.D. 80 (£160) per month. All the residents of this building have to cook either in their rooms or in the corridors. Each of these rooms are air-conditioned and usually has a television bought collectively by the room's inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> Further evidence of overcrowding in single group accommodation has come out in the official study carried out by the Ministry of Planning where it was found that the majority of the sample (59.5%) were living in places of less than 4 sq. metres

Picture 3.1 Pictures from Inside:Accommodation of Single Immigrants

"In the open, during the summer and winter we wash  
our dishes, clothes and our bodies."



"Some of us who have no rooms to put our belongings or to sleep we rent a bed in the forecourt of the house."



"Our toilets are more dirty than anything you could imagine. They have no doors, and could remain for weeks unclean."



and 33.9% of them lived in places of 4-7 sq. metres. In other words, 93.8% of the sample are living in inadequate and overcrowded accommodation.<sup>42</sup> It was also found that 46.5% of the sample are in rooms containing more than 5 persons, and in some cases the number could be as high as 15 persons per room (See table 5.10)<sup>43</sup>. The other indicator of the appalling conditions of single accommodation was found in the number of persons per lavatory and kitchen. For example, in a study of the Ministry of Planning, it was indicated that in 40% of the sample's houses there were between 11 and 25 persons per lavatory, and in 39.1% of these houses the average number of persons per kitchen was 100. The study also noted that many of these houses had no kitchen, the inhabitants having to cook in their rooms or in a wooden kitchen made for this purpose which may be a source of danger to health.<sup>44</sup>

In terms of the health standards of such accommodation, it has been noted that the high population density per room, the lack of toilets, proper bathrooms, and kitchens, the complete lack of other facilities in the whole residential area (such as health services, and proper inspection by the Municipality) have caused various types of disease. These include: influenza, skin diseases, colds and rheumatism, illnesses which might in time develop into tuberculosis or bronchitis under these conditions. A research team from the Ministry of Public Health has noted that:

The widespread group accommodation among the immigrant groups, which lacks basic services, is overcrowding and unhealthy. This is reflected in the ill-health of the inhabitants. In addition these houses became a place for the growth of rats and insects.<sup>45</sup>

Table 5.10 Collective accommodation by type of housing

Type of accommodation	The area per person in m <sup>2</sup>					Total	%
	Less than 4	4-	7-	12			
Arabic house	1863	910	112	38	2922	62.9	
Villa	109	27	7	2	144	3.1	
Annex	70	72	6	3	151	3.3	
Establishment	124	122	11	7	264	6.1	
Room	55	54	4	1	146	3.1	
Other	125	380	81	15	591	21.5	
Total	2785	1575	221	68	4649	100	
%	59.9	33.9	4.8	1.4	100		

Source: Ministry of Planning, Study of Housing of Singles, Kuwait, unpublished study, April 1982, p.17.

Generally, the increased amount of single accommodation, due to the increase in the country's labour force in the urban residential areas has become a subject of concern for both the public and the authorities. For the public the problem of the single accommodation was summed up as follows:

The existence of large numbers of single immigrants in neighbouring houses is causing tremendous disturbances due to the noise caused by them, and the social restrictions they put on the movement of our family's female members.<sup>46</sup>

The government's view of the problem of single immigrants' accommodation is stated by the Under Secretary of the Minister of Planning as follows:

There is no division of opinion between the different sides (the public and the government); that the continuation of the recent situation of single immigrant's accommodation would cause a severe danger to the country's health, social and security situation. Thus, a radical solution for this problem is greatly needed.<sup>47</sup>

For the authorities, that solution is: 1) the establishment of more single houses isolated from the rest of Kuwait's residential areas; 2) the location of these centres beyond the urbanized areas; and 3) the prevention by law of single immigrants from residing in the urban areas.<sup>48</sup> Of course, these solutions would be a burden to the Kuwait government's budget, but it will keep the majority of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti families quiet and for the government this would ease the task of controlling the movement of these workers.



A.3. Housing and Politics

After the establishment of the Kuwait National Assembly, housing became the most important issue for the Kuwait government. The provision of government houses as well as their distribution among the Kuwaiti population, coincided with the government's political interests. The fact that the government controls the distribution of houses enabled it to minimize the number of opposition representatives in the National Assembly. For instance, the government usually moves the bedouin voters from one electoral district to another. In 1967 the government moved several thousand voters into the opposition-dominated areas such as al-Qadisiyah and Kaifan. The bedouin and some shi'as were the main tool that was used by the government at the time of the election against the opposition groups. The other way that the government has attempted to minimize the strength of some ethnic and religious groups has been through scattering them among various electoral districts, or through re drawing the boundaries of districts, as happened to the shi'a and the nationalist opposition in the February 1981 National Assembly Election. Furthermore, the use of the housing issue by the government does not stop at this. On 29 August 1976, on the eve of the dissolution of the National Assembly the government proclaimed that the main reason for the dissolution was the failure of parliament to meet the housing needs of the indigenous population and its delay in acting on important legislation and vital programmes. For the government, housing will remain one way of winning the loyalty of the indigenous population. For the indigenous population, the government's housing programme is a test of the sincerity of its policy towards its population.<sup>49</sup>

A.3.1. Comment on the Housing Situation of Immigrants

From the preceding discussion we may reach the following conclusions:

1) immigrants and their families occupy types of accommodation which vary considerably from that of the indigenous people; 2) in contrast to Kuwaitis non-Kuwaitis have to find their accommodation on the private market; 3) the housing of the immigrant groups is worse than that of the indigenous; and 4) a relative isolation exists between the residential areas of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis.

Although it may be inappropriate to apply the term ghettos to the immigrants' residential area, the term is probably justified. Whole areas such as Kuwait City Centre, Hawali, al-Noqra, Kheitan, Farwaniya and so on are losing, if they have not already lost, much of their indigenous population and immigrants are replacing them, forming an ever-higher proportion of the total population of such areas. There are no immigrant ghettos, but there are residential districts only inhabited by immigrants and members of the poorest and most deprived groups of the Kuwaiti population, such as Kheitan, Farwaniya, Abassiya... etc.<sup>50</sup> If we are talking about ghettos in a wide sense to include all areas where groups of immigrants reside in virtual segregation from the rest of the population, then there are ghettos in Kuwait. The group accommodation for single workers in Shuwaikh\* and Shu'biya industrial areas, or the newly established single towns, where no one else lives except the immigrant workers, in al-Jahra and Pintass, or the immigrant residential areas in Hawali and al-Noqra, are a form of ghetto.

\* Although Shuwaikh is a name given to both industrial and residential Shuwaikh these two areas are now separated and distant. One being (as mentioned) an upper class residential area, the other industrial.

Given the general situation of immigrant housing, it seems necessary to examine the popular notion that migrants are financially benefitting from emigration. Data obtained from our survey shows that a very small proportion of the non-Kuwaiti sample (6.2%) indicated that their "standard of living had been raised a great deal". The majority of the sample (51%) witnessed a little improvement. 27.4% of them said "it does not change" and 12.5% of them said "it has gone down". In contrast a large proportion of the Kuwaiti sample 31.8% said that their standard of living "has risen a great deal", 45.5% "witnessed a little improvement", 11.3% thought it "has not changed" and a very small proportion (0.8%) described it as "having gone down". On the other hand the future for the immigrants hold no signs of improvement in their living standards as only 38.5% of them have indicated that "it will be better" while the majority found it either "the same (14%) or thought it "will be worse" (9.3%), or simply "don't know" (37.5%). By the way of contrast, the majority of the Kuwaiti sample (61.3%) are expecting their living standard "to be better", 6.9% felt it "will be the same", and 31.8% "do not know". Another study carried out by the Stanford Research Institute came to similar conclusions when it found that although there is a general optimism in terms of "future living standards" among Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, the Kuwaitis were more optimistic as they foresaw their standards in the coming two years as being higher than those of the two previous years. The non-Kuwaitis, in contrast, forecast it in the coming two years as being below that of the past two years. (See table 5.11).

Kuwait's wealth, the relatively high wages in comparison with other countries and the large quantitative and qualitative availability of social services tends to conceal the actual living standards of immigrant groups,

Table 5.11

SELF-ASSIGNED STANDINGS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

	Standing 2 Years Ago	Standing Now	Standing in 2 Years
General population	3.38937	3.85188	4.76095
<u>Nationality</u>			
Kuwaiti	3.415	4.041	5.030
Unproven Kuwaiti	2.792	3.387	4.413
Non-Kuwaiti	3.433	3.812	4.666
Other	3.371	3.800	4.886
<u>Sector employer</u>			
Government employer	3.380	3.933	4.815
Public sector employer	3.600	3.860	4.640
Private sector employer	3.408	3.735	4.706
Other (outside the establishment)	2.417	2.917	3.833
<u>Education</u>			
Illiterate	2.749	3.328	4.135
Read and write	3.309	3.682	4.528
Primary	3.300	3.653	4.624
Preparatory	3.735	4.182	5.106
High School	4.013	4.440	5.450
Above High School	4.331	4.886	5.960
<u>Income</u> (KD per month)			
0-25	3.322	3.471	4.408
26-50	2.573	3.032	3.721
51-100	3.135	3.613	4.633
101-150	3.325	3.936	4.919
151-200	3.971	4.469	5.396
201+	4.590	5.139	5.949

Source: Stanford Research Institute, op.cit, p. v-17

and not insignificant numbers of the Kuwaiti population itself. More precisely, the high per capita income of the country, which is estimated at \$11,600 (one of the highest in the world), does not reveal the uneven distribution of national wealth. Birks and Sinclair noticed the following:

"Despite the high average level of income the distribution of income is very uneven, even amongst the half million Kuwaiti nationals. High inflation rates and astronomically high house rents have a noticeable effect on (low and limited incomes) Kuwaitis and, more dramatically, upon non-Kuwaitis."<sup>51</sup>

Many individual cases we came across during fieldwork indicated such a general trend; emigration does not necessarily bring any real improvement in the living standards of the immigrants:

"On my way to Kuwait, I expected, as I heard, to get a job as soon as I set foot in the country. Unfortunately I was for several months unemployed, (although I have a diploma in commercial studies). Recently I have been working as a baker. My monthly salary is K.D. 75 (£150), around K.D. 35 (£70) goes for my accommodation's rent. I am living in a small room shared with some other people. Housing is the most serious problem facing me."<sup>52</sup>

A similar experience was that of an Indian driver who described his case as follows:

"I have been in Kuwait for the last 7 years. My family was living with me in the first three years of my arrival. We were living in an Arabic house in al-Murqab district. I sent my family back home due to the increase in the cost of living and house rent. Thus I visit them at home once in every three years. I was working as a bus driver in the Kuwait Transportation Company. Nowadays I am a private driver for a Kuwaiti family."<sup>53</sup>

B. Social Life.<sup>54</sup>

The nature of the social life and social relations that any immigrant has in the country of employment will largely depend on their socio-economic position. In other words, the immigrants' position in the process of the reproduction of capital in the recipient country largely affects their social life and social relations. Factors like the place of work, occupation, nationality, ethnicity, and cultural background are also factors influencing the social life of immigrants within the community of foreign labour, and between communities; between the immigrant communities on one hand and between the immigrants and indigenous communities on the other.

B.1. The Immigrants' Membership of Local Clubs and Societies

The stability of any immigrant labour force does not only depend on its relatively free access to various economic activities, but is largely affected by its right to affiliate itself to the existing clubs and societies, or to create their own. Article 4 of Kuwait's law of 1962 No. 24, and as revised in 1965 in No. 23, for the establishment of sports and social clubs, has limited the right of establishment to Kuwaitis only. Moreover, article 11 of this law, excluded non-Kuwaitis from being members of the executive committees in the local clubs and societies.<sup>55</sup> While the law allowed the immigrants to have membership, without voting rights or the right to be elected to office, the Kuwaiti executive committees are reluctant to accept non-Kuwaiti members. There is no doubt that such exclusion either stated by law or by the behaviour of the executive committees of these societies, was intended: a) to secure the emergence of pro-government executive committees in these societies; and b) by excluding the non-Kuwaitis, to prevent the politicized Arab immigrants

from participating in their activities thereby preventing any foreseeable social and political pressure. More evidence on this was obtained from our survey. The majority of non-Kuwaitis (58.3%) are not members of any society. Of the rest only 7.9% participate regularly in society activities, while 7.5% said that they participate "once a month", and 47.5% only participate in the social events. The rest 37.5% never participate in any activities. Similarly, only 47.7% of the Kuwaiti sample are members of social societies and of these 52.3% actually participate in society activity.

Some of the large Arab immigrant groups such as the Egyptians and Syrians were allowed to have their own social societies. Others, Eritrean and especially Palestinian groups, because of their political situation, were allowed to form their own trade unions and social societies on condition that they did not deal with local issues. In fact these societies are dominated by the moderate higher strata of the immigrant groups who are either prominent figures in the government administration or have consolidated their power through their contact with the government of their country of origin.<sup>56</sup> This situation has driven the majority of immigrants from participating in their own societies. Furthermore, unlike the other countries of the Gulf Kuwait has prevented the non-Arab immigrants from setting up their own social societies, despite the large and significant economic role of these immigrants in Kuwaiti society.

B.2. Immigrants' and Their Leisure Time

The opportunities available for non-Kuwaitis to make use of their leisure time are very limited. Their access to local societies and trade unions, and their inability to live in the Kuwaiti residential areas, which has been made impossible by laws and regulations, limits any possible integration between the Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. This minimizes any political impact on the indigenous population. In fact, the way immigrants spend their leisure time varies from one immigrant to another and from one strata to another according to their role and status in the production process. Generally, Arab immigrants, as opposed to non-Arab immigrants, and the highly qualified immigrants as opposed to semi and non-skilled workers, have more leisure time opportunities.

Immigrants according to their socio-economic position, could be divided into three social groups. The first category consists of senior government non-Kuwaiti officials, experts and businessmen, the private sector experts and managers, and university lecturers. Most of these are highly educated and usually obtained their education in universities in their own countries or the west. Some of these, especially those in the government sector, were in high government posts in their country of origin and have been seconded to Kuwait in response to an official Kuwaiti request.<sup>57</sup> They are in real terms the "designers" of Kuwaiti's internal and external politics. They normally live with their families in modern luxury flats or villas in the better quarter of the City. Mostly their accommodation is provided by their employer. Although they do not share the same social and political rights as their Kuwaiti counterparts, their role and interests have put them in the same position as the Kuwaiti bourgeois vis-a-vis the other social strata.



The way this group spend their leisure time or entertain themselves is affected by two factors: their previous status in the country of origin and the new socio-economic position they occupy in the country of employment. Thus they maintained to some extent the same social life they enjoyed in their country. Mostly they associate with people of the same nationality; relatives and friends who share common interests, political ideologies, sports, parties, economic interests and so on. They usually entertain and visit their friends at home as couples. They spend much time in the company of their wives and children, and usually grant their children more freedom than would be normal in Kuwait and send them to the foreign schools. Because of their wealth they also send their children to Europe for their higher education. Those who return to Kuwait are allowed mixed parties at home and western educated sons and daughters talk to each other in English. Clearly this generation's lifestyle has alienated it from the social values of its parents and of the host society.

The non-Arab immigrants in this group are very small in number and consist mainly of Indians and Pakistanis. Each of these groups keep their social lives quite separate. They rarely mix with Arab groups. Being non-Arab gives them less opportunity for entertainment and social life. In general, the South Asian immigrants have an inferior social status in comparison with other immigrant groups despite their actual economic position. This is true not only in Kuwait but in all other Arab Gulf countries. Evidently integration among the various sub-groups in this category is largely determined by nationality, religion, income, values and customs rather than shared economic interests. For example,

the Egyptian members of this group conduct their social relations within the same strata of their own community. If they extend beyond this it will be in the same strata of other Arab immigrant groups and Kuwaitis, but this remains on an individual basis. The same could be said of other immigrant groups. In some instances, members of the same strata of non-Arab immigrants may extend their relations to members of the same strata of other non-Arab immigrants, such as the links between muslim Indians and Pakistanis, or between Pakistanis and Iranians. This behaviour would be the exception rather than the rule.

For most of the immigrant groups, and especially this strata, being in Kuwait has exposed them to new consumption patterns, which in turn has produced new types of arrogance.

The second category is composed of shopkeepers, craftsmen, retail traders and civil servants. Of these, the civil servants are the most important, because of their political role and their wide participation in Kuwaiti economic activities, particularly in the government administration.\* Palestinians and Egyptians make up the majority of this category. They are recruited either through governmental contracts, or seconded to Kuwait, as in the case of Egyptian teachers, or through the assistance of relatives and friends. Most of them are married and accompanied by their dependents. They usually live in good flats in the Halwail and Salmiyya districts. It is important to emphasize their importance to the economy of Kuwait and especially the government sectors.

\* For more details on the distribution of the Kuwait labour force by nationality and economic activity see Chapter IV

Without them, administration would come to a standstill. For example, non-Kuwaiti teachers accounted for 72.9% of all government school teachers in 1981-82.<sup>58</sup> If they were removed many schools would have to close.

"The economic importance of (these) cannot be over-estimated, for example, the Palestinians and Egyptians dominate the field of medicine and education. In fact if the Egyptians decided to withdraw from Kuwait the educational system would come to a standstill."<sup>59</sup>

It should be stressed that while the first group design Kuwaiti politics, the second group influence the ways in which politics affects the people. Their political power has always been the subject of government concern and their political impact has been very significant for Kuwait society. Through their domination in the fields of education and the mass media this segment introduced the ideas of Arab unity and Arab Nationalism into Kuwait since the thirties."

"The influence of these teachers and journalists has been so obvious in Kuwait, that it persuaded one observer to state in 1961 (during the crisis with Iraq) that a plebescite would have brought Kuwait into the Nasser camp despite her prosperity and development."<sup>60</sup>

In the meantime, during the internal crisis the Kuwaiti government used these journalists to divert Kuwait public opinion from the essential regional and sub-regional issues to the marginal ones. Some of these immigrants were politically active in their own countries and in Kuwait. Hence the Kuwaiti authorities, especially in the last seven years or so, have imposed restrictions on them. We hear continuously about their deportations, due to what is called "violation of internal security.

\* For more details on this subject see Chapter IV.

This group, because of their standard of education and their economic role, tend to have more opportunities to socialise with each other and with Kuwaitis. They are the only group which utilizes widely the available means of entertainment: cinema, theatre, festivals, etc. However, their social relations are affected, to some extent, by the country's values and customs. Thus their social life is restricted to family members and close friends. The highly educated and sophisticated married couples hold mixed parties which are limited to relatives and close friends. The housewives in this group visit each other during the day, while their husband visit friends in the evening. Some husbands hold parties that are restricted to the adult male members of the family. Furthermore, in most immigrant residential areas, particularly Salmiyya, Hawali and Murgab there are some restaurants, coffee shops and food shops which cater especially for the first and second strata of the immigrant groups. Some of the cafes are centres for the social encounters between male members of these strata and some cafes were established to serve particular nationalities.

In the third group are those single immigrants who are mainly non-skilled and semi-skilled workers. Their number has considerably increased since 1975.\* Non-Arab immigrants, Indians and Far Easterners, constitute the majority, accounting for 50.7%. Most of these are employed in the construction industry, 68.7% are married, but due to their low living standards they left their families in their countries of origin.<sup>61</sup>

Leisure time is a difficult problem for many single immigrant workers. Clearly, their socio-economic position gives them very little chance to make use of available entertainment. After they finish housework they are at a loss for stimulating activities. One of the major factors is socialisation

\* For more details see Chapter IV.

attitudes towards single men. They are not allowed to live in the areas where most of the residents are Kuwaitis or migrant families. It has been noted that groups of single male immigrants, especially Indians, and Far Easterners tend to be regarded as threatening by the indigenous population and some of the Arab migrant families. The problems confronting them were expressed as follows:

"You may very well ask what is a bachelor. Is he the lowest form of homosapiens, or is he the direct descendant of the ape. Do bachelors have to be locked up at night and put on a chain at sunrise, who really are the rapists, moon-shiners and the like."<sup>62</sup>

Many single male immigrants, especially the Arabs, find inexpensive distraction in watching television. Others usually meet in cafes and cheap restaurants catering especially for them (especially in the al-Murqab and Sharq districts). Each immigrant group has its own cafes and restaurants which are becoming centres for meeting their country-men, discussing problems of work, problems in their homeland and in addition providing help for the newcomers.

For non-Arab immigrants the choice of activities is narrowed by factors of language, cost and discrimination. Because of these they are excluded from most types of activities enjoyed by other groups.

The number of cinemas which show special films for non-Arab immigrants is very limited: there is only one cinema in Kuwait that exclusively shows Indian and Pakistani films. Others generally show either Arabic or European films. Some of the construction companies which recruit Far Eastern workers occasionally show films for the workers in their own language.

In Kuwait's market area, some places have become single immigrant meeting centres. For example, some of the new shopping complexes, such as al-Wataniya market, became a centre where Indian and Pakistani single

men meet each other and do their shopping. For the Christian Indians and Far Easterners, especially the house maids, the Sunday church ceremony in the Catholic church, in the market place, became a centre where the single men could meet the single women. Many relationships between male and female immigrants have grown up in this way, but if such relationships are discovered by the employer the maid will often be deported. Local newspapers report occasionally that sexual relations have occurred between male and female single immigrants or between an employer and his maid.<sup>63</sup> Sexual repression and the precarious and helpless existence of these female immigrants constitute a severe problem for these workers.\*

Most social visiting amongst single immigrants within the same area occurs in the evening after dinner. Such encounters always take place between members of the same immigrant group, between immigrants of the same village or town or between those who are working for the same employer. These contacts however, cease during periods of police raids in the single immigrant areas which search for illegal immigrants and drug smugglers.<sup>64</sup> Social relationships between immigrants is thus persistently affected by internal security, activities which are based on the authority's fear of single immigrants.

Finally, it should be pointed out that social relations between this group and the indigenous population are poor in comparison with the previous two categories. This may be attributed mainly to the attitudes of local population to the single immigrants and to other factors previously discussed. More specifically, one cannot ignore the fact that the way this group conducts its social life and its leisure time is determined by its socio-economic position, a position which results from its role in the production process.

\* For more details on the working conditions of maids see Chapter VI.

B.3. Relations Between Kuwaitis and Non-Kuwaitis

It has been noted in the previous discussion that relations between the indigenous population and immigrant groups are often based upon mutual resentment. Some have interpreted this in terms of experiences during the British colonialist period. The Palestinians, for example, from the early days of modernization in the 1920s were used to run the established administration. The high wages they received, their comfortable accommodation, their access to facilities like regular water supplies, scarcely available to the general public then, and free electricity, created a rift in the relations between Kuwaitis and Palestinians.<sup>65</sup> If such explanations were true, one would imagine that the resentment would apply only to the Palestinians and not to all immigrant groups as such. Of course, there are differences in this respect, due to the immigrant groups differing population size, the way Kuwaitis perceive their competition and their economic role and status. An examination of the actual situation reveals that what applies to Palestinians also applies in one way or another, to other immigrant groups but in different degrees. For Kuwaitis, non-Kuwaitis are regarded as "money grabbers who take our money and leave".<sup>66</sup> Generally relations between the two are described as strained.

"Kuwait copes with its potentially volatile immigrant population as it copes with the world at large; it tries to keep everyone happy, usually spending lots of money in the process, yet it maintains the separation of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. Kuwaitis have a certain disdain for foreigners, usually considering them money-grabbers. The foreigners in return consider Kuwaitis uneducated people whose riches come from luck, not intelligence. There is little socialising between the groups."<sup>67</sup>

The situation of Arab immigrants in this respect is better than that of non-Arab immigrants. South Asians, especially are resented by indigenous and immigrant Arabs. They are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, particularly the manual workers: "At the bottom of the social heap are the Baluchis, Pakistanis, Bengalis and Indians employed in menial tasks as road-sweepers and unskilled labourers".<sup>68</sup> Of course, one could argue that such a division between the various segments of the Kuwait population is maintained and consolidated by the government's discriminatory policy in housing, wages, incentives, education and so on. This reinforces and perpetuates the differences between immigrants and natives, in terms of language, culture and religion.

The growing hostility to non-Kuwaitis by the mass media is another factor. The local newspapers\* have always seen immigrants as "money grabbers" or as "violators of internal security".

We have to stop naturalizing more foreign workers, they have no love of Kuwait, and their main object is to gain as much as they can of our country's wealth. Thus they want Kuwaiti nationality to enjoy more social and economic rights like their Kuwaiti counterparts with whom they compete.<sup>69</sup>

The strained relationships that exist between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti are not random. They are necessary in order to weaken the population as a whole and hence to consolidate the power of the ruling families.

In terms of work-place relationships, one would expect that, since the majority of the Kuwaiti labour force are non-Kuwaitis some contacts would have been established. The actual situation indicates that such contacts only occur on the job. For example, when the immigrant and

\* Local newspapers are owned by Kuwaitis (notably merchants like Al-Qabas and Al-Naba'a) and directed by the government; like the rest of the newspapers,



Kuwaiti samples were asked if they often visited their work mates; the majority indicated that such visits did take place but very rarely (See table 5.12). Obviously most of these visits take place between work mates of the same countries, and if extended would be within the immigrant community rather than between them and Kuwaitis.

The survey also revealed that such relations did not exist between the Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti even if they were living in the same residential area: Kuwaitis would visit only Kuwaiti families and the same applies in the case of non-Kuwaitis. For example, 93% of Kuwaitis living in a traditional house and 91% of Kuwaitis with limited income visited only Kuwaitis, and likewise 87% of the non-Kuwaiti, from various economic levels only others from the same country.<sup>69A</sup> Another study pointed out that the majority of the Kuwaiti sample (84.3%) preferred to live in an exclusively Kuwaiti residential area. By contrast only 60.7% of the non-Kuwaitis stated that they liked living in immigrant residential areas.<sup>70</sup>

Another study, on the problem of the adaptation of the Palestinian community in Kuwait, found that the majority of the sample (79.9%) preferred to have their friends amongst their own community, 6% amongst Arab immigrants and 1.3% amongst non-Arab immigrants. In addition, when they asked about their relations with Kuwaitis, 89% of them said it occurred only in the place of work.<sup>71</sup> Thus both groups, Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, seek their social relations within their own communities.

The question remains: can a country with such strange and peculiar social relations between the various components of its population achieve its aims in terms of progress and development? A sponsored government study carried out by the Stanford Research Institute commented:

Table 5.12 Visiting workmates by nationality

Description	Non-Kuwait	Kuwaitis
Always	5.3%	4.5%
Sometimes	35.5%	28.6%
In special occasion	19.7%	33.6%
Rarely	23.9%	36.4%
Never	15.6%	15.9%
Total	100%	100%

"The resolution of the long-term problem facing Kuwait will depend in part on the development of cooperative relations between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis.<sup>72</sup>"

C. Immigrants and Crime Rates

In Kuwait it is a popular belief that immigrants have very high crime rates. This belief has led to great hostility from the indigenous population who see immigrants' criminality as a danger and an unstable element in Kuwait society. The local press tend to place great emphasis on crimes committed by immigrants. Their view is that the main cause of criminal activity in Kuwait is the existence of large foreign communities with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Since the influx of immigrant workers from different Arab and non-Arab countries, Kuwait has started to witness different and strange types of crimes such as murder and rape. The majority of these crimes were committed by immigrants. If such a situation is allowed to continue it will constitute great danger to the country.<sup>73</sup>

Local newspapers always tend to publish stories and statistics which appear at first sight, to support the idea that immigrants are more prone to commit crimes than other people.<sup>74</sup> Other newspapers exaggerate the fears of the indigenous population. Here is one example of such an exaggeration:

The people of Khaitan\*, due to the increased number of crimes in the area, are afraid to leave their children alone during the day time. So they tend to take them to their relatives in other residential areas, then to bring them back when they finish work. Other people are so afraid they cannot sleep at night due to crime.<sup>75</sup>

\* Khaitan is a small poorly equipped town, inhabited by bedouin Kuwaitis and lower middle and lower income immigrant groups.

Table 5.13 Offences by Nationality from the years 1976 - 1980

Year	Kuwaiti	%	Non-Kuwaiti	%	Total
1976	2229	32.7	4585	67.3	6813
1977	2389	32.2	5021	67.8	7410
1978	2253	28.6	5491	71.4	7694
1979	2149	28.9	5278	71.1	7427
1980	2138	29.7	5041	70.3	7179

Source: (1) Ministry of Interior - Report on the public security, 1976 - Kuwait Government Printing Press, Kuwait, p.62.

(2) Ministry of Interior: Report on the public security, 1977, Ibid, pp.48-53.

(3) (4) Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980 - op.cite-1980, 400.

(5) Ministry of Interior, Report on Public Security 1980, pp.36-39.

Even some reasonable academic writers have fallen into the same trap. One of them suggested in a recent article that the presence of large numbers of Asian labourers has contributed to both the increased number of crimes, and to the introduction of strange and unknown types of crimes into the Arab Gulf countries.<sup>76</sup>

The constant exaggeration of the crimes committed by immigrants is designed to shape and/or to strengthen the hostile attitude of the indigenous population towards the immigrants. Thus any action which may be taken by the government against non-Kuwaitis seems justifiable and will receive the support and endorsement of most of the indigenous population. Such behaviour in the last analysis serves the interests of the dominant class in strengthening its power and creating divisions amongst the rest of the population. In fact, most of the published statistics and articles in the local newspapers and magazines, could be used by someone intending to spread xenophobic propaganda: they contribute nothing to a better understanding of the actual situation. In fact although the crime rates of migrants is high (See table 5.13) these figures alone do not form an adequate basis for a comparison between immigrants and the indigenous population. Crime rates indicate only the number of offenders as a percentage of the total population in each group. But it is well known that the propensity to commit crime varies considerably between different demographic groups: men commit offences more frequently than women, young people between 18 and 30 are more frequently offenders than old or very young people.<sup>77</sup> This is in addition to the fact that Kuwaitis are less likely to be arrested and therefore such statistics are misleading.

In other words, the socio-economic conditions of immigrant groups, and their lack of social rights, tend to alienate the non-Kuwaitis. Such alienation can and does contribute toward creating an atmosphere conducive to crime among the immigrant groups.

C.1. Types of Crime Committed by Immigrants

An accurate comparison of the crime rate between the indigenous population and immigrants is a problematic task since the available data does not provide much detail for each nationality by sex and age and since many crimes committed by indigenous people go unreported. Thus we are going to concentrate on those offences which tend to be fairly frequently committed by either citizens or immigrants and those which are rarely committed.

We do, however, give in some places a comparison with indigenous crime rates; it is rather to reveal certain social problems arising out of the immigrants' socio-economic position in the country of employment. A comparison between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in terms of the number of crimes committed in years 1976 to 1980 demonstrates the relative decline in the share and number of crimes committed by Kuwaitis against non-Kuwaitis. The Kuwaitis share decreased from 32.7% in 1976 to 29.7% in 1980. In addition, table 5.13 indicates that the number of non-Kuwaiti offenders varies from one year to another. It jumped from 4585 offences in 1976 to 5491 in 1978, but it dropped again to 5041 in 1980. In general, despite the constant concern about the increased number of crimes, only 0.5% and 0.6% of the total population in 1976 and 1980 respectively were convicted for crimes. In terms of each group, only 0.3% to 0.4% of

the total Kuwaiti population and 0.6% to 0.7% of the total non-Kuwaiti population were convicted for crimes between 1976 and 1980.

Once again, an examination of the type of conviction (as indicated in table 5.14) reveals that: 1) the number of the offenders by nationality varies from one type of crime to another; 2) there are certain types of offences which tend to be committed by certain immigrant groups rather than by others, according to their demographic structure and the social position; and 3) Kuwaitis after all, in comparison with other nationalities committed the highest percentage of crimes.

Immigrants and Kuwaitis alike, are often convicted of crimes of assault and threat. This crime alone made up 44.8% and 40.6% of all crimes in 1977 and 1980 respectively. Immigrants were responsible for 69.8% in 1977 and 68.7% in 1980 of that total. Nevertheless, an examination of the nationality of the offenders indicates that in 1977 and in 1980 the Kuwaitis constituted 30.1% and 31.1% of the total offenders, Egyptians made up the largest proportion of immigrants as they accounted for 20.6% and 26.7% of these crimes in the same period. Palestinians, the largest migrant community accounted for 10.3% in 1977 and 12.2% in 1980. The proportion of non-Arab immigrants committing this type of crime is small. It accounted for only 3.2% in both 1977 and 1980 in the case of Pakistanis and 1.2% in 1977 and 2.2% in 1980 in the case of Indians.

Crimes of theft and robbery are also common amongst migrants. Though the rate varies from one year to another it remains fairly high despite a decline in recent years. For example, the proportion of theft offences as a percentage of the total crime rates have decreased from 17.8% in 1977 to 15.6% in 1980. While the percentage of convicted Kuwaitis

out of the total crime rate dropped from 4.8% in 1977 to 2.5% in 1980, it has risen for the same period from 4.9% to 13.1% in the case of immigrant groups. Such increases could be attributed to a large influx of non-skilled low paid workers and the increased numbers of household servants. Furthermore, among those who were convicted of crimes of theft, the share of Kuwaitis dropped from 27.1% in 1977 to 16.1% in 1980. On the other hand, the share of Egyptian offenders rose for the same period from 20.6% to 26.7%. In general, table 514 shows that the number convicted for the crime of theft in terms of nationality varies from one year to another; it increases in one year and decreases in another.

As for forgery and fraud offences, their actual number and share have increased between 1977 and 1980. The percentage of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis committing forgery out of the total committed crimes for the years 1977 and 1980 increased from 2.1% and 8.1% to 5.1% and 13.4% respectively. Consequently the percentage of Kuwaitis out of the total forgery crime rate rose from 21.3% in 1977 to 27.4% in 1980. Egyptians convicted of this crime accounted for 19.7% in 1977 and 19.8% in 1980. In contrast, their absolute number rose from 151 to 252 for the same period. Similar observations could be made about other nationalities where the number of offenders increased during the period 1977 to 1980.

The share of offences against the liquor laws in the total offences slightly decreased from 13.1% in 1977 to 14.1% in 1980. Kuwaitis alone committed 50% of these offences in 1977 and 40% in 1980. The proportion of Indian offenders increased from 7.7% in 1977 to 13.3% in 1980 and similarly the Egyptian percentage rose from 4.3% to 11% for the same period.



Table 20

Types of crimes by nationality of the offenders between 1977-1980

Nationality	Theft & Burglary				Assault & Threat				Murder Offences				Murder and Alleged Murder				Teaching to Utter and Narcotics				Poetry, Films and Artistic				Others							
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1977	1978	1979	1980	1977	1978	1979	1980	1977	1978	1979	1980	1977	1978	1979	1980	1977	1978	1979	1980	1977	1978	1979	1980	1977	1978	1979	1980
Kuwait	357	264	331	181	1003	918	903	310	245	259	359	274	12	46	28	25	577	534	382	390	103	242	269	367	51	11	7	2	377	279	179	190
Iran	171	93	109	66	206	176	255	175	15	13	50	50	0	15	13	13	54	352	81	31	52	57	75	49	15	285	13	3	15	285	13	3
Iraq	141	119	98	71	199	210	222	173	84	43	75	53	2	6	5	17	13	92	41	54	38	69	77	61	-	78	2	-	-	-	-	
Libyan	273	247	262	161	611	564	577	472	35	33	113	107	19	24	17	11	16	128	91	105	131	144	112	172	8	41	12	8	41	12	8	
Jordan and Palestine	128	110	121	105	344	319	318	257	75	75	63	55	18	18	11	14	14	59	40	35	30	85	105	161	11	49	10	11	49	10	11	
Syria	61	55	51	44	170	158	156	147	35	45	35	30	10	7	9	2	8	127	21	24	16	76	90	82	3	115	9	8	3	115	9	8
Lebanon	40	23	12	13	67	82	60	76	22	19	22	37	4	4	1	1	15	16	35	21	69	49	71	83	2	11	4	1	2	11	4	1
Oman	7	0	1	2	2	3	4	3	4	10	5	1	-	-	1	-	11	6	3	-	3	4	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yemen	16	7	9	2	44	64	18	18	23	5	3	8	2	1	1	-	58	34	27	8	5	6	9	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saudi Arabia	1	7	9	11	22	53	49	51	7	15	7	12	1	9	1	-	16	36	27	19	13	14	13	17	-	4	-	-	4	-	-	-
Pakistan	20	17	62	26	107	92	90	98	21	40	52	23	10	8	10	4	11	21	45	17	27	47	52	67	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	6
India	45	36	13	15	12	46	55	66	24	28	38	41	14	1	3	6	81	97	123	136	15	26	34	42	2	12	4	1	2	12	4	1
Other Asians	70	115	89	107	309	124	334	304	18	61	42	48	14	14	14	11	23	110	132	76	59	65	17	71	3	3	3	3	3	3	6	1
Other Nationalities	33	18	32	51	38	31	27	61	4	4	17	25	2	7	12	18	71	39	60	51	14	17	30	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	1170	1105	1119	1127	3323	3084	3162	2920	305	316	370	675	154	160	131	133	1074	1691	1096	946	765	932	1043	1336	95	364	85	42	364	85	42	

Source: Ministry of Interior: Report on the Public Security, 1977-78, pp. 18-53.

1. Ministry of Interior: Report on the Public Security, 1978, Ibid., pp. 60-61.

2. Ministry of Interior: Report on the Public Security, 1979, Ibid., pp. 11-18.

3. Ministry of Interior: Report on the Public Security, 1980, Ibid., pp. 26-29.

Moreover, while the number of moral offences decreased from 705 to 675 between 1977 and 1980, their share in the total number of crimes for the same period amounted to 9.5%. Table 5.14 also demonstrates some of the differences between the various nationalities. For example, while the number of offences decreased in the case of Palestinians and Egyptians, it rose for Kuwaitis, Iranians and others. (See table 5.14). As for sexual offences, it has been found that the immigrants committed 74.9% against 25.1% for Kuwaitis in 1980. Sexual offences constitute 57.6% of the total moral offences; of these Kuwaitis accounted for 14.5% and non-Kuwaitis 43.1%. Nevertheless, a simple comparison according to the nationality of the offenders indicates that 25.1% of sexual offences were committed by Kuwaitis, 8.9% committed by Iraqis, 8.7% committed by Iranians, 6.6% committed by Indians and 2.9% committed by Palestinians.

Murder or attempted murder is not a frequent crime either among Kuwaitis or non-Kuwaitis. The total number of these offences dropped from 156 in 1977 to 133 in 1980. Similarly with other offences, Kuwaitis committed the highest proportion in comparison with other nationalities (accounting for 18.7%), followed by Egyptians 17.2%, other Arab immigrants 13.5%, Iranians 9.7%, Iraqis 9%, and Palestinians 8.2% (See table 5.14).

Despite the low rate of crime committed by each immigrant group in comparison with Kuwaitis, as a whole, the immigrants have a range of conviction for crimes higher than that of the indigenous population. Different factors have contributed to this: a) it is well known that a considerable number of crimes, like assaults, theft and traffic offences were committed by the indigenous population and never reported to the police, simply because of the offender's influence or that of their

families. In other cases the police take no action if Kuwaitis were involved in the accidents; and b) the most important factor is the socio-economic condition of the immigrant which has a great influence on the way they are dealt with by society. For instance, the majority of the immigrants are single, earn less than the average wage, are isolated from the rest of the society, and discriminated against. All of these factors directly or indirectly affect the crime rate of the immigrants. An official study carried out on the crime of rape in 1977 pointed out that 84.5% of the rape offenders are single immigrants, working in unpleasant low paid jobs.<sup>78</sup> A local magazine, commenting on the increase in number of sexual crimes noted:

The spread of the sexual offences among the single immigrants, is a direct result of their difficult social life in the country. There is no way they may have normal sexual lives. The result is the increase in rape.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, a judge in the low court in Dubai, commenting on the high rate of criminality among the immigrant groups pointed to a conclusion that could be generalized to other parts of the Gulf:

We import workers from Asia and other countries, isolate them from the rest of society, force them to work in unpleasant, arduous conditions, their monthly wage could be K.D. 40 (E80) or less; and then we complain about their high rate of criminality.<sup>80</sup>

Despite the fact that the legal procedure is not technically biased toward migrant offenders, there is evidence that migrants are punished more severely than native offenders for the same type of crime. The sentence of deportation is widely used against migrants, even against some of those who were found not guilty and cleared by the Kuwaiti court.<sup>81</sup> The deportation sentence, in the official view, has been adopted to prevent the country from further crimes; on the other hand, such a severe

punishment may indicate some of the government as well as the public attitudes towards migrant labour.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that many migrants are unaware of their rights. This, together with fear of the employer and the way in which laws are practiced prevents them from appealing when their rights are infringed by the authorities. This infringement of rights is also evident in such areas as vocational and educational training, incomes and employment. The next chapter therefore, will present material related to these issues.

NOTES

1. From Protestleaders aller welt (Frankfurt, Fischer, 1967), p.80, as quoted by Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe, op.cit., p.319.
2. R. Jardawi, al-Iskan Fi al-Kuwayt, (Housing in Kuwait), Kuwait, Khazimah Co. for Publication and Distribution, 1978, p.51.
3. Ibid., p.52.
4. See for example, al-Kuwayt al-yum, (Kuwait Gazette), Kuwait, Government Printing Press, No. 988, July, 1974, in R. Jardawi, Ibid., p.52.
5. Figures are obtained from, Ministry of Planning, Official Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980, op.cit., p.100, and Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.88.
6. For more details on the experiment of limited income housing in Kuwait, see: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Taqrīr<sup>un</sup> Iskan Zawi al-Dakhl, al-Mahdud, (An Evaluative Report on the Accommodation of limited income population), Kuwait, Government Printing Press, 1973.
7. World Bank for Construction, Report on Housing in Kuwait, unpublished Report, Kuwait, 1980, p.69.
8. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980, Ibid., p.86.
9. Ibid., p.86. See also R. al-Jardawi, Ibid., p.86.
10. R. Jardawi, Ibid., p.69.
11. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, Ibid., p.79.
12. R. Jardawi, Ibid., pp.67-69.

13. Figures obtained from Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, p.79.
14. For more details on the housing of Kuwaitis see a study carried out by Kuwait Engineers Society, in 1981.
15. M. Ahmad al-Tijan, Majmū'ah min alQararāt wa al-Tashri'āt al-Sadīrah min Oct. 1977 illa 30 Sept. 1978. (A Collection of decisions and legislations issued from October 1977 to 30 September, 1978), Kuwait, Council of Ministers, Government Printing Press, 1979, p.75.
16. The Financial Times, London, February 26, 1979, p.21.
17. The value of land has increased to the extent that 750 sq. m. of land in the desert beyond Kuwait city and the suburbs costs anywhere between \$150,000 and \$200,00 (£112,500 and £150,000).  
Shamlan Al-Essa, The Problem of Manpower in Kuwait, op.cit., p.47.
18. Ibid., p.48.
19. Ibid., p.48.
20. For more details on the subject of the family expenditure see Chapter VI.
21. Mohamed al-Rumaihi, et al., al-Iskan Fi al-Kuwayt al-Jawanih al-Ijtima'iyyah, (Housing in Kuwait, The Social Sides), Kuwait, Kuwait Engineers Society, 1982, p.168.
22. According to the new Kuwait law of renting the real-estate No. 6 of 1978, the Kuwaiti landlord may increase the rent by no more than 100% after five years.
23. al-<sup>Aril</sup>Aril, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, No. 24, September 11, 1976, p.22.
24. Arab Times, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, March 28, 1981, p.11.
25. A statement made by Minister of State, al-watan, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, September 5, 1975.
26. Shamlan al-Essa, Ibid., p.48.
27. R. Jardawi, op.cit..

28. Ibrahim al-Shahin et al., al-Iskan Fi al-Kuwayt: al-Jawanib al-<sup>c</sup>Amān, (Housing in Kuwait: The General Sides), Kuwait, Kuwait Engineers Society, 1982, p.77.
29. An interview with an Arab immigrant born in Kuwait, December 1981, Kuwait.
30. See for example, Fahad al-Rashid, al-Iskan Fi al-Yuwayt: al-Jawanib al-Iqtisadiyyāh, (Housing in Kuwait: The Economic Sides) Kuwait, Kuwait Engineers Society, 1982.
31. Content analysis as indicated in Kuwait newspapers, see M. al Rumaihi et al., *op.cit.*, p.79.
32. Ministry of Planning, Dirasat Iskan al-<sup>c</sup>Azāh (Study of Housing of Singles), unpublished study, Kuwait, April, 1982, p.1.
33. *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.
34. al-Qabas, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, May 8, 1981.
35. Further discussions on this issue was brought in Chapter I.
36. Minutes of meeting between the representatives of Planning Ministry, Interior Ministry and the Kuwait Company for Investment and Trade. (Confidential), Kuwait, October 10, 1981, p.1.
37. A personal observation carried out by the author, December 1981.
38. An Observer, Oil for Underdevelopment and Discrimination, The Case of Kuwait, Monthly Review, Vol. 30, No. 6, November, 1978, p.17.
39. Ministry of Planning, Study of Housing of Singles, *Ibid.*, p.28.
40. A recent study found that 37.3% of the collective accommodation dwellers left their houses due to the destruction or because the building itself was no longer suitable for living in. Ministry of Planning, Study of Housing of Singles, *Ibid.*, p.30.
41. Another example of the overcrowded nature of group accommodation is founded in shargh district where 36 persons shared a flat which consisted of two bedrooms. In the flat's lounge alone there are 14 persons. al-Nadaf, a weekly magazine Kuwait, No. 25, October, 1981, p.6.

42. Ministry of Planning, *Ibid.*, p.22.
43. *Ibid.*, p.26.
44. *Ibid.*, p.41.
45. al-Ṭalīḥ, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, No. 646, April, 9, 1980, p.10. Number of Articles written by a local writer and some Arab immigrants claimed that Asian labour in the Gulf has introduced various dangerous diseases.
46. See for example: 1. Mohamed Rumaihi, al-ʾAthār al-Salbiyah Li Ghazw al-ʿAmaliḥ al-Asyawayihilla Kjalij wa a-ʿAlām al-ʿAraby, (The Negative Implication of the Invasion of Asian Labour to the Gulf and the Arab World: Kuwait), al-ʿArabi, Monthly Magazine, No. 280, March 1982.
46. al-Qabas, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, No. 3290, July 9, 1981.
47. al-watan, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, November 7, 1981, p.6.
48. Minutes of meeting between Representative of Ministry of Housing and Ministry of Planning, October 5, 1981, (Confidential).
49. See for example, Mohamed al-Rumaihi, Social Roots of Democracy in the Contemporary Arab Gulf Societies, *op.cit.*
50. Examples may also be found in the other Gulf countries, where the lower and middle classes of the indigenous population are living in the same areas as the immigrants.  
For more details see B. al-Najjar, Living and working conditions of non-Arab immigrants in the Arab Gulf countries, *op.cit.*
51. J.S. Birks and Sinclair, C.A., Arab Manpower, *op.cit.*, p.33.
52. al-ʿAzīl, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, December 15, 1978, p.31.
53. Interview carried out by the author, November 1981.
54. The data of this section depends heavily upon the personal participation, observation and interviews carried out by the author with different immigrant groups in Kuwait.
55. ʿAli al-Mousa et al., Strategies of Movement of Labour Force in Kuwait, *op.cit.*, p.67.



56. Examples of these are the important role of the Egyptian government's higher advisor in the Egyptian community in Kuwait; and the role of the Syrian and Iraqi Embassies in directing the activities of their social societies in Kuwait.
57. Some of these are Ahmad Kamal Abu al-Majd, the former Minister of Information in Egypt and the Crown Prince's personal advisor, and George Tu'mah, the former Syrian U.N. representative, at present a professor at Kuwait University; the others are highly specialised physicians, officers, engineers, lawyers etc.
58. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.312.
59. Shamlan Al-Essa, op.cit., p.312.
60. H.G. Merzerik, Kuwait Iraq Dispute, 1981, (N.Y. & International Review Service, 1961), Vol. 7. No. 66, p.8. in Tawfic Farah et al., Alienation and Expatriate Labour in Kuwait, op.cit., p.25.
61. Ministry of Planning, Study of Housing of Singles, op.cit., p.13.
62. Arab Times, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, June 25, 1981, p.6.
63. al-Siyyasih, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, April 29, 1975, p.10.
64. These are common ways, employed by the Kuwaiti authorities to harass immigrant workers. Such tactics are also used by the regime to win the Kuwaiti population that it is taking a "firm stand" with regard to immigrants.
65. Kuwayt al-aym (Kuwait Gazette), Supplement No. 41, February 29, 1972, p.56.
66. Tawfia Farah et al., Alienation and Expatriate Labour in Kuwait, Ibid., p.38.
67. The Financial Times, London, 26 February, 1979, p.21.
68. John Andrews, Migrant Workers in the Gulf States, In Georgan Ashworth (ed), World Minorities in the Eighties, Sunday, U.K., Quarterly Review, 1980, p.90. See also, B. al-Najjar, Ibid. 2. A.A. al-Murshid, Al-Hal al-'Amaliyyah al-Ajnahbiyyah 'ala al-Ta'awuf al-Ijtima'iyy, (The Impact of non-Arab Labour on the Social Harmony), op.cit.

69. al-Siyyasih, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, March 21, 1972, p.4.
- 69a. r. al-Jardawi, op.cit., pp.228-231.
70. Mohamed al-Rumaihi et al., Ibid., p.118.
71. Wajih Yasin, al-Takayuf al-Ijtimā'iy Lil 'Ayyilīh al-Filastiniyyah Fi al-Kuwayt, (The Social adaptation of Palestinian Families in Kuwait, Kuwait, Kuwait University, unpublished thesis, 1978, p.223.
72. Stanford Research Institute, op.cit., p.v.19.
73. al-Ra'y al-'Am, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, April 19, 1966.
74. Some local newspapers exaggerate the actual number of crimes committed by immigrants or publish the number and types of crime committed only by immigrants. For example, al-siyyasih published crime statistics where immigrants, according to the newspaper, have committed 74% of the offences. Nevertheless the actual non-Kuwaiti proportion as it is indicated in the statistics of the Ministry of Interior is only 30.3%. See al-Siyyasah newspaper, Kuwait, April, 6, 1981, p.5.
75. al-Watan, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, June 2, 1981.
76. A.A. Mou'ati, Fi-Taklūf al-Ijtimā'iyah Lil 'Amaliy al-Asyawayyah Fi al-Khalīl, (The Social Cost of Asian Labour in the Gulf), al-Mustaqbal al-'Araby, No. 37, March 1982, p.69.
77. See for example: Stephen Castle and Godula Kosack, op.cit., p.142.
78. Salah A. Mu'ti, et al., Athar al-'Awamil al-Ijtimā'iyah wa Qanūn al-Jazā' Fi Intishār Jara'im Hatk al-'Ard Fi al-Kuwayt, (Social and Legal Factors Effecting the Widespread of Rape Crimes in Kuwait), unpublished study, Ministeries Council, Social Research Directorate, May 1977, pp.21-24.
79. al-Yaq'ah, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, September 4, 1972, p.11.
80. al-Azminah al-'Arabiyah, a weekly magazine, Shrjeh, No. 71, July 16, 1980, p.16.

81. We come across many cases which revealed the discrimination against migrants in the administration of justice. For example Fahad al-Ruwashid, a Kuwaiti citizen, convicted of a traffic offence causing the deaf to a non-Kuwaiti was only fined K.D. 130, by the Kuwaiti court (The Traffic Course, Case No. 2794/79 Al-Ahmadi, 10.12.79). On the other hand a migrant found guilty in a traffic accident injuring one person was sentenced to three months imprisonment (Case No. 1020/79, 25.9.1979). More evidence was found in other cases. For instance, while most of the Kuwaiti convicted drug crimes received extenuated sentences (Case No. 619/1980, 9.6.80, and Case No. 1705/80 9.8.80), non-Kuwaitis convicted of the same crimes or even if they were cleared by the court, have been deported from the country (Case No. 62/1980, 2.3.1980). Furthermore non-Kuwaiti political prisoners are usually beaten up badly and some of them are sent back to their countries of origin. For the last ten years or so it has been reported occasionally that numbers of Palestinian political prisoners have been murdered in prison under the inhuman torture of Kuwaiti police.  
See for example al-Tali<sup>h</sup>, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, June 6, 1973.

## Chapter VI

### CHARACTERISTICS OF IMMIGRANTS IN KUWAIT: ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

"If non-Kuwait Arabs suddenly left our country Kuwaitis would be forced to leave their cars in the street and walk, because they would not even know how to change the points in their cars."

A Deputy in the Kuwaiti Parliament  
1975-76<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In the previous chapter it was shown that in spite of the importance of immigrant labour to the economy of Kuwait the immigrants social status does not reflect this. The social and spacial segregation of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis has served to preserve the political interests of the Kuwaiti regime. This segregation has also maintained the dependency of Kuwaiti labour on international capitalism. Having no rights within the Kuwaiti state, political action among non-Kuwaitis is stifled. Furthermore, Kuwaitis see themselves as occupying a superior position with regard to non-Kuwaitis, and thus see support for the Kuwaiti regime as being in their interests.

The aim of this chapter is to consider some further characteristics of the non-Kuwaiti labour force. It will focus on such areas as the fact that: non-Kuwaitis are diffused over all the economic activities of Kuwait; they are the backbone upon which this economy stands and operates; and they are better educated and have mostly obtained their vocational training and education through private means. The chapter will also emphasize that discrimination against immigrant workers also includes their children. Finally, it will show that contrary to some misconceptions, immigrant labourers are restricted in their sources of income, but the amount and the items of expenditure for them are not any different from those of their Kuwaiti counterparts.

A. Economic and Vocational Characteristics

The 1980 Kuwait population census revealed that the labour force amounted to 491,537 persons, of whom 8986 or 1.8% were unemployed. Of the total population only 36.2% are in the labour force. (See table 6.1). If the labour force is classified by sex it will be found that males accounted for 422,003 or 87.1% in 1980 of those who are engaged in some form of economic activity. Female contribution to the labour force, in 1980 was 12.8% of the total, consisted of 13,823 Kuwaitis or 13.3% of the total Kuwaiti labour force and 48,274 non-Kuwaitis or 12.6% of the total non-Kuwaiti labour force.<sup>2</sup> In general non-Kuwaitis comprised of 78.6% of the total labour force (See table 1.2).

Furthermore, an examination of the employment status of the labour force reveals an increase in the wage labour form since the development of the oil industry as it has increased from 89.9% in 1957 to 91.7% in 1980. The absolute number of wage-earners increased as well, from 66,591 in 1957 to 434,353 in 1980. A comparison between the Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti labour forces reveals two important characteristics: First, the considerable increase in the number and proportion of wage-earners amongst the Kuwaitis; 17,612 in 1957 to 51,151 in 1970 and 97,071 in 1980. Similarly the number of the non-Kuwaitis increased from 48,979 in 1957 to 140,468 in 1970 and 337,283 in 1980 (See table 6.2). Such an increase in the wage-form, both proportionally and in absolute terms, exemplifies the transformation of Kuwait into a capitalist economy.

This also affirms that the bulk of the Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis are largely dependent upon their wages and salaries as a major source of income. On the other hand, table 6.1 also indicates significant features

Table 6.1

Population 17 years and over and labour force by employment status and nativity between 1957 and 1990

Employment Status	1957 <sup>1</sup>					1965 <sup>2</sup>					1970 <sup>1</sup>							
	K	%	N-K	%	T	K	%	N-K	%	T	K	%	N-K	%	T			
Employer	208	0.23	234	0.14	502	0.62	1487	0.70	2223	1.71	4512	2.44	2050	0.84	4514	1.87	6503	2.71
Self Employed	3902	7.25	5544	0.40	11446	14.25	5291	2.42	15442	10.00	23649	12.63	6012	2.39	20579	11.76	34501	14.24
Employees	17617	21.23	45370	61.00	66591	82.04	32374	16.10	127262	61.51	150488	81.67	51161	21.22	170268	57.00	261600	79.17
Unpaid Workers	181	0.14	167	0.20	345	0.42	250	0.11	270	0.12	504	0.27	295	0.12	417	0.17	210	0.49
Unemployed	672	0.54	726	0.90	1404	1.74	2858	1.35	2322	1.26	5194	2.61	5831	2.40	2432	0.96	8353	3.51
Total Labour Force	21602	30.64	35660	69.15	80288	100.00	44010	21.34	141112	76.65	184297	100.00	65369	26.96	171877	73.03	242106	100.00

Employment Status	1975 <sup>4</sup>					1980 <sup>5</sup>						
	K	%	N-K	%	T	K	%	N-K	%	T		
Employer	2129	0.17	5519	1.81	3208	2.5	2455	0.5	6927	1.6	3412	2.0
Self Employed	6264	2.28	21445	7.04	20409	9.1	3303	0.6	26427	7.4	26742	8.0
Employees	77285	25.2	124285	60.47	26257	95.4	97052	20.0	277222	61.2	454170	88.3
Unpaid Workers	408	0.22	301	0.06	610	0.2	640	0.1	212	0.22	73	0.1
Unemployed	4571	1.52	1294	0.42	6167	2.0	3286	0.6	2221	0.6	7477	1.6
Total Labour Force	91244	31.25	141726	69.54	303582	100.00	107784	23.0	337297	75.0	451173	100.00

1. Statistics Canada, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Summary, 1957-58, p. 126.

2. Ministry of Labour, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Summary, 1965-66, p. 126.

Table n.2 Wage - labour 12 years and over in Kuwait according to the nationality and year of census

	1957 <sup>1</sup>	1965 <sup>2</sup>	1970 <sup>3</sup>	1975 <sup>4</sup>	1980 <sup>5</sup>
Kuwaiti	17612	33374	51151	77385	97071
Non-Kuwaiti	48979	117064	140468	184185	337263
Total wage-labour	66591	150436	191629	261570	434333
Total labour force	80288	184297	242196	304582	492914

Source: 1,2,3,4 Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1980 - op.cit, p.166.

5. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Kuwait Population Census 1980 - Vol.1 - Government Printing Press, Kuwait, 1982, p.286-290.



with regard to the employment status of non-Kuwaitis. For example, it shows that the number of non-Kuwaiti employers increased from 274 in 1957 to 6957 in 1980, whilst it only rose from 228 to 2455 in the case of Kuwaitis during the same period. Ironically, while the increase of Kuwaiti employers actually represents the expansion of the Kuwaiti merchant community, the increase of non-Kuwaiti employers which could also indicate the development of non-Kuwaiti commercial interests is not so. All non-Kuwaitis have to have a Kuwaiti sponsor/partner. This is because the Kuwaiti business law prohibits non-Kuwaitis from starting a business without a Kuwaiti partner.<sup>3</sup> It is also interesting to note that while the number of unemployed people decreased in the case of Kuwaitis from 4873 in 1974 to 4286 in 1980 it rose in the case of non-Kuwaitis from 1294 to 3181 during the same period. With regard to the unemployment, it is estimated that it reached its highest level among Kuwaitis in 1970, when it accounted for 5821, and among immigrants in 1980 (See table 6.1). Finally, unpaid labour increased in the case of Kuwaitis from 182 in 1957 to 648 in 1980 which indicates the expansion of "family business" where no fixed salary is assumed for family members.

#### A.1. Distribution of the Labour Force by Economic Activity

An examination of the distribution of the Kuwaiti labour force reveals its heavy concentration in the service sector which employs 232,919 or 48.1% of the total labour force. Comparison in terms of the employment of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in this sector reveals that the bulk of the Kuwaiti labour is employed in this sector; 14,681 or 51.7% of the total Kuwaiti labour in 1957 and 78,263 or 75.6% in 1980 (See table 1.1). The large concentration of Kuwaiti labour in this sector is ascribed to their large proportion in the government sector which alone absorbed around

Table 6.3

Government Administration Civil Servants in June 1981.

Government Administration	Employees			Craftsmen			Service Jobs			Total		
	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
Amiri Diwan	96	10	106	2	51	53	173	155	328	271	216	487
Audit Council	36	143	179	-	-	-	7	22	29	43	165	208
Cabinet Affairs	290	109	399	-	8	8	56	149	205	146	266	612
Legislation Department	27	24	46	-	1	1	15	12	29	37	59	96
Ministry of Planning	173	313	486	-	1	1	41	76	117	214	390	604
Government Employment Council	106	177	282	-	-	-	28	66	94	133	243	376
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	284	59	343	1	30	31	38	45	83	573	134	707
Ministry of Finance	471	144	615	19	608	627	135	258	393	623	1110	1733
Customs & Port Dept.	841	276	1117	57	202	259	685	173	858	1543	651	2194
Ministry of Oil	141	100	241	-	-	-	32	56	88	173	158	331
Ministry of Commerce & Industry	465	130	595	-	-	-	57	107	164	132	317	481
Ministry of Defence	264	376	640	19	546	565	221	274	495	504	116	1700
National Guard	1	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5
Ministry of Interior	1991	174	2365	43	1000	1043	648	1019	1667	2462	2391	5075
Ministry of Justice	284	826	1110	4	49	53	126	250	376	416	1125	1509
Ministry of Awqaf & Islamic Affairs	252	774	1026	3	44	47	137	1114	1251	392	1372	2124
Ministry of Education	12887	18748	31435	100	1217	1317	4719	9677	14396	12506	29642	47149
Ministry of Information	1868	874	2742	114	1091	1205	239	183	422	2221	2148	4369
Ministry of Health	3567	12636	16203	508	4686	5194	2126	3302	5428	6761	20624	26825
Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour	1194	649	1843	55	408	463	559	676	1235	1908	1737	3645
Ministry of Electricity & Water	2027	2663	4690	654	4456	5110	484	191	675	3165	7330	10495
Power & Distillation Plants	461	915	1396	60	981	1041	54	34	88	75	1940	2028
Ministry of Communication Telegraph & Telephone	2903	1545	4348	179	668	847	632	769	1401	3074	2002	5076
Postal Services	420	127	547	24	64	88	225	201	426	661	592	1253
Civil Aviation Dept.	531	294	825	22	270	292	127	79	206	680	643	1323
Ministry of Public Work	651	1108	1759	1155	5881	7036	64	105	169	1879	7094	8973
Ministry of Housing	74	64	138	1	-	1	40	57	97	115	121	236
<b>Total</b>	<b>11999</b>	<b>43892</b>	<b>75881</b>	<b>3020</b>	<b>22262</b>	<b>25282</b>	<b>11668</b>	<b>18954</b>	<b>30622</b>	<b>66697</b>	<b>51098</b>	<b>117795</b>

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit. pp. 124-125.

Table 6.4

Contribution of Construction to the G.D.P. 1966-1979.

Year	G.D.P. (million KD)			Percentage of G.D.P. in Construction to Non-Oil G.D.P.
	Total	Non-Oil	Construction	
1966	854	344	38	11.0
1969	989	432	39	9.0
1970	1084	432	34	7.9
1971	1347	444	40	9.0
1972	1562	626	21	6.4
1973	2112	665	21	6.1
1974	3150	788	22	7.1
1975	3477	994	70	7.2
1976	3824	1277	129	10.1
1977	4054	1523	158	10.4
1978	4210	1647	176	10.7
1979	6136	1957	180	9.2

Source: Fargani, Nader, *The Role of Egyptian Labour in the Construction Sector in Kuwait*, Tokyo, Institute of Developing Economies, 1981, p.25.

43.7% of Kuwait labour in 1981. Similarly, the majority of the non-Kuwaitis labour force 40.6% in 1980 was employed by the services sector and of these 35,098 or 20.5% of the total non-Kuwaiti labour force in 1981, were in the government sector. Moreover, the bulk of these non-Kuwaitis are employed in the Ministry of Education and number 47,148 or 62.8% of whom are non-Kuwaitis. The Ministry of Health employs 26,825 of whom 76.8% are non-Kuwaiti (See table 6.3). An examination of the contribution of females to the labour force reveals that 91.9% or (57,094) are in the service sectors, which reflects their heavy concentration in education and health, which is said to have recruited around 50% of the total female labour force in 1975.<sup>4</sup>

The construction sector which was third, in terms of its employment capacity, in 1975, became the second employer of labour after the services sector in 1980. The absolute number of persons employed rose from 32,256 (10.8%) in 1975 to 97,044 (20%) in 1980 and of these 95,835 (98.7%) were non-Kuwaitis. Few women were employed in this sector: only 575 (0.1%) of whom almost all (563) were non-Kuwaitis.<sup>5</sup> The peak year for employment in this sector was 1978 when it received 64.6% of labour permits issued for the first time (See table 4.17). The issue of recent labour permits indicates a decline of the construction boom. For example, its share of the labour permits dropped from 310,190 in 1978 to 271,154 in 1981. On the other hand, the other economic activities increased their contributions from 17,180 to 23,300 during the same period. Furthermore, the non-oil G.D.P. has passed throughout this period through four stages: it witnessed a considerable growth in the late sixties and early seventies and then again in the second half of the seventies (table 6.4). The first could be attributed to the sense of stability brought about by the assistance of the continuity of oil revenues and capital

surplus; the adoption of the welfare-state concept led to the financing of local construction in order to meet the demands of housing created by the influx of a large number of immigrants. The second boom was generated by the constant increase of oil prices since 1973 which enabled the Kuwaiti government and land owners alike, to expand their housing programmes (See table 6.5).

Once again it is important to emphasise that immigrant labour in the construction sector, as with most labour importing countries was far more dominant than in any other economic activities. For instance, it is understood that in Libya around 77-80 per cent of the workers engaged in construction activity were non-Libyan, and the proportion was about 90-95 per cent in the U.A.E. and Qatar.<sup>6</sup> This argument as we have already indicated also applies to Kuwait.

Tables 1.1 and 4.10 indicate that this sector is almost entirely made up of an immigrant labour force and an estimate of Kuwaiti labour contribution stood at 5.5% in 1975 and decreased to 1.2% in 1980. In spite of the scarcity of data on the composition of the labour force in this sector by nationality, the available figures show that the Iranians and Egyptians jointly constituted about 50% of the construction sector labour force in 1970 and 1975. However the share of Iranian labour dropped from 33.53% in 1970 to 24.14% in 1975, while in contrast the Egyptians showed an increase from 12.46% in 1970 to 22.91% in 1975.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it could be said, that the Iranian contribution in the construction sector will maintain its decline in favour of Egyptian and Asian labour. Furthermore, figures of work permits showed that Asian labour are taking up the bulk of the work permits issued between 1976 and 1981. For example, Asian

Table 6.5

## Government Investment Expenditure by Major Areas of Government Activity (1969/70-1979/80)

Fiscal Year	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80*
Total	53.1	50.6	53.8	61.0	69.4	111.5	220.0	378.4	433.2	441.4	592.5
Water and Electricity	40.3	19.3	23.8	27.8	31.2	43.5	91.3	88.6	113.5	132.6	170.1
Housing	3.3	1.9	2.2	4.1	1.2	1.5	11.3	70.2	102.9	111.0	148.8
Transportation	7.6	8.1	7.7	12.6	12.2	29.2	30.1	26.1	99.9	59.9	63.8

\* Data of 1979/80 derived from, Ministry of Planning, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit.

Source: Fargani, Nader, op.cit., p.26

labour accounted for 69% in 1981 and of these 8.1% were Pakistanis, 3.0% were Bangladeshis, 13.6% were Indians, 27.4% were Koreans, 0.2% were Philipinos, 1.7% were Japanese, 8.6% were other Asians, and the Iranians were only 3.3% (See table 6.6). The contribution of Arab labour to this sector fluctuated from 38.6% in 1977 to 26.3% in 1978 and to 27.1% in 1981. The Egyptians' share is significant as it accounts for 17.6% out of the total contribution and 65.1% of the Arab share in this sector in 1981 (See table 6.6). The above indicates that immigrant labour input in the construction sector is so extensive as to eliminate any possibility of reducing a reliance upon it in the short or the long term.

Commerce is the third largest employment sector, absorbing 12.1% of the labour force in 1980. The bulk of these are non-Kuwaitis (92.1%) whose number doubled in a ten year period, from 25,715 in 1970 to 54,153 in 1980. This sector, until recently, was dominated by Arab and Iranian labour, however, the years following 1975 witnessed a considerable increase in the share and number of Asian labour. In particular, Indian immigrants in 1980 accounted for 17.8% of the total labour permits issued for this sector. In addition 45.8% of those who were employed in 1981 by this sector were Asians (See table 6.6).

The fourth largest proportion of Kuwait labour (8.4%) is employed in the manufacturing sector. Unlike the other sectors the manufacturing labour force has shown only a small increase; rising from 32,091 in 1970 to 40,974 in 1980 (See tables 4.10 and 1.1). The non-Kuwaiti share amounted to 92.6% in 1980. Furthermore, table 6.7 also indicates that the contribution of immigrant labour in major manufacturing industries is much higher than that of Kuwaitis; accounting for 88.5% and 90.8% in 1970 and

Economic Activities	Other Arab														Total Arab	Asian										Other	Total
	Tunisia	Iraq	Jordan	Palestine	Syria	Lebanon	Egypt	Other Arab	Total Arab	Pakistan	Bangladesh	India	Iran	Korea		Philippine	Japan	Other Asian									
Agriculture	1 1978	4	10	32	-	21	5	191	12	277	184	137	35	39	-	1	-	1	1	197	50	3	727				
Hunting & Fishing	2 1979	8	94	32	-	23	3	272	20	452	191	33	94	52	-	25	-	2	2	397	45	-	894				
	3 1980	6	79	11	-	36	7	315	9	463	357	170	95	51	-	-	-	34	34	707	4	1	1175				
	4 1981	3	37	14	-	15	4	368	11	455	324	133	110	64	-	48	-	27	27	706	23	2	1186				
Mining & Quarrying	1978	5	4	55	2	5	14	20	1	106	7	-	56	-	-	-	-	1	2	66	81	2	255				
	1979	1	-	30	2	5	6	10	1	55	7	1	41	-	-	-	-	2	-	51	70	1	186				
	1980	-	-	21	-	4	2	9	-	37	11	2	36	1	-	-	-	-	-	51	40	1	129				
	1981	3	4	28	4	3	2	13	3	59	63	2	46	-	-	-	-	2	2	144	86	2	261				
Manufacturing Industries	1978	47	64	298	9	224	198	1717	59	7561	651	360	544	248	49	10	1	30	30	1613	161	18	4433				
	1979	44	283	293	5	233	163	1766	62	2249	547	257	540	370	2	1	-	201	201	1711	166	13	4142				
	1980	44	316	227	3	303	106	1725	87	2811	696	191	727	253	3	76	-	257	257	2205	125	5	5146				
	1981	48	173	184	6	195	103	1482	80	2773	606	334	682	251	3	124	17	146	146	2163	130	7	4577				
Construction	1978	54	272	1027	16	876	704	5177	403	8331	2856	315	6886	1520	7052	1797	198	602	602	21586	1138	35	31090				
	1979	35	837	746	15	659	545	4204	363	7198	3287	265	4033	672	7803	425	253	911	911	17643	1065	12	25924				
	1980	70	1204	889	12	662	349	5990	189	9305	2958	708	2794	1133	9497	371	111	1378	1378	18950	1046	37	29398				
	1981	40	755	664	34	562	348	4796	149	7358	2215	829	3713	909	7450	814	371	2444	2444	18795	1033	18	27154				
Commerce, Restaurants & Hotels	1978	101	768	649	13	445	448	2402	96	4327	710	145	1175	577	211	42	60	180	180	3108	974	29	7538				
	1979	94	659	600	14	354	412	2377	116	4816	641	180	1168	444	48	131	123	282	282	3067	397	29	8309				
	1980	126	764	562	11	850	343	3363	237	6257	1020	334	2105	802	71	118	189	4421	4421	5183	336	37	11803				
	1981	97	515	468	18	676	256	7586	160	4876	731	500	1490	632	17	350	205	494	494	4419	311	27	9643				
Transportation	1978	16	38	85	3	38	33	366	25	606	176	226	171	149	126	1	2	253	253	1117	59	1	1778				
	1979	14	132	75	-	68	46	237	50	622	210	187	407	67	69	245	4	15	15	303	201	10	1456				
	1980	13	149	57	1	69	31	276	38	1134	315	503	811	71	42	117	5	383	383	2247	51	1	1431				
	1981	8	110	83	3	92	44	522	43	903	191	571	622	130	77	219	17	561	561	2343	85	3	1336				
Financing & Insurance	1978	40	46	136	7	34	39	379	7	741	44	2	82	21	1	1	-	3	3	151	97	6	899				
	1979	71	126	152	7	43	50	362	41	858	71	7	175	21	92	4	2	15	15	303	201	10	1456				
	1980	63	107	144	8	47	53	456	101	979	123	10	227	47	14	23	2	29	29	475	163	12	1629				
	1981	64	60	131	7	34	36	298	37	667	79	9	198	28	6	1	2	25	25	308	144	6	1128				
Services	1978	10	57	104	3	61	52	402	7	716	49	6	99	36	3	15	-	19	19	274	107	3	1050				
	1979	6	117	66	2	95	36	331	30	684	93	45	105	75	2	15	8	195	195	679	113	11	1487				
	1980	5	162	84	6	134	57	1015	20	1484	148	175	494	231	1	34	-	144	144	1811	164	8	3467				
	1981	3	170	75	1	106	67	645	15	1091	191	719	230	77	3	28	-	509	509	1829	72	8	4132				

1. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Report on the Use and Characteristics of migrant labour, 1979, Kuwait, January, 1979, p.29

2. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Report on the Use and Characteristics of Migrant Labour, 1980, Kuwait, February, 1980, p.50

3. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Report on the Use and Characteristics of Migrant Labour, 1981, Kuwait, February, 1981, p.70

4. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Report on the Use and Characteristics of Migrant Labour, 1982, Kuwait, February, 1982, p.50



Table 3.7 Percentage Distribution of Labour Force by major manufacturing sector and nationality

Type of Manufacturers	1970		1975	
	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Food,stuff and soft drink Industries	4.4	95.6	4.0	96.0
Textile industries	2.2	97.8	1.2	98.8
Wood and furniture industries	10.1	89.9	4.0	96.0
Paper and printing industries	31.5	68.5	25.0	75.0
Chemical industries	17.4	82.6	19.6	80.4
Building and non-metallic industry	3.1	96.9	8.1	91.9
Metal Works Industries	28.1	71.9	8.4	91.6
Other manufacturing industries	10.9	89.1	2.5	97.5
<b>Total manufacturing industries</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>90.8</b>

Source: Ministry of Planning: Employment in Manufacturing Sector - Department of Human Resources Development, Kuwait, January 1979, Table No. 1/54, p.121.

1975 respectively. The growth of the manufacturing sector is a subject of great concern for the Kuwaiti government, thus the regime stood continuously against any attempts to expand the industrial sector.\*

Al-Atiqi, the former oil minister, explained:

"Industrialization would allow to develop but on a very limited scale. Heavy industrialization would not be established in order to prevent any significant increase in migrant workers in the manufacturing sector.<sup>8</sup>"

For most of the Gulf regimes the creation of a working class is conceived as a potential political threat to the stability of these countries. Thus, importing labour which has different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and different interests and ambitions, obstructs any possibility of the development of a strong and effective working class.\*\*

#### A.2. Immigrant Labour and the Operation of the Kuwaiti Economy

Whilst the Kuwaiti economy, as indicated earlier, totally depends upon one source of income, oil, the operation of this economy depends on the large presence of an expatriate labour force. The contribution of the Arab labour force in the economy of Kuwait is crucial and represented 51.5% and 47.2% of the total labour force in 1970 and 1980 respectively. They constituted 69.3% in 1970 and 60% in 1980 of the non-Kuwaiti labour force (See table 6.8). An examination of the contribution of individual migrant groups reveals that Palestinians up to 1975 were the major

\* For more details on the questions of industrialization in Kuwait see Chapter III

\*\* See for example, Chapter VIII

Table 6.8

Non-Kuwaiti Labour force by group of countries between 1970-1980.

Group of Countries	1970				1975				1980			
	Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%
	Arab Countries	111081	11650	123654	69.3	128746	17972	146718	69.3	201473	27073	228546
Asian Countries	48754	2557	51315	29.0	53382	9204	62586	29.6	125811	19920	145731	38.2
African Countries	301	19	320	0.2	77	30	107	0.1	371	439	810	0.3
American & European Countries	2177	311	2480	1.5	1714	319	2033	1.0	4674	842	5521	1.4
Not Stated	45	4	49	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	162206	14541	176827	100.0	183919	27525	211444	100.0	332334	48274	380608	100.0

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.96.

contributors to the labour force, and despite the decline of their proportion, their absolute number jumped from 11,720 persons in 1965 to 47,653 persons in 1975 (See table 6.9). Similarly, the Iranian share decreased from 19.7% in 1965 to 13.6% in 1975, though their absolute numbers increased from 27,955 to 28,933 during the same years. On the other hand, Egyptian and Asian labour increased their percentage and numbers; Egyptians increased from 3.9% in 1965 to 17.7% in 1975, and Asians from 8.8% to 15.4%.

The importance of the non-Kuwaiti labour force can also be seen in the qualitative worth of this labour. Two immigrant groups formed the backbone of highly skilled labour until 1975; Palestinians and Egyptians (See table 6.9). A study carried out by the planning board in 1975 on the labour force in Kuwait examined the relative weight of the labour force by nationality and professions in 1970. They came up with the following ranking order on the basis of the relative role and contribution:<sup>9</sup>

Palestine	= 24.3	points
Iran	= 17.5	"
Egypt	= 9.4	"
Iraq	= 8.1	"
Syria	= 5.2	"
India, Oman	= 4.2	"
Yemen	= 3.4	"
Lebanon	= 0.7	"

Such a ranking order has continued through 1975, with Egypt taking the place of Iran. In 1975, amongst the non-Kuwaiti labour the Palestinians occupied 37.5% in technical and professional occupations, 31% in managerial occupations, 41.2% in clerical occupations, 20.5% in sales and 19.5% in

Table 10

Nationality of Labor Force by Sex and Nationality (1965, 1970, and 1975)

Nationality	1965						1970					
	M	%	F	%	T	%	M	%	F	%	T	%
Arab Gulf Couns.	17772	12.57	146	0.10	17918	12.68	12484	7.65	164	-	12648	7.15
Saudi Arabia	1718	1.2	23	0.01	1741	1.23	2749	1.5	34	-	2783	1.56
Palestine & Jordan	13704	23.90	2258	1.51	16027	25.50	35224	21.61	3380	1.31	40004	23.52
Iraq	10364	7.14	1356	0.95	11720	8.29	15383	8.69	2071	1.17	17454	9.87
Syria	10115	6.23	522	0.36	10637	7.24	12974	6.82	671	0.39	13645	7.21
Lebanon	10502	6.61	490	0.31	10992	6.98	7981	4.45	586	0.31	8567	4.76
Egypt	1012	2.36	1043	1.26	2055	3.01	11673	7.11	4692	2.45	16365	10.04
Yemen (R & S)	5614	4.31	8	-	5622	4.12	4630	4.98	15	-	4645	4.88
Other Arab Couns.	40	0.24	15	-	361	0.25	520	0.29	16	-	536	0.30
<b>Total Arabs</b>	<b>91942</b>	<b>65.67</b>	<b>6961</b>	<b>4.57</b>	<b>98403</b>	<b>69.65</b>	<b>111008</b>	<b>62.77</b>	<b>11650</b>	<b>6.56</b>	<b>122658</b>	<b>69.36</b>
Iran	22892	19.74	63	-	22955	19.78	13528	20.09	71	-	13600	19.00
Pakistan	5453	3.84	112	0.07	5565	3.92	6548	3.92	207	0.12	6755	3.82
India	6175	4.37	915	0.57	6990	4.84	8188	4.90	2250	1.27	10438	5.91
Other Asians	142	0.10	14	-	157	0.11	494	0.29	24	-	518	0.27
Other Africans	294	0.20	1	-	297	0.21	301	0.18	19	-	320	0.18
Europeans	1472	1.18	199	0.14	1671	1.32	2177	1.30	311	0.17	2488	1.30
Non-White	12	-	2	-	14	-	45	-	4	-	49	-
<b>T. Non-Arab</b>	<b>41004</b>	<b>29.68</b>	<b>1215</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>42876</b>	<b>31.15</b>	<b>51282</b>	<b>29.00</b>	<b>2891</b>	<b>1.63</b>	<b>54173</b>	<b>30.64</b>
<b>G. Total</b>	<b>132946</b>	<b>94.56</b>	<b>7676</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>141279</b>	<b>99.79</b>	<b>162290</b>	<b>91.77</b>	<b>14541</b>	<b>8.22</b>	<b>176831</b>	<b>99.99</b>

Nationality	1975					
	M	%	F	%	T	%
Arab Gulf Couns.	1195	2.01	149	0.07	1344	2.10
Saudi Arabia	1582	1.22	62	-	1644	1.25
Palestine & Jordan	43507	20.57	4144	1.55	47651	22.53
Iraq	17156	8.25	1935	0.91	19091	8.51
Syria	17007	7.38	941	0.44	17948	7.82
Lebanon	6261	3.11	651	0.30	7112	3.47
Egypt	27079	13.04	9979	4.71	37058	17.75
Yemen (R & S)	11377	5.38	38	-	11415	5.39
Other Arab Couns.	1152	0.54	73	-	1225	0.57
<b>Total Arabs</b>	<b>128746</b>	<b>60.88</b>	<b>17972</b>	<b>8.49</b>	<b>146718</b>	<b>67.38</b>
Iran	28764	13.60	169	0.07	28933	13.68
Pakistan	10519	4.97	528	0.24	11038	5.22
India	13107	6.22	8466	4.00	21573	10.73
Other Asians	91	0.44	41	-	132	0.46
Other Africans	77	-	30	-	107	0.05
Europeans	1714	0.81	319	0.15	2033	0.96
Non-White	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>T. Non-Arab</b>	<b>55171</b>	<b>26.77</b>	<b>9553</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>64724</b>	<b>30.61</b>
<b>G. Total</b>	<b>183917</b>	<b>86.98</b>	<b>27525</b>	<b>13.02</b>	<b>211444</b>	<b>97.99</b>

Source: Compiled from the Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstracts, 1960, pp. 115, p. 127.

production positions. Egyptians occupied 34.3% in technical and professional, 18.3% in the service sector, and 15.9% in production. Iranians were concentrated in production work and sales. Iraqis were similar to Iranians, but had a much higher ratio of clerical workers. Indians were concentrated in service work, mostly cooks, private drivers and house servants production and clerical occupations. Yemenis were mostly sales and production workers, with a relatively fair ratio of professional and technical workers (See table 6.10). The distribution of the non-Kuwaiti labour force by occupation, revealed that Kuwait is not dependent on any one single immigrant group, however, it heavily depends upon Palestinians and Egyptians for professional and technical occupations and clerical jobs; on Iranians, Egyptians and South Asians for semi-skilled and production work; on Indians for domestic labour. However, it is important to emphasize that while the Egyptians and Palestinians remained the main source of the clerical, professional and managerial workers, the Far Easterners and the South Asians are increasingly becoming the main source of technical and to some extent professional jobs and they also increased their share in production work. It was estimated that 70.2% of the newly recruited workers in 1961 were for production occupations and of these the Asians constituted the majority.<sup>10</sup> It is also interesting to note that while in the fifties and sixties Egypt and Oman were the main source of domestic labour, South Asia and some of the Far Eastern countries have since become the main source of such labour.

From the above it can be suggested that a number of factors articulate in such a way as to ensure the heavy reliance of Kuwait on immigrant labour for a long time to come: a) the labour demand generated by the type of socio-economic development adopted far exceeds quantitatively and qualitatively, the availability of local labour; b) the failure of

Table 6.10 Non-Kuwaiti Labour by Occupation and Nationality in 1975

Occupational Groups	Palestine		Egypt		Iraq		Yemen		India		Iran		Lebanon		Syria		Others		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Professional & Technical	12052	37.5	11061	34.3	1007	3.1	2	0.0	2602	8.1	97	0.2	1055	3.2	1356	4.2	2849	9.4	32097	100.0
Managers	562	11.0	241	13.7	100	5.5	22	1.2	177	9.7	23	1.2	109	9.3	102	5.6	413	22.8	1809	99.6
Clerical & related employees	8327	41.2	2359	11.6	1404	6.9	1365	1.9	2672	13.2	384	1.9	757	3.7	744	1.7	2153	10.6	20165	99.6
Sales Workers	3795	20.5	740	4.0	912	4.9	2634	14.2	1729	9.3	1334	10.3	1053	5.7	2637	14.2	1573	9.5	18467	99.6
Service Workers	4086	9.0	9339	18.3	4919	10.8	4486	9.8	10546	23.2	4308	9.4	813	1.7	2496	5.4	5408	11.9	45400	99.5
Production Workers	12938	19.8	14385	15.9	6411	9.3	2600	2.8	3740	4.1	20114	22.2	3333	3.7	8884	9.8	10817	11.9	90260	99.5
Total	46760	27.4	37122	17.8	16753	8.0	11248	10.3	7220	3.4	28459	11.6	7220	3.4	16239	7.7	23213	11.1	208198	99.7

Source: Ministry of Planning, Labour Force in Kuwait - April, 1980, p.131.

vocational and educational programmes to meet the country's needs for skilled labour; and c) the way in which the society has been transformed it has consolidated social values which hinder local labour in working on many of the lower strata occupations.

#### B. Immigrants' Educational Attainment

In contrast to Kuwaitis who see education as a means to improve their social status or to occupy a leading position in the official and semi-official sectors, non-Kuwaitis, especially the Arabs, attain it in an attempt to secure their uncertain position and to give themselves an advantage in Kuwait's labour market. In other words, for immigrant groups, education and vocational training were obtained in an attempt to maintain their presence in the country of their employment and as a means of obtaining more employment opportunities in Kuwait. One should also remember the fact that obtaining more education is a pattern in many immigrant communities as they have been exposed to the value and benefits of education for a longer historical period, which preceded the rise of contemporary Kuwaiti society.<sup>11</sup> Comparisons between immigrants and the indigenous population reveals that immigrants education status as opposed to the Kuwaitis is considerably higher. For example, the illiteracy rate among non-Kuwaitis decreased from 51% in 1957 to 24.2% in 1980 while for Kuwaitis it declined from 59.7% to 36.4% during the same period.<sup>12</sup> The small improvement of literacy among Kuwaitis could be partly ascribed to the considerable naturalization of bedouin groups. The percentage of immigrants who attained the primary certificate rose from 2.5% in 1957 to 18.9% in 1975 but this decreased to 16% in 1980. This decline was counter balanced by other educational levels (See table 6.11 and table 6.12), where the proportion of secondary certificate holders and



Table 6.11

Immigrant population distributed by educational class.

Nationality	Illiterate		Read & Write		Primary		Intermediate & Secondary		Higher Education		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Iran	12646	67.2	4442	23.6	805	4.8	640	3.4	208	1.1	18911	100.0
Syria	3508	26.3	6849	51.4	1421	10.7	1242	9.3	297	2.2	11117	100.0
Lebanon	2380	16.9	7413	52.7	1642	11.7	2188	15.5	449	3.2	14072	100.0
Jordan and Palestine	5606	16.0	25351	47.3	5205	9.7	12521	23.4	1940	3.6	53623	100.0
Egypt	1147	14.0	1683	21.0	506	6.2	2073	25.4	2581	31.5	8198	100.0
Oman	11802	69.3	4887	28.7	279	1.6	52	0.3	1	-	17021	100.0
Other Arab	6610	48.1	5678	42.7	452	3.3	731	5.3	90	0.7	13766	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>46706</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>56703</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>10400</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>19451</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>5568</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>138830</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Iran	23745	30.9	5228	17.8	193	0.7	126	0.4	45	0.2	29342	100.0
India & Pakistan	4139	23.9	8378	48.4	647	3.7	3445	19.9	713	4.1	17322	100.0
Other Asian	70	32.0	58	26.5	7	3.4	47	21.5	41	19.7	219	100.0
African Coun.	196	54.4	141	39.2	5	1.4	15	4.2	1	0.8	160	100.0
Europe	75	3.6	642	27.5	122	6.1	1211	42.4	802	36.1	2855	100.0
U.S.A.	-	-	74	20.4	7	1.9	119	32.8	161	44.7	361	100.0
Other Coun.	11	10.7	26	31.3	6	7.2	21	25.1	13	20.5	81	100.0
<b>Total Arab</b>	<b>28231</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>14547</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>4984</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>1204</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>50644</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>N. Total</b>	<b>74944</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>71250</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>11391</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>24437</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>7152</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>189474</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Iran	14229	65.6	6096	21.2	1274	11.4	2512	8.8	582	2.0	24693	100.0
Syria	4923	24.7	7480	38.2	3922	20.1	2853	14.6	478	2.4	19556	100.0
Lebanon	2110	13.1	5775	35.9	3565	22.1	4120	25.6	535	3.3	16105	100.0
Jordan and Palestine	14456	17.0	22909	26.9	17900	21.0	26007	30.5	3949	4.6	85231	100.0
Egypt	5769	23.5	4724	19.2	2111	3.6	6181	25.1	5793	23.6	24578	100.0
Oman	7206	57.8	3947	31.7	886	7.1	392	3.1	70	0.2	12461	100.0
Other Arab	6013	42.6	7788	36.8	2173	10.3	1964	9.3	206	1.0	21140	100.0
<b>Total N.A.</b>	<b>59616</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>58719</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>33831</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>44029</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>11569</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>207764</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Iran	35276	30.2	9832	25.0	1131	3.1	532	1.5	54	0.2	46021	100.0
India & Pakistan	4687	19.7	10224	43.0	1411	5.9	6211	26.1	1241	5.1	21754	100.0
Other Asian	49	7.7	76	11.9	11	5.2	250	39.7	129	15.0	415	100.0
African Coun.	181	54.0	166	51.1	39	7.3	135	25.3	12	2.4	333	100.0
Europe	47	1.1	569	15.3	187	5.0	1735	47.8	1104	30.4	4645	100.0
U.S.A.	-	-	80	11.2	55	7.7	112	43.8	266	37.1	713	100.0
Other Coun.	-	-	-	-	3	9.7	19	61.3	9	29.0	31	100.0
<b>Total N.A.</b>	<b>20240</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>20117</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>2861</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>9193</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>2903</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>65314</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>N. Total</b>	<b>89856</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>78839</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>16692</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>53222</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>14472</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>277078</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: <sup>1</sup> Planning Board, Central Statistical Office, Population Census, 1965, Kuwait Government Printing Press, 1965, pp.220-221

<sup>2</sup> Board of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Population Census, 1970, pp.167-170.

Table 6.12

Education of population (10 years and over) by Nationality and Sex between 1970 & 1980

		1970		1975		1980	
		Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Illiterate	M.	36703	60389	44880	61889	40660	98977
	F.	69091	31839	88734	42971	92150	45972
	T.	105794	92228	133614	104860	132810	144949
Read & Write	M.	30480	58072	31287	55786	32245	93210
	F.	12569	18443	12653	22089	19025	42671
	T.	43049	76515	43940	77875	52080	135881
Primary	M.	25400	21948	39989	39067	47686	53881
	F.	16569	14751	26199	29405	31522	39572
	T.	41969	36699	66188	68472	79208	93453
Intermediate	M.	12095	14902	20919	26036	34460	50650
	F.	7284	9738	14496	18815	24567	34064
	T.	19397	24640	35415	44851	59047	84714
Secondary	M.	4982	18495	9806	25311	18207	53716
	F.	2321	11539	6797	17984	14810	34119
	T.	7303	30034	16603	43295	32517	87835
University degree	M.	1074	9990	2755	17314	5508	30261
	F.	273	3033	1224	5953	3366	14631
	T.	1347	13023	3979	23267	8874	44892
Not Stated	M.	117	411	18	7		
	F.	139	189	17	7		
	T.	256	600	35	14		
Total	M.	110846	184207	149654	225403	138736	496695
	F.	108246	89532	150120	137219	185740	201029
	T.	219092	273739	299774	362622	324476	697724

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op. cit., p.42.

degree holders increased from 5% in 1957 to 14.7% in 1980 and from 1.5% in 1957 to 8.8% in 1980 respectively. Similarly women's education improved as the rate of illiteracy decreased from 47.5% to 22.9% and for Kuwaitis from 74.2% to 49.6% between 1957 and 1980 respectively.<sup>13</sup> The status of their educational attainment also witnessed a great improvement, for instance the number of university educated non-Kuwaiti women rose from 1793 or 3.9% in 1965<sup>14</sup> to 4431 or 7.2% in 1980 (See table 6.12). The improvement of women's educational status partly reflects the increasing need of Kuwait's labour market for educated women especially in the field of education and health.

An examination of educational status by individual immigrant groups indicates that in 1970 the rate of illiteracy was the highest for Iranians (70.2%), Iraqis (65.2%) and Omanis (57.8%) and the lowest for Europeans (1.3%). Amongst the Asian labourers only 4% can read and write, while for Syrians and Lebanese it represents 38.2% and 35.9% respectively. This reflects the fact that most of these groups, and in particular the South Asians, are in occupations such as domestic service, tailoring and retail which do not require reading and writing. Furthermore, table 6.11 also shows that as the educational level increases, the proportion from each group is reduced and it reaches its lowest level in the case of Iranian (0.2%) and Omani (0.2%) degree holders in 1970. This is to be contrasted with the Americans and Egyptians who exhibited the highest proportion of university degree holders, (37.3%) and (23.6%) respectively. This is partially due to the fact that a large proportion of professional labour, such as physicians and teachers are from Egypt. Moreover, a large proportion of the Europeans, (47.8%) and the Palestinians (30.5%) have obtained a secondary level of education which also reflects the fact that the majority of the skilled workers,

technicians and clerical staff are Palestinians and Europeans. This was particularly the case during the sixties and early seventies. This situation has changed since then, but the Palestinians have remained the main source for clerical occupations. It can be concluded from the above that the educational attainment of immigrants in spite of the differences among them, has exhibited a considerable improvement.

With regard to the country of education it was found from our survey that the largest proportion of the sample (37.5%) have obtained their education from Egypt, 16.5% from Jordan, and 15.6% from Lebanon (See table 6.13). Moreover it was also noted that some of the migrant groups, Yemenis and Omanis in particular, before the spread of modern education in the countries of origin, during the sixties and early seventies, used to attend night classes in private schools. Such attempts were made by the immigrants themselves in order to improve their working conditions. Some Omanis, in particular, attained high positions in the government administration when they returned home with additional resources such as education.

#### B.1. Problem of Language

Although the problem of speaking the language of the receiving country does not apply to the Arab migrants the problem of understanding the Kuwaiti dialect still confronts them when they arrive in Kuwait. Of course, the problem of the Arabic language is quite apparent in the case of Asian semi and non-skilled workers. Nevertheless, the historical trade relations between Kuwait and the South Asian countries and Iran has lessened the problem since many Persian and Indian terms have found their way into the Kuwaiti dialect. In addition many Kuwaitis, because of

their Asian origin (Persian in particular) or through constant contact with Asians, are familiar with the Indian and Persian language. Moreover, many Asian labourers are in fact working with employers from their own countries or compatriots who are naturalized Kuwaitis, which helps alleviate some of their language difficulties.<sup>15</sup>

In referring to the problem of language in other Gulf countries, it is important to note that it is particularly acute in the U.A.E. not for migrants, but for the indigenous population who are a minority in their own country.<sup>16</sup> The large number of Asian migrants, in addition to the wide use of the English language in some of the government sectors and most of the private firms and companies, presents a real problem for a large number of the indigenous people who are in frequent contact with migrants. This problem is a regular subject for local newspapers and magazines, and research centres who see the large and continuous presence of non-Arab communities in the Gulf region profoundly affecting the Arab identity of these countries.<sup>17</sup>

#### B.1.1. Proficiency in a Foreign Language

Proficiency in a foreign language, especially English, is one of the essential conditions for obtaining employment in Kuwait. More evidence concerning this was demonstrated in the responses of the Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti samples. For example, 93.5% of the migrant sample speak English or English and one or two other European languages, mainly French and German. Of those, 76% could read, write and speak the languages, 16.6% could speak and read the languages, and 6.2% could only speak the languages. Similarly 88.7% of the Kuwaiti sample indicated

that they are proficient in English and other European languages, of those 63.6% are able to speak, read and write, 11.3% are able to speak and read, and 13.6% are able to only speak the languages. Once again, this means that proficiency in a foreign language for Kuwaitis and in particular for migrant labour is one of the major bargaining elements in the Kuwait labour market.

B.2. General Condition of Vocational Training

Three main factors have limited the expansion of the vocational training programmes in Kuwait: first, the small proportion of the Kuwaiti labour force in comparison with non-Kuwaitis; second, the heavy concentration of the indigenous labour force in the government sector and; third, the reluctance of the indigenous work force to work in manual and technical jobs. In addition, the government programmes on vocational training were limited only for Kuwaitis and aimed at training Kuwaitis in occupations which were classified as strategic. These were specified in the plan for vocational training in 1976-81, as: a) the occupations in which Kuwaitis are small in number; b) occupations where skills can be obtained through training; and c) the occupations where Kuwaitis constitute the highest proportion, but are expected to suffer from a shortage of labour during the period of the plan.<sup>18</sup> However, the recent development of the Kuwait labour market; the large surplus of foreign labour; the increasing importance of the private sector in the economy of the country, which has neither the interest nor the time to train the national labour force; and finally, the limited output of Kuwait's educational and training programmes, have all contributed to wipe out the government's hopes.

B.2.1. Training programmes for Kuwaitis

Since 1949 when the Kuwait Oil Company (K.O.C.) opened the first training centre in Kuwait, their number has increased considerably. They are distributed among the four sectors of the Kuwait economy: First, the main government training centres which are a) the Institute of Telecommunication, b) the Institute of Maritime Transportation, c) the Institute of Applied Engineering, d) the Institute of Agriculture, e) the Institute of Education, f) the Health Institute, g) the Business Institute, h) the Shuwaikh Centre for Industrial Training, and i) the Training Centre for Development of Water resources.<sup>19</sup> Second, by the oil companies training centres such as: a) K.O.C. training centre, b) K.N.P.C. training centre, c) Petro-chemical Industries Company's training centre, and d) the Arab Oil Company training centre.<sup>20</sup> Third, the joint sector which has no training centres as such but it initiates training programmes according to its needs.<sup>21</sup> Fourth, training programmes offered by the private sectors are very limited, both in terms of the quality of these programmes and the number of firms which provide such facilities.\*

In fact, there is no kind of coordination between these sectors in terms of their need for skilled manpower or even the nature of training programmes. They usually provide on-the-job training programmes according to their particular needs. However the oil companies and the joint sector companies do send their employees abroad to further their training and study.<sup>22</sup>

\* The only available training centre in the private sector is in the Alghanim Mobils Company which offers on-the-job training programmes.

Admission to the training centres of the oil, joint and private sectors is restricted to their employees. Admission requirements for the government training centres and institutes is that: a) students should be Kuwaiti, but students from the Gulf and from Arab and Islamic countries who meet the academic requirements are also accepted as long as they do not exceed 10% of the total enrolment; b) the student should hold the general certificate of secondary education or its equivalents (if they intend to enter the post-secondary institute); and c) they should be medically fit.<sup>23</sup> Kuwaiti students who dropped out of primary or secondary schools, or those who leave school with a poor pass mark, can be accepted in the training centres and institutes which are not at the post-secondary level. The training course normally lasts between six months and two years,<sup>24</sup> and after the completion of the vocational training all the Kuwaiti candidates will be offered a post in the ministry for which they have trained. Nevertheless, it has been found that many of these trainees chose jobs which did not relate to the type of training they have received. For example, a study carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, showed that 49.2% of the trainees graduating from the training centres neither accepted nor preferred manual work. Moreover, this study also shows that 87% of the Telecommunication Institute's trainees rejected manual work, in spite of the fact that their training was essentially manual.<sup>25</sup>

#### B.2.1.1 The Advantages and Disadvantage of Vocational Training

One may ask to what extent have the vocational training programmes achieved their goals? In answering this question two main aspects need to be examined: the cost of vocational training and the extent to which these programmes have managed to meet the society's needs. Concerning



the first aspect, the available data reveals how high the cost of technical education and vocational training is. For instance, Kuwait technical college in the period between 1955-70 spent approximately six million K.D. (£12 million) in return for 569 graduates. More precisely the technical college annually spends KD 400,000 (£800,000) to graduate 39 students.<sup>26</sup> The same situation can be found in the government sector training centres where the input in comparison to the output is extremely high, for example, between 1965 and 1972 the government spent K.D. 13,297,966 (£26,595,932) in return for 4230 graduates. Moreover, the expenditure of the Air Aviation Training Centre during the period 1967-72 reached K.D. 10,092,663, and for the Institute of Telecommunication it reached K.D. 519,930.<sup>27</sup> With regards to the cost per-trainee table 6.18 shows that it reached its highest level in the case of the Telecommunication training centre K.D. 4,388 (£8,776), and at the Agriculture Institute and the Training Centre for Development of Water Resources (See table 6.14). Hence the question has been raised about the advantages of spending such large amounts of money when a much larger number of students could be sent to Europe, where advanced technology is available, with less cost. Nevertheless, one could argue that the presence of such centres benefits Kuwait in the long run.

Sending students abroad would prevent the country from creating its own vocational and technical education programmes to meet its needs and hence would perpetuate dependency on the west.

For Kuwait and most of the Third World countries, however, the problem does not end here. It is the value system and other economic and political factors which determine the progress of vocational and technical education:

Table 6.13 The Country from which the Migrants obtained their Education.

Description	%
Kuwait	7.3
Egypt	37.5
Iraq	6.2
Lebanon	15.6
Syria	4.2
Jordan & Palestine	16.6
Other Arab Countries	2.1
England	3.1
Germany	2.1
East Europe	4.3
Asian Countries	1.0
Total	100.0

Table 6.14 Cost of Vocational and Educational Training

Centre of Vocational Training	Cost per trainee	
	K.D.	£
Agriculture Institute	4,384	8768
Institute of Applied Engineering	2,866	5732
Wireless and Telecommunication Centre	4,388	8776
Water Resources Development Centre	4,000	8000
Air Aviation Training Centre	1,466	2932
Shuwaik Industrial Training	1,145	2290

Source: The Central Directorate for Vocational Training  
Manpower and Training in the Government, Joint Oil  
and Oil Sectors, Kuwait, Government Printing Press,  
 January 1974, p.27.

vocational school teachers ought to be well trained teachers as well as having industrial experience, but such people are scarce in any country; the equipment of vocational schools is liable to be either out-dated or so advanced as to have little relevance to the country in question; it is virtually impossible to stimulate the actual rhythm and discipline of factory work in the class room; and most students regard vocational schools as second-best opportunities and hence are reluctant to take their training seriously.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, it is worth noting that in the case of Kuwait most of the trainees are either school drop-outs or those who received poor marks. Such a situation was reflected in their work performance, where 80% of the trainees were found to be incompetent for the jobs for which they were nominated.<sup>29</sup> It was also found that the relatively high pay of clerical jobs in contrast to manual and technical jobs (especially in the government administration) affected the performance and career choice of Kuwaiti pupils.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the easy access to employment in the government for Kuwaitis; the absence of a plan or plans that link the vocational and technical programmes and the country's needs for manpower; and the absence of government control over the influx of the foreign labour, are all factors reflected in the low attendance of Kuwaitis in the vocational training programmes, and their poor performance at work. This, of course, dramatically affects the occupational distribution of the national labour force.

#### B.2.2. Vocational Training for Immigrants

For migrant labour in Kuwait, vocational training is also a field of discrimination. While the government sector provides it for Kuwaitis only, other sectors offer it in a very limited scale, and mainly in the form of on-the-job training. Immigrants have to obtain training, either

from their country of origin or in private institutions in Kuwait or elsewhere in the western countries as vocational training is one of the main job requirements. For example, 60.4% of the immigrant sample had obtained some kind of vocational training before they took their present jobs (See table 6.15), and of these 70.6% had received their training from the Arab countries, 20.6% obtained it from Kuwait and only 8.8% were trained in European countries. Turning to the Kuwaiti sample we found a large proportion (54.5%) took a job with training, and of those 50% were trained in Kuwait, which should be contrasted with 20.6% of non-Kuwaitis in a similar position (See table 6.16). This substantiates the earlier argument which noted that the Kuwaiti employees have priority over non-Kuwaitis. Consequently many migrant workers, in order to stay in the job have had to obtain training through private means.

The lack of on-the-job training, in addition to the absence of "continuing education" for both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis affects the overall performance of work and hence productivity:

The government does not presently have adequate policies and programmes for the full utilization of expatriate personnel. They are not encouraged nor have they the motivation to perform well or to improve their performance. (For instance) expatriate science teachers, like local science teachers need opportunities for upgrading skills and meeting professional colleagues. The quality of Kuwait education will suffer if expatriate teachers are not upgraded and refreshed periodically. The productivity and quality of performance of most other expatriate personnel will be sub-standard if the government does not develop pragmatic programmes for upgrading their skills and motivating them to aspire to excellent performance. <sup>31</sup>

Having come from rural areas in India, Iran and Egypt many migrants are totally unaccustomed to very advanced machines so they have to learn how to do simple repetitive jobs on a machine, and those with primary school knowledge learn how to work on semi-sophisticated machines. Moreover, it has been observed that with some migrants once they were trained they leave and seek employment with another employer who may offer a higher salary.

The majority of the Asian labour are non-skilled. We face immense difficulties in turning them into semi-skilled. Once they obtained such skills they start looking for a new job with a high salary.<sup>32</sup>

An examination of the type and place of training obtained after commencing employment reveals significant differences between the two groups: First, a large proportion (55.2%) of non-Kuwaitis obtained no training while the majority of the Kuwaiti sample (63.7%) said that they had been trained. The type of training varies and indicates the actual distribution of the national and migrant labour force. For example, a large percentage of Kuwaitis (46.2%) have obtained clerical training whilst only 30.2% of non-Kuwaitis have received the same. (See tables 6.17 and 6.18) Moreover, table 6.19 indicates that both groups (Kuwaitis 89.2% and migrants 74.4%) were trained by the employers. Again it should be noted that in many cases where there are no Kuwaiti workers the employer would be compelled to train non-Kuwaiti workers. An examination of the impact of such training on the work performance of the respondents is demonstrated in table 6.20 where the majority of the two groups suggested that training has improved their work performance.

Table 6.15 Trained before the commencement of the present job by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Yes	45.5%	48.4%
No	54.5%	39.6%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6.16 Country of training by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Kuwait	50%	20.6%
Egypt	16%	31.0%
Jordan	10%	12.0%
Other Arab countries	-	26.6%
Germany	5%	2.0%
Holland	5%	3.6%
East Europe	20%	3.6%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6.17 Respondents if they were trained after commencing their present job, by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Yes	63.7%	42.8%
No	36.3%	55.2%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6.18 Type of training by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Vocational training	14.3%	41.8%
Clerical training	46.4%	37.2%
Both	39.3%	22.0%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6.19 The sponsor of the training, by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
By private means	10.8%	15.9%
The institution I work in	69.2%	74.4%
Others	-	11.7%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6.20 Training impact on the work performance by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Almost too much	43.0%	28.0%
Too much	21.4%	32.5%
To some extent	32.1%	34.9%
None	3.5%	4.6%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6.21 The Need for further training by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Yes	81.8%	73.9%
No	18.2%	26.1%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6.22 Importance of training by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
To maintain my employment	13.6%	8.3%
To improve personal performance	59.0%	49%
Needed in future	7.0%	13.5%
It has no particular purposes	4.5%	3.2%
Not stated	15.9%	26.5%
Total	100%	100%

B.2.2.1. Desire for Additional Training

Despite the amount of criticism written about the development of education and vocational training in Kuwait the majority of the population have a high regard for it. For example, 81.8% of the Kuwaiti sample and 73.9% of the non-Kuwaitis said that they would like to have further training (See table 6.21)<sup>33</sup> A comparison of the purposes of such training between our survey and the study of the Stanford team in 1972, suggest some of the changes that took place in the Kuwait Labour Market during the last ten years. For instance, while the majority of both groups from our sample (59% Kuwaitis and 49% migrants, see table 6.22) emphasized the need for training to upgrade their personal skills, the majority of the Stanford sample (59% Kuwaitis and 46% non-Kuwaitis) wanted it so as to expand their knowledge.<sup>34</sup> Once again, such differences should be understood in the light of the fact that during the first half of the seventies there was less job competition due to a shortage of labour brought about by the flow of migrant labour out of Kuwait, while the increase of oil prices in the second half of the 1970s and the influx of labour (especially Asian) was accompanied by an increased demand for more qualified labour in terms of productivity and educational attainment. In other words, when there is a shortage of labour a low value is put on more training, while a surplus of labour means more competition in the labour market and consequently a high value is put on training and further education.

B.2.2.2 Basis of Vocational Training

It is always stressed in Kuwait by employers in the government or in the private sectors that all the employees are equal in terms of training and professional promotion. However, observations and interviews



with many migrants and Kuwaiti officials reveal that few of the non-Kuwaiti workers made use of this facility especially after the state adoption of what was called the "Kuwaitization policy", especially in the key positions of the government and joint sectors.\* This situation was clearly reflected in the replies of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, 43.2% and 49% respectively, who stated that vocational training is carried out on an irrational basis (See table 6.23). The table also shows that a significant proportion of both groups think that training is run on a priority basis (20.4% Kuwaitis and 21.8% non-Kuwaitis) and on a persistence basis (20.4% and 29% Kuwaitis and migrants respectively). However, it should be emphasised that even if there is a significant percentage of the two groups who think that vocational training is run on a rational basis, Kuwaiti employees will remain the first to obtain such facilities, especially in the government and joint sectors.

### B.3. Education of Immigrants' Children

As mentioned above, since the sixties the immigrant communities have experienced a considerable increase not only in male working migrants, but also in the number of their dependents. In particular the number of immigrant children of school age (4-18) increased from 52,622 in 1965 to 222,088 in 1980 (See table 4.20). Of these only 62.6% were absorbed by the government schools and 27.6% enrolled in private education while the remaining 9.8% left school to enter the labour market.

\* See Chapters IV and VII.

Table 4.23 Basis of vocational training by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Priority	20.4	21.7
Favouritism	9.0	15.7
Persistence	20.4	11.1
Random Basis	25.6	24.9
Priority for Kuwaitis	46.6	4.3
Do not know	7.1	1.1
Not stated	6.1	3.1
Total		100

In fact, the large non-Kuwaiti communities, especially Arabs, have taken advantage of their presence to make use of the free education provided by the Kuwaiti government. Nevertheless, the tightening policy adopted by the regime has recently driven many migrants' children out of the government schools. Some of these have managed to seek education in private schools, while others have no other choice but to enter the labour market as cheap unskilled labour.

#### B.3.1 Immigrants' Children in the Government Schools

Until the early seventies education was provided freely and on an equal footing for both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. However the large influx of migrants families during the second half of the sixties, which the government described as "the increase of the economic burden", have led to the introduction of laws for the education of foreign children. These laws have managed to limit the number of migrants' children in some stages of education, and prohibit them from others, such as kindergarten, government training centres and special institutes for the handicapped.

According to the legislation for the education of non-Kuwaiti Arab migrants children may be accepted at the government schools, but at ratios not exceeding 10% of the total enrolment. The requirements for admission in these schools are as follows:<sup>36</sup> a) the father of the non-Kuwaiti student should have resided in Kuwait prior to the 1st of January 1971;<sup>37</sup> b) the student should be a resident in Kuwait; c) the father of the student should present to the authorities a labour certificate issued from his employer; and d) the student should not have been previously enrolled in a private school. On the other hand, non-Arab children are prohibited

by law from enjoying the education available in the government system. During the fifties and sixties Indian and Iranian migrants were able to send their children to the public schools, but since the late sixties no non-Arab student has been to a government school.

Undoubtedly, the conditions on the admission of non-Kuwaiti students, while intended to minimize government expenditure, were also aimed at reducing the number of Arab migrant students enrolled in the public schools and hence to reduce any possible political effect of the latter on their Kuwaiti counterparts. Palestinian students constituted the largest group after the Kuwaitis in 1981-82, when their number reached 84,888 or 26.4% of overall enrollment in the government schools. Of these, 33,394 and 33,067 were in primary and intermediate schools respectively.<sup>38</sup> However, in 1970-71 there were only 14,935 Palestinian students enrolled in the government schools. In general the share of non-Kuwaiti students has considerably increased from 29.1% in 1970-71 to 40% in 1975-76 and then to 49.8% in 1981-82 (See table 6.24). This increase reflects first the growth of the migrant community, due to the increase in the number of men at the age of marriage and the relatively high fertility amongst them (around 28.9% of the non-Kuwaiti population in 1980 were born in Kuwait); second, the constant influx of Arab migrants accompanied by their dependents; and third, the immigrant's need for education as a necessary requirement to secure employment and the means by which they can maintain their residence in Kuwait. More evidence is given in tables 6.25, 6.26 and 6.27 which indicates that the results of school examinations obtained by non-Kuwaiti students are far better than their Kuwaiti counterparts. Such achievements mirror the great value migrants place on education.

Table 6.24

Enrolment in Government Schools by Sex and Nationality between 1972/73-1981/82

Country	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82
Kuwait	108089	110634	115332	121244	128406	134299	139769	146187	153148	161588
Egypt	3192	3410	3936	4598	5339	6381	7105	8200	8486	9130
Syria	1923	1960	2279	2769	3303	4029	4447	5358	6252	7189
Jordan and Palestine	22345	26567	31912	29054	61368	67376	72834	77907	81517	84888
Iraq	3379	3407	3481	3716	4215	4651	4874	5495	5779	6209
Saudi Arabia	1405	1735	1972	3660	3884	4116	4182	4345	-	4662
Lebanon	2368	2589	2849	3163	3640	3902	4272	4655	4918	5226
North Africa	65	30	50	40	43	79	107	-	121	129
South Arabia	1268	1376	1493	1661	3092	3057	3725	-	-	-
Gulf Countries	3220	3060	2755	2373	784	754	682	-	8631	4746
Iran	447	511	580	604	661	717	798	-	946	1080
Other Countries	12530	14138	16117	18225	20456	23831	24723	33286	32779	37562
Total	160231	163417	182778	201907	235203	253212	267518	285333	302610	322509

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.311.

Table 6.25

The Result of Government Primary Schools Examination

1977/1978 1980/1981

Item	النسبة المئوية للمكتمنين			إجمالي			غير كويتي			كويتي		
	% (Kuwaiti)			Total			Non-Kuwaiti			Kuwaiti		
	إجمالي	إناث	ذكور	إجمالي	إناث	ذكور	إجمالي	إناث	ذكور	إجمالي	إناث	ذكور
1977/1978												
Registered	44.2	45.0	43.6	113,244	52,438	60,806	63,160	28,659	34,301	50,084	23,579	26,505
Attendance	43.9	44.5	43.3	112,515	52,024	60,491	63,139	28,849	34,290	49,376	23,175	26,201
Drop out	97.1	97.6	96.5	729	474	315	21	10	11	705	404	304
%	—	—	—	0.6	0.8	0.5	—	—	—	1.4	1.7	1.2
Passing	42.7	43.8	41.7	103,730	47,951	55,779	59,467	26,968	37,499	44,262	20,963	23,280
%	—	—	—	92.2	92.2	92.2	94.2	93.5	94.7	89.6	90.5	86.8
Failing	56.2	53.6	62.0	8,765	4,073	4,712	3,672	1,881	1,791	5,113	2,152	2,921
%	—	—	—	7.8	7.8	7.8	5.8	6.5	5.3	10.4	9.5	11.2
1978/1979												
Registered	44.3	45.2	43.5	116,560	54,320	62,240	64,930	29,784	35,146	51,539	24,530	27,294
Attendance	78.4	44.7	43.2	115,834	53,920	61,914	64,920	29,779	35,141	50,914	24,141	26,775
Drop out	98.6	96.7	98.5	726	400	326	10	5	5	716	395	321
%	—	—	—	0.6	0.7	0.5	—	—	—	1.4	1.6	1.2
Passing	42.8	43.6	41.7	106,360	49,140	57,220	61,036	27,694	33,342	45,324	21,446	23,874
%	—	—	—	91.8	91.1	92.4	94.0	93.0	94.9	89.0	88.8	89.2
Failing	59.0	56.4	61.7	9,474	4,760	4,694	3,884	2,085	1,799	5,590	2,695	2,695
%	—	—	—	8.2	8.9	7.6	6.0	7.0	5.1	11.0	11.2	10.6
1979/1980												
Registered	44.9	45.5	44.3	122,031	57,686	64,345	67,216	31,503	35,713	54,815	26,383	28,432
Attendance	44.5	45.1	44.0	121,248	57,435	63,813	67,201	31,497	35,704	54,047	25,938	26,109
Drop out	98.0	98.6	97.2	783	451	332	15	6	9	768	445	323
%	—	—	—	—	—	—	.02	.01	0.2	1.4	1.6	1.1
Passing	43.4	44.3	42.0	112,159	53,149	59,110	63,465	29,523	37,942	48,694	23,526	25,168
%	—	—	—	—	—	—	94.4	95.0	95.0	90.0	90.7	89.5
Failing	56.6	54.9	62.5	9,069	4,386	4,703	3,736	1,974	1,762	6,320	2,447	2,943
%	—	—	—	—	—	—	5.5	5.0	4.9	9.9	9.3	10.4
1980/1981												
Registered	44.9	45.6	44.1	124,882	60,160	64,722	68,806	32,682	36,124	50,076	27,478	28,598
Attendance	44.5	45.3	43.8	124,146	59,767	64,379	68,802	32,679	36,123	50,344	27,086	28,256
Drop out	99.4	99.2	99.7	736	393	342	4	3	1	732	300	342
%	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.006	0.004	0.003	1.4	1.4	1.2
Passing	43.3	44.3	42.8	116,312	55,751	60,561	65,649	31,009	34,640	50,503	24,742	25,921
%	—	—	—	—	—	—	95.4	94.9	95.9	91.5	91.3	91.7
Failing	56.7	56.4	61.1	7,534	4,016	3,618	3,153	1,670	1,483	4,651	2,346	2,335
%	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.6	5.1	4.1	8.5	8.7	8.3

Source: Ministry of Planning, op.cit., p.313

Table 6.26

The Result of Government Intermediate  
Schools Examinations

1977/1978 - 1980/1981

Year	السنة المتوسطة الكويتية			الجمهورية			غير الكويتية			الكويتية		
	% of Kuwait			Total			Non Kuwait			Kuwait		
	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر
Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	
1977/1978												
Registered	55.0	55.0	54.9	78,252	35,138	43,114	35,700	15,796	19,404	43,052	19,342	23,710
Attendance	54.7	54.8	54.8	77,553	34,716	42,837	35,109	15,745	19,364	42,444	18,971	23,473
Drop out	86.9	87.9	84.8	699	422	277	91	51	40	608	371	237
%	—	—	—	0.9	1.2	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.2	1.4	1.9	1.1
Passing	52.2	53.2	51.5	64,374	30,056	34,278	39,712	14,072	16,540	32,662	16,024	17,638
%	—	—	—	83.0	86.7	80.0	87.5	89.4	85.9	79.3	84.5	75.1
Failing	66.7	64.1	68.2	13,179	4,620	8,559	4,397	1,673	2,724	6,782	2,947	5,835
%	—	—	—	17.0	13.3	20.0	12.5	10.6	14.1	20.7	15.5	25.4
1978/1979												
Registered	52.7	52.8	52.6	85,145	36,229	46,916	40,304	18,056	22,248	44,541	20,173	24,669
Attendance	52.3	52.3	52.4	84,473	37,806	46,667	40,243	18,030	22,213	44,230	19,776	24,454
Drop out	90.9	93.8	65.9	672	423	249	61	26	35	611	397	214
%	—	—	—	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.2	1.4	1.9	0.9
Passing	49.6	50.5	49.7	70,450	32,638	37,752	35,529	16,181	19,348	34,821	16,517	18,404
%	—	—	—	83.4	86.5	80.9	88.3	89.7	87.1	78.9	83.5	75.3
Failing	66.4	63.8	67.9	14,023	5,106	8,915	4,714	1,849	2,865	9,319	3,259	6,060
%	—	—	—	16.6	13.5	19.1	11.7	10.3	12.9	21.1	16.5	24.7
1979/1980												
Registered	49.2	49.5	48.9	92,217	40,914	51,303	46,843	20,634	26,209	41,574	20,290	25,094
Attendance	48.9	49.1	48.7	91,585	40,512	51,073	46,793	20,614	26,170	41,492	19,896	24,694
Drop out	97.0	95.6	86.9	632	402	230	50	20	30	582	392	200
%	—	—	—	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.2	1.8	0.7
Passing	65.4	47.4	45.5	77,224	35,489	41,735	41,365	18,664	22,731	35,539	16,935	19,004
%	—	—	—	84.7	87.6	81.7	88.4	90.4	86.8	80.0	84.6	76.3
Failing	62.3	60.9	63.0	14,361	5,023	9,338	5,408	1,960	3,448	8,953	3,053	5,890
%	—	—	—	15.5	12.3	16.2	11.5	9.5	13.1	19.9	15.3	23.7
1980/1981												
Registered	47.9	47.0	47.0	100,535	45,155	55,380	52,957	23,637	29,320	47,568	21,518	26,050
Attendance	47.7	47.2	46.8	99,871	44,775	55,096	51,722	23,617	29,191	46,903	21,156	25,807
Drop out	91.7	94.7	86.1	664	382	282	59	20	39	605	362	243
%	—	—	—	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.68	0.1	1.3	1.7	0.9
Passing	44.7	45.6	43.8	87,514	40,547	46,967	48,323	21,933	26,390	39,191	18,514	20,577
%	—	—	—	87.6	90.6	85.2	91.3	92.9	90.0	83.5	88.0	79.0
Failing	62.5	60.1	64.5	12,357	4,226	8,131	4,585	1,684	2,901	7,772	2,547	5,233
%	—	—	—	12.5	9.4	14.8	8.8	7.1	9.9	16.5	12.0	20.0

Table 6.27

The Result of Government Secondary Schools Examination

1977/1978 1978/1979

Grade 10/12th

Item	السمة المحلية للكويتيين			إجمالي			غير الكويتيين			الكويتيين		
	% of Kuwaiti			Total			Non-Kuwaiti			Kuwaiti		
	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر	إجمالي	انثى	ذكر
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
1977/1978												
Registered	53.1	53.4	51.2	46,370	21,076	25,294	21,740	9,401	12,339	24,960	11,677	13,283
Attendance	57.1	57.4	51.2	45,814	20,793	25,021	21,468	9,271	12,197	24,346	11,522	12,824
Drop out	51.1	54.1	47.9	556	283	273	272	130	142	254	151	103
%	-	-	-	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.0
Passing	51.6	52.0	50.6	30,759	15,046	15,713	15,890	7,125	3,767	15,663	7,517	7,946
%	-	-	-	67	72.4	62.8	74.0	76.9	71.9	65.1	68.7	61.9
Failing	56.3	62.7	52.4	15,055	5,747	9,308	5,572	2,142	3,430	8,483	3,605	4,878
%	-	-	-	32.8	27.6	37.2	25.9	23.1	28.1	34.8	31.3	38.0
1978/1979												
Registered	89.7	44.3	23.9	54,096	25,237	28,859	28,511	12,613	15,898	25,585	12,624	12,961
Attendance	47.1	23.3	23.8	53,184	24,901	28,283	28,127	12,498	15,629	25,057	12,403	12,654
Drop out	57.9	24.2	33.7	912	336	576	384	115	269	528	221	307
%	-	-	-	1.7	1.3	1.9	1.3	0.9	1.7	2.1	1.8	2.4
Passing	44.9	23.4	21.6	43,764	21,303	22,461	24,074	11,051	13,023	19,690	10,252	9,438
%	-	-	-	82.3	85.6	79.4	85.6	88.4	83.3	78.6	82.7	74.6
Failing	56.9	27.8	34.1	9,420	3,598	5,822	4,053	1,447	2,606	5,367	2,151	3,216
%	-	-	-	17.4	14.4	20.6	14.4	11.6	16.7	21.4	17.3	25.4
1979/1980												
Registered	48.1	48.7	48.0	19,395	8,384	11,011	10,063	4,344	5,719	9,332	4,040	5,292
Attendance	47.7	48.0	47.0	19,026	8,313	10,713	9,934	4,317	5,617	9,092	3,996	5,096
Drop out	65.0	61.9	65.7	389	71	298	129	27	102	240	44	196
%	-	-	-	1.9	0.8	2.7	2.7	0.6	3.7	2.5	1.0	3.7
Passing	43.4	45.6	41.4	14,272	6,854	7,418	8,071	3,726	4,345	12,201	5,128	3,073
%	-	-	-	75.0	82.4	69.2	69.2	36.3	77.3	66.2	78.2	60.3
Failing	66	59.4	61.3	4,754	1,459	3,295	1,663	591	1,272	2,891	868	2,023
%	-	-	-	24.9	17.5	30.7	30.7	13.6	22.6	31.7	21.7	39.6
1980/1981												
Registered	51.2	53.1	49.7	57,814	25,676	32,138	28,171	12,017	16,154	29,643	13,659	15,984
Attendance	51.0	52.7	49.6	56,722	25,399	31,323	27,763	11,997	15,786	28,939	13,402	15,537
Drop out	64.4	92.7	54.8	1,092	277	815	365	20	368	704	257	447
%	-	-	-	1.9	1.1	2.5	1.4	0.2	2.3	2.4	1.9	2.6
Passing	48.2	50.1	46.4	44,141	20,820	23,321	22,557	10,369	12,488	21,284	10,451	10,533
%	-	-	-	77.8	82.0	74.5	82.3	85.4	79.1	73.6	78.0	67.7
Failing	60.8	64.0	56.7	12,581	4,579	8,002	4,926	1,628	3,298	7,659	2,951	4,711
%	-	-	-	22.2	18.0	25.5	17.8	13.6	20.9	26.5	21.0	32.3

Source: op.cit., p. 315



B.3.2. Immigrants' Children in Private Schools

Restrictions put by the government on the entrance of non-Kuwaiti students to the public schools have driven many migrant families to send their children to private schools. Private education was set up partly to meet the unsatisfied needs for education of the non-Kuwaitis and partly to provide for education which the government schools did not meet. In fact there are three kinds of private education; the minorities private schools; the Arab private schools; and the commercial private schools. These schools are supervised by the Ministry of Education which some times interferes or change or to introduce some subjects in the curriculum to stop an increase in the fees. The Arab schools are the only private schools which the government subsidises (50% of their budget) and over which the government provides regular academic supervision.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand while the foreign private schools are denied any kind of government assistance, the Ministry of Education compels them to teach at their own expense the Arabic language, Kuwait history and Islamic and religious courses. In addition, according to the law of private education of 1967, non-Kuwaitis are not allowed to open private schools without a Kuwaiti sponsor.<sup>40</sup> The number of enrolled students in private schools jumped from 9856 in 1966-67 to 46,382 in 1975-76 and to 69,296 in 1981-82 (See table 6.28).

B.3.2.1 Private Education for the Minorities

The number of minority schools reached 14 in 1980-81 (See table 6.29). They accommodated around 19,518 student which constituted 30% of the total students in private education in 1980-81. This type of private education is largely dependent on its own economic resources which comes mainly from the fees of their students, the financial assistance of their

Table 6.28

Private Education between 1966/67 and 1981/82

Year	Schools	Class-rooms	No. of Pupils			No. of Teachers		
			Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1966/67	30	334	5785	4071	9856	60	327	387
1967/68	35	453	7546	5987	13533	48	511	559
1968/69	56	657	9850	8416	18266	72	730	802
1969/70	79	909	13512	11722	25234	107	1003	1110
1970/71	80	977	15078	13138	28216	150	1070	1220
1971/72	81	1029	16225	14038	30263	217	1173	1390
1972/73	81	1134	18415	15696	34111	308	1269	1577
1973/74	81	1235	20267	17403	37670	411	1400	1811
1974/75	83	1325	22432	18727	41159	510	1730	2240
1975/76	83	1481	25301	21081	46382	594	1654	2248
1976/77	86	1620	28405	23512	51917	744	1811	2555
1977/78	86	1701	30445	25332	55777	770	1897	2667
1978/79	60	1782	32576	26848	59424	845	1984	2829
1979/80	59	1904	32713	28608	61321	880	2087	2967
1980/81	62	2002	34777	30187	64964	951	2331	3282
1981/82	66	2117	36804	32492	69296	922	2566	3488

Source: op.cit.p.255.

Table 6.29

The minority schools by No. of students, teachers and class in 1980/81

Description	No. of students			No. of Teachers	No. of class	No. of students	
	Girls	Boys	Total			per-class	per-teacher
The Armenian school	361	396	757	38	26	29.1	20
The Iranian school	2142	2455	4597	138	133	35	33.3
The Iranian school in Fahahil	163	154	317	14	10	32	23
The Indian school	1918	2100	4018	165	168	24	24.3
The Indian school in Fahahil	293	378	671	29	20	34	23.1
The new Indian school	545	1370	1915	80	53	36.1	24
The Pakistani school	781	679	1460	72	50	29.2	29.2
The Al-Bashdan Pakistani school	205	257	462	23	18	26	20
The new Pakistani school	314	442	756	28	22	34.3	27
The Al-Shab Pakistani school	328	364	692	32	22	31.4	22
The Pakistani school in Fahahil	209	262	471	21	16	29.4	22.4
The international Pakistani school	256	363	619	14	22	28.1	18.2
The Al-Fahahil Pakistani school	268	364	632	30	22	29	21
The Kaimal Indian school	1426	725	2151	96	66	33	22.4
Total	9209	10309	19518	800	648	30.1	24.3

Source: Office of Private Education, Statistics on private education in Kuwait in 1980/81

own communities in Kuwait, and sometimes the assistance of their own government. Above all, the Iranian private schools until recently were receiving considerable support from the Persian merchant community in Kuwait and their government. Although the Iranians settled in Kuwait in the late nineteenth century, their private education was only established in the second half of the sixties. However, it should also be emphasised that since they comprised over 50% of the shi'a community, the shi'a religious schools were always known as Persian schools. In fact, the first Iranian school was opened in 1968-69 with the support of 'Abdullā Dāshti.\* However, this school was closed in February 1970 after it received strong criticism from the local newspapers and magazines due to "its suspicious role".<sup>41</sup> The school was accused of being a centre of political Iranian agents in Kuwait. In more recent times two Iranian schools were established which provide different levels of education; from kindergarten to the secondary level and they accommodated about 5041 students in 1979-80 (See table 6.30). The average number of students per class is 34 and per teacher 28, in both schools as it accounted in 1980-81 (See table 6.29).

The condition of Indian and Pakistani schools is much worse in comparison with other private schools. The classes are overcrowded and can reach up to 36 students per class and 29\*\* students per teacher, school buildings are old and small and totally inappropriate for the purpose of education. They are usually established in a flat, an old house, or at

\* A deputy in Kuwaiti parliament until 1972.

\*\* Despite the figures which do not seem to be much worse than that of other private schools, my impression, after visiting them was that the overall situation was by far the worst.

Table 6.30 Schools and Students by areas of education in private schools in 1979/80

Areas	School's name	Kindergarten		Primary		Intermediate		Secondary	
		No. of schools	No. of students	No. of schools	No. of students	No. of schools	No. of students	No. of schools	No. of students
Kuwait City	Al-Karmel	1	556	1	1059	1	408	1	74
Beneid al-Kar	Pakistani International	1	94	1	207	1	193	1	80
ai-Jabiriya	American	1	55	1	304	1	321	1	269
Surrah	Armenian	1	223	1	319	1	213	1	50
	French	1	163	1	201	1	168	1	20
	English in Surrah	1	55	1	180	1	64	-	-
	Iranian	1	37	1	2739	1	1616	1	649
	New English	1	125	1	517	1	552	1	751
	Japan	1	16	1	41	1	21	1	6
Kalidiyah	American International	1	204	1	281	1	135	1	11
	Al-Bayan	1	110	1	158	1	12	-	-
Total		11	1638	11	6006	11	3510	9	1910

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Social Statistics, Kuwait, Government printing press, 1980 - p.37.

best in a building built in a style of a school by a Kuwaiti landowner. They are usually rented, but at very high costs. The constant increase of school rents is becoming one of the major problems facing the minority communities especially in the case of the South Asian labourers:

Neither our limited incomes nor our own government would be able to help in building a school to accommodate our students. The construction costs are increasing at astronomical levels. We have no other option but to pay the high rent. We pay K.D. 9,000 (£18,000) annually. This amount was doubled three years ago and will double in the coming two years. <sup>42</sup>

The problem of minority schools does not end here. They are badly equipped, teachers are poorly paid in comparison with their counterparts in the government schools and in some cases there are insufficient places for all the applicants. Hence, they operate on two shifts: the morning shift to teach the female students and an afternoon shift for the male students. Moreover, it has been learnt that some of the poor parents who cannot afford the school fees found it difficult to send their children to school. When the parents could send them to school, they often found that the child was too old for the class it was expected to join:

I have two children, one is nine, the other is ten years old. This year I managed to send them to school because a Kuwaiti benefactor is paying their fees. They are happy to be in school but are facing difficulty in adapting themselves to the class atmosphere and the school rules. <sup>43</sup>

Table 6.11 also shows that while the Iranian schools provide free education for their community, the annual fees in other minority schools could reach as much as K.D. 180 (£360) such is the case in the International Pakistani schools. Furthermore, these schools, because of their financial difficulties, tend to raise the fees annually and such increases have prevented many poor immigrant children from pursuing their education.

Table 3.31 Annual fees in private schools by school's level in 1980/81 in KD.

Description	The level of education				
	Under- garden	Primary	Inter- mediary	Secund- ary	Senior Secondary
The American School	105	115	130	150	
Pakistani schools	95	85	110	135	
The International Pak.School	140	160	180	180	
The Kasmal Indian School	96	96	110	132	
The Indian School	85	96	109	132	
The new Indian School	81	96	109	132	
The Iranian school	Free	Free	Free	Free	
The French school	300	460	485	570	
The American school	370	630	-	730	
The Inter-American school	360	560	-	650	
The Euro American school	360	560		650	
Al-Bari, Al-Thamis school	300	460	485		
Al-Badrina, Al-Nor	300	460	485	-	-
English schools	300	460	485	-	-
Kuwait, Al-Laditha	360	560	570	650	710
Al-Khaliq, Al-Sara Sul	360	560	570	650	710
Afghanistan Eng.schools	360	560	570	650	710

Source: Ministry of Education: The fees in foreign schools, 1981/82, Kuwait, 1981.

B. 3.2.2 The Arabic private schools

The condition of Arab migrants' schools are no better than those of minorities, in spite of the fact that 50% of their budgets are subsidized by the Ministry of Education. In 1980-81 there were 37 Arab migrants' schools. The number of their children had risen from 25,296 in 1972-73 to 39,984 in 1981-82 and constituted 57.7% of the total number of students in private schools (See table 6.32). The average number of students per class increased from 28.4 in 1972-73 to 33.2 in 1981-82 (See table 6.35), however, it may reach to 40 or 45 students per class in some areas, as for example, in the Noor al Sabah and al-Wataniyyā schools.<sup>44</sup> Table 6.33 indicates that the average number of students per class in the kindergarten and primary levels is slightly higher than the intermediate and secondary levels. Also the comparison between Arabic and foreign schools shows that the average number of students per class in Arabic schools is slightly higher (33.2 compared to 31.2). Moreover the average number of students per teacher was estimated at 20 in 1981-82 (21.6 in non-Arab schools) and reached its highest level in the case of kindergarten and primary schools (30.5 and 20.5 respectively). It has also been found that most of these schools were established in small houses which have no playing fields, or any kind of sports activities. Since most of the Arabic schools are subsidized one would expect that their fees are much lower than those of minority schools. Nevertheless table 6.34 shows that they are charging fees which are much higher than even those charged by the non-subsidized non-Arabic schools. This again could reflect the financial difficulties of not only the Arabic schools, but most of the non-commercial private education. It was also learned that some of the teachers in the Arabic schools, once they are established in the country of employment,



Table 6.32

Teachers and Students in Private Education by School Level between 1972/73 and 1981/82.

	No. of Students						No. of Teachers								
	Arabic Schools			Non-Arabic Schools			Arabic Schools			Non-Arabic Schools					
	Kindergarten	Primary	Intermediate Secondary												
1972/73	4886	14528	5250	632	1603	4530	2088	588	160	650	296	63	172	128	44
1973/74	6276	13316	7106	896	1632	5224	2553	671	183	649	415	85	220	148	47
1974/75	6911	12335	8941	1276	1841	5960	3078	815	208	657	624	192	71	262	74
1975/76	7614	12436	9917	2053	2026	7144	4008	1184	218	645	550	168	78	271	114
1976/77	8321	12874	10870	3340	2335	7961	4613	1600	217	614	626	235	88	286	208
1977/78	8099	12865	10768	4834	2453	9105	5492	2161	205	619	591	336	100	378	182
1978/79	7876	12719	10738	5908	3246	10003	6143	2791	199	600	563	446	120	429	225
1979/80	7216	12656	10678	6557	3292	10732	6844	3340	213	555	593	474	128	434	253
1980/81	8354	12851	10534	7202	3842	11018	7558	3606	273	624	518	544	154	475	253
1981/82	9042	13327	10279	7336	4334	12061	8639	4278	296	649	609	596	185	529	281

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p. 122.

Table 6.33

Classrooms in Private Schools and Students per Classroom, and per Teacher, by School Level

Year	المتوسطة				المتوسطة				المتوسطة			
	Total				Total				Total			
	Secondary	Intermediate	Primary	Kindergarten	Secondary	Intermediate	Primary	Kindergarten	Secondary	Intermediate	Primary	Kindergarten
1972/73	50	263	601	210	79	57	148	55	31	170	455	114
1973/74	77	330	1091	237	30	97	167	50	48	113	424	16
1974/75	26	394	1077	258	17	111	138	61	11	11	111	19
1975/76	110	451	1116	277	50	141	212	71	30	21	111	17
1976/77	173	504	1116	286	45	174	161	78	111	111	111	207
1977/78	241	104	100	276	54	175	204	57	117	111	111	111
1978/79	290	522	686	282	98	206	122	107	112	111	111	111
1979/80	329	552	711	308	120	232	112	104	211	111	111	111
1980/81	357	557	718	380	135	253	111	121	122	111	111	111
1981/82	390	588	740	399	152	272	111	138	239	216	111	207
Students per Classroom												
1972/73	20.3	27.9	31.7	30.9	20.3	24.0	31.0	29.3	20.4	29.8	31.9	31.1
1973/74	21.4	29.3	31.4	33.4	20.3	26.3	31.7	29.1	20.7	30.5	31.4	34.7
1974/75	21.8	30.3	31.7	33.4	16.6	26.2	30.7	30.2	24.5	32.0	32.0	35.1
1975/76	24.5	30.5	31.6	34.6	21.1	28.0	31.9	27.2	27.0	31.7	31.7	37.3
1976/77	27.6	30.4	32.3	37.3	23.5	26.5	30.5	29.6	30.1	32.4	31.4	40.1
1977/78	29.0	32.3	32.3	39.2	25.7	31.4	31.0	30.7	30.8	32.7	32.3	41.3
1978/79	27.4	32.3	33.0	39.4	22.0	29.8	31.1	30.3	30.5	34.0	34.7	45.0
1979/80	30.7	31.7	30.9	34.1	27.6	29.5	31.4	31.7	31.4	30.7	34.0	35.4
1980/81	30.1	31.9	33.7	33.9	26.7	29.9	31.3	32.0	27.4	31.7	31.7	34.8
1981/82	32.7	32.7	34.3	33.3	23.1	31.9	33.3	31.4	30.5	30.7	31.1	34.6
Students per Teacher												
1972/73	15.2	17.3	17.1	20.1	11.4	10.3	21.1	21.1	11.1	11.4	11.4	11.1
1973/74	15.0	17.1	17.1	20.1	17.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1
1974/75	15.9	15.1	19.0	21.4	11.1	21.1	11.1	21.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1
1975/76	14.7	16.5	21.4	31.6	10.7	19.6	11.4	21.1	11.1	16.0	19.3	14.9
1976/77	15.0	17.1	19.1	34.9	11.1	16.4	21.1	21.1	14.2	17.4	21.0	14.1
1977/78	15.1	19.2	22.0	34.6	11.1	21.1	24.1	24.1	14.4	19.2	21.6	14.1
1978/79	15.1	20.1	22.0	34.9	11.4	24.1	22.0	27.1	13.3	19.0	21.0	14.1
1979/80	14.6	19.2	23.5	30.6	13.2	21.6	24.7	25.7	13.8	18.0	19.6	14.1
1980/81	13.7	18.5	21.7	26.6	14.3	22.2	22.2	24.9	13.2	17.0	20.6	14.1
1981/82	13.1	19.3	21.4	27.1	13.1	23.1	23.7	23.4	12.3	16.9	20.1	14.1

Table C. 4 Annual fees in the Arabic Private Schools by school level in 1980/81 in K.D.

Description	Kindergarten	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary
The subsidised school	140	135	121	156
The non-subsidised school				
Fajir Alantah school	140	165	195	275
Al-Qad school	140	130	160	
Al-Meil school	160	150	120	
Batien school	90	55	70	50

Source: Office of Private Education: Fees in Private Schools, 1980/81, Kuwait, 1980/81.

start looking for new jobs in the government sector where the salaries are much higher, working hours shorter, and with a better student/teacher ratio. It was also noticed (despite the lack of reliable data) that these schools, because of the tremendous difficulties they face, suffered an increasing drop-out rate every year. Eventually, most of these drop-outs enter the labour market as semi-skilled workers; salesmen, clerks, etc. As such they meet a part of Kuwait's labour demand.<sup>45</sup>

The other type of private schools are those called "madāris al-Mūnaḍ mah" (the P.L.O. schools). They were initially opened to accommodate the children of the Palestinian refugees who moved to Kuwait after the 1967 war. They were set up in the government schools operating on the afternoon shift, and directed by the P.L.O. Office in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The available data shows that the number of students rose from 4889 in 1967-68 to 14,482 in 1972-73. As a result the number of the schools and teachers increased from 8 to 20 and from 17 to 426 between 1967-68 and 1970-71 respectively. Students in the primary level made up 77% of all students, while the students at the intermediate and secondary levels represented 15% and 8% respectively in 1970-71.<sup>46</sup> These figures indicate that these schools were opened to meet the education needs of the children of the new arrivals.

In the first two years (1967-68 and 1968-69) these schools faced no financial difficulties, but as the years passed the number of students increased and hence placed these schools in a real economic difficulty. For example, the total expenditure of these schools reached (K.D. 500,000 (£1,000,000) in 1972/73. While student fees met only (K.D. 280,000).

Government aid (K.D. 100,000) met 20%, and donations only 2% (K.D. 10,000).<sup>47</sup> This left the deficit in the schools' budget at K.D. 110,000 and the continuous deterioration of economic conditions of these schools led finally to their closure in 1975 and the distribution of their students among the government and private schools.

### B. 3.2.3. The Foreign Private Schools

The foreign schools seem to be the best private schools for a number of reasons: they teach in the English language\*, are well equipped, less crowded, and provide a number of facilities which are not available in any of the other schools in Kuwait. In other words, the adoption of a western type of education by these schools seems to attract a significant number of children; children of the elite groups from both the indigenous and immigrant population. The number of such schools rose from 6 in 1974-75 to 11 in 1980-81, and the number of their students increased from 2486 to 6505 for the same period.<sup>48</sup> This increase undoubtedly indicated an increasing need for this style of education among the higher strata of Kuwaiti society.\*\* The average number of students per class in 1980-81 was 20 in comparison with the Arabic and minority schools which had 33.2 and 30.1 respectively.<sup>49</sup>

The annual fees at these schools are the highest. (See table 6.11), therefore the government and private sectors usually pay the cost of education of their expert's children enrolled at these schools.

\* Knowledge of English language is a major asset in the Kuwait labour market.

\*\* See Chapters III and V.

B.3.3. Immigrant children in Higher Education

The admission regulations of Kuwait university reflect, once more, another field of government discriminatory policy. For example, the university council sets its minimum requirement for admission as follows:

1. The Kuwaiti students should form 85% of the university student body.
2. Kuwait university would accept a maximum of 5% of its students from other Gulf countries.
3. Kuwait university would accept a maximum of 10% of its students from other Arab non-Gulf students.
4. Kuwaiti students would be accepted in Kuwait university if they obtained a minimum average in high school, 55 points (out of 100).
5. Students from other Gulf countries need 70 points.
6. Non-Kuwaitis who did part of their pre-university education in Kuwait need 80 points.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, a non-Kuwaiti applying to Kuwait university to study Engineering or medicine is required to have an average of 90 to 95 points in the secondary school certificate, while a Kuwaiti is admitted with a 70 to 75 point average. Thus, the non-Kuwaiti students enter initially the science faculty in the hope that their academic career during the first and second years of their study might help them to transfer to the faculties that require high averages such as medicine and engineering.<sup>51</sup> Because of this regulation many non-Kuwaiti students were prevented from pursuing their higher studies and even those who were accepted are very limited in number and only in some faculties.

On the other hand, the available data indicates that in spite of such a tightened regulation many non-Kuwaitis have managed to find a way of entering Kuwait university and their numbers between 1967-70 and

1980-81 were never less than 27% of the total student body, yet in 1975-76 their numbers reached as high as 52% of all students.<sup>52</sup> However, it is important to remember that Kuwait university, especially in the mid seventies was accommodating a large number of Gulf students, especially Bahrainis who during this period were the largest non-Kuwaiti group in the university.

Comparisons between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis with respect to the field of study reveals that the uncertain position of non-Kuwaitis, in addition to the recent situation of the Kuwait labour market has determined the distribution of non-Kuwaiti graduates.\* They constitute the majority of the graduated students in the fields of science and engineering. Kuwaitis in contrast were the majority in arts, commerce and politics. The case of the medical school results from the regulation of admission and the university's recent policy in this respect.<sup>53</sup>

#### B.4. Comments on the Education of Immigrants' children

Much of the preceding discussion shows that the field of vocational training and education is a field of discrimination and exploitation. For the Kuwaiti regime it is the field from where the "strange ideas" come. Thus, a separation between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in this respect would help to maintain the stability of the regime, while for Kuwaiti businessmen and landowners education is the field where they can invest some of their wealth. Some, for example, want to build "schools" but their purpose is to rent them at high rates. For them to rent an educational establishment is the same as renting an office or shop.

\* See Chapters IV and VII

Furthermore, the absence of the government from the field of private education is leading to its deterioration and as a result, the education of immigrants' children has been characterized by a number of features which can be summed up:

1. The discrimination between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti students does not end at the small proportion of migrants in government schools but it also expands to cover the service and financial assistance which these schools provide.<sup>54</sup>
2. Comparisons between government and private schools indicates that while there are slight differences between the two groups in terms of the average number of students per class (significant differences exist between the two groups in the case of Kindergarten, 25.7 vs. 34.1, (see table 6.35), the average student/teacher ration in private schools is much higher than in government schools. In most of the levels of education, for example, the average number of students per teacher is 13.7 to 30.8 in kindergarten and 9 to 13.6 in secondary levels, see table 6.35. In addition the private schools were prevented from taking a part in any student activities organised by the Ministry of Education or even from having their own activities. For example, students at the private schools were prevented from participation in a drawing exhibition organised annually by the Ministry of Education.
3. The wages paid to teachers in private and especially foreign schools, and the long working hours, have forced many teachers to seek employment in the government schools or elsewhere. For example, a teacher who holds a first and a higher degree qualification and works in a Pakistani or Indian school receives a monthly salary of between K.D. 110



Table 6.35

Education in Kuwait by students, teachers, classes, sex and sector in 1979-1980

Level of Education	Sector	No. of Students			No. of Teachers			Classes	Average Students per Class	Average Students per Teacher
		Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total			
Kindergarten	Government	8611	8203	16815	-	1228	1228	654	25.7	13.7
	Private	5271	4793	10514	-	341	341	308	34.1	30.8
	Total	14332	12996	27328	-	1569	1569	962	28.4	17.4
Primary	Government	64269	57969	122238	3446	3287	6733	3791	32.4	18.2
	Private	12432	10956	23388	132	857	989	714	32.8	23.7
	Total	76701	68925	145626	3578	4144	7722	4505	32.3	18.9
Intermediate	Government	51291	41267	92558	3776	3367	7142	2985	31.0	13.0
	Private	9311	8211	17522	372	538	910	553	31.7	19.3
	Total	60602	49475	110080	4148	3905	8053	3538	31.1	13.7
Secondary	Government	24711	22565	47276	2547	2715	5262	1612	29.3	9.0
	Private	5249	4648	9847	376	351	727	329	30.1	13.6
	Total	29960	27213	57173	2923	3066	5989	1941	29.5	9.6
Technical Schools	Government	2127	709	2836	424	182	606	231	12.3	4.7
	Private	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	2127	709	2836	424	182	606	231	12.4	4.7
Technical Schools (higher than Sec. level)	Government	1066	956	2027	237	76	313	-	-	6.5
	Private	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	1066	956	2027	237	76	313	-	-	6.5
Other Educational Institutes	Government	444	995	1439	122	147	269	-	-	5.4
	Private	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	444	995	1439	122	147	269	-	-	5.4
Total	Government	152519	132664	285183	10552	11002	21554	9273	30.7	13.2
	Private	32713	28608	61321	880	2087	2967	1904	32.2	20.7
	Total	185232	161272	346504	11432	13089	24521	11177	31.0	14.1

Source: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Social Statistics, op.cit. p.3.

and 140. On the other hand, a similarly qualified teacher in a government school receives between K.D. 250 to 350 in addition to social allowances and free accommodation.<sup>55</sup>

4. High density, and bad equipment of these schools, in addition to the poorer education standards, have forced many of the students to leave their school and enter the labour market. Undoubtedly their only chances of employment will be on the lower strata of the occupational ladder.

Finally, one should emphasise here, that education is an important aspect for migrant workers not only in Kuwait but also in the other Arab Gulf countries. Hence the migrants often adjust their duration of stay in the country of employment to coincide with school terms when children are enrolled. For example, we found in our research that immigrants stay in Kuwait to benefit from the free and relatively high educational standard.\* Furthermore, Yemenis (Yar) have begun to migrate to Saudi Arabia with their children, partly to make use of particular concessions by the Saudi Arabian government to Yemenis permitting them to enrol at all levels of education.<sup>56</sup>

#### C. Immigrants Sources of Income

The discrimination of the local laws and regulations have prevented the non-Kuwaiti groups from having the same source of income or enjoying the same level of income from the same sources as Kuwaitis.<sup>57</sup> As stated earlier the majority of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti labourers are to a great extent dependent on their wages as the main source of income. This is substantiated by the quota of the wages and the salaries in the

\* See Chapter IV.

government expenditure; for example, the wages of the government employees absorbed around 32.8% of the total government expenditure and 45.9% of the domestic government expenditure between 1964-65 and 1975-76.<sup>58</sup> In other words, wages absorbed the largest share of government expenditure. This was clearly indicated in our survey where 85.4% of non-Kuwaiti and 75% of Kuwaiti respondents stated that they depend on their wages as their only source of income (see table 6.36). Further evidence has been provided by a survey on the family budget conducted by the Board of Planning in 1972-73 where it has been found that Kuwaitis earn 53.8% of the monthly income from wages, 20.8% from private business, and 25.4% from other sources. In contrast the bulk of non-Kuwaitis (70%) depend on the wages as the main source of family income, 19.3% on private business and 10.7% on other sources (see table 6.38). It is interesting to note that while the other sources are defined by the majority of the Kuwaitis (72.6%) as rent, (property and/or investment), it is defined by the majority of non-Kuwaitis (57.2%) as a part-time job (See table 6.37). Undoubtedly, these figures indicate two facts: a) the dependency of migrant labour on their wages as the main source of the family income, and b) the limited alternatives left open to them.

Comparison in terms of level of income indicates crucial differences between the two groups. First, there is no positive correlation between the amount and the sources of income of the two groups. For example, while the lower income (less than K.D. 50) Kuwaiti families tend to diversify their monthly income (25.9% comes from private business and 33.9% from other sources), migrant families of the same category are heavily dependent on their wages (89.6%). Both groups earn an income which falls between K.D.100 to 500 per month, the wages present their

Table 6.36 Additional Sources of income by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Property	9.1	3.2
Business	9.1	3.2
Part-time job	6.8	8.2
Do not have	75.0	85.4
Total	100	100

Table 6.37 Source of additional income by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Property	36.3	21.4
Business and investment	36.3	21.4
Part-time job	27.4	57.2
Total	100	100

prime source of income. Second, as the level of income rises the families tend to depend largely on private business and other sources. For example, in the income category K.D. 1000 and over per month, the non-Kuwaitis earn 58.4% and 29% from private business and other sources respectively, while the Kuwaitis earn 42.2% and 40.4% from both these sources. Third, the number of wage-earners per household increases as the level of income rises. This is especially the case for Kuwaitis. (See table 6.3B). Further evidence from our survey indicates that 68.7% of the non-Kuwaitis and 61.3% of Kuwaiti samples stated that they are the only breadwinners in their families. For those who have others to help, the role of their wives is more obvious in the case of non-Kuwaitis (50%), while the corresponding figures for Kuwaitis was only 20%.

Furthermore, we came across some cases (especially, poor migrant families) where sons or daughters contributed the whole amount of their wages to the family budget. In other migrant families who have no one else to assist, the father had to overcome the family's financial problem by working overtime, or by finding a part-time job. The increase in the number of children among migrant's families in addition to the dramatic increase in the cost of living has driven many breadwinners of the low income immigrant families to look for a part-time job in a move to secure the minimum standard of living.

I am a lorry driver working in the Kuwait municipality. I am the only breadwinner for eight children including my wife, and the family of my brother who has recently died. As a result I looked for a part-time job, which raised my salary to K.D. 400 (£800), 25% of it goes as a rent for my apartment, the rest is spend on my childrens' education, clothing, food... etc. For the 14 years of my life in Kuwait, due to the high cost of living, I save not even a dinar.<sup>59</sup>

Table 6.38

Household Income by Level  
and Source - (1972/73)

Income Groups	Monthly income per household								
	Wages	Private Business	Other	Total	Wages	Private Business	Other	Total	Earners per household
Percentage in K.D.									
<b>Kuwaiti Households</b>									
Less than 50	14.0	9.0	11.8	34.8	40.2	25.9	33.9	100.0	1.0
50-	25.3	10.8	21.6	57.7	43.8	18.8	37.4	100.0	1.2
70-	52.0	5.3	27.2	84.5	61.5	6.3	32.2	100.0	1.1
100-	108.2	4.3	14.0	126.5	85.5	3.4	11.1	100.0	1.1
150-	148.5	8.2	16.8	173.5	85.6	4.7	9.7	100.0	1.2
200-	173.7	18.3	49.3	241.3	72.0	7.6	20.4	100.0	1.5
300-	265.6	24.0	53.9	343.5	77.6	7.0	15.7	100.0	1.9
400-	314.9	57.0	66.7	438.6	71.8	13.0	15.2	100.0	2.3
500-	345.2	86.4	108.6	540.2	63.9	16.0	20.1	100.0	2.4
600-1000	372.0	154.1	200.6	726.7	51.2	21.2	27.6	100.0	2.7
1000+	352.5	854.9	818.5	2025.9	17.4	42.2	40.4	100.0	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>190.4</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>353.8</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>Non-Kuwaiti Households</b>									
Less than 50	37.3	2.2	2.1	41.6	89.6	5.3	5.1	100.0	1.0
50-	47.4	4.5	7.9	59.8	79.2	7.6	13.2	100.0	1.1
70-	60.1	16.6	6.1	82.8	72.6	20.1	7.3	100.0	1.2
100-	90.2	23.5	8.0	121.7	74.1	19.3	6.6	100.0	1.4
150-	133.4	26.7	12.2	172.3	77.4	15.5	7.1	100.0	1.5
200-	187.4	34.6	18.0	240.0	78.1	14.4	7.5	100.0	1.5
300-	249.1	57.3	36.7	343.1	72.6	16.7	10.7	100.0	1.7
400-	333.6	55.0	48.0	436.6	76.4	12.6	11.0	100.0	1.8
500-	330.5	128.8	77.3	536.6	61.6	24.0	14.4	100.0	1.7
600-1000	421.8	150.4	144.0	716.2	58.9	21.0	20.1	100.0	1.6
1000+	213.0	987.2	490.2	1690.4	12.6	58.4	29.0	100.0	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>140.8</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>201.1</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>

Source: Ministry of Planning; Annual Statistical Abstract, 1978.  
Government Printing Press, Kuwait, 1979, p. 229

On the whole, the available information on the level of incomes indicates that the majority of the immigrant households (48.5% compared to only 26% of Kuwaiti households) earned between K.D. 50 and K.D. 149 per month. In contrast, 22.8% of the Kuwaiti households earned between K.D. 400 to K.D. 1000 and more and only 9.4% of the immigrant households had a similar level of income. The majority of Kuwaiti households (51.2%) and 42.1% of non-Kuwaitis earned between K.D. 150 to K.D. 300 (See table 6.39). The average income per individual in the case of Kuwaitis reached K.D. 215 and it is only K.D. 143 in the case of non-Kuwaitis.<sup>60</sup>

#### C.1. Immigrants' Families Expenditure

The available data on family expenditure in the 1972-73 and 1978-79 surveys by the Ministry of Planning indicate that the average monthly expenditure per-individual has risen from K.D. 25 for non-Kuwaitis and K.D. 30 for Kuwaitis in 1972-73 to K.D. 59.9 and K.D. 57 respectively, in 1978-79. Furthermore, the average expenditure on each item of commodity has increased for both groups. For example, the per-capita expenditure on foodstuffs jumped from K.D. 8.3 (for Kuwaitis) and K.D. 7.5 (for migrants) to K.D. 20.8 and K.D. 21.1 in 1972-73 and 1978-79 respectively. Similarly, the expenditure on clothing rose for both groups from K.D. 2 in 1972-73 to K.D. 5.8 in 1978-79. Moreover, it is interesting to note that while the average expenditure on housing for non-Kuwaitis rose from K.D. 5 in 1972-73 to K.D. 8.5 in 1978-79, it decreased in the case of Kuwaitis from K.D. 6 to K.D. 3.9. The imbalance between the two groups reflects two important facts: First, the increase of the government subsidies to the housing of Kuwaitis, and secondly the dramatic increase in the rent of private housing which affects considerably the housing of

**Table 6.19**

**Households by Income Level - (1972(1973))**

Income per month (K.D.)	Kuwaitis			Non-Kuwaitis			Total		
	Household	Persons	Income	Household	Income	Persons	Household	Income	Persons
Percent									
Less than 50	5.4	3.5	0.5	5.5	4.9	1.1	5.4	4.2	0.8
50-69	3.0	2.2	0.5	7.5	7.3	2.2	5.7	4.8	1.3
70-99	4.0	2.5	1.0	14.6	14.7	6.0	10.3	8.5	3.2
100-149	13.6	9.9	4.9	20.9	22.2	12.6	17.9	16.0	8.4
150-199	18.7	17.3	9.2	16.1	16.3	13.8	17.2	16.8	11.3
200-249	12.8	12.9	7.9	10.3	10.2	11.2	11.3	11.5	9.4
250-299	9.4	9.7	7.2	7.6	7.3	10.2	8.4	8.5	8.5
300-399	10.3	11.7	10.0	8.1	7.8	13.8	9.0	9.8	11.7
400-599	11.5	13.8	15.4	6.5	6.5	15.1	8.5	10.2	15.2
600-999	5.8	8.3	11.8	2.2	2.2	7.8	3.6	5.3	10.0
1000+	5.5	8.2	31.6	0.7	0.6	6.2	2.7	4.4	20.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Planning Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1978, Kuwait Government Printing Press, 1979, p. 229



immigrants.\* The cost of transportation and communication tends to absorb a large proportion of the household expenditure in the case of the two groups. It increased from K.D. 2 to K.D. 7.9 (for migrants) and from K.D. 4.1 to K.D. 9.9 (for Kuwaitis) in 1972-73 and 1978-79 respectively. With respect to the remitted money it was found that while it remains the same (K.D. 1.4) during the period 1972-73 to 1978-79, it slightly increased from K.D. 2 to K.D. 3.2 for non-Kuwaitis (See tables 6.40, 6.41 and 6.42). Accordingly, much of the preceding discussion reveals that there is no real significant difference in the average expenditure between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti, which contradicts the the popular view, especially among Kuwaitis which argues that the main purpose of migrant labour is "to make money and go home". It is important to emphasise that migrant labour, particularly those who have established themselves, are more likely to spend their earnings in the country of employment. Moreover, it has been found that even the remittances have absorbed only 5.4% of the total expenditure of the migrant household in 1978-79 (See table 6.42).

An examination of the items of expenditure according to the level of income reveals: 1) a large proportion of the expenditure of the low income families goes on foodstuffs. For example, families in the category of less than K.D. 150, 47.2% (for Kuwaitis) and 40.9% (for non-Kuwaitis) of their expenditure went on foodstudd. 2) As the level of income rose, new areas of expenditure appeared. For example, while the share of foodstuff for both groups (household income K.D. 950+) dropped to 26.2%, their expenditure on transportation and communication rose to 20.7% (for Kuwaitis) and 27.1% (for non-Kuwaitis). 3) A large proportion of migrants' families with an income of less than K.D. 150

\* For more details on the subject of housing see Chapter V.

Monthly Per Capita Expenditure on Items of  
Consumption by Expenditure Level

- Average (April 1972-March 1973)

Kuwaiti households									
Commodity groups	Monthly expenditure of household K.D.								Av. Expenditure
	30-	50-	100-	150-	200-	300-	400-	500	
Per capita expenditure K.D.									
Food and Beverage	3.653	7.123	7.692	7.838	8.279	8.764	9.368	11.082	8.374
Clothing	0.418	1.004	1.426	1.938	2.592	3.126	3.863	6.267	2.782
Dwelling rent & related expenses	1.224	2.583	3.204	4.194	6.088	8.321	11.281	14.879	6.786
Fuel and Light	0.308	0.391	0.367	0.426	0.599	0.639	0.654	0.914	0.564
Household equipment & services	0.197	0.622	1.245	1.956	2.765	3.542	4.101	11.332	3.545
Transport & communication	0.439	0.912	1.964	2.386	3.154	4.712	6.225	11.461	4.158
Education, recreation & sport	0.018	0.171	0.306	0.483	0.743	0.973	1.297	2.621	0.897
Medical expenses	0.039	0.189	0.210	0.259	0.408	0.586	0.580	0.922	0.431
Other goods & services	0.017	0.192	0.542	0.973	1.366	1.897	2.060	3.624	1.473
Transfer payments	0.010	0.285	0.348	0.591	0.688	0.834	1.158	6.613	1.452
Total expenditure	6.323	13.472	17.304	21.044	26.682	33.394	40.587	69.715	30.462
Percentage									
Food and Beverage	57.7	52.9	44.5	37.2	31.1	26.2	23.1	15.9	27.5
Clothing	6.6	7.5	8.2	9.3	9.7	9.4	9.5	9.0	9.1
Dwelling rent & related expenses	19.4	19.2	18.5	19.9	22.8	24.9	27.8	21.3	22.3
Fuel and Light	4.9	2.9	2.1	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.6	1.3	1.9
Household equipment & services	3.1	4.6	7.2	9.3	10.4	10.6	10.1	16.3	11.6
Transport & communication	6.9	6.7	11.4	11.3	11.8	14.1	15.3	16.4	13.7
Education, recreation & sport	0.3	1.3	1.8	2.3	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.8	2.9
Medical expenses	0.6	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.4
Other goods & services	0.3	1.4	3.1	4.6	5.1	5.7	5.1	5.2	4.8
Transfer payments	0.2	2.1	2.0	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.9	9.5	4.8
Total expenditure	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Monthly Per Capita Expenditure on Items of Consumption by Expenditure Level

- Average (April 1972-March 1973)

-Non Kuwaiti households

Commodity groups	Monthly expenditure of household K.D.								Av. Expenditure
	30-	50-	100-	150-	200-	300-	400-	500+	
Per capita expenditure K.D.									
Food and Beverage	4.373	5.571	7.292	8.716	10.970	12.418	12.468	16.459	7.596
Clothing	0.338	0.890	1.644	2.818	4.323	6.204	7.737	10.671	2.232
Housing rent & related expenses	1.633	3.350	5.326	6.621	8.449	9.563	11.137	14.998	5.368
Fuel and light	0.253	0.325	0.425	0.591	0.716	1.100	1.030	1.226	0.491
Household equipment services	0.194	0.483	1.172	2.149	3.895	6.002	7.374	15.870	1.895
Transport & communication	0.470	0.900	1.736	3.147	4.987	7.052	8.191	33.621	2.810
Education, recreation sport	0.030	0.332	1.165	2.085	3.417	5.466	8.321	6.715	1.606
Medical expenses	0.043	0.159	0.340	0.630	0.893	1.259	1.078	1.607	0.439
Other goods & services	0.072	0.190	0.441	0.783	1.222	2.270	2.242	5.014	0.660
Transfer payments	0.065	0.356	1.147	2.128	3.917	7.145	8.322	24.735	2.049
Total Expenditure	7.471	12.556	20.688	29.668	42.789	58.479	67.900	130.916	25.146
<b>Percentage</b>									
Food and Beverage	58.5	44.3	35.2	29.4	25.6	21.2	18.4	12.6	30.2
Clothing	4.5	7.2	7.9	9.5	10.1	10.6	11.4	8.2	8.9
Housing rent & related expenses	21.9	26.7	25.7	22.3	19.7	16.4	16.4	11.5	21.3
Fuel and light	3.4	2.6	2.2	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.4	0.9	2.0
Household equipment services	2.6	3.8	5.7	7.2	9.1	10.3	10.8	12.1	7.5
Transport & communication	6.3	7.2	8.4	10.6	11.7	12.1	12.1	25.7	11.2
Education, recreation sport	0.4	2.6	5.6	7.1	7.9	9.3	12.3	5.1	6.4
Medical expenses	0.6	1.3	1.6	2.1	2.1	2.2	1.7	1.2	1.7
Other goods & services	0.9	1.5	2.2	2.6	2.9	3.8	3.3	3.8	2.6
Transfer payments	0.9	2.8	5.5	7.2	9.2	12.2	12.2	18.9	8.2
Total Expenditure	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

ble 6.42

Monthly Per Capita Expenditure on Items of Consumption by Expenditure Level

- Average (April 1978-March 1979)

Monthly expenditure of household K.D.

Commodity Groups	150-	150-	250-	350-	450-	550-	650-	750-	850-	950-	Av. Expenditure
Kuwaiti Households											
Food and Beverage	8136	12328	16463	20157	22966	24334	26730	27376	27028	33917	20829
Clothing	2556	3676	4686	5157	5780	7165	8027	7602	7533	11200	5985
Housing rent & related expenses											
Fuel & light	1128	2673	3355	3896	4563	4765	4875	3965	5061	6020	3964
Household equipment & services	1078	2289	3765	4385	5836	7740	10,626	11,706	9163	54,778	7323
Transport & communication	1660	3565	5730	6965	8994	9104	12375	10182	11515	33841	9928
Education, recreation & sport	237	650	1030	1480	1813	2508	4099	2758	3844	4616	1977
Medical expenses	151	162	328	377	362	402	518	211	1212	1057	426
Other goods & services	2062	2798	3231	4328	5027	6125	8119	9661	9997	17724	6118
Transfer payments	221	287	536	644	760	905	1441	1403	957	4236	1067
Total Expenditure	17229	28428	39124	47389	56101	63048	76810	74864	76310	167389	57617
Non-Kuwaiti Households											
Food and Beverage	8442	12749	17643	22062	27950	28209	36921	38263	42028	40425	21105
Clothing	2270	3304	4778	6021	7197	8571	9899	11949	17016	12884	5830
Housing rent & related expenses											
Fuel & light	5012	7475	8269	8285	9638	9098	10035	14480	22205	12798	8578
Household equipment & services	1366	2862	3778	5398	7014	10604	12296	11098	12523	17179	5559
Transport & communication	1426	3197	4686	6855	9220	10835	19248	24244	41762	51096	7906
Education, recreation & sport	495	1208	2171	3059	3815	4820	6675	6746	12061	10223	3006
Medical expenses	124	273	347	469	986	897	846	1086	1037	1229	527
Other goods & services	1269	1848	2660	3573	4963	7325	9689	10344	15840	21961	4184
Transfer payments	234	957	1657	2705	4163	6975	6965	9334	16843	20332	3245
Total Expenditure	20638	33873	45989	58427	74946	87334	112574	127544	181315	188127	59940

spent 24% of their available money on rent. However, the middle and high income non-Kuwaiti group spent a low proportion of their income on housing (12.8% and 6.8% respectively). The low share of rent in the expenditure of these categories, can be understood by the fact that most of these were provided with free accommodation, and/or their monthly income is high enough to remain unaffected. 4) Finally, while the share of remittances in the total expenditure of the non-Kuwaiti household small despite the level of income, it increases as the family income rises. It rose from 1.3% for the low income to 5.5% in the case of middle income, and to 10.8% in the case of high income (See table 6.42).

The above discussion along with the preceding chapters discussed in some detail various aspects of the socio-economic condition under which immigrant labour exists in Kuwait. An important concern, however, of this thesis is the political dimension of the labour migration process. It is for this reason therefore that the remaining two chapters attempt to provide material which highlights the political dimension. The discussion of the nature of the labour market in the next chapter for example, is an attempt to indicate the manner in which political considerations play a central role in labour allocation and productivity.

NOTES

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3. See for example, Shamlan Al-Essa, op.cit., pp.43-50.
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12. Ministry of Planning, Ibid., p.43.
13. Ibid., p.43.
14. Figures of 1969, derived from 'Amal al-Sabah, op.cit., p.444.

15. See for example, Haider Ibrahim, 'Athār al-ʿAmalah al-ʿAjnabiyāh ʿAlā al-Thaqāfah al-ʿArabiya (The Impact of Foreign Labour on the Arab Culture), al-Muṭaʿbal Al-Ariby, Vol. 2, No. 40, April, 1983.
16. It has been estimated that the indigenous population in U.A.E. constitute between 12% and 18% of the total population, see for example, Abd al-Razāq al-faris, op.cit.
17. See for example, 1. The Centre for Arab Gulf Studies, The Arab Gulf Journal, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1979. 2. Haider Ibrahim, ibid.
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22. Shamlan Al-Essa, op.cit., p.77.
23. Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Education in Kuwait, Kuwait, October, 1979, p.1.
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32. Arab Planning Institute, Information on Foreign Labour in the Gulf, Ibid., p.26.
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35. <sup>c</sup> Ali al-Mousa, op.cit., pp.43-55.
36. The Office of Minister of Education, The New Rules of Admission of non-Kuwaiti Students in the Government Schools, Kuwait, Ministry of Education, No. 2-45503, on 3rd March, 1980.
37. The first regulation that set some restrictions on the education of immigrants' children was issued on 1st January 1974 with a requirement of resident of the father of non-Kuwaiti students prior to 1962. See Planning Board, Strategy of Labour Force in Kuwait, op.cit., p.54. In the meantime the sons of the high government non-Kuwaiti officials and the non-Kuwaiti military advisors were excluded from this regulation.
38. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.249.
39. Ministry of Education, Ministerial Decision, No. 736/1975, 27th September, 1975.
40. Ministry of Education, Ministerial Decision, No. 46601, Article 17, 1967.
41. al-Tali<sup>c</sup>ah, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, No. 269, March 4, 1970, pp.10-19.
42. An interview with the headmaster of a Pakistani School in Al-Rumaythi'yah, in November 1981.



43. An interview with a Pakistani tailor, Kuwait, December, 1981.
44. Ministry of Education, Statistics on the Private Education, 1980/81, Kuwait, 1981.
45. See for example, H.J. Taha, op.cit.
46. Muwafaq M. Yassin, Mushkilāt Ta'lim 'Abnā' Filastīnīn Fī Marakīs Taja-mu'ati him al-Kūbrā Fī al-Dūwal al-'Arabiyyah, (The Problems of Educating the Palestinian Children in the Arab Countries), unpublished M.A. thesis, Kuwait University, Kuwait, 1974, pp.92-94.
47. Ibid., p.95.
48. It has been learnt that the majority of these students are Arabs (around 56%) mostly Palestinians, Egyptian and Lebanese, whose fathers occupy leading positions in the government and private sectors.
49. Ministry of Education, Statistics on Private Education, op.cit.
50. University of Qatar, Report on the Regulation of Higher Studies, Scholarships and Admissions, in the Universities of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirate, Qatar, April/May, 1980, pp.14-15.
51. It has been learnt lately that even the possibility of converting was limited by a new regulation which determined the maximum number of non-Kuwaiti students who may be accepted in each faculty of Kuwait Universities, especially in the Engineering and Medical Schools.
52. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., pp.329-330.
53. See Ministry of Planning, Ibid., p.331.
54. Al-Siyyasīh, a daily newspaper, 13th May 1972.
55. According to the Ministerial decision No. 3728 of 2nd June 1979 the wages of Arabic private schools were increased as follows: a teacher who holds a university degree is on K.D. 144, a teacher with a two year Post-Secondary Diploma received K.D. 107, and a teacher who holds a Secondary Certificate receives K.D. 92. Directorate of Private Education Annual Report 1979/80, Ministry of Education, Kuwait, 1980/81, p.4.

56. Ismael Serag elddin et al., op.cit., p.234.
57. Certain jobs in Kuwait are restricted to Kuwaitis only. For example, an immigrant lawyer cannot defend a client in court without special permission from the Minister of Justice. If the permission is granted the immigrant lawyer is required to be accompanied by a Kuwaiti lawyer who is a member of the Kuwaiti Lawyers' Association. (See Farah, T. and others: Alienation and Expatriate Labour in Kuwait, J.S.A.M.E.S., Vol. IV, No. 1, Fall, 1980, pp.29-30). In addition a non-Kuwaiti cannot open a business without a Kuwaiti partner who is the only one who has the right to register the establishment, (See, Raf at Suwailiws, Qanun al-sharikat al-Tijariyah, (Laws of the Trading Companies), Kuwait, al-Qabas Printing Press, 1975, Law No. 15, Article 5, p.8.
58. Jassim al-Sadoun, Income distribution in Kuwait, Journal of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies, Vol. 3, NO. 12, October 1977, p.90.
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Chapter VII

IMMIGRANTS IN THE KUWAIT LABOUR MARKET

"We asked for workers, but human beings came".

Max Frisch<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Discrimination against immigrant workers in Kuwait is not restricted to the issues discussed already. It surrounds the everyday life of the immigrants. It reminds them of their inferiority and their insecurity vis-a-vis the indigenous workers. Immigrants are the backbone of Kuwaiti society. Without them society would come to a standstill. For the majority of them, the experience of work in Kuwait is unique and novel in its nature and characteristics. They must change their attitudes towards the locality in which they live, the production process and the people involved in this process. Working in Kuwait usually means working in impersonal surrounding, arduous working conditions, and sometimes in completely new occupations. This chapter will examine various aspects of the working conditions of immigrant labour and related issues. One should emphasise here that the immigrants' working conditions are affected by factors like nationality, occupation, the sector of employment and the channels of recruitment. For example, the working conditions of Asian labourers, particularly the sub-continentals, and the non or semi-skilled workers, working in small enterprises, or in the construction sector, were found to be the least pleasant and most arduous. There is no doubt that the discrimination in the Kuwait labour market between workers according to their language, their ethnic origin, and sometimes their religious and political beliefs, have affected the productivity of the Kuwaiti economy as a whole. It is also important to remember that these are indicators of the model of development adopted by the Kuwaiti

ruling class. Such a development has brought out the duality in the labour market between the major components of Kuwait population: Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. In the final analysis, these serve the interests of the dominant group in strengthening the divisions in society.

#### A. Channels of Recruitment

Three types of recruitment channels have existed throughout labour migration into the Gulf countries; private channels, the official channels, and the recruiting agencies. The first was and still is the way through which a substantial number of labourers are channelled to the Gulf countries. The first and second channels have been operating in Kuwait since 1950, and it is through these two that most of the Arab labour force, and Asian labour in the fifties and sixties, moved into Kuwait. Through the first channel immigrants move into Kuwait either by obtaining an entry visa with the assistance of relatives and friends or buying it at a high price. Otherwise, they enter through clandestine and illegal migration. Further evidence was obtained from our survey. For example, amongst Arab migrants, 52% of the sample had moved to Kuwait in response to an invitation sent by relatives or friends, 17.7% came to Kuwait by using a "no objection certificate", 9.1% were either born in Kuwait or came to study and then settled and worked in Kuwait,\* and only 3.9% came to Kuwait with a pre-arranged work contract. In other words, almost all the Arab immigrants in Kuwait, especially in the period prior to 1975, had immigrated into Kuwait with no certainty of their future employment in the country. In contrast, the non-arab migrants; especially

\* For more details of the first channel, see Chapter IV

in the case of Europeans and Far Easterners, have moved into the country with an advance signed work-contract. For example, it was found in a study carried out on a sample of Asian labourers in the Gulf that 70% of them moved to the area with a work contract already signed in the country of origin.<sup>2\*</sup> Another study, however, carried out on single immigrants in Kuwait pointed out that only 28.8% of the sample came to the country with a signed work contract while the majority (71.2%) immigrated by other means. Of those 58.1% came in response to an invitation and 13.1% came by non-stated means.<sup>3</sup> This means that the majority of the immigrant labour force in Kuwait came without a work contract and then sought employment in the country.

The second channel of recruitment is regulated by bilateral labour agreements between Kuwait and other labour exporting countries. The most prominent example is the labour agreement between Egypt and other Arab labour importing countries. By it Egypt supplies them with their labour needs. The secondment of Egyptian teachers to Kuwait operates as an official agreement between the two countries. In 1981/82 the number of Egyptian teachers in Kuwait government schools reached 10,880 making up 44.6% of the total.<sup>4\*\*</sup>

The third channel, the most organised, is managed by recruitment agents and has developed over the last seven years. These agencies control the recruitment of Asian labour as a whole. They are private enterprises

\* This high percentage can be attributed to the fact that this study surveyed predominantly skilled labour, and the package deal labour. For this reason it is the exception to the rule.

\*\* Kuwait has signed no such official agreement with any other Arab or non-Arab country.

owned by a person or group of people, in labour exporting or importing countries. There are two types of recruitment agencies. First the small private business which recruits workers on a very small scale and mainly for domestic purposes like maids and drivers. It recruits between 40-50 sub-continentals a month.<sup>5</sup> These agencies, which are located in the country of employment, have representatives who travel to the villages and towns of the sub-continent and meet the people who seek employment in the oil producing countries. The second type of recruitment agencies are located in both labour exporting and importing countries. They meet the demand for labour on a large scale and for different types of skills. The best example of this is the Multinational Recruitment Group (M.R.G.) which is based in Jeddah and meets the labour demand for both private and official sectors, not merely for Saudi Arabia but also for most of the Arab Gulf countries. Its advertisements in the leading national and international newspapers and magazines are headed "Quality Manpower from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Phillipines, Sri Lanka and Thailand". It promises to supply workers with "most efficient reliable, hard working qualities". It has agents in more than 14 labour importing and exporting countries.<sup>6</sup> For a country like Kuwait, where recruitment agencies for commercial purposes are banned by law, the employer usually contacts these agents, who then send their representative to interview their applicants.<sup>7</sup>

No information is available on the number of Asian labourers recruited through this channel, but one might estimate that approximately between 40% and 60% of the Asian workers were directly or indirectly recruited through these organisations. Furthermore, it has been noticed that labour recruited through these agents, especially the sub-continentals, has been exposed to considerable exploitation by these agents who are paid large

amounts of money in advanced in return for the promise, usually false, to be transferred to the Gulf countries. For a poor Indian peasant these sums could reach between \$100 to \$200. Alternatively, the migrants may be exploited by the employer himself, who, under the legal cover of the sponsorship system, controls the stay and work of the migrant labourer in Kuwait. In other words, the stay and work of the immigrant worker depends largely on the wishes and disposition of the sponsors.

Abuse of recruited labour has received wide criticism from some of the local papers and in many academic conferences, and has led to great concern in the sub-continent as well as the imposition of tight controls over the flow of manpower in the Far Eastern countries. For example, the 1974 labour code in the Phillipines recognised the need to create an institutional structure to administer and control labour migration. Other countries imposed legislation that prevented any worker from emigrating unless he had a secure job in the country of employment. Others, like Korea, required its workers wishing to work for foreign companies to register with the Korean Overseas Development Department.<sup>8</sup>

In theory therefore, controls exist. Most of the labour exporting countries, even in the sub-continent, have model contracts setting out minimum conditions; decent housing and food, guarantees by employers to pay their fares out and home again and to ensure that they have valid work permits and papers. In practice, the system is "rife with abuses".<sup>9</sup>



A.1. Clandestine Migration as Means of Recruitment

For a long time Kuwait's borders were opened for migrants from Iraq, Iran and other Arab and non-Arab countries. These migrants moved into the country in search of a decent life. Many of these came from the poor peasantry in the surrounding countries, or from India and Pakistan. Because they entered the country illegally their number is unknown to official sources. However Al-Mousa estimated them to be between 10,000 and 50,000 by the end of 1982.<sup>10</sup> It is known that the Iranians, and especially the Ahwaris (Khuzistanis) constituted the majority, especially in the sixties and early seventies.<sup>11</sup>

The "open door" status of the Iraqi labour market for Egyptian labour has encouraged many poor Egyptian peasants working in Iraq to seek better wages in Kuwait. Many of these have entered the country illegally in search for better employment. Generally, illegal immigrants were either shipped to Kuwait during the night (as in the case of Iranian illegal immigrants) or crossed the border during the day (as with the Egyptians and Iraqis).<sup>12</sup> Those who were arrested by the police were sent back to their country; those who escaped deportation found work in the construction sector, road building, house services and other harsh jobs.<sup>13</sup> They were ruthlessly exploited by their employers; they received low wages, working in very unpleasant conditions, and in continuous fear of deportation. A local magazine described the living conditions of illegal immigrants as follows:

"The fear of deportation makes the illegal immigrant's life miserable; living in horror of the police, imprisoned in his room, seeing nothing of Kuwait but his room"<sup>14</sup>

The need of the local market for unskilled cheap labour, in addition to the employers' pressure on the government, has prevented the latter from taking any effective action against illegal immigrants. A highly placed officer in the Ministry of Interior stated:

"Although we knew about the large presence of illegal immigrants, no action has been taken against them, due to the demand of the local labour market and the difficulty of providing them with homes since they have entered the country illegally. If we did so this would encourage the others to follow the same path of migration."<sup>15</sup>

Clandestine migration is allowed to continue because it is the source of cheap labour, where the employer has no responsibility for the needs of non-Kuwaiti workers.

#### B. Employment of Immigrants

The employment of non-Kuwaitis varies from one to another according to their work experience, their skill-level, their nationality and the size of their community in Kuwait. Those who enter the country with a work contract in hand face no problems in terms of employment; for those who come in search of employment the situation is different. Unlike Kuwaitis, non-Kuwaitis' previous work experience may help in easing the problem of employment. For those who have no such experience the assistance of relatives and friends is essential; "every employer is asking for work experience, nobody is going to employ us unless we manage to meet such requirements or to search for favouritism". For immigrants working in Kuwait, job experience is one of the most important bargaining elements in the labour market. This situation is clearly indicated in the replies of the non-Kuwaitis sample. Most of them, 81.2%

had worked before, either in the country of origin (42.3%) or in Kuwait (57.6%). In comparison, only 52.2% of the Kuwaiti sample had worked before. This means that the majority of the non-Kuwaiti sample have left their first job in search of better wages and working conditions. The situation soon changes once the non-Kuwaiti has obtained a satisfactory job. For example, 47% of the non-Kuwaiti sample had been in their present job for the last 14 years; only 30.9% of the Kuwaitis held one job for the same period (see table 7.1). These results, have however, directly contradict findings obtained in other studies carried out on migrant labour in Europe. These found that immigrant labour tends to stay in one job for a short number of years. More precisely, labour turnover among the expatriate labour force tends to be higher than that of indigenous labour.<sup>16</sup> One particular result of our survey suggests that married Arab immigrants, who tend not to change their jobs, illustrate perfectly the peculiar situation of the non-Kuwaiti labour force. In other words, the sponsorship system which governs the relation between the employer and the employee leaves no freedom for the latter to change his job, unless he leaves the country. Furthermore, it has been noticed that labour turnover is generally higher among non-Arab, single and low-paid unskilled workers.

As already mentioned, divisions according to nationality also exists in the Kuwait labour market. For example, the Far Easterners usually move into Kuwait with a work contract in hand since most of the Far Eastern countries ban the emigration of their workers unless their jobs are secure in the country of employment.<sup>17</sup> The Arab and South Asian labourers especially after 1975, are divided in two: those who emigrate with a work contract in hand and those who search for employment after their

Table 7.1 Number of years of work in Kuwait by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Less than a year	15.9	4.1
2 to 4 years	36.6	29.1
5 to 15 years	30.9	47.0
15 to 27 years	13.5	19.8
Not stated	3.1	-
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.2 Way of employment according to the nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Response to advertisement	6.8	40.6
Personal contact	59.0	33.4
Through friends and relatives	20.4	19.8
Through other means	13.8	6.2
Total	100.0	100.0

arrival. Other migrants, especially the Arab-skilled and professional workers who moved into the country without a work contract usually obtain employment in response to employers' advertisements or through the assistance of relatives and friends<sup>18</sup> (See table 7.2).

C. Conditions of Work

C.1. Awareness of Rights and Duties of Job:

Data obtained on this aspect reveals that over half of the respondents of both groups, Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti are aware of the rights and duties of their jobs. A higher percentage of non-Kuwaitis, in comparison with Kuwaitis were aware of these (68.8% against 54.5%). In addition only 9.4% of the non-Kuwaitis as against 16% of Kuwaitis were not aware (See table 7.3). These results could be understood to mean that the immigrants' work experience, and their comparatively higher educational level, is reflected in their replies. In addition non-Kuwaitis are more likely to seek jobs relevant to their training and education. For example, 80.2% of the non-Kuwaiti sample in contrast to 68.3% of the Kuwaiti sample revealed that their present job was relevant to their education and vocational training (See table 7.4).

C.2. Labour Mobility Within the Place of Work:

While both groups, Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, indicated that they have changed the place of their work, Kuwaitis have a higher propensity (73.7%) to change places of work in comparison with non-Kuwaitis (56.3%) (See table 7.5). On the other hand, an examination of the mobility within the place of work indicates that non-Kuwaiti (98.1%) in contrast to their Kuwaiti counterparts (89.2%) have a higher propensity to move but within the same place of work (See table 7.6).\*

\* These results substantiate the fact that non-Kuwaitis, once they have settled in Kuwait have the least propensity to change their jobs.

Table 7.3 Awareness of Rights and Duties of job by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	54.5	63.8
No	16.0	9.4
Somewhat	29.5	21.8
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.4 Compatibility of education with job by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Relevance of education and training	68.3	80.2
Irrelevance of education and training	22.7	17.7
Do not know	9.0	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.5 Change the place of work by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti
Yes	73.7	56.3
No	26.3	43.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.6 Number of jobs and changes within the place of work by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti
One	39.7	53.8
Two	35.8	20.3
Three	14.2	24.0
Not stated	10.8	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.7 Reasons of job change by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Promotion	20.7	59.0
Fidgetness	3.4	7.1
Moving to other section	34.6	23.4
Low salary	10.3	7.1
Disagree with Supervisor	10.3	1.7
Other reasons	20.7	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Further examination of the reasons for job changes reveals, especially in the case of non-Kuwaitis, that it is primarily caused by promotion (59%) or movement to another department (23.4%). By contrast large proportions of Kuwaitis changed their place of work due to their moving to other departments (34.6%) and promotion (20.7%) (See table 7.7)

C.3. Promotion

While the laws of the civil service govern promotions in government and joint sectors' jobs and are largely organised to give preference to Kuwaitis, promotion in the private sector is more or less based on the productivity and persistence of the worker irrespective of his nationality.

According to the laws of the civil service system promotion should first go to Kuwaitis; if there are no Kuwaitis, then the law allows the administration to promote non-Kuwaitis by selection. The non-Kuwaiti must meet conditions set by article 24 of the Civil Service Law.<sup>19\*</sup> Although the new Civil Service Laws of 1979, gave no direct expression of the priority of Kuwaitis in terms of promotion, the actual practice of the government administration and the policy of Kuwaitization plus the pressure of Kuwaiti public opinion eliminates any possibility of non-Kuwaitis being promoted in the government sector. Lately pressure has come from the Kuwaiti parliament to pursue the process of Kuwaitization not only in the government administration, but even in the joint sectors which were initially set up to avoid the government bureaucracy.<sup>20</sup>

\* He must spend the minimum time required in each grade, he must receive a rating of "excellent" on his annual report from his supervisor, he must not have been promoted before and there must be a need for his promotion.



It is interesting that while non-Kuwaitis were prevented from holding key positions in the government and joint sectors, the door was opened for them to hold a "medium position". Such a trend was indicated in our survey where only 37.5% of the non-Kuwaiti sample held such jobs against 43.1% of the Kuwaiti sample (See table 7.8). When these people were asked about the nationality of their supervisors 48.9% said he was a Palestinian, 16.8% said he was a Kuwaiti and 4.1% said he was Egyptian. In the case of Kuwaitis it was found that 44.7% of them were supervised by Kuwaities, 45.4% by Palestinians and 6.8% by Egyptians. However, these figures do not mean that non-Kuwaitis, especially Palestinians, are treated on the same footing as Kuwaitis in terms of promotion, but it does indicate that the "medium jobs", particularly in the government and semi-official sectors, are held by non-Kuwaitis.

Opportunities for non-Kuwaitis to be promoted in the foreseeable future in these sectors seem unlikely. For example, only 25% of the non-Kuwaiti sample indicated that they expect to be promoted in the future; of the rest, 40.6% think they have no chance at all, and 34.3% do not expect any promotion. Thus almost two-thirds of the non-Kuwaiti sample were doubtful about promotion prospects. Such definite attitudes are a result of the government's discriminatory policy, which aims at gaining the support of the Kuwaitis with such measures. In the final analysis it appears that the Kuwaiti-employees, by virtue of being Kuwaitis are more likely to be promoted than non-Kuwaitis. As a consequence of this policy, some of the senior official non-Kuwaitis have left the government sector in search of employment in the private sector where promotion, more or less, is given on a rational basis. Furthermore, while the Kuwaitis are the only group to be promoted to the top positions, promotion within this group is largely affected by tribal origins and religious

beliefs (Sunni or Shia) rather than by productivity and the qualification of the employee.<sup>21</sup>

C.4. Working Hours and Holidays

According to the Labour Law of Kuwait a "labourer may not be made to work for more than eight hours a day or more than 48 hours a week". It also defines the situation where "working hours may be increased, as in the case of hotel workers, restaurants, security and hospitals." It also lays down rules for overtime; "a labourer may under a written order from the employer, work overtime, provided that it shall not exceed two hours a day, if the overtime work is required for the prevention of a dangerous incident, rectification of any damage resulting from such incidents, or for meeting any extraordinary additional work. In all such cases, a labourer shall be paid an overtime wage for every additional hour equal to his normal wage per hour plus at least 25%."<sup>22</sup> However, the real situation is vastly different. Working hours are largely determined by the sector of employment, by the skill-level of the workers and sometimes by the nationality of the workers. For example, while clerical workers in the government sector work approximately 6 hours a day or 36 hours a week; manual workers work 8 hours a day or 48 hours a week. Similarly, in the joint sector and the large enterprises of the private sector, where clerical and skilled labourers are working the maximum hours laid down by the law (8 hours a day and 48 hours a week), the manual workers, in many cases, work 10 hours a day without any extra pay.<sup>23</sup> Again Asian labourers (especially the Far Easterners and the sub-continentials), Egyptian construction workers, and house maids are working between 12 and 16 hours per day.<sup>24</sup>

A comparison between table 7.9 and table 7.10 reveals that while the weekly working hours have decreased in the period from 1974 to 1981 in some economic activities like agriculture and the wholesale and retail sectors for both workers and clerical staff, from 72 to 61 hours per week, in the case of workers and from 52 to 51 hours per week in the case of clerical staff, working in agriculture, it increased in some other sectors like construction and transportation, from 50 to 52 hours per week in the case of labourers, and from 42 to 45 hours per week in the case of clericals, in the construction sector. Other sectors like manufacturing and insurance have also witnessed an increase in the weekly working hours of one section of its labour force (such as the increase of the weekly working hours of labourers in insurance and real estate from 43 to 45).

Tables 7.9 and 7.10 demonstrate that the weekly working hours of labourers in most economic activities is higher than that of clerical staff and professionals. They also indicate that the disparity between the two varies from one economic sector to another. It reaches its highest average in the case of agriculture.

An examination of working hours according to nationality (see table 7.10) indicates that the disparity also exists between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. Non-Kuwaitis weekly working hours, although they vary from one sector to another, remain higher than those of Kuwaitis: 50 weekly working hours in the case of non-Kuwaitis as against 44 in cases of Kuwaitis.

Table 7.9

Number of Employees and Average Number of weekly hours of work and monthly wages classified according to Major Division Activity and Nationality - 1974.

Economic Activity	Clerical and Professional			Labourers			Total		
	Kuwaitis	Non-Kuwaitis	Total	Kuwaitis	Non-Kuwaitis	Total	Kuwaitis	Non-Kuwaitis	Total
<b>Agriculture, Hunting &amp; fishing:</b>									
Number	13	90	103	-	1550	1550	-	-	1653
Wages	123	93	93	-	29	29	123	32	55
Hours of work	-	-	54	-	-	72	-	-	71
<b>Mining &amp; Quarrying:</b>									
Number	410	844	1254	721	674	1395	1131	1518	2649
Wages	344	272	295	207	133	171	257	210	250
Hours of work	-	-	47	-	-	50	-	-	49
<b>Manufacturing Industries:</b>									
Number	412	3349	3761	142	17908	18050	954	21257	21611
Wages	286	165	178	195	49	50	261	67	77
Hours of work	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Construction:</b>									
Number	24	2060	2084	-	12705	12705	24	14705	14729
Wages	111	138	140	-	46	46	111	52	79
Hours of work	-	-	47	-	-	50	-	-	47
<b>Wholesale, Retail Trade:</b>									
Number	141	6933	7064	22	22082	22104	153	29015	29168
Wages	244	93	96	147	48	48	230	59	60
Hours of work	-	-	47	-	-	59	-	-	56
<b>Insurance, Real Estate &amp; Auctions:</b>									
Number	363	4133	4501	3	1286	1289	366	5424	5790
Wages	191	171	127	106	36	38	190	161	107
Hours of work	-	-	42	-	-	43	-	-	42
<b>Service:</b>									
Number	82	3551	3633	7	11827	11834	89	15778	15867
Wages	186	81	83	705	49	48	188	51	56
Hours of work	-	-	29	-	-	54	-	-	48
<b>Transportation &amp; Communication:</b>									
Number	227	2595	2822	24	4044	4078	256	6744	6996
Wages	244	123	133	95	91	91	227	111	108
Hours of work	-	-	42	-	-	44	-	-	44
<b>Electricity, Gas &amp; Water</b>									
Number	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	5	5
Wages	-	-	-	-	52	52	-	52	52
Hours of work	-	-	-	-	47	47	-	47	47
<b>Total:</b>									
Number	1662	23560	25222	924	72086	73010	2580	95646	102522
Wages	265	120	129	200	50	52	242	128	71
Hours of work	-	-	43	-	-	54	-	-	54

Source: Compiled from Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1976, op.cit. pp.116-119.

Table 7.10

Number of Employees and Average Number of weekly hours of work and monthly wages classified according to Major Division Activity and Nationality - 1981.

Economic Activity	Clerical and Professional			Labourers			Total		
	Kuwaitis	Non-Kuwaitis	Total	Kuwaitis	Non-Kuwaitis	Total	Kuwaitis	Non-Kuwaitis	Total
<b>Agriculture, hunting &amp; fishing:</b>									
Number	11	337	355	-	2611	2611	13	2948	2961
Wages	741	247	265	-	99	99	741	216	119
Hours of work	53	51	51	-	61	61	53	60	60
<b>Mining &amp; Quarrying:</b>									
Number	5	96	101	1	560	561	6	656	663
Wages	823	302	128	600	198	198	780	211	210
Hours of work	49	47	47	48	51	51	47	51	51
<b>Manufacturing Industries:</b>									
Number	305	5074	5379	19	23479	23598	324	28653	28977
Wages	566	278	290	273	143	144	549	166	171
Hours of work	47	48	48	47	52	52	47	52	52
<b>Construction:</b>									
Number	207	9610	9818	35	46570	46605	238	56180	56418
Wages	724	359	366	240	159	159	654	193	195
Hours of work	44	47	47	47	52	52	44	51	51
<b>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade:</b>									
Number	316	10104	10420	37	19548	19585	353	29652	29965
Wages	578	260	268	132	132	132	531	176	180
Hours of work	47	48	48	48	49	49	47	49	49
<b>Transportation &amp; Communication:</b>									
Number	39	2534	2573	2	7095	7097	41	9629	9670
Wages	548	328	332	80	201	201	525	235	236
Hours of work	44	45	45	56	49	49	44	49	49
<b>Insurance, Real Estate &amp; Auction:</b>									
Number	1242	8697	9935	8	2535	2543	1250	11228	12478
Wages	505	357	375	368	131	132	504	306	320
Hours of work	43	42	43	43	45	45	41	44	44
<b>Services:</b>									
Number	274	5933	6207	79	7678	7757	353	11611	13964
Wages	275	187	191	193	111	112	257	144	147
Hours of work	42	41	41	48	47	47	43	44	44
<b>Total:</b>									
Number	2197	42391	44778	181	110176	110357	2578	152557	155735
Wages	517	297	309	208	148	148	476	190	195
Hours of work	44	46	45	47	51	51	44	50	49

Source: Compiled from: Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Results of statistics of employment, wages and hours of work, March 1981, Kuwait, Government Printing Press, 1982, pp.41-91. (in ARABIC)

An investigation of the private sector of the Kuwaiti economy especially the small and medium sized private enterprises, reveals that workers, particularly the semi and non-skilled, were made to work for hours considerably in excess of those stated in the labour law. Many cases we came across indicated that workers have been made to work for more than 14 hours a day, such as in the case of the Shawaikh port workers. Here it was found that 88.7% of them were working 14 hours and more a day.<sup>25</sup> Other workers in other sectors were made to work continuously for more than five consecutive hours in violation of article 33 of the labour law of Kuwait : "a labourer may not be made to work for more than five consecutive hours without at least one hour rest-break following such five hours".<sup>26</sup> Workmen in a small workshop reported their cases as follows:

"we are working daily from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. Sometimes we may be allowed to have a rest break for half an hour to have our lunch, but mostly we work continuously without a restbreak especially on busy days."<sup>27</sup>

More evidence, obtained from an official study carried out by the council of Ministers, shows that 76.2% of the Shuwaikh's port workers in the cargo section, have no break during the period of the two shifts. These workers had been made to work continuously from 6.00 a.m. in the morning until 12.30 p.m. and then from 3.30 p.m. until 7.30 p.m.<sup>28</sup>

Although article 35 of the labour law grants every labourer one full days holiday per week without pay, only a very small number of the workers in small companies, restaurants, workshops and so forth in fact enjoy such a privilege; they do not even have feast vacations. For example, the study carried out on Shuwaikh's port workers found that 79.6% of them

had not enjoyed one full day for weekly rest.<sup>29</sup> A baker in one of the traditional Arabic bakeries stated:

"We ususally work for more than 10 hours a day. We have never had one full day for weekly rest. We heard about the feast vacation and the annual leave but we have never enjoyed such privileges.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, it has been noticed that none of the small, and only some of the large private enterprises permit an annual paid leave; if they do it will be without pay, again, in controvention of article 38 of the Kuwait Labour Law. Among the 233 workers included in the study, only 26.4% had had an annual leave, (with or without pay). Of these only 29.6% had been granted their annual leave with full pay, 17.9% with half pay and 52.5% without pay.<sup>31</sup> An Indian labourer, working in a Kuwaiti cleaning company described his case as follows:

"I have been working in this company for more than two years without any annual leave. I work 12 hours a day in return for a monthly salary of K.D. 40 (£80). Since I have been employed I have had no annual vacations despite the fact that it was mentioned in my work contract.<sup>32</sup>"

Other immigrant workers are forced to work under any conditions with no regard for the individual's age and health. If they take sick leave the employer punishes them by subtracting the days of the leave from their salary in violation of the rights set forth in Article 37 of the Kuwait Labour Law:

"I am 50 years old, working in a construction company and living in a room shared by another four workers, rented for K.D. 25 (£50). Once when I was working I was injured and taken to hospital, when I stayed for 20 days. The employer refused to compensate me or to pay my wages during my sick leave."<sup>33</sup>

More evidence has come from the aforementioned official study on Shuwaikh port workers where it was found that 88.7% of the workers said that sick leave is usually subtracted from their salary. Those who said that they had been paid sick leave received wages in excess of K.D. 100 (E200).<sup>34</sup> Thus the amount of the labourers' wages determined the kind of rights they enjoyed at work.

#### C.5. Wages and Incentives

One of the prominent features that characterizes the system of employment in Kuwait, especially in the government and semi-private sector, is its duality. In other words the distinction between workers according to their nationality; Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. The wages of indigenous labourers are higher than the general wage level in the country because immigrants, especially the non-skilled and semi-skilled workers have wages below the average. The data in table 7.9 of 1974 and 7.10 of 1981 show that in all areas of economic activity Kuwaitis usually receive higher wages than non-Kuwaitis. It is notable that the disparity in wages in 1974 (see table 7.9) was extreme between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis labourers the average wage of Kuwaitis was four times higher than that of non-Kuwaitis; K.D. 200 in the case of Kuwaitis as against K.D. 50 in the case of non-Kuwaitis. The situation changed considerably in the eighties when the disparity extended to income differential between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in clerical and professional groups (K.D. 517 for Kuwaitis against K.D. 297 for non-Kuwaitis). The differences between the two groups vary from one economic sector to another. Income differentials stand at their highest levels in the case of agricultural workers where average Kuwaiti income exceeds that of non-Kuwaitis by 84.4%, by 73.0% in mining and quarrying, by 70.5% in



construction, by 69.8% in manufacturing, by 66.9% in trading, by 56% in transportation, by 44% in services and 39.3% in insurance. A comparison between tables 7.9 and 7.10 reveals that while the gap in the average monthly salaries of the two groups has narrowed in most economic activities, especially in the insurance and service sectors, it has widened in agriculture and quarrying.

Available data show that the average monthly wages for both groups has changed considerably since 1976, but there are still the inequalities which characterize the Kuwaiti salary system. The average total monthly salary of Kuwaitis was K.D. 204 (E403) and of non-Kuwaitis K.D. 123. The average total monthly salary for the two groups by occupational categories was K.D. 248 against K.D. 195 for professional and technical occupations; K.D. 556 against K.D. 503 for managers; K.D. 198 against K.D. 158 for clerical occupations; K.D. 253 as against K.D. 200 for sales workers, K.D. 162 as against K.D. 80 for service workers, K.D. 191 against K.D. 69 for agricultural workers, and K.D. 209 against K.D. 106 for production and related workers.<sup>34a</sup> This confirms once more that the gap between the two groups is much wider for immigrant semi- and non-skilled workers than for managers and highly skilled workers.

In April 1979 the Kuwaiti government responded to criticism and announced a new scale of salaries in the government sector. In this scale there are no differences in the basic salary of the two groups, but a distinction is maintained by means of the social allowance. For example, the scale denies the single immigrants any social allowance, while it virtually treats the single Kuwaiti on the same footing as the married non-Kuwaitis, particularly for the professional and technical grades. A married Kuwaiti of the same grade receives 34.3% more than

Table 7.11

Monthly salaries and social allowances by Grades and Nationality

Occupational categories	Monthly salary		The annual allowance		The minimum stay in the grade	The social allowance		
	Basic salary (1)	End with	its value	its No.		Kuwait		Non-Kuwait
						Single (2)	Married (3)	Married
Category of leading occupations								
Excellent grade		790					200	
Under secretary of minister	700	780	16				200	
Assistant of under secretary of minister	600	690	16				200	
Category of public occupations								
Grade "A"	520	560	12	Five allowances	Two years	110	190	125
Grade "B"	460	520	12			110	190	125
First Grade	410	460	10			105	180	120
Second Grade	360	410	10			105	180	120
Third Grade	310	360	10			100	170	115
Fourth Grade	260	310	10			100	170	115
Fifth Grade	200	240	8			95	160	110
Sixth Grade	165	200	7			95	160	110
Seventh Grade	135	165	6			90	150	105
Eighth Grade	110	135	5	90	150	105		
Category of semi-skilled occupations								
First Grade	225	295	7	Ten allowances	-	105	180	100
Second Grade	265	225	5	Ten allowances	Five years	100	170	95
Third Grade	140	165	5	Five allowances		95	160	90
Fourth Grade	120	140	14		95	160	90	
Fifth Grade	85	120	3		90	150	85	
Sixth Grade	70	105	3		90	150	85	
Category of services occupations								
First Grade	160	210	5	Ten allowances	-	100	170	95
Second Grade	120	160	4	Ten allowances	Five years	95	160	90
Third Grade	90	120	3			90	150	85

Source: Kuwait al-Yaum: (Kuwait Gazette) Kuwait No. 1241, 19th April, 1979 P.21

- (1) Added 20 dinars to the basic amount of each grade.
- (2) Added 45 dinars to each grade.
- (3) Added 60 dinars to each grade.

his non-Kuwaiti counterpart (K.D. 190 to K.D. 125 in grade A) (See table 7.11). The semi and unskilled non-Kuwaitis received approximately 55.5% of what his Kuwaiti counterpart received.\* In time of internal political problems the Kuwaiti government usually increases Kuwaiti employees wages to distract public opinion from the main issues, if not to win their support.<sup>35</sup> The increased average wages of the clericals and professional, especially in the last eight years, accounts for two developments: the declining number of Kuwaitis working in lower paid jobs, and the manipulation of civil servants, as already described.

It has frequently been argued that the expansion of the Kuwaiti administration and the constant increases in the wages of Kuwaiti civil servants are only ways of diffusing the national wealth.<sup>36</sup> In fact, as we have argued elsewhere in this study, the wages discrimination, and the expansion of the government bureaucracy are essentially intended:

- 1) to consolidate the loyalty of the Kuwaiti people to their government,
- 2) to create divisions within the country's working class, and
- 3) to meet the needs of the merchant fraction of the ruling class.

Since the enlargement of the administration means importing more labour and the constant increase of wages means a rise in popular purchasing power,\*\* these measures assist in making Kuwait one of the largest markets for capitalist commodities. Geoffrey Kay argues:

"If workers did not spend their wages on commodities many firms in the economy would be unable to sell their output and realize the value and surplus value tied up in it. The survival of capitalism as a system of social production depends as much upon this, as upon the continuous reproduction of the working class."<sup>37</sup>

\* Army and police salaries are not treated here.

\*\* For more details on this issue see Chapter III.

The government's discriminatory policy in the field of wages and jobs benefits resulted in wide frustration and dissatisfaction among non-Kuwaitis. A large proportion of the non-Kuwaiti sample said that their salaries and job benefits were not commensurate with their efforts and qualifications; 36.4% found their pay adequate and only 14.5% said they did not know (see table 7.11 A). Job benefits were described by a majority of the Kuwaiti sample (54.4%) as inadequate, 42.7% of the non-Kuwaiti sample described them as adequate (see table 7.12). Such surprising results may be attributable to the fact that the government and the joint sectors usually prefer non-Kuwaitis, who work a great deal of over-time thus receiving considerable additional funds.

#### C.5.1. The Wages System in Small Private Enterprises

Wages in small private enterprises and in the domestic services, such as the workshops, restaurants and small companies, are complex and uncontrolled. The failure of Kuwaiti labour laws to declare a minimum wage level is reflected in wide exploitation of immigrant labour and in dismally low wages.<sup>38</sup> The average wages in this sector are as low as K.D. 25 to K.D. 40 per month for South Asian maids and private drivers, and only reach a maximum of K.D. 60 or 70 for construction, cleaning and workshop workers.<sup>39</sup> Wages in this sector are incredibly low in comparison with other sub-sectors within the private and the government and joint sectors. Many workers have had no wage increase whatsoever:

"I came to this country ten years ago, when I was 26 years old. At that time my salary was K.D. 25 per month. More than three years ago I moved to my new job in this restaurant. Since I moved, my salary has not increased. It is only K.D. 50. It hardly covers the cost of living."<sup>40</sup>

Other immigrant workers were brought to work as technicians in return for a reasonable salary, but once they moved into Kuwait, they found themselves in different jobs with low salaries. An Egyptian worker described his case as follows:

"I am a technician. When I first met my employer, he told me that I would receive K.D. 90 per month, and I would work as a technician. But once I arrived I found myself in a different situation. I was forced to work in a local coffee bar in return for K.D. 50 per month."<sup>41</sup>

D. Jobs: The Long Term Insecurity.

One of the recent official reports has explained the relations between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis as "a relation that is based upon mutual interests: the indigenous population depend upon the immigrants to supply the bulk of the labour force and needed technical and professional skills. On the other hand the immigrants depend on the Kuwaitis for their livelihood and wellbeing in Kuwait!"<sup>42</sup> Although this may explain the economic necessity of the immigrant to the Kuwaiti economy, it exaggerates their welfare status. Economically, immigrants are indispensable in different sectors of the Kuwait economy but they have very little security. They may be fired from work or deported at any time:

"In spite of their importance for the development process /immigrants/ like the Helots in classical Greece, are expected to stay within the boundaries of their assigned stations. Deprived of their civil rights, they are constantly threatened with deportation if they participate in any political movements (or ask for equal rights similar to those of the indigenous populations)."<sup>43</sup>

In other words, while the Kuwaitis have the rights of full members of society, immigrants are only members of the labour force with no rights but to work when needed. In many cases we came across, immigrants who had worked in Kuwait for 20 years or so, and when the time of the retirement came they have been asked to leave the country. Mohamed Abdul Aziz is one of these. He worked in the Ministry of Public Works for 27 years, lived in Kuwait for 30 years, but when the time of his retirement came the Ministry asked him to leave the country within 12 days.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, immigrant workers can be fired from their work at any time, without being given any reasons for such action.

In May 1983, the Ministry of Education decided to dismiss 422 of its immigrant teachers from their jobs without advance notice and giving no explanation for its action.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, while the skilled and professional employees in the private sector usually have a signed labour contract, many of the semi and non-skilled workers and all illegal immigrants commence and terminate their work without ever knowing about the labour contract. For the employer these workers can be recruited and dismissed at any time, and would not know about their service terminal indemnity. For example, it has been found that 93.9% of Shuwaikh port workers are not entitled to service terminal indemnity.<sup>46</sup>

Many of the medium and small private enterprises recruit a majority of their semi and non-skilled workers from illegal immigrants who receive low wages and can be dismissed at any time with their employers bearing no legal responsibility towards them.

0.1. Job Satisfaction:

The purpose of this section is to examine to what extent the uncertain position of immigrants has affected their job satisfaction. It is important, however, to emphasise that the results obtained in our survey must be taken with great caution, since they apply only to the skilled and professional workers in the government and joint sectors. However, the following discussion may suggest some general conclusions with regards to this matter. For example, when both groups, Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, were asked if they were satisfied with their jobs, a majority of the Kuwaitis (59%) and non-Kuwaitis (78.1%) said "Yes satisfied". A significant proportion of Kuwaitis (20.4%) and only (8.3%) of non-Kuwaitis said they "are extremely satisfied"; a very small percentage of them said they are "not satisfied" (see table 7.13). Other expressions of job satisfaction were made when the respondents expressed their job appraisal. The majority of the two groups described it as "quite important" and "absolutely essential" and a very small proportion of them found it "not really important" (See table 7.14). In addition the best indication of respondents' views with regard to their jobs was expressed when the majority of both groups (52.2% of the Kuwaitis and 59.3% of the non-Kuwaitis) said that "it is interesting most of the time and dull sometimes", and only a small proportion took the other extreme (See table 7.15).

An examination of the job related problems and the intention to change the place of work, reveals that a majority of Kuwaitis (68.2%) and non-Kuwaitis (73.9%) indicated they face no job related problems (See table 7.16). The high percentage of non-Kuwaitis could be attributed, partially, to their awareness of job duties and rights, and to the fact that immigrants, especially the skilled and the highly skilled, tend to search for jobs

Table 7.6 Hold a supervisory position by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Hold a supervisory job	43.1	37.5
Do not hold a supervisory job	56.9	62.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.11A The salary satisfaction according to the nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti
Adequate	45.5	36.6
Inadequate	45.5	48.9
Do not know	9.0	14.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.12 The incentives wages satisfaction according to nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non Kuwaiti %
Adequate	54.5	42.7
Inadequate	31.8	48.9
Do not know	13.6	8.2

Table 7.13 Job satisfaction according to the nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Extreme satisfaction	20.4	8.3
Satisfactory	59.0	78.1
Unsatisfactory	11.3	3.3
Unsatisfactory at all	4.5	3.1



which are relevant to their training and education. For those who have a job related problem, the largest proportion of the two groups attributed it to the nature of the work, and the social atmosphere of work. A very significant proportion of immigrants (28%) attributed it to other causes which in the case of non-Kuwaitis are specified as the lack of promotion and the threat of replacement by Kuwaitis (see table 7.17). The examination of the respondents' intention to change their job also indicates that a majority of both groups 65.9% for Kuwaitis and 58.3% for non-Kuwaitis have no intention to change their jobs (Table 7.18). For non-Kuwaitis reasons for change their place of work are more or less related to their search for better living standards or more security (See table 7.19). In fact a study of the inter-sector mobility reveals that labour usually moves from the least attractive jobs, in terms of wages, working conditions and uncertainty, to sectors with high salaries, incentives and better working conditions. Moudi Houmoud in her study of the Kuwaiti Social Insurance found that non-Kuwaiti labourers unlike Kuwaitis, are more likely to move from the government sector and small enterprises to the oil companies, large private enterprises and the joint sector.<sup>47</sup>

#### E. Working Conditions in Personal and Domestic Services

Despite its low profile in the non-oil G.D.P., the personal and household sector, since the early 1970s, is becoming one of the most sizeable employers of labour not only in Kuwait but in most of the Arab Gulf countries. It is interesting to note that the increase in numbers of household servants, especially after 1973, came as a result of an increase in individual incomes, which enabled many families to afford servants.\*

\* In the past servants were only employed by notable families, who bought these servants as slaves from the local markets, usually brought to Kuwait from Oman and Africa.

Table 7.14 Job appraisalment by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Absolute must	43.1	44.7
Quite important	45.4	48.9
Not really important	4.5	5.2
Do not know	6.8	-

Table 7.15 Respondents asked to describe their job feeling according to nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Interesting most of the time	18.1	21.8
Interesting most of the time, dull some time	52.2	50.3
Interesting sometimes and dull sometimes	15.9	18.7
Always dull	9.0	-

Table 7.16 Job related problems by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Face job related problems	31.8	26.1
Face no job related problems	68.2	73.9

Table 7.17 Reasons of job related problems according to nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Nature of work	42.8	36.0
Work mates	28.5	16.0
Social atmosphere at work	14.2	20.0
Other reasons	14.2	28.0

There is no doubt that the wide use of domestic servants not only among the indigenous population but also among immigrant groups is a consequence of the deep effects of consumption patterns on these societies. A report carried out by the World Bank on the economy of Kuwait claimed that the number of workers employed in 1980 in the "personal and household services" area numbered 56,170 or 12% of non-oil employment.<sup>48</sup> However, the population statistics of 1980 show that there are only 39,632\* workers employed as household servants or 8.1% of the total Kuwait labour force and 10.4% of non-Kuwaitis labour force. Of these 20,760 or 52.3% are females.<sup>49</sup> In some cases, especially among the high-income Kuwaiti families, the number of servants is in excess of that of the family members. This indicates a) the growing size of this sector, and b) the extent to which these families have handed over their basic functions to the servants. Having said that, it is also difficult to see how such services could be taken over by the indigenous labour force.

Thus the permanent dependency pattern on immigrants has been established. The World Bank warned as follows:

"It appears therefore necessary to exercise some pressure towards a change in the life-style in favour of greater self reliance."<sup>50</sup>

The population censuses of 1975 and 1980 give no detailed information on the nationalities of household servants, but the majority of them came from India, Sri Lanka plus a few Egyptians and Far Easterns.\*\* The average monthly wages for Far Easterns is slightly higher than South Asians which amounted to K.D. 100-120 compared to K.D. 25-50. However,

\* This figure is lower than the World Bank figure, but I would suggest that the latter is closer to the real figures.

\*\* India, due to the inhuman treatment of maids working in the Gulf, stopped Kuwait recruiting for domestics.

A "WANTED" LIST OF IMMIGRANTS

Picture 7,1

Those who escaped from their employers, for one reason or another find the chains of the sponsorship system following them everywhere they go for as long as they are in Kuwait.

Below are examples from newspaper advertisements warning potential employers that these "people" have escaped from their previous employment. The advertisement asks for concerned citizens to provide information on their whereabouts.

■ **تخدير** ■




العامل / رمضان حسن عثمان ، حامل جواز سفر مصري رقم : ٣٧١١٠١ ، قد تظبه عن العمل منذ ١٩٨٣/٩/٨ م وعليه العودة لعمله خلال ثلاثة أيام والا سنحظر لفصله وانهاء التعاقد معه دون تحمل أية مسؤولية ، علماً بأن المذكور تحت كفالتنا ومن ينسب عليه أريعمل عنده يتحمل المسؤوليات القانونية .

■ **تخدير** ■



حاكم علي ترك العمل دون اذن مسبق علماً أنه لايزال تحت كفالتنا . لذا نحذر من استخدامه أو التستر عليه . يرجى ممن يعرف عنه شيئاً الاتصال تلفون : ٨٣١١٩١ / ٨١٨٥٦٩ .

**تحذير**



تركت الخادمة دبل يوفى برما (سيلاية الجنسية) تحمل جواز سفر رقم: ٣٦٩٤٠ منزل بمحرمها ولم تعد إليه وهي مازالت بكفالتنا لذا نخبر من التستر عليها أو استخدامها ويرجى من يعلم عنها شيئاً إبلاغ أقرب مخبر وتعمل المسؤولية لمن تعمل لديه.

**تحذير**



عبدالمفتاح بسطامي زيدان (مصري الجنسية) جواز سفر رقم: ٩٤٤٤٤٥. المذكور يعمل لدينا ونحت كفالتنا ترك العمل بدون إخطار. يرجى من يعلم عنه شيئاً الاتصال بهاتف: ٤١٨٨٩٢ أو ٤١٩٧٢١ ونحمل كل من يتستر عليه الاجراءات القانونية علماً بأنه قد تم الغاء اقامته لدينا ومازال جوازه لدينا.

**تحذير**



المدعو/ فتحي حسانين محمد «مصري الجنسية» يحمل جواز سفر رقم: ٢٤١٨٣٨ ترك العمل بدون اذن مسبق من الشركة وهو مازال تحت كفالتنا. يرجى من يعلم عنه شيئاً الاتصال تلفون: ٨٤٤٣٤١/٢ / ٨١٥٣٨٦ أو أقرب مخبر شرطة وكل من يتستر عليه يتحمل المسؤولية القانونية.



**تحذير**

ان كل من المدعو:

**محمد يونس** بالكتاني الجنسية

والمدعو **دون ويمالا سينا ونيانا** سيبافى الجنسية

قد تركا العمل لدى مؤسسة مصطفى كرم

وهما مازالا تحت كفالتنا، لذا تحذر المؤسسة

كل من يتستر عليهما ويغفلهما يتحمل المسؤولية

القانونية.

**الإدارة**

a director in one of the recruiting agencies estimated the average monthly wages of personal and household servants in the Gulf as follows:<sup>51</sup>

Maid	K.D. 30 (£60)
Driver	K.D. 40 (£80)
Cook	K.D. 40 (£80)
Messenger	K.D. 30 (£60)

The average wages in this employment sector varies from one nationality to another. Phillipinos in general receive higher salaries and are employed either by members of the ruling families or members of the merchant fraction of the ruling class. They enjoy better working conditions and facilities, such as better accommodation and an annual paid ticket home. Many of the South Asian servants moved into Kuwait with a promise of receiving salaries of not less than K.D. 70 per month but in fact neither the recruiting agency nor the employer fulfilled their promises completely.

"I came to Kuwait through one of the recruitment agencies in Bombay, to which I paid K.D. 350 (£700) to be transferred to Kuwait. They promised me a salary of not less than K.D. 70 per month. When I moved here I discovered that my salary is only K.D. 30."<sup>52</sup>

For these people, working conditions are arduous. There are no work rules or regulations, no limits to their working hours, they could be less than 10 hours a day, or they may be 16 to 18 hours a day. In most of the cases we came across, the servants are the last to go to bed and first to wake:

"My work starts from 5 in the morning, and it could last until midnight. The only break that I am allowed to have is when I go to bed at midnight, or when I have my meals. Although

I was hired to work as a driver, there is no choice but to do everything my master asks, driving, cooking, gardening ... etc."<sup>53</sup>

If he refuses to obey his master's orders, he is exposing himself to a punishment which may include a beating, or a salary cut or longer hours, or all of these. One employer reported:

"Although she works hard, cooking, washing, cleaning and so forth my wife beats her for every tiny mistake she makes."<sup>54</sup>

Having left their families and dependents behind, the amount of wages the maids and male servants receive bring very little improvement to their standards of living in the country of employment. Frustration and dissatisfaction among the labour of this sector is reflected in the number of workers who run away, and seek employment elsewhere. A recent study commented on the conditions of the Indian servants as follows:

"Indian household servants in Kuwait are the weakest of all the non-Kuwaiti groups subjected to severe discrimination. They are defenceless in the face of exploitation. In such a primitive system, the exploitations take a primitive form, a form of slavery."<sup>55</sup>

#### F. Labour Productivity

Despite the moderate propensity of job satisfaction indicated by the respondents (as was shown in the last section) most of the studies that have been carried out in this respect<sup>56</sup> found that the productivity of labour is low and this is regarded as one of the major problems facing development in Kuwait. The lower level of productivity of labour is entirely a manifestation of Kuwait's total reliance on one depletable economic resource (oil). A recent study conducted by the Ministry of

Planning in 1978 and the World Bank in 1980 suggest that the complete direction of the Kuwaiti economy towards the outside and its dependence upon oil is manifested in the retardation of other non-oil productive sectors.<sup>57</sup> In fact, the highly advanced technology that is used in this sector in addition to the price and production level of oil, are dependent on the political economy of the wider world and in consequence the whole Kuwaiti economy is very sensitive to changes in the world economic climate. In other words, given the fact that oil is the leading sector in terms of its contribution to the country's G.D.P. and its production and prices are largely determined by changes in the global economy. So any changes in factors which determine the oil price and production, would consequently affect the country's national income. For example, the rate of growth in the productivity of the national economy decreased by 10% during the period 1965-66 to 1973-74, with a considerable decrease of 27% in the period from 1972-73 to 1973-74. Consequently the growth rate of sectional productivity declined from 112% to 24% in 1972-73 and 1973-74 respectively.<sup>58</sup> Further explanations can be derived from table 3.1\* where the share of Mining and Quarrying fluctuated from 56.5% in 1968-69 to 77.1% in 1974-75 and again down to 62% in 1981-82 (See table 3.1 chapter III). Such changes are due to the fluctuation of oil prices and production on the international level. On the other hand, such a decrease has assisted in the percentage increase of other activities in the G.D.P. For example, although the share of manufacturing has not shown any significant changes throughout the years of 1968-1969 to 1975-76, for the last five years or so it witnessed some increases, and its absolute number demonstrates a considerable increase in that it rose

\* For a more detailed discussion on this subject see Chapter III



from K.D. 65.4 million to K.D. 372.8 million in 1972 and 1981 respectively.<sup>59</sup> The same could be applied to other economic sectors such as trading, services and finances.

Turning to the labour productivity the available data show that during the years 1965-1980 the productivity of labour was 10% per annum in the non-oil sectors.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the available data indicates that in general the average productivity of each employed worker is low; it declined from 100% in 1965 to 93.0% in 1975.<sup>61</sup> However table 7.20 shows that while some economic sectors such as services, agriculture and construction have experienced low average productivity per worker, especially 1970 to 1975, other sectors like manufacturing, electricity and financing witnessed considerable increases in the average productivity per worker during 1970 to 1975. In the years 1975-80 it was reported that there was hardly any improvement in the average productivity per worker in the non-oil economy. For the longer period 1970-80 average annual improvement in productivity was a meagre 0.5%.<sup>61</sup> It is clear that the high reliance of the Kuwaiti economy upon oil, and the continuation of the recent government policy in the field of employment and other economic fields would eliminate any hopes of increasing the productivity of the country's economy.

"In the absence of basic change in a number of policies including the public employment policy the reorganisation of the system of public administration, the rate of improvement in average productivity in the non-oil sectors is expected to remain low."<sup>62</sup>

The problem of the country's economic productivity is not attributed to the economic factors alone. The social factors such as the attitudes and ethics of work, the political function of government employment, and

Table 7.18 Respondent's intention to change their jobs by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	34.0	47.6
No	65.9	58.3

Table 7.19 Reasons of respondents' intention to change their jobs

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
For better grade	22.2	20.8
Job irrelevant to qualifications	16.6	12.5
For better salary	5.5	29.1
For better work atmosphere	16.6	6.2
To get more experience	16.6	16.5
Not satisfied with job	22.2	16.5

Table 7.20 Alteration in labour productivity by economic sectors 1965-75

Sector	The village of individual productivity at fixed prices (K.D.)			(1965 = 100) The index number of change	
	1965	1970	1975	1972	1975
Agriculture & Fishing	1265	1010	759	79.8	60.0
Mining & quarrying	101630	128838	101893	126.8	100.2
Manufacturing	1704	2071	4569	121.5	268.1
Construction	1262	1036	639	82.1	50.6
Electricity & gas	2775	5530	7248	199.3	261.2
Wholesale, retail trade, restaurants & hotels	3107	2845	3274	91.5	105.4
Transport, storage & communications	2544	3065	3691	120.5	145.1
Finance, insurance	6405	5228	15821	81.6	247.2
Community, social & personal services	1668	1573	1195	94.3	71.6
Total	5845	5837	3914	86.7	67.9

Source: Ministry of Planning, The Measurement and Analysis of Productivity of the Kuwait Economy, Kuwait unpublished study, 1978, p.26 (In Arabic)

the differentiation between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in terms of wages and professional promotion also have had a great effect on labour productivity. In this respect the major causes of low productivity of labour can be listed as: first, the role and status of work in an environment of wealth.<sup>63</sup> (The fact that no material or other incentives are able to make people work hard in a society of abundance.) Second, the incongruity between the persons work and his pay. In other words, due to the gap between the wage on the one hand and work performance on the other real damage appears to have been done to the concept of productivity. The Stanford team commented on the 1971-1972 compensation as follows:

"The compensation increases of 1971-72\* effectively broke the linkage between pay and performance by being applied in such a manner that all employees in a class quite unrelated to personal performance, citizenship, received its benefits. There could therefore be no expectation that the increase would automatically lead to either an individual or an across-the-board rise in individual performance.<sup>64</sup>

A recent study by the World Bank observed the effects of wage differentiation on the level of productivity.

"Wages were often paid more as a right of citizenship than in return for participation services. From the first, nationals were not required to compete in the modern labour market on realistic terms. They effectively gained a "rent" from being nationals of the (country) and their wages and salaries were quite divorced from marginal productivity.<sup>65</sup>

In addition it has been noticed that the continuous increase of compensation for Kuwaiti employees, especially in the official administration, has enlarged the magnitude and the difficulty of the task of

\*And other compensations which have taken place ever since and which mainly went to Kuwaitis.

re-establishing a criterion of personal productivity and performance in the government administration. In fact it is to the detriment of other corrective actions that have been and still might be taken.<sup>66</sup>

Third, the concept of work seems to be unclear, especially to Kuwaitis. In a study carried out on a sample of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in an effort to evaluate the importance of work, the respondents were asked to evaluate the position of their work in relation to other things like, friends, family, and leisure activities. The results indicated the different rating between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis. Of the non-Kuwaiti respondents (32.4%) placed their work first in importance, compared to (24.4%) of the Kuwaiti respondents.<sup>67</sup> Further exploration of these differences between the two groups were clarified when the respondents were asked why they worked. The ideal expression of the true work ethic is contained in the first optional response which was that "everyone who is able should work". In this category the Kuwaitis in the government sector averaged the same number as the rest of the nationality. However, the most interesting indicator was drawn from the private sector where Kuwaitis who subscribed to this ethic outnumbered other nationalities, excepting Egyptians and Indians (See table 7.2). This of course is due to the fact that the private sector is more strict in its implementation of its rules and regulations for work. Therefore, the government of Kuwait, for the last fifteen years or so, has invested jointly with the private sector to allow new establishments to have their own rules and regulations of work outside official bureaucratic controls.

Finally, this could also be ascribed to the large presence of non-indigenous labour in the private sector, who, due to their previous work experience in their own countries have a high tendency to adhere to the work ethic. For example, the two groups with a high tendency to

**OPINIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA - I. WORK BEHAVIOR  
BY NATIONALITY AND SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT**

	Kuwait	Jordanian and Palestinian	Iraqi	Egyptian	Syrian	Lebanese	Indian	Saudi Yemeni Other Arab	Other	Unproven Kuwaiti	Percent of Total Respondents
<b>DOMESTIC SECTOR - EMPLOYER</b>											
Percent "everyone should"	10.7%	13.9%	7.1%	30.3%	3.0%	21.1%	33.3%	0.0%	15.4%	7.0%	11.8%
Percent "I enjoy work"	6.6	5.3	0.0	13.6	3.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	7.7	2.3	5.8
Percent "I want good things"	31.3	11.7	14.3	22.7	3.0	5.3	5.3	10.0	0.0	14.0	13.5
Percent "I want necessities"	69.9	68.9	78.6	33.3	84.8	73.7	58.3	86	76.9	72.1	69.7
Percent "I want others to think well of me"	1.5	0.7	0.0	0.0	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	4.7
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Percent nationality is of all respondents</b>	42.4	19.1	1.8	8.3	4.2	2.4	1.5	0.3	1.6	5.4	100.0
<b>DOMESTIC SECTOR - EMPLOYEE</b>											
Percent "everyone should"	18.2%	6.5%	3.8%	20.7%	4.3%	0.0%	14.8%	2.8%	4.8%	0.0%	6.7%
Percent "I enjoy work"	3.0	5.7	0.0	6.9	2.2	3.4	7.4	5.6	19.0	4.0	4.7
Percent "I want good things"	24.2	14.6	31.5	33.8	21.7	20.7	14.8	25.0	14.3	22.0	16.7
Percent "I want necessities"	51.5	70.7	82.7	58.6	71.7	75.9	63.0	63.9	61.9	84.0	70.0
Percent "I want others to think well of me"	3.0	2.4	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.8	0.0	0.0	2.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Percent nationality is of all respondents</b>	7.3	27.3	11.6	6.4	10.2	6.4	6.0	8.0	4.7	5.6	100.0

Note: Percents may not add due to rounding

Source: Steinfeld Research Institute Attitude Survey, op. cit., p. v. 34

believe in the work ethic in the government sector were Indians and Egyptians (33.3% and 30.3% respectively) (See table 7.21). Of those who work because they seek only to purchase the necessities of life, that is, those who view their work primarily as a source of income, the percentages of the general sample are similar in both the government and private sectors. A comparison between the respondents according to their nationalities reveals the differences in their views; 69.9% of the Kuwaitis working in the government sector, worked primarily for necessities, but only 51.5% in the private sectors worked for the same reason. Similarly, with other nationalities, especially amongst those who were working in the private sector, working for basic essentials reached its highest level among Saudis 86%, Iraqis 85.6% and Syrians 84.8%. For the private sector the "unproven" Kuwaitis and Iranians obtained the highest proportion, 84% and 82.7% respectively (See table 7.21).

In general these results demonstrate a very important fact, that the oil wealth and the way it is used, not in Kuwait alone but in most of the Gulf countries, has not only affected the attitudes of indigenous labour towards work, but it has affected immigrant labour attitudes as well. Which means in the final analysis, that the use of oil wealth has not only affected the sub-regional level of the oil producing countries, but it has had an impact on the functioning of the economies of the labour exporting countries like Egypt, Yemen, Jordan and others.<sup>68</sup>

And fourth, the 'mis-matching' between the structure of work organisation and the personal performance of the work. Four kinds of 'mis-matching' of work organisation in the government sector in Kuwait have been observed:

The mis-matching between the number of employees in the section and the amount of work which exists for them; employee's qualifications and those required for the job; compensation and work performance;<sup>69</sup> and finally it has been found that a significant number, particularly Kuwaitis have business and other work concerns which distract their attention and efforts.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, it is important to emphasize here that government employment was used as a means of buying the loyalty of the Kuwaitis and to keep them quiet.\*

Similarly, the labour productivity of the non-Kuwaiti is also low. Several reasons were given for this, such as the lack of loyalty to the political system, their uncertain positions aggravated frustration caused by the inequality which has been introduced into job conditions, the social atmosphere related to poor recreational facilities, and the limited range of social services offered to non-Kuwaitis. The Stanford team summed up the situation of non-Kuwaitis by saying:

"Non-Kuwaiti reaction is likely to be aimed at his job rather than the concept of work: contact with Kuwaiti colleagues is a constant reminder of the inequalities that have been introduced into job conditions. In the case of the Kuwaiti by way of contrast, it is probably the concept of work that has suffered most".<sup>71</sup>

\* For more details on this subject see Chapter III

### Conclusion

The problems of immigrant labour in Kuwait's labour market do not end here, and cannot be solved by a set of recommendations, or even by producing more just legislation, in terms of work, residence, etc. Indeed many of these, as the official interpretations tend to suggest, are solely securing the minimum rights of immigrant labour. It is also important to emphasise that these problems are not limited to immigrant labourers only, although they are the most exploited group; Kuwaitis in their turn are facing the same problems but to a lesser degree. These problems are not accidental; they are inherent in the social structure of Kuwaiti society. In other words, once underdeveloped countries like Kuwait become an integrated part of the world capitalist economy, the inherent elements of the capitalist system are present in its social structure, but in a very crude and distorted manner. This is highlighted when we consider the universal rights of labour to organise itself in the form of the trade union.



NOTES

1. From Ray C. Rist, Migration and Marginality, Guest workers in Germany and France, Daedalus, Vol. 108, No. 2, Spring, 1979, p.95.
2. Arab Planning Institute, Information and Foreign Labour in the Gulf, Ibid., p.107-2.2.
3. Ministry of Planning, Study of Housing of Singles, op.cit., p.2.
4. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.312.
5. Arab Planning Institute, Ibid., p.107-2.2.
6. The Sunday Times, London, June 9, 1983, p.20.
7. In Kuwait where the setting up of such establishments is prohibited by law; nonetheless, it has been heard that small recruitment agencies were established unofficially, in cooperation with some Kuwaiti government officials and some influential people. The operations of these agencies were known to the officials but "no action was taken due to the need of the domestic labour market", as a highly placed government official stated.
8. The Middle East Magazine, London, No. 100, February, 1983, pp. 31-32.
9. The Sunday Times, Ibid., p.20.
10. A. al-Mousa and K. McLachlan, Wage Patterns among the Foreign Labour Force in Kuwait, Arab Gulf Journal, Vol. 12, No. 2, October 1982, p.64.
11. It has been reported that in 1965 and 1966 alone Kuwait police arrested 4513 and 6640 illegal immigrants from Iran. See al-Risalih, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, February 21, 1968, p.20.
12. Many of these were found dead, either drowned, or shot by police accidentally, or they have been shipped in metal boxes during the very hot summer of Kuwait.
13. Ibid.

14. al-<sup>Ḥ</sup>Amīl, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, September 9, 1975, p.21.
15. An interview carried out by the Author with an officer in the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait, December, 1981.
16. See for example, A. Ersan Yücel, Turkish Migrant Workers in the Federal Republic of Germany, Durham, University of Durham, unpublished Ph.D. 1982, pp.139-150.
17. Arab Planning Institute, *Ibid.*, p.21.
18. It has been noticed that there is a tendency among certain immigrant groups to be concentrated in certain administrative sectors, for example, while the Egyptians are heavily present in the Planning, Education and Public Health Ministries, the Palestinians in their turn, are concentrated in the Ministry of Information and the Oil Companies. Similarly such concentration also exists among Kuwaitis according to their sect, for example, while Shi<sup>ʿ</sup> are only concentrated in the Ministry of Information, the Oil Companies and in the Army before the Iranian Revolution, the Sunnis are diffused among the rest of the Ministries.
19. Diwan al-Muwazzafin Qanūn al-Khidmah al-Madaniyah wa Nizam al-Khidmah al-Madaniyah, (Law of Civil Service and the System of Civil Service), Kuwait, Government Printing Press, 1979, p.25.
20. See for example the discussion on the employment of the Kuwaiti graduates in the Kuwait Gazette, Supplement No. 35, 18 January, 1972, pp.13-50.
21. B. al-Najjar, *op.cit.*, p.21.
22. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Qanūn al-<sup>Ḥ</sup>Amal fi al-Qitā<sup>Ḥ</sup> al-Khaṣ, (Private Sector Labour Law No. 38.1964), Kuwait, Government Printing Press, undated, p.10.
23. For example, it has been noticed that the workers of the Cargo Section of Kuwait Airways Company are working 11 hours a day but they are paid for only 8 hours a day.  
al-<sup>Ḥ</sup>Amīl, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, August 1, 1975, p.21.
24. Arab Planning Institute, *op.cit.*, p.94-2.

25. Abd al-Aziz A., Abd al-Aziz and Rafiq M. Mubarak, al-Khadamat al-Umamiyah li al-Amilin fi Majal al-Tafriq wa al-Sha' bi Mina' al-Shuwaik (The labour services for workers in the cargo section in Shuwaikh Port), Kuwait, Directorate of Social and Criminal Research, unpublished study, March, 1982, p.17.
26. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ibid., p.11.
27. al-Amil, a weekly magazine, August 15, 1975, p.23.
28. A.A. Abdul Aziz and Rafiq M. Mubarak, Ibid., p.18.
29. Ibid., p.19.
30. al-Tali'ah, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, December 23, 1972, p.13.
31. A.A. Abdul Aziz and Rafiq M. Mubarak, Ibid., p.72.
32. From an interview carried out by the author, Kuwait, November 1981.
33. Saut al-Khalij, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, No. 706, May 27, 1976.
34. A.A. Abdul Aziz, Ibid., p.20.
- 34A. Ministry of Planning, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1950, op.cit., pp.150-162.
35. Immediately after the dissolution of the national assembly in August 1976 the Kuwait government increased the salaries of its Kuwait employees in order to win their support for its actions.
36. See for example: 1. Amin Azz al-Din et al., Ahwal al-Amal wa al-Umil fi Buldan al-Khalij al-Araby, (Condition of Labour and Labourers in the countries of the Arab Gulf), Baghdad, Arab Labour Organisation, 1977. 2. Shamlan Al-Essa, Problems of Manpower in Kuwait, op.cit.
37. Geoffrey Kay, The Economic Theory of the Working Class, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979, p.87.
38. The minimum wage level was declared only in Article 11 of Kuwait Labour Law of the government sector No. 18 in 1960. It determined the minimum amount of wages at RS. 9 (£1) a day. See, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Mujaz Li Tatawir Tashri at al-Umal, (Summary of Development of Labour Legislations), Kuwait, Directorate of Labour Relation, 1967, p.23.

39. Arab Planning Institute, op.cit., p.27.
40. al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Amil, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, November 1, 1975, p.22.
41. Ibid., p.35.
42. Stanford Research Institute, op.cit., pp.v.18-v.19.
43. Ibrahim Ibrahim, The Impact of Arab Expatriates on Social and Political Development in the Gulf States, in Zahlan, A.S. (ed), The Arab Brain Drain, op.cit., p.76.
44. al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Amil, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, No. 123, August 1, 1981, p.18.
45. al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Alī<sup>ʿ</sup>ah, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, No. 796, June 8, 1993, p.17.
46. <sup>ʿ</sup>Abd al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Aziz Abd al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Aziz, op.cit., p.23.
47. Moudi Al-Houmaid, An Analysis of the Social Insurance System in Kuwait, London, City of London University, unpublished PhD. 1979, p.279.
48. The World Bank, op.cit., p.55.
49. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Kuwait Population Census, 1981, Vol. 1, Part II, Kuwait, Government Printing Press, 1982, p.113.
50. Ibid., p.167.
51. Arab Planning Institute, Ibid., p.109-2.4.
52. al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Amil, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, No. 103, August 11, 1980, p.10.
53. Ibid., p.10.
54. Al-Ra<sup>ʿ</sup>y al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Aam, a daily newspaper, Kuwait, October 23, 1972, p.4.
55. Anti-Slavery Society for Protection of Human Rights, Report on the Indian House Servants Working Conditions in Kuwait, unpublished report London, January 1981, p.8. (Translated into Arabic by Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Kuwait).

56. There is a scarcity of data concerning the productivity of labour in Kuwait. The only available studies are those which were carried out on the productivity of the Kuwait economy and which indicate the problems, issues not only in Kuwait but in other Gulf countries.
57. See for example: 1. Ministry of Planning, The Measurement and Analysis of Productivity of Kuwait Economy, unpublished study, Kuwait, February 1978, (in Arabic). 2. The World Bank, op.cit.
58. Ministry of Planning, Ibid., p.31.
59. Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1982, op.cit., p.236.
60. The World Bank, Ibid., p.82.
- 60A. See reference 57.i p.27.
61. Ibid., p.82.
62. Ibid., p.82.
63. Stanford Research Institute, op.cit., p.v.29.
64. Ibid., p.v.30.
65. Ismail Serageldin et al., op.cit., pp.54.55.
66. Stanford Research Institute, Ibid., p.v.31.
67. Ibid., p.v.32.
68. For more details on this subject see, for example: 1. Adel Hussein, Oil Money as an Abstract to Arab Unity, al-Mustaqbal al-ʿArabi, No. 3, January, 1980, pp.16-30. 2. S. Ibrahim, The New Arab Social Order, op.cit., pp.141-143. 3. Ijaz Gillian et al., Pakistan Emigration to the Middle East: A Cost Benefit Analysis, op.cit.
69. Stanford Research Institute, Ibid., p.v.29.
70. Kamal Askar, al-Ṭaḍakhūm al-wadifi fi al-Qitāʿ al-Hukūmi, (Inflationary Employment in the Government Sector), unpublished study, Arab Planning Institute, Kuwait, 1977, p.6.

71. Stanford Research Institute, Ibid., p.v.31.

## Chapter VIII

### IMMIGRANTS AND TRADE UNIONS

What needs explaining is not why the hungry man steals or the exploited man strikes, but why most of the hungry do not steal and most of the exploited do not strike.

Wilhelm Reich<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In the previous chapters it was shown that despite the immigrants' wide diffusion over economic activities, their actual social status is subordinated by government practices and their position within the production process. Undoubtedly immigrants' class position does not depend only on their position within the production process and social relationships at the place of work; though these are the most important factors. Housing, education, culture, social integration at the community level, political relationships, and trade unions are all important factors shaping the class position and hence the class consciousness of immigrant labour in Kuwait.

Trade unions were initially set up as institutions of working people dedicated to militantly representing their interests, and in some cases led ultimately to the society's transformation to socialist structures, especially in the third world countries. In countries where immigrant labour is the major components of the country's labour force, and where their presence poses a potential political threat to the regime, unions were used indirectly by the regime to constantly exert a restraining influence upon the workers.



As mentioned earlier, political freedom is not only a problem for Kuwaitis, but it is in fact more of an issue in the case of non-Kuwaitis. Because the political parties are banned by laws, attention may be concentrated on the trade unions to obtain some indication of immigrants' political relationships. Thus the purpose of this chapter is to survey the development of the Kuwaiti labour movement and to examine the degree to which unions have been subdued by the underdeveloped capitalism of Kuwait, so that they have now become an instrument which perpetuates the division within the labour force of Kuwait.

#### A. The Development of Labour Movement in Kuwait

As discussed earlier, the exploitation of oil since the forties alongside with the influx of foreign labour have transformed Kuwait society from a traditional to an underdeveloped mode of production. Such a transformation was clearly manifested in the governments' attempts to regulate the labour market. In other words, the strike of Indian workers in August 1948, the establishment of the labour office in the fifties and the introduction of the labour law in 1964 are only a few indications of the development of class awareness by employees and employers:

The creation of labour law in the Gulf states signals that wage labour has become a significant component of their economies. The particular forms which labour law has taken in the various Gulf states mirrors both specific local conditions and the recent history of labour there, as well as indicating how particular states seek to deal with their labour forces.<sup>2</sup>

The conflict between the two classes has led the one which holds the power (the ruling class) to seek protection, but through a framework which involves on the one hand the governmental control over the labour movement and the protection of the interest of the employers, and on the other partially met some of the employees' demands for unionization. The early official admission of the rights of Kuwaiti workers was brought about in article 70 of the 1959 labour law.<sup>3</sup> However the first trade union did not develop until 1964 when a new revised version of the 1959 labour law was made by the Kuwaiti parliament in 1964. The government's suspension of the workers' right to set up their own trade unions was due: 1) to the regime's intention to wait until the whole country's legislative position came under its total control, and 2) the British fear that once Kuwaiti's unionized themselves, it would encourage the workers of the other Gulf Emirates, especially the Bahrainis, to raise again their demand to organise a trade union.<sup>4</sup> The Bahraini working class was militant, more organised and raised the demand for organizing into trade unions as far back as the 1930's.<sup>5</sup> Emile Nakhleh observes the following:

Labour is the one constant under-pinning of politics in modern Bahrain. Since the 1930's, when a labour class began to develop due to the discovery of oil, most political crises in the country have been centred on, rooted in and caused by Bahraini workers' determination to unionize.<sup>6</sup>

The first Kuwaiti trade union came into being immediately after the Kuwaiti parliament endorsed the labour law No. 35 of 1964 and there is no evidence of attempts by Kuwaiti workers to form trade unions before the political independence in 1961.<sup>7</sup> However, the recent study by Ahmed Al-Ajmi suggests that the first attempt by the Kuwaiti workers

to organize themselves was by the Kuwait Oil Company's workers in 1951, when a number of them set up a form of labour gathering called the "labour society".<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless an examination of this society revealed that it consisted of a very small number of Kuwaiti workers, not exceeding ten, who by any means could not affect the company or represent the majority of Kuwaiti labourers who numbered in 1960 over 3000. In addition the main purpose of this society was to secure the availability of food at a cheap rate at the place of work. Having no means provided by K.O.C. Kuwaiti workers in contrast to the non-Kuwaiti workers had to bring their own food.

A.1. Immigrant Labour and the Formation of the Trade Unions

The debate on the trade unions in the Kuwaiti parliament in May and June 1964 revealed that there were two groups with different views. On the one hand there was the government and tribal and conventional religious groups, and on the other hand there was the Arab Nationalist group. The former stood firm against the unionization of the non-Kuwaiti workers. This view was clearly expressed by Abdul Razaq Al-Mu'owd, a Kuwaiti Deputy, as follows:

If the trade unions are going to be for Kuwaitis only, I will be the first to support them. We do not want our trade union to be open to everybody from anywhere.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand the nationalist group was asserting that the non-Kuwaiti Arab workers should be treated on an equal footing to their Kuwaiti counterparts.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently a compromise solution was adopted by the council, as indicated in Article 72 of the 1964 labour law, where non-Kuwaitis are accepted but only after being in Kuwait for five years

and could only have membership as observers:

Non-Kuwaiti labourers may join a trade union but without having the right to vote or stand for election. However, they shall have the right to delegate one of them for their representation and to express their point of view before the Board of Trade Union. A non-Kuwaiti labourer is prohibited from joining a trade union unless he has been in Kuwait for five consecutive years, with effect from the date of this promulgation.<sup>11</sup>

Undoubtedly, this indicates the fear of the Kuwaiti government that if the immigrant workers were granted the same rights as the Kuwaitis, then the labour movement would turn into real political power. It should be noted that the majority of Kuwait's labourers were Palestinians; the most politicized migrant group. In addition, once immigrant workers were allowed to organize themselves, it would be natural for them to go on and demand rights which the regime would not be willing to give. For most of the tribal regimes in the Arab Gulf labour unions have been viewed as a negative force whose long-term goal was to dismantle those regimes, and therefore such a force has not been tolerated.<sup>12</sup>

The first trade union formed in Kuwait was on the 21st of October 1964, by the labourers of the Kuwait Municipality. Three days later, the employees of the Ministry of Public Health set up their union.<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting that the foundation of these unions took place in "Al-Istiqlal Cultural Club",\* this again indicates the fact that the labour movement, especially during the sixties was not isolated from the nationalist movement. The leaders of the newly formed trade unions such as Hussain Al-Yoha, Hussain Saqr Abdul-Latif, and Ahmed Sa'iyid Al-Asbo'hi

\* Al-Istiqlal Cultural Club was, before its dissolution in 1977, dominated by the Arab Nationalist group, or what has been locally known as Al-Taliah Group (Avant Garde Group).

Table 3.1 Trade union in Kuwait by the date of establishment and number of the founders

Trade Union	Date of establishment	no of founders (i)
Municipality	21.10.1964	28
Public Health Ministry	24.10.1964	16
Education Ministry	6.11.1964	21
Public Works Ministry	31.12.1964	45
Oil & Finance Ministry	10. 1.1965	19
Electricity and water	20. 5.1965	25
Communication Ministry	19. 9.1968	70
Information Ministry	12.12.1971	15
Social Affairs and Labour Ministry	26.11.1972	70
Trade Union Federation Enrolment sector	1. 4.1965	-
Kuwait Oil Company	12.11.1964	431
Kuwait National Petroleum Company	15.11.1968	20
Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Co.	27. 2.1972	30
Oil & petrochemical industries workers confederation	17. 5.1965	-
Kuwait chemical Fertiliser Company	3. 2.1972	-
Banking & Workers Service (2)	27.12.1972	-
Kuwait Trade Union Federation (3)	25.12.1967	-

Source: Ahmad al-Asabi - Structure of Kuwait Working class - paper presented at Arab Institute for labour's education, Algeria, 21-26 Feb 1981, pp.6-9.

(1) Amin Azzal-Din Trade Union in Kuwait - unpubl'd paper - Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour - Kuwait - 1970, p.26.

(2)(3) S. Altuse - The Evolution of Trade Unions in Kuwait, M.A. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1975, p.49.

Table B.2

Membership in some of the trade unions in the oil and government sectors between 1964-1981

Sector of Trade Union Year	T.U. of Education Ministry. <sup>1</sup>	T.U. of Public Health Ministry <sup>2</sup>	T.U. of Kuwait Municipality <sup>3</sup>	T.U. of Public Work Ministry <sup>4</sup>	T.U. of Finance Ministry <sup>5</sup>	T.U. of Electricity & Water Ministry <sup>6</sup>	T.U. of Communication Ministry <sup>7</sup>	T.U. in the K.O.C. <sup>8</sup>	T.U. Members in the Oil Sector	T.U. Members in the Government Sector
1964	78	69	48	48	580				34	242
1965	112	285	240	308			84	494		
1966	150	316	326	506	667	100	350			
1967	168	376	358				120			
1968	175	388	408	720	720	150	127	590		
1969	227	404	498						203	163
1970	238	418	516			217	203			
1971	255	434	611	713	713	255	317	690		
1972	270	491	655						331	449
1973	490	582	1058			408	703			
1974	609	724	1648			847	918			
1975	729	1093	1800			1141	1557			
1976	1008	1251	1890			1486	1794		3615	
1977	1156	1317	-			1693	1865			
1978	1190	1440	-			2045	1960			
1979	1201	1508	1200			2123	2000		2426	
1980	1300	1800	1750			2061	2015			
1981	1421	2014	2220	900	530	2000	2300		4400	12796*

\* This number includes the trade union members of Information and Labour and Social Affairs Ministries

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, compiled from the documents of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation.

6, 7, 8, figures derived from Amin Ezeldin Trade Unionism in Kuwait.

Unpublished study. Kuwait Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, 1972, p.24.

Table 2.3 Membership in the Trade Union by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	48.9	37.5
No	51.1	62.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 2.4 Participation in the Trade Union activities by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	4.3	5.2
No	95.4	88.5
Do not know	2.3	6.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 2.5 Responses to "What do you think is the best thing you can do to keep your job?" by nationality

Plan	Nationality				Total Percentage
	Kuwaiti	Unimproved Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Other	
Work hard and do good work	75.0	80.0	74.0	65.7	74.2
Rely on a union	5.0	0.0	2.4	16.7	6.1
By other means	20.0	20.0	23.6	16.7	27.6
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Stanford Research Institute - op.cit. Table D.7 - p. 26.

were also prominent figures in the Arab Nationalist movement in Kuwait. The number of workers' trade unions reached 15 by the end of 1981 and there were 5 white collar unions(See table 8.1). Moreover table 8.2 also indicates that the number of trade union members increased from 279 in 1964 to 17,196 in 1981.\* Similarly the members of each trade union increased considerably. For example, the members of the Municipality and Ministry of Public Health unions rose from 48 and 69 to 2220 and 2014 respectively in 1964 and 1981. Table 8.2 also indicates that four of the trade unions (Municipality, Communication, The Public Health, and Kuwait Oil Company) included around 51.9% of the over all membership in 1981. However, it should be noted that a very small number of the workers and employees of each economic activity are enrolled in the trade union. For example, only 9.7% out of the total government employees, and 27.4% of the Kuwaiti government employees are in fact members of the government sector trade unions. Furthermore, it has been found that the Kuwait trade union membership varies from one sector to another. For example, 63.6% of the Kuwait employees of the Ministry of Communication are enrolled in the union, but only 32.4% of employees in the Ministry of Public Health are in fact members of a trade union. More evidence obtained from our survey shows that a large proportion of both groups, Kuwaitis (51.1%) and non-Kuwaitis (62.5%) are not in the trade unions. (See table 8.3). In addition, when they were asked if they participate in the union activities, a very small percentage of them (2.3% of the Kuwaitis and 5.2% of the non-Kuwaitis) indicated that they are in fact involved in any kind of union activities (See table 8.4).

\* This does not include non-Kuwaitis.



The low membership of both groups of trade unions can be attributed to three main factors: 1) the tribal origin of most of Kuwaiti workers and their very recent experience of a trade union tradition. For instance, in a response to the question "What do you think is the best thing you can do to keep your job?", only 3.1% of the sample answered by referring to a union, while the rest 74.2% and 22.6% replied "by working hard and doing a good job" and "by other means", respectively. (See table 8.5); 2) the fear of both groups, Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, is that their membership in the union could damage their prospect of promotion, since the unions are not on good terms with the government;<sup>14</sup> and 3) the union's failure to represent migrant workers and protect their interests. For instance after an effective and successful strike of migrant employees in the banks on the 10th of June 1974, the union failed to protect the migrant leaders from being sacked, deported or warned by the government.

#### A.2. Immigrant Legal Position and Trade Unions

Many of those concerned with the labour movement in Kuwait tend to argue that the migrant workers, despite their nationality, are neither good trade unionists nor supportive of industrial action.

In fact, although such an argument may sound acceptable, it ignores an important factor: migrants' weak legal position, which largely contributes to their limited participation in any industrial conflict. It is important to assert here that a full analysis of the laws and regulations restricting immigrants' political and civil rights would be an enormous study and beyond the scope of this thesis.

But, it could be said in general that migrant workers are denied any kind of political freedom, and are allowed only to a minor extent to participate in trade union activity.\* In addition, it is worth noting that even the rights which are guaranteed to immigrants by law are often eroded by official practices, or by illegal police action.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, this situation is reflected in the migrants' responses to the questions of what changes they would like to see in the local laws and legislations, where the majority of them would like to see more just and flexible legislation (See table 8.6).

To begin with, all immigrants in Kuwait are allowed to stay in the country as long as they are working. Once their work is over or they are dismissed they could conceivably be forced to leave the country.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, no migrant worker has the right to change his work without his employer's permission. The employer or the "sponsor" (al-Kafil)<sup>17</sup> has the right to ask the police to deport his immigrant worker/workers once his interests are threatened by the latter. The employer's superiority was obtained by his political and economic power and reinforced by a number of local laws. For example, Article 3 of the Interior Ministry regulation No. 84 concerning servants' residency states:

If the servant leaves his employer before the expiration of the contract, his residency permit will be cancelled and he will not be given a new one unless his employer agrees to it.<sup>18</sup>

The terms and conditions of professional and highly qualified managerial foreign labour are far better than that of the non-skilled or semi-skilled labour. It is the migrant workers who come to occupy the detested jobs: Iranians, Egyptians and South Asians, as drivers, cooks, builders or maids. The particular legal relationship linking the employees with their employers

\* Kuwait has granted very limited freedoms to the Palestinians and Egyptians to establish their own trade unions. For more details see Chap.I.

Table A.6

"How you would like to see the Kuwaiti Laws?" by nationality.

	Labour Law		Residential Law		Nationality Law		Social Associations' Law		Vacations' Law		Civil Service Law	
	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti
Tighten	55.9	-	24.3	-	2.2	-	84.1	-	-	-	-	-
Flexible	43.1	42.7	72.7	56.2	56.8	86.3	15.9	12.5	9.0	22.9	39.6	40.6
Not Stated	-	57.3	-	43.8	40.0	13.7	-	87.5	91.0	77.1	61.4	59.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

places the former in a very weak bargaining position, mostly exploited by the employer in a very conspicuous way. Al-Essa comments on this, saying:

The al-Kafil system is frequently abused by the merchant or employer. When the prospective employee arrives in Kuwait he or she is obliged to remain in the service of the person up to the time agreed upon in his or her contract. In certain ways this system is similar to "indentured servitude", since the employed person is forced by law to remain with the employer, regardless of particular working conditions.<sup>19</sup>

The kafil (sponsor) system is in fact a continuation of the pre-oil productive relations especially in the pearl diving sector, where the diver remains under the command of his employer (nokhda or Tawash) as long as his debts are not paid and they were rarely paid.\* It is a developed version of the slave trade, and it comes very close to what might be called a "wage slave".<sup>20</sup>

According to the Kafil system immigrants in Kuwait cannot open businesses or run any other enterprise without a Kuwaiti partner (a Kuwaiti Kafil) who will register the establishment in his name. The non-Kuwaiti may provide the capital, the skills and the labour. In other words, the Kuwaiti may give the non-Kuwaiti only legal coverage by lending his name to proceed with the contractual arrangements to obtain licensing. In return the Kuwaiti Kafil usually gets an agreed-upon annual payment as part of the profit which reaches in some cases 50%.<sup>21</sup> To conclude, it could be said that the Kuwaiti Kafil, by the virtue of his nationality, has some vague legal responsibility towards both the government and the sponsored "al-Makful". He often keeps with him the passport and all the travelling documents of those individuals

\* For more details see Chapter III.

whom he sponsors. Therefore they cannot travel out of the country or work for anyone else without his permission. In other words the Kafīl not only extracts a substantial profit from those he sponsors, but also controls them while they are in the country. The local regulations are on the side of the Kafīl, he has the right to terminate the employment of, or partnership with, a sponsored person at will. He can demand his deportation at any time.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned earlier, migrant workers have no right to set up their own political parties, (political parties are banned in Kuwait), they also have no right to participate in the general election for the National Assembly.<sup>23</sup> In other words, political activity by the immigrants is severely restricted; they are unable to be involved in any kind of political activities, neither in the country of employment nor of their own countries. There have been many cases of police action against immigrant workers, students, and intellectuals. Between 1970 and 1981 there were a total of 160,537 deportations from Kuwait enumerated by various causes from legal violations to unemployment.<sup>24</sup> Arab immigrants, in particular Palestinians, and to a minor extent Yemenis, Omanis and Bahrainis have been continuously the subject of police action.<sup>25</sup> Having neither governments to intercede for them, nor territory to return to, Palestinians would suffer most if they were expelled. The use of Palestinians by some neighbouring Arab countries to violate the internal security of Kuwait led the leaders of this community on several occasions, before government officials and in the newspapers, to express the view that "Palestinians are policing themselves so as not to interfere in Kuwaiti policies, despite the unfortunate accidents in which Palestinians were involved."<sup>26</sup>

The discrimination against the non-Kuwaiti does not end here. The Kuwait law of citizenship (articles 4 to 8) states that naturalization of Arab immigrants requires ten years residency before application for citizenship can be made; for non-Arab immigrants, the residency requirement is fifteen years. Moreover, article 4 of the law allows the government to naturalize only 50 immigrants in any given year. However, naturalized citizens are second class citizens; they have no right to vote in elections until they have been a citizen for twenty years, they may not run for elected office at the sub-cabinet level or above in the executive branch. In addition, according to article 13, the naturalized people are subject to deportation and their citizenship status subject to revocation at the discretion of the Ministry of the Interior: "if the supreme interest of the state or its external security requires" or "if the specific authorities have proof that the person is propagating principles which may destroy the social and economic system in the country, or belongs to a foreign political organisation".<sup>27</sup>

The implementation of the law of citizenship is largely effected by the course of political events in Kuwait. For example, the naturalization of bedouin immigrants from Saudi Arabia and Iraq, who were used to support the power structure in Kuwait, has been excluded from the legal maximum of 50 per year.<sup>28</sup>

#### B. Dilemma of the Trade Unions

The small size of the Kuwaiti labour force, the domination of bedouin workers over the trade union, the fear felt by foreign labour, in addition to government practices, all create considerable problems for the trade unions in Kuwait.

The trade unions are in fact in a real dilemma. While the government's restrictive policy is in conformity with the willingness of the majority of Kuwaiti labourers (the bedouin) in terms of their rejection of the unionization of the immigrant workers, the trade unions as a result have no option but to adopt the trend of the majority of their Kuwaiti members. It contradicts the doctrine of internationalism which is a strong tradition in many labour movements in the world.\* For the government and the employers, having such a large number of foreign labourers who are not unionised is a positive feature. It meets the ruling class' objectives: first, in dividing the working class, and second, in weakening the bargaining position of both the Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti labour vis-a-vis the employers. Thus, such a situation will alienate the two groups from each other, and subordinate them to the local bourgeoisie and international capitalism.

The basic dilemma has been the very low enrolment of both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti workers in the unions, and an absolute minimum participation of these in the unions' activities. As mentioned earlier a very low percentage of the enrolled members (2.3% of the Kuwaitis and 5.2% of non-Kuwaitis) are involved in the unions' activities (See table 8.4). However, both groups, Kuwaitis (79%) and non-Kuwaitis (79.1%) have described the trade unions as an important institution (See table 8.7). Furthermore, when the respondents were asked "Do you think that all workers should be unionized?", the majority of the Kuwaiti sample (58.2%) and 61.4% of the non-Kuwaitis said "Yes" (See table 8.8). It is also important to note that while a large proportion of both groups opposed the idea of immigrants being allowed to form their own trade unions (See table 8.9) they emphasised strongly (69.7% of Kuwaitis and 70.8% of

\* It also contradicts the Arab nationalism of the prominent figures in the unions.

Table 4.7 The importance of Trade Union by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	79	79.1
No	4.6	4.1
Do not know	16.4	16.8
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 7.8 All workers should be members of the trade unions? - by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	58.2	61.4
No	27.9	22.9
Do not know	13.9	15.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 8.9 Non-Kuwaiti workers should be also members of trade unions? - by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	60.7	70.8
No	18.6	14.6
Do not know	11.7	14.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 8.10 Non-Kuwaiti workers should be allowed to form their own trade unions? by nationality

Description	Kuwaiti %	Non-Kuwaiti %
Yes	12.6	15.5
No	70.0	66.6
Do not know	9.4	17.8
Total	100.0	100.0



non-Kuwaitis), the fact that immigrants and indigenous workers should become members of the same trade unions. While the figures in table 8.10 indicate a strong attitude among both groups against the establishment of separate unions, the Kuwaitis stood more firm in their opposition to the idea (79% compared with 66.6%). The differences between the two indicate the fears of Kuwaitis of the possible growing role of the non-Kuwaiti workers if they were allowed to set up their own trade unions or even if they were offered similar rights to Kuwaitis. In fact, Kuwaitis would like to see migrant workers as members of their own trade union, but within the limits stated by the labour law.<sup>29</sup>

Once again the dilemma of the trade union has resulted from the superiority of the trade union leaders themselves, in particular, and the leadership of the Arab Nationalist Movement (A.N.M.) and their petty bourgeoisie ideology which is reflected in the separation of the trade union's leadership from their membership. In addition, many Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis have seen their involvement in the unions as "a waste of time", or in other words, the narrow conception of union function provides little incentive for membership participation, as explained in the following passage:

participation in any organisation appears to be related to the number and saliency of the functions which it performs for its members and the extent to which they require personal involvement. In most cases, trade unions perform only one major function for their members - collective bargaining, which can be handled by a more or less efficient uniform administration without requiring any membership participation, except during major conflicts. In such unions, we would not expect continuous participation by more than the handful of members who are involved in administration.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, the overwhelming number of bedouin workers enrolled in the trade union, and the weak position of the nationalist movement vis-a-vis the tribal and religious groups, has weakened in general the trade union and hence permitted the bedouin workers to determine the leadership and policies of the unions. Having worked in the sector where the most advanced technologies are used has not changed the values and attitudes of bedouin workers in the oil sector. For example, because the "al'Ajman"<sup>31</sup> constitute the overwhelming majority of the oil companies' workers, the workers of other tribes and those who have no tribal origin would not be able to win if they were nominated for union office.<sup>32</sup>

One could conclude here that the development of Kuwaiti trade unions, like anywhere in the third world, has been affected by the location of these countries in the world capitalist market. In other words, the catalogue of the economic and political development of Kuwait over the last two decades yields a somewhat pessimistic perspective for trade unionism; the overwhelming majority of the labour force are expatriates, the high percentage of bedouin workers among the native workforce, the deep split between the Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti workers, the surplus of capital owned by the political authority, the weak legal position of migrant labour, have all weakened trade union bargaining power and necessitated their dependence on the government for adjudication arbitration and financial support.

C. Immigrants in Labour Disputes

The increasing number of immigrant employees, since the discovery of oil in 1936, brought a growing number of instances of industrial conflict. Conflict in industry (the result of the pursuit by employers and employees of incompatible demands and objectives) are as varied as man's imaginative powers can devise. As Clark Kerr puts it:

The strike is the most common and most visible expression (of conflict). But conflict with the employer may also take the form of peaceful bargaining and grievance handling, of boycotts, of political action, of restriction of output, of sabotage, of absenteeism, or of personnel turnover. Several of these forms, such as sabotage, restriction of output, absenteeism and turnover, may take place on an individual as well as on an organised basis and constitute alternatives to collective action. Even the strike is of many varieties. It may involve all the workers or only key men. It may take the form of refusal to work overtime or to perform a certain process. It may even involve such rigid adherence to the rules that output is stifled. <sup>33</sup>

These forms of conflict assume an organised form which is normally associated with a trade union. In addition, different unions may adopt different methods: from pure industrial action to political involvement, and from peaceful bargaining to militancy. <sup>34</sup> Such differences would reflect, somehow, the extent to which the class conflict has developed, and the political ideology adopted by the trade unionists. In this section and elsewhere in this thesis, on the other hand, our aim is to challenge the view that the explanation for immigrant groups involvement in labour disputes is to be sought in the clash of cultures and the failure of these immigrants to adapt themselves to the country of employment. Consequently, the initial assumption is that the reason

for these labour disputes should be sought in the structural configuration of the work place and, at the societal level, in the class formations within the structure of the underdeveloped capitalist economy of Kuwait.

Ironically, while the strikes involving Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaitis or Kuwaitis only are organised and led by the trade unions, the strikes involving non-Kuwaitis are led by immigrant labour only. They are usually spontaneous actions as an outcome of the immigrants' bad working conditions and their inferior social status. The participation of immigrant workers in the labour disputes is an undeniable feature of the contemporary Kuwait industrial scene. The cases have been chosen to illustrate three main categories of problems: First, the case of labour disputes which involve only immigrant workers. These cases indicate the exploitation of immigrant labour by their employers. They also demonstrate how the authorities react to the immigrants' action. And finally, they reveal the standing of trade unions with regards to immigrant workers. It is important to state that the trade unions usually react indifferently if the labour dispute involves non-Arab workers.

#### Case One

In August 1948, the Indians working in the Kuwait Oil Company went on strike demanding 1) an improvement in their housing conditions, 2) an increase in their salaries and wages, to make them equivalent to their European counterparts in the same grade and occupation; and 3) an improvement in working conditions, to permit them to enjoy the same facilities provided for European workers.<sup>35</sup> The available data do not show how many days it lasted or even whether the workers demands

were met or not. However, the data indicate that the strike was well organised and led by "Harrið Mayen and Dr. Kobi Rustomjee Setha". Once the strike broke out the latter became leader of the strike. The British chief special police officer, Sergeant F.J. McLintic described him as a "trouble-maker, agitator and possible communist, he appeared to have experience of organising such matters."<sup>36</sup> As a result around 15 Indian workers were dismissed and eventually deported back to India.<sup>37</sup> Indian workers despite their constant complaints continued to be treated as inferior subjects. The good will mission which was sent in response to this strike to inspect the conditions of Indian workers in Kuwait stated:

The Indian employees complained that they were being treated as inferiors by the European members of the staff.... The general attitude of the management and of the European staff towards Indians appears to be such as does not induce a sense of dignity and self-respect in the minds of Indian employees.... Indian employees feel that they are working under conditions in which there is loss of human dignity.<sup>38</sup>

#### Case Two

Another example is the strike of Indian workers in the summer of 1979. The information on this strike is very scanty; the government banned the local newspaper from reporting the matter.\* Nevertheless, the available data reveals that Indian workers employed by Engineering Projects (India-EPI) on a large housing project at Ain Baghzi went on strike demanding 1) an increase in their salaries and wages; and 2) an urgent improvement in their working conditions. The strike lasted for a few days but was eventually defeated. The government reaction to it was very extreme. A large special troop of riot police was sent to

\* Even the Indian Officials in the Indian Embassy were hesitant to tell the story of the strike.

the place of work, leaders of the strike and 1,400 workers were arrested and deported to India.<sup>39</sup> Back in India the way in which the Kuwaiti government reacted to the strikers received a condemnation at more than one level.<sup>40</sup> The Indian Ministry of Industry stated "the Indian Government is studying the conditions in which Indians in the Gulf are working and living". A deputy in the Indian parliament went on to say that "Indians working in the Gulf are exposed to tremendously arbitrary measures, and they are being treated like slaves".<sup>41</sup>

### Case Three

The second example is a labour dispute which involved virtually only Arab workers, such as the strike of the workers in the Canada Dry Company in September 1979 demanding 1) an increase in salaries and wages, 2) an improvement in the conditions of work, and 3) an increase in the amount of allowance to cover the increase in the rents of housing and the cost of transportation. The strike lasted for three days. The company met some of the demands raised by the workers. The Kuwait Trade Union Federation verbally backed the strikers, but it was unable to do anything when the strike leaders were dismissed and eventually deported from Kuwait.<sup>42</sup>

The third type of disputes are involve both indigenous and immigrant workers. Such cases, while showing the effect of any joint struggle, also illustrate how the government and the employers try to use the weak position of immigrant labour to weaken the bargaining position of the workers or to split the workers by meeting the demands, but for indigenous workers only.

Case Four

On the 2nd of April 1963, the indigenous and immigrant drivers and clerks of Shwaikh port went on strike. For the first two days of the dispute the strikers raised no specific demands, and insisted on meeting the Minister of Public Works. Eventually when the Minister met them at the place of work they made the following demands: the daily paid workers should be converted to monthly salaries; Fridays and feast days should be paid holidays for workers, and if they have to work they should be paid overtime; labour disputes between the administration and employees should be solved through employees representatives; lorry drivers should be paid more; the clerical employees should receive monthly pay and be treated equally to their government counterparts; and port workers should be hired by the government directly and not through the labour construction companies.<sup>43</sup>

The workers demands were met by the government, but the solidarity between the two groups (Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis) seemed to threaten the government. Thus the government, in order to split the workers, considered the Kuwaitis (as government employees) by virtue of their Kuwaiti citizenship.

This meant that their jobs would be permanent and their pay higher than non-Kuwaitis. On the other hand, immigrant workers had to be employed by construction companies.<sup>44</sup>

Case Five

Kuwaiti and non Kuwaiti workers employed by the Kuwait Oil Company went on strike on the 15th of April 1963 demanding: the establishment of a trade union for all the company's workers; Thursday and Friday should be considered as a paid holiday; there should be an annual increase in the workers and employees' salaries; Arabs working in the company should not be dismissed and should be treated as equal to the other company workers; Arab and Kuwaiti workers should gradually replace the non-Arab workers in the Company; the Company's workers and employees should be recruited directly by the company concerned and not through the recruitment agents; Arabs working in the company for 4 years should be able to enjoy the training and education facilities provided by the Company; Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti workers should be paid housing and transportation allowances and the company's workers should have the same privileges as enjoyed by government workers.<sup>45</sup>

The strike ended in promises by the government that it would exert pressure on the company to meet the workers' demands, but the situation did not change and the parliament was divided between the Arab Nationalist group who sought improvement too both Arab and non-Arab workers and tribal and conventional groups backed by the government who considered that these privileges should only go to Kuwaitis.<sup>46</sup>

Case Six

Early in June 1974 indigenous and immigrant workers in the banking sector went on strike. The bulk of the banks' employees were non-Kuwaiti and received low wages in comparison with Kuwaitis, and had to work unpaid overtime. The strike lasted for a week and it was backed by the



trade union. A committee was set up, consisting of the majority of the banks' Kuwaiti employees. The demands were as follows: an increase in the wages and salaries of all banks' employees; Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti employees should be treated on an equal footing; employees should be paid social allowances similar to government employees; and no employee should have to work overtime without pay.<sup>47</sup>

The government and the employers tried to split the strikers by using the immigrants' weak position and promising Kuwaitis an improvement in their working conditions. The strike ended with a great victory for the union and the employees. The case is interesting as it shows clearly how employers hope to use the weak legal position of immigrants to weaken workers unity, and that determined action by the workers and the union can foil such attempts.

#### Case Seven

At the Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company, in August 1975, Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti workers went on strike for three days demanding an increase in their wages, and an improvement in their working conditions. The demands were met, but the salaries and wages were increased only for the Kuwaitis, and some improvements were introduced in the working conditions of both groups.<sup>48</sup>

Finally the third type of strike involves only Arab immigrant workers and it is usually politically oriented. It is a kind of protest against western intervention in the Arab world and their backing of Israel.

### Case Eight

Arabs working in the oil fields of Kuwait sabotaged the oil facilities during the Suez war in 1956 and during the war in June 1967. They were led mostly by Palestinian workers who were mostly members of the Arab Nationalist movement.<sup>49</sup> As a result, many Palestinians and some other Arab workers were dismissed and deported. Most of the key and important positions held by Palestinians and Arabs were transferred to Kuwaiti and non-Arab workers.

### Conclusion

The study of the trade unions as they have been observed in the capitalist and in some of the underdeveloped societies is in essence a study of democracy and the distribution of power. A trade union is first and foremost an agency and medium of power. Its major purpose is to permit workers and employees collectively to exert control over the conditions of their employment which cannot be gained individually, and to do so largely by compelling the employer to consider, in policy and in decision-making, the interests and priorities of his workers and employees.<sup>50</sup>

But in a country like Kuwait, the trade unions are split by the workers' ethnic and tribal differences, and by the government's labour legislation. The position of trade unions vis-a-vis external pressures or even internal pressures is very weak. Such pressure works essentially in two ways. The unions are trying to affect the decisions of the government and the employers and they are themselves subject to influence and pressure from a range of external and internal agencies (government, employers, tribal and religious groups...etc).

It is important to note the reformist nature of the Kuwaiti trade union. Seeking no radical change in the system, the amount of pressure that they are able to exert is minimal. On the other hand the fears of the government and the employers are similarity. A fear of the political role of the non-Kuwaiti population (especially the Arabs) has driven the regime to segregate them in social, political and spacial senses. Furthermore, the unequal distribution of economic and political power gives the ruling class (government, local and international bourgeoisie) a crucial influence over the process of ideological formation: legitimating its own predominance and inhibiting effective challenge on the part of labour.<sup>51</sup>

NOTES

1. Maxseon Psychologie des Faschismus, (1933), as quoted by Castle and Sosack, op.cit., p.117.
2. Enid Hill, Modernization of Labour in the Arab Gulf, The American University in Cairo, Cairo Papers in Social Science, Vol. 2, February 1979, p.64.

3. A. Fatah A. Baqi, Qanūn al-ʿAmal al-Kuwayti: Dirasih Naqdiyyah, (The Kuwait Labour Law: A Critical Study), Kuwait, Kuwait University Press, undated, p.13.

It is important to note that the Kuwait Labour Law of 1959 was changed first by Ameri degree No. 43 of 1960, then by No. 1 of 1961 and finally replaced by the new Law No. 38 of 1964. In 1968 the government added new chapters concerning the employment of the oil sector, which lately developed and known by Labour Law of the Oil Sector No. 28 of 1969.

See A. Fatah A. Baqi, *Ibid.*, p.13.

4. The official interpretation of the government suspension of Article 70 of the 1959 labour law was:

- 1) The National labour force were small in number which does not justify unionising it!
- 2) The high salary and better working conditions of migrant labour operates against its demand to be unionised.

See Abd al-ʿAziz al-Sarʿawi, Tatawwir Tashriʿat al-ʿUmmaliyah fi al-Kuwayt, (The Development of Labour Legislations in Kuwait), Kuwait Ministry of Labour and Social Affair, 1962, p.15.

5. For more details see: 1. M. al-Rumayhi, Bahrain, op.cit.  
2. Emile Nakhleh, op.cit. 3. A. Khalaf, al-Naft wa al-Harakah al-ʿUmmaliyah fi al-Khalij mithal al-Bahrain, (Oil and Labour Movement in the Gulf: Case of Bahrain), in al-Tariq Journal, Vol. 1/4, August, 1980.

6. Emile Nakhleh, *Ibid.*, p.75.

7. The trade union was only mentioned once by a Kuwaiti writer (Yusif al-Hamad in 1952), for more details see: Yusif al-Hamad, Maʿha Nurid Min Hukumat al-Kuwayt, (What we want from the Kuwaiti Government), Cairo, Dar al-Kutub Press, 1952, p.111.

8. Muḥamed al- Ajmi, al-Harakah al-ʿUmmaliyah wa al-Niqabi yah fi al-Kuwayt, (Labour Movement in Trade Union in Kuwait), Kuwait, Araba an Company for Publication and distribution, 1982, p.60.

9. Kuwayt al-Yum, (Kuwait Gazette), Supplement No. 75, April 2, 1965, p.5.
10. Mohamed al- Ajmi, op.cit. p.85.
11. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Private Sector Labour Law, op.cit., p.20.
12. See for example, Emile Nakhleh, op.cit. p.75.
13. al-Tali ah, a weekly Magazine, Kuwait, No. 104, October 28, 1964, p.2.
14. Shamlan Al-Essa, The Evolution of Trade Unions in Kuwait, unpublished M.A. dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1975, p.49.
15. Some of these actions were brought about in the discussion of housing of migrants and their working conditions. See Chapter V and VII.
16. For more details see for example: Jamal al-Din al-<sup>h</sup>Atiya, op.cit.
17. Kafil is a Kuwaiti person or firm who enters into an agreement to be responsible for non-Kuwaiti persons. The sponsorship system has been used by some of the native population to exploit many migrant workers. Some of these workers would pay as much as K.D. 600 in order to get a visa to Kuwait. A Pakistani engineer told me that he obtained his visa through a Kuwaiti who registered him as a cook in return for K.D. 600 every two years.
18. Kuwayt al-yum (Kuwait Gazette), No. 1157, September 19, 1977, p.14.
19. Shamlan Al-Essa, Problem of Manpower in Kuwait, op.cit., p.45.
20. According to the Kafil system employers have no right to choose their jobs or to change it. It stands completely opposite to the wage labour system.
21. Shamlan Al-Essa, Ibid., pp.44-45.
22. Saad Eldin Ibrahim, op.cit., p.13.
23. See for example: 1. Fred Halliday, Migration and Labour Force in the Oil Producing States of the Middle East, Development and Change, Vol. 6, No. 3, July 1977. 2. An observer: Oil for Underdevelopment and Discrimination: the case of Kuwait, op.cit. 3. Jacqueline S. Ismail, op.cit.

24. The figures compiled from the Ministry of Planning, Central Statistical Office, Annual Statistical Abstract, 1976, p.372; 1980 p.421; 1982, n.373.
25. For example in October 1966 the Kuwaiti regime, which was preparing for the 1967 National Assembly election, arrested and deported a large number of Arab migrants mostly Palestinians who were at that time active in the Arab Nationalist movement in Kuwait (al-Hadaf, a weekly newspaper, October 22, 1966). In addition, Yemenis and Omanis working in Kuwait, and who sympathised politically with the South Yemen and popular front for the Liberation of Oman and Arabian Gulf (P.F.L.O.A.G.) were and still are a subject of police action. (al-Ra'id, a weekly magazine, Kuwait, April 15, 1971). Arab migrants and Palestinians in particular who were criticising the role of the Syrian regime in Lebanon during the civil war 1977/77 have been deported from Kuwait. Last but not least, the security coordination between the Gulf Emirates led to wide spread deportation of Bahraini students at Kuwait University since 1975.
26. An interview with a highly placed Palestinian official in Kuwait.
27. Jacqueline S. Ismail, *op.cit.* pp.118-119.  
It was learnt that even the first class Kuwaiti citizens are sometimes subjected to revocation. This happened to al-Obaykh M. Al-Mahri who due to his severe criticism of the Kuwaiti government had his nationality revoked and was deported to Iran in Summer 1979.
28. It has been estimated that there are around 40,000 unproven Kuwaitis who their dilemma was used officially by the government during the internal political crisis.
29. The Kuwaiti trade unionists usually express their fear that if the Arab workers were allowed to enjoy the same rights as their Kuwaiti counterparts, this will bring out their political differences and hence will divide the Kuwaiti working class.
30. R. Hyman and R.H. Fryer, Trade Unions: Sociology and Political Economy. in Tom Clarke and Laurie Clements (eds), Trade Unions Under Capitalism, Glasgow, Fontana, 1977, p.165.
31. al-Ajma tribe is one of the most loyal government allies during election time they dominate the 10th electorate district in Abu Halifa and al-Fahhil. Its clans consist of, al-Solran, al-Hadi, al-Dhain, al-Qamir, al-Aziz, al-Rashid, al-fahad, al-Mubaishu al-Suliman, al-Mahfood. See Abdulla al-Nifisi, *op.cit.*, p.76.

32. Other examples could be found in the domination of Al-Awazims (those who belong to the al-Azmi tribe) and al-Rashaidan (al-Rashid tribe) over the trade unions in the Ministry of Education, Public Health, and Public Work.
33. C. Kerr, Industrial Conflict and its Mediation, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 59, 1959, No.171.
34. R. Hyman and R.H. Fryer, op.cit., p.103.
35. Notes on Labour Conditions in Kuwait, f.o. 371/74942.
36. f.o. 371/74943.
37. Ibid.
38. f.o. 371/74964.
39. When I went to question the leaders of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation it seemed that they knew very little about this strike and its results.
40. Mansur al-Rawi, al- Ab<sup>ḥ</sup>ād al-Ijtimā<sup>ḥ</sup>iyah wa al-Iqtisā<sup>ḥ</sup>iyah Lil Tanmiya fi Aqṭar al-Khalij al- Araby, (Social and Economic Dimensions of Development in the Arab Gulf Countries), paper presented at conference on the Development in the Arab Gulf, University of Baghdad, February, 1980, p.166.
41. Ibid., p.166.
42. Shamlan Al-Essa, op.cit., p.57.
43. Kuwayt al-yum (Kuwait Gazette), Supplement No. 6, June 4, 1963, pp.2-3-.
44. Ibid., p.3.
45. Kuwayt al-yum (Kuwait Gazette), Supplement No. 14, 26 November, 1963, p.12.
46. Ibid., pp.10-11.
47. Shamlan Al-Essa, op.cit. p.57.

48. The story of the strike told by Abdul-Raza Al-Jassim, Kuwait, June, 1981.
49. Shamlan Al-Hesa, op.cit., p.54.
50. R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction, London, Macmillan, 1975, p.64.
51. R. Hyman and R.H. Fryer, op.cit., p.155.



## CONCLUSION

### Conclusion

Labour migration within and to the Arab region, as the preceding discussion revealed, is not an isolated phenomenon. It is a consequence of the integration of labour exporting and importing countries into the world capitalist market. In other words the movement of labour from the poor Arab and Asian countries to the oil producing countries of the Gulf, in its contemporary stage, is brought about by the particular location of these countries in the new international division of labour. The study of migration is, in fact, a study of the development and expansion of western capitalism. The outcome of such development, on the one hand, is the uneven distribution of wealth within the underdeveloped countries, and the massive imbalance between the countries of the periphery and the countries of the centre on the other.

The analysis of the accumulation of capital on an international scale, especially in its present form, supports the main thesis of this study: that the way in which Kuwait and most of the other Peninsula states are integrated in the world capitalist market produces simultaneously certain forms of political structure whose influence goes far beyond the boundaries of these countries. The emergence of the Peninsula countries, with their immense financial power, did not only restructure the economy of the Arab region, but also affected the course of the political events in the whole region. For example, poor Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan and Yemen are experiencing two types of dependency. First, a dependency on the rich labour importing countries due to their reliance on migrants' remittances and financial "aid"; and secondly, on the industrialized countries from which they import most commodities. In fact, these countries act as a transit point for the pumping of petro-dollars back to the economies of the industrialized

world through the purchase of capital goods, machines, consumer durables and food stuffs. The effect of such financial "aid" and remittances is that they have gradually moved these countries, especially Egypt, Sudan and Yemen, from a position which challenged Western interests to a role which enhances the Western presence in the region. This is primarily due to the fact that although Kuwait and the other Gulf oil producing countries, have a great deal of financial power they are deficient in almost all other aspects including the military dimension. For objective reasons they are far from attaining the status of industrialized countries. Thus their political and economic role, especially at the internal and Arab regional levels, is to preserve the interests of Western capital.

The rise of the Gulf countries is of great importance for the West. They managed, through the process of "the internationalization of capital" to paralyse the nationalist forces in the region, and more crucially to influence the policy of the Mashriq regimes towards the Arab Israeli conflict and hence to enhance talk about a possible political solution to the Palestinian question. This, of course, gives a preponderant role to the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia. In every internal Arab dispute, these regimes were perceived, not only by the West, but also by most of the Arab governments, as being capable of doing something. In fact, the responsibility they sought to bear is even greater and their failure to settle not only the Palestinian crisis but also other differences amongst the Arab countries (such as Lebanon) is even more conspicuous. This could indicate, the failure of these regimes to minimize their very close link with the Western countries particularly America; their actual political potentiality, apart from their economic one; and finally their failure to fulfill the desire of the Arab people for independence and unity or to bring about any noticeable changes in the policies of their closest Western allies towards the Arab cause.

As far as Kuwait is concerned, its development will continue to proceed but with further dependence on imported labour and its regime will consolidate its position by adopting a discriminatory policy towards more than half of its population. Such a development has resulted, among other things, in the marginalization of the Kuwaiti labour force. For the national and international bourgeoisie the presence of migrant labour is important in two senses: First, economically, the size and the role of migrant workers in the Kuwait economy make them an integral part of the production system. They are important to the operation of the production machine, which in the final analysis is in the interests of international capital; second, politically, having immigrant workers from different nationalities, cultural and religious backgrounds does not only prevent solidarity between them, but also in the long-run it reduces any possible changes in the political system. From the point of view of the dominant class once a large immigrant labour force became inevitable, (which is usually conceived as a potential political threat) the variation in the ethnic, cultural and political backgrounds of the immigrants would, in the final analysis, strengthen the power of the ruling class and make the task of controlling such a fragmented society easier. The indigenous population has been paralysed through the way the Kuwaiti regime diffused the oil revenues and through its discriminatory policy not only against the expatriate population but also against some ethnic and religious components of the indigenous population.\* By total denial of the social and political rights of immigrants and by fostering the illusion amongst the indigenous peoples that they have full rights as citizens, Kuwait and the Gulf regimes are partially overcoming their lack

\* It is important to note that discrimination against certain conventional religious and possibly tribal Kuwaiti groups also exists subtly in Kuwait. For example, the Shi<sup>Ā</sup> in Kuwait have no access to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and cannot be promoted to a high rank in the Army. They are also denied the right to build or set up their own religious institutions in the areas where the majority of their population are Kuwaiti Suni.

of legitimacy. In such circumstances, therefore, the impact of immigrant labour on the host society cannot be ignored; their prominent role in the economy of the country, and especially in the fields of education, the mass media and government administration has, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced the government's internal and external policy and shaped public opinion toward some of the national problems.

The process of social and spacial segregation is simultaneously the source of social conflict between classes and social groups and the formation and production of class faction. The practice of discrimination is the centre of this process which has determined the ideological, political and economic formation. It is important to recognise this as a consequence of Kuwait's social and economic transformation from the production of surplus to the consumption of an oil-based surplus. Discrimination does not exist naturally or essentially by virtue of the existence of phenotypical variation, rather it is a production of certain forms of relations of production. As already mentioned, once an underdeveloped country is integrated structurally into the global capitalist economy the element of the capitalist system will be reproduced but in a very crude and distorted manner.

It should be clear from the previous chapters that this study, while it examines the size and the trends of migration to the Middle East, (the focus of most previous studies carried out on the subject) it departs from the limitations of such literature. It rejects interpretations which are based solely on economic criteria: labour flows from poor countries with a surplus population to countries poor in human resources but with a surplus of capital. Instead, this study has attempted to situate the problem in a broader context. It conceived it as a cause as well as a consequence of

the changing historical conditions of the accumulation of capital. Labour migration is seen as playing an effective role in restructuring the political and economic aspects of the Arab countries, thus making them ripe for full integration into the world capitalist market.

Aspects of the immigrants' lives in the country of employment such as housing, social life, working conditions and trade union have all been examined within the operation of the political economy of Kuwait and its location in the world market. Finally, in concluding it should be noted that what I have tried to do in this thesis is to study the process of the internationalization of capital and its consequences on Arab region as reflected in the associated phenomenon of international migration to Kuwait. I am aware that there are many aspects which have not been discussed, or only briefly discussed. However, if the study has managed to initiate or stimulate new areas of study it will have achieved some of its aims.

APPENDIX

A. Fieldwork

This thesis is based on research which took place in Kuwait between March and June 1981 and from November 1981 to January 1982. A modest empirical survey was carried out on a sample consisting of 140 workers and employees (96 Arab migrants and 44 Kuwaitis from the government and joint sectors. It should be emphasised, however, that I have not relied heavily on an analysis of the survey data but more on an attempt to understand issues that concern migrants and an effort to provide a framework in which to evaluate available written material. The first period (March to June 1981) of the fieldwork was spent in administering a pilot study which aimed at testing the questionnaire and enlarging our understanding of the problem. 38 immigrants from different nationalities, mainly Arabs, were interviewed. Of these 47.4% were from the government sector, 34.2% from the oil sector, and 18.4% from the private sector. The share from each sector was unrelated to its size and role in the Kuwait economy. The sample was broken down into two sub-groups: Kuwaitis (15.8%) and non-Kuwaitis (83.2%). The data was fed to the computer during the summer of 1981, and a preliminary account was written. Furthermore, the first period, of the research was also devoted to collecting other written materials from the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. A substantial amount of time was also spent reading newspapers, magazines, and following the evaluation of Kuwaiti laws with regards to presence of immigrant labour. Most of the data, were collected from the Gulf Documentation Centre at Kuwait University, and the Periodical Library of the National Council for Arts and Culture in Kuwait.



As mentioned earlier, the second phase of the fieldwork was carried out between November 1981 and January 1982. The questionnaire used was that of the pilot study having been redesigned and shortened. A sample of 140 Arab migrants from different sectors of the Kuwait economy were chosen. The bulk of the respondents were from the industrial sector, Kuwait National Petroleum Company and the National Industries Company. The interviews were carried out by me and the help of some friends, who were trained to administer the questionnaire, from the Sociology Department in the University of Kuwait. The information collected was of great value in some areas of the study where there are no written materials at all, such as the relations at place of work, and migrants' views with regard to certain issues in Kuwait like trade unions, legislation concerning their presence etc.

The sample consisted of 140 immigrants, 96 of them were non-Kuwaiti Arabs and the rest (44) were Kuwaitis. All non-Arab immigrants were interviewed without a questionnaire. Their age ranged between the age-groups 20-25 and 45 and more. A large proportion of non-Kuwaitis were concentrated in the age-groups 35-40 and 40-45, 21.8% and 23.8% respectively, and the Kuwaitis were concentrated in the age-groups 25-30 and 35-40 29.5% and 27.2% respectively. Furthermore, male respondents made up the overwhelming majority in both samples: 89.5% of the non-Kuwaitis and 79.5% of the Kuwaitis. Married respondents were also the majority in both cases: 83.3% in the case of non-Kuwaitis and 77.2% of the Kuwaitis.

The interviews of the 140 respondents were conducted at the place of work. Some of these respondents were interviewed easily, while others either simply refused to be interviewed at all, or it took me a considerable time to convince them of the purpose of my work. Those who were reluctant or suspicious were excluded from the study.

In addition, interviews were carried out between 1981-1983 with Kuwaiti officials, leading figures in the migrant communities, foreign diplomats, trade unionists, political groups and migrants themselves. Some of these interviews, especially with migrants, were informal and non-directive. Interviews were also sought with others who have carried out their own research on the issues of development and migration. It should be noted that interviews carried out with migrants, political parties and foreign diplomats were not easy. It took me a long time to locate them or to make them talk about their problems as freely as possible. Some of these interviews were arranged through a long series of friends.

I also visited areas where migrants live and talked to them in their homes and places where they met for recreation, such as cafes, cinemas. Places of work were also visited; the oil field, government sector, construction sites, work shops, etc. Accommodation for single immigrants were also visited, I talked to them and tried to be one of them and used their facilities. Furthermore, visits to minorities and private schools were also arranged. I talked to the head masters of these schools, teachers and some students. Some of these visits were accompanied by an official in the Directorate of Private Education, since no such work could be conducted without their endorsement.

It is important to note that my ability to speak Persian and Urdu languages in addition to the different Arabic dialects were of great help in pursuing and conducting my field work successfully.

The first task on my return from Kuwait in late January, was to code the questionnaires and to process the results on the computer. To this end I used the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). It took approximately 4 months to check and re-check the data and run the programme. In late September 1982, I started to analyse the data and incorporate my methodological and theoretical framework.

Moreover, a large amount of published and unpublished material has been made available to me, books, articles, working papers, government reports and international organisations reports in the local and international newspapers and magazines, and material available in the archives of the Central Periodical Library of Kuwait, Gulf Documentation Centre at Kuwait University, India Office Library and Public Record Office, London.

Finally, I found previous research carried out on migrant workers in Europe and America of great help. It is no secret that the work of Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack on immigrant workers in Western Europe has inspired my work in many respects.

It is also important to note that the sensitivity of the issue of the socio-economic position of migrant labour made it impossible in some cases to gain access to the migrants themselves or to ascertain information concerning their working and living conditions. For example, repeated attempts to get detailed information about European migrants, their living and working conditions were unsuccessful. It was difficult also to find out details about police action against migrants etc. Furthermore, many migrants were suspicious of my work. Some of them, after being convinced agreed to talk while others refused believing that

I was working for the authorities. All migrants in Kuwait, whatever their nationality and their socio-economic status think that if they talk or complain about their problems the next day the government will deport them. Thus, to overcome this problem a very general questionnaire was used whose stated aim was not the study of socio-economic conditions of immigrants, but an examination of the social problems which effect labour turnover in the Kuwaiti labour market. Aspects like housing, work conditions, education of immigrants' children, the social relations etc., were examined in this questionnaire. Aspects which were considered as very sensitive such as the political rights, the police action, rate of crime, were excluded from the questionnaire and information on them was got from interviews with migrants or officials and from newspapers.

Having collected the research data the next step was to divide it into categories in order to make the following comparisons, first, between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, and second, between Arab and non-Arab migrants.

B. Questionnaire

استمارة خاصة بقياس دوران  
المحل ومشكلات التكيف في سوق العمل  
بـ دولة الكويت

البيانات المدلى بها سرية وغير قابلة للتداول  
وتستخدم للأغراض العلمية فقط

- ١ - كم تبلغ من العمر .
  - أ - أقل من ٢٠ سنة .
  - ب - ٢٠ الي ٢٤ سنة .
  - ج - ٢٥ الي ٢٩ سنة .
  - د - ٣٠ الي ٣٤ سنة .
  - هـ - ٣٥ الي ٣٩ سنة .
  - و - ٤٠ الي ٤٤ سنة .
  - ز - ٤٥ فأكثر .
- ٢ - ما هو مكان الولادة ؟
- ٣ - الجنس :
  - أ - ذكر .
  - ب - أنثى .
- ٤ - حالتك الاجتماعية .
  - أ - متزوج .
  - ب - أعزب .
  - ج - مطلق .
  - د - أرمل .
- ٥ - ما هي جنسية زوجتك ؟
  - أ - كويتية .
  - ب - عربية ( تذكر جنسيتها ) .
  - ج - غير عربية ( تذكر جنسيتها ) .
- ٦ - أين هو مكان عملك الحالي ؟
- ٧ - ما هي جنسيتك :
  - أ - عربي ( تذكر ) .
  - ب - غير عربي ( تذكر ) .
- ٨ - ما هي آخر مرحلة تعليمية أنهيتها :
  - أ - لم احصل علي أي نوع من التعليم الرسمي .
  - ب - حاصل علي التعليم الابتدائي .
  - ج - حاصل علي التعليم الثانوي .
  - د - حاصل علي التعليم الجامعي .

بيانات حول التعليم والتدريب :

٩ - ما هي نوعية التعليم الذي حصلت عليه ؟

- أ - التعليم الفني والمهني .
- ب - التعليم التجاري .
- ج - التعليم النظري .

١٠ - ما هي اللغة التي تجيدها ؟

- أ - اللغة الانجليزية ( قراءة ) ( كتابة ) ( تحدث ) ( )
- ب - اللغة الفرنسية ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
- ج - اللغة الالمانية ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
- د - أخرى ( تذكر )

١١ - في أي دولة أنهيت تعليمك ؟

- أ - الكويت .
- ب - بلد عربي ( يذكر ) .
- ج - بلد اجنبي ( يذكر ) .

١٢ - هل حصلت علي أي نوع من التدريب قبل التحاقك بعملك الحالي داخل الكويت أو خارجها ؟

- أ - حصلت علي تدريب داخل الكويت .
- ب - حصلت علي تدريب خارج الكويت ( يذكر البلد ) .
- ج - لم احصل علي أي نوع من أنواع التدريب .

١٣ - هل حصلت علي تدريب بعد التحاقك بعملك الحالي ؟

- أ - نعم .
- ب - لا .

( في حالة الاجابة بنعم أجب علي الاسئلة رقم ١٤ ، ١٥ ، ١٦ ) .

١٤ - ما هي طبيعة أو نوع التدريب الذي حصلت عليه ؟

- أ - تدريب مهني .
- ب - تدريب مكثسي ( نظري ) .
- ج - تدريب مكثسي ( مهني ) .

- ١٥ - ما هي الجهة التي قامت بتدريبك ؟
- أ - حصلت علي تدريبي بالطرق الخاصة .
  - ب - حصلت علي تدريبي عن طريق المؤسسة أو الوزارة التي أعمل بها .
  - ج - حصلت عليه عن طريق جهات أخرى ( تذكر ) .
- ١٦ - ما مقدار تأثر تدريبك علي تحسين أدائك في العمل ؟
- أ - كثيراً جداً .
  - ب - كثيراً .
  - ج - الي حد ما .
  - د - لم استفد منه .
- ١٧ - هل ترى بأنك في حاجة الي دورات تدريبية أخرى ؟
- أ - نعم .
  - ب - لا .
- ( في حالة الاجابة نعم أحب علي الاشارة رقم ١٨ ، ١٩ ، ٢٠ ) .
- ١٨ - ما هو نوع التدريب الذي ترى انك بحاجة اليه ؟
- أ - تدريب يتفق مع طبيعة عملي الحالي .
  - ب - تدريب يؤهلني لاستلام عمل آخر .
  - ج - تدريبات أخرى .
- ١٩ - في أي مكان ترى بأن دورات التدريب يجب أن تقام ؟
- أ - التدريب أثناء العمل في مكان العمل .
  - ب - في اقسام أخرى من المؤسسة أو الوزارة .
  - ج - في مؤسسات أخرى داخل الكويت .
  - د - في خارج الكويت .
- ٢٠ - ما هي أهمية التدريب بالنسبة لك ؟
- أ - ضروري جداً لاستمرارية عملي في المؤسسة أو الوزارة .
  - ب - لتحسين أدائي في العمل .
  - ج - فحركات أهمية بالنسبة لعملي الحالي في المؤسسة أو الوزارة .
  - د - ربما احتاج اليه مستقبلاً في عملي .
- ٢١ - ما هي الاسس التي تخضع لها فروع التدريب في المؤسسة أو الوزارة ؟
- أ - الاستجابة في العمل .
  - ب - الواسطة .
  - ج - الثابته .
  - د - يخضع للاسس العشوائية .



٢٣ - ما هي الأماكن التي سكنت بها وكم قضيت في كل منها بالسنوات ؟

أ - المنطقة

ب - عدد السنوات

.....

.....

.....

.....

٢٤ - هل السكن الذي تقيم فيه :

أ - خاص .

ب - حكومي .

ج - خاص بالمؤسسة التي تعمل بها .

د - بالإيجار .

٢٥ - إذا كان منزلك بالإيجار فكم تدفع إيجاراً له ؟

٢٦ - هل السكن الذي تقيم فيه :

أ - منزل عربي .

ب - شقة .

ج - فيسلا .

د - مشترك مع آخرين .

٢٧ - هل موقع منزلك ؟

أ - حريص .

ب - غير حريص .

ج - لا أعرف .

٢٨ - كم هو عدد غرف السكن بها في ذلك الصالة والحمامات ؟

٢٩ - كم شخص يعيشون معك ؟

٣٠ - هل وضعك السكني يمثل مشكلة بالنسبة لك ؟

أ - نعم .

ب - لا .

ج - لا أعرف .

الوضع المعيشي :

٣١ - هل ترى في أن مستواك المعيشي خلال الخمس سنوات التي مضت ؟

- أ - قد تحسّن كثيرا جدا .
- ب - قد تحسّن قليلا .
- ج - بقيت على حاله .
- د - انخفضت .
- هـ - لا أعرف .

٣٢ - هل ترى في أن مستواك المعيشي في خلال السنوات الخمس القادمة ؟

- أ - سيحسن .
- ب - سيبقى على حاله .
- ج - سينخفض .
- د - لا أعرف .

٣٣ - ما هي الاجهزة التي تمتلكها وعدد هـا ؟

- أ - السيارة ( . . . . ) العدد ( . . . . )
- ب - جهاز فيديو ( . . . . ) العدد ( . . . . )
- ج - أجهزة اخرى ( تذكر ) .

٣٤ - هل لديك مصادر اخرى للدخل بالانفاق لممتلك الحالي وما هي ؟

- أ - عقار .
- ب - أعمال تجارية .
- ج - أعمال انفاقية .
- د - أخرى ( تذكر ) .
- هـ - ليس لدى مصادر اخرى .

٣٥ - كم عدد ساعات عملك الاصيل والاضافي ؟

- أ - ساعات العمل الاصيل ( . . . )
- ب - ساعات العمل الاضافي ( . . . )

٣٦ - هل أنت المعيل الوحيد لمائلتك ؟

- أ - نعم .
- ب - لا .

( في حالة الاجابة بنعم )

٣٧ - من هم الذين يسهمون معك في مصروفات الاسرة وبكم يسهمون ؟

٣٨ - هل تستفيد من الخدمات الصحية التي تقدمها الحكومة ؟

- أ - اتعالج لدى مستشفيات وزارة الصحة .  
ب - اتعالج لدى المستشفيات الخاصة .

### التركيب الاسري :

٣٩ - ما هو حجم اسرتك ؟

- أ - متزوج بدون اطفال .  
ب - اطفالي من ١ الي ٣ .  
ج - اطفالي من ٤ الي ٦ .  
د - اطفالي ٧ فأكثر .

٤٠ - عدد الاطفال الذين هم في سن الدراسة ؟

٤١ - كم طفل يذهب الي الدراسة فصلا ؟

٤٢ - كم طفل في المدارس الحكومية ؟

٤٣ - كم طفل في المدارس الخاصة ؟

٤٤ - في أي سنوات الدراسة اطفالك ؟

- أ - الروضة ( ) المدر ( )  
ب - الابتدائية ( ) المدر ( )  
ج - الثانوية ( ) المدر ( )  
د - الجامعة ( ) المدر ( )

٤٥ - هل تقضي جزءاً من وقتك مع اسرتك وأطفالك ؟

- أ - كثيراً جداً .  
ب - كثيراً .  
ج - أحياناً .  
د - ليس من وقتي لدى لقائه معهم .

٤٦ - هل أنت عضو في نادي او جمعية ثقافية او رياضية ؟

- أ - نعم .  
ب - لا .

٤٧ - هل تساهم في نشاطات الجمعية اذ ازيد الذي أنت عضو فيه ؟

- أ - باستمرار .
- ب - مرة في الشهر .
- ج - في المناسبات .
- د - لا أساهم .

٤٨ - كم تقضي العطلة الاسبوعية ؟

- أ - زيارة الاصدقاء .
- ب - زيارة الاقارب .
- ج - التنزه خارج البيت .
- د - راحة في البيت .

٤٩ - هل تتبادل الزيارات مع زملائك في العمل ؟

- أ - دائما .
- ب - أحيانا .
- ج - في المناسبات والاعياد .
- د - نادرا .
- هـ - لا أزورهم .

٥٠ - أي من هذه الجماعات زرتها فملا ؟

- أ - أبناء بلدتي .
- ب - الكويتيون .
- ج - عرب آخرون .
- د - أصدقاء من غير العرب .
- هـ - غير ذلك ( تذكر ) .

لغير الكويتيين : ( امل ان يكون هذا السؤال قد تم الاجابة عليه )

٥١ - متى حضرت للكويت ؟

- أ - أقل من ٥ سنوات .
- ب - من ٥ الي ٩ سنوات .
- ج - من ١٠ الي ١٤ سنة .
- د - من ١٥ الي ١٩ سنة .
- هـ - ٢٠ سنة فأكثر .

٥٢ - كيف حثت للكويت ؟

- أ - حصلت علي عقد عمل .
- ب - حصلت علي كارت زيارة .
- ج - حصلت علي عدم معانعة .

٥٣ - هل دفعت مبلغا نظير ذلك ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا

٥٤ - الغرض من مجيئك للكويت ؟

- أ - للحصول علي عمل .
- ب - لتحسين وضعي المعيشي .
- ج - لوجود بعض الاقارب .
- د - للعمل ووجود الاقارب .
- هـ - أسباب أخرى تكسر .

٥٥ - هل كنت تعمل في بلدك قبل مجيئك للكويت ؟

- أ - أعمل .
- ب - أعمل وأوفر جزء من راتبي .
- ج - أعمل ولا أوفر جزء من راتبي .
- د - ليس لدي عمل .

٥٦ - ما هي المهنة التي عملت فيها في بلدك الاصيل ؟

٥٧ - هل لديك اتصال باقاربك في بلدك الاصيل ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا

٥٨ - أين تقضي أجازتك السنوية ( الصيفية ) ؟

- أ - في بلدي ( يذكر ) .
- ب - في بلد عربي ( يذكر ) .
- ج - في بلد أجنبي ( يذكر ) .
- د - في الكويت .

٥٩ - هل تساعد اقاربك ماليًا في بلدك الاصيل ( تحويلات نقدية ) ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا

- ٦٠ - هل توفر جزاً من راتبك الحالي ؟
- أ - نعم  
ب - لا
- ٦١ - هل ترغب في ترك الكويت ولماذا ؟
- ٦٢ - هل ترغب في الحصول علي إقامة دائمة ولماذا ؟
- ٦٣ - هل ترغب في الحصول علي الجنسية الكويتية ؟
- أ - نعم  
ب - لا  
ج - لا أعرف

أوضاع العمل :

- ٦٤ - متى بدأت عملك الحالي ؟
- ٦٥ - أين كنت قبل التحاقك بمملك الحالي ؟
- أ - في القطاع الحكومي خارج الكويت .  
ب - في القطاع الخاص خارج الكويت .  
ج - في القطاع الحكومي داخل الكويت .  
د - في القطاع الخاص داخل الكويت .  
هـ - لا أعلم .
- ٦٦ - هل كنت علي معرفة بحقوق وواجبات عملك الحالي ؟
- أ - نعم  
ب - لا  
ج - الي حد ما .
- ٦٧ - بالتحديد ما هو عملك الحالي ؟
- ٦٨ - هل تعتبر عملك الحالي ؟
- أ - فني .  
ب - يدوي .  
ج - مكتبي .  
د - مهني مكتبي .

٦٩ - هل يتفق عمك الحالي مع د راسنك و٢٠٠٠٠٠ ك ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا
- ج - لا أعرف

٧٠ - كم عدد المرات التي غيرت فيها من عمك في هذه المؤسسة أو الوزارة ؟

- أ - مرة
- ب - مرتين
- ج - ثلاث مرات
- د - لا أعرف

٧١ - اسباب تغييرك لعمالك ؟

- أ - الترقيته .
- ب - الدليل من عملي السابق .
- ج - الانتقال الي قسم آخر .
- د - سوء المراتب .
- هـ - خلافات مع رئيسي .
- و - عوامل أخرى ( تذكر ) .

٧٢ - أكثر زملائي في العمل من ؟

- أ - الكويتيون .
- ب - العرب غير الكويتيون .
- ج - الهنود ( الآسيويين ) .
- د - الأوربيين .

٧٣ - كيف الشقت لعمك الحالي ؟

- أ - استجابة لأعلان .
- ب - سمع شخصي لايجاد العمل .
- ج - عن طريق بعض الأصدقاء والأقارب .
- د - لم أرق أخرى ( تذكر ) .

٧٤ - التي اى مدى أنت مرتاح في عمك الحالي .

- أ - مرتاح الي حد كبير .
- ب - مرتاح .
- ج - غير مرتاح .
- د - غير مرتاح إطلاقاً .
- هـ - لا أعرف .

( ١١ )

٧٥ - أى من هذه التفسيرات توضح حقيقة شعورك نحو عمك ؟

- أ - شيق في الغالب كل الوقت
- ب - شيق معظم الوقت وممل أحيانا .
- ج - شيق أحيانا وممل أغلب الوقت .
- د - ممل أغلب الوقت

٧٦ - كيف ترى عمك الحالي ؟

- أ - مهم جدا .
- ب - مهم .
- ج - غير مهم
- د - غير مهم علي الاطلاق .
- هـ - لا أعرف .

٧٧ - هل ترغب في تغيير عمك الحالي ولماذا ؟

٧٨ - هل تواجه مشكلات غير عادية في عمك ؟  
( لمن أجاب بنعم أجيب السؤال رقم ٧٩ )

٧٩ - هل يمكن القول بأن سبب هذه المشكلات ؟

- أ - طبيمة العمل .
- ب - رفاق العمل .
- ج - الجو الاجتماعي بالعمل .
- د - أسباب أخرى ( تذكر ) .

٨٠ - هل تعمل على ؟

- أ - علاوات اجتماعية نعم ( ) لا ( )
- ب - تعويض نهاية الخدمة نعم ( ) لا ( )
- ج - تقاعد نعم ( ) لا ( )

٨١ - هل يتناسب راتبك مع جهدك ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا
- ج - لا أعرف



٨٢ - هل المكافآت والبرواتب في هذه المؤسسة از الوزارة ؟

- أ - مناسبة .
- ب - غير مناسبة .
- ج - لا أعرف .

٨٣ - هل نظام الاجازات في هذه المؤسسة التي تعمل بها مقبولا بالنسبة لك ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا

٨٤ - ما هي فترة اجازتك السنوية ؟

- أ - ١٥ يوما .
- ب - شهر .
- ج - ٤٥ يوما .
- د - ٦٠ يوما .
- هـ - لا اجازة مدفوعة .

#### الاشراف والتمثيل :

٨٥ - هل أنت مشرف وحدة أو قسم ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا

٨٦ - ما هي جنسية مشرف الوحدة او القسم الذي تعمل فيه ؟

- أ - كويتي
- ب - عربي
- ج - أجنبي

٨٧ - هل ترى ان هناك فرصا امامك لتولي منصب مشرف في المؤسسة أو الوزارة ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا
- ج - لا أعرف

( ١٣ )

- ٨٨ - كيف تصف علاقتك بشرك في العمل ؟
- أ - حميمة جداً .
  - ب - حميمة .
  - ج - غير حميمة .
  - د - عدايمية .
- ٨٩ - هل أنت عضو في نقابة .
- أ - نعم
  - ب - لا
- ٩٠ - هل تعتقد بأن النقابات العمالية ضرورية ومفيدة ؟
- أ - نعم
  - ب - لا
  - ج - لا أعرف
- ٩١ - هل تشارك في نشاطات النقابة ؟
- أ - نعم
  - ب - لا
  - ج - لا أعرف
- ٩٢ - هل تعتقد بأن كل الماملين يجب أن يكونوا أعضاء في النقابة ؟
- أ - نعم
  - ب - لا
  - ج - لا أعرف
- ٩٣ - هل تعتقد بأن غير الكويتيون يجب ان يكونوا أعضاء في النقابات ؟
- أ - نعم
  - ب - لا
  - ج - لا أعرف

( ١٤ )

٦٤ - هل تصدق بأن غير الكويتيون يجب أن يشكلوا النقابات الخاصة  
بهم ؟

- أ - نعم
- ب - لا
- ج - لا أعرف

٦٥ - أى من هذه القوانين ترى أنها بحاجة الي تعديل ؟

- أ - قانون العمل .
- ب - قانون الإقامة .
- ج - قانون الجنسية .
- د - قانون جماعات النفع العام .
- هـ - قانون الاجازات .
- و - قانون الخدمة المدنية .

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire especially designed  
to study the turnover and the  
problem of adaptation in the Kuwait  
labour market.

Note: The questionnaire was distributed and administered in Arabic.  
This is a literal English translation, therefore, the English  
expressions are awkward.

A. Personal Data

1. Age:

- a) less than 20 years
- b) 20 to 24
- c) 25 to 29
- d) 30 to 34
- e) 35 to 39
- f) 40 to 44
- g) 45 and more

2. Place of birth:

3. Sex:                    a) Male                    b) Female

4. Marital status:      a) Married              b) Unmarried

5. The Nationality of your wife/husband:

- a) Kuwaiti
- b) Non-Kuwaiti Arab
- c) Non-Kuwaiti Non-Arab

6. Place of Work:

7. Your Nationality:

- a) Arab
- b) Non-Arab

8. Level of your formal education:

- a) No formal education
- b) Primary
- c) Secondary
- d) University

B. Information on Education and Vocational Training

9. Type of education:

- a) Technical education
- b) Commerce education
- c) Science or social science education

10. Your proficiency in foreign languages:

- |            |              |               |               |
|------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| a) English | Read (.....) | Write (.....) | Speak (.....) |
| b) French  | Read (.....) | Write (.....) | Speak (.....) |
| c) German  | Read (.....) | Write (.....) | Speak (.....) |
| d) Other   |              |               |               |

11. Where you have obtained your education:

- a) Kuwait
- b) Arab country (            )
- c) Foreign country (            )

12. Have you obtained any kind of training before commencing your present job?

- a) Obtained training in Kuwait
- b) Obtained training abroad (            )
- c) Obtained no training

13. Have you trained after commencing your present job?

- a) Yes
- b) No

14. The nature of your training?

- a) Vocational training
- b) Clerical training
- c) Both

15. Training sponsor?

- a) Personal
- b) Company/Ministry
- c) Other (            )

16. The impact of the training on your personal performance at work?

- a) Almost too much
- b) Too much
- c) To some extent
- d) None

17. Do you need further training?

- a) Yes
- b) No

18. Type of training you need?

- a) Training goes with my present job
- b) Training for another job
- c) Other training

19. The place of training:

- a) On the job training
- b) Somewhere in the Institution
- c) In other training Institution in Kuwait
- d) To be trained abroad
- e) Do not know

20. Importance of training:

- a) To continue working with this firm
- b) To improve my performance
- c) It is not necessary
- d) Needed in future

21. Basis of training:

- a) Priority
- b) Favouritism
- c) Persistence
- d) Random basis
- e) Priority for Kuwaitis
- f) Do not know

C. Housing Conditions

22. Number of areas and the period of living in Kuwait?

- | a) Area | b) No. of years |
|---------|-----------------|
| _____   | _____           |
| _____   | _____           |
| _____   | _____           |

23. The house you live in?

- a) Private
- b) Government house
- c) Firm's house
- d) Rented house

24. The amount of rent of your accommodation .....

25. Nature of your house?

- a) Arab house
- b) Apartment
- c) Villa
- d) Annex

26. The location of your accommodation?

- a) Comfortable
- b) Uncomfortable
- c) Do not know

27. Number of rooms in your house .....

28. Number of people living with you .....

29. Housing presents a problem to you?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Do not know

D. Standard of living

30. Do you think that your standard of living in the last five years?

- a) Has risen a great deal
- b) Has risen a little
- c) Stayed the same
- d) Gone down
- e) Do not know

31. Over the next five years do you expect your standard of living to?

- a) Be better
- b) Be about the same
- c) Be worse
- d) Do not know



32. Items you possess?

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| a) Car (            )    | No. (            ) |
| b) Video (           )   | No. (           )  |
| c) Other items (       ) | No. (           )  |

33. Source of income?

- a) Property
- b) Business
- c) Part-time jobs
- d) Other
- e) Do not know

34. Number of working hours? .....

35. Are you the only breadwinner for your family?

- a) Yes
- b) No

36. Is there anybody in your family who shares in the family's expenditure?

- a) Yes
- b) No

37. Do you enjoy the government health service?

- a) At the government hospitals
- b) At the private hospitals

E. Family Structure

38. Size of your family?

39. Number of school-age children?

40. Number of children who actually go to school?

41. Number of children in the government school?

42. Number of children in the private school?

43. At what school-stage are your children?

- |                 |            |                |
|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| a) Kindergarten | (        ) | No. (        ) |
| b) Primary      | (        ) | No. (        ) |
| c) Secondary    | (        ) | No. (        ) |
| d) University   | (        ) | No. (        ) |

44. Do you spend a part of your time with your family?

- a) Almost always
- b) Always
- c) Sometimes
- d) I have no time

45. Are you a member of one of the Kuwaiti sports clubs or cultural societies?

- a) Yes
- b) No

46. Do you participate in their activities?

- a) Almost always
- b) Once a month
- c) On some occasions
- d) Never

47. How do you spend the weekend?

- a) Visit friends
- b) Visit relations
- c) Entertainment
- d) Stay at home

48. Do you visit your workmates at home?

- a) Almost always
- b) Sometimes
- c) In the social occasions
- d) Rarely
- e) Never

49. Which one/ones of these groups you usually visit?
- a) Immigrant of the same nationality
  - b) Kuwaitis
  - c) Other Arab immigrants
  - d) Non-Arab immigrants
  - e) Other
50. When did you come to Kuwait?
- a) Less than 5 years
  - b) 5 years to 9 years
  - c) 10 years to 14 years
  - d) 15 years to 19 years
  - e) 20 years and more
51. How did you come to Kuwait?
- a) Through pre-signed work contract
  - b) Visitor permit
  - c) No objection permit
52. Have you paid money to get that?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
53. The purpose of your coming to Kuwait?
- a) To get a job
  - b) To improve my standard of living
  - c) To reunite with my family
  - d) To re-unite my family and to work
  - e) Others
54. Were you working in your country?
- a) Working
  - b) Working and saving a part of my salary
  - c) Working and saving nothing
  - d) I have no work
55. The occupations you worked in the country of origin?

56. Have you any contact with your relatives at the country of origin?

- a) Yes
- b) No

57. Where do you spend your annual vacation?

- a) In my country
- b) In other Arab countries
- c) In a foreign country
- d) In Kuwait

58. Do you remit some of your income home?

- a) Yes
- b) No

59. Do you save a part of your monthly income?

- a) Yes
- b) No

60. Do you want to leave Kuwait and why?

61. Do you prefer to have permanent residence in Kuwait?

62. Would you like to get the Kuwaiti nationality?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Do not know

F. Conditions of work

63. When did you start your present job?

64. Where were you before that?

- a) Working in the government sector abroad
- b) Working in the private sector abroad
- c) Working in the government sector in Kuwait
- d) Working in the private sector in Kuwait
- e) I was not working

65. Were you aware in advance of the rights and duties of your present job?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Somewhat
66. Specifically what is your present job?
67. Do you consider it:
- a) Manual
  - b) Mental
  - c) Both
68. Is this the job you were trained and educated for?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
69. How many times has your job been changed?
- a) Once
  - b) Twice
  - c) More than three times
  - d) Do not know
70. What was the cause of the change(s)?
- a) Promotion
  - b) I wanted to change my previous work
  - c) Transfer to other department
  - d) Low wages
  - e) Disagree with my supervisor
  - f) Other
71. Most of your work-mates are:
- a) Kuwaitis
  - b) Arabs
  - c) Asians
  - d) Europeans
72. How did you join the firm/Ministry?
- a) Response to advertisement
  - b) Personal contact
  - c) Through relatives and friends
  - d) Others

73. To what extent are you satisfied with your present job?
- a) Very satisfied
  - b) Satisfied
  - c) Not satisfied
  - d) Not satisfied at all
  - e) Do not know
74. Which of these statements come closest to describing how you feel about your job?
- a) Interesting nearly all the time
  - b) Interesting most of the time. Some dull stretches
  - c) Interesting only sometimes - mostly dull and monotonous
  - d) Always dull and monotonous
75. How would you appraise your work?
- a) An absolute must
  - b) Quite important
  - c) Not really
  - d) Not really important at all
  - e) Do not know
76. Would you like to change your present work and why?
77. Do you have job-related problems?
78. Are these problems related to:
- a) Nature of work
  - b) Workmates
  - c) Social atmosphere at work place
  - d) Other reasons
79. Does your employer provide:
- a) Social allowances
  - b) Service terminal indemnity
  - c) Scheme for retirement
80. Your personal salary:
- a) Adequate
  - b) Inadequate
  - c) Do not know

81. Incentives and salaries at this institution?

- a) Adequate
- b) Inadequate
- c) Do not know

82. Is the personal system of vacations?

- a) Adequate
- b) Inadequate

83. Your annual vacation is only for?

- a) 15 days
- b) A month
- c) 45 days
- d) 60 days
- e) No paid vacation

G. Supervision and Representatives

84. Are you a supervisor?

- a) Yes
- b) No

85. What is your supervisor's nationality?

- a) Kuwaiti
- b) Non-Kuwaiti-Arab
- c) Non-Kuwaiti-Non-Arab

86. Do you think that there is an opportunity to be a supervisor?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Do not know

87. How friendly would you say that you are with your supervisor?

- a) Extremely friendly
- b) Quite friendly
- c) Indifferent
- d) Not very friendly

88. Are you a member of the trade union?

- a) Yes
- b) No

89. Do you think that the trade union is important and beneficial for the workers and employees?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Do not know
90. Do you participate in trade union activity?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Do not know
91. Do you think that all the workers and employees should be unionized?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Do not know
92. Do you think that non-Kuwaitis should be unionized as well?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Do not know
93. Do you think that non-Kuwaitis should set up their own trade unions?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Do not know
94. Which of these legislations do you think need to be changed.
- |                                   |     |          |     |            |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------|-----|------------|
| a) Law of labour                  | ( ) | Flexible | ( ) | Restricted |
| b) Law of residence               | ( ) | "        | ( ) | "          |
| c) Law of nationality             | ( ) | "        | ( ) | "          |
| d) Law of social society and club | ( ) | "        | ( ) | "          |
| e) System of vacations and leave  | ( ) | "        | ( ) | "          |
| f) Law of civil service           | ( ) | "        | ( ) | "          |



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