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ABSTRACT

OF THESIS ENTITLED

"A STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN KUWAIT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN"

by

Sabriyah Mohammed al-Marzooq

This thesis is based on a series of personal interviews conducted in 1971 among 126 girl students of the University of Kuwait and the Teacher Training College, and on a questionnaire handed out to a stratified random sample of 200 Kuwaiti nationals. Whilst the personal interviews were intended to yield information about the educated young women's attitudes towards education, career, marriage and related issues, the questionnaire was designed to supply additional data about the attitudinal and behavioural changes of both old and young Kuwaitis of both sexes in regard to family, religion, politics, and in particular the education and employment of women.

The findings were analysed by means of a model of Kuwaiti society which fully recognised the importance of family status. A division into Royal Family, Upper Class Families and Higher and Lower Status Families of the Middle class was proposed.

It has been shown that the impact of modern education has caused a considerable rift between the older and the younger generation of Kuwaitis. The responses of the former group have been far more homogeneous and were carried by a concern for the maintenance of the

traditional values and mores. Among the young people this decidedly conservative attitude was found to be characteristic only of the respondents from the Upper Class Families, whereas the respondents from the Higher and Lower Status Families appeared to be more open to social and ideological innovation. The most progressive group was composed of those individuals mainly from the Higher Status Families who had received a higher education abroad. In the course of this investigation it has become evident that the Kuwaiti youth has only half-emerged from the traditional patterns of a typical Middle-Eastern society, and that possibly one of the chief impediments to further development is the young men's entirely negative attitude towards female education and employment, with its implicit perpetuation of the segregation of the sexes and insistence on male superiority.

A STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN KUWAIT

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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Dissertation presented to the University of Durham

for the degree of Master of Arts

by

Sabriyah Mohammad Al-Marzooq

March 1975

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Before 1946 Kuwait was one of the unheard of mini-states of the Arabian peninsula. This changed overnight as it were after the first shipment of crude oil had been sent to the west. Suddenly Kuwait was converted from an obscure and insignificant hinterland to a country of great economic and strategic importance, not only to the Arab states themselves, but also to the major political powers of the world. Yet the booming oil industry not only placed Kuwait in the political limelight; it has also actively transformed the country itself. Far from being merely of a peripheral nature, these changes have affected Kuwaiti society at its roots. In 1959 Sir Rupert Hay could still write about the Kuwaiti people that "Western influence has enhanced the material well-being of all, but has as yet brought little change in their traditional manner of life" [1]. Irrespective of whether or not such a sweeping statement was true then, it is definitely inaccurate today. Change in Kuwait has not been confined to a single parameter; it can be said to be rampant in every sector of the life of the Kuwaitis. Economic change is paralleled by transformations in the social dimension of existence and in the political and religious life as well, though the rate and degree of change varies from one sector to another.

It is against this background of multisectoral change that the present investigation has been carried out, and throughout my analysis I have attempted to remain aware of this larger context of change and, wherever possible, highlight the various findings by relating them to this general background.

[1] R. Hay, The Persian Gulf States (Washington, 1959), p. 104

This thesis requires a preamble of autobiographic explanation. The intrinsic difficulties and trials of fieldwork and data analysis of an alien society are well-known. They are further increased when the observer is at the same time also part of the observed, as was the case with myself. Having been born and brought up in Kuwait, I was - as a researcher - in the ambiguous position of having a close-up and inside view of this fast changing society and simultaneously being required to stand aside and look at it, and indirectly at myself, from a distance in order to appraise objectively the changes that have taken and are taking place. My research is thus inescapably and intimately bound up with a personal search for identity. And therefore in addition to whatever merit my thesis may have as a piece of objective analysis, it is also a highly personal document.

In fact, it was an initial desire to understand and come to terms with my own socio-cultural environment which led me to a systematic social anthropological study of Kuwaiti society in the first place. Sensitive to, and no doubt like most of my countrymen suffering from, the uncertainties and instabilities of Kuwaiti society, I felt the acute need to clarify my personal situation and to look for a set of meaningful cues which would permit me to orientate myself in relation to my society. I was given the opportunity to rid myself of some of the 'veils' which effectively prevented me from seeing the intricate mechanisms of my own society and culture during my academic education in Egypt in the years 1962-66. It was in Egypt that the notion of carrying out professional research in social anthropology crystallised. In 1971 I came to England where I was exposed to a cultural climate and social situation strikingly different from any of the Middle Eastern countries with which I was

familiar. The contact with European students and teachers finally gave me the necessary distance to study my society with sufficient objectivity, though by no means as a dispassionate observer.

I began my research by tentatively exploring various aspects of Kuwaiti society and culture and soon realised that possibly the most appropriate pivot for my investigations would be the relation between the sexes as highlighted in the role and status of the female. Having selected this as the specific paradigm of my study, I conducted early in 1971 ninety-six personal interviews among female students at the University of Kuwait and the Teacher Training College. During the analysis of the material it became evident that further information was required in order to obtain a more adequate perspective. I consequently designed a brief questionnaire which was intended to yield some additional data representative of the social, political and religious attitudes of young and old, educated and uneducated, low and high status/class, male and female Kuwaitis. This second badge of fieldwork was carried out during the months March-June 1973. Although the sample was small, and the data obtained from both the interviews and the questionnaire remained relatively crude, I believe the findings to be representative of the consensus of opinion among Kuwaitis.

Since this thesis was from the beginning designed to be no more than an exploratory study, I could but confine myself to a preliminary degree of abstraction and theorising. I intend, however, to expand my research in the future by applying more refined sociometric techniques which will permit the acquisition of more structured data and the generation of testable hypotheses. Only in this way will it be possible to do full justice to the complexities of present-day Kuwaiti society and culture.

This thesis consists of five major parts; the first is purely introductory, the second and third analytical, the fourth represents the over-all conclusions, and in the fifth and last I risk a look ahead into the future of Kuwait. The Introduction provides the necessary background against which the changes predicated in the Analysis can be set off. It seemed apposite to start with a brief outline of the general history of Kuwait, and then proceed to delineate the economic, political and social particularities in the pre-oil period and to bring home the degree to which the traditional Kuwaiti institutions and customs conformed to those prevalent throughout the Middle East.

In the analytical sections I have preserved the actual order of my fieldwork and placed the questionnaire after the personal interviews, although one might argue that the former demands logical priority in that it leads up to the specific patterns emerging from the interviews which in a way constitute the nucleus of the entire investigation. In the analysis of both the interviews and the questionnaire I have registered the important responses and at the same time attempted to place them in a wider framework in the form of a running commentary. The fourth section represents an attempt to draw together the findings of both analyses and to relate them to each other. The final part is purely speculative and questioning.

In the process of this study I have incurred debts to a number of people who, in various ways, have contributed to the successful completion of this piece of work. First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Dr G. Ansari, Department of Sociology, Kuwait University, for his unfailing encouragement throughout my studies and in particular for his

assistance in regard to the design of the personal interviews. Next, I owe a great obligation to my sister, Miss Jasmiyah al-Marzooq. She not only provided the original stimulus for my taking up research at Durham University, but also assisted greatly during the months of my fieldwork, especially in helping to make contact with appropriate respondents for the questionnaire. Thanks are also due to several of my colleagues in the Department of Sociology, Kuwait University, for facilitating my research on the questionnaire. In Durham, it was above all my supervisor Mr David Brooks whose patient criticism and guidance proved both directive and stimulating, and I am particularly grateful to him for opening up for me many new avenues of intellectual enquiry. I also wish to thank Professor Eric Sunderland for his friendly encouragement. My appreciation is, moreover, due to Mrs R L Reed for converting an at times rather patchy manuscript into a neat typescript. Last, but not least, I wish to record my gratitude to all those countrymen of mine, both young and old, whose friendly response to questionnaire and interviews has supplied the substance of this thesis.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Kuwait : Its Historical Background and Population

Our knowledge of the early history of Kuwait is based mainly on a few references in early travel books and on traditional lore. According to Abu-Hakima, "the state of Kuwait is named after its capital Kuwait which was originally a very small fishing centre on the north-western corner of the Arabian Gulf"[1]. The name 'Kuwait' is derived from the diminutive of 'kut' meaning a small fortress. This town was known to the 18th century travellers as 'Grane', sometimes spelled 'Grain' or 'Graen' which is a diminutive of the Arabic 'qarn' meaning a small hill. Its foundation probably dates back to the mid-seventeenth century.

The origin of the present city of Kuwait is assigned to the beginning of the 18th century, and the year 1710 is put forward as the year of foundation.[2] Tradition has it that in the early years of the 18th century a group of pure-blood (asil) or noble Bedouins of Central Arabia were forced by war (against the tribe of Ibn Saud) and drought to abandon their native place and move out

[1] A.M. Abu-Hakima, "The Development of the Gulf States", in : D. Hopwood (ed.), The Arabian Peninsula : Society and Politics (London, 1972), p. 31

[2] See H.R.P. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours (London, 1956), p. 26

in search of water, pasture and a new permanent home which would at the same time guarantee their continued independence.

This group consisted of the al-Sabah lineage together with several other senior and prestigous lineages related to the al-Sabah by marriage, viz. the al-Ghanim, al-Quitami, al-Shahin, and the al-Saqar. [3] According to H.R.P. Dickson [4] they spent some time in Qatar, off the Arabian Gulf, but did not find it possible to settle there. They then moved to Maharaq in Bahrain and from there, after much wandering, the group which consisted of members of the Dahamshah section of the Amarat, a sub-tribe of the Anazah confederation, went to the south of Iraq which was at that time under Ottoman rule. It appears that Ottoman government officials became suspicious of the growing power of these immigrants who enriched themselves by raiding and looting, [5] and consequently the group was forced to move further south until a suitable place was found on the southern shore of Kuwait Bay.

Their settlement, known as 'Kuwait', acquired permanent recognition through the Shaikh Bani Khalid, ruler of Nejd, Hasa and Kuwait. In return for his permission to settle in Kuwait, these tribes had to pledge loyalty to the Bani Khalid who at the time were engaged in a struggle for supremacy against Ibn Saud. Among the members of this founder group were not only the ancestors

3 See Z. Freeth and V. Winstone, Kuwait : Prospect and Reality (London, 1972), p. 94

4 H.R.P. Dickson, op.cit., p. 26

5 A. al-Rashid, Tarikh al-kuwait (Beirut, 1971), p. 36

of the al-Sabah lineage and their relatives, but also two other lineages from Qatar, viz. the al-Jalahmah and Ibn Ali. They mingled with the local population of Kuwait, and the authority of the Sabah leaders was recognised without resistance by all who lived in the area around the Bay. After the political misadventure of the Bani Khalid against Ibn Saud, which was partly due to internal dissonances among the Bani Khalid, the al-Sabah assumed complete authority over the area, forcing the Bani Khalid tribe to return to Nejd.

The al-Sabah lineage established itself as the ruling family of the village community initially through the election of Sabah I in 1756, who became a sedentary Amir. This election was forced by political pressure resulting from intertribal warfare. Sabah I was chosen from among his people by virtue of his personal excellences, such as wisdom, strength, liberality, modesty, 'good luck', and not least wealth. His wealth was measured by the size of his herds of livestock (camels, sheep) and his wisdom by the keen judgment which he displayed in handling authoritatively the problems of the community.[6] Another decisive factor in the people's choice was no doubt the fact that Sabah's father, Jaber (who had died in Qatar), had been the recognised leader of this immigrant section of the Anazah tribe.

The settlers from Saudi Arabia injected new life into the small resident fishing community, and Kuwait gradually matured from an insignificant village into a flourishing city. In 1756 the population was estimated to have comprised about 10000 people.[7]

[6] This kind of election was revived with Mubarak, the seventh ruler, after 140 years of hereditary succession

[7] See K. Kal'aji, Adwa' 'ala ta'rikh al-kuwait (Beirut, 1962), p. 39

This considerable population increase was due to the fact that after the departure of the Bani Khalid their soldiers, servants and slaves remained behind and pledged loyalty to the Sabah family.

Like the other principalities on the western shore of the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait developed a subsistence economy based on sea trade, pearling and fishing. The economy came to be governed by the mercantile families who also exercised an incisive influence on the political attitudes of the rulers whom they supported financially and ideologically. It was their vessels which carried the bulk of the trade between India, East Africa and the Red Sea. Ship-building became an important industry and the waterfront of the town of Kuwait was dominated by shipyards. The captains of these ocean vessels - there were about 800 vessels in all - came mostly from prominent families and more often than not were the owners as well.[8]

Thus in the late 18th century Kuwaiti society was stratified into three large groups. First, the ruling family (the house of Sabah); secondly, the mercantile families (the associate lineages from Nejd), and thirdly, the massive group of fishermen, Bedouins and those families which formerly stood in the service of the Bani Khalid.

The population increased rapidly, mainly by virtue of the influx of immigrants from the neighbouring country of Iraq. These were composed chiefly of rich Iraqi merchant families who migrated to Kuwait after the East India Company had moved its office from Basra to Kuwait as a result of the Persian occupation of Basra (1775-79). Surprisingly, by 1831, the Kuwaiti population

[8] See K. Kal'aji, op.cit., p. 38

had dropped to about 4000 people which is to be explained by the great political instability at the time which forced a great many families to leave Kuwait, either back to Iraq or to central and southern Arabia. However, according to Co. Lewis Pelly, Kuwait had about 20000 inhabitants in the 1860s, and despite continual feuds and warfare the population multiplied to about 60000 by 1930.[9] No information is available for the period 1860-1900. Actually the first census was undertaken in February 1957, and all estimates before that date are no more than informed guesses.

The Kuwaiti population multiplied steadily to up to 75000 in 1950. This increase can partly be explained by the continued influx of foreign labourers immigrating from the adjoining countries like Iraq, Persia and other Arab states, as well as from India, Pakistan and Africa, as a result of the oil exploration. Also European businessmen arrived and were mainly responsible for the professional building boom. In 1957 the Kuwait Amirate counted about 200000 inhabitants. By April 1961 their number had reached roughly 320000, and the third census showed a further increase to ca. 467000 people by April 1965. The 1971 census gives a total figure of 733000, and careful forward projections suggest a population of over one million by 1975.[10]

It is impossible to gain absolutely precise figures about the demographic structure and level of population for Kuwait, because of the high and fluctuating rate of immigration since the

[9] See Z. Freeth and V. Winstone, op.cit., p. 91

[10] See C. Buchanan and Partners (eds.), Kuwait : Studies for National Physical Plan and Master Plan for Urban Areas (Kuwait, 1970), p. 81

first days of the oil exploration. Between the census of April 1965 and the beginning of 1969 the population increased at the very high rate of 10% per annum. This finds its partial explanation in the acceleration of immigration after the 1967 war between Israel and Egypt/Jordan/Syria. No other country in the world, with the possible exception of the United States, has witnessed the same massive turbulence in the population as has Kuwait. Although the influx of foreigners may have reached a peak, immigration continues unabatingly. The rapidly developing economy and the ever more attractive market for labour still draws a flood of skilled and unskilled workers and professionals from all parts of the world. The ethnic and political heterogeneity of these immigrants created a series of new problems, both social and religious, but these have to be faced still.

While in 1957 the majority of the population was still indigenous, today the foreigners (387000) outnumber the natives (346000).[10] The greater part of the foreign population originates from the Arab countries (ca. 70%), including about 70000 Palestinians. Americans and Europeans form a minority group of roughly 4000 people, and they work and live in relative isolation in Ahmadi south of Kuwait city. Of this total population, about 375000 live in the capital, and of these about 145000 are Kuwaitis and 230000 non-Kuwaitis.[11]

[10] These are 1971 figures

[11] For a comprehensive review of the available data see A.G. Hill, "The Gulf States : Petroluem and Population Growth", in : J.I. Clarke and W.B. Fisher, Populations of the Middle East and North Africa (London, 1972), pp. 242-56

Unlike the Kuwaitis themselves, they have none of the benefits of the welfare state. They have to pay for schooling and medical care, while earning meagre wages. No housing provisions are made for them, and the poorer section of the foreign-born population is forced to live in shanty towns. According to the 1970 census only about 7000 out of a total of 43000 Kuwaitis who are in employment are classifiable as labourers. This means that 80% of the labour force were immigrants. These are excluded from the Kuwaiti trade unions and are also not permitted to form their own unions. Similarly, they are completely forbidden to engage in any political activity whatsoever.

In contrast with this, the roughly 100000 Bedouins, travelling between Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, share the same privileges as all other Kuwaiti nationals.

The fact that the Kuwaitis constitute today the minority in their own country is felt by many of them as a serious political and economic threat. Counter measures were first initiated in 1959 in the form of the naturalisation decree and its amendment in 1960. This stipulated that (according to the amended articles 4 and 5) nationality by naturalisation may be conferred on any adult who satisfies the following conditions.

1. That he has been permanently resident in Kuwait for at least 15 years, or for 10 years if he is an Arab belonging to an Arab country, before his application for naturalisation.
2. That he has a lawful means of livelihood and is of good character, with no criminal records.
3. That he has knowledge of Arabic.

Article 5 makes special provisions for those who do not satisfy the above conditions; these additional specifications are the following :

1. A person who has rendered useful services to Kuwait provided that he is an Arab belonging to an Arab country.
2. A person who has been residing in Kuwait before 1945 and has continued his residence until the publication of this Law, provided that he is an Arab belonging to an Arab country.
3. A non-Arab who has been residing in Kuwait before 1930 and has continued his residence until the publication of this Law.

2. The Economic Development

Over the past twenty years the oil producing countries of the Middle East have become of paramount economic importance, not only to Europe and Africa, but also to the Far East, particularly Japan. The growing oil industry has not only had repercussions abroad, it has more importantly led to significant transformations in the home countries themselves. The pace and scale of change has nowhere been greater than in the Gulf states in view of the discovery of huge oil reserves in the post-1945 period. The oil has attracted to these countries, particularly Kuwait, funds, personnel and equipment from Europe and the United States which has allowed rapid industrial development.

During the last two decades Kuwait has dramatically changed not only its physical appearance both in the city and the surrounding areas but also in the outlook of its people. The customs and mores

of the old Kuwaiti socio-cultural complex have been exposed rather abruptly to the impact of western values and ideas. The Kuwaiti economy and life style no longer depend on commerce, shipbuilding, fishing, pearling, camel breeding and sheep-farming. Today Kuwait imports most of its technical products from western countries such as the United States, Britain and Germany. There are few Kuwaiti households which have not acquired a car, TV set and refrigerator. Moreover, most Kuwaitis today have the opportunity of seeing how other people live, either indirectly through the mass media or directly by travelling abroad. The increase of international business enterprises also contributes to the transformation of social experience.

At the root of all of these developments lies a single factor, namely the discovery and exploitation of the massive oil reservoirs in Kuwait. It is the oil which has initiated all the many economic, political and social changes and which is certain to have a still more profound impact on the life of the Kuwaiti people in the future. Kuwait is recognised as one of the fastest changing countries in the world. The gap between the traditional society and modern life is already considerable and is bound to widen even further in the years to come.

The discovery of oil has attracted to Kuwait not only the whole apparatus of modern western technology but also a new ideology with its own distinct set of values. The Arab of the desert, clothed in the traditional dress of his ancestors and modelling his life on age-old traditions, is already a half-legendary figure. Western civilisation has reached all strata of Kuwaiti society by now.

The market is swamped with material goods and gadgets from western countries, and there are few families that cannot afford them and still fewer that would reject them.

For Kuwait the story of industrialisation begins in 1920 when Major Frank Holmes of the Eastern and General Syndicate Company became keenly interested in searching for oil in North-Eastern Arabia, especially in the small principality of Kuwait. [1] A tough and persistent New Zealander, he encountered numerous obstacles in his attempt to obtain oil concession from the Kuwaiti ruler because of the Shaikh's loyalty to his British protectors. He was bound by the 1899 agreement between Kuwait and Britain. However, in 1924, after extensive negotiations between Major Holmes, the British Government and the Kuwaiti Amir, agreement was reached to cede the exploration rights for the Neutral Zone south of Kuwait to him. But it was only in 1932 that the ruler of Kuwait, Shaikh Ahmad al-Jaber, signed the complete oil agreement between his state and Major Holmes' company, by which the latter acquired the exploration rights for the whole of Kuwait, except the old walled city itself. From that moment on Kuwait's future was decided.

At that time the Shaikhdom, like the other principalities along the western shore of the Arabian Gulf, still suffered from the detriments of a subsistence economy dependent on fishing, pearling and trade. The area of Kuwait is about 16000 square miles, excluding the Neutral Zone of featureless desert in the south separating Kuwait from Saudi Arabia. [2] Until the exploitation of oil which attracted

[1] See S. Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East (Oxford), 1968), p. 110

[2] R. Hay, The Persian Gulf States (Washington, 1959), p. 98 :
"The Shaikhdom as it exists now is roughly lozenge-shaped with a large portion cut out of the middle of it by the Kuwait Bay. Each side is about 90 miles long. It is bounded on the east by the sea, on the north and west by Iraq, and on the south by Saudi Arabia and the Neutral Zone."

large numbers of immigrants from other Arab and non-Arab countries the settled population was, as has been shown, very small.

The old town of Kuwait, running for some three miles along the southern shore of the Bay, was built on a site where no fresh water was available, and until 1953 all drinking water had to be delivered by boat from the Shat al-Arab in Iraq, or collected during the brief rainy season in small underground cisterns.

Understandably, water was and still is an expensive commodity. Shortly after the Kuwait Oil Company commenced drilling in 1945, a systematic and intensive search for water began, and since then more than seventy water wells have been drilled. The water drawn from these underground deposits was in most cases far too brackish to be drinkable, and the water problem remained unsolved until the huge sea water distillation plant was put into operation by the oil company in 1953. With a daily capacity of 800000 imperial gallons it was one of the largest plants of its kind in the world. For some time a considerable amount of water was piped into Kuwait town gratis.

In the same year the government of Kuwait opened its own distillation plant in Shuwaikh with a capacity of more than five million gallons a day. This capacity was increased to about 14 million gallons a day by 1969, the total production from the two distillation plants and natural ground water being ca. 47 million gallons a day. This caters for most of the domestic and agricultural demands at the moment, though the high rate of urban growth and industrialisation necessitate a rapid expansion of the water supply. With a projected population of two million people by 1990, the peak demand for water could amount to about 800 million gallons a day. [3]

[3] See C. Buchanan and Partners (eds.), Kuwait : Studies for National Physical Plan and Master Plan for Urban Areas (Kuwait, 1970), pp. 106ff

The rough environment forced the people in the old days to look to the sea for food and work and limited the choice of occupations to fishing, pearling, boat building and trading, the last of which earned the Kuwaitis a reputation for great honesty.

Boat building was an important industry, and the ocean-going booms were the Kuwaitis' special pride. Describing the picturesque scene at the harbour of old Kuwait, Z. Freeth writes : "The boats which took shape here were marvels of the carpenter's art, made with primitive traditional tools, but shaped into lines so functionally graceful that they were a delight to the eye." [4] Some of the ships were as big as 300 tons, and their distinctive features made them easily recognisable in ports as far as Zanzibar and Bombay.

In 1939 there were more than 10000 qualified deep sea sailors in Kuwait. [5] Most of them were of negro origin, the descendents of slaves, though now no longer enslaved themselves. Many others were of Iranian extraction. The sailors were drawn from the lower and middle classes of the population, whereas the captains, known as 'nakhoda', usually came from the prominent families.

The life of a sailor, especially when young and inexperienced, was incredibly harsh, and he barely managed to sustain himself on his meagre wages. As a rule, his entire possession often consisted of no more than the clothes he wore and perhaps one or two spare pieces.

[4] Z. Freeth and V. Winstone, Kuwait : Prospect and Reality (London, 1972), p. 93

[5] See A. Villiers, "Some Aspects of the Arab Dhow Trade", in : L. E. Sweet (ed.), Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East, vol. 1 (New York, 1970), p. 162

Many had not even a permanent home, but when on land sought shelter in the native bazaar (suq) where they spent the nights, if lucky, in a coffee shop or outside in the sand. During the monsoon, when ocean sailing was largely suspended, they often supplemented their income through pearling - a dangerous and nowadays unpopular occupation.

The principal motivation which made this difficult and hazardous way of life acceptable to a sailor was the hope to make substantial profits from smuggling (an important source of income), and his rarely ever achieved ambition to possess a small store of his own. No doubt he also derived some moral support from his religion and from the emotional security found in the cameraderie customary among seamen, and not least from the arresting promises of such alluring ports as Zanzibar and Bombay.

As for the Arab Bedouin, he has no flair for the seafaring life. His heart and soul are in the environment to which he has become habituated, viz. the desert which holds many attractions for him. Above all, only the life in the desert guarantees him the kind of freedom which he desires, and the continuation of such much appraised manly occupations as camel breeding, raiding (ghazu) and tribal warfare (harb).

Pearling, which used to be a second and seasonal source of income, even after the introduction of the cultured pearl, has almost ceased since the creation of opportunities for employment in the modern industries. With the discovery and subsequent exploitation of the oil, the shipyards, once so characteristic of Kuwait's waterfront, have almost all vanished. The enterprising owner-captains of the rich trading fleets were the first to foresee the tremendous changes that would take place and to profit by them.

The 'foundation year' of modern Kuwait was 1946, when Shaikh Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah ceremonially opened Kuwait's oil terminal and sent the first shipment of crude petroleum on its way. In a very restricted and cautious way, the ruler spoke of the "happy event which by the grace of God is for our future welfare" [6] - now three decades later even the most optimistic expectations have been surpassed. Kuwait has been thrust from the 16th to the 20th century in less than two generations. In the economic sector this dramatic change is best evinced in the total modification of the employment structure. According to the 1965 census merely about 570 Kuwaitis were engaged in fishing and agriculture, whilst over 25000 were employed in the various services and about 5000 in the commercial field.

With the exploitation of the oil, and the related growth of affluence, the old town of Kuwait has perished and been replaced by a modern centre of business enterprises and government departments. Although the oil industry, including all administrative buildings, have been kept well outside the city, about 20 kilometres to the south in Ahmadi the old buildings have had to yield to a vast network of asphalted roads with roundabouts laid out according to a long-term masterplan. New residential quarters have been constructed outside the former walls of the old town. Their place was taken by a huge belt of trees and gardens which separates the centre from the new suburb.

6 Z. Freeth and V. Winstone, op.cit., p. 173

With the money received as compensation for their old town property, acquired by the Government for demolition, the dislodged Kuwaitis built new residences on the lots allocated to them in the desert. At the same time new neighbourhood-units were constructed by the Government, and a welfare programme was introduced of which hospitals, schools and, most important of all, the water distillation plant, were the major projects. When in 1960 the first eight neighbourhood-units of different types - all complete with kindergarten, playground, shopping centre and mosque - filled the desert space between the green belt and the third ring-road which encompasses the old Kuwait from the northern beach to the southern beach, new residential quarters began to be developed on the sands between this third ring-road and the fourth.

These are the conspicuous physical manifestations of the fact that the country has undergone a radical transformation from a stagnant tribal community with subsistence economy to a super-affluent society with all the manifold advantages and simultaneous drawbacks of a complex exchange economy. The rising national and personal wealth created new demands and gave rise to new patterns of life which now seriously challenge the values of the traditional society. More than that, the phenomenal speed of industrialisation and technological development has triggered off a chain reaction of problems which in the western countries have led to the now widely recognised ecological crisis.

In the present context one important question remains to be answered. This is the question of the economic future of Kuwait. How long will the phenomenal affluence last? That the present prosperity and security is but ephemeral is realised by all Kuwaitis, and anxiety about their common future increasingly dominates their

thinking. This is reflected, for instance, in their recent high pressure economic policies (e.g. the accumulation of foreign reserves, fostering of rapid industrialisation, oil prize increases, curb of oil production, etc.) and also in their endeavours to forestall disaster by building up a well-organised public service - almost overnight as it were.

It is evident that the oil reserves will not last for ever. Although Kuwait holds about one quarter of the world's total proven oil reserves, it is also the fourth largest producer and the second largest exporter of oil in the world. It has been calculated that at the present rate of production (ca. 100 million tons annually) the flow of oil will dry up in less than 100 years. It is an open question whether the Kuwaitis will be able to harness their wisdom, skill and present affluence in time to safeguard their future prosperity and welfare during this relatively brief period of grace.

3. The Political Structure

The al-Sabah family which rules modern Kuwait is a branch of the famous Anazah tribe of Nejd. Their leader Sabah ben Jabir was elected in 1756 after the tribe had taken up its domicile in Kuwait. He established the dynasty in power today.

Kuwait's early political structure was a traditional one in which effective power was vested in an autocratic ruler who was traditionally chosen from the Sabah family. Governmental institutions were as good as non-existent. The tribal structure of Kuwait permitted the town notables to act as advisers to the ruler, but no more. As from the end of the 18th century the ruler also availed himself of British counsel, although Britain recognised Kuwait as an independent government as far as domestic matters were concerned.

Before Kuwait's independence in June 1961 the ruler was the final arbiter of most disputes, though he would often consult the community elders in conformity with the established tradition. His authority extended to all matters except those pertaining to religious categories which were decided by a group of Moslem scholars known as ulama. They were in charge of the educational system which consisted exclusively in traditional religious instruction. In certain cases the Amir would delegate authority to the merchants to settle commercial disputes among themselves. He permitted a wide latitude of individual freedom.

Tax was levied on real estate sales or rentals and amounted to one-third of the market value. The rate of customs to be paid on merchandise from abroad was likewise one-third of the sales price. Police functions were exercised by a group of bodyguards whose foremost duty was the protection of shops at night. Crime was rare among Kuwaitis.

The line of succession of the first six rulers of Kuwait was from father to son, yet hereditary succession has at no time been considered obligatory. On the death of an Amir, his successor was nominated by the people in the same manner in which Bedouin tribes traditionally chose their chiefs, viz. by selecting a member of the ruling family who had demonstrated in the past that he possessed the requisite qualities of personality, leadership and 'good luck'.

In the days before the oil brought sophistication to the economy and rapidly changed the character of the whole country, the rulers of Kuwait had to govern two distinct groups of people whose interests differed widely. The one was the town population, the other the nomadic Bedouin tribes. The townspeople, except

perhaps in the early period, always outnumbered the Bedouins. Whilst the former carried the economy, the latter safeguarded the country against possible invasions or raids by non-Kuwaiti Bedouins. In other words, they constituted the military power of the state. Though fewer in number, and poorer, the Bedouins enjoyed great prestige. According to Arab tradition they embody all the most admirable manly qualities, upholding as they do the desert code of honour and chivalry. Among the urban community many prominent merchants whose families had long since quitted the nomadic life took pride in their descent from free-roaming Bedouin ancestors. However, some of the people in the city would make a mock of the Bedouin's uncouth manners, while at the same time fearing their strength and temper.

Mindful of their own Bedouin origin, the Shaikhs of Kuwait always maintained the traditional link with the tribesmen. They had to combine a Bedouin's knowledge of the desert and a merchant's know-how of urban matters. By virtue of their whole education and upbringing their outlook was more akin to that of a desert chief than of a merchant. As leaders of the Bedouin armies they had to be completely familiar not only with the terrain of the desert but with every aspect of tribal life.

To keep the independent and freedom-loving nomads under control it was essential for a sedentary Amir to treat them with the respect commensurate with their aristocratic standing. He held open meetings, called mejles, so that he would be accessible to even the humblest of them. He had to be powerful enough not only to exact tribute but also to execute justice with speed and equity. At the same time he had to be generous with gifts and demonstrate

his friendly alliance by invariable hospitality. Thus treated, the desert dwellers were prepared to acknowledge the Shaikh's authority, pledge their allegiance to him, and pay him the honour due to a great tribal chief.

As regards the foreign policy of the Shaikhdom, no major change took place until the first few years of the rule of the seventh Amir of Kuwait, Shaikh Mubarak al-Sabah (1896-1916).

Mubarak, a man of action with an almost fanatical love for his country, saw Kuwait being hastened to its ruin by his half-brother's - Shaikh Mohammed's - acceptance of Turkish supremacy. He tolerated this disastrous situation until 1896 when he slew both his half-brothers, Mohammed and Jarrah, and seized the throne. [1]

During the first three years of his reign the position of the new shaikh was more than precarious since he not only had to fear the revenge of members of his own family, but also lacked sufficient external support. [2] Moreover, there was the serious threat from Turkey to be warded off. The ottoman empire naturally resented Mubarak for asserting without any concealment that Kuwait owed no allegiance to the Turks whatsoever. Unwilling to let Kuwait slip out of its sphere of influence, Turkey bestowed the title of 'quaimaquam' on Mubarak (January, 1897) which 'honour' was promptly rejected by the Shaikh.

1 See H.R.P. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours (London), 1956), p. 136

2 See Lorimer, Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, vol. 1 : Historical, part 1 B (Westmead, 1970), p. 1018

The following month the Turks sent a quarantine official to Kuwait and later a Turkish harbour-master accompanied by five soldiers arrived. Mubarak interpreted these actions as a military threat and approached the British Government for protection. Initially Britain, which had friendly relations with Turkey, was reluctant to intercede, but on 23rd January, 1899 a treaty was signed between Great Britain and Shaikh Mubarak which proved to be decisive to the course of Kuwaiti history. Because of its utmost importance I wish to quote it here, at least in part : "... The said Shaikh Mubarak ibn Shaikh Sabah, of his own free will and desire, does hereby pledge and bind himself, his heirs and successors, 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 of the British Government, and he further binds himself, his heirs and successors, not to cede, sell, lease, mortgage, or give his territory to the Government or subject of any other power without previous consent of Her Majesty's Government for these purposes ...." [3]

Great Britain thus became responsible for conducting the foreign relations of Kuwait and implicitly guaranteeing protection against military aggression. [4] Shaikh Mubarak entered readily into this agreement because he felt that Kuwait's continued independence could only be ensured by British protection. In making this important political decision he acted on his own initiative which

[3] Quoted in C.W. Hamilton, Americans and Oil in the Middle East (Houston, 1969), pp. 178-79

[4] See A.M. Abu-Hakima, "The Development of the Gulf States", in : D. Hopwood (ed.), The Arabian Peninsula : Society and Politics (London, 1972), p. 35

led to a certain amount of unrest among the leading families who expected to be consulted in a matter of such signal importance. Since he began to act more and more arbitrarily, consulting the community elders only when he wished, and then on his own terms, opposition on a limited scale began to surface. It came from two sources, the Moslem scholars and the mercantile notables. Many of the ulama resented the Shaikh's alliance with Britain since it disrupted the religious solidarity which they felt with the Ottoman Empire.

On the other hand, the notables' challenge to the Sabah family was motivated by their disenchantment with Mubarak's arbitrariness and autocratic demeanour. They sought to reassert their right to be consulted on matters involving serious decisions. The Shaikh responded by summoning - in 1914 - two prominent intellectuals, Shaikh Mohammed al-Shanqiti and Shaikh Hafiz al-Misri, and accusing them of treason.[5] He rounded up a group of people who were involved in the movement and punished them by extra taxation. The penalty was so harsh that some of them were forced to leave Kuwait for good.

Shaikh Mubarak ruled Kuwait for some twenty years under British protection until his death on 3rd January 1916. After Mubarak, his son Jabir acceded to the throne to rule the country for the brief span of one year; he died in February 1917. He was followed by his son Salim who governed Kuwait for four years. During his reign an important change in the political structure

[5] See A. al-Rashid, Tarikh al-Kuwait (Beirut, 1971), p. 240

took place. Since the time of Sabah I the political rule had been personal and autocratic, with only a minimum of delegation of authority. Under Shaikh Salim this form of government brought on an unnecessary war with Saudi Arabia, against the will of the people, which after his death in 1921 led the members of the Al-Sabah family to choose as the next ruler one who would be willing to assent to a council of advisers.

The choice fell on Shaikh Ahmad al-Jabir who acceded to the rule on 29th March 1921. As soon as possible the new Shaikh put into effect the changes in government which were demanded by the people of Kuwait, especially the merchant families. A legislative council, the Mejles al-Tashri, consisting of twelve members elected from the wealthy and middle class families, was instituted in 1938, for unknown reasons it failed in its mission. It was dissolved again at the end of 1939. However, its institution meant a first step towards democratic rulership in Kuwait. Afterwards the administration of the country was run in consultation with the merchant families. Shaikh Ahmad realised the need for developing the country's oil resources and accepted the change that would inevitably follow. At the same time he regretted the fact that some of the old customs of brotherhood and tribal leadership would be lost in the surge of technology and the concomittant social transformation.

Following Shaikh Ahmad's death in 1950, his cousin Shaikh Abdullah al-Salim ruled Kuwait for a period of fifteen years. He "bridged the gap from a rigidly tribal society to an industrial democracy, in which the power of the hereditary shaikhdom was no

longer total" [6], whilst his brother, the present ruler of Kuwait, Shaikh Sabah III, "led it into its present era of superabundance and creeping technocracy" [7].

In the years preceding independence day, Kuwait lacked an organised government. This situation was aptly described by Sir Rupert Hay :

> The system of Government is patriarchal and the high offices of State are held by members of the ruling family, each of whom conducts the affairs of the department entrusted to him with the minimum of financial or any other control by any central authority. In fact, each of these Shaikhs is a law unto himself, and there is much in the administration which depends on their relations with each other, their presence or absence from the State or the willingness of the Ruler to control their activities ... [8]

Under Abdullah al-Salim, Kuwait assumed full autonomy, as defined in the 1961 act known as the Treaty of Independence, and he was also responsible for the establishment of a provisional government through an appointed constituent assembly. Finally,

6 Z. Freeth and V. Winstone, op.cit., p. 212

7 ibid., p. 212

8 R. Hay, The Persian Gulf States (Washington, 1959), p. 101; quoted in H.M. Albaharna, The Legal Status of the Arabian Gulf States (Manchester, 1968), p. 19

in 1963 - with the election of the National Assembly - the constitution of the state of Kuwait was changed from absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchical system.

The constitution was drafted by an elected committee of five members of the Assembly, with the expert councel of the Egyptian Professor Uthman Khalil Uthman. It contains 183 articles in all, divided into five sections.

The Assembly is composed of the prime minister, fifteen cabinet ministers and thirty-four members of parliament. Membership includes both Shaikhs and commoners. The prime minister and his ministers need not be members of the National Assembly. General elections are held at four-year intervals. The prime minister, who is appointed by the Amir, is at present the crown prince, and four of the ministers likewise belong to the royal house. The Amir has the power both to adjourn the Assembly for not more than one month and to dissolve it. In the latter case, new elections must be held within two months. The Assembly cannot be dissolved twice on the same grounds. The Amir also enjoys constitutional immunity.

However, the constitution imposes definite restraints on the Amir's veto by demanding a two-third majority. It also limits his time to confirm or reject legislation to thirty days and in cases of urgency seven days only. Members of the Assembly may demand statements about matters of policy from any minister and, moreover, request a general debate on them. The Assembly may, furthermore, return a vote of no confidence with regard to any minister, except the prime minister, and also not with regard to the cabinet as a whole.

The constitution guarantees the basic freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, protection against illegal searches, and the right to education and employment. It does not, however, sanction the establishment of political parties, and hence the candidates for the National Assembly are required to stand as individuals.

The two-year delay between independence in 1961 and the enactment of the constitution is explained by the fact that after the termination of the 1899 agreement Iraq laid a claim to Kuwait which prevented Kuwait's admittance to full membership in the Arab League. However, on 20th July 1961 Kuwait was recognised as a fully sovereign state by all the Arab League states in opposition to Iraq. Finally, after the political overthrow of the government of 'Abd al-Karim Qasim on 8th February 1963 Kuwait's application for membership of the UN was also approved.

In December 1965 the Kuwaiti Government had to face a serious constitutional crisis which reflected the enduring tension between the ruling family, strongly represented in the Council of Ministers, and the opposition group in the National Assembly. The latter consisted at the time of eight Kuwaiti-born members of the Arab Nationalist Movement. In protest against what they regarded as non-Arab measures adopted by the pro-government Assembly, they handed in their voluntary resignation. On completing its four-year term of office, the National Assembly was consequently dissolved by Shaikh Sabah III, and on 25th January 1967 a new fifty-member Assembly was elected. This time, however, the opposition group (representing the Kuwaiti branch of the Arab Nationalist Movement) gained a mere four seats only.

This proved a great setback for the progressive group of Kuwaiti intellectuals. The Government was accused of interfering in the election, but these allegations were promptly denied and disciplinary measures were taken against several of the newspapers which supported the criticism of the Government. Subsequently six of the successful candidates, who would otherwise have represented the progressive voice in the new parliament, submitted their resignations.

The struggle for political power in Kuwait today is characteristic of the immense strains which are likely to occur at the outset of any novel experiment with democracy. In the case of Kuwait they are perhaps more accentuated in view of the considerable dichotomy which exists between the small size of the community and the huge financial resources and economic potential. At the moment it seems that the alliance formed in 1963 between the ruling family and its supporters and the newly emerged Kuwaiti educated middle class has temporarily at least become disunited again. Intellectual opposition in the present Kuwaiti parliament appears to be an urgent desideratum.

4. General Patterns of Family and Kinship in the Middle East and Kuwait in particular

The family in traditional Middle Eastern society has been characterised as displaying six distinct traits. It is extended, patrilocal, patrilineal, patriarchal, decidely endogamous and occasionally polygynous. [1] It is ordinarily headed by the father, and its membership comprises all his wives, his sons with their wives and children, his unmarried daughters and the granddaughters. The entire family which may consist of several dozen members resides together either in a cluster of neighbouring tents (in the case of a nomadic camp) or in a single house or several buildings located in the same area (in the case of a village or city).

On the death of the family head, the extended family splits up into as many new units as there are married sons, each of whom will then become the patriarch of a new and separate extended family.

Marriage customs, sex mores and the position of women are more or less analogous in the nomadic camp, the agricultural village and the town. Marriage is highly endogamous, the preferred union being between first cousins. The relationship between the sexes is governed by a rigid sex code which places special emphasis on female purity and chastity. Traditionally men still claim the right to kill their daughters or sisters, though not their wives, if caught in illicit sex relations. A man can easily repudiate his wife, whereas a woman faces a great many difficulties in obtaining a divorce. Although the Islamic divorce law makes certain provisions for women

[1] See R. Patai, "Nomadism : Middle Eastern and Central Asian", Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, vol. VII (1951), pp. 408-9

seeking a divorce, the societal pressure - the great shame attached to a divorce and in particular a divorced woman - effectively prevents her from bringing a suit against her husband. Economically, the extended family is the basic unit. It holds the common property, i.e. the camels and other livestock (in the case of nomads) or land (in the case of villagers). In the town, the extended family owns and manages the business by which its members jointly earn their livelihood.

The father figures as the master of the family. He is the recognised sole owner of all its property, and decisions of any importance are made by him. This does not exclude the possibility of occasional consultation with family members, though he reserves for himself absolute veto power. He is the axis of the familial kinship framework.

Since he is accountable to no one, a great latitude of behavioural freedom is allowed to him. He may, and not infrequently does, inflict corporal punishment on his wife, or stay away over night without having to explain his absence. He can also give away any part or all of the family property to whomever he chooses. Moreover, he is free to take up extramarical relations without having to fear public disgrace or ostracism, or the undermining of his authority within the family. He has the right to choose a husband for his daughters and also to arrange the marriage of a son. This concentration of power and authority in the father is counterbalanced by his family's right to, and expectation of, protection, security and care.

The authority of the head of the family is seriously curtailed only in one instance, namely when his mother is still

alive or when an unmarried or widowed elder sister lives with him. Should both mother and elder sister(s) be present, much authority is delegated to the mother. It is she who holds the reins of the household, and her son cannot make any important domestic or other decision without consulting her first.

Given that neither the patriarch's mother nor any unmarried elder sister lives in the household, the wife enjoys a position of relative authority and subtle psychological control. Her main objective is to manage the household property in such a way as to guarantee its preservation and thus to secure her own position, for she has no personal resources but is entirely dependent on the kin. As H. Rosenfeld quite rightly observed, "only by foregoing her rights in property does the woman enjoy kin rights" [2].

The position of the wife in the family reflects the subservient status of women in Muslim society in general. Although restrictions play a decisive role in her marital life, she is not totally dependent on her husband, since marriage does not cut the juridical and emotional bond with her father's family. She remains a member of the paternal household, a fact which is borne out by the custom that she continues to use her maiden name after marriage. She has the right to call her own kin for protection or to return to her father's or brother's house at any time and with the knowledge that she will be fully cared for.

[2] H. Rosenfeld, "On Determinants of the Status of Arab Village Women", Man, vol. 95 (1960), p. 67

Within her husband's family her main role is to supervise the running of the household, to bear him male children [3] and to care for their upbringing and education. She acts as a go-between in the communications between the head of the family and the children and grand-children. In return she expects to be kept properly by her husband, even if she has her own property. A woman is also legally entitled to inherit property from her husband, which amounts to one fourth of the total inherited estate if he leaves no children, or to one eighth in all other cases.

H. Rosenfeld, in his study on Arab village women, perceives of a continuous struggle for security between mother-in-law and daughter(s)-in-law which is occasioned by the fact that neither has a share in the family property but both are exclusively dependent on their kinsmen. This hypothesis is only conditionally applicable to Kuwaiti society. It is not useful in explaining the position of women in the kinship structure at the lowest and the upper end of the social spectrum. In the one case property is negligible and can hardly be considered a bone of contention; in the other case property cannot be the root of the struggle since both these female members of the family have their own property.

Extended families, linked together by blood ties, form a lineage. The lineage possesses certain shared properties, such as threshing floors, communal ovens, desert wells or land. Yet these properties, important as they are, do not constitute the real

[3] See D.F. Beck, "The Changing Moslem Family of the Middle East", in : Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures, ed. by A.M. Lutfiyya and C.W. Churchill (The Hague, 1970), p. 572 : "The Moslem woman's special prayer is : 'Sons, give me sons'."

asset of the lineage, but rather it derives its coherence, status and strength from the total number of its male members and the land owned. The size of the lineage determines its social importance. Besides its clear economic advantage for the constituent families, the lineage also grants the individual protection and security in times of crisis.

Since the blood bond is traced through the males of a lineage, who compose its fighting strength, the lineage has naturally more meaning for men than women. As a matter of fact, women harbour ambivalent feelings towards the lineage. The reason for this is to be sought in the fact that they marry into the lineage of their husbands whilst at the same time remaining always loyal members of their father's lineage. Blood purity of the lineage is given a prominent place in traditional Moslem society. The desire to keep the paternal lineage free from alien blood has led to the conventional marriage of first paternal cousins described below.

As far as the family organisation in Kuwait is concerned, scarcity of references,and in particular the fact that modern Kuwaiti society is a comparatively new phenomenon and that it has come under the impact of the West at an early phase in its development, greatly complicate any research. In view of these technical problems the present investigation had to be based on the assumption that the traditional family organisation in Kuwait was broadly commensurate with the traditional model typical of the Middle East in general. However, whereas in most instances the Middle Eastern extended family derived much of its cohesion from the joint ownership of land, in Kuwait the communal property comprised the various types of vessels

for trading, pearling and fishing. But this difference, arising from the fact that the Kuwaitis never engaged to any degree in agriculture or pasturage, does not in any way call into question the applicability of the socio-economic system current throughout the Middle East in the particular case of Kuwait.

The founding tribes of Kuwaiti society were of Bedouin extraction and operated the 'communal economy' characteristic of nomadic peoples. On settling down in Kuwait they were required to adjust themselves to the new socio-economic conditions. They had to abandon the customary raiding and camel breeding economy in favour of marine occupations such as fishing and pearling. This incisive switch in the economic structure, accompanied by equally important social changes, was only possible by way of sustained co-operation not only among the members of each family but also among the various lineages themselves. This traditional co-operative economy was centrally organised. Within the family all lines of power converged in the patriarch, and societal life as a whole was superintended by the ruling shaikh. There is, for instance, also a striking analogy between the head of a family and, say, the owner-captain (nakhoda) of a vessel; both represented unquestioned authority and executive power.

This staunch co-operation, based on mutual trust and shared responsibility, is a still recognisable, though no longer dominant, feature of modern Kuwaiti society. The new industrial environment has proven inimical to the continuation of this essential component of tribal life.

What, then, are the characteristic features of the traditional family in Kuwait? First of all, it belongs to the type known as 'extended family' which signifies a residential pattern in

which several categories of relatives live together in a single household. Frequently this extended to up to three generations : the senior male, his wife (if alive), any unmarried sisters, his married sons and their wives, unmarried sons and daughters, married daughters who are divorced or separated, grandsons and granddaughters. The family residence may include all of the above categories or only some of these. The joint household usually had a single manager, viz. the senior male, whilst the full responsibility for the actual running of the household lay in the hands of the senior female, who may be the wife or elder sister of the family patriarch.

Each family was economically independent, with its own limited resources. These were mainly derived from the traditional occupations, especially trading which was the most profitable form of business in Kuwait. The richer families would have one or more trading vessels, the less affluent specialised in fishing and pearling. Depending on the family profit the residence pattern ranged from a smallish house to a cluster of big houses adjoined to each other. The 'ideal' was to accommodate the extended family in a single house. Such houses would be one-storey buildings with a courtyard, a spacious common room, kitchen, one or two bedrooms for each unit within the extended family, a room for the women to spend their leisure hours and perhaps some rooms on the top of the house for the hot summer season.

This close-knit communal life in a single building or an assemblage of annexed houses raises the question of the dynamics of transactions between the various family members. Here one must, first of all, observe that the family is ideally and factually a microcosmic replica of traditional society. It perpetuates itself

through the generations without losing its innate homogeneity or structure. The tensions and underlying values remain constant, and change is confined to purely demographic details. The family unit is analogous to the community of believers. Both are structured according to sex, age and seniority, division of labour, public and private activities and are regulated under the leadership (spiritual and temporal) of the senior male (father/grandfather : the Prophet).

The structure of the house effectively channels familial interactions, minimising relationships of potential tension. It allows a degree of social distance, such as respect and formality between senior woman and daughter-in-law, to be maintained even in cramped spaces. So long as the head of the extended family is alive, moral pressures and social context tend to contain the internal frictions which inevitably occur as sons grow up and get married, etc. One could examine the constellations of moral values associated with family life which serve as a means of social control to preserve the integrity of the family.

Depending on the social position, wealth etc. of the family its values will vary - and with it the degree of constraint. The most controlled relation is that between male and female members, for which provision is made in the organisation of the house. The living area for adult males is strictly separated from that of the womenfolk. This pattern is static and permanent and part of the overall structuring of the social environment. Thus walls divide the family from the outside world; guests (outsiders) are allowed only limited access, i.e. to the diwaniyah or male 'public' room; and finally there is the internal segregation of male and female adults other than husband and wife.

This control through the affirmation of distancing also finds expression in the customary rules for veiling which demand that a woman covers her face from the brother-in-law and any other male. Veiling allows the physical movement necessary for the continuance of duties commensurate with social position. This can be understood in terms of degrees of control. A woman is allowed maximum freedom in the privacy of her own house (if she is a senior female), in her own room (if she is a junior wife, daughter, daughter-in-law). Minimum freedom exists outside the house, where behaviour is rogorously controlled. This is expressed also in physical terms (modesty code), viz. avert eyes, covered face, etc. The most extreme form of control is witnessed in the harim of a shaikh, sultan or caliph, etc. Once a woman entered the harim, she lost all rights to social contact outside the walls of her husband's house except for chaperoned visits to relatives.

This basic division between male-female severely structures the physical and moral world of the Middle East at large and extends from the family level up to the broadest social level. This dichotomisation portrays a conception of human nature which accords to the male such criteria as rationality, knowledge, culture, literacy and control, and to the female animality, irrationality, illiteracy and lack of control. This is backed up by religious sanctions, at least in their male version.

Male-female polarisation is the ideal informing social interaction. However, the aspirations for this ideal are not easily realised, wherefore the need arises to structure the social environment in order to maximise the possibility of achieving control. Points of particular stress threatening this established order are especially rigidly controlled. The male-female boundary is

experienced as the most acute threat to social and physical continuity. This has wider symbolic ramifications. Thus the submission to Allah demanded in Islam from the believer is analogous with the woman's submission to the will of the male :

Allah : Male	: :	Male : Female
submission		submission

To come back to the family setting. Structural conflict can be seen at any point in time, but it also undergoes continuous change in the course of time. There are specific moments when internal conflicts come out into the open, such as in marriage. This is clearly expressed in the stresses involved in the first cousin marriage customary in the Middle East. This form of union helps to maintain the family's integrity and particularly the solidarity between adult brothers whose individual and family interests and loyalties may be in conflict.

The practice of first cousin marriage was widely prevalent in Kuwait in the past. Obviously, it is a convenient custom in a society which offers young men and women no opportunity of meeting each other and of selecting their own partners. In the case of the aristocratic Arabs of both town and desert, it prevents marriage outside their social stratum, thus safeguarding the political and economic homogeneity of their extended families. The preference for this system of marriage lies in the fact that it is the only way to protect a family from any unwanted influx of alien blood. Through cousin marriage the property remains within a closed group, and there is a greater assurance of the stability of the marriage. [4]

[4] See A.H. Fuller, "The World of Kin", in : Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures, p. 530

The father's brother's son is considered to possess marital right over his cousin, and in those rare cases where he does not take advantage of this right, it is none the less necessary to obtain his permission for the cousin to be able to marry another man. The father cannot refuse to give his daughter in marriage to a cousin, even if marriage to another suitor would be economically more attractive. The only exception is when the cousin is feeble-minded or of disreputable character. Should a girl not have a first cousin she falls to the next nearest kinsman in the male line. Moreover, if the father gives his daughter in exchange for a woman he himself proposes to marry, cousin marriage becomes impossible.

The political and economic reasons for first cousin marriages are self-evident. The principal motivation is to keep the property within the family. Marriage to an outsider necessarily involves the transfer of family property to another family, and this is considered to enhance the economic susceptibility of the former. However, this argument would hold only if women were entitled to inherit a substantial amount of it, let us say, half the total property. But according to Islamic law she is entitled to only a small share from her father's estate, viz. equal to half of what her brother receives. If the deceased had more than one daughter, and no sons, then the daughters have the right to divide among themselves two thirds of the inheritance. [5]

The insistence on confining marriage to one family entirely ignores the fact that in the case of marriage to an outsider the female partner would bring to the husband's family her share from the

[5] See A.M. Lutfiyya, "The Family", in : Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures, p. 510

inheritance of her father's estate. No economic loss need be involved. However, Arab tradition has it that marriage should be among equals only, and no one is closer in status and sentiment than a paternal cousin. This type of marriage is thought to strengthen the kinship bonds. By giving his daughter in marriage to his brother's son, the father will be assured of the political and economic support of his brother's family. He will also gain influence over his patrilineal kinsmen, especially if he is the head of the lineage. It will raise his prestige and also guarantee him the loyalty of the family members.

Cousin marriage is important also for the young man in that marriage to a girl outside his extended family will involve uncertainty about the father-in-law's attitude towards him. On the other hand, the father who gives his daughter in marriage to her cousin has the security that he will be able to exercise control over his son-in-law and prevent any injustice or harm to his daughter. It is believed that this kind of marriage is assured of greater happiness and stability. One great advantage is also that the woman's children will remain within the lineage. As already mentioned, the tribe welcomes male children since it is the number of males which give it prestige and power.

With the rapid changes that are taking place in Kuwait today this type of marriage is on the wane. It is very rare among affluent middle class families for a marriage to be contracted without consultation of the two partners concerned.[6] They will have become acquainted previously, if only by sight. Nowadays it is customary

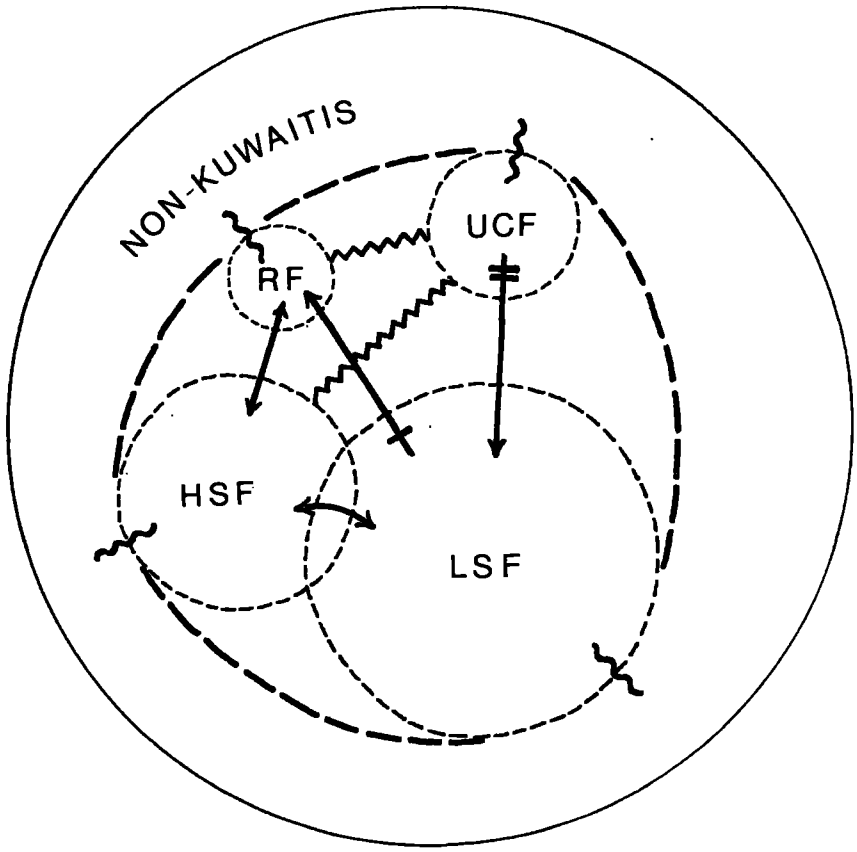
[6] See below p. 67

for them to enter a long-term engagement before getting married. The two main reasons for this change are the disappearance of the woman's veil and higher education which inevitably establishes closer contact between the sexes. Moreover, the general decline in the familial authority causes a relaxation of the traditional practice of forbidding family members to marry strangers. Today it is only the Royal Family which still refuses to give daughters in marriage to outsiders in order to protect its blood purity. But this rule does not apply to male members who are permitted to marry girls from other families since such marriages automatically raise the girl's social status. Cousin marriage is also still prevalent among Bedouins.

In the past it was in the parents' hands to arrange a suitable match for each child. In doing so they ignored both age and compatibility. But with the impact of higher mixed education, this age-old custom is gradually disappearing, and especially the women's age of marriage is rising, particularly among the well-to-do families where the demands of education clash with the customary early marriage arrangements.

5. The Stratification of Kuwaiti Society : Proposed Model

Both the interviews and the questionnaire are based on an implicit simplified model of the structure of Kuwaiti society which stands in need of explication prior to embarking on the analysis of the findings. Diagrammatically the model looks as follows :



Legend :

RF = Royal Family
UCF = Upper Class Families
HSF = Higher Status Families of the Middle Class
LSF = Lower Status Families of the Middle Class
↔ = mutual social interaction/intermarriage
≋ = relation of conflict
≈ = relation of ambiguity
⟷ = one-way supportive relation
⟷ = one-way political pressure

Spatial proximity in the drawing indicates the varying degrees of social distance between the constituents of Kuwaiti society.

As is evident from this diagrammatic representation, the model implies a clear separation between the non-Kuwaiti population and the nucleus of Kuwaiti citizens of both first and second degree citizenship. It defines the boundary between these two major components of Kuwaiti society at large as essentially one of ambiguity : The Kuwaiti people need the working power of the foreign population, but resent this dependence and experience the presence of the large body of aliens as a severe political threat to their future autonomy. The ambivalence is necessarily reciprocal. The foreigners are clearly aware of their low status in relation to the Kuwaiti population.

According to the present model this social dichotomy is repeated in the nucleus of Kuwaiti society itself. As can be seen from the diagram there is a pronounced rift between the Upper Class Families on the one hand and the remainder of the Kuwaiti citizens on the other hand. Whilst the relation between the Upper Class Families and the Royal Family together with the Higher Status Families of the Middle Class is one of conflict, the relation between the Upper Class Families and the large number of Lower Status Families of the Middle Class can be described as one of unilateral political pressure.

The division of the Middle Class into two sets of status groups can be explained historically. For the different status of these families derives from the esteem in which their forebears were held on account of their blood purity and traditional type of occupation. The role of the Royal Family at the present time can perhaps be described as a catalyst between the Upper Class Families and the rising Middle Class Families, especially those of the higher

status category. The Royal Family has good relations with the Middle Class and on a limited scale mixes socially with the Higher Status Families, and occasional intermarriage is not impossible. On the other hand, the Royal Family receives the support of the majority of the Lower Status Families which tend to identify the Royal Family as the mainspring of all the beneficial changes that have taken place in the post-oil period.

I shall now take a closer look at the three constituents of the mucleus of Kuwaiti society from which respondents for the questionnaire and the interviewees were drawn, viz. UCF, HSF, and LSF.

A. Upper Class Families

These are composed of five lineages of pure-blood Arabs from Nejd. They were the former mercantile families and had already in the pre-oil days amassed considerable wealth. Today they dominate the economy of Kuwait, with the exception of the oil industry which is the joint enterprise of the Royal Family and foreign business agencies. The relation of these families to the rest of Kuwaiti society proper can be depicted as follows.

In the past the Upper Class Families supported the Royal Family economically in return for a share in the political authority. Today this always latent opposition has given way to an undisguised struggle for power and supremacy. Social intercourse between these two categories is strictly limited, and intermarriage is not practised at all. Since the Higher Status Families of the Middle Class fraternise with the Royal Family, the rich Upper Class Families turn to the Lower Status Families for political support, as is plain from

their policies during election campaigns. The Upper Class Families are clearly uneasy about the growing influence of the Higher Status Families which are no longer in need to them economically. They see in them a more and more realistic rivalling power in their competition for political supremacy. The Upper Class Families perpetuate an ideology of deliberate social encapsulation on the basis of a claim for racial superiority, of which the system of strict endogamy is the most obvious aspect. Their concern for the Lower Status Family is ephemeral and confined to their political exploitation to gain greater control in the government.

The Upper Class Families favour strong conservative attitudes which is evident from their clear preference for the extended family type, the great degree of paternal authority, and their ambivalent attitude towards modern education. The inherited high social status and the enormous affluence of these families readily permits them to perpetuate the traditional values and norms characteristic of their previous 'feudalistic' position. In other words, they can afford to remain ignorant. Hence the small percentage of UCF children who have undergone or are undergoing higher education.

B. Higher Status Families of the Middle Class

In the period before the oil, these families were engaged in sailing, fishing and pearling, where they occupied the upper occupational ranks. The Lower Status Families, on the other hand, supplied the labour force for more menial jobs. A portion of the Higher Status Families is of pure Arab origin, while others have a

mixed background, possibly with a Persian or Iraqi strain. The present ratio between these families and the Lower Status Families is about 1 : 2.

Among them is to be found the highest rate of literacy. They supply the professionals, such as lawyers, doctors, engineers and government officials etc. These families mix freely with both the Lower Status Families, the Royal Family, and also the Upper Class Families. Thus they represent the most contact-rich and versatile section of Kuwaiti society. There is a high degree of solidarity among the members of these families without the disadvantages of the extreme introversion of the Upper Class Families.

Unlike the Upper Class Families which prefer independent households, but in close proximity, the Higher Status Families show a distinct trend towards the establishment of nuclear families at a reasonable distance from the paternal home. Needless to say, their attitude towards education is uniquivocally positive, and they are fully aware of the function of education in maintaining and further enhancing their independence from the Upper Class Families for whom they were once forced to work. It is among this group that, as a result of higher education abroad, a core of progressivists is emerging who have done away with many of the traditional norms and biases and are open to the influx of western values and ideas.

C. Lower Status Families of the Middle Class

Formerly constituting the bottom stratum of the labour force, they now fill the lower ranks of the military and police and supply the host of porters at hospitals and schools, taxi drivers, postmen, filing clerks etc. Their relative lack of education prevents them from moving up in the social hierarchy and improving their economic situation.

Also, one of the most important points which separates them from the other groups is their mixed descents; they are not of pure-blood Arab origin. Although their lot has been greatly improved by the generous governmental provisions, these families nevertheless are still forced to operate a fairly tight household economy. In their traditionalist outlook they are comparable with the Upper Class Families, but stand in stark contrast with the highly educated group of modernists among the High Status Families.

One more important factor needs to be mention. The social segregation, as sketched above, is corroborated by the residential patterns in Kuwait city and its immediate surroundings. The manifest schism between the Kuwaiti citizens and the foreign population has its equally apparent correlate in the housing arrangements. This has been recognised by A.G. Hill who writes :

> "One aspect of the duality introduced into Kuwait by sustained immigration of foreign nationals is the differentiation of Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis by place of residence. Kuwait City, containing

298,701 of Kuwait's 1965 population within the fourth ring road, is the principal centre where citizens and immigrants reside in close proximity (...). The two groups (...) were strongly segregated by place of residence.

Two major factors are involved in the evolution of this pattern. First, non-Kuwaitis are not permitted to own land, property, or business in Kuwait and so must rent their accommodation from Kuwaitis. The principal areas of new housing for higher status non-Kuwaitis are in the Hawalli and Salimiya suburbs while for lower status non-Kuwaitis the Old City provides suitable accommodation. Secondly, Kuwait City has been expanded very quickly by the purchase from individuals of land and property within the Old City by a government agency, 'Amlak al-Hukuma. Inflated prices paid by the state to individual Kuwaitis have provided the necessary capital for the building of new housing in strictly planned suburbs. Thus Kuwaitis have moved from the Old City to the new suburbs, but non-Kuwaitis, excluded from the disbursal of funds to property owners in the Old City, and therefore unable to build or own new houses in the planned suburbs, have been left to fill vacancies in the Old City or to live in newer accommodation in the less closely controlled suburbs of Hawalli and Salimiya.

Outside the capital, the proportion of Kuwaitis increases in the smaller and more remote settlements." [1]

Important as these observations are, they ignore the important differences in the residential patterns among the Kuwaiti nationsl themselves. These do undoubtedly exist, though no research has been undertaken which could be quoted in support of the following merely tentative statements. Thus the Royal Family can be said to reside mainly in the district of Shamiyah, whereas the Higher Status Families are mostly to be found in the port area. The Lower Status Families, on the other hand, are scattered throughout most of the districts outside the Old City, though very few reside in the port area, and there are also not many families of this category to be found in Shamiyah and Khaldiyah. The exact distribution figures and the reasons for these patterns still need to be ascertained in future research.

[1] A.G. Hill, "The Gulf States : Petroleum and Population Growth", in : Populations of the Middle East and North Africa, ed. by J.I. Clarke and W.B. Fisher (London, 1972), pp. 254-56.

PART TWO

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

1. Methodology

The data presented in this section represent the results of an investigation carried out among girl students of the University of Kuwait in 1971. The purpose of the study was to examine the social factors of influence in determining the attitudes and aspirations of these girls in respect to marriage, family life and career. The sample selected for this survey consisted of Kuwaiti nationals only who were registered with various faculties of the recently opened University (1966) and with the Teachers Training College. The former students are hereafter referred to as UG (University Graduates), the latter as TTCS (Teachers Training College Students).

A stratified random sample was obtained comprising 96 students of the several faculties in their first, second and third year of study, and 30 TTCS in their first and second year. Personal interviewing and participant observation were the research techniques employed. The problem of interpreting the findings adequately was constantly present, not in the least because the interviewing schedule included a number of open-ended questions which permitted shadings of feelings and opinions to be expressed more freely. While this has added to a better understanding of each individual, the group was sufficiently homogeneous also to permit generalisations with regard to their main problems arising from the changes that were taking place in their family life.

The interviews gravitated around eleven leading questions, of which the first three were designed to gain some preliminary information about (a) the mother's age of marriage and her educational background, (b) the father's income, and (c) the composition of the household of the girls' families. Questions 4-11 were intended to elicit responses to the following specific issues : (Q.4) The girl's attitude towards modern education; (Q.5) her choice of career; (Q.6) her opinion on what constitutes the first and foremost destination of a modern girl; (Q.7) her personal assessment of the degree of freedom permitted to her in comparison with male relatives; (Q.8) her attitude towards the custom of arranged marriage; (Q.9) her ideal marriage partner; (Q.10) her opinion on the custom of dowry; and (Q.11) her opinion on the possibility of her taking a job after marriage.

2. Historical Background

Prior to embarking on a more detailed discussion of the present-day position of women in Kuwait, it seems desirable to briefly outline the conditions in the past in order to assess the extent of the changes that are taking place.

In the past the social position of women in Kuwait was, in keeping with Middle Eastern tradition in general, considered to be naturally inferior to that of men. Most of the Kuwaiti girls received little special attention in their childhood. Parental attention was to a large extent focussed on the male offspring, since boys were regarded as more important for the family's continued existence and socio-economic viability than girls.

Everything in the girls' social surroundings reminds them of this fact. Unmarried girls were expected to stay at home to help in the household, to supervise the younger children and, above all, to unconditionally obey parents and elder brothers. The girl's freedom was negligible and strictly confined to within the boundaries of home life. Through marriage she became a man's property and was expected to yield implicitly to her husband's control and authority. If she was lucky enough to possess property of her own, with marriage this was transferred to the husband. She was expected to cope with the children's upbringing and serve her parents-in-law as well as the other members of her husband's family.

A girl received little or no formal education, her training being primarily in the household arts. She was required to conform to the traditional mores and had no right to make any personal decisions concerning her own life. She had, above all, no voice in the selection of her future husband. The standard procedure was for the parents to make all the necessary arrangements and for the girl simply to obey. After marriage the husband replaced the father and resumed his role as sole controller and director of her life. She was expected not to protest against any of her husband's decisions or to do anything without his prior permission. Unmarried girls were carefully guarded against any contact with males other than members of the immediate family. Even to be seen by a stranger entailed some element of shame and dishonour. Thus social control in women's life was both exceedingly marked and constant.

How does this common practice compare with the normative behaviour called for by Islamic tradition? A brief review of the Islamic attitude towards women is important because Islam is still a dynamic force in the preservation of the traditions, customs and laws in Kuwait. It must be emphasised that I am not here concerned with pure Islamic concepts or their different orthodox interpretations, but with actual Islamic practice as evident in the social attitudes of its adherents.

Islam appeared in history as a revolution against certain tribal traditions, and it laid the foundations of a new system of human relations designed for the benefit of the society as a whole. The innovations introduced by Islam also affected the position of women in the Middle East. In fact, it was the novel ideology of Islam which liberated women from the then current male oppression and persecution. Thus, for instance, it abolished the cruel practice of burying alive unwanted daughters under the age of seven. Above all, it revolutionised the inheritance laws in that it acknowledged a woman's right to inherit property from her husband, children, parents or brothers.

> Legally speaking, such transfer of property is supposed to follow a complicated formula stated in the Qur'an. A girl, for example, is entitled to share from her father's estate equal to half of what her brothers (sic) receive. If the deceased father had more than one daughter, and no sons, then the

> daughters have the right to divide among
> themselves two-thirds of the inheritance.
> If only one daughter survived her father,
> she inherits half of what he leaves. [1]

Further detailed specifications take into account a great variety of circumstances. Islam also granted a girl the right to refuse marriage to a person for whom she has no liking.

However, most of these gains remained on a purely conceptual level. The close connection of Islam with Bedouin society prevented more dramatic changes in the actual social practice, and women continued to be regarded as inferior to men in social rank and mental aptitude. Thus, for instance, it is stipulated in Sura I. 282 that the testimony given by a single woman in the law-courts cannot be considered as legally valid evidence since there is the possibility that memory fails her or that she lacks descriptive skill to portray a situation adequately. For a woman's testimony to be legally valid, the presence of another woman and a man as witnesses is required. Islamic tradition also charged the man with the protection of the woman on account of his greater physical, financial and mental capabilities allowing him to assume full responsibility.

Whereas the male lived in two different worlds - that of his family and that of his work - a woman was confined to the narrow environment of the household. She acted and interacted under the close supervision of the man and had no real contacts with society

[1] A.M. Lutfiyya, "The Family", in : op.cit., p. 511.
The author's statement requires correction on one point, viz. the daughter is entitled to only one half of the share of her brother, or to one fourth if there are two brothers. In other words, she will always receive only one half of the share of one of her brothers. See Quran, IV, 11.

at large. Only on two occasions was she permitted to interrupt her permanent house arrest; first when she left her father's house to enter the household of her husband, and then when she was carried to her tomb. Thus, woman was culturally deprived. Even if she lived twice as long as her husband, her symbolic environment remained incomplete.

The human personality needs socio-cultural interaction in order to develop. This possibility was denied to women by the prevalent value system of Kuwaiti society. She was unable to develop her social sense and public skills and to grow into an emotionally mature person. This still holds true of contemporary Kuwaiti society.

Woman is effectively prevented from realising her potential. This repressive attitude is most apparent in the denial of her right to sexual satisfaction. From childhood on she is taught that sexual desires bring shame and disgrace on her and hence must be controlled under all circumstances. This suffocation of the sex instincts is considered necessary in order not to mar her respectibility. On the other hand, she is expected to satisfy the carnal desires of her husband whenever he summons her.

But sexual repression is merely one aspect of woman's general dispossession of the right to be herself and think and feel freely. And no number of clever slogans such as "The woman is the one half of society" or "Woman is equal to man"- as perpetuated by the mass media - can blind one to the fact that social practice denies woman the right to self-expression. These slogans are designed to cast an invincible cordon around the women's incipient initiatives to shake off the social strait jacket in which the patriarchal Arab society imprisoned them for so long.

It appears that the only avenue open to women for improving their social status is to take their place in the sphere of production and become economically independent. For there appears to be an intimate link between the status of woman and her economic and productive capacity.

3. Women's Education and Social Status

The oil industry which initiated a great many changes in the life of Kuwaiti people also affected the social role of women. But what kind of impact has this had on the women's status?

Probably the most incisive event for Kuwaiti women was the establishment of a primary school for 140 girls in 1937. This was the beginning of women's education in Kuwait, which newly conferred right included University education. By 1951, when the first secondary school was opened in Kuwait, there were 2447 female students in all. Seven of these matriculated at the University of Cairo. By 1966/67 there were 43020 girl students below University level - which is sixty times the figure for the first year of female education.

Education in Kuwait is free for both boys and girls of all nationalities and extends from the Kindergarten to the University. It includes not only tuition but also school meals, books, transport, health services and school uniforms. Compulsory education comprises the two stages of primary and intermediate schooling, together totalling eight years. During these two phases segregated but on the whole equal educational facilities are provided for both sexes. Secondary education, again in exclusively male or female schools, consists of a four year course of study and is of two types :

(i) qualifying for admission to the various faculties of the University, and

(ii) vocational, either commercial or technical.

The University of Kuwait was established in 1966. It provides Colleges for the Sciences, Arts and Education separate for male and female students. Previously the Ministry of Education regularly sent a number of students, male and female, for further qualification to other Arabic or European Universities. Out of a total of 886 Kuwaiti students entering the University in the first year of its establishment, 170 were girls. They attended the various courses in the women's college established in separate buildings with their own boarding house and playgrounds. This area is surrounded by walls and situated at some distance from the central buildings of the University. In the academic year 1969/70 the number of female students increased to 838, almost equalling that of the male students (875). [2] In the academic year 1970/71 the number of female students further increased to 1040. In addition, the number of Kuwaiti female graduates who returned from abroad in the same year amounted to 66 (from U.A.R.) as against 88 male graduates, and to two (from U.K.) as against 20 male graduates.

Mention must be made of the fact that 10% of the University students are non-Kuwaiti, mostly from the Arabian Gulf principalities who have obtained scholarships from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education. A boarding house has been built on the premises of the University to accommodate these foreign students.

[2] See Statistical Abstract 1972, publ. by the Planning Board of Kuwait.

As far back as 1961 the first TTC was opened offering a three years' course for those who had completed their intermediate schooling. The course qualified both male and female students to teach in the Kindergarten and primary schools. The increase in the number of secondary schools involving a relatively higher rate of establishment of girls' schools (the ratio being 1 : 3 in 1963/64 as against 5 : 8 in 1969/70) had its immediate effects on the growing population of girl students in the TTC.

When the girls selected for this study were born, desert covered the area of their present residence, and their parents started to convert the barren land into an habitable zone when they were infants. They grew up fully accustomed ~~with~~ to the newly created environment, such as the asphalt roads with their motorised traffic and the convenience of tap water and air conditioning. As a matter of course they took advantage of proper school education and, now approaching the age of twenty, they choose higher education rather than the yoke of marriage and the responsibilities of early motherhood. Their mothers, on the other hand, as a rule were married either immediately after the onset of puberty or before the age of eighteen. Some of the girls were not familiar with their mother's age and could only say that "she got married rather young".

Their mothers' schooling still consisted mainly in the learning and recitation of the Quran. Hence it is not really surprising that the majority are illiterate in the contemporary sense of the term. However, a surprisingly high number of them - about 28%) availed themselves of the facilities provided by the Government as part of its Adult Education project started in 1961. The rapid increase in the number of illiterates attending the evening classes of the study centres for women, organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, prompted these centres to raise their standard

of teaching. The educational programme was divided into primary and intermediate stages where women were taught Arabic, English and other general subjects.

Even in 1970, when school education and adult education had been in full swing for several years already, 62.7% of the Kuwaiti female population (10 years and over) were still illiterate. [3] The comparative figure for the male population was as low as 32.1%. These figures vindicate the finding below that the families of the present sample of girl students belong to the more privileged sector of Kuwaiti society.

Indexes of the socio-economic status of the families of these girl students were the profession and income of their fathers or guardians. Of these, 38 fathers of UG and 12 fathers of TTCS were government or municipality employees. Some had attained to a high rank, while others remained on the lower echelon, but not in the lowest. (The monthly salaries in the Kuwaiti civil service range from 300 - 400 dinars for superior posts and from 120 - 275 dinars for senior posts.) 49 fathers of the UG and 12 of the TTCS were in business or commerce. The profession of nine of the fathers of the UG remained obscure (categories A and B) and six held lower status jobs. This information can be tabulated as follows :

Income in Kuwaiti Dinars	UG Fathers	TTCS Fathers
(A) 100 - 199	20	6
(B) 200 - 399	30	7
(C) 400 - 599	16	5
(D) 600 - 999	6	-
(E) 1000 and above	14	-
(F) unspecified (but high income)	10	12
total	96	30

[3] See Statistical Abstract 1973, publ. by the Planning Board of Kuwait

In terms of the model of social stratification as developed on pages 40-47 , these income categories can be translated as follows :

Income category	Family status	UG Fathers	TTCS Fathers
(A)	LSF	18 = 17%	6 = 20%
(A)	HSF	2)	-
(B)	HSF	30)	7)
(C)	HSF	16) = 64%	5) = 40%
(D)	HSF	6)	-
(E)	HSF	14)	-
(F)	UCF	10 = 9%	12 = 40%
	total	96 = 100%	30 = 100%

Several striking facts emerge from these tabulations. First, among the UG the low income category (A) is constituted almost exclusively by members of the group of LSF. Only two girls came from HSF, as was evident as in all other cases from their family names. Second, the overwhelming majority (64%) of girls came from HSF. Third, in those ten instances where no information on the father's income was given, the respective girl belonged to one of the five UCF. The one-to-one correlation between income and family status proved valid also in the case of the TTCS. Fourth, whilst among the fathers of the UG a relatively high number held high offices in one of the government services (see income categories C-E), in the case of the TTCS fathers, the categories D-E remained vacant. Fifth, on the other hand, there was an extraordinarily high percentage (40%)

of the girls who came from the UCF. This can readily be explained by the fact that illiteracy is highest among the UCF and that the children of these families in general find it difficult to achieve in school, and hence a greater number of them are more suited to the TTC rather than the University, the standards of which are considerably higher. It is also clear from these tables that few of the children of the LSF attend the University or Teacher Training College.

Mention has been made of separate schools for girls and separate evening classes for women, implying a segregation in the activity of men and women. It is not long ago that women of the upper strata families (HSF, UCF) never left their houses except for occasional visits to relatives and, perhaps, once a year for a picnic with their families in the desert during spring time. On all these occasions they were invariably veiled with the large black 'abaya' which covered their body from head to toes and merely left an opening for the eye region. But nothing could be more misleading than to infer from the fact that today the veil is no longer in use among these families - although some older women still continue to wear it - that the segregation between the sexes has disappeared as well.

On account of the general affluence and the unlimited availability of motor cars, most of the families of these girl students are in a position to place a car at the disposal of the women in the household. Thus the mothers are enabled to go to their various social gatherings - generally for the promotion of some cultural or welfare activities - in the privacy of a car without having to use public transport. But apart from the small group of prominent and well-to-do families who lead a mixed social life and also go frequently abroad, women's movements are still very restricted in public life.

Although the students, as I had time and again the opportunity to observe, were strolling about in the courtyards of the women's College to bridge the time gap between lectures, wearing clothes after the latest fashion, and although they had up-to-date hairdoes and were experienced in make-up; and although their behaviour seemed entirely carefree and unrestricted - nevertheless, all these grown-up girls had to wait inside the College gates for the College bus or for the family car to pick them up and drive them home. Nobody was permitted to enter the premises without prior permission of the gate keeper in charge of this barrier. The staff of the University had to come the long distance from the central University buildings in order to duplicate for the girl students the lectures they had given previously to the male students.

The contrast and contradiction between the fact that these girls were free to make full use of the new educational facilities and the simultaneous strict control maintained over their activities outside the College and the home is highly significant. For it expresses the families' preoccupation with their daughters' future marriage. Formal education is increasingly more regarded as a means of augmenting the value of a girl as a future wife. The idea of education as a social security for the girl possibly comes as an afterthought.

In a world ruled by men who incline to see the ideal woman mainly as a devoted housewife and mother, the parents' worry about their daughter's reputation should not be surprising, nor the fact that they should wish to give her the best possible education and thus make her more attractive to possible suitors.

However, the conclusion that the above restrictions on free social intercourse are absolute and all-pervading would be erroneous. The girls' academic life supplied proof to the contrary. They attended several mixed functions of the University and were even eligible to become members of the Students' Union Committee. They also attended other mixed gatherings. It was evident that the egalitarian ideology accompanying higher education for all was carried out by the University authorities with conviction and great prudence, fully taking into account the prevailing social prejudice. Public opinion would evidently still have to shift a great deal before the girls could be regarded, and could regard themselves, as equal to man and without being in need of special 'protection'.

Being part of the society, the girls themselves were not free from the traditional prejudice regarding women, although the influence of their academic training as well as the changing relations between the members of their families in a predominantly conjugal household pattern was clearly discernible in their attitudes towards the immediate life problems. Not inclined to reject indiscriminately the traditional mores, but rather assessing them along with the new alternatives offered by the changing circumstances, the girls were apt to carefully weigh the pros and cons of the new values.

Thus, for instance, when asked about the desirability of co-education, their opinions were in many cases subtler and more complex than a simple 'in favour of' or 'against' as is clearly indicated in the following table :

Attitude towards co-education	UG	TTCS
In favour at all stages	55	7
Partly in favour	29	12
Not in favour	10	10
No opinion	2	1
total	96	30

These figures show a marked difference in attitude between the two categories of students (UG/TTCS). While the undergraduates (UG) tended to be more in favour of co-education at all stages, the TTCS showed greater reluctance in their judgement on this matter. This may be partly due to the fact that on the whole the UG were recruited from the HSF whose fathers had acquired a more liberal outlook and were more realistic about the inevitable consequences of the present education of their daughters. In the case of the TTCS the reason for their more evenly distributed opinion may be the result of the fact that they were all preparing themselves for the teaching profession which would confront them immediately with the problems implied. Whether they would actually take up work as teachers after completion of their studies did not, as will be shown. depend exclusively on their personal preferences and desires.

Choice of career	UG	TTCS
Teaching	73	27
Civil Service	12	-
Business	7	-
Social work	4	-
Undecided	-	3
Total	96	30

Significantly, 27 of the TTCS stated that they would prefer teaching as a career; the remaining 3 were students who under-achieved in the final examinations and were undecided about their future career. The UG, with their several subjects of study, formed a less homogeneous group. They were more divided in their choice of an eventual career. Yet even among them a substantial proportion of the votes went to the teaching profession. This can be explained by the fact that (a) teaching is considered by most of the parents of these girls as more 'respectable' than any of the other alternatives and (b) it has an excellent payment structure with two months' paid holidays a year. However, some expressed their interest in a career in the civil service (all of them HSF), business (all UCF) and social work (partly LSF and HSF) - all choices not opted for by the TTCS. The 3 girls who were undecided belonged to the UCF. It is not really surprising that the majority of votes went to the teaching profession, since it is not only most intimately related to the traditional role of the female as mother and educator but also guarantees an exclusively feminine sphere of activity.

When asked what they considered to be the first and foremost destination of a girl today, the majority of the UG (63) answered marriage amd motherhood. The percentage within the three status groups (UCF, HSF, LSF) was between 65-70% in each case. Among the TTCS only 12 out of 30 girls opted for this alternative, the majority coming from the UCF girls (ratio 2 : 1). Those who replied that a woman must get educated first to be able to "bring up her children properly" and "make useful citizens of them" took marriage and motherhood for granted. In acknowledging school education as a new

element in the preparation of women for this role, they diverged completely from the traditional criteria of feminine accomplishments to which their mothers were accustomed. This progressive group consisted in both categories of students predominantly of HSF girls (ratio 2 : 1 for UG and less for TTCS).

Opinion on the first and foremost destination of a modern girl	UG	TTCS
Marriage and motherhood	63	16
Education first to improve the lot of her children	33	14
total	96	30

This altered perception of the mother's role will no doubt contribute in putting her on equal footing with the father and also in changing her relations with her own children. The pace of change appears to be sufficiently rapid to warrant the speculation that the present generation of modern educated girls may before long be regarded by men as dangerous rivals in the occupational world. At present, however, with the separate schooling system and the persistent segregation of the sexes which prevents closer cooperation among the educated Kuwaiti men and women, the threat of competition is still felt only by the numerous foreigners who hold responsible positions in the fields of education, governmental services and in business. It is evident that the present educational facilities so lavishly offered to Kuwaiti boys and girls are primarily aimed at the early replacement of qualified foreigners by Kuwaiti nationals with equal skills and abilities.

Nonetheless, for the time being the girl students are still in a rather vulnerable position, as appears from their negative replies to the question as to whether they were as free in their movements as their brothers.

Opinion on degree of freedom permitted in comparison with brother, and attitude to it		UG	TTCS
Less freedom		73	30
Same degree of freedom		23	-
	total	96	30
Restriction accepted		54	24
Not accepted		19	6
	total	73	30

The overriding majority of the UG and all of the TTCS stated that they were allowed less freedom. Those 23 girls among the UG who claimed that they had the same degree of freedom all came from the HSF, That virtually none of the TTCS made such a claim may partly be due to the fact that there is a certain amount of social mixing among the UG whilst the TTCS have no opportunity of this kind in the College; the boys' TTC being situated in a different district of Kuwait city.

That about 75% in each category of students 'accepted' this restrictive situation may be regarded as evidence for their sense of reality in respect to present social norms. I have apostrophised the word 'accepted' since their attitude was quite

evidently more one of resignation than wholehearted acceptance. Some of the answers were, "Well, we can't change anything anyway", "Perhaps we wouldn't even know what to do if we had more freedom", "We'll lose our reputation if we behaved differently than is expected of us", etc.

This attitude of resignation to the prevalent social restrictions is corroborated by their various qualifications of their judgements on the matter of co-education. Those few girls who expressed their disagreement came mainly from the HSF (17 out of 19 UG; 5 out of 6 TTCS). They were unable to give logically coherent explanations for their attitudes. But their dissatisfaction with the present social bias on segregation of the sexes would seem to indicate a nascent protest involving a deviation from the traditional family pattern but without any proper and adequate outlet and direction as yet.

This was nowhere more obvious than in the case of the changing attitudes regarding marriage. It has already been pointed out that practically none of the girls, with a median age of 19-20, was married. However, all of the students expected to get married after completion of their present studies, i.e. at the age of 23 or thereabout.

All admitted that their marriage would be arranged by their parents but, with the exception of four UG (from the UCF), they expected to be consulted beforehand. Whilst no girl had any objection to the marital state, a definite majority in both categories of students did, however, disagree with the custom of arranged marriage. The composition of this majority group was as follows : 86% of the HSF among the UG and 100% among the TTCS. The other two status groups in both categories of students were between 50-66%. Nevertheless,

it was accepted by roughly one-third of the UG and one-fourth of the TTCS. The latter rationalised their acceptance by repeating that a girl was too inexperienced to choose for herself, that parents knew better what was good for them, and that they were also better informed about potential candidates than they could ever be themselves. Despite the relative freedom granted during their college education, they had only restricted social contact under the strict supervision of a female chaperone.

Attitudes towards marriage	UG	TTCS
Expect to get married	all	all
Expect to have marriage arranged	all	all
Expect to be consulted by parents	92	all
Disagreement with custom of arranged marriage	67	23

An established system by which the unmarried young people of both sexes can meet each other on socially approved and relatively informal terms without commitment for the future is still lacking in Kuwait.

The impact of traditional views and customs regarding marriage was clearly discernible in the answers of the minority group. On the other hand, the substantial majority gave evidence of more independent thinking in their protest against the system of arranged marriage, arguing that they were able to shoulder their own responsibility and that they were in a better position than their parents to choose the right marital partner. Nonetheless,

all of these vaguely rebellious girls thought it wise to consult their parents before making any decision.

There can be two reasons for this ambivalence. (i) They were level-headed enough to weigh the real possibilities of the existing situation and (ii) they did not equate marriage with romantic love as they knew it from novels and films. They may well have harboured phantasies about 'falling in love' but were realistic enough to know that romance and marriage were two different things and very often irreconcilable.

Hence the majority thought of marriage with a certain preferred type of man rather than with any one man in particular.

The departure from traditional criteria of feminine accomplishment, already referred to, cannot be regarded as an isolated phenomenon but must be related to the changing preferences as regards the qualities of the male marriage partner. The girls, though still aware of such qualities as lineage, placed greater emphasis on their future partner's personal achievements (education, occupation). Over and beyond this social criterion, the girls hoped to find husbands with such preferred personal qualities as good character and morals, occasionally adding that they should also be strict Moslems. Good looks were also appreciated.

These responses are interesting in several respects. They bear out the great value placed on education among the UG and in particular by the HSF and LSF girls of this category. There was only a single UCF girl who would want an educated husband. Also among the TTCS, the majority who responded to this item came from the HSF, whilst there was not a single response from the UCF girls. The UCF answers showed a preoccupation with status as was evident

from the fact that 8 out of 10 UCF girls among the UG and 7 out of 12 among the TTCS responded with 'good family'. None of the LSF girls in either category of students regarded status; instead they looked for husbands with a lucrative job.

Whereas it may be thought that the preferences so far stated may coincide with the criteria of choice applied by the girls' parents for selecting a good husband and son-in-law, one quality mentioned by a number of girls seems to reveal greater independence on their part. This is their wish that the future husband should have respect for them. This specification not only reflected the persisting asymmetrical relationships between the sexes in family life, but also showed that, as in the case of co-education, these particular girls had come to question this situation.

In the table below are listed the qualities and the frequency of their occurrence either individually or in combination with others.

Qualities and achievements desired in the marriage partner	UG	TTCS
University education	40	8
Strong character and good morals	34	22
Good looks	27	8
Good family background	17	8
Respect for wife	12	4
Lucrative job	7	8
Strict Moslem	6	5
	143 :	63

The data clearly reflect a changing society inasmuch as they portray a shift from the former emphasis on attributes of an ascriptive nature to a more equal distribution of both ascriptive and achievement attributes. A difference is discernable in the stated preferences between the UG and the TTCS. While both seemed in basic agreement on the issue of the husband's respect for his wife (ca. 12% in either category of students), the TTCS were more inclined to stress ascriptive qualities, thereby revealing their more conservative social background. Here it will be remembered that 12 out of 30 TTCS girls came from the UCF.) Those who appreciated a lucrative job, on the other hand, came exclusively from the LSF (in both categories of students).

As pointed out already, a high proportion of the students expressed their disapproval of the custom of arranged marriage. Almost as many strongly opposed the high mahr or dowry still customary in all their families (65 UG; 21 TTCS). Those who agreed came mostly from the UCF.

Attitudes towards the custom of dowry (mahr)	UG	TTCS
Agreement	31	9
Disagreement	65	21
total	96	30

The Islamic dowry, given by the bridegroom to the bride, should be in accordance with the amount established by the prophet Mohammed for his daughter Fatima. But, as in many other Arab and Islamic

countries, the customary dowry in Kuwait is fixed according to the social status of the bride's family. It is not so much the existence of this tradition as the exorbitant sum involved against which their protest was directed. Also, they acutely felt that they were being manipulated and humiliated, more than the males, within a marriage system which allows them only a passive choice and treats them as prized articles.

The students blamed the tradition of extraordinarily high dowry for the growing habit of educated Kuwaiti young men to marry non-Kuwaiti girls whom they had met during their studies at home or abroad. The girls argued that in this way the Kuwaiti males managed to avoid the burden of the high bridewealth customary in their particular social milieu. Foreign women become Kuwaiti citizens upon marriage to a Kuwaiti, whereas a Kuwaiti girl who marries a foreigner loses her Kuwaiti citizenship. These arguments explain the reason for the students' disapproval of the prevalent dowry tradition, though their rejection did not entail the idea of bridewealth as such which they regarded as a symbol of the bridegroom's ability to shoulder the responsibilities of married life. Thus at the bottom of their rejection of this tradition lies their frustration with the fact that they are unable to make male friends during their studies and afterwards in their professional life.

The question whether or not the girls will actually be allowed to take a job after completion of their studies remains to be answered still.

All the girls, with the exception of two UG, stated that their parents would allow them to take a job before marriage, but they seemed more uncertain about what would happen afterwards.

While a small number of them thought it impossible to hold a job because of the children ('no' category), others said that it would depend on the in-laws or the husband whether or not they could continue work. The overwhelming majority were confident that they would not be prevented from taking a job, provided proper care was taken of the children and the household.

Opinion on the possibility of being allowed to take a job after marriage	UG	TTCS
Yes	69	19
No	15	5
Depends on in-laws or husband	12	6
total	96	30

The question why the girls were permitted to take a job before marriage, while at the same time they received a separate education and were denied the opportunity to mix freely with the other sex, has already been answered in connection with the teaching profession. When asked which employment was considered as best suited for women, the students' consensus of opinion inclined to the teaching profession (73 UG, 27 TTCS). As in the case of the other options, viz. social and medical work or nursing, their principal motives were that these professions agreed with the nature of woman and that they could be performed without mixing with men. For the same reason occupation in the fields of secretarial work, civil service, politics, theatre and film were rejected as unsuited for women in the prevailing situation.

This whole line of reasoning is best summarised in the following statement of one of the UG : "Teaching is the most suitable profession for a girl. The situation in our Kuwaiti society does not give sufficient freedom to girls. Suppose they take other jobs, they are easily talked about." This particular girl did not approve of co-education, saying that "society does not accept mixing of boys and girls". The conformist attitude reflected in this statement was corroborated by many of the answers obtained from these girls. Some of the girls blamed not so much society as the behaviour of the girls themselves. "The present situation", said another UG, "is confusing for Kuwaiti girl students. They believe to behave like modern Western girls, but do not realise that by adopting some superficial traits of western culture they fail to detect the core. That is why their behaviour is unbalanced and may easily give offence."

This analysis which nolens volens makes use of the distinction between reality ingredients and value ingredients[4] of a culture in a contact situation such as Westernisation represents, throws some light on the problems of these girl students and the frequent inconsistencies in their behaviour and reasoning. The Kuwaiti girls were still so marked by the lag caused by the emotional attachment of their families to traditional values, imposing taboos on their freedom, that they became confused by the conflicting developments which have taken at an unprecedented pace in this part of the world as a result of industrialisation and modernisation.

[4] This distinction was introduced by A.C. Kroeber, The Nature of Culture (Chicago, 1957)

Another revealing aspect of this kinship culture reacting to the disruptive forces of urbanisation are the women's associations, such as the Women's Cultural and Social Association and the Al-Nahda Women's Society, both of which were founded in 1963. As the primary relations are still mainly governed by kinship, the ties of blood are still a very dominant element in the formation of such associations which satisfy the needs for identity of married women. However, the mass media are increasingly exposing them to alternative sources of socialisation and new values. The original organisations, based primarily on kin, are gradually growing into modern women's association, thereby lessening the gap between the older generation and the younger.

At this point it seems opportune to mention that women in Kuwait, both old and young, are that part of the society which has gained most by the sudden transformation. Yet a persistent sense of female inferiority, inherited from the recent past, seems often to prevent them from making proper use of their newly acquired liberties and responsibilities. Attitudinal and behavioural inconsistencies are, it appears, mainly due to this fact.

PART THREE

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Methodology

The following chapters present the data obtained from the questionnaire, a translation of which is supplied in the appendix (the original version was in Arabic). Altogether 200 cyclostyled copies of the questionnaire were prepared, of which 150 copies were actually handed out to the respondents, hereafter labelled 'young people'. The remainder was kept in reserve for the second group of respondents, hereafter called 'older people'.

The sample consisted of a total of 200 people, all Kuwaiti citizens by birth, who were drawn from three strata of Kuwaiti society, viz. the UCF, HSF and LSF. The proportion between these groups was as follows :

Status group	'young people'	'old people'
UCF	39	9
HSF	28	24
LSF	83	17
total	150	50

The group of 'older people' comprised men and women who had received a traditional education and were around the age of 40+, whilst the sample of 'young people' consisted of men and women who had received

a modern type education and were between 18-30 years of age. Among the first group, the proportion between men and women happened to be 1 : 1, among the second group it was 2 : 1.

Because of the prevalent illiteracy among the older generation I was forced to read the questionnaire to almost all of them and also to write down their answers myself. This procedure took place in the respondents' homes, and it led to a small amount of interviewing (cross-questioning for clarification, re-phrasing of answers etc.) which in most instances resulted in more qualified information than could be obtained from the young people.

Needless to say that it was not easy to stimulate interest in the questionnaire which was the first of its kind in Kuwait. The older people were at first suspicious and regarded the enquiry as an intrusion into their private life. They were especially apprehensive about those questions which probed into their religious and political attitudes. But after, and within the limitations of, these initial misgivings they proved very cooperative. Contact was made mainly through their sons and daughters who offered their co-operation far more readily. The questionnaire was handed over personally in each case.

Being myself a member of Kuwaiti society, and speaking the same language as the respondents, I did not encounter any serious communication problems once proper contact had been established.

However, there were some difficulties of a formal nature in regard to the responses of the 'young people' group. As a rule their written responses were rather brief, but occasionally they apparently felt the need to qualify and justify their answers.

Although this deviation from the prescribed form was unexpected, it did in fact yield more useful information than would have been the case otherwise. Most of these qualifications were in regard to the question about the establishment of an independent household and about their opinion on women's education and employment.

The intended purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain a reliable, if provisional, profile of both the nature and the degree of change in the social attitudes and behaviour of young and old Kuwaitis in regard to certain specific categories. Following a few essential biographical items, section I of the questionnaire dealt with the structure of the respondent's resident family; this was meant to ascertain the extent to which the traditional extended family type had been supplanted by the modern nuclear family type. Section II, addressed to the older generation only, was projected to detect possible changes in the preferred qualities for a son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Section III, addressed to the young generation only, was designed to yield details about attitudinal changes regarding family life. The responses obtained would permit further qualification of the findings of section I. Section IV was intended to procure information about changes in interpersonal relations between familial authority (father/mother etc) and dependents (son/daughter). Items D and E were to be answered by the young people only. The last item in this section called for a more general response to the changing patterns of life in Kuwait. Section V was meant to probe into the changes in the religious attitudes of both old and young people, and section VI was intended to achieve the same in regard to their political attitudes.

Finally, the items of section VII were designed to obtain data about attitudinal changes in respect ~~to~~ of women's education and employment, and were addressed to the older people and the young men only, but not the young women themselves.

Since this questionnaire is, by virtue of its intended provisory character, of secondary importance only, I have refrained from presenting the data in terms of percentage; this would have unduly inflated the merely tentative value of the findings.

2. Family Structure

A. Family composition : monogamous/polygynous

The present sample group did not include a single man who had more than one wife. Although Islamic law permits a man to be married to up to four wives simultaneously, the practice of polygyny is very rare nowadays because of the social stigma (accusations of cruelty to first wife and her children) which is attached to it in most Arab countries including Kuwait. Moreover, the girls of the younger generation generally abhor the thought of living as, or with, a second wife. The reasons for their opposition are no doubt to be found in modern education which puts them into contact with new values, most of which affirm the individual's self-esteem. However, polygyny is still practised by many members of the Royal Family for pre-eminently political reasons. In the past this form of marriage was fairly common among the people of Arabia, since it met certain economic and political needs.

A.M. Lutfiyya[1] mentions five basic causes which motivate a man to practise plurality in marriage. (1) Inability of the first wife to produce male children; (2) prestige; (3) the custom of

[1] See A.M. Lutfiyya, "The Family", in : Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures, ed. by A.M. Lutfiyya and C.W. Churchill (The Hague, 1970), p. 521

levirate marriage; (4) love marriage after emotionally unsatisfactory cousin or arranged marriage; (5) wife's prolonged illness. The factors which act as deterrents to polygyny can be grouped into two sections, viz. (1) those arising from the opposition to the first wife, or the family and (2) the husband's financial inability to raise the bridewealth for a second wife.

The members of the present sample group did not practise polygyny and as was clear from some of their qualifying statements primarily rejected it because of the problems and additional responsibilities involved in marriage to several wives. Their main consideration was the inevitable jealousy between the wives, their children and the pressure exerted on the husband by his wives' families. The bone of contention in such a case would be the husband's property.

B. Number of family members

Large residential families are rare in Kuwait today. The prevalent residential unit is the nuclear family as the standard model of modern societies in general. It replaced the large extended family characteristic of Arabia before the impact of modernisation. The small nuclear family is the most common form of residence. It usually consists of four to six members comprising husband, wife and children and occasionally the husband's mother if she is a widow without a married or unmarried brother, or unmarried son, to look after her.

The few families with more than seven members, belonging to the HSF category, comprise in addition to parents and children also other close relatives such as unmarried sisters or a widowed mother. Formerly they lived together in spacious houses, but with the rapid modernisation in Kuwait and the rising prices for property such big buildings have become scarce.

The preference for the small nuclear family is due primarily to the economic independence of the younger generation and also their overt or covert rejection of paternal authority and family pressure.

3. Marital Preferences (parts A and B)

Next I proceed to outline the criteria of preference in regard to a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law among the older generation. Once formal education was recognised as the main channel to well-paid jobs for men, the importance of family status markedly decreased, although many of the conservative wealthy families (UCF) are still keenly aware of their high-born origin.

The social life of old Kuwait was dominated by tribal mores. Qualities of ascribed status were decisive in the conclusion of marriages. Strict rules of status endogamy prevented families, however wealthy, from linking themselves through marital unions to those considered of superior social status. Until very recently these high-born families, belonging to the Sharif Arab tribes, have guarded most jealously their purity of blood. Many Kuwaiti families are recognised as asil or 'pure blooded' by virtue of their being true descendants of those Sharif Arab tribes which migrated to Kuwait from the Nejd plateau more than two centuries ago.

The families of this group of mercantile lineages (UCF) have remained very exclusive. Their daughters are obliged to marry within their group, and bridegrooms are still almost invariably chosen from among the male members of the immediate family or a related family, irrespective of their personal qualities.

Such strictly endogamous rules do not apply to the majority of Kuwaitis (HSF and LSF) who belong to the Biasr tribe which, ? category ? though of Arabian stock, is not of Sharif origin. Among the Biasr, marriage to an outsider is not prohibited, though he is expected to be an Arab and a Kuwaiti citizen.

Among the older members of the rich conservative families (UCF) the idea of pure blood was found to be decisive in the choice of a partner for son or daughter. Good character (entailing such qualities as good manners, reliability, faithfulness etc) was also appreciated. However, they did not appear to be particularly concerned with educational qualifications since they themselves were largely uneducated. Also, high income was not considered an essential criterion, probably because the custom of endogamy guarantees the circulation of money within the families of the lineage.

The women of the upper class families had no real say in the matter of their son's or daughter's marriage but were expected to agree with their father's or husband's choice. Although they were keen to have a son-in-law or daughter-in-law from a good family of the same social status as their own, they also regarded good character as important. They were particularly careful about the conservative social background especially of the prospective daughter-in-law, but treated the question of a well-paid job for the son-in-law as inessential. The women of this social class, themselves uneducated,

were distinctly in favour of the daughter-in-law's education since, as they saw it, education prepares her to be a good wife and mother. This judgement indicates to what extent women have begun to put their hope and confidence in education as a means of improving their position in society.

The older people of the HSF regarded education as the best way to well-paid jobs and a better life. They placed education, especially higher education, above all other qualities for a prospective son-in-law, because they thought education would ensure a high status job. Daughters-in-law were also expected to be well educated. They also valued a good character because it guaranteed respectability.

The LSF parents did not object to a son- or daughter-in-law who was a Kuwaiti but foreign-born. They also believed that as long as he or she is educated there is the security of a good job. They also appreciated the daughter-in-law's domestic skills and thought it recommendable for her to be a good wife and mother. Some of the respondents of this group expressed their interest in a son-in-law with a high income.

For the older people, men and women, of both UCF and HSF, the chief criterion in the choice of the right son- or daughter-in-law was the consideration of whether or not he or she was a Kuwaiti citizen by birth. In other words, the older people continued to a large extent to operate within the value system of pre-modernised Kuwait. This traditionalism and purism among the conservative wealthy families in fact causes considerable emotional and social problems, especially to the daughters. If pressurised by her family to marry into a family of equal social status, but unable to agree

on her parents' choice of a marriage partner, a girl is forced either to remain single throughout her life or, more rarely, revolt against this pressure by eloping. During the past two years there have been three known cases of young girls running away from home - all unsuccessful however.

While the rich élite (UCF) was found to rely on its amassed wealth and disregard modern education, the older people of the middle class (HSF, LSF) placed their stake on education as the most effective way of improving their social status. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that it is the young middle class generation which holds the key positions in Kuwait today. The traditional idea of endogamy is largely foreign to their thinking which has assimilated many of the values which modernisation introduced, and there appears to be a far greater willingness to adapt to the new circumstances among them than among the people of the rich upper class (UCF).

One interesting observation is that very few women of the over-forty sample group among the UCF, HSF and LSF disagreed with the statements of their husbands who were present during the interview in all cases. This almost total concurrence of opinion is significant in that it shows to what extent older Kuwaiti women believe in the infallibility of male authority and, by implication, in the unquestioned superiority of man. The women usually explained their subservient attitude by arguing that men have greater life and social experience than women and hence automatically were better qualified than they to judge the best match for a daughter or son. The most striking difference between husbands and wives was in their opinion about the value of education for girls.

4. Preferences in Residence after Marriage (parts A-E)

The traditional extended family of Kuwaiti society consisted of the blood relatives plus the women who were brought into the family unit through marriage. The family, not infrequently comprising thirty or more members, used to occupy one large house or several houses built close together or often attached to each other. It formed not only a social but also an economic unit which comprised all those who claimed descent from the same paternal ancestor.

The tremendous acceleration of the economic growth in Kuwait has led to the replacement of the extended family type in favour of the nuclear family typical of modernised societies. The transformation of the traditional family pattern, a correlate of the general social evolution particularly marked since the beginning of the 1950s, has come about under the considerable pressure of rapid industrialisation and the accompanying new values of a modern education system. The young Kuwaiti men, especially those from the UCF or HSF class, but also from the LSF, refused to live in their parental home once they were married and preferred to establish an independent household. They desired emotional and financial independence from paternal authority. The same is true of the young married women who refused to come under the authority and regimentation of their mothers-in-law. Their ability to oppose the traditional pattern and their expressed self-affirmation is no doubt connected with the feeling of security about the fact that it is easy for an educated woman to get a good and well-paid job in Kuwait today.

However, there are still survivals of the old patriarchal family type, such as in the spirit of co-operation among the relatives irrespective of the distance of the relationship. This felt affection and solidarity are marks of the proverbial amicable character and good manners of the Kuwaiti people. Those who still consciously uphold these ideals also tend to establish their own household in the near vicinity of their family. In this way they are able to help each other more readily.

It is this general and genuine feeling of solidarity which would seem to explain why so many Kuwaitis of the younger generation displayed predilection for the patriarchal family and regretted its disappearance: they felt uneasy about their breaking away from the paternal family and thought that it must be very disagreeable to their fathers to see his family split up into so many parts. They revealed a great loyalty and obligation towards the family at large.

Others, who were more individualistic - mainly from the HSF - distinctly preferred the modern nuclear family pattern which they considered an improvement on the traditional patriarchal family which, they felt, deprived a person of his independence even after marriage and encouraged him to rely continuously on the support of others.

Nonetheless there were still many people, men and women, especially among the LSF, who chose to live with their family after marriage and readily assumed responsibility for looking after their widowed mothers and unmarried sisters. They did not allow themselves to think of separating from the family and founding an independent home.

The establishment of an independent household is not entirely a question of economic independence but also one of emotional emancipation from traditional ideas. For the Kuwaiti who grew up in a large household under the relentless authority of the family patriarch and constant supervision of the elders, it is extremely difficult to break away from the customary attitudes and behaviourial patterns formed already in early childhood. The only way, therefore, to create a new life for himself is by leaving the parental home for good and establishing his own household. To ensure a minimum of interference from the family elders who will try to reinforce their traditional ways of thought it is regarded as necessary to live at a safe distance from the parental home.

5. Social Attitudes

A. "In case of marriage negotiations for son/daughter which of the relatives are to be consulted?"

Bearing in mind the still strong family solidarity, it is perhaps not surprising that even if the members in question - young and old - were not economically dependent on each other, they nonetheless preferred to consult their relatives in important matters, particularly marriage arrangements. For the majority of the UCF, HSF and LSF respondents the first person to be consulted is the father's brother, no matter whether he is younger or older than he. The second person is the father's sister who, if living in the same household, usually is vested with great authority. Where a family is without the father, the mother customarily consults her own brother who as a rule replaces in authority the husband after

his death. The solidarity between the father and his siblings and between the mother and her brother is far more pronounced than that between them collectively and the other family members. This general pattern was confirmed by the responses to the questionnaire. In passing it may be mentioned that a few of the UCF, HSF and LSF respondents stated that they would consult the eldest brother or else the mother's eldest brother. The reason for this was the fact that they did not have father's brothers.

Especially among the older generation there was found to be a still pronounced desire to keep the family together. In fact, they emphatically gave vent to their dislike of the modern trend of breaking away from the traditional kinship system. To them the consultation with members of the family was not just a matter of obligation but rather it was understood as a sign of good manners and profound respect. Clearly it is important for the older people to cultivate good relations with the family at large and remain an integral part of it.

B. "In case of domestic disputes which relatives/ friends are asked to mediate?"

The answers to this question vary considerably between the older and younger respondents. The former invariably turned to the nearest relative in authority (see previous section) to settle disputes since they felt they could not trust outsiders and were careful to keep family affairs private.

The young people, on the other hand, were a little reluctant to ask advice from close friends who, they thought, would understand them far better than any family member and hence

were in a better position to render effective help. Slightly different responses were obtained from the young women. They tended to remain closer to the family than the young men who were more prone to reject family constraints. Even after marriage a girl tends to confide in her mother who is still widely regarded as the daughter's best friend. Fear and formality prevent the young women from establishing a similarly trusting relationship with her father.

This is perhaps an opportune point to mention that for the young married women of the HSF and LSF a number of severe problems stem from the fact that many of them hold a job which not infrequently interferes with their domestic life and causes them to neglect husband, children and household. Other sources of difficulties are the almost inevitable interference in family matters by the parents-in-law, the children's education and, for non-Kuwaiti women, tensions with the husband's family. Among the young married women of the UCF an occasional though noteworthy source of domestic problems appears to be the husband's sense of inferiority kindled by his wife's education.

C. "In case of financial difficulties which relatives/ friends are called upon to help?"

The responses of the older generation were concurrent with their traditional outlook and great loyalty to the family. Only the young respondents from the opulent UCF admitted financial dependence on their parents, especially if they participated in the family business. They felt it was shameful to ask for financial help outside the family and in particular from the Government.

The overriding majority, however, appeared to make full use of the various financing services introduced by the Government. These consist in social security for non-earners, supplementary benefit for those who earn below the minimum income stated by the Government (currently 50 dinars per month), long-term personal loans and mortgages for those with good wages, and study allowance, etc. This extensive social security programme enables the young people to become independent from the economic resources of their families and thus also indirectly helps them in their struggle to extricate themselves from the authority of the kin.

D. "Do you prefer to keep close relations with your extended family or not?"

This question was designed exclusively for the young generation. Without exception all of the respondents of this category stated that they preferred to entertain close relations with their family, but at the same time insisted that they should be given the opportunity to lead their own life without undue interference from their parents or relatives. The underlying reason for this attitude appears to be primarily their psychological inability to sever all family ties completely. "I will be completely alone if I leave my family, even if I have friends", was one statement exemplary for many. Obviously these young men and women felt part of their family and a genuine separation seemed inconceivable to them. Some of them rationalised their attitude by offering a religious explanation, saying that their parents' and elders' happiness was at stake and that their approval would secure simultaneously the approbation of God.

Young unmarried women, whether or not they are working and economically independent, have no real alternative on this point. They are forced to live with their family, unless they are prepared to forego every kind of security, since a single woman living on her own is likely to lose her reputation. Also, married women are careful to remain within the extended family as this is their only protection and security in case the marriage breaks up or her husband dies or becomes handicapped. It was evident from their responses that they feared the criticism of their family and mostly only conformed to the traditional mores in order to avert rejection.

With very few exceptions most Kuwaiti men and women apparently still feel a great respect and obligation towards their larger family. It is the family which guarantees the individual's safety and thus by attenuating his anxiety helps him to cope with life more effectively. Only some highly educated members of the HSF group admitted to having broken away from their family more or less completely.

E. "Would you consult elders (both male and female) of your extended family for major decisions in your domestic and occupational matters?"

All of the young respondents, to whom this question was addressed, agreed to consulting the family elders, but only some regarded their advice as binding. Modern education and the situation at work gives young men and women the opportunity to make independent decisions at an early age and to gain confidence in themselves. This was apparent from some of the answers to the

present question, which emphasised that the family elders were consulted primarily in order to keep them informed and because of the feeling of deference, but not because of any real intention to follow their advice. This small minority consisted mainly of those young people of the HSF category who had the benefit of a higher education. They preferred to make their own judgements and resisted any pressure from their family. They admitted that they usually made up their mind before consulting the family elders.

The majority of respondents, however, confessed to taking the consultation seriously, but nevertheless reserved the right to either take or ignore their elders' advice.

The young women were far more anxious to remain on good terms with their elders who, they felt, had greater life experience than they. Although they expressed the desire to be free from the 'leading strings' of their family, they greatly feared the family's and society's rebuke and repudiation. They felt powerless against the machinery of tradition with its continuous reiteration of male superiority and its myth of the fragile, defenceless female in permanent need of protection and supervision.

F. "Do you agree with the changes that are taking place at the present time?"

The answers obtained to this question can be divided into two clear-cut categories, one comprising the responses from the older generation, and the other those from the young people. The older respondents unanimously affirmed that the changes they had been witnessing over the last three decades or so definitely

brought them greater comfort and happiness. They were particularly conscious of the tremendous advantages of modern medical treatment which reduced much unnecessary suffering and anxiety. Previously native women carried the bulk of unsophisticated medical practice and midwifery, with little knowledge of hygiene. Today the effective scientific medical treatment offered in highly modernised and well-staffed hospitals has won the trust and respect of the people. Members of this group also remarked on the great improvements in the feeding and care of children.

However, their appraisal of the contemporary social situation was not unqualified. They were clearly apprehensive about the influx of Western ideas and values which they regarded as a concrete threat to their traditional mores and customs and, in particular, the religious heritage. They expressed dislike at their children's consumption of alcohol, increasing disregard for their parents and disloyalty to Islam. Their disapproval of these new ways was evidently mixed with anxiety, especially about the future of the religious tradition, and some of them blamed the West for corrupting the youth. However, they admitted that the clock cannot be turned back and that the chain reaction of modernisation leaves little chance for the 'sons of the desert' to escape what they consider the 'seamy-side' of progress.

The answers of the young generation show a far greater optimism as regards the normative and valuational aspects of the changes in Kuwaiti society. They were greatly appreciative of the availability of a good education, easy transport, first-class medical treatment and ample well-paid work. They mentioned that financial independence empowered them to choose their own life-style

and escape the tutelage of the family members. They also referred to the fact that the affluence permitted them to go abroad and see the outside world.

Nevertheless, there was some ambiguity about the desirability of the injection of western values even among the members of this group. As a matter of fact, those who expressed uneasiness about this aspect of their changing society were clearly in the majority. They acutely felt the dichotomy between the traditional value system and the ideas imported from the West in the process of modernisation. Although their appreciation of the technological benefits was unequivocally positive, they felt that as Easteners and Moslems they ought to protect their heritage and be on guard against western ideals and standards of behaviour.

This traditionalist outlook was not shared by the minority of those who had been educated abroad or were married to foreign women. They were distinctly in favour of an all-round transformation of Kuwaiti society, and their replies conveyed a concealed criticism of their more 'timid' contemporaries whose conservative attitude to change they were unable to explain to themselves. One of the striking points of departure from traditional custom among the members of this progressive group was their refusal to uphold the barrier of segregation and their free mixing with the opposite sex. They were also totally in favour of co-education and unchaperoned mixed social activities. But even among this progressive group, none thought in terms of an outright supplanting of the traditional way of life by a new one (which may or may not be western).

6. Religious Attitudes

In view of the fact that the Kuwaiti people tend to explain their behaviour largely in terms of religious norms. it seemed desirable to include in the questionnaire some questions which would probe into their actual religious attitudes.

A. "Do you follow all the tenets of the religion - yes/no/few - if few, which?"

The main features of Islam are (1) the belief in Allah as the one and only God and in Mohammed as his prophet; (2) the annual fast (ramadhan) extending over a period of one month; (3) the giving of alms (zakat) to the poor; (4) the prayer to Allah five times a day and (5) at least one pilgrimage to Mecca during one's life. These are known as the 'five pillars' of Islam and are considered essential for a good life, though needless to say not everyone's religious practice measures up to this ideal.

The answers obtained to the above question were unanimous in their affirmation of the belief in God and in the prophetic authority of Mohammed. However, it is uncertain to what extent these statements reflect true opinion. It is highly probable that, especially among the highly educated, there are some people who have their doubts and suspicions about the validity of this important Islamic dogma. There may even be those who reject Islam completely, though none of the present sample group was prepared to give vent to his doubts or antagonistic feelings. The reason for this possible concealment is obvious, since any public disclaimer of the religious tradition would inevitably result in the person's ostracism. He

would undoubtedly be branded as a communist working against the interests of the society, and from then on live under the permanent threat of being accused of, and tried for, political agitation.

As for the remaining four ingredients of a pious life, as envisaged in Islam, the responses revealed a marked discontinuity in the religious practice between the older and the younger generation. The older people, irrespective of sex or social class, strictly adhered to all the religious injunctions. Many of them had been on two or more pilgrimages to Mecca. They valued Islam as a way of life, accepting the notion that life on earth is but temporary and that one must do one's best to prepare for the eternal life in the hereafter. Believing that God is the final arbiter of man's fate, they maintained that it was best not to come into conflict with him by deviating from the path pointed by his prophet Mohammed. Fear of punishment and the desire to propitiate God were most decisive factors in the shaping of their life. It is within this normative framework that their thoughts and actions were regulated and which, as they insisted, constitutes the only way to secure peace and happiness for themselves.

In contrast with the attitudinal uniformity of the older generation, the responses from the young people, all of whom had received at least primary and secondary education, were heterogeneous and had a wide range of variation. These respondents can conveniently be divided into three groups (1) those who considered themselves orthodox Moslems, (2) those who were admittedly occasional Moslems and (3) those who were purely nominal Moslems. The first group comprised nearly four-fifths of the total number of respondents, and the ratio between men and women was approximately 2 : 1. The reasons for this overwhelming male majority among the orthodox

confessors remains obscure. The possibility of deliberate falsification or self-deceit is always given, since for a man it is obviously more difficult to reveal his true feelings both to others and to himself in view of the fact that, unlike the women, he has to give visible proof of his religiosity (by going to the mosque regularly).

The second and third group were of roughly the same size, and the ratio between men and women was 1 : 1 and about 1 : 2 respectively. Respondents of the second group, consisting of about a dozen people, retained the central belief in God but admitted a more casual attitude towards religious practice. They expressed doubt about the validity and usefulness of pilgrimages and prayers etc., but admitted to conforming to the traditional religious customs under sufficient social pressure. Most explained their concessive behaviour in terms of their desire to show respect to their parents and family elders who were loyal to Islam.

The most interesting group was composed of those who confessed merely nominal adherence to the tradition of Islam. The majority of these respondents belonged to the female sex. This candour is perhaps not as surprising as it seems, since it was naturally much easier for a person of the same sex as myself and - as was in fact the case - known to me personally, to answer frankly. A few of these progressive respondents confessed complete cessation from religious practice and called in question some of the religious values. They felt that Islam effectively hindered social progress and were critical of the still powerful constraint exercised by the religious norms on people's life. However, they were careful to conceal their disbelief in public. They also rejected the indiscriminate identification common among the older generation of all extraneous

ideas and values with communist ideology. This group roughly coincides with those respondents who stated to be in favour of the introduction of western values, such as the equality of the sexes, relaxation of the divorce law, greater personal and political freedom etc. Though ignoring the spiritual aspects of Islam, they expressed interest in the political and economic strength of the Moslem world.

B. "What is your attitude towards people who do not belong to your own religion?"

Among the respondents of the older generation two groups of approximately equal size can be distinguished. The members of the first group reflected a strict traditionalist bias. They believed in the religious primacy of Islam and regarded all other religions as inferior. Some of them sought to bolster up their Islamo-centric attitude by referring back to the Quran which supposedly declared the superiority of Moslems over the adherents of other religions. (The passage in question actually confers this privilege on the Jews.) Some tried to justify the believed supremacy of Islam by pointing out that in contrast with all other religions, Mohammed's teaching has not changed in the course of time; they took this supposed stability as a sign of proof for the authenticity of Islamic religion.

The second group displayed a far more tolerant attitude, without however disclaiming Islam. It consisted of one-third of the total sample of older people, mostly from the LSF and HSFm with only two respondents from the UCF. Most of the members of the HSF category had been abroad and come into direct contact with non-Moslem

values. They expressed indifference towards other religions, taking them to be equally valid with Islam. Though not discrediting other religions, they also showed no interest in them. On the other hand, the tolerance of the LSF respondents can be explained by the fact of their genuine broad-minded religiosity, based on exclusive faith in the revelation of the Quran.

Among the young generation about two-thirds were indifferent to other religions but concerned about the islamic tradition, while the remaining one-third (mostly HSF and UCF respondents), admitted a more progressive attitude. They did not mind mixing socially with non-Moslems or attending non-Moslem religious gatherings. They also had no religious objections against marriage to a non-Moslem woman. This second group included also all those who were inclined to reject some of the religious values outright.

C. "Would you like to provide religious education for your children?"

Among the older people, all were in favour of religious education for their children. However, they did not insist on an exclusively religious training but agreed to co-ordinate religious with secular education. This attitude was shared by the overwhelming majority of the young respondents, whilst those who were previously identified as nominal Moslems responded to the question in the negative. They clearly preferred a purely secular education for their children.

Nevertheless, at the present time the educational system in Kuwait combines religious with secular training, from the primary school right up to the University, It is in fact obligatory for a

B.A. student to attend a course of lectures in "Islamic Culture" and also to pass an examination on this subject before he becomes eligible for the B.A. degree.

D. "Would you agree with your children marrying non-Moslems?"

Whereas the older people without exception were decidedly against their children marrying non-Moslems, the overriding majority of the young respondents stated that they disliked the idea but would let their children make their own choice. The small minority, consisting of the progressive group of nominal Moslems, had no reservations whatsoever, which is not surprising in view of the fact that about half of them were actually married to non-Moslem women.

7. Political Attitudes

The constitution of the modern state of Kuwait challenged some of the basic assumptions of the old patriarchal order. For the first time in Kuwait's history the people were allowed to participate through their representatives in the political system and to exercise restraint on the hitherto unquestioned executive authority of the Amir. As will be demonstrated by the responses to the following questions, there is a clear dichotomy in the political attitudes of the Kuwaitis which accentuates the generation gap.

A. "Do you prefer the government to be elected or to be appointed by the Amir?"

The older respondents without exception expressed their dislike for the modern system. They remembered with nostalgia the days when the Amir still handled all the important problems of the community himself. They retained their belief that only the Amir is wise enough to select the right men to assist him in governing the country. Some argued that the new electoral law transferred the political power to the wealthy merchant families (UCF) and the recent rich upper middle class (HSF). They preferred the ruling family to hold the political monopoly, and their rejection of the contemporary political structure was evidently linked up with the disinheritance of the Amir as unrivalled political leader and charismatic figure.

Unpopular as the democratic political idea appeared to be among the older generation of Kuwaitis, the responsesfrom the young people to the above question were unanimously positive. With the exception of the UCF members, they all welcomed the changes in the political organisation of their country. However, some of the HSF and LSF respondents declared that they would only actively support (by their votes) the present system if it will in future provide better opportunities for the educated people to become members of parliament. This is further elucidated by their responses to the next question.

B. "If you are entitled to vote, would you give your vote to (a) an influential candidate, (b) a rich candidate, (c) an educated candidate, (d) an efficient candidate, or (e) a candidate from an influential family?"

While the older people did not respond to this question at all (for the above-stated misgivings on their part), the young people of the HSF and LSF category unanimously opted for an educated candidate. The UCF members did not respond.

All of them expressed their dislike of the fact that the present system favour people from influential families, who are usually unqualified to stand as M.Ps. Some argued that since the Assembly is composed pre-eminently of rich or influential candidates and the Government carefully avoids the possibility of a majority of well-educated M.Ps, the political structure has not really changed at all. They felt that without the active participation of more people with a higher education, the Government will remain static and tribal, and hardly be able to cope with the mounting problems of a country under the impact of accelerated socio-economic change.

8. Attitudes towards women's Education and Employment

Of all the problems which the youth of modern Kuwait has to face none are more significant than those of the educated young woman. She is confronted with the tremendous task of having to persuade the society to grant her unconditional freedom in education and employment. In her endeavour to be accepted as a full-fledged member of society she is forced to battle against a deeply entrenched

prejudice towards the female sex, considered to be naturally inferior to man. The responses to the following questions bring out some of the striking ambivalence in the people's attitudes towards women's education and employment as it is guaranteed and encouraged by the Government.

A. "What is your opinion on the education of girls?"

The great majority of the older people, who had very little education themselves, were in favour of the modern provisions for the education of girls and also approved of their holding a job. However, they insisted that these new concessions for women must be carefully checked so as not to undermine traditional Moslem values. Education, they felt, increases the social prestige of a girl and also gives her a better chance to find a suitable marriage partner. Particularly the mothers, themselves deprived of the benefits of education, were keen that their daughters should have the same educational privileges as men. They preferred, however, the type of education which would prepare their daughters for their role as housewives and mothers. Only a small number of people from among the older generation of the UCF respondents expressed their scepticism about the value of women's education beyond the basic skills of reading and writing. No reasons were given for their objection.

A similarly unfavourable attitude towards higher education for women was, surprisingly, found among all of the young male respondents. They accepted primary and secondary education for girls, but had ambiguous feelings about women going to University or Teacher Training College. They were keenly aware that the Kuwaiti women

were steadily progressing towards a position of greater freedom in society. Although they did not deny women the right to education altogether, they nevertheless felt that their place was in the home and that 'too much' education would only deter them from fulfilling their traditional role as housewives and mothers. It seemed evident from their answers that they disliked the fact that education made women more independent and turned them into genuine competitors against men. The majority of young men, irrespective of their social status, preferred an educated wife, but only few would be willing to marry a University graduate. Moreover, it was also clear from their responses that a young woman who had received her higher education abroad has even less of a chance to get married to a Kuwaiti.

B. "Would you allow your daughter to take any job?"

Most of the older people did not object to their daughters taking up employment which would give them a greater degree of independence. Still, they had clear preferences as regards the type of work which they would like their daughters to take up. They considered teaching and social work as the two most desirable forms of occupation for a girl, since these do not entail the necessity of mixing with the opposite sex. Some parents, however, felt that the modern educated girl could be trusted not to compromise herself and her family when mixing professionally with the male sex. But the standard response of the parents was still to assert their traditional right as guardians and protectors of their daughters'

reputation and virginity.[2] They felt that the young women, however educated, were unprepared for the aggressive world of men and hence should take a job which kept mixing with men to an absolute minimum.

Also the young men were found to have a totally conservative attitude as regards women's employment. They evidently disliked the idea of women at work, saying that their chief role was in the home, running the household and bringing up the children. They thought, like their fathers, in terms of protecting the girl or young woman from the permanent and unpredictable danger of male assault.

[2] "The idea of virginity here is not, as it seems to be in European and American circles, restricted to sexual intercourse as such. Rather it is a feeling that no one should give sexual satisfaction of any kind to anyone other than his or her spouse or spouses as the case may be. Sexual stimulation includes not only flirtatious glance or a caress of the fingers, but even an accidental touching of the body...". J.E. Pierce, Understanding the Middle East (Tokyo, 1971), pp. 33-34.

PART FOUR

SYNOPSIS AND COMPARISON OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the overall results of the interviews and the questionnaire from the particular viewpoint of the model of social stratification expounded on pages In other words, I intend to study the responses given to the various questions under the headings of UCF, HSF and LSF. I will first summarise the data for each social category and then try to relate them to each other and generalise from this synoptic view.

1. Interviews

The girls of the Upper Class Families (UCF) constituted the main body of those among the UG who answered the questions about co-education in the negative ('not in favour'). This was corroborated by the findings among the TTCS where all of the UCF girls opted against co-education, with the exception of a few girls who withheld information on this point ('no opinion').

In their choice of career, this group of UCF girls in both categories of students (i.e. UG and TTCS) opted for the teaching profession. There were, however, a number of girls among the UG whose option fell on 'business'.

In response to the question about the first and foremost destination of a modern girl, the majority of the UCF girls in either category of students replied 'motherhood', and only some placed 'education' before 'motherhood'.

As to the next question, concerning their assessment of the degree of personal freedom enjoyed by them, all of the UCF girls in either category of students felt that they were socially far more restricted than males, and what seems most important, almost all these girls 'accepted' this situation.

Their attitudes towards arranged marriage were equally revealing. There were in fact four UCF girls among the UG who did not even expect to be consulted in the arrangement of their marriage, but only about half the girls in each category of students registered their protest against the still prevalent custom of arranged marriage.

As was clear from their responses to the next question, the most appreciated quality of a future husband was considered to be his family background ('good family'), whereas but few considered 'University education' as a decisive criterion. This pattern was true of both the UG and the TTCS.

Furthermore, few of the UCF girls of either category of students disagreed with the custom of dowry.

Last, to the question of employment after marriage, all of the UCF girls among the UG answered either 'no' or 'depends', and these were also the characteristic answers of the UCF girls among the TTCS category.

HSF

The majority of the HSF girls were clearly in favour of co-education.

In their choice of career they inclined to teaching, like the rest of the girls, though those among the UG who opted for 'civil service' were exclusively from this HSF group.

Two of the UG expressed interest in 'social work'. Also, most of the HSF girls among the UG regarded marriage as the first and foremost destination of a modern girl, although ten out of twelve HSF girls among the TTCS opted for education first.

While all the TTCS felt that they had less freedom than the males, there was a large group of HSF girls among the UG who claimed that they had the same degree of freedom. The putative restriction was 'accepted' by most of them in both categories of students.

However, the majority of the HSF girls among the UG and all of this group among the TTCS expressed disagreement with regard to the custom of arranged marriage.

Also in their criteria for a husband, they diverged considerably from the UCF girls. For they placed great emphasis on their future husbands' education, whilst the question of his family background was given less attention.

Most of the HSF girls in either category also disagreed with the custom of dowry.

To the question as to whether they will be allowed to work after marriage, the majority of the HSF girls both among the UG and the TTCS answered 'yes'.

LSF

In response to the question about co-education, one-third of the LSF girls among the UG and one out of six among the TTCS were 'in favour at all stages'. On the other hand, two-thirds of the LSF girls among the UG and five out of six among the TTCS opted 'partly in favour'. None of this group answered in the negative.

Whilst all the LSF girls among the TTCS, and most of this group among the UG, preferred teaching as a career, there were in fact two LSF girls among the UG who opted for 'social work'. The majority of LSF girls among the UG regarded 'motherhood' as more important than 'education', though among the LSF girls of the TTCS category only two out of six girls agreed with this. The others made a case for the priority of 'education' over 'motherhood'.

All of the LSF girls in either category of students thought that they had less freedom than boys and also 'accepted' this without protest.

As regards their attitudes towards arranged marriage, half of the LSF girls among the UG and two-thirds among the TTCS expressed their disagreement with this custom.

In their choice of a future husband, status played no role at all, but most of the LSF girls among the UG, and half of the LSF girls among the TTCS, wanted an educated man above everything else. 'Good character' was also considered as important. And most of the LSF girls in either category of students were also keenly interested in 'lucrative job'. This choice was not opted for by any of the UCF or HSF girls.

Most of the LSF girls among the UG and all among the TTCS disagreed with the custom of dowry. Also, all of them without exception said that they would be allowed to work after marriage.

2. Questionnaire

UCF

There was not a single instance of polygyny among the members of this group, and in none of the UCF households were there more than six family members.

As regards the marital preferences for a son-in-law, the responses made it clear that the pre-eminent consideration was the family status. On the other hand, they were little concerned with the son-in-law's education or income, but good character was appreciated. The daughter-in-law was likewise expected to come from a good family and to have a good character. The women's options coincided with those of their husbands except on one point. All of them preferred the daughter-in-law to be educated above and beyond the primary and secondary schooling.

As was evident from the responses of the young people of the UCF, they preferred to establish a separate household after marriage, though most of them were keen to live in the near vicinity of their parents.

To the question as to which of the relatives were to be consulted in the event of marriage negotiations, both the older people and the young generation admitted to following the traditional customs.

In the case of domestic disputes, the older generation likewise conceded to solving them in the traditional way. The young men however would much rather turn to a friend than a family member; the young girls, on the other hand, were on the whole less inclined to discuss their problems outside the family.

And both young men and women quite freely admitted that in the event of financial difficulties they would, like the older people, depend exclusively on their parents rather than an outsider.

They also stated that they prefer to keep close relations with their family and consult family elders in major decisions and also to heed their advice.

In reply to the question of their attitudes towards the changes in Kuwaiti society, the older people were distinctly in favour of the technological aspect of change but apprehensive about the new values accompanying these innovations. Four-fifths of the young generation shared this attitude.

The older people were committed Moslems, and also most of the young generation reflected this pro-Islam attitude. But there were a few who admitted to being occasional Moslems, and fewer still to being merely nominal adherents of Islam. Most of the members of this radical group were University educated. In their attitudes towards non-Moslems, all of the older people, with the exception of two more liberal-minded men, had a distinctly Islamo-centric outlook. This pattern was also prevalent among the young generation, and only one-fourth of them were more liberal-minded.

On the other hand, all of the older people were clearly in favour of religious and secular education combined. This attitude was shared by most of the young people with the exception of those who were purely nominal Moslems and preferred a purely secular education for their children.

Whereas the older generation was entirely against their children marrying non-Moslems, most of the young people preferred a Moslem as a son- or daughter-in-law but would let their own

children decide. The small group of nominal Moslems had no reservations on this issue whatsoever.

Both older and young people alike expressed their disagreement with the present political system and also did not respond to the question as to what kind of candidate they would vote for.

The older people were mostly in favour of girls' education but some remained sceptical about the values of higher education for girls. This scepticism was shared by all the young men who felt that primary and secondary education was sufficient for girls.

Whereas the older people would allow their daughters to take a job, preferably a teaching position, the young men without exception disapproved of the idea of girls holding a job.

HSF

Although there were no polygynous marriages, several of the respondents affirmed the presence of close relatives in the household.

In reply to the question about the marital preferences of a son- or daughter-in-law, the older people were little concerned with the family status but insisted that the son- or daughter-in-law must be Kuwaiti by birth. They placed a high value on education and also mentioned 'good character' as a desirable feature.

The young men and women of this category preferred to establish an independent household and did not mind the distance from the parental home.

As regards marriage negotiations, the older people clearly followed the traditional ways of consulting the most authoritative relatives. And so did the young generation.

Domestic disputes were also said to be settled within the family by the older people, whereas the young people admitted to consulting a friend rather than a family member.

Again, whilst the older people preferred to solve their financial trouble within the family, the young generation was not reluctant to turn to the Government for help and utilise the excellent services available.

Unlike the older people who were keen to keep close relations with the extended family, most members of the young generation had a similar attitude, though there were a few highly educated respondents who tried to make it on their own.

All of the young people admitted that they would consult elders in important matters, but many of those with higher education stated that they would still make up their own mind.

The older people welcomed the material changes in Kuwait but regarded the normative changes as disruptive of tradition. Three-fourths of the young people were in agreement with this.

Most of the young people were, like their parents, practising Moslems, but some admitted that they practised only some of the islamic tenets and a few (University educated) confessed only a half-hearted allegiance to Islam.

The attitude of two-thirds of the older people and also two-thirds of the young respondents were distinctly Islamo-centric. The others showed a more tolerant attitude towards adherents of other religions.

With the exception of the young nominal Moslems, all of the respondents were in favour of religious-cum-secular education.

The older people were quite disinclined to let their children marry non-Moslems, but most of the young people expressed a more tolerant attitude.

Whilst the older people preferred the traditional type of rulership to the present political system, the young respondents were all in favour of it, though some of the more educated men and women wanted to see certain changes in the government (such as more educated MPs).

Consequently all of the young people would vote for an educated candidate. The old generation did not respond to this question at all.

However, whereas all the older people were in favour of girls' education up to University level, the young men in one voice expressed their dislike for higher education for girls.

They also were not in favour of women at work. On the other hand, the older people had no objections to their daughters taking a job, preferably teaching.

LSF

There was no case of polygyny among this category, but a distinct preference for the nuclear family type with no more than six members per household.

When asked about the marital preferences of a son- or daughter-in-law, the older respondents emphasised the educational factor. They would also appreciate a high income or a daughter-

in-law from a rich family. They had no objections against marriage to a non-Kuwaiti.

In this status group the question of establishing an independent household clearly depended on the income of the young breadwinner. There was a tendency to have the parents in the same household.

Both young and old alike admitted to consulting the authoritative family members in the event of marriage negotiations.

But in the case of domestic disputes the young people would preferably consult friends, whereas the older generation would treat this as a family matter.

The older people would also rely on their family in financial difficulties, but the young people stated that they would rather make use of the governmental provisions.

Both old and young people preferred to keep close relations with the extended family, and they would also consult their elders in important matters and heed their advice.

Nine out of ten of the young people shared their elders' disapproval of the normative innovations that accompany the technological changes in Kuwait.

A similar correlation was found as regards their religious outlook. Most of the young people were orthodox Moslems, but there were some who considered themselves occasional Moslems and a few who were purely nominal adherents of Islam.

Despite this high degree of orthodoxy among the old and young people of the LSF, nearly half of them were liberal-minded about other religions.

The older people were ready to accept a religious-cum-secular education, and this view was also taken by the overriding majority of the young people with the exception of those few who were merely nominal Moslems.

Whereas the older people were decidedly against a non-Moslem son- or daughter-in-law, most of the members of the young generation were prepared to leave this choice with their children. For the minority group of nominal Moslems this question constituted no problem whatsoever.

As opposed to the old people who were not in favour of the present type of government, the young people were all in favour of the changes in the political system from tribal rule to constitutional democracy, and their votes would unequivocally go to an educated candidate. The old people left this particular question unanswered.

The older generation was unanimously in favour of girls' education up to University level, but the young people did not respond with the same enthusiasm. They thought it was sufficient for a girl to receive primary and secondary education.

The older people also conceded to their daughters' entering the professional world, though the young people preferred to see young women in the home rather than at work.

3. Overall Analysis

I shall next proceed to assemble the salient features of the data presented above and also attempt to assess their sociological relevance in the context of Kuwaiti society. I will first look at

the information gathered from the sample group of 'older people'. Here the most striking point is undoubtedly the almost unattenuated adherence to the traditional patterns of life, causing a far greater homogeneity within the three categories (UCF, HSF, LSF) than can be said of the sample of 'young people'.

Thus all members of the older generation were found (1) to accept and appreciate the traditional tight-knit kinship system, (2) to adhere to the traditional values of Islam as committed and practising Moslems, (3) hence also expressedly against their children's marriage to non-Moslems, (4) to be appreciative of the material advantages accruing from the oil revenues but (5) equally clearly not in favour of the accompanying normative changes, and lastly (6) to disapprove of the current political system which replaced the tribal rule.

On the other hand, some of the responses - from all three categories of respondents - clearly evinced a more or less pronounced shift away from this traditionalism. Thus, (1) except for two cases among the interviewed UG girls, polygyny, once common, was not practised by any of the members of the sample for both the Interviews and the Questionnaire. (2) The old generation without exception accepted and approved of secular education as long as it is combined with religious instruction. (3) They approved of religious-cum-secular education also for girls. However, the UCF parents were not in favour of higher education for their daughters. Only the HSF and LSF parents found the idea of girls receiving a University education agreeable, or even desirable. (4) They were all willing to let their daughters take a job, though insisted that it should be an occupation which respects the segregation between the sexes, and teaching seemed to them the most suitable choice.

Certain of the responses of the older people were idiosyncratic of their social status. Whereas the UCF parents emphasised the family status of the prospective son- or daughter-in-law, and had an acutely Islamo-centric outlook, the HSF parents were less concerned with the family background provided that the bride or bridegroom were Kuwaiti by birth. There was also a greater number of them who were more liberal-minded about other religions. The LSF parents, again, disregarded the question of family status completely and were quite willing to have a non-Kuwaiti son- or daughter-in-law. Also half of them were liberal-minded in regard to other faiths.

Turning to the sample group of 'young people', one finds a considerably larger margin of heterogeneous responses than among the old generation. Not only is there a greater variation within each social category (UCF, HSF, LSF) but also between these three categories, and a further marked difference can be detected between the attitudes of the young male respondents and those of the girls.

The UCF were distinctly more traditionalist in their outlook than the respondents from the other two categories. Their conservative attitude can be regarded as a correlate of the fact that in this group education is not welcomed with the same enthusiasm that appears to be characteristic of the HSF and LSF parents and their children. The young men and women - but especially the latter - of these wealthy families showed in many ways the same class consciousness as their parents. This became singularly apparent in their political attitudes. Thus among the Interviewees (UG, TTCS), it was the UCF girls who were mostly not in favour of co-education, who preferred motherhood to education and thought that they had less freedom than boys.

On the other hand, the HSF parents and youngsters were fully aware and recognizant of the enormous advantages of a modern type education. The young men and women were generally far more open to non-Moslem values than either the UCF or the LSF respondents. Some of the HSF respondents not only preferred to establish their own household but also wanted to set it up at a safe distance from the parental home so as to guarantee a minimum of interference in their personal life. Education has instilled in them an appreciation of the western ideals of individualism and self-reliance. It was this category which contained most of the more progressive respondents ('nominal Moslems'). Among the interviewed girl students, most of the HSF girls placed education before motherhood and many of them felt that they had the same degree of freedom as boys. In contrast with this, the LSF girl students' responses were similar to those of the UCF category in that they generally rated motherhood as more important than education and also thought that their freedom was more limited than that of the young Kuwaiti male.

In this context one of the most interesting, if disappointing, findings may be cited. This is the remarkable clash between the attitudes of the older people and the young men concerning the education of girls and their participation in the professional sphere. With the exception of the UCF parents, all of the elders showed far more open-mindedness about both these points than any of the young male respondents. The latter were absolutely against higher education for girls and also disliked the idea of women at work. Although no reasons were given for these antagonistic responses, one may justifiably attribute this uniform disavowal of female emancipation to the fact that the ostensible eagerness of most girls to receive

a good education and enter the occupational world is experienced by most Kuwaiti men as endangering their customary superiority over the female.

As is readily borne out by a comparison of these findings with the attitudinal and behavioural patterns of the old generation, the Kuwaiti youth has half-emerged from the traditional world of their fathers. However, their discovery of the worth of the individual and their concommitant struggle for independence and self-sufficiency, impeded as it is by the powerful gravitational pull of the entrenched values and norms perpetuated by the elders, cannot be said to have been singularly successful so far. It appears that many of the changes are purely formal and not changes of content. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that although all of the young people showed a declared preference for the nuclear family, few of them were actually prepared to break away - emotionally - from their extended family.

Perhaps one of the most serious stumbling-blocks that stands in the way of a more profound transformation is due to the young men's persisting male bias, inherited from their fathers. This is probably the most difficult barrier to be surmounted in the future since it implies a frontal attack on one of the crucial coordinates of all Middle Eastern societies, viz. the segregation of the sexes.

PART FIVE

EPILOGUE

As I have tried to show on the preceding pages, the economic change witnessed in Kuwait during the past 25 years or so has had profound repercussions in most sectors of private and public life. One of the outstanding determinants within the complex nexus of cause and effect underlying the proliferative socio-economic developments is unquestioningly the restructuring that has occurred in the area of education.

Until 1910 the only schools known in Kuwait were of the traditional religious type in which an alim instructed a small group of children in the Quran and Hadith. In the course of the next 25 years three secular schools were founded, and in 1935 "the enlightened policy was begun of importing teachers from more advanced Arab countries - Palestine, Lebanon, and Egypt". [1] From the very earliest days of the receipt of oil revenues, the State spent lavishly on education, regarding it as an important form of investment for the country's future.

The year 1960 saw a sharp increase in the improvement of the educational facilities. The education budget for operational expenditure alone was approximately £11 million in that year. Whereas in 1946 there were only twelve secular schools in Kuwait, by 1960 this figure had increased to 114 schools. In the scholastic

[1] C. W. Hamilton, Americans and Oil in the Middle East (Houston, 1962), p. 285

year 1957/58 approximately 28000 pupils attended school, and in 1959/60 the number of pupils had risen to over 40000. This means that by 1960 about 70% of all children of school age actually attended school. The missing 30% were composed of Bedouin children and children of those families which denied them a secular education. The figure of 70% consisted of 85-90% of the total population of male children and about 50-55% of the total population of female children. At the time many parents still questioned the value of modern education for their daughters. However, it must be remembered that education was then already compulsory up to the age of fifteen.

Ostensibly the parents' attitudes towards female education have changed since then, as was borne out by the questionnaire and indirectly by the interviews. It is also evident from the fact that in 1960 a number of Kuwaiti girls were granted scholarships for higher education abroad in Egypt, Lebanon and the U.K. In 1968/69 there were in fact 66 girls who graduated from Egyptian universities alone. Today about 1000 girls are registered for courses in higher education, and it appears that they make on the whole better students. This can be explained from the fact that they are still deprived of the same degree of social liberty that is enjoyed by the young Kuwaiti males. Girls are generally kept under much closer surveillance, and it is quite possible that their under-privileged situation is the factor responsible for their greater dedication to study.

As has been fully confirmed by the interviews they are quite aware of the advantages of a modern education, and their incentive to succeed in their studies is proportional to their perception of the possible gain both in social status and

personal freedom. As D. Cook mentioned in his book, more awards for best average grades are given to girls among Kuwait's University students. He also pertinently quoted a female student who remarked that "if the boys in Kuwait don't wake up and start taking care of their education, women will be running this country in another twenty years" [2]. This statement can be said to reflect the attitude of a great many female postgraduates.

Education is evidently considered the master key to a better future for Kuwait's women. In point of fact it has already greatly improved their lot, and most modern girls today are able to enjoy a degree of freedom unimaginable in the framework of the traditional pre-industrial society. Especially married women are no longer confined to the house but are increasingly entering the occupational world. The image of herself is rapidly changing under the impact of western style education : whereas previously a woman had been conditioned to think of herself as irrevocably inferior to the male, the spreading literacy has done much to supplant her traditional role as wife and mother and open up for her completely new vistas of social existence.

There are promising signs that Kuwaiti women begin to acquire a new sense of self-esteem. This, however, does not appear to be particularly welcomed by the young Kuwaiti male population.

[2] D. Cook, Kuwait : Miracle in the Desert, quoted in : J. Daniels Kuwait Journey (London, 1971), p. 161

Few of them seem to have a genuine desire for a wife who is more a partner and companion than a chattel slave whose role is exhausted by giving birth to possibly male children, caring for their upbringing and looking after the household. As has emerged from their responses to the questionnaire, their version of an 'educated wife' does not include higher education. The exact reasons for this exclusion are not clear, but well deserve a separate investigation, possibly by means of a series of case studies.

Nonetheless, despite these misgivings on the side of the Kuwaiti males, there is undeniably an upsurge of demands for equal opportunity and of new aspirations and hopes among the young educated women of Kuwait. The social distance between male and female, prescribed by past convention and characteristic of pre-modernised Kuwaiti society, has already shrunk considerably. Especially the women with higher education are far less prone to see their life in terms of self-denial and a shadow existence in the seclusion of the home. Modern education for the young has also had its effects on the older generation in terms of attitudinal and behavioural changes on their part. Adult education has had a share in this too. Women are no longer forced to wear the veil, or to walk two or three paces behind their husbands in public. Nor are they required to sit on the back seat of a car but can take their place in the front with their male escort.

This new-found confidence among women is likely to be greatly enhanced by the influence of the increasing number of those who have received their higher education abroad, and who tend to be more in favour of the supersession of the conventional value system by a new kind of ideology which will match the changing social conditions in Kuwait.

Secular education has induced a general relaxation of several of the more constrictive mores and customs of pre-oil Kuwait. Thus, first-cousin marriage has nearly disappeared, and parents nowadays tend to consult their children, and they expect to be consulted, before making any marriage arrangements. Most educated young Kuwaitis are free to marry a girl of a different nationality, provided that she is a Moslem, Christian or Jew or, if of another creed, willing to convert to Islam. The children of such mixed marriages are expected to be of the Moslem faith. Notwithstanding that disciplinary actions in regard to marriage to a foreign girl, especially from Europe, have been relaxed, there is still a rule that officials in the diplomatic corps and the army must leave the service upon marriage to a non-Arab woman.

Education and the contact with a different ethic have also been responsible for the gradual eclipse of the patriarchal family accompanied by the simultaneous undermining of the authority of the father. In the past the father was regarded as the sole proprietor of all knowledge and skill and as a fit ideal to be followed by the son. Today it is not infrequent that the son feels educationally superior to his father. As a result the young male generation is far less responsive to their fathers' wishes, particularly since many of them enjoy economic independence from their family. The new trend is towards small conjugal families with independent households. However, survivals of the old patriarchal family style are still detectable, as for instance in the high value ascribed to family solidarity.

The switch to individualism, as expressed in the nascent conjugal family pattern, is also evident in the climbing curve for divorce and also in the new divorce procedures. Previously divorce

was almost entirely dependent on the husband, and only in the extreme case of neglect did the wife have the right to seek a divorce. Today social workers spot marital rifts and endeavour to reconcile the partners and thus keep the family intact. If their intervention proves futile, mutual divorce is usually arranged. More than that, today it is quite possible for a wife who has become disinterested in her husband to demand a divorce herself and also obtain it. Matters of divorce are rarely referred to the courts since it is considered shameful, especially for a woman, to resort to this ultimate step.

Furthermore, it seems fair to say that most modern Kuwaiti women would sooner submit to divorce than accede to their husband taking a second wife. Polygyny, once very prevalent and sanctioned by Islam, is now considered intolerable, and there are very few instances of this kind of marriage in Kuwait today. Divorced women retain their dignity and status and need no longer fear public opprobrium. They can either return to their parental home while retaining their economic independence, or they can decide to remain on their own. There is also the possibility of remarriage. The breakdown of the traditional kinship patterns and the emergence of new values emphasising individual worth and personal liberty are obviously enhanced by the excellent governmental provisions for social security.

Concordant with the changes in family life are the shifting religious attitudes and the rise of a purely nominal Moslem community of highly educated middle class men and women. Together with the motor car and the western style news media a new kind of value system was introduced in which the ideals of progress and competition loom large. The extent to which this secularism has taken root in

Kuwaiti society is hard to assess. But there can be no doubt about the growing scepticism in regard to the traditional religious mores and practices. Combined with an almost naive affirmation of technology and its accompanying philosophy of progress this spreading religious diffidence and even indifference may serve as an important marker of the nature of the emergent normative pattern in Kuwait.

In this connection the political aspects of social change must be mentioned. The importance of politics in a situation where the social conditions are rapidly changing is self-evident, in view of the fact that it can easily enhance the predicament of a society caught in the struggle of dissolving old value structures and crystallising new ones. The Third World countries offer ample illustration for this. As F. Stoakes aptly pointed out : "As the forces of change invade society, blueprints are imposed and to a greater or lesser degree institutionalized." [3] Politically the most significant innovation in modern Kuwait was of course the constitution of 1961-62, accompanied by the establishment of a vast and intricate governmental machine.

Whereas in pre-petroleum days social leadership was almost exclusively in the hands of an individual ruler, the shaikh supported by the members of his family, the composition of the Government today is defined by the recognition of a two-way communication between the governmental body and the society at large.

[3] F. Stoakes, "Social and Political Change in the Third World", in : The Arabian Peninsula : Society and Politics, ed. by D. Hopwood (London, 1972), p. 191

Personal charisma and shared ideology have been supplanted by a situation where it is the individual who is facing authority. In other words, the Government has to contend with more or less organised pressure groups and public criticism and protest. The Kuwaiti Government appears still to be involved in a struggle for balance. On the one hand there are the increasing social demands based on new values and realisations and especially the call for greater political participation of the more educated Kuwaitis, and on the other hand there are the abiding influence of the ruling family, the strictly conservative attitudes of the wealthy upper class and the traditionalist outlook of the older generation.

The lines of stress between the Government and the parliament, representing the public, are not easily plotted. But as many an outside observer has remarked, the political structure is still to a considerable extent informed by the commanding power of the aristocratic families. One of these critics, H.M. Albaharna, observed : "The absence of a badly needed 'intelligent opposition' in the present Kuwaiti parliament is, of course, much regretted by many admirers of Kuwait's democratic system". [4]

Implementation of governmental decisions occurs via the large and steadily expanding state apparatus which, with its tendency to form enclaves, is not necessarily conducive to the kind of smooth communication which is called for by the increasing complexity of

[4] H. M. Albaharna, The Legal Status of the Arabian Gulf States (Manchester, 1968), p. 21

the socio-economic life. In particular the clamouring for personal advantages and the general atmosphere of competitiveness in the bureaucracy are bound to prove economically and also politically disadvantageous in the long run, all the more so since the public has no longer direct access to the ruler.

Public participation in the governing of the country, as guaranteed by the constitution, is despite all appearances still very limited. Kuwaitis do not show much political awareness. There are no political parties or even political student organisations which could put pressure on the existing regime; they are forbidden. The political power is located in the affluent families of royal origin who have monopolised the huge oil profits. F. Stoakes - following D. Apter's classification - spoke of a "mixed regime" in Kuwait which "tends to work autocratically where collective issues are concerned and as a reconciliation system on sectoral issues". [5] This political system works on the basis of the recognition of common material interests. Its transitional status is evident from the fact that it seeks to reinforce governmental demands by exploiting the persisting old value system while at the same time trying to reconciliate the demands of the more progressive wing in the country.

All these considerations bear witness to the fact that Kuwaiti society is in a process of profound transition. It belongs neither exclusively to the traditional/underdeveloped nor to the modern/developed type. Rather it is a combination of extremes

[5] F. Stoakes, op.cit., p. 212

in both directions. The change which Kuwait is undergoing today is not simply a case of readjustment but, in A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's words, a change of type. [6] The tension which exists between these extremes is effectively neutralised by the immense affluence which allows both young and old alike to live a life of comfort and leisure without much thought for the future. F. Shehab rightly drew attention to the danger imminent in this attitude when he said : "Young people have lost their perspective, their urge to acquire knowledge, their acceptance of discipline. As a result, the drive, diligence and risk-taking that characterised the old Kuwaiti are no more". [7] The lavish welfare benefits have reduced the feeling of responsibility of the individual and the growing disproportion between the security offered by the State and the simultaneous passivity on the part of the majority of Kuwaitis probably constitute the most serious hazard of contemporary Kuwaiti society.

The conceptual universe of many Kuwaitis appears to be hazy, and among the young generation there is a widespread feeling of being adrift. Economic progress clearly has outstripped the psychological capacities of the majority of the people. They can no longer identify with the old traditions and mores by which their lives had been regulated along well-tried channels. Nor are they able to identify with the values imported from the West. It seems, however, that unless the tensions inherent in this fast changing society are harnessed creatively the future of Kuwait is more than uncertain.

6 A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, A Natural Science of Society (New Yotk, 1957), p.87

7 F. Shehab, "Kuwait : A Super-Affluent Society", in : Modernization of the Arab World, ed. by J.H. Thompson and R.D. Reischauer (Princeton, 1966), p. 137

APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

(Biographic Details)

Name (optional) ..... Sex..... Age .....

Marital status ..... Education .....

Occupation .....

(I Family Structure)

A. Family composition : monogamous/polygynous

B. Number of family members ..... Male ..... Female .....

(II Marital Preferences)

A. Qualities for a son-in-law

good family

good looks

education

good character

high income

B. Qualities for a daughter-in-law

good family

beauty

education

good character

rich family

perfect in domestic duties

(III Preferences in Residence after Marriage)

A. Do you prefer to live with parents or husband? or :

B. Do you prefer to establish an independent household?

C. Do you prefer to remain partially dependent on parents ((of both husband or wife)?

D. Would you be willing to accommodate brothers and sisters of the husband in the newly established household?

E. In the case of an independent household, would you wish to have the financial support of parents, brothers or sisters?

(IV Social Attitudes)

A. In case of marriage negotiations for son/daughter which if the relatives are to be consulted?

father's brother(s)

father's sister(s)

father's sister's husband

mother's brother(s)

mother's sister(s)

mother's sister's husband

elder brother

elder sister

distant relative(s)

family friend(s)

B. In case of domestic disputes which relatives/friends are asked to mediate?

C. In case of financial difficulties which relatives/friends are called upon to help?

D. Do you prefer to keep close relations with your extended family? yes/no

If no, give reasons : .....

E. Would you consult elders (both male and female) of your extended family for major decisions in your domestic and occupational matters?

F. Do you agree with the changes that are taking place at the present time? State your reasons.

(V Religious Attitudes)

A. Do you follow all the tenets of the religion?

yes/no/few

If few, state which : .....

B. What is your attitude towards people who do not belong to your own religion?

C. Would you like to provide religious education for your children?

D. Would you agree with your children marrying non-Moslems?

(VI Political Attitudes)

A. Do you prefer the Government to be elected or to be appointed by the Amir?

B. If you are entitled to vote, how do you exercise this right?

Do you give your vote to

an influential candidate

a rich candidate

an educated candidate

an efficient candidate

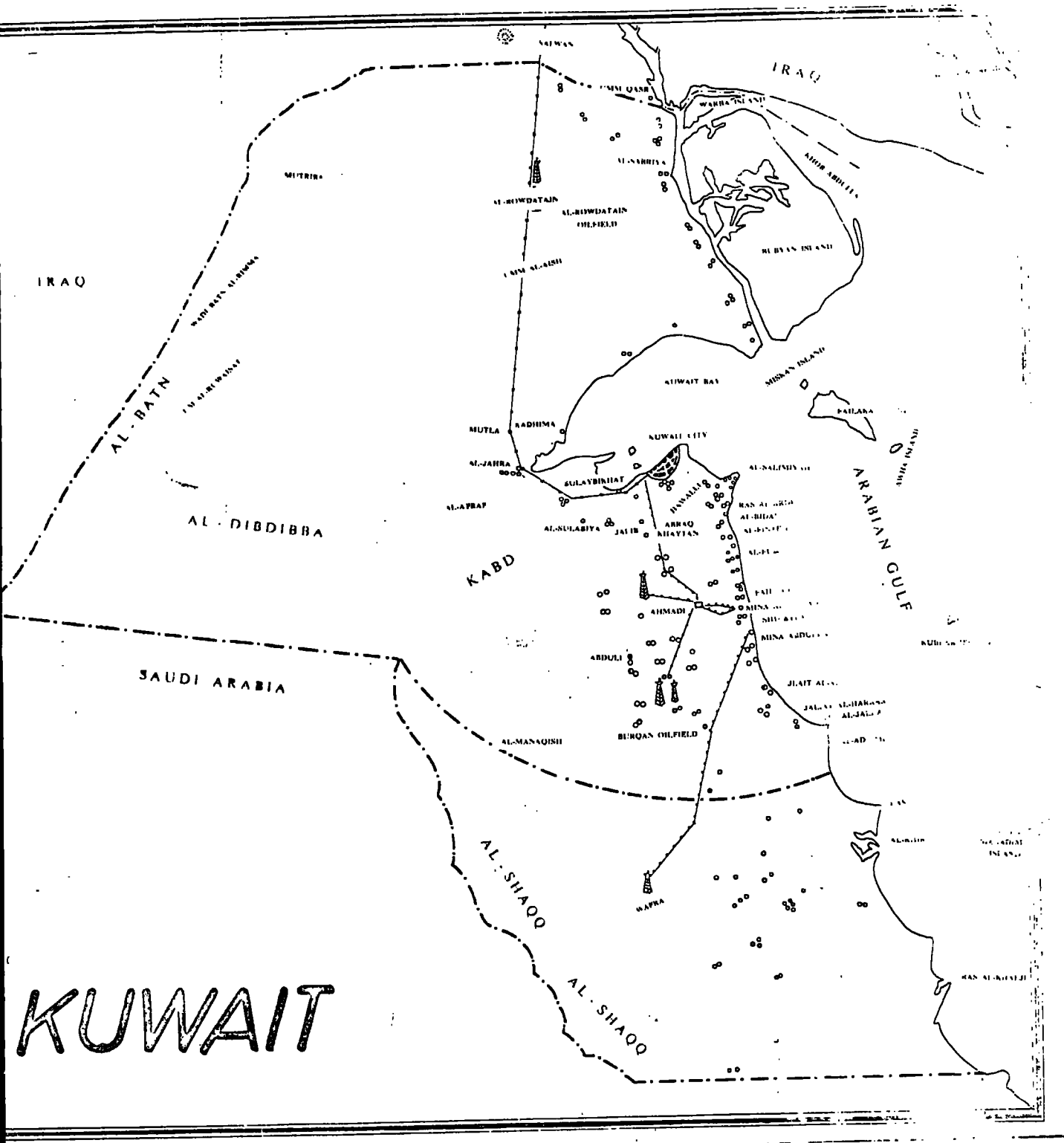
a candidate from an influential family

(VII Attitudes towards Women's Education and Employment)

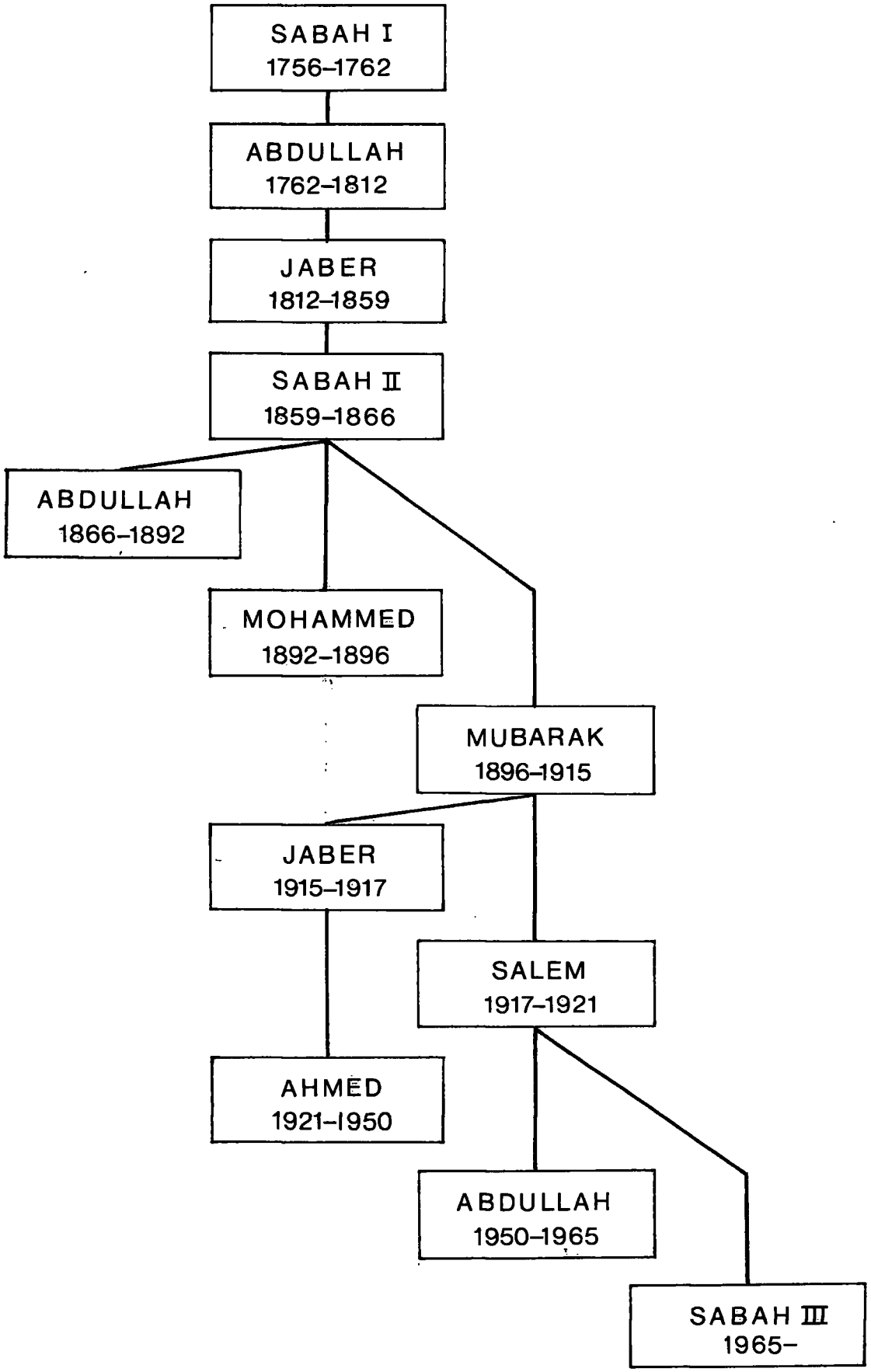
A. What is your opinion on the education of girls?

B. Would you allow your daughter to take any job?

MAP OF KUWAIT

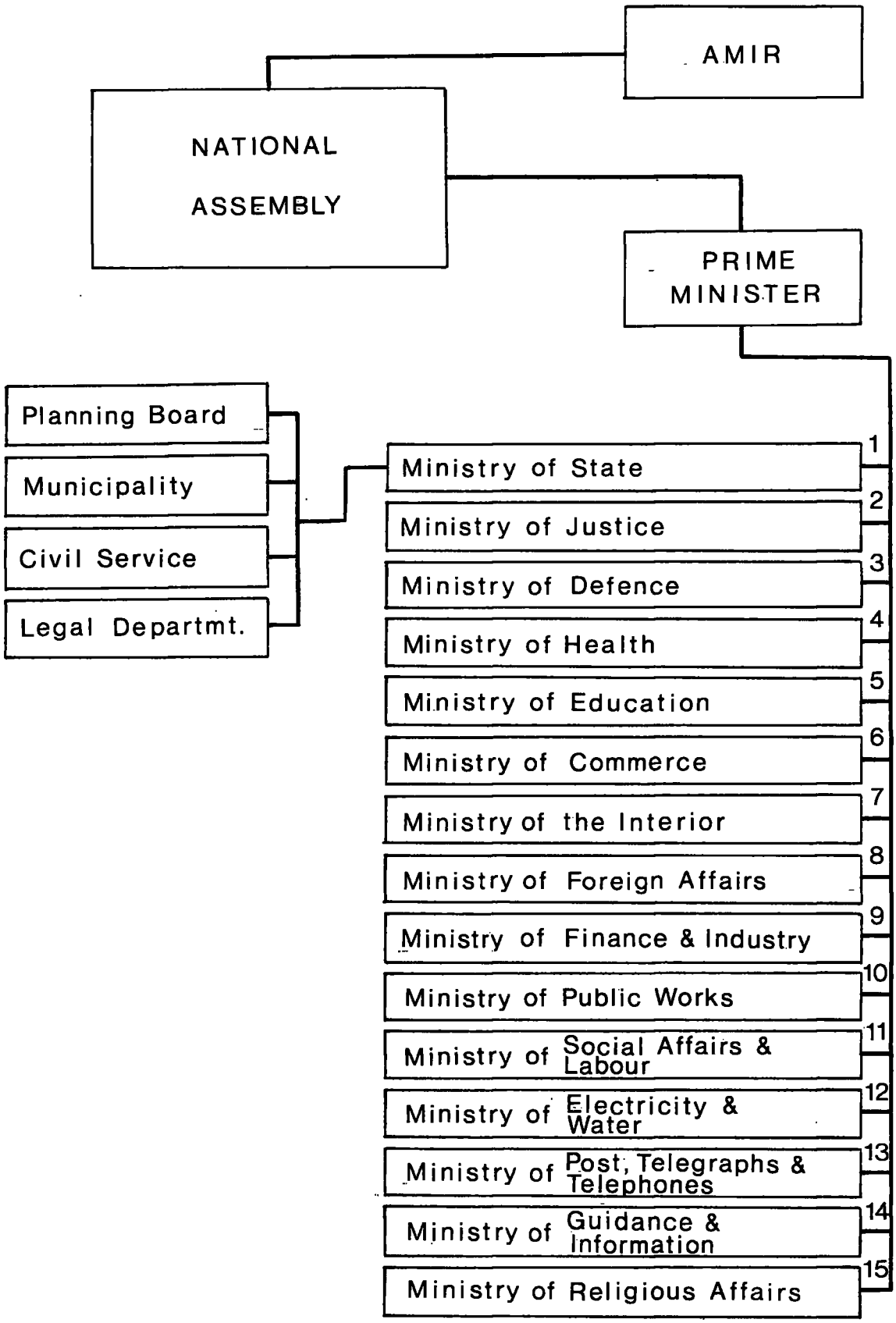


GENEALOGY OF KUWAIT'S RULERS



THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF KUWAIT

FOR 1963



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