CONCLUSIONS

Education, democratization and development are interrelated concepts and bear a reciprocal relationship. A literally strong society is supposed to be an open and modern society. It is in this vein that S.M. Lipset propounded his theory of modernization and development wherein he identified several variables to measure a modern society. Among these variables, Lipset accorded primacy to education as an important component for the modernization, particularly of the countries in the Third world. This thesis inter alia attempts to tests Lipset's hypothesis as well as most of the countries in the Third world are backward in terms of education and particularly the countries in the Arab world are far behind in education. Of late there has been a trend in the oil-rich countries to send there children to the Western world in quest of education that resulted in a substantially major segment of rich elite section demonstrating there literary capabilities in the government as well as private sectors. The mushrooming foreign education centres basically from the American and European countries in the Arab region is a testimony to the fact that the new generation in the Arab world inclined towards education. Further there has also been a trend to develop there own educational institutions catering to the indigenous needs in the Arab countries.

Leaders of Third World countries, including the Arab countries, have started looking at education as a vehicle of social justice, but also as an instrument of democratization, liberalization, in terms of overall social and economic development. This view of education has been aided by practical and theoretical considerations. Specifically, following the dismantling of colonial systems and the achievement of independence, emergent political considerations and expediency, coupled with the relative ease of modernizing education, were important factors in the expansion of educational systems. Also, the two major theoretical approaches to social and economic development, the individual and the institutional, both agreed in emphasizing the developmental role of formal education. In the countries of the Arab world, in a period of about two decades, there has been substantial expansion of educational facilities at all levels, particularly at the primary level. In these countries, however, as elsewhere in the Third World,
educational change has not functioned uniformly as the expected catalyst in the modernization process. It is here argued that those attempting to assess the impact of formal education on development have tended to bypass certain important issues which are believed to influence education's role as an agency of social change. In addition to the list of issues confronting education, which political leaders and planners in the Arab countries have identified, attention is drawn to three other sets of factors which need to be considered in evaluating the modernizing influence of education. These are factors relating to: (1) the interpretation and implementation of societal goals, (2) the implications of unbalanced institutional change, and (3) legitimate expectations of the educational institution. Evaluations of the developmental impact of education have, too often, imposed a Western-based model, overlooked the importance of the societal context, and placed hope—perhaps more idealistic than realistic—in the potential of formal education as an agent of democratization, liberalization and development in the Arab world and in particular the Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Arab access to education, for both male and female students, has grown very rapidly and in quantitative terms a great deal has been achieved. Moreover, within certain limits, a variety of educational opportunities exist for Arab students, including now more private institutions and a number of English-medium and Western-style ones, plus study abroad. The reasons for this complex mixture of systems are rooted in the co-existence of several different groups in Arab society. Some people seek to acquire Western-type skills and go for Western education. Some agree that acquisition of those skills is important, but they want to combine them with a solid grounding in Arab and Islamic culture. Still others reject Western culture and go for an Islamic education taught mostly or entirely in Arabic. The rapid expansion of educational opportunities at home, at low cost, reduced pressure to study abroad, and encouraged the growth of local educational institutions that were at least partly "Western." Yet despite the substantial quantitative expansion of educational opportunities, questions are being asked throughout the Arab world by thoughtful observers, especially in the private sector but also in government and academia, about the quality of education and the outputs of the system. Employers are increasingly complaining that job applicants have not learned skills useful in the private sector so they
must hire foreign labor or also undertake remedial training programs. Unemployed graduates also are disappointed that they are unable to find jobs they want because they lack needed skills. This phenomenon has become more apparent as governments privatize enterprises and as globalization affects more businesses. Transmission of knowledge has expanded, but problems persist because of reliance on rote learning, and little production of new knowledge. Most educational institutions are still under government control and are almost entirely paid for out of state funds, but many Arab governments are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the demands for education. New ways of financing education including dependence on private resources are becoming increasingly popular, and foundation support for education, still very modest, is also growing. Criticism of the educational system is also leading to greater interest in quality control and external evaluation, including consideration of accreditation systems, which currently do not exist. These are the main features of the discussion and debate currently going on throughout the Arab world about education. Although American media after September 11 have focused on the narrow question of whether Arab textbooks incite hatred of non-Muslims, and that particular issue will undoubtedly be part of the focus of Arab attention in the coming months and years, the serious discussion of educational reform have been focussed more on issues in the thesis.

Of course, there is complex interplay among the separate elements that go together to make a quality distance education program; therefore, it is important that quality assurance of all aspects of distance education programs be considered. Otherwise, the failure in assuring quality of one aspect may have a knock-on effect on the quality of the whole system. Given all issues highlighted in Chapter I, it seems honest to conclude that developing such a framework is essential for ensuring quality, but is not enough on its own to ensure quality distance education offerings. It should be regarded only as the beginning of an ongoing comprehensive process that has to be supported effectively to produce the desired results. For successfully executing such a framework, all essential synchronous conditions which foster quality assurance have to be present, such as integration of the quality assurance into the institution's commitments, staff persuasion and
engagement, commitment by each of the organizational units involved to ensure the quality in all of the services provided, and the development of a positive corporate culture.

The results confirm the diversity of the Arab world and highlight a number of strengths and weaknesses that can inform policy decisions and provide a foundation for enhanced dialogue between the public and private sector. The present findings, along with previous assessments, indicate that many countries show a respectable track record for maintaining and improving competitiveness. Yet, when benchmarked against peers in other parts of the world, many Arab economies fall behind. This applies to a larger extent to the wealthier and more advanced economies; most of the remaining Arab world compares rather favorably when benchmarked against other countries in similar stages of development. In today’s globalizing world economy, the pace of reform will need to be accelerated to avoid the region falling further behind the most dynamic economies in the world, such as Singapore, Malaysia, India, and China. We have identified a number of challenges that need to be addressed to improve the competitive performance and maintain the growth momentum in the region. Given the high unemployment and the need for diversification in many countries, education reform is a high priority. Educational outputs remain mismatched with the needs of the business sector, depriving the economies of the trained talent needed to raise productivity and move up the value chain. Because innovation is the key enabler of future growth, investment in research institutions as well as incentives for the private sector to increase R&D spending will be necessary. High unemployment and rapid labor force growth are putting pressure on governments in the region to thoroughly overhaul the organization and regulation of labor markets that rely heavily on the public sector and migrant workers. More flexibility in employment regulations and increased focus on meritocracy and professional management are steps in the right direction. Although many of these reforms are politically sensitive, the current growth cycle may prove opportune for initiating labor market reforms. Similar considerations apply to goods markets in several countries that remain protected from internal and external competition. When it comes to addressing the challenges outlined in chapter I, the current oil boom is a double-edged sword. Although periods of prosperity provide a window of opportunity for introducing politically challenging reform, they also diminish the pressure for such reforms. Some of the most impressive success stories in the region, including that of the United Arab Emirates, have demonstrated the possibility of
sustained and aggressive reforms irrespective of conditions in oil markets. This, however, has often required the participation of the business community and society at large in supporting measures aimed at long-term economic prosperity.

The shape of Arab politics is rapidly evolving thanks to regional and international changes and internal developments that have been accelerated since the end of the second Gulf war. Arab regimes are now more aware of popular dissatisfaction and the support by several Arab regimes for the US war campaign has only put more pressure on the ruling regimes. Symbolic and superficial changes have been introduced in most Arab countries. State-sponsored councils and committees have been sprouting at a rapid rate in many countries, including in the Gulf region where identification with Shari'ah was all that the regimes were willing to submit to. Regular elections in Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon have resulted in a changed political structure. It can be maintained that the influence of fundamentalism has been weakened in countries where relatively free elections have taken place. Women have not formed the backbone of fundamentalist organizations in any Arab country and they constitute the bulk of secular forces in Algeria, Jordan and Lebanon. Another feature of recent events in the West Asia is the growing role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Human rights organisations, feminist networks and election monitoring groups have received added attention, perhaps because the picture of party politics still lacks credibility. Arab states have dominated political parties, either in their countries or in other countries, for too long. Varying positions exist within the Arab countries concerning the right to form and support political parties and the degree to which such parties should be allowed to operate. Across the Arab region, six Arab countries, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, continue to prohibit in principle the formation of political parties. Bahrain is the only one of the six Gulf states which affords the freedom of formation to 'political organizations'.

People are often suspicious of the motivations of party leaders and they often accuse them of loyalty to external forces. Furthermore, the rise of the fundamentalist movement, which often expresses hostility to traditional party organisations in the Arab world, has not increased the credibility of political parties.

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Lipset's widely accepted association of high economic performance with corresponding high levels of democracy.\(^2\) In his words: Concretely, this means that the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy. From Aristotle down to the present, [people] have argued that only in a wealthy society in which relatively few citizens lived in real poverty could a situation exist in which the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics.\(^3\)

Lipset establishes a linkage between wealth and democracy.\(^4\) He does not, however, link economic fairness (equal distribution of wealth) and political fairness, i.e., democracy ('one person, one vote'). Thus for Lipset, an increment in general wealth would mean political participation without necessarily eliminating socioeconomic inequalities. Dahl, however, while of the view that a fairly high GNP per capita 'threshold' can be conducive to higher levels of contestation and participation, cautions that higher GNP levels per capita beyond an upper threshold do not necessarily 'affect [polyarchy] in any significant way.'\(^5\) Furthermore, Dahl gives the example of US democracy (in the 19th century as observed by Alexis de Tocqueville), which was neither industrially based, nor had high GNP per capita.\(^6\) Huntington's findings point to an 'economic transition zone' that can correspond with a 'political transition zone' where movement from non-democracy to


\(^3\) Lipset, 'Some social requisites of democracy', p 75.

\(^4\) The association between economic growth and democracy and democratization, as can be deduced from Lipset's assertion, is posited on the following tenets: first, the greater economic development is, the lesser will, or at least should, socioeconomic inequalities be, and therefore the lower the potential for political disturbance. The 'more well-to-do' societies often pursue welfarist policies to minimise socioeconomic cleavages and indirectly placate those potentially rebellious social forces who basically have nothing to lose. Second, the greater economic development is, the more 'participant' society is. Third, the greater economic development is, the less the tendency for extremism. In other words, modernisation and tolerance set in. Fourth, the greater economic development is, the smaller the margin for tyranny and dictatorship. Again, the middle class, which is assumed to be politically well organised, tends to act as a counterweight to the state.


\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 68-74.
democracy occurs. This however, is not irreversible. Lipset's correlation applies to the Arab setting only in one sense. It explains the unsustainability of competitive (Lebanon) and semi-competitive (Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan) politics in the not so 'well-to-do' Arab countries. In general, however, the Arab world reveals inconsistencies. Three deviations stand out. First, the view in many parts of the Arab world is, rightly or wrongly, that democracy is amenable to high economic development, not vice versa. Second, present Arab democratisers are the 'relatively populous, poor, and politicised'. Third, the well-to-do Arab rentiers states are, with the qualified exception of Kuwait, the furthest from democratization.

How can these last two deviations be explained? The anomaly in the Arab allocation or hydrocarbon states is partly a result of the artificiality of oil wealth - one of a number of various possible factors. The huge returns from external oil rent have mostly contributed to aggrandisement of the state and its political oligarchical patrons the 'rentier class'. This aggrandisement applies to both oil producers and non-producers. The former directly accrued billions of petrodollars from external oil rent. The latter, which were only peripheral oil-producers, promoted from the Arab oil boom which facilitated greater Arab economic integration and interdependence. This latter group have partly become rentier economies. They rent labour, skills and expertise to the sparsely populated Arab oil-producing states earning billions of dollars in remittances. The transfer of millions of Arab petrodollars either in the form of aid or investment is another factor in the equation. Many interrelated factors are at the core of oil-related state aggrandisement.

7 Ibid., p. 59.
8 One of the first scholars to look at the relation between socioeconomic variables and democracy in the Middle East is Charles Issawi. (1956) See his, 'Economic and social foundations of democracy in the Middle East', International Affairs, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 27-42.
11 Those that accrue huge earnings from external oil rent. The deviation applies to all the Gulf oildoms, Iraq and Libya. Huntington points out examples of these deviations - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Oman, Libya and Iraq. See his, The Third Wave, pp. 59-72.
But the point is what do public attitudes tell us about the linkage between Islam and democracy? Are public attitudes toward more democratization and political openness influenced by religiosity and adherence to Islamic belief? Popular perceptions in Western societies, often resembling anecdotal stereotypes, hold that Islam and democracy are mutually exclusive concepts, and that levels of piety and acceptance of democratic principles are inversely correlated; that is, the more religious a person is, the less likely it is that he or she will embrace democratic principles. Such perceptions of the relationship between piety and democracy in the region may be misinformed by Western experiences.

In West European and American societies, more religious people indeed tend to hold more conservative views and attitudes toward governance and domestic and foreign policies. If one assumes that the embrace of and commitment to civic virtues are key requirements for the creation and maintenance of stable democracies, it is crucially important to study, monitor, and access public attitudes toward democratic principles and policies that support secularization and democratization. There have been very few attempts systematically to study the impact of Islamic religious attachments on individuals’ attitudes toward democracy and governance. Islam is not necessarily an obstacle to democracy. Islamic attachments do not seem to obstruct the emergence of an open political culture, and thus eventually of sustainable democracy. Interestingly, the only significant correlation between piety and political conservatism was found among women, who seem to fear greater economic inequality between the sexes as an indirect consequence of a liberal political and economic order.

It is not unlikely that the next few years will witness competition between traditional political parties (of the left, right and centre) and the professional associations concerned with human rights, feminism, ecology and development. The competition will intensify as some of those groups seek representation in parliament, as was the case in the recent parliamentary election in Lebanon. Within this context, political parties of the left and centre are now incorporating items and issues promoted by the popular NGOs. References to the environment and human rights now make their way into the programmes of official political parties. The changing discourse is unlikely to undermine the power base of the
professional associations although it reflects a change in the discourse within the public sphere.

Caveats aside, the fact remains that incentives are a critical and critically underused-tool for effecting reform and spurring democratization in the Arab world. Current U.S. policy is based on a mix of defective assumptions: about the role of civil society, about the transformative effect of economic development, and about the efficacy of punitive policies to force change. Finally, what is missing from the literature on democracy in the West Asia is any critical assessment of the concept of democracy itself. West Asian scholarship now accepts without hesitation the assumed virtues of Western democracy. That democracy is capable of resolving the acute social, economic and political problems of the Arab world is as questionable an assertion as the slogan ‘Islam is the solution’. Events in Eastern and Central Europe illustrate the limitations of capitalist transformation and of democratisation. The former benefited Western economic interests, while the latter allowed wealthy elites to sing the praises of ‘freedom’, American style. The literature does not contain any linkage between social justice, which is essential for the long-term development of the region, and the path of democratisation. In light of the widening gap between the rich and poor in the West Asia in general, democratization does not necessarily guarantee any positive change in the lives of the majority of Arabs. Similarly, voters in Central and Eastern Europe have been returning former communists to power as a result of their disillusionment with Western democracy. This should not, of course, be interpreted as a call for the preservation of the status quo, which entails acts of violence and oppression against ordinary citizens, but it only raises questions about the wisdom of the tone of religious dogmatism in which West Asian specialists invoke their calls for the democratisation of the region.

The forces that determine whether or not civil society organisations can emerge and act as agents of democratisation are varied and diverse, often differing according to the particular characteristics of a region or country. Class composition and the nature of

economic development, specific societal characteristics and cultural preferences, and the pursuit of certain state policies as opposed to others all appear to be determining factors in the widespread absence, or the emergence and growth, of a dense and democratic civil society. In the Arab world, all these factors eventually boil down to the structural features and policy agendas of the state. In the Arab world, the politics of clientelistic paternalism are still alive and well, having recently experienced what amount to no more than mere cosmetic adjustments. In both the economic and political realms, dangerously high levels of functional paralysis are still a long way away. On the other hand, most of the emerging autonomous CSOs have yet to fully embrace democracy. Most, in fact, continue to adhere to dogmatic and uncompromising ideological blueprints—religious or otherwise—that are antithetical to democracy. Given the present constellation of social and political forces in today’s Arab world, democratization does not appear as a likely possibility in the foreseeable future. What perhaps makes this third phase in the development of civil society unique is that for the first time associational life has organized and mobilized itself independently from the state, pressuring and demanding greater representation and accountability from public officials. Samuel Huntington’s ‘third wave’ of democratization may be irreversible if this third phase in the development of civil society continues to value and promote democratization.

So far, the majority in the Arab countries, where the process of political liberalization started in the late 1980s and early 1990s, feels that the process has been neither deep enough nor wide enough, and the situation can be described as at a standstill. Because the regimes are not very democratic in their structure, the elites within these state systems do not implement policies that advance the process of reform. And, unfortunately, the thrust of the political actions of the elites outside the state systems has not been to promote a democratic agenda. It is a combination of foreign factors—not only the US, but also Europe and the global implications of the entire World Trade Organisation (WTO) structure—that becomes crucial in advancing reform and democratization in the Arab world. It is organizations, institutions, and activists on both sides, Arabs and the US, who share the same values that will form an alliance to push the reform agenda forward. The
United States of America with its policies on the ground in the region can only cause harm to the process of reform.

During past decades, Kuwait has made great strides in the direction of development. These included creating a modern economic infrastructure and upgrading their educational system. Amid growing interest with the school system, to which over 90% of children attend, the private school industry is seen as a growth industry. This revolution in the quantitative levels of education however, suffers from qualitative deficiencies. The types of academic learning and technical training are not geared toward the requirements of the job market. In other words, there is a mismatch between the educational system, where the main focus is on arts, humanities and religious studies in order to preserve traditional culture, and the labor force, where the need is for technical and managerial skills in order to achieve a higher level of integration in the international economic system. This contradiction between the desire to preserve traditional culture and at the same time aspire to be part of the global revolution in information technology is likely to endure for some time. It is further complicated by the slow change in societies' attitude toward women's status and role. There have been significant achievements but much more is still desired. There is a fundamental need to change the quality of education, to accommodate technical training and focus more on science and less on humanities.

Given the global nature of many of the structural transformations taking place, solutions to the problems must be found at international and regional level. This is particularly clear in the case of inclusive nature of educational policy, environmental threats, certain types of conflicts, and macro economic policies. At the same time, at least part of the answer to increasing insecurity must lie with the state. The state can create an enabling environment for the efforts women are making to safeguard and enhance their chances, not only for survival but also security. These efforts can only give long-lasting results if they are recognized and supported by established institutions capable of providing the necessary resources. Thus responsive and genuinely accountable governments should be counted, together with women's autonomous organisations and international agencies, among the main actors in the quest for security.
This thesis has shown that even modest, cosmetic, and seemingly calculated reform initiatives had an effect on bolstering perceptions of regime legitimacy in Saudi Arabia. Indirectly, this assisted in mitigating terrorism by making the populace more willing to support the government's counterterrorism initiatives, even if the liberalization steps themselves did not speak to the militants' motivations, with the possible exception of judiciary and prison reform. Similarly, the 2005 municipal elections created an institutional framework for the peaceful airing of grievances and the discussion of issues, which was significant in the context of the kingdom's political culture. By fostering an environment conducive to Salafi participation, these elections, along with the National Dialogue sessions, deprived domestic terrorists of ideological support from key clerics. As noted by Freedom House, these steps were certainly miniscule—but they were not meaningless. There was indeed an indirect and immediate effect on curtailing violence because they came at a key juncture in the regime's counterterrorism campaign.

While the social structure of Kuwaiti society has been rapidly became comparable to most Western States today: the education and health services, social security provisions, utilities and public employment which were introduced in Kuwait compare with the most modern systems in the world. Each State provided its citizens with these services as guaranteed rights; for instance, the State is pledged constitutionally to provide every individual with a job appropriate to his qualifications. The guaranteed job concept is an Islamic social concept. Education and processes of democratization are intertwined and interrelated. It is safe, therefore, to conclude from the foregoing that Kuwait as well as the other Arab Gulf States is witnessing a rapid return to the traditional Islamic Shari'a, as a result of many important factors internally and externally. Kuwait is to be considered the leader among the Gulf States in returning to Islamic law of which education is a cardinal principle through the adoption of some Islamic Laws and their implementation and application since the beginning of the 1980s. It was the aim of the chapter II to oversee and investigate the steps followed by Kuwait—as a model in adopting education as a process of democratization and liberalization under the rubrics of established Islamic ethos.
The roots of participatory politics in Kuwait date back to its establishment as a society more than two centuries ago. The basic agreement among the immigrant families was to have a ruler who would consult with the people over important issues, while they supported him financially. The system was undermined by the sudden ability of the ruler to be financially independent following the discovery of oil, and the great interest shown by the external superpowers. After independence in 1961, society was transformed from the traditional form of participatory governing, to a more institutionalized democratic process. Many factors contributed to the transformation. Internally, the politically active and open merchant community were able to cultivate a cordial relationship with a benevolent ruler before he came to power. It was the country's good fortune that he ('Abdallah al-Salim) ruled for 15 years, the critical first years of the oil era. In addition, the activity of younger political groupings, and the country's increasing wealth, helped achieve the transformation. Externally, changes on the international scene, especially the British decision to withdraw from the Gulf, were important factors. The emergence of regional powers, with their own rivalry for regional supremacy, gave the small independent state room to maneuver and choose its own political system. With the death of the Amir in 1965, and the subsequent shift of the balance of power in the government's favor, coupled with a sharp decline in the influence of merchants and political groupings, the democratic process became the first victim. This was demonstrated in the unconstitutional dissolutions of Parliament. But social change, through mass education and economic opportunities, opened the door for new socio-political forces to affect the process in the direction of a more open society. The situation reached its height with the establishment of the pro-democracy movement in 1989, which took to the streets calling for the restoration of constitutional rule. This was helped along by the change in the international order brought about by the end of the Cold War, and the impetus toward more open societies.

Kuwait's successful tryst with democracy and extension of franchise to its women folk heralded a new era in democratic politics in the Gulf region and Arab world. It is interesting to note that women participation and contest in General elections in Kuwait have considerably risen during the last few years is an indicator of the fact that growth in education correspondingly leads to a growth in democratic activities.