It may not be an act of unworthiness to reiterate that education is of value in itself (intrinsic value) and is valued for what it can do (instrumental value). Education is desired for itself as it opens up a vast world of opportunities and ideas to the educated person. It is also of great instrumental value in the process of economic, social and political growth and development. There is strong empirical correlation between education and political change. Education empowers and, through empowerment, affects larger socio-political processes. Exemplifying this hypothetical correlation an important phase in the growth of the theory of political development is perhaps best represented by S.M Lipset's own work, Political Man, regarded as representing a major departure from the established methodological orientation of American political sociology which at that time was unquestionably dominated by the approach systematized by Talcott Parsons.

The Parsonian method whose pedigree is traced to Max Weber and his study of the cultural foundations of the origin of capitalism in Europe led the inquiry into social action and social institutions, including politics and political institutions, through a study of the values and norms of a society. The result was framework, which stressed the elements of consensus within a social system. In the contemporary times, S.M Lipset, unravelled the "social bases of politics", and came to grip with the problem of conflict in society. Lipset's method is that of multivariate analysis. Instead of trying to identify any one particular variable, which determined the development of a stable democratic system of the western kind, which still remained the telos of political development, he attempted to find a cluster of variables, which correlated with what he identified a priori as developed political systems. His investigation showed that factors such as wealth, industrialization, education and urbanization all correlated fairly highly with European and English-speaking stable democracies, and then, at a decreasing rate, with European and English-speaking unstable democracies and dictatorships, Latin American democracies and Latin American stable dictatorships. This cluster of variables, which together he called economic development, was, therefore, crucial in estimating the prospects of the growth of a developed polity out of a backward society.
But even within this cluster of variables, all were not equally important. Citing Daniel Lerner's study on the Middle East, Lipset emphasized quite strongly that of all these variables, it is education which is definitely a necessary condition for development and democracy.

Education presumably broadens man's outlook, enables him to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains him from adhering to extremist doctrines, and increases his capacity to make rational electoral choices. Further, at the level of individual behavior, the higher one's education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices. Thus it is only after there is a sufficient spread of literacy, and therefore a wide area for the operation of the media of communication that democracy begins to function as a stable social order.

Long dominated by authoritarian regimes, the Arab World, today, faces the challenge of change posed by a variety of internal and external factors. In recent years, significant degrees of political liberalization have already been evident in a number of Arab states — although the extent to which this presages an eventual democratization of their political systems is far from evident. Elsewhere, regimes have made more modest, perhaps only cosmetic, reforms or resisted demands for expanded public freedoms and participation.

The first is that the study of democratization in the Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular does not, and should not, stand alone: it has to be connected up to wider theoretical studies of the phenomena of democracy, liberalization and democratization. Throughout the thesis, varying definitions of the term “democracy” are used and discussed. This reflects the diversity of approaches to evaluate the progress made in the

region toward democratization, and it explains the nature of optimism and pessimism about the region's prospects for both democratization and resulting peace dividends. Such disagreement is of course not unique. As Schmitter argues, "[a]cross time and space — not to mention culture and class — opinions have differed concerning what institutions and rules are to be considered democratic . . . [while] . . . [t]he concrete institutions and rules which have been established in different 'democratic' countries have similarly differed." Recognizing these differences in definition and expectation and accepting the fact that there is more than one "ideal" model of democracy — in a universal but also, much more significantly, in a regional context — are key to peaceful relations among nascent democracies and to relations between them and established democracies. As Schmitter further notes, "[g]iven the positive connotation which the term [democracy] has acquired, each country tends to claim that the way its institutions and rules are structured is the most democratic . . . [while] . . . [t]he 'others,' especially one's enemies and competitors, are accused of having some inferior type of democracy or another kind of regime altogether." Such arrogance breeds resentment, which, in the long run, breeds violence. In particular, the application, experience, and debate surrounding the validity of the democratic peace are thus in no small measure highly dependent on the compatibility of definitions and expectations of what constitutes a democracy, as well as on a thorough understanding and appreciation of the vulnerabilities generated by the transition process from autocracy to democracy. A second factor concerns the time-span covered. Democratization has been a major theme in Arab world studies for only about twenty


Ibid.

years. Although earlier theoretical literature is relevant to the issue, there is no body of work on democratization in the Arab world which can be traced through the 35-year period. Though significant political changes are on the anvil, however, desirable changes in the direction of democratization are either dim or quite nascent. Escaping thus from the teleological tunnel permits the identification of two major developments. The first is an oscillation between controlled education, political liberalizations and demineralization, and the second consists of five areas of change within regimes: legitimation, elites, institution building, co-optation, and regimes' reactions to external influences. The second trend is particularly crucial for understanding the lack of democratization in the Arab world. Finally, the academic study of democratization in the Arab world can not be dissociated from the democratization policies pursued by Western governments. Much of the academic work on democratization in the Arab world has been policy-related: geared to recommending to Western governments how they can help promote the process. The relevance of this stems from the increased willingness of Western governments, over the past decade, to play an active role in promoting liberal democracy in other parts of the world. An assessment of the development of education, liberalization and democratization studies, therefore, needs to take into account the relationship between the academic and governmental agendas, and the degree to which its promotion in the Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular has in fact been a useful policy to pursue. This thesis examines, first, the main contributions which have been made to the understanding of education, liberalization democratization in the Arab world especially in Kuwait. And secondly the inadequacies in the existing literature. Finally, it will be suggested that the international community, both academic and governmental, could achieve more for the peoples of the Arab world by changing the emphasis of its current concerns. Less stress should be placed on the generalized concept of liberal democracy, and a closer focus should be placed on an extensive yet clearly-defined set of characteristics which comprise Islamic ethos, education and good governance.

The thesis addresses a number of key issues that will determine failure or success in establishing sustainable democratization efforts in the region. Peace and stability, both domestic and interstate, and both negative and positive, are necessary for democratization
processes to take hold. Simultaneously, democratization is necessary for peace and stability to unfold and, most importantly, to endure. Attempts to pursue peace without democratization, or democratization without peace, exacerbate instead of reduce the prospects of tension and war within and between the countries of the Arab world.

Political reform in the Arab world has thus far taken place through a process of formal regime-oppositions, negotiations, and discussions whose content, scope, and timing have been controlled by ruling elites. The basic goal has been to promote a sufficient level of political openness in civil society, media, and the political-electoral arena for opposition elites to let off steam, without affording them the opportunity or capacity to undermine the institutional, legal, and informal props that sustain regime control of the political system.

The top-down nature of this process is by no means unique to the Arab world. On the contrary, regime-initiated liberalizations have been a common feature of regime transitions in many parts of the globe. But what distinguishes the Arab cases is the failure (or perhaps unwillingness) of civil society groups and political parties to take advantage of opportunities to press for genuine democratization as opposed to regime managed liberalization.

Meanwhile, there is a lively discussion taking place throughout the Arab world about several aspects of education and reform measures that are needed. This discussion, which has gone largely unnoticed in the West, has been generated by several developments in the region. Those developments include strong demand for education at all levels, the resulting pressure on educational facilities and budgets, and concern on the part of the private sector that the education system is not providing graduates with appropriate skills to deal with the challenge of globalization. Arab students have a variety of opportunities now, including private educational institutions, English-medium schools, religious-curriculum institutions, and study abroad. The thesis also attempts to describe the fundamental attributes of educational systems in the Arab world and then reviews the main issues that are being discussed by Arab leaders in the private sector, government and academia, about areas that need reform.
There are, at present, devastating changes and conflicts of interest in the world which place the Arab countries in the face of long-term changes which could reshape all the dimensions of human life. This situation requires the Arab governments and active forces in Arab society to consolidate their invulnerability, to protect their identity and overall national security, and to measure the time to come in order to secure for themselves an effective foothold at a time of fierce competition and increasing reliance on the products of the information and communication revolution and knowledge explosion. One of the most important engines which could help the Arabs control their own decisions is doubtless to avoid deficit in knowledge capital and enhance the level and quality of the knowledge being produced and applied. In this respect, it should be mentioned that the Arab countries are endowed with a large intellectual elite and a wealth of experience which can provide innovative solutions and alternatives based on a full awareness of changes and on a realistic approach.6

Since the early, 1980s there has been an upsurge in academic interest in the processes and potentialities of democratic transition. Initially scholars of comparative politics devoted relatively little attention to, or hope for, processes of democratization in the Arab World. This was evident in the two most important and influential research projects on the subject published in the 1980s. The first- O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead's influential comparative study of Transitions from Authoritarian Rule- does not mention a single Arab country anywhere in its 710 pages.7 Similarly, Diamond, Linz and Lipset's massive four-volume study of Democratic Politics in the Developing World explicitly excluded consideration of most of the Middle East, noting that "the Islamic countries of the Middle East and North Africa generally lack much previous democratic experience, and most appear to have little prospect of transition to even semi-democracy".8 Another influential scholar, Samuel Huntington, agreed, arguing "among Islamic countries,

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particularly those in the Middle East, the prospects for democratic development seem low."^9

With the collapse of the Soviet system and the end of the cold war came a wave of experiments in democratization around the world. Although the Arab world seems to some to be the major exception to this trend, even here there has been some cautious movement toward liberalization, if not democratization. The concept “civil society” has emerged as a key condition for democratization, and now a number the most able political scientists of the Middle East are investigating whether the reality is emerging as well and why.10

Way back in 1964, Daniel Lenier in his *Passing of Traditional Society* epitomized a flawed phrase, Mecca or Mechanization, for the modernization of the Arab world projecting Islam as an impediment or incompatible with modernization. In the early 1960's modernization theories saw the Muslim world as facing an unpalatable choice: either a "neo-Islamic totalitarianism" intent on "resurrecting the past", or a "reformist Islam" that would open "the sluice gates and (be) swamped by the deluge." Since the 1980's, several modernization theories have come to accept that posting a sharp division between tradition and modernity oversimplifies a complex process of interaction in which religion and tradition coexist with economic development and the needs of a modern society.11

Several years later, Huntington revisited his same question. This time he concluded, "Islamic doctrines... contains elements that may be both congenial and uncongenial to democracy". Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, he was less sure that culture is so powerful in influence in democratization. As he explains it, "great cultural traditions like Islam...are highly complex bodies of ideas, beliefs, doctrines, assumptions and behavior

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patterns. Any major culture...has some elements that are compatible with democracy, just as both Protestantism and Catholicism have elements that are clearly undemocratic...The real question is which elements in Islam ...are favorable to democracy, and how and under what circumstances these can supersede the undemocratic aspects.12 Survey research in Egypt confirms Huntington's later position that Islam is not a strong influence on political attitudes. In recent years, significant degrees of political liberalization have already been evident in a number of Arab sectors.

On the basis of civil and political rights of citizens, and personal dignity Arab political systems13 can be discussed into following categories:

A) Countries with reasonable measure of freedom of association, authorizing political parties and permitting the establishments of various types of professional associations, class - based organizations and private societies, are Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria between 1988 and 1991, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen. Kuwait comes close to this group, although political parties have not been legally authorized, but different political groupings are known to exist and have openly contested legislative elections.

B) Countries where associations of various types do exist but are subject to heavy controls by a dominant party, a single party, or a mass organization like Libya, Syria, Iraq and Sudan and

C) Countries where freedom of association is not recognized whether for political parties, professional associations, or trade unions; Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE.

These trends in democratic experience in the Arab world are the result of the growth of education and literacy more particularly among their middle classes.

In this backdrop, the exercise examined and tested the argument that it was education that provided the base for democratization and liberalization in Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular. The globalization environment opened up a competitive ambience wherein public sphere had different trajectory of its own, and is like the free market open to all. But the development of capitalist economy towards monopoly capitalism narrowed the space of the free market as also that of the public sphere—the space for a rational and the very forces that had brought it into existence destroyed universalistic politics distinct from both the economy and the state.

The present study documents a comprehensive account of the responses of education system in Kuwait to the challenges posed by the forces of democratization and liberalization in order to make an assessment of the degree of education and consequent march of democracy in the West Asian part of the Continent substantial locating countries with differences in terms of geographical size, population, development and education. Despite these differences what are common in these societies are their social complexities, Islamic ethos and political system although the nomenclature of their individual political structures differs in terms of processes of democratization.

Kuwait may conveniently be regarded as representative of West Asian societies in particular and the Third World in general as far as experiments in education, democracy and liberalization are concerned. It is beset with the problem of grappling with the forces of education as a factor in democratization vis-à-vis its indigenous Islamic, socio-cultural values. Despite this nahdha (awakening), the process of change and innovation is not yet complete, and the new patterns that have emerged are not yet final. They are part of a current of change of which it is only possible to indicate the general direction. While the old order is being gradually eroded an entirely new beginning is on the anvil that will determine the future scenario that is likely to emerge in the Arab world in its quest for modernization.

The study divided into five-chapter including conclusion has been descriptive and analytical in nature. The research design has been experimental with education being the
causal factor. Both primary and secondary data sources have also been utilized to understand the direction of change besides data combined in books, articles and government policies on the nature and status of education as a factor in the changing dynamics of democracy and the processes of democratization in Kuwait. The empirical data about Kuwait was gathered from various sources that included documentary analysis of reports, studies, and other documents. The documents were either gathered directly from the institutions or from official Web sites of the related bodies. The information was mainly taken from official Web sites of related agencies.

Chapter I of the thesis entitled *Education, Liberalization and Democratization in Arab World* dealt with the massive and substantive changes in the world economic, political, social and cultural foundations in Kuwait. The chapter is principally concerned with liberalization, democratization in Arab world in general and Kuwait in particular with education as a factor insofar as it relates to freedom and human rights. There is a wide interest in the universal trends of democratization and in the various schools of democracy. The literature on civil society and democratization has concentrated on simultaneous process of democratic transition and consolidation. The chapter examines the question of democratization and different patterns of political rule and evolution in the course of the past few decades. Democratic transitions require two developments; one involving the state, the other society. The masses looked for societal alternatives, and an increasingly democratic civil society emerged as a result. In the Arab world, however, the collapse of the state has not been nearly as total, with Arab world leaders retaining enough political, economic and cultural sources of legitimacy to be able to supplant much of the potential appeal that burgeoning civil society organisations might have. Invariably all Arab world states, however, have been able to maintain those corporatist arrangements through which they keep key social groups beholden to them, thus discouraging them from indirectly undermining their own interests.\(^{14}\) Genuine democratization, if successful and sustained, can produce accountable, transparent, participatory, inclusive governance, instead of exclusive and repressive rule. Liberalization of political and economic systems throughout the region could support stability with education as an important factor. The

\(^{14}\) See Chapter III of the thesis, which attempts to extensively deal with these issues.
infinitah improved the lot of many in the upper and upper middle classes, their essentially dependent relationship with the state remained intact. The relationship of the state to society is based on a somewhat different premise in the oil monarchies. But the outcome—lack of societal pressure for change—is essentially the same. The corporatist arrangement in the oil monarchies has four central axioms. At the top sits the Royal family, which dominates and is often indistinguishable from the state. The Royal family is, in turn, supported by three key social groups: the clergy, whose close association with the state has resulted in the emergence of al-Islam al-rasmi; chiefs and notables from other tribes; and wealthy merchants and industrialists. None of these three groups is willing to challenge an implicit understanding with the state that has long ensured their economic prosperity, social affluence, political inclusion (or acceptance) and physical security. Those openly opposing the regime invariably come from outside these corporatist groups, with many being Islamist activists who question the credentials of the Royal family.

Formal independence came to the oil monarchies even later than in the rest of the Arab world (Kuwait in 1961). Nevertheless, the Royal families that eventually dominated the state had already achieved local control and prominence long before the departing British who recognised them as the rulers of the region. Upon the assumption of formal power, the Royal families based their control of the state on two powerful principles, one economic the other historical. Historically, the Royal families used the apparatus of the state to presents themselves as the 'natural' outgrowth of tribal forces in society, the true representatives of the essence of their nation. By so doing, they nullified any potential claims to rulership that other tribal chieftains or local notables might have had, thus eliminating an important source of possible opposition or, for that matter, societal independence. With varying degrees of success, they also sought to cultivate additional legitimacy on religious grounds, presenting themselves as the embodiment of religious piety and righteousness. Although there have been widespread and frequent reports of

corruption and immorality in the Gulf courts, all the Royal families present highly pious and devout images of themselves to their populations. Fortunate to house Mecca and Medina in his territory, in 1986 Saudi Arabia's King Fahd went so far as to adopt the title of 'Custodian of Islam's Holiest Mosques'. Of course, a transition from autocratic and closed systems to open and democratic ones cannot be realized without pain. Despite the acknowledged (and experienced) problems of intermittent democratization pains, some authors believes that, certainly in the long term, democratization is a positive and worthwhile endeavor for all societies of the region. What is required is not the immediate (or even eventual) adoption of full-fledged Western-style liberal democracy, but a gradual process toward more participation in the political and economic life and governance of the country, in harmony with religious norms and teachings respected throughout society. The question is not whether democracy would be an asset for peace and justice in the Arab world, but which path toward a more participatory and accountable, political system should be embraced as one that would suit each society. Democratization can be defined as a progressive evolution of these components (accountability, elections, civil and political rights, and autonomous associations) in the context of, and conditioned by, state and political institutions, economic development, social divisions, civil society, political culture and ideas, and transnational and international engagements. The right to free association is fundamental to democracy. A measure of the liberalization of a regime is the degree to which free association is permitted without hindrance or restrictions, or control by the government.

The countries of the Arab world share with one another, and with Third World countries in general, certain common problems and aspirations. Education was viewed as "the master determinant of all aspects of change," as "the key that unlocks the door to modernization." For those in political power, increasingly mass-based education ways

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18 *Ibid*, p. 61, In addition to 'His Majesty', the King dropped other titles, including 'Light of the Kingdom' and 'Object of One's Self-Sacrifice'.
(and still is) a visible accomplishment having direct, if not fully understood, impact on the lives of people.

A motivating factor, leading in varying degrees to this change, is the move toward greater egalitarianism and the assumption that formal education is a major vehicle toward this end. Egalitarian orientations are tied to, or in some instances hidden by, an assumption which is more overriding for most Arab governments, namely, that development, modernity, and international prestige accompany educational growth. Hence, the educational sector is usually a major consideration in national development plans. There have occurred other noteworthy developments in the social, economic, and political sectors in many parts of the Arab world. For example, the face of many cities has changed not only in terms of modern building construction, but also through the increasingly powerful role of financial institutions, elaborate commercial activities, and complex networks of communication. Additionally, industry and agriculture have been "revolutionized" as a result of the increasing mechanization and application of modern technology. At the socio-political level, most Arab cities have witnessed democratization— a high degree of political mobilization resulting in an active political role for the urban worker and the expanding middle class. There has also been a decline in traditional orientations in virtually all institutional spheres. In recent decades, Arab education has achieved substantial growth in quantitative terms, with enrollments and other indicators expanding dramatically, including for females. Arab students can choose from different educational systems.

For the past several decades, Kuwait has made great strides in its efforts to develop the society. These included creating a modern economic infrastructure and upgrading their educational system. This can be explained, to a great extent, by the introduction of modern schooling and the opening of several universities all over the state.

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Chapter II entitled Kuwait: Education, Democratisation and Development brought out the changing nature of the state, civil society and the conviction that human capital is the basic foundation in the fulfillment of development tasks, and that education is the cornerstone in the preparation, training and mobilization of the abilities of human capital, in order to meet national and regional needs. The pursuit of knowledge is a religious duty. This, of course, raises the question, 'what sort of knowledge?' Muslim scholars have been at pains to emphasize that this does not license the pursuit of any kind of knowledge. Knowledge in Islam is subject to two major constraints. The first relates to its religious origin. The Holy Qur'an makes it clear that knowledge is a characteristic of God Himself and that all knowledge comes from Him.\(^{21}\) This applies whether the knowledge is revealed (naqliyya) or humanly constructed ('aqliyya) and it means that knowledge must be approached reverently and in humility, for there cannot be any 'true' knowledge that is in conflict with religion and divine revelation, only ignorance. The second relates to its purpose. There is no notion in Islam of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Seyyed Hossein Nasr points out that in Arabic 'to know' ultimately means 'to be transformed by the very process of knowing'.\(^{22}\) Ibn Khaldun pours scorn on the man 'who knows about tailoring but does not know tailoring'\(^{23}\) and al-Ghazali says, Be sure that knowledge alone is no support.... If a man reads a hundred thousand scientific subjects and learns them but does not act upon them, his knowledge is of no use to him, for its benefit lies only in being used.\(^{24}\) Like money, knowledge is not to be accumulated for its own sake but must be put to use. And the appropriate use for knowledge from a Muslim perspective is to help people to acknowledge God, to live in accordance with Islamic law and to fulfil the purposes of God's creation. Knowledge which does not serve these purposes may be considered useless. All this implies a concept of knowledge that is very different from dominant western concepts. Secondly, the traditions (ahaddith) of the Prophet Muhammad provide further insight into Islamic education. One hadith (in al-Bukhari's collection) reminds believers that 'seeking for knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim

\(^{21}\) Q. 35:28.


man and woman', another (in the collections of Tirmidhi and Darimi) says that 'he who goes forth in search of knowledge is in the way of Allah till he returns', while others (of less certain authenticity, but quoted, for example, by Bahonar, 2004) say 'Seek knowledge, even as far as China' and 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave'. Some of these sayings have far-reaching implications: learning is a lifelong matter, it can be pursued outside the Islamic world and it is an equal obligation for men and women. Thirdly, though little of it could strictly be called 'philosophy of education', there was a substantial amount of writing in the high period of Islamic civilization that discussed educational issues generally. Both Nasir al-Din Tusi's Akhlag-i-Naseri and Ibn Maskuya's Taharat al-A'arag contain detailed discussions of moral education and other educational issues. Al-Ghazali's Fatihat al-'Ulfm is perhaps the closest to an early introduction to educational theory. In al-Muqaddimah, the great historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun outlines the aims of education, the curriculum and the skills of teaching and also provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of Islamic knowledge. He follows the by now standard bifurcation of knowledge into that which is revealed (naqliyya or transmitted sciences, such as theology and jurisprudence) and that which is discovered ('aqliyya or intellectual sciences, such as medicine and mathematics). Other texts, including Siyasat-Namah by Nizam-al-Mulk and Ghulistan and Bustan by Sa'di, examine topics like education, teaching, learning, youth, love and devotion. The Treatises (Rasd'il) of the Ikhwan al-Safa include discussions of psychological and philosophical issues that are of particular interest to educators. This list, though far from complete, indicates something of the breadth of interest among Muslims in educational principles and practice. The tradition of broad scholarship exemplified in these writers has continued up to the present day.

In Islam, therefore, there is no question of individuals being encouraged through education to work out for themselves their own religious faith or to subject it to detached rational investigation at a fundamental level; the divine revelation expressed in the sharfa...
provides them with the requisite knowledge of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and the task of individuals is to come to understand this knowledge and exercise their free will to choose which path to follow. From a liberal perspective, the notion of free will in Islam is thus an unsophisticated one, involving simply the choice to accept or reject the complete package of beliefs, and contrasts sharply with the liberal notion of personal autonomy. Kuwait allows, let alone encourages civil society to thrive and prepare the population, political parties, and movements to contribute constructively to eventual democratization. The question analysed whether education would be an asset for democracy, peace and justice in Kuwait, but which path toward a more participatory and accountable, political system should be embraced as one that would suit the society. There is an imminent need for the process of liberalization that gives a special consideration and a top priority to the building of knowledge capacity. The closeness of education to development is so intimate that it has become impossible to map development without keeping a very big space for its educational component. If development is a process of continuous growth of societal aim and goals towards civility and human fulfillment, then similarly education is also a process of continuous change and enrichment of its goals and methods in order to make such development possible. For that symbiotic relationship between development and education to be meaningful, both have to be societal related, to be a response to pivotal historic call, and, therefore, be fairly specific and particular. We are then speaking of democratization, liberalization and education of Kuwaiti society and people, at this tragic stage of historical march. Striking a balance between contemporary interests and traditional values is an issue that is moving to the fore in the education sector, as increased privatisation and a growing population reshape schools in Kuwait. While Kuwaitis expect an education that will prepare them to go to universities abroad, there is a growing fear that Westernisation is eroding Kuwaiti identity in the classroom. Presiding over this debate is Nouria Al Sbeih, Kuwait’s first female minister of education, tasked with re-energising the country’s educational system in the face of increased regional competition and shifting societal demands. Private schooling is available in Kuwait but the Government subsidy on it has been removed.28 Most of the challenges facing the private sector are similar to those found in other Arab

countries with regard to capturing market share and increasing profitability. Within the Arab countries, the percentage of children accessing kindergartens varies greatly (1% in Yemen and 99% in Kuwait). This is mainly due to the difference in wealth and in the ability to build and finance such institutions. The sex typing of fields of study is a worldwide phenomenon, yet it varies between countries. For example, 51.6% of engineering students are women in Kuwait, compared with 3.3% in Switzerland and Japan (UNESCO 1995). Looking at the record, the MDGs goal of achieving universal primary education has, for all intents and purposes, been achieved, nearly ten years ahead of time. Education is the primary prerequisite for the process of democratization based on liberalized policies of the state.

In Kuwait, where in 1981 a sweeping law made literacy compulsory for everyone aged 14 to 44, rewarded them with job incentives, made it illegal to hire or promote an illiterate and threatened to sue those who refuse to participate or fail to attend classes regularly. Judging gender equality by the relevant ratios in education and literacy, Kuwait was able to achieve the MDG on gender equality by the year 2004 as required. Women represent 70% of university graduates, and a few hold relatively senior non-political posts in the state bureaucracy. In June, 2005 the prime minister appointed Masouma al-Mubarak Minister of Planning and Administrative Development. She is the first female cabinet minister in the nation’s history.

State-sanctioned and supported voluntary associations are among the primary venues of civil society in modern Kuwait. Voluntary associations also are important because they provide alternatives to the family as bases for mobilizing citizens according to their interests and affinities. Voluntary associations are vital components of Kuwaiti political

and social life. They are theoretically and, to varying extents in practice, more – or at least differently – democratic than *diwaniyyas*, meetings usually held in private homes. 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.

It was the aim of this chapter 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.

Chapter III of the thesis entitled *Regional Influences on Experiments in Political Liberalization* focused on types and levels of political liberalization. Political liberalization and political democratization are two processes that must be distinguished from each other. Whereas democratization, with a focus on popular political participation and elite accountability, requires political liberalization (the promotion of individual freedoms and rights), the latter can happen without the former. Although political liberalization can be witnessed throughout much of the Arab world, movement toward genuine democratization, enshrined and consolidated in both constitutional arrangements and political practices, is rare. The chapter explored the extent of genuine progress toward democratization and the degree to which it has in fact been eluding the region despite the urgency with which true change must be pursued if the countries of the region are to overcome the “tremendous challenges . . . in achieving the levels of human development ‘with education’ (sic) that only good governance, including its political aspects, can ensure.” Professional associations, like syndicates of lawyers, physicians, journalists, artists, university professors, and teachers may enjoy a credibility that political parties do not have anymore. Professional associations could be entrusted with the task of political transformation and democratization because they appear less corrupt and rigidly organized than political parties. In all countries where democratization- as a process- has begun, professional associations are asserting themselves.
In the MENA region, information disclosure acts leave much to be desired and NGO laws are restrictive, but there are signs that things are changing for the better. Civil society is now playing a more active role in several areas, including education. Newspapers, television shows, and the Internet regularly feature education debates, sometimes with scathing analysis of government efforts. Also, a number of independent institutes and academics are conducting and disseminating research on education issues.

Nevertheless, most Arab states have proven unable to meet the needs of all students desiring to pursue their goals because of dramatic increases in student enrollment unaccompanied by sufficient resources. Confirming this, the 1998 Beirut Declaration of the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education stated “higher education in the Arab States is under considerable strain, due to high rates of population growth and increasing social demand for higher education, which lead states and institutions to increase student enrollment, often without adequate allocated financial resources.”

Moreover, faced with the challenges of providing flexible enrollment and lifelong learning availability, Arab higher education institutions have not been able to meet the new demands and needs of their societies. Thus, the urgent need for in-depth reform of university structures is evident. In view of this, the Beirut Declaration calls for harnessing modern information and communication technologies to “contribute in the provision of courses and degree-awarding programs through multiple and advanced means, thus breaking through the traditional barriers of space and time.” In responding to what is mentioned above, Arab countries have adopted radically new visions that would prevent Arab societies from lagging behind other socio-economically advanced nations.

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

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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.

The past decades saw Kuwait making great strides to develop and modernize. These included creating a modern economic infrastructure and upgrading their educational system. Amid growing discontent with the public school system, to which over 90% of Saudi students attend, the private school industry is seen as a growth industry, as is the e-learning industry, which is expected to hit $125m in value in 2008. One private university, Alfaisal University in Riyadh, hopes to cultivate valuable connections to the international scientific world through a new research agreement with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Lack of interest in science and engineering fields among tertiary students contributes to the growing skills gap in the Kingdom, a trend the government is aiming to reverse. In October 2008, Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah launched the construction of the first women-only university in Saudi Arabia. The Princess Noura Bint Abdelrahman University for Girls will offer courses in subjects like medicine, pharmacy, management, computer sciences and languages that women find difficulty in studying in normal universities where strict gender segregation is enforced. The country of 25 million has state schools for girls and some private colleges for women.

This can be explained, to a great extent, by the introduction of modern schooling and the opening of several universities all over the countries. 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.

36 http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/publication.asp?country=44
37 http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSTRE49S65L20081029
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.

While the social structure of Kuwaiti society has been rapidly nearing 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.

Chapter IV entitled Kuwait’s Tryst with Democracy explored the problems which democratization poses to the traditional political system of Kuwait and its tryst with democracy as a result of the discovery of oil. The chapter discussed the effect of the
consequent changes upon its political authority and upon the state's traditional political institutions. Next it analyzed the welfare state with education as a factor established in the aftermath of the oil boom, with special attention to the enormous socio-economic changes in context of liberalization which have swept Kuwait. The chapter also analyzed the weaknesses affecting, and challenges facing, Kuwait's political system, balancing this assessment with a consideration of more positive factors, which have led to the restoration of parliamentary life after each period of dissolution. Kuwait experienced the fifth dissolution in its parliamentary experience. On 3 July 1999, elections were held with 288 candidates competing for the 50 parliamentary seats. On June 29, 2006, for the first time universal suffrage was in force. It saw the participation of women in national elections. It is estimated that there are around 340,000 eligible to vote in Kuwait of which 57 per cent are women; the turnout was 35 per cent. In 2006 elections, there were 27 women candidates among the 249 in the electoral fray. But the repeated dissolution of Parliament raises many questions about democracy in Kuwait, which is located in a region that does not look favorably on democratic reforms. The Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly of Kuwait on 18 March 2009 over accusations of supposed abuse of democracy and threats to political stability. An early parliamentary election was held in Kuwait on 16 May 2009, the country's third in a three-year period. It also raises a legitimate question concerning the reason(s) behind the uniqueness of Kuwait, with its relatively open society. The chapter discussed the democracy in practice in Kuwait and discussed the major challenges facing democracy in Kuwait. It explored the strengths and weaknesses of a rare continuing democracy in the Arab world, despite the limitations. 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. The Iraqi invasion of August 1990, and the liberation of Kuwait by an international coalition, was a decisive moment for restoring democracy in the country.

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.