

Youth Transitions and Social Change in Kuwait: Tensions between Tradition and Modernity

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Abstract

Within the social sciences, there is extensive literature on youth transitions as a key context for understanding how social changes and complex contemporary life have an impact on young people's lives, focusing generally on the 'global north'. However, far too little attention has been paid to exploring youth transitions in the 'global south'. Even if it is acknowledged that youth research in the global south has grown in recent years, and has discovered different youth experiences from those in northern contexts, these studies have still been narrow and mostly based on theoretical rather than new empirical work. This research addresses the research gap by investigating young people's transition from education to the labour market, and exploring the impact of social changes on their lives beyond the global north, in Kuwaiti society. It provides insight into how contemporary young people are constructing and negotiating their pathways to work within a complex reality in which traditional norms and cultural restrictions come into conflict with modernity. It highlights the role of certain variables that continue to mould their transition, including family, gender, religion, education, and government policies. It demonstrates that the rapid change and the compressed manner of modernity in Kuwait have made young people live in a state of tension and contradiction between modernity and tradition, agency and structure, and individual and collective ways of life. It shows how the unique nature of modernity and its consequences in Kuwaiti society have made the young people's experience distinct from that described in other contexts. This study draws on data generated through questionnaires and interviews. It involves a sample of 1,120 secondary school students, and 24 young adults who had recently entered the labour market. The thesis, which reports the results, challenges existing models in the youth studies literature and critically assesses general sociological theories which tend to be northern-centric. In considering the ideas of the German sociologist Ulrich Beck on modernisation and individualisation, it is difficult to apply his western ideas to the Kuwaiti context. This thesis therefore calls for a cosmopolitan sociology, claiming the need to re-define the concepts within social sciences in such a way that can be easily and flexibly used in a variety of global contexts.

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Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Introduction

Youth transition into adulthood has been established as a core topic in social research. This period of life is one that involves significant and interrelated social role changes, including the completion of full-time education, entry into paid employment, leaving the parental home, and the step into a new family formation (Furlong, 2009, Woodman & Bennett, 2015).

This study investigates young people's transition from education to the labour market outside the 'Northern Metropole'¹, in the Arab/Muslim-majority nation of Kuwait. Although extensive sociological studies have been carried out in the past on youth transitions from education to the labour market, particularly in the field of youth sociology, no single social study exists which focuses on this topic in the Kuwaiti context. Kuwait is a small, wealthy nation with a small population whose main source of income is oil. It is located in the Middle East on the north-west of the Arabian Gulf, bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south and Iraq to the north, and is a member of the Cooperation Council for the Arab states of the Gulf (GCC)². Its land is 17.820 km² (KGO, 2013), and the population was 4,028,765 in 2014, only 31% of whom were Kuwaiti nationals (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014a). Most of the population is concentrated in the capital, Kuwait City, and its suburbs, especially in the areas adjacent to the coast. Arabic is the official language, and Islam is the main religion and the main source of Kuwaiti laws and legislation. The vast majority of Kuwait's citizens are Muslims and a small minority consists of Christians, with approximately 150-200 Christian citizens and a small number who practise Bahai (US Department of State, 2012).

¹ This term was used recently by youth sociologists to denote the urban areas of, predominantly, the UK, Europe, North America and Australasia.

² The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, or the Gulf Cooperation Council, is a regional inter-governmental political and economic union consisting of six Middle East countries: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain. The Council was established in 1981 in view of the special relations between these states, including their geographic proximity, common language (Arabic), Arabian culture, similar political systems based on the Islamic faith, common destiny and shared objectives, and common market and economic interests (Shalhoub, 2006).

Rapid modernisation and growth began in Kuwait with the discovery of oil in the late 1930s. The increase in national wealth was associated with a huge influx of migrants who came in search of employment. As a result, more than half of its labour force are non-Kuwaiti. While the country is a home for many immigrants seeking economic benefits and a better life, its indigenous population is experiencing multiple social, educational, employment and political problems including increasing youth unemployment, underemployment in the public sector, favouritism, and poor quality education (Al-Abed & Al-Ramzi, 2008).

The transition from school to work is inherently a challenge for young people all over the world, but it can be even more challenging for young people in regions experiencing an unprecedented ‘youth bulge’³, such as the Middle East. In this region, young people represent more than half the population, and more than two million young people enter the labour market annually (O’Sullivan, Rey & Gálvez Méndez, 2012). According to the Kuwait Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, which is generally concerned with young people aged 14 to 34, the youth cohort in Kuwait represents approximately 60% of the country’s population structure. Furthermore, statistics from the Kuwait Public Authority for Civil Information (2016) indicate that more than 55% of the population of Kuwait is under the age of 25. Even more importantly, young Kuwaitis live under conflicting conditions; although theirs is a relatively rich country, with some 8.4% of global oil reserves in 2013 (OPEC, 2015), some of the characteristics of a traditional society still exist. These characteristics manifest themselves in the traditional norms, beliefs and rules around family networks, social ties, gender roles and religion. This thesis explores how young people navigate their pathways towards employment under such conditions, and the contradictions between traditional norms with their cultural restrictions, and modernity; how they negotiate the era of globalisation and growing openness through the constraints of certain variables in their lives, including family, social relationships,

³ According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography*, this represents a relatively large growth in the size of a country’s population, conventionally young people of 16-25 or 16-30. It represents the stage of decline in the infant mortality rate, with no corresponding decline in the fertility rate; thus, there will be a wave of births relative to previous years (Castree, Kitchin & Rogers, 2013). It is a common phenomenon in developing countries. The net result is that children and young adults constitute a large segment of the population (Lin, 2012). It has been argued that this is one of the factors prolonging the waiting period of young people to enter the labour market in the Middle East and North Africa, and that this issue is partly behind the political unrest among the young people in these regions (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008, Castree, Kitchin & Rogers, 2013).

gender roles, religion, and social division along with other restrictions imposed by education and labour market policies.

Setting the terms: terminology in the division of the globe

The research revolves around the idea that social science and youth studies are developing and spreading within a narrow northern context, while knowledge is marginalised in others. It is informed by multiple theoretical discussions which will be analysed in the following paragraphs. Before engaging in these discussions, it is important to clarify the terminology used in this thesis on the division of the globe.

According to Mignolo (2014), the East-West division began in the 15th and 16th centuries as a creation of western Christianity, and continued in use until the Second World War, to legitimise Europe's centrality and its civilising mission. Western European states long imposed their influence and power on a large part of Asia and Africa, confirming an "era of western domination over the rest of mankind" (Emerson, 1960: 5). However, since the Second World War ended, the terms west/east have been increasingly replaced by north/south, with the emergence of anti-colonial movements and post-colonial studies that began in India and Latin America in attempts to understand their history. In this new situation, the terms west and east became problematic and the terms 'global north' and 'global south' more acceptable (Fraser, 2013). This new division of the world is based broadly on economic, political and developmental conceptualisations, with nations geographically located in the global north, including western Europe, Canada and the United States, associated with higher standards of living, industrialisation, and economic and technological progress than nations in the global south, including Africa, Latin America and the Middle East (Guttal, 2016). Thus, the terms global north and global south are commonly used in contemporary discussions by youth sociologists. Based on this, the present study uses this terminology, except where the term 'west' is specifically used by scholars and the term remains in some sections of the thesis.

The present study argues, in line with the idea of promoting a global sociology, that critical social science studies in general and the assumptions of theoretical paradigms have been largely developed in, and spread widely from, the global north, with a consequent

marginalisation of knowledge and studies from countries outside this region. Wide debate began in the eighties on the possibilities for the internationalisation of the social sciences. The project by Akinsola Akiwowo of ‘indigenization of sociology’ (1986, 1988), was one of the first attempts to do so, and provoked much controversy (Lawuyi & Taiwo, 1990). This project called for the development of universal frameworks, through learning and investigating the traditions of different cultures, with valuable work in a variety of locations. More recently, further attempts have appeared elsewhere (see Connell, 2007; Keim, 2009; Alatas, 2006).

In particular, the Southern Theory by Connell (2007), an Australian sociologist, with the participation of a group of scholars from the global south, has represented a vital contribution to the ongoing debates around the internationalisation of sociology. Connell (2007), in studying and discussing the general social theories of three principal sociologists, Bourdieu, Giddens and Coleman, pointed out the bias of northern thinkers and referred to a ‘grand erasure’ in which the majority of the world is seen exclusively through the lens of European dominance (2007: 44). She also questioned the meaning of ‘global’ in globalisation, at a time when this phenomenon is based largely on the experimental specificities of the global north, and controlled by thinkers from the metropole, the homeland, or the central territory of a colonial empire. The call by Burawoy (2005, 2008) for ‘provincialised’ social science is another example of promoting the idea of global sociology as a way in which sociology can remedy the former neglect of ‘other’ (non-northern) societies, especially in the context of building the modern world. Burawoy argues for the need to allow the other to enter into conversation with the centre. Similarly, Bhambra criticises the way in which others’ views make no contribution to understanding modernity, aiming for debates through which peripheral (southern) voices can not only speak, but also be heard (Bhambra, 2009).

However, despite these efforts, knowledge production in social science is still relatively uneven. For example, the vast majority of sociology of youth research is still disseminated from the UK, Europe and North America, and some urban areas in Australia, whereas youth studies elsewhere have received limited or no critical attention (Woodman & Wyn, 2014). The aim of this study is therefore to expand the knowledge about young people and discover their experiences in one of the many nations that is rarely the focus of social research. It aims to

open up, theoretically, methodologically and empirically, an understanding of different historical pathways to modernity by providing a contemporary example of extra-European experience of modernity, in seeking to understand how this impacts differently on young people's lives.

This chapter begins with a brief explanation of the meaning of 'youth' from a social perspective and of the critical role of youth studies and its excessively northern focus. This is followed by a brief discussion of the contemporary debates in youth sociology on the impact of social changes on young people's lives in the global context. The chapter then goes on to describe the unique situation of young people in Kuwait; this context is significant for scholars of youth, and gives the present study an original and distinctive position among global youth studies. It argues that the Kuwaiti context may seem confusing, as it is located in the global south and shares sets of cultural characteristics with its neighbours while also maintaining its own identity, with many features that differentiate it from other nations in the region. Kuwait is very affluent in many ways, as well as technologically sophisticated and more urbanised than many countries in the global south (Al-Nakib, 2016). In other words, in economic terms it is similar to developed nations in the global north, but culturally it is more like developing nations in the global south. Completely fitting neither paradigm, Kuwait is thus in an interesting and challenging period at which to examine youth experiences. The main arguments and the research questions are set out in this section. At the end of this chapter, the theoretical framework that guides the study is illustrated, and the main findings and structure of the thesis are outlined.

Concept of youth and youth studies

Generally, from a sociological perspective, youth is seen as a social construct rather than a biological phenomenon (Furlong, 2012). Sociologists believe that the definition of youth as covering the teenage years and biological criteria, as Hall (1904) noted, is a relatively inflexible one, and that it should be defined more broadly so that it is not treated as an

interchangeable term for adolescence, which describes the period between the onset of puberty and the achievement of biological, psychological, sexual and emotional maturity (Furlong, 2012). Furlong (2012: 1) defined youth as “a socially constructed intermediary phase that stands between childhood and adulthood: it is not defined chronologically as a stage that can be tied to specific age ranges, nor can its end point be linked to specific activities”. It is “a broader concept than adolescence”, and “tends to cover a more protracted time span” (Furlong, 2012: 1-2).

Rather than understanding youth as an impartial concept and universal stage of development, researchers have tended to consider it in relation to specific circumstances and within specific contexts of meaning (Wyn & White, 1997). Wyn and White (1997) argued that although age is supposed to refer to biological processes, cultural understandings of the stages of life course that have been developed by specific social and political processes, providing a social meaning to the process of growing up. Thus, youth is most usefully seen as:

A relational concept, which refers to the social processes whereby age is socially constructed, institutionalised and controlled in historically and culturally specific ways... Youth is a relational concept because it exists and has meaning largely in relation to the concept of adulthood... Youth is a state of becoming [and] adulthood is the arrival (Wyn & White, 1997: 10-11).

From this reason, identifying a precise period of youth across time and space is impossible because youth is subjective to specific circumstances in different societies that vary in their cultural norms, social and educational policies and economy (Heinz, 2009). Although there is no official legislation that sets a specific age for youth in Kuwait, the Council of Youth and Sports Ministers in the GCC have defined youth as the age cohort of 15-24 years, in line with the definition used by the Council of Arab Youth Ministers. As Hijazi (2008) has pointed out, this definition reflects the period from a young person’s late adolescence (aged 15-18), up until undergraduate level study and entry into the labour market for the first time. As has already been mentioned, the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs is concerned with young people aged 14-34. With regard to this extended period, sociologists have preferred to divide

the youth phase, using ‘young adults’ to reflect the late phase of youth, avoiding overlapping of age brackets; policies are still designed according to strict age standards (du Bois-Reymond & Lopez Blasco, 2003).

Studying youth is a powerful means by which sociologists can explore major issues connected to social science as a whole (Furlong, 2015a). The different topics within youth sociology, such as youth transitions and youth subcultures, contribute to theoretical debates in a range of disciplines including educational sociology, psychology, politics, economics and law. Placing youth at the centre of research and investigating their experiences and transitions can provide fundamental insight and understanding about how society as a whole works and changes. In other words, this kind of study is considered as an important way of broadly examining various aspects of society (MacDonald & Shildrick, 2009; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007).

Further, the issues examined by youth researchers and theorists change over time in accordance with changing circumstances. Cohen stated three decades ago that “the fact is that the youth question has to be continually rethought in the light of the changing circumstances of the times” (1986: 4), and this remains true. Youth studies in general have evolved in response to the new issues and broader social and global changes that have occurred over the last twenty years. A wide range of important research has been done, with the result that many conceptual innovations have emerged, aiming to understand the interaction between the modern world and the lives of young people. For example, focus has been placed on how young people struggle in the process of establishing themselves and building their social identities in a fundamentally changing world (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007); and how global social changes and economic restructuring, and their impact on the patterns of employment and the nature of education, have led young people to encounter increasing risk and uncertainty in their lives (Beck, 1992, 2000).

The theory of the risk society attempts to explain how young individuals’ lives and identities have been affected in the context of structural changes and the risk and uncertainty that characterise the contemporary era (Beck, 1999). In the context of youth and the pathway of the life career, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2001) observed that the changes that have

emerged in the labour market in contemporary modern society, featuring increasing instability and the growth of unemployment, have contributed to extending youth's movement to the labour market and disrupting the traditional smooth and linear transition from school to work which was enjoyed by earlier generations. Furthermore, and under such circumstances and complexities, young people are now expected to navigate and determine their own fate, life trajectories and control their transitions from education to work in highly individualised ways (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, 2001).

However, these approaches and theories in the sociology of youth, in line with most general theories in the social sciences, have been formulated and carried out within the framework of the global north. Heinz (2009) argued that young people are subject to specific circumstances in different societies with varying cultural norms, social and educational policies and economies. Thus, changes are likely to create different experiences for young people across different cultures and parts of the world. Therefore, the generalisability of much of the published research into contemporary youth experience is problematic, requiring more understanding of young people's lives in different cultural contexts and global areas.

Recently, acknowledgment has been growing among youth scholars of the importance of registering young people's experiences beyond the north metropole. This has improved with the increasing recognition of cross-cultural differences in the lives of various groups of young people (Nilan, 2011) and the importance of spatial perspective as a force in youth life studies. Farrugia (2014b), for example, offered a theoretical recognition of the important role of space and place in reshaping and understanding young people's lives. In doing so, Farrugia (2014b) argued that understanding experiences across geographical areas improves the existing perspectives in youth studies and creates new theoretical agendas in the discipline. At last, then it appears that youth scholars are moving to understand young people's lives, identities and lifestyles outside the northern metropole and in various places on the planet, whether

urban or rural, city or nation, and in rich or poor areas (see the papers presented at the *Symposium: Youth Outside the Northern Metropole, 2014*⁴).

Although research into young people's lives outside the northern metropole has recently been increasing, it has remained narrow and focused on theoretical discussions and assumptions rather than empirical work. Hence, the contribution of the present study is to widen theoretical understanding of the lives of young people beyond the northern metropole through investigating, both theoretically and empirically, youth transitions from school to work in an Arab Gulf nation that has received little attention in the youth literature to date. Before illustrating why this research into young people's lives in Kuwait is unique, and what contribution it can make to global youth debates, the following paragraphs present a brief picture of contemporary life among young people in northern and southern contexts to provide an overview of the conditions experienced by young people today and how various changes are affecting their lives.

Youth, the changing world and different contexts

It has been widely argued in the literature that young people today are experiencing a significantly different world from that experienced by their parents and previous generations in their youth. They spend more of their lives in education, a larger proportion enter higher education, and many participate in new forms of employment that did not even exist a few decades ago. The changes in young people's lives have occurred within great transitions in critical contexts such as education, the labour market, and relationship formation in many parts of the world (Furlong, 2009; Woodman & Wyn, 2014). Although these changes are not limited to young people, they are at the forefront of the social categories involved in, and affected by, contemporary changes and globalisation (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001; Furlong &

⁴ Abstracts available online at: <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/education-arts/newcastle-youth-studies-group/conferences-and-symposiums/youth-outside-the-northern-metropole-symposium-2014> [Last accessed 06/06/2017]; downloadable as pdf file *YouthOutsideTheNorthernMetropole_Booklet*.

Cartmel, 1997, Woodman & Wyn, 2014). Young people are most affected by changes that have led to the restructuring of lives. According to Woodman and Wyn (2014), although these changes are more recorded in northern contexts, they are also affecting many countries in the global south (Nilan & Feixa, 2006).

Reforms in the global labour market have resulted in growing youth unemployment, poorer conditions of employment, and a proliferation of unsecured and precarious work⁵, as recorded in Australia and the UK (Furlong & Kelly, 2005; Standing, 2011). For example, a significant process of de-industrialisation has been taking place since the early 1980s in the UK. The shrinkage of traditional manufacturing industries and stable public employment, in general, along with the emergence of the service sector and high-tech industries in many countries, has led many young people to engage in low-paid and insecure employment (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Yates, 2017). In analysing the impact of globalisation and the decline of manufacturing on youth in New York, Katz (1998) indicated that the rate of unemployment among young people aged between 16 and 19 in 1988 was 18%, rising to 36% in 1993. The delay in entering the labour market, alongside social changes affecting young people's lives, has led to a prolonged economic dependence of young people on their families and on state welfare, as well as delaying family formation and having children.

It has been suggested that as young people are living in a world of uncertainty, they will feel more tension and strain. This makes them more vulnerable to psycho-social disorders and mental health problems, as a large body of literature has shown. Loss of hope for the future among young people can also lead to attempted suicide. For example, according to the longitudinal evidence presented by West and Sweeting (1996), the rates of suicide attempts and psychological morbidity increased among unemployed young people compared to their peers who were in work or on training programmes. Furlong and Cartmel also stated that “greater protraction of the youth transitions, changes in sequence of key transitions and the prolongation of semi-dependency can be associated with psycho-social problems” (2007: 95). Smith and Rutter (1995) showed how the prolonged transition of youth and the failure to

⁵ Although there is no comprehensive definition, this term specifically describes particular insecure work arrangements associated with temporary, short and flexible contracts, irregular hours, and poor wages (Quinlan, 2012).

obtain smooth transition leads to conflicts between young people and their parents. Indeed, the lengthening of transitions can create feelings of exclusion and separation from the adult world and barriers to work opportunities and participation in society as stakeholders. Consequently, young people may become more likely to search for other sources to compensate for this disadvantage and satisfy their needs; these may take the form of criminal activities or involve health risks and/or anti-social behaviour.

The changes and complexities in young people's lives have led to many instances of youth protests and uprisings, which have been more pronounced in the global south, where there are harder conditions in relation to high youth unemployment and apathetic governments (Woodman & Wyn, 2014). Uncertainty and frustration among young people have led to a series of revolutions in the Arab world, the so-called Arab Spring, which started in Tunisia in 2010 and continued in Egypt, Syria, Libya and other countries. Youth has been at the heart of the mass movements organised to call for political and economic reforms and the social changes they need to provide them with opportunities for healthier, more secure and more prosperous lives (Kurtz & Gomez, 2012). Indeed, young people in many parts of the global south, such as in sub-Saharan African countries, are growing up under challenging economic and social conditions (Gough, Langevang & Owusu, 2013). New challenges have emerged in their lives with rising unemployment. Recent studies of young people's lives beyond the global north have highlighted the growing concern at the number of young people who are being marginalised and excluded from work, and hence the status of adulthood. It has been argued in this context that the problems of unemployment and poor employment conditions are associated with rising frustration among young people which can render them more vulnerable to risky behaviour, involvement in crime and uprisings (Gough, Langevang & Owusu, 2013). The new changes in the context of already difficult economic conditions, the scarcity of local educational and work opportunities, political instability, and the dominance of cultural expectations to fulfil family responsibilities, can create intense pressure on young people in various locations of the global south and even force many of them to migrate (Punch, 2015; Jeffrey, 2010; Camacho, 2007; Hashim, 2006). Engaging in entrepreneurship appears to be another of the strategies undertaken by contemporary young people in the global south to respond to changes, struggle through the difficult economic environment, and assume

responsibility for social reproduction (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2013; Gough, Langevang & Owusu, 2013).

To sum up, the lives of contemporary youth are greatly subject to many types of change, bringing increased tension and pressures in achieving their aspirations for the future. As has already been mentioned, and as Kelly (1999) argued, how people experience globalisation and change, including those in education and the labour market, depends largely on the cultures within their societies. Thus, although the life experience of young people today seems risky and uncertain in both the global north and the global south, the relative level of uncertainty and their response to the changes will differ according to the local cultural and geographical contexts and social situations. The following section briefly shows how the circumstances of young people in Kuwait, including the pace of change undergone by society, specific cultural norms and economic features, are likely to make their experiences and challenges different from those of their peers in other countries.

Research questions and summary of main arguments

Since the discovery of oil, Kuwait has undergone an enormous series of developments and huge socio-economic change at different levels of life at tremendous speed and in a compressed manner. Unlike northern societies, that required two to three centuries to achieve mature economic and social development, radical economic change has allowed Kuwaiti society to enter a new stage of development, civilisation and affluence in less than half a century. It has shifted in few decades from a traditional poor country to a modern rich one “that values modernity and the use of new technologies” (Alanezi, 2010: 71). Such fast changes are reminiscent of the experience of contemporary South Korea, which underwent rapid transformation of its economy and society in a short period; in that case, the term ‘compressed modernity’ was introduced to account for its condition (see Chang & Song, 2010; Chang, 2010). Compressed modernity was defined as “a civilizational condition in which

economic, political, social and/or cultural changes occur in an extremely condensed manner in respect to both time and space and in which the dynamic coexistence of mutually disparate historical and social elements leads to the construction and reconstruction of a highly complex and fluid social system” (Chang, 2010: 444). This term is used in the present thesis to refer to the rapid waves of social and economic changes occurring in Kuwaiti society and its hyper-fast transition from a simple nomadic society to an affluent one with a better quality of life. However, although these changes have occurred and spread very quickly, other aspects of society have resisted the forces of change. This resistance can be seen in the power of relationships, the continued dominance of Islamic values, and the embeddedness of traditional social obligations and institutions, leading to the ongoing debate between continuity and change in the region (Held & Ulrichsen, 2012). An in-depth examination of the historical progress of modernity in Kuwait, drawing on Beck’s theoretical framework, will be provided later in this thesis. In fact, the model posed by Kuwait, and to a lesser extent GCC societies in general, is puzzling and unique. It combines European modernity and traditional Arab culture: Arab dress that expresses the old nomadic culture is worn, against a backdrop of tall buildings and luxury cars designed in the European style, providing an obvious simple example of this combination. The economic strength of the Gulf states, beside their unique cultural model, enables these societies to have a distinct identity, enjoying different attributes from other societies. This creates a new division, or a new way of exploring how young people live their lives in this specific context, and of understanding the nature of their transitions in the real world.

Unemployment in Kuwait has increased significantly over the past two decades (Al-Qudsi, 2005). According to recent statistics on the youth unemployment rate, unemployment increased among people aged 15-24 in Kuwait from 4.3% in 1991 to 14.4% in 2015, compared with 0.5% in Qatar, 5.4% in Bahrain and 11.7% in the United Arab Emirates in 2015. To put this into a wider context, the rate of unemployment in the same age group during the same year was 14.6% and 11.6% in the United Kingdom and the United States respectively (World Bank, 2017a). Statistics from another source, the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (2015), indicate that the rate of unemployment in Kuwait ages for 15-24 reached 15.3% in 2015. As high as it may appear, this rate does not reflect the good economic situation of the state of

Kuwait and its small population. Although the total unemployment rate in Kuwait is not in excess of 3%, which should still be considered low compared with 11.5% in the Arab world and 5.7% in the world in general in 2015 (World Bank, 2017b), unemployment appears to be a serious problem among young people in the country. Table 1.1 shows how unemployment rates are significantly higher among younger groups, specifically those in the 15-24 age group, and that the rate of unemployment among Kuwaitis in this age group is more than double the unemployment rates among non-Kuwaitis.

Table 1.1: Unemployment rate by age groups and nationality (Kuwaiti / Non-Kuwaiti) in 2015

Age group	Nationality		
	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
15 - 24	22.1	11.8	15.3
25 - 34	4.6	2.1	2.6
35 - 44	1.3	1.3	1.3
45 - 54	0.9	0.5	0.6
55 - 64	0.7	0.1	0.2
Total	4.7	1.8	2.2

Source: Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (2015)

It is necessary to clarify here that the term ‘unemployment’ in the Kuwaiti context differs from the prevalent sense of the inability to find a job due to the non-availability of work opportunities, or hard economic conditions. This indicates that it is not easy to directly generalise from the dominant studies of youth in the global north context to other countries. Unemployment in Kuwaiti society, as well as in other GCC societies, is often considered voluntary⁶, with the tendency of citizens to wait for employment in the public sector, even while jobs may be available in the private sector (Salama & Alanzi, 1999). In Al-Qudsi’s words, “Voluntary unemployment implies that the unemployed choose the joblessness status rather than settle for lower-paying jobs” (2005: 1). In a sense, the nature of unemployment in GCC societies reflects the state of those who are able and seek work but voluntarily remain out of the labour market due to the imbalance between the skill level and wages offered and their expectations. Since the time of the oil boom, working in government has become the most desirable form of employment in Kuwait, due to its attractive features such as stability,

⁶ See Chapter Three, pages 95-97.

high salaries, and comfortable working conditions. Unemployed workers sometimes choose to wait for a job in this sector, especially with economic conditions that allow them to endure this waiting period set alongside various barriers that prevent them from working in informal jobs.

What distinguishes the Kuwaiti context is the sharp social division between national and expatriate labour. Although this study is limited in terms of focusing on young Kuwaitis, their lives can not be separated from the wider context of social structure and economic change. The economic change in Kuwait contributed to the collective upgrading of Kuwaitis' standard of living, in which they represent the middle class and hold white-collar jobs in the public sector. This has led to the emergence of a new class of expatriate workers from various countries to fill low-skilled manual and menial jobs in the labour market (Ashkanani, 1988). The current data on social division of the labour market shows how the primary occupations, crafts (hand or manual work) and service work such as in markets and shops, are generally filled by non-Kuwaitis (Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, 2014). This social division or the Kuwaitis' position in the class structures is likely to influence young people's transitions to work and to contribute to the problem of youth unemployment. The impact of social class on transitions has long been discussed in youth studies. For example, Ashton and Field (1976) illustrated how a complex mixture of the individual's experiences at home and school associated with social class generates a relatively narrow set of career alternatives. They were able to explain how the expectations of working-class young people conflict with the realities of the labour market. Roberts (1968) also developed a theory to understand the transitional outcomes based on 'opportunity structure'.

Although the significance of social class in young people's transitions has diminished in a period of rapid social change and restructured economics, several scholars continue to show how social class and inequality have not died and are lived by young people, across and through social space. It has been argued that young people's structural position and location continue to influence their transitions (Roberts, 2009; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; MacDonald et al., 2005). Roberts (1997), for instance, argued that young people may consider themselves as free agents in shaping their own individual pathways but still originate from specific class backgrounds; certain types of social and cultural capital are ingrained in economic conditions

and history. Hence, the sharp social division prevailing in the Kuwaiti economy and society between citizens and expatriate workers is likely to determine young people's pathways to work and limit their opportunities for entry to certain routes due to their social backgrounds. Despite recent demands of the Kuwaiti government to direct young people towards non-government sectors, or to work in handicraft activities, aiming to reduce youth unemployment, the position of young people in the social structure may conflict with meeting these demands.

It must be clarified that while the thesis attempts to provide some understanding of the broader structure of social division in Kuwait, there is still a gap concerning the nature of the conditions, barriers and opportunities available to individuals in the other half of the social division. This is complicated by the fact that this section of the class division consists of different nationalities with various backgrounds, introduced to meet the needs of the labour market. In other words, individuals in this other part of the social division have not lived and studied in the same context as Kuwaitis, but have usually completed their education in their own country before coming to Kuwait; this makes it unfeasible to consider their experiences and the conditions of their schooling, their pathways after compulsory education and the constraints they faced during their transitions to work. It would be unrealistic to attempt to obtain such detailed data within the constraints of the present study. However, it is recognised that, and as the next chapters show, the majority of foreign workers hold low qualifications and come from environments with difficult economic conditions that suffer from a lack of good quality education and work opportunities; it is, indeed, these conditions that push them to seek better opportunities in Kuwait. However, the researcher believes that the focus of this study does not require more detail than that provided on the social division between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti workers, as the purpose of highlighting the social division is not a comparison between classes or examination of the marginalisation and economic and social deprivation suffered by non-Kuwaiti workers. Instead, the main goal is to place young Kuwaitis in a wider socio-economic panorama in order to understand the context in which they find themselves and the opportunity structures available to them.

In fact, the unique model of the Kuwaiti context, that combines economic strength alongside the severe social division and traditional cultural characteristics, deserves attention. Studying

youth transition within these specific conditions can make a significant contribution to global youth debates. The argument is that since Kuwaiti society has undergone rapid development and had unique experience of modernity, its young people are facing different circumstances from those of young people in northern and other southern contexts. Thus, their experiences and challenges in relation to transitions to work will appear differently from those described in other youth studies, and studying this transition has the potential to add new knowledge to the global youth literature. More specifically, due to the speed of change in this society and the presence of some characteristics of traditional society persisting in contemporary life, the debate on the trend of young people exercising free choice, designing their own biographies and choosing to individualise their lives (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) is challenging in this context. Young people are likely to continue to be influenced, and perhaps even controlled, by factors such as family, gender, religion and education, resulting in tension in their experiences of transition to the modern and changing labour market. Moreover, as young people in Kuwait are subject to specific economic circumstances alongside the specific cultural, social, economic and educational contexts in their society, the present study can challenge the conventional narratives on youth studies, such as the increasing engagement of young people nowadays in migration, precarious work, and poor conditions of employment (Beck, 2000; Furlong, 2015b; Standing, 2011).

Sociological research and empirical studies on youth in Kuwait are few, and research in this context is therefore still at the stage of infancy. Even though Al-Jazzaf recently conducted a study on transitions in Kuwait, it was focused on disabled children's transition from childhood to entering adult life. She also stated that: "There is very little research, if any, on transition in the Gulf region and in Kuwait" (2012: 15). Her study examined parental expectations and aspirations for the future transition of children with disabilities. The current study, however, investigates youth transition from school to work to understand the general patterns, values and challenges that characterise this transition, distinct from specific disability issues. At the end of his study, which had aimed to identify the general personal and social problems of young Kuwaiti people, Al-Tarrah (2003) claimed that there is a clear need for further, more comprehensive studies exploring the priorities of Kuwaiti youth and the obstacles they face, particularly in relation to their personal and professional development. Hence, in order to

address this gap in the local and global literature, this thesis aims to explore the nature of Kuwaiti young people's transitions from school to the labour market. It seeks to understand their experiences and the difficulties they face during this period in the context of the country's rapid shift to modernity, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In other words, it focuses on the impact of compressed modernity on contemporary youth transitions in Kuwait, by investigating the barriers and factors likely to impact young people's transitions, including family, wider social relationships, cultural values on gender roles, the social division between nationals and non-nationals within the labour market, and the roles of education and labour market policies.

The following **research questions** are addressed:

- 1) What are the consequences of Kuwait's compressed modernity on young people's transitions from school to work?
- 2) To what extent is the contemporary experience of Kuwaiti young people's transitions from school to work distinct from that in other global contexts?
- 3) To what extent does Beck's 'individualisation' thesis help to explain young people's transitions from school to work in non-western contexts?

The following section clarifies Beck's thesis of individualisation, with further discussion set out in the following chapter. It must be borne in mind that as the area of youth transition from education to work has not received much attention in Kuwait to date, this study is the first attempt to answer these questions. Because social studies were mostly controlled by northern theorists, there is no clear explanation as to whether they are suitable for analytical purposes in countries like Kuwait. Thus, the uniqueness of this study is that it does not just apply models that have been developed elsewhere; it challenges these existing models and attempts to understand where Kuwait sits *vis-à-vis* the literature. It seeks to test and refine the validity of some of the bigger ideas and theories developed in other contexts in order to analyse and describe the transition to work of young people in contemporary Kuwait. According to Woodman and Wyn:

To accept Connell's critique of the limiting effects of northern theory may not mean that we need to abandon the concepts that have been used previously to instead create or draw on different theories. Instead we may be able to enrich and rework those we have (2014: 35).

Hence, this study draws on the theories of the well-known German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1944-2015), and attempts to enrich some of his concepts. It empirically confirms how social theories are limited to certain contexts, and highlights their inadequacy in global application, calling for a global sociology. The following section illustrates Beck's ideas as the theoretical framework that has guided this study.

Individualisation and compressed modernity

The study draws on the works of Beck and his thoughts about modernisation and individualisation in order to understand youth transition and the predicament of youth unemployment in Kuwaiti society. Modernisation is understood here as the complex historical and structural processes that radically changed the institutional arrangements from first modernity into second modernity, leading to the emergence of crushing forces such as individualisation, reflexive modernity and cosmopolitisation (Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). Beck sees second modernity as a new stage of human civilisation whose side effects produce a new situation (different from the traditional society stage, industrial society, or the first modernity stage), with a consequent need for different institutional arrangements and different social means to pursue them in a cosmopolitan model (Beck, 1999). The characteristics of this stage include international flows and borderless environmental problems and threats (e.g. transboundary air pollution).

Beck used the term reflexive modernisation for the transition from simple to reflexive modernity (1994), arguing that it constitutes “[a] radicalisation of modernity which breaks up the premises and contours of industrial society and opens paths to new modernities or counter-

modernities” (Beck, 1997: 17). This notion uncovers the main ideas and concepts of modernity, supporting understanding of its impacts on society not only at the institutional level, but also at the level of individuals. Conditions established in the risk society led individuals to become reflexive agents in the way that they built their self-identities in a critical manner (Beck, 1992). For Beck, reflexive modernisation means “self-confrontation with effects of risk society that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society as measured by the latter’s institutionalized standards” (1994: 6).

As a consequence of the increasing global risks and uncertainty that threaten life in the contemporary era, social institutions and traditional practices can no longer be sustained; thus, individuals are forced to be more responsible for their own survival. In this sense, the progress of modernisation has led to increasing individualisation, in which individuals are becoming liberated from traditional communities and constraints including the family, neighbourhood, church, kinship, membership of political parties, gender and social class (Beck, 1992: 87-88). Beck’s account of individualisation is that individuals are no longer being forced into the traditional models of lifestyle previously imposed upon them by social constraints. The process of individualisation leads to removing traditional societal restraints and the emergence of new ways of life and prospects in which social actors have to produce, develop and stage biographies for themselves. More specifically, Beck’s original approach to explaining the process of individualisation is based on three dimensions, as follows:

Disembedding, removal from historically prescribed social forms and commitments in the sense of traditional contexts of dominance and support (the ‘liberating dimension’); the loss of traditional security with respect to practical knowledge, faith and guiding norms (the ‘disenchantment dimension’); and—here the meaning of the world is virtually turned into its opposite—re-embedding, a new type of social commitment (the ‘control’ or ‘reintegration dimension’) (Beck, 1992: 128).

The process of individualisation has led to a move towards reflexive individualisation, which means that the choice is central to human existence, as individuals’ identities and biographies are increasingly shaped by decisions that orient their lifestyle, not through the traditional

model that attributes them to set social categories, which he calls ‘zombie categories’. Hence, Beck’s idea of individualisation emphasises that social categories, such as gender, class, race and family, which theorists and sociologists usually ascribe to them, have vanished (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). The following chapter also illustrates Beck’s account of individualisation and how second modernity allows the emergence of individualised forms and obliges individuals “for the sake of their survival to make themselves the center of their own life plans and conduct” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001: 31).

Beck was a leader in developing cosmopolitan theory. Through his concept of reflexive modernity, he argued that modern societies in both the global south and the north are faced with new types of risk. These risks created global responsibilities or ‘cosmopolitan imperatives’ (Beck, 2011: 1346). Beck (2011) therefore identified the need for a more cosmopolitan sociology, and a shift from ‘methodological nationalism’⁷ to embrace the lives of everyone on Planet Earth. Such a shift in focus requires a restructuring of the social sciences in theory, methodology, as well as changed approaches to organised research. Beck’s point of view is that this is important in order to understand a set of circumstances, desires, contradictions, effects and divisions of global generations. Cosmopolitan sociology, for him:

Differs from a universalistic one by starting, not from anything supposedly general, but from global variability, global interconnectedness, and global intercommunication. It means treating the global generations not as a single, universal generation with common symbols and a unique consciousness. Rather, it conceptualizes and analyses a multiplicity of global generations that appear as a set of intertwined transnational generational constellations (2016: 203).

Beck tried to overcome some of the biases in sociology theory and provided useful analytical contributions to improve cosmopolitan theory. He and his followers recently adopted and advanced the theory of reflexive modernisation beyond its European references in order to discuss varieties of second modernity (Beck & Grande, 2010). The theory was applied to

⁷ “Methodological nationalism can be defined as the all-pervasive assumption that the nation-state is the natural and necessary form of society in modernity; the nation-state is taken as the organizing principle of modernity” (Chernilo, 2006: 5-6).

several East Asian countries, and in different fields and contexts; examples include transnational marriages and second modernity in Korea (Shim & Han, 2010) and the individualisation of relationships in Japan (Ishida et al., 2010). The present study in turn examines Beck's theory from the perspective of youth transition to the labour market in Kuwait. Examining individualisation is interesting in a society such as Kuwait, which displays many of modernity's features while, simultaneously the maintaining strong roots of its traditional culture; so, it is experimentally open whether the experience of individualisation deviates from, or follows, the path taken by the western model. On the other hand, it is also fascinating to study the phenomenon of youth unemployment as a social change towards modernity in a relatively affluent society such as Kuwait. However, Beck's ideas are not approached uncritically; their strengths and weaknesses in interpreting and accounting for compressed modernity in Kuwait and the transition of young Kuwaitis from education to work are appraised and questioned throughout the thesis.

Before moving to the next section, it should be mentioned that while this study draws largely on Beck's works and theories, some ideas of Bourdieu, more particularly his concept of habitus (1990), are also used as an analytical tool. His theoretical model of habitus is a useful framework for understanding how social institutions can create ways of thinking of young people and affect their transition. The habitus consists of:

Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively "regulated" and "regular" without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 1990: 53)

Further detail of Bourdieu's theoretical model of habitus (1990) appears later in this thesis. The next section presents some of the main findings of the study.

Main findings and outcomes

In examining the impact of compressed modernity on youth transitions from education to the labour market in Kuwait, the study suggests that there are different paths to modernity outside the northern metropole, which impact differently on young people's lives. The findings from the present study indicate that in their country's state of compressed modernity, young people in Kuwaiti society, despite their relative affluence, are living in a state of tension. This tension is mainly related to the conflicts between tradition and modernity, and between individual desires and compliance with traditional cultural norms such as strong family and social relationships, and norms about gender and religion. Ineffective state policies on education and the labour market also lie to some extent behind the frustration of young people by reducing their opportunities to acquire jobs that they believe best suit their abilities and ambition. These challenges, beside the economic conditions, have made it difficult for young people in Kuwait to respond to the changes in the labour market and engage in non-governmental sectors or in the new forms of work undertaken by young people in other countries, such as part-time or casual work. In general, these challenges act as barriers preventing young people from taking new courses of action away from the traditional pathways into the public sector, which has recently become overcrowded (World Economic Forum, 2014). This study therefore shows how young workers suffer from productive participation or inadequate employment in the public sector, as they often do not find sufficient work to do once they are employed. They try to find a clear formulation between their hard work during education and the reality of work in this sector, that does not require from them to be productive or work hard.

The present study reveals that there have been some attempts among young people to change traditional attitude to work through working in the private sector and in small businesses, but this has not without difficulties. Among the barriers they have faced are parental control over educational and occupational choices, society's views and the social stigma attached to some professions as a result of the social division between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, poor educational preparation, and competition with expatriate professionals in the private sector. This social, educational and employment reality combine to condemn young people to wait for government jobs, despite the problems of working in that sector. Thus, youth transitions and the period in which they are dependent or semi-dependent on their families are likely to

lengthen, and the level of uncertainty associated with this stage of ‘waithood’⁸ is likely to increase, as is explained in the following chapter. The findings, when taken together, suggest that young Kuwaitis’ transitions from school to the labour market and their experience of unemployment can be understood through theoretical ideas such as ‘structured individualization’ (Roberts, 1993, 2003), which will be discussed in more detail later in the thesis. Broadly, rather than the assumptions of the individualisation thesis that contended that young people “have become ever more free of structure” (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994: 174), some researchers have stressed that opportunity structures continue to be powerful in shaping young people’s transitions from education to work (Roberts, 2009; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). This is not to say that agency is not important, but that it is not independent of objective circumstances. Roberts (2009) argued that home, environment, school, employment practices, labour market processes, job qualifications and gender are all important factors that influence, if not determining, the career paths of young people. This study tends to show how young people’s choices and prospects in Kuwait are shaped by the opportunity structures surrounding them, including family, education systems, social division, labour markets, employer practices and job opportunities.

Generally, the main issue that arises when looking at the conditions experienced by young Kuwaitis today is the complex and conflicting relationship wrought by globalisation between modernity and tradition, or conservatism and liberalism. Some of the heritage and characteristics of the traditional tribal⁹ Arab society remain evident in some of the dominant behaviours, ideologies and ideas. This can create feelings of repression and frustration among some young people, along with a consequent desire to be free from the traditional constraints which are being imposed on them. As was discussed above, the most prominent characteristic of modern times is the accelerated change in multiple spheres, such as education and the labour market, and increasing uncertainty (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007), which requires a higher degree of flexibility, increased freedoms, and higher levels of personal responsibility in

⁸ The term used in the literature to describe the uncertain and bewildering nature and the long waiting phase of young people in the Middle East and North Africa region, before their move to the stage of independence and the assumption of adult roles and responsibilities and citizenship rights (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008; Singerman, 2007).

⁹ “...characteristic of a tribe or tribes...characterized by or reflecting strong group loyalty”. A tribe is “A social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader” (Stevenson, 2010: 1897).

shaping future routes and building social identities. Therefore, maintaining values such as subordination, dependency and the acceptance of authority can pose an additional challenge for Kuwaiti young people in negotiating and adapting to the rapid events of life today.

The findings of this study, therefore, provide new understandings of the experiences in young people's lives in a context that has received little attention to date. It shifts the focus from the usual view of young people in the global south as being economically disadvantaged (Punch, 2010, Jeffrey & McDowell, 2004), to understanding the nature of the new difficulties experienced by young people in this part of the world. On a broader front, it challenges the traditional narratives that appear in the youth literature, including the increasing engagement of young people in precarious work (Standing, 2011; Beck, 2000). It also offers a new understanding of the unemployment situation which is not linked to poor economic conditions, migration, poverty, or homelessness (Farrugia, 2016; Punch, 2010; Jeffrey & McDowell, 2004). Instead, the concluding chapter refers to it as the situation of 'until employment'.

Youth experiences and the transition to work in a Kuwaiti context is interesting because young people are more affluent, and are able to acquire secure, stable full-time jobs after graduation. Thus, they appear less mobile, and are less likely to experience precarious work or poor employment conditions than other young people in the global context (Beck, 2000; Furlong & Kelly, 2005; Standing, 2011). Yet, simultaneously, they are facing more challenging conditions than did former generations, such facing changes in the labour market including crowding in mainstream sectors and competition with high levels of migrant labour. In contrast to previous generations, when a young person living in the wake of the oil boom was readily able to obtain a place in government employment, job opportunities are less immediate nowadays and the rate of youth unemployment has increased.

The study deduces that Beck's model is empirically flawed when it is applied in the Kuwaiti context. His process of individualisation (1992) seems culturally and historically limited to the western context. Although the findings of this study show that modernisation has allowed the emergence of some individual pathways, this does not mean that an absolute freedom of the individual from traditional contexts has been achieved, as depicted by Beck. This study finds that individualisation in the Kuwaiti context needs to be understood in the context of collective ways of living and of continuing the traditional guidelines. The study ends with a further

critique of Beck's assumptions, his account of cosmopolitanism, and his inability to deal with multicultural issues (Bhamrah, 2009; 2011; Holton; 2009; Dawson, 2010).

Structure of the thesis

The current chapter has provided an introduction to the research, set out the core aims and arguments, stated the questions being investigated, and presented the theoretical framework and main findings of the study. Chapter Two reviews the youth literature on youth transition more broadly and highlights the broad themes running through the study, namely individualisation, structure and agency. Given the limited scope of the existing literature on the global south, this chapter examines northern studies, conceptual perspectives and theoretical approaches at a starting point. The second part of this chapter reviews some of the publications pertaining to the global south, focusing then on youth literature in the Arab and Middle East context, including to some extent, or implicitly, Kuwait. The differences between Kuwait (and the wider Gulf context) and northern contexts (particularly European societies) are also discussed in this part to illustrate the difficulties encountered in adopting the dominant perspectives to examine youth experiences in Kuwait. Further discussion of the theoretical perspectives on which the study draws, and how its theoretical framework was developed, are presented at the end of this chapter. Chapter Three is divided into two sections: 1) theories of modernisation, with a focus on multiple modernities and the reflexive modernisation of Beck; and 2) the process of modernisation in Kuwait. It traces how the process of modernisation in Kuwait took a unique pathway combining modern and traditional forms, and how some of Beck's ideas are challenged when applied to this society. In general, this chapter depicts why the nature of youth transitions in this contemporary society must be rethought, framing the context for the empirical chapters that follow.

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology by providing the rationale and philosophy that underpin the design of the study. It details the research population, the methods used to obtain the required data, the data collection procedures, and the analysis process. Chapters Five and Six then move on to describe the data obtained from the sample of Kuwaiti

secondary school students through a survey questionnaire that covers broad issues of youth transition to employment. The data focus on the lives of young Kuwaitis in the final stages of full education, exploring their experiences, feelings, concerns, and perspectives before entering the labour market and the aspects likely to shape their attitudes and influence their future career paths. Chapter Five descriptively outlines the quantitative sample and data (with some of the qualitative components of the quantitative survey) on educational institutions in Kuwait. It focuses on educational issues, and the support provided by the social settings (family and school) to young people to prepare them for their working lives and skills development, including employability and soft skills. The purpose is to set the scene for the following empirical chapters, especially Chapter Seven, which deals with the experiences of young people in work, showing that the skills gap and ineffective educational institutions affect youth transitions. In other words, according to Bourdieu's theory of habitus (1990), as institutions create individuals' ways of thinking, it is important to provide a clear understanding of the nature of the institutions within which young Kuwaitis grow up, in order to better understand the patterns of their attitudes towards work. This chapter (Chapter Five) provides more descriptive information than the analytical chapters. The descriptive element contributes to enhancing understanding of the reality of the educational environment, and the series of arguments and interpretations that appear in the following empirical chapters. Chapter Six examines the issues of control and the role of certain variables over young peoples' decisions, and their attitudes and pathways towards work. It empirically demonstrates how young Kuwaitis continue to be subject to various socio-cultural influences, including family, gender, and social ties and stigma, each of which can restrict their transitions.

After a snapshot of contemporary young Kuwaitis' situations in their last years of schooling, Chapter Seven (the third of the data chapters) deals with the qualitative data obtained from young people who have recently entered full employment; here, the term 'young adults' is used to refer to them. It identifies their personal experiences and general points of view on the challenges facing young Kuwaitis in the transition from education to work and shows in more depth how certain variables impact on young people's transitions and how they respond to control over their agencies. The overlapping relationships between agency/structure,

individual pathways/social networks, and modernity/tradition, and how these create tension in young Kuwaitis' lives, are discussed.

Chapter Eight concludes the study by bringing together the various themes and strands raised in the thesis. It outlines the findings and frames them within the existing literature of youth studies in the global context. It discusses how the experiences of young people in Kuwait differ from young people in the global context, challenging the existing models in the youth literature as well as Beck's model and ideas about modernisation and individualisation. Then, suggestions for future lines of enquiry, recommendations for further study and policy implications are set out which should be of benefit to various decision makers with regard to community awareness and reforms to education and labour market policies.

Chapter 2 – Youth transitions from school to work: A review of the literature

Introduction

The previous chapter stated the purpose and aims of the study. A brief overview of the situation of contemporary youth in the global context was provided, moving on to a discussion of the position of young people in Kuwait in order to clarify the significance of the present research's investigation of young people's experiences in this context and how this study can make an important contribution to the global youth literature. The present chapter digs deeper into the core of the research topic and the basic concepts that underlie the study of youth transition. Given that understanding of youth transition has thus far largely been dominated by northern metropole studies (also referred to as the western context) (Shavit, Müller & Tame, 1998; Müller & Gangl, 2003; OECD, 2000), as a starting point, the chapter investigates the literature on youth transition in the global north and its changing nature. It indicates that the life course of young people has become much more complex and unclear over recent decades; traditionally seen as unproblematic in much of the post-war period, the transition from education to the labour market is now recognised as a critical stage in an individual's life.

Today, young people face many challenges in moving towards productive and rewarding employment, requiring them to be well-prepared in order to ensure a successful transition. However, the question examined here is whether or not the ideas proposed by the dominant studies and theories on young people's transition to work can be applied to Kuwaiti society. As has already been introduced, and is explained in more detail in the following chapter, Kuwait is in an interesting situation, because while it is rapidly modernising, its Islamic Arab cultural heritage still permeates most of its social institutions. The economic boom that preceded the investment in human capital in schooling, and the hierarchical structure of the Arab family, characterised by strong family and tribal ties (Arnett, 2007) are among the unique aspects of the Kuwaiti case that require some re-thinking regarding young people's transition from school to work.

As there is insufficient research on youth transitions in the Kuwaiti context and GCC more broadly, the chapter starts by drawing a connection between contexts to identify and articulate the gap. In other words, after setting up the principal debate and the main lines within youth transition studies in the global north, the chapter then attempts to situate this study between different contexts, reviewing the recently expanded literature in the southern context. It argues that Kuwait as the focus of this study shares some aspects with both the northern and southern contexts, alongside its own unique features, offering a new combination. The focus in the third section is narrowed down to the Arab region, highlighting the main themes and terms discussed in the youth literature within this context, such as different patterns in the transitions of traditional and modern youth, and ‘waithood’ (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). It argues that young people in the Arab world are similar to those in northern contexts in relation to the changing circumstances and increased risk they face compared to previous generations. Young people in this context are experiencing different circumstances in terms of the nature of an economy still dominated by the public sector, the rigidity of the labour market, the dominant social norms, and the state educational policies. The fourth section further examines the main characteristics that distinguish GCC and global northern countries, particularly the UK and other European societies, in order to demonstrate the challenges in applying the dominant models in youth studies to the GCC. The last section of the chapter provides further discussion of the theoretical framework of the study, highlighting how it was developed and why, and how Beck’s individualisation and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus are used and incorporated in this study.

Youth transitions in the northern context

During the 1980s, and as a result of the changing circumstances of young people in the UK, youth research increased (Roberts, 1997; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001). Rather than the traditional theoretical studies of youth culture of the 1970s and the ethnographic observation of sub-cultural groups, youth transition became the central concern of youth sociology (MacDonald & Marsh, 2001: 29). With the restructuring of youth transition catalysed by rising

unemployment and the collapse of the youth labour market, youth transition became a main preoccupation of youth sociologists. They have generally been more interested in how young people deal with these structural changes and the pathways from education to employment (MacDonald & Marsh, 2001; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Cohen, 1998). This section focuses on these changes and its impact on young people's lives as shown in global north literature, and how the theoretical perspectives within youth sociology have changed over the years, moving to focus on the youth transition from education to the labour market.

Structure, agency and middle-ground positions

Over recent decades, a variety of structural shifts have occurred in modern institutions such as education, the family, and the labour market (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Bynner, 2005). These changes have fundamentally affected lifestyles and the biographies of individuals, and are reshaping all aspects of life. As young people experience these changes, the issues of social change have received special interest from youth sociologists. According to Furlong and Cartmel, as young people today are experiencing circumstances that differ from their parents, "...changes which are significant enough to merit a reconceptualization of youth transitions and processes of social reproduction" (2007: 8-9). Young people's transitions to adulthood have been conceptualised in terms of 'extended' or 'delayed' (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). While the previous generations became full adults once they had followed the path of rapid sequential stages from leaving school, entering the labour market, leaving the parental home, and establishing an independent household and family, these events now overlap and have become extended (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). The nature of the economy and labour market in the modern world requires young people to obtain good qualifications and wide knowledge before entering the labour market. Thus, young people now spend longer in education and experience of university has become increasingly widespread in most advanced societies (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). According to Furlong (2009: 32), empirical evidence points to the switch in life-course stages: the young man who reaches his third decade and still lives in his parental home, the divorced couple who go back to a youth culture lifestyle, or the employee who goes back to education to retrain. With these extended, exchanged, and interrupted life phases, young individuals are finding it difficult to feel either young or adult; hence, the term

‘young adults’ has become common and may extend to 35 years or beyond (du Bois-Reymond & Lopez Blasco, 2003).

In other words, the life course of contemporary youth differs from their parents. Rather than being linear, smooth and unproblematic, the transition experienced by contemporary youth is more likely to be ‘cyclical’, ‘reversible’ and ‘yo-yo’-like (du Bois-Reymond, 1998), or ‘arrested’ (Côté, 2000). Personal biographies have become less predictable, and often involve backtracking and a mixing of statuses and roles (Furlong et al., 2003; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Heinz (2002, 2009), having examined youth transition in the context of life-course theory, argued that the chronology of various stages of the life course have become fuzzy, with mixed roles becoming more common. There is no longer any set timing of the transition to adulthood (except in terms of legal definitions of the age of maturity); it is, rather, linked to the complex interactions between individual decisions, social pathways and institutional opportunities in framing guidelines and navigation, and restricting choice. Thus, young people struggle to deal with unexpected events, manage their trajectories and build their biographies.

These changes in lifestyle and transitions over the past 30 years have prompted researchers to apply new theoretical perspectives to them. Youth studies in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Ashton & Field, 1976) focused on the ways in which young people’s class of origin strongly affected their experiences. Ashton and Field (1976) argued that three basic courses existed which might be followed by young people from school to work: first, expanded careers, which require young people to participate in higher education; secondly, short-term careers, where the young person enters the labour market after leaving school then receives additional training provided by their employer; and thirdly, careerless occupations, which are unlikely to supply training or the chance of development. The idea of a ‘career trajectory’ was highlighted by researchers at this time, in which the individual’s class was seen as determining the direction to the labour market with limited scope for escaping this fate (Bynner, Chisholm & Furlong, 1997: 4). Structural perspectives developed in the 1970s and 1980s have become less pronounced, and individual agency action more dominant (Furlong, 2009: 1). As youth transitions are seen to be more diverse, uncertain and complex, theories on transition to reflexive or second modernity and individualisation, particularly the works of Beck, have been influential in

studies of youth transitions (Woodman, 2007). Individualisation is here understood as the categorical change in the relationship between the individual and society as a consequence of a global risk regime (Beck, 1992: 127).

As Beck (1992) outlined, conditions established in a risk society have led to the emergence of individualised forms, obliging individuals to make themselves the centre of their own life plans and behaviours. Just as modernity contributed to the erosion of feudal society in the nineteenth century and to the emergence of the industrial society, new modernisation is now dissolving the industrial society, resulting in the second modernity. Beck (1992, 1994) argued that due to the growing global risk that threatens their lives in this stage of societal development, individuals have no choice but to be liberated from the previous dominant forms of institutions and structures in industrial society, including extended family, kinship, religion, traditional gender roles, and class. More specifically, structural changes have contributed to the removal of traditional socially-imposed models of lifestyles and societal constrictions in which each individual develops his/her own idiosyncrasies and biographies. Thus, according to Beck, individualisation means:

... first, the disembedding and, second, the 're-embedding' of industrial society ways of life by new ones, in which the individuals must produce, stage and cobble together their biographies themselves (1994: 13).

Côté has also stated that “the life course has been destructuring, and people have increasingly had to adapt by individualizing their lives – taking things into their own hands rather than relying on traditional institutions to provide structure for them” (2000: 4). Further, for modernisation to progress successfully individuals must liberate themselves from structural restraints and actively engage in the process of modernisation as social agents (Lash & Wynne, 1992). Giddens has also noted that since traditions and past structures are shrinking, the individual’s sense of self-identity “has changed and self-identity has to be created and recreated on a more active basis than before” (1999: 47). In brief, as modernisation reaches a certain level, traditional institutional frameworks are less likely to impose their regulating,

standardising function. Hence, the course of human life has increasingly become a matter of individual construction and to constitute a series of individual decisions.

While free choice and the importance of individual agency have been emphasised as a feature of the risk society, especially through the thesis of individualisation, many authors have emphasised that young people's lives continue to be affected by constraints (structures) and determined by variable access to opportunities. Heinz (2002, 2009), for example, emphasised that the concept of 'self-socialization' means that individuals are responsible for their choices and the pathways they perceive, without losing the consideration of structuration and how the institutions and class contexts restrict their choices. He stated that "the structural continuities of social inequality and the different opportunities for putting agency into practice are neglected" (2009: 397). In this respect, Roberts (1993, 2003) also stressed that young people navigate within constraints and opportunities in their lives that are outside their control and not of their own making, such as gender, family, cultural background and social class. Thus, their lives involve so-called structured individualisation. Roberts argued in the context of youth transition from education into employment in Britain over the past 60 years that, despite the changes which have occurred in the characteristics of the opportunity structures governing this transition, they have been maintained and their collective predictive power remains undiminished. These opportunity structures are mainly made up of the interrelationships between family backgrounds, education, employers' recruitment practices and labour market processes (see Roberts, 2009). His opportunity structure theory asserts that "people do not typically 'choose' occupations in any meaningful sense: they simply take what is available" (Roberts, 1977: 1).

Similarly, Evans (2007), drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus to critique Beck, suggested the idea of 'bounded agency' in which agency is socially influenced by the structures and environments to be negotiated and the internal frames of reference. Through her cross-national research on youth transitions in Germany and England, in an attempt to understand the continuation of class and gender in shaping actions, Evans (2002: 151) argued that "people act systematically, rather than just idiosyncratically". She pointed out that young people are "undoubtedly manifesting a sense of agency" (2002: 262), but there are certain boundaries or

barriers that sometimes prevent the feelings of control and expression of agency. In this context, Furlong (2009) argued that changes in youth transitions blur the stratifications of their experience and encourage them to seek solutions on an individual basis; however, this does not mean that social structural divisions of class and gender no longer exist. In an attempt to address this contradiction, Furlong and Cartmel (2007) suggested that the introduction of individualistic social and political approaches, alongside the decline of collective social identities, has created a sense of false reality for many young people. In this context, young people are seen as blind to the wider forces at play in shaping their lives. This sets young people up to believe that they have enough control to be solely responsible for their choices and to negotiate their lives as though they have real opportunities. These authors stated that “Blind to the existence of powerful chains of interdependency, young people frequently attempt to resolve collective problems through individual action and hold themselves responsible for their inevitable failure” (1997: 114). In other words, they proposed that life in late modernity revolves around an epistemological fallacy, and that the paradox inherent in modernity is that although the collective foundations of social life have become more obscure, they continue to provide powerful frameworks which constrain young people’s experiences and life chances.

Furlong (2009) expressed the belief that the obscured divisions and the increasing fragmentation of youth opportunities require new ways of thinking about the primacy of structure or agency over social action, initiating practices that combine both and the taking of middle-ground positions (Furlong, 2009). These middle-ground theories assert the double effect of the agency and structure levels. While the transitions are rooted in opportunity structures and institutions, individuals also work to build and shape distinguishing pathways through their preferences, past experience and future planning.

Roberts explained youth transition experiences with reference to middle-ground positions, borrowed from the analogy of Furlong and Cartmel (1997):

Whereas once young people could be viewed as being on trains being hurled across a set track to some final destination, they are now making their journey to adulthood in a car, navigating their own way. However, political rhetoric espousing equality of opportunity in

a meritocratic society obscures the fact that 'cars' of varying quality and reliability are unevenly distributed, that there is variable access to different standards of 'road', and that while many are supplied with 'maps', a differential ability to read them exists (Roberts, 2010: 146).

The above arguments and positions have become increasingly influential in youth studies, supported by many authors (see Lehman, 2004). To sum up, when considering the history of youth research it is evident that the present perspectives of researchers in examining young people's experiences have changed over the years. Rather than structural factors, modern perceptions now tend to focus on the individual. Recently, researchers have moved to the middle-ground which takes into account both the structural level and individual preferences in capturing youth transitions.

Although, the claims of Beck and his co-authors on individualisation and how class, race and gender no longer shape young people's lives have received considerable criticism from youth sociologists (Evans, 2002, 2007; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Lehmann, 2004, and others). It is nevertheless agreed that general theoretical framework on individualisation provides a valuable and important reference for youth research in sociology. Furlong and Cartmel argued that Beck and his colleagues "have been successful in identifying processes of individualization and risk which characterize late modernity¹⁰ and which have implications for lived experiences" (2007: 2).

Indeed, Beck (1992) claimed to offer a new theoretical approach that underlines that contemporary society has undergone a rapid radical development, compared to the industrial society, which was the subject of early sociologists including Marx, Durkheim and Weber. Moreover, Beck focused on applying his theory to a wide range of topics in relation to the transition of the family, labour market and the welfare state (Rasborg, 2012), which can usefully be applied to understanding the social consequences of compressed modernity in the Kuwaiti context and on young people's experiences. However, individualisation and the ideas

¹⁰ Another term used by theorists (such as Giddens, 1991) to interpret the changes in the new era that involve a new and more diverse set of lifestyles; it draws attention to the extensive implications of recent socio-economic changes (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007: 1-2).

on free and personal choice can be restricted even more in the Kuwaiti context as individual choice can be hampered by different constraints, not only the social structures that recent youth sociologists tend to focus on such as gender and class divisions. Furthermore, constraints on young people in Kuwait can appear with the local socio-economic and cultural influences such as the strong collective attitudes and traditional and Islamic norms. According to Nilan (2011), the ideas of individual choice and planning life personally are questionable in framing youth transitions in the global south, as societies profoundly differ from western cultural contexts and hold strong collective orientations. Thus, this study attempts to understand these ideas on youth transitions in an unexplored context, in which new ideas can emerge around Beck's individualisation with different cultures, local socio-economic conditions, and the compressed manner of change. In this regard, but in relation to family forms, Chang (2010) suggested another core concept, namely 'individualization without individualism', to express individualisation in South Korea. His argument is that compressed modernity has created a kind of functional overload in South Korean families which has resulted in fewer marriages, an increase in late marriage, decrease in the birth rate, and increase in the divorce rate and the numbers of singles. Chang (2010) considered this trend as 'risk-averse individualization' to avoid the burden of a family rather than ideational change and instead of the preceding general change to individualistic values, in the sense that compressed modernity has transformed family relations from a social resource into a source of individual risk, which has been encouraged to reduce such family-associated risks by returning to individual stages of life (Chang & Song, 2010; Chang, 2010).

The education to employment transition

The transition from school to work is the basis of the implementation of individuals' aspirations, regulating their participation at family and community levels, both as consumers and citizens (Heinz, 2009). The concept of transition from school to work, which is considered a recent development, refers to the period between the end of the enrolment of an individual in compulsory schooling and their attainment of a stable full-time job (OECD, 1996, 1998). For Müller and Gangl, this transition should be understood as "the period between the end of an individual's primary involvement in education or training and their stable settlement in a work

position” (2003: 1). Due to the link between the concept of transition from school to work and many other issues which may extend far beyond the immediate contexts of education and work, the process is considered complex. More complexity arises from the fact that many individuals plan and prepare for their future careers from an early stage of life, probably while still in the education system; some (a number which is difficult to measure) may work in casual jobs in the informal sector, which is hard to measure; others may migrate to find better work opportunities abroad; and another group might feel frustrated and disappointed because of their failure to achieve their employment goals. All these differences make the transition from school to work a complex process which requires longitudinal analysis (Tchibozo, 2013). Tchibozo analysed the process of the transition from school to work by dividing it into four main stages: first, when an individual starts to think about the career pathway he/she wants to follow; second, when the decision regarding the educational track is taken; third, entering the world of work; and finally, the process of integration into the workplace. While some individuals may experience this transition to work easily and smoothly, others undoubtedly struggle and take a long time to find a first job. Although the transition phase in theory marks the beginning of a long working life, there is empirical evidence to confirm that the first stage largely affects the subsequent working career (Barone & Schizzerotto, 2011).

Many researchers have argued that contemporary young people’s transition from school to work is different from the experience of young people in the past. It has become increasingly fragmented, prolonged, less straightforward and less predictable (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). This view is supported by examinations of the current changes in youth conditions, such as increased unemployment, the expansion of training, an increased complexity of choice and increased participation in post-compulsory education (Roberts, 1997; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, 2007; Nagel & Wallace, 1997; Wyn & Dwyer, 2000).

Today, education is forcing young people to make life-course decisions earlier in their lives, especially with pre-placement requirements set by most university courses and the targeting of certain outcomes. Dwyer and Wyn (2001) considered young people as more responsible than those in the past for early planning and making realistic choices to maintain their aspirations, despite the structural influences and constraints upon them. These authors argued that with

increased labour market flexibility, the outcomes from post-compulsory education have become “less straightforward” and “take a longer time to achieve” (Dwyer & Wyn 2001: 184). Young people must manage additional risks and challenges during their education continuum, such as limited course places, high costs, not becoming too specialised, and not having opportunities to gain experience, which in turn increase their complexity of the transition to work.

Heinz (2003) documented dramatic changes in employment in Europe and the USA in recent decades associated with globalisation, technological innovation and rapid shifting in occupational structures which have had a major impact on the lives of young people. The rigid pattern of education-work-retirement is no longer widely available; instead, recent cohorts of youth are more likely to have to move flexibly between jobs and even experience multiple occupations, instead of choosing a single job and enjoying stable lifetime employment. Moreover, re-equipping through further education and certification has become a necessity for competitiveness in the current job market. Some argue that with the possibility of re-entry to school, the increase in working while studying, and movements between employment and unemployment, in many cases identifying a specific period of time for this transition, with a clear starting point and exact end point, is neither easy nor simple (Kerckhoff, 2000; Wolbers, 2003). Instead, the transition process is becoming increasingly like “a multi-dimensional process, and not a single event at one point in time” (OECD, 2000: 26).

In recent decades, the contraction of economic activity in manufacturing sectors and the boom in the service sectors in advanced industrial countries such as the UK, the USA and Australia have resulted in a need for better educated and highly professional skilled individuals (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). Although the share of employment in the service sector in developed countries is much larger than that in developing countries, this sector has also expanded in many parts of the developing world. According to the International Labour Organization, the share of the service sector reached 40% of total employment in the world in 2006, exceeding for the first time the total share of agricultural employment (38.7%), while the industrial sector remained steady at 21% of total employment over 10 years (ILO, 2007). The dominance of the services sector had demands relatively more human capital and less natural capital to produce

intangible goods and forms of service and, consequently, the need for a better educated workforce. This sectoral change also has an impact on changing working conditions, such as increased dependence on casual and insecure employment (Furlong, 2009: 177, Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Yates, 2017).

Beck (2000) pointed out that the significant change observed in working conditions over recent decades, particularly in industrialised countries, has a large impact on young people. According to Furlong (2009: 177), the flexibility of employment that increased across industrialised countries such as in Europe and Australia, is the main aspect of these changes. Flexibility takes many forms: production flexibility, such as outsourcing work tasks, means that instead of working in large organisations, more people work in small or medium-sized enterprises and/or are self-employed (Watts, 1997). There are also increasing flexibility concerning wages, such as a reduction in minimum wages and salaries and limiting fringe benefits to certain groups of workers; deregulation flexibility, such as reducing severance pay and extending the probationary period; and employment flexibility, such as increasing non-regular work with casual workers, using contract labour, temporary agency workers, homeworkers, and others who do not benefit from the legal protection afforded to regular workers (Furlong, 2009: 177). Thus, to achieve economic growth and in response to the new global market conditions of and increased competition, many firms have replaced permanent full-time positions with more flexible employment arrangements through non-standard forms of employment, such as very short fixed-term contracts, part-time work, and zero-hours contracts, often provided by labour hire agencies and freelance contracts. Such contracts are characterised by short, variable and non-guaranteed working hours, and are frequently performance-based (Hall & Mirvis, 1996). This relieves employers from meeting statutory financial obligations such as superannuation and payment during holidays and sick leave. In practice, any form of flexibility usually contributes to increased job insecurity for workers and strengthened salary inequality (Furlong, 2009).

According to a report by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UN, 2007), new types and arrangements of work have appeared in the global economy based on services. A large-scale restructuring of the labour market has led to a clear

spread of various forms of informality and increasingly precarious work relationships in many parts of the world (Beck, 2000; Furlong & Kelly, 2005; Standing, 2011). The International Labour Office (ILO, 2002) indicated that 50-70% of the workforce in developing countries were in casual employment. Although casualisation has spread most widely in developing countries, it is also becoming increasingly common in other countries. Globally, short-term contracts have been used extensively, characterised by few entitlements for workers and a consequently greater feeling of job insecurity. The constant feeling of insecurity and fear of losing their job usually forces workers to agree to employers' decisions, such as reduced wages or benefits, or changes in the workplace (UN, 2007).

With the profound shift in the world of work and increased flexibility in the modern global labour market, the sense of insecurity associated with informalisation and labour casualisation presents great challenges for young people. Self-direction, adaptability and flexibility are key elements of individual success in this tough environment (Hall & Mirvis, 1996). Modern organisations are increasingly requiring workers to have multi-tasking skills, strong continuous learning skills, effective communication skills, and the ability to work in teams (Watts, 1997; Hall & Mirvis, 1996).

Youth homelessness and poverty as one of the dimensions of material insecurity has also been discussed in current studies and the discourses on changing structures to understand the lives of young people in the contemporary era (Farrugia, 2016). Both unemployment and job insecurity have serious consequences for individuals' mental health, life satisfaction and psychological well being. According to the evidence from a European social survey, financial deprivation is most responsible for the damage, although social isolation and disruption of social networks also play a role (Gallie, 2013 in Furlong, 2015b).

Generally speaking, given the current circumstances, uncertainty and risks, young people in the western world now have to navigate their way through a set of experiences and options (Vickerstaff, 2003). Looking back, the transition to work was originally straightforward in the 'golden age', when young people often left school with few or no qualifications and smoothly and immediately joined the labour market. However, this unproblematic and single-step

transition from school to the labour market has since completely changed; the process has become more extended, fragmented, complex and individualised, with less sharing of experience and biographies with others.

Just as the youth transition to work varies between generations of youth according to the conditions they experience, they also vary according to the location in which young people live and the specific conditions and characteristics of the institutional structure and cultural practices within this locality. Heinz argued that:

Modern societies differ in their institutional arrangements concerning life transitions: education and training provisions, labour market regulations, exclusion mechanisms, social assistance rules, and the extent to which there is an explicit youth policy (2009: 6).

To sum up, the literature on youth transitions in the global north includes ample studies that record youth transitions in light of the changes in education and the labour market over recent decades. Nevertheless, young people within different contexts can still experience different local circumstance in which more research is required to understand young people's experiences outside the global north.

Youth transitions in the southern context

Recently, the voices of new scholars have recognised the importance of extending the knowledge on youth beyond a reductively northern perspective. Young people's lives across the world are increasingly being affected by globalisation as well as by the specific political, economic, cultural and other local contexts of their realities (Ansell, 2009; Punch & Tisdall, 2012; Punch, 2015; Holloway & Valentine, 2000), but it is necessary to discover how their lives differ between the global north and global south (the literature also refers to western and non-western countries, developed and developing countries, First World and Third World, and/or Minority World and Majority World) (Punch & Tisdall, 2012; Ansell, 2005).

According to Farrugia (2014b), while the claim that the lives of young people are shaped by place is obvious and self-evident, a spatial, place-based focus has only begun to be recognised as an increasingly important way to understand the lives of young people. In the contexts of contemporary youth issues and globalisation, the spatial perspective has become more important and is now recognised as a powerful tool with which to understand contemporary young people's identities, everyday lives and biographies (Farrugia, 2013, 2014b). This perspective draws attention to different issues, including education and employment in different places and spaces, and how youth biographies and identities are built in relationship to geographical sites. It breaks down the traditional dualisms (local/global, urban/rural) and allows experiences from the global south to enrich the existing perspectives in youth studies (Farrugia, 2014b).

In 2014, Farrugia and a number of international youth researchers, mostly of whom were Australian, held a symposium called *Youth Outside the Northern Metropole*¹¹. This work illustrates the recent attempt of researchers to concentrate understanding of young people's lives and experiences developed outside the northern metropole. The main argument was that the field of youth studies has largely been dominated by northern theories and studies that have all been developed and spread in the UK, Europe, North America and urban areas of Australia. As Nilan (2014) argued, since this field is dominated by scholars and theorists from the global north, no real understanding or consensus has been established about its suitability for analytical purposes in the studies of youth from many other countries like Japan, or cities like Dubai, as well as those who live in regional and rural settings. Some theoretical implications of rapid change were discussed, with case studies on urban youth in Indonesia (Sutopo, 2014), Japan (Furlong, 2014) and in rural/regional settings in Australia (Farrugia, 2014a) presented in this symposium. Further global southern studies have also recently been emerging elsewhere; some examples are the work of Benwell (2008) in suburban South Africa, Jeffrey (2010) in India, Punch (2002) in rural Bolivia, Bell (2007) in rural Uganda, and Honwana (2012) in the African context.

¹¹ Abstracts available online at: <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/education-arts/newcastle-youth-studies-group/conferences-and-symposiums/youth-outside-the-northern-metropole-symposium-2014> [Last accessed 06/06/2017]; downloadable as pdf file *YouthOutsideTheNorthernMetropole_Booklet*.

As has been explained above, young people in the northern context are becoming more likely to undergo a series of transitions, and to move back and forth between independence and dependence, although independence remains their ultimate goal (Gillies, 2000). However, a literature review of studies of the global south shows that achieving independence in youth is less likely, given the family structures and cultural norms involved. In this context, Punch (2002) argued that the notion of youth transition from dependence to independence is problematic in southern contexts because young people move in and out of relative independence and negotiate with their families throughout their lives, and direct comparisons cannot be made without further research into the use of this term in different cultural contexts. The notion of ‘negotiated interdependence’ is a useful way to understand contemporary youth transition and the relationships between adults and young people over a life course in the global south, which Punch calls the ‘majority world’. She argued that this term:

Reflects how young people in the majority world are constrained by various structures and cultural expectations of family responsibilities yet also have the ability to act within and between such constraints, balancing household and individual needs (Punch, 2002: 132).

The term was derived mainly from the situation of Bolivian children and young people in rural areas, where they “move in and out of relative autonomy and dependence” (Punch, 2002: 124). It can also be applied to other studies set in rural areas of the global south; for example, Thorsen (2007) on strategies to become adult in rural Burkina Faso; Hashim (2006) on immigrant children and young people in Ghana who consider themselves responsible for the economic support of individuals and households; and Camacho (2007) on the experience of the children of Filipino immigrants, where fulfilment of personal and family goals are often intertwined.

As Kuwait is economically wealthier than most other nations in the global south, better opportunities are available there for young people, suggesting a likelihood of more stable patterns of transition. Given the scarcity of economic resources and more limited education and employment opportunities in the global south generally, young people are more likely to be forced to leave school and start work earlier (at 12-13 in some cases, such as rural Bolivia)

than young people in Kuwait or in most of the global north, in order to actively participate in the economic support of their families.

The migration of children and young people to neighbouring cities or richer countries is another way of contributing to the household income, as it enables them to expand their education and employment opportunities (and earn a better salary) as well as broadening the scope of their future options (Punch, 2010, Jeffrey & McDowell, 2004). Sutopo (2014) argued, based on a study of young Indonesian musicians, that mobility plays a notable role in promoting the successful accumulation of social and cultural capital in young peoples' lives. According to Punch (2010), despite a lack of reliable or valid statistics, the migration of children and young people is considerable in the global south, especially in/from rural areas. Punch (2010) argued that the flexible movement of young immigrants between the local community and various migration destinations, as well as through a diversity of jobs, leads to increased level of risk and uncertainty in young people's pathways. They are more likely to experience changing conditions and be affected by global and local economic changes; hence, their transition is largely fragmented and unstable (Punch, 2010: 203). However, although the experience of youth immigration and working during childhood is prevalent in many parts of the global south, it is not common in Kuwait.

Nevertheless, the cultural constraints and social norms placed by family on young people's transition, such as job restrictions on women, and gender differences in the type of work, are a common feature in both the global south and the Kuwaiti context. For instance, Hansen (2005) observed in Lusaka, Zambia, that young females are less likely to secure jobs through contacts and more likely to lack economic means than are young males. Similarly, social norms that require women in Ghana and Gambia to carry out domestic work hinder their enrolment in school and securing of jobs (Jones & Chant, 2009). In Bolivia, because of family and parental beliefs, girls face greater opposition when seeking to migrate; they may migrate later than boys, and some may travel under the protection of boys (Punch, 2002).

Although youth transition in the Kuwaiti context may be similar in some aspects to that in the global south, it is different in others. Economic conditions in Kuwait generally do not require

young people to work at an early age, nor do they need to actively contribute to the household income, as many of their peers in the global south do. Hence, they appear at first glance to be more economically independent of their families. Nevertheless, cultural constraints, negotiation between family members, parental involvement in decision making and strong social relationships in Kuwait are similar to those in the global south (Arnett, 2007; Al-Saffar, 1995). Because of religious and cultural expectations about cooperation and assistance between family members, Kuwaiti families may continue to support their children financially even after they become employed, and go on doing so throughout their lives; similarly, young people may help to support their families, given available opportunities. For this reason, the concept of negotiated interdependence may be useful in understanding young people's transition, as the border between dependence and independence is blurred.

Kuwait is part of the Arab world¹², increasingly referred to as the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) especially with regard to support from the US Department of State¹³; it therefore combines several attributes of the countries of this region. Despite some differences in individual local contexts, Kuwait is closer to the Arab world than to anywhere else. Thus, locating the study within this context is appropriate in building a better understanding of the situation of young people in Kuwait, especially bearing in mind the limited prior literature on the youth transition in Kuwait and GCC countries. Therefore, the following paragraphs review the literature which has been developed in the Arab context, focusing on the whole region rather than on individual countries, and the aspects that reflect, and account for, the Kuwaiti context.

¹² Arab world: refers to a geographic area stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Arabian Sea and the Arabian Gulf in the east. It consists of 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa which share a common language, religion, culture, and history.

¹³ See: <http://www.state.gov/>

Youth transitions in the Arab World

Traditional and modern youth transitions

Following previous studies on Arab youth transition, and to better understand their life courses based on the three stages of education, employment and family, two archetypal life courses must be defined: traditional and modern (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009). Transition in the previous generation was often mediated within the framework of the family and rural community, and the social norms associated with it. For males, the traditional life course included an immediate and early transition to work, with no training, and did not often feature unemployment or extended periods of time searching for a job. In the case of Kuwait, and as illustrated in more detail in the following chapter, until the beginning of the previous century there was no formal education system at all. Most Kuwaiti boys spent a few years in non-formal education, Koranic schools, and then joined the labour market at the age of 13 or 14 to help their fathers. Although the first formal school in Kuwait was established in 1911, secondary education did not appear until the 1950s, and the number of schools only significantly expanded after the flow of oil began to grow (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2002).

Working in the family enterprise or on the family farm, and casual or irregular paid employment, were the prevalent forms of employment in old Arab societies (Dhillon, Dyer & Yousef, 2009). Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008) added that the traditional life course involved passing occupations from one generation to the next; the family's role included helping children to walk in the footsteps of their fathers' professions, such as fishing or agriculture. In the past, young people in Arab societies were married at an early age, especially females, who were less likely to have access to education and whose role was limited to the responsibilities of home-making and raising children. Living arrangements after marriage were commonly kept within the extended family.

However, the new generation of youth increasingly experienced a ‘welfarist life course’¹⁴ which developed along with the process of urbanisation and the expansion that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s in most Middle Eastern countries, particularly in the oil-rich Gulf, in terms of education, work, the protection of the citizen provided by government, and rising living standards (Murphy, 2012: 10). Dhillon, Dyer and Yousef (2009) have explained that the economic development of countries in the Middle East after independence opened the way for this welfare life course, in turn influencing the transition from school to work. They have argued that governments, especially in GCC states with high oil revenues and small populations, have been able to sponsor many social welfare services and development plans for their citizens, including free education at all levels to encourage families from different backgrounds to send their children to school, and to encourage young people to stay in secondary education and enter university, as well as offering young people stable employment in the public sector (Dhillon, Dyer & Yousef, 2009: 14). Non-oil producing countries in the region, such as Egypt, have also profited from the flow of capital from the richer countries, bilateral assistance, regional trade, and remittances sent by migrant workers in the oil-rich states (Heyne & Gebel, 2016: 37).

Thus, the life course of modern Arab youth now includes staying longer in school, at least into upper secondary education. According to the Human Development Data for the Arab states of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2011) based in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the mean expected years of schooling increased by 2.5 years between 1980 and 2011 in Arab states. In Kuwait, this figure rose from 11.2 years in 1980 to 14.6 in 2013, compared with 10.6 in Arab states in general in 2012 (UNDP, 2013) and 16.2 and 16.5 in the UK and the US respectively in 2013 (see Table 2.1). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)¹⁵ for primary, secondary and tertiary education in Kuwait increased from 88% to 104%, 63% to 93% and 4% to 28% respectively between 1971 and 2013 (World Bank, 2017d).

¹⁴ This term was defined as a new life course that includes “higher living standards and a process of urbanization which diminished traditional normative and institutional structures” (Murphy, 2012: 10).

¹⁵ Total enrolment in a specific level of education, of any age, to the population of the school-age group that officially corresponds to the same level of education in a given school year. Due to the inclusion of students who enter at ages younger or older than the official age group, and repeating a year, the GER can be greater than 100%. See: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/114955-how-can-gross-school-enrollment-ratios-be-over-100>

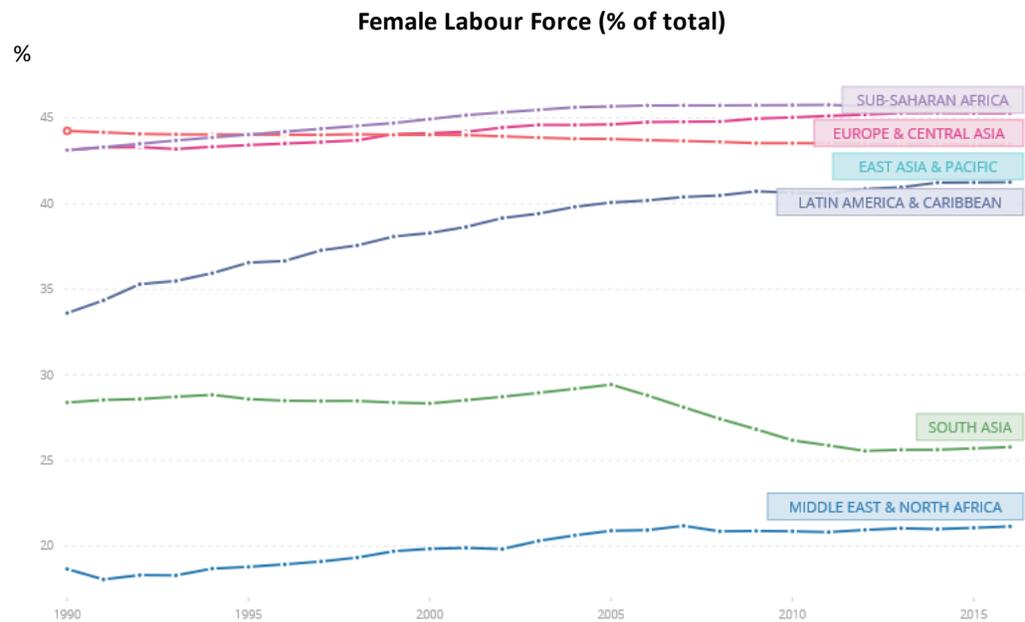
Table 2.1: Expected years of schooling of children in Kuwait from 1980 to 2013, relative to selected countries

Country/Region	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Kuwait	11.2	10.4	15.5	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6
Qatar	11.9	11.8	12.6	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8
Saudi Arabia	6.0	8.7	11.5	12.5	12.7	12.8	13.1	13.7	14.6	15.2	15.6	15.6
UAE	8.6	10.6	12.0	12.7	12.9	13.0	13.2	13.3	13.3	13.3	13.3	13.3
Oman	3.5	7.9	10.9	11.2	11.1	11.4	11.9	13.1	13.4	13.6	13.6	13.6
Bahrain	10.4	13.4	14.8	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4	14.4
Arab States	7.7	8.6	9.7	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.3	10.3	10.2	10.2	10.6	--
United Kingdom	12.9	13.6	16.1	16.6	16.1	16.0	16.2	16.4	16.8	16.2	16.2	16.2
United States	14.1	15.2	15.3	15.9	15.9	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.4	16.5	16.5	16.5

Source: The Human Development Office, 2013. Based on data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2013 <http://hdr.undp.org/en>

* Number of years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age specific enrolment rates persist throughout the child's life.

According to the World Bank (2013), gender inequalities in the MENA region began to fade through education and participation in the labour market. The ratio of female gross enrolment in school has risen at all levels, and at the tertiary level has even exceeded male enrolment in some countries, including Kuwait. The gender gap with regard to labour force participation has also shrunk, although the ratio of female participation in the labour force in the MENA region remains the lowest of all global regions, as Figure 2.1 shows (World Bank, 2016).



Source: World Bank (2016) <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?end=2015&locations=ZQ-8S-ZJ-Z7-Z4-ZG&start=1990&view=chart>

Figure 2.1: Regional female labour force comparison, 1990-2015

Burchinal predicted in 1960 that increasing attendance in higher education would reduce the rate of early marriage. This has proven to be, almost universally true. In the Arab world, early marriage has dropped sharply, despite the cultural taboo against sexual relations outside marriage (Dhillon & Yousef, 2007). Arab men typically married in their early twenties, and women in their teens. In recent decades, however, the average age at marriage for both men and women has generally risen to the late 20s. In the early 1970s, around 40% of Kuwaiti women aged 15 to 19 were married, but this figure had declined to 5% by the 1990s (Rashad, Osman & Roudi-Fahimi, 2005). Arnett (2007) has argued that the discovery of oil in Kuwait, and the numerous associated social and economic changes, led to the emergence of a new lifestyle. Many young Kuwaitis, especially men, delay marriage because they are more concerned with completing their higher education, securing a suitable job and preparing themselves economically. Moreover, Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008: 26) have asserted that “The involuntary delay in marriage also is caused by inflexible social norms and expectations that place too much emphasis on economic security at a time when education and labour market outcomes are changing rapidly”.

With limited research in GCC and Kuwait on youth transitions, an understanding of the shift in young people's transitions as recorded within Arab Middle East literature is important for this study. It is clear that transition in the Arab World has changed from previous generations, resulting from staying longer in education, delayed entry to labour market, increased female participation in education and the labour market, and delayed marriage and family formation. New mobility in the labour market was generated as a result of the influx of oil revenues (Dhillon, Dyer & Yousef, 2009). Searching for formal employment opportunities, commonly in the public sector, thus plays a significant part in the modern work transition.

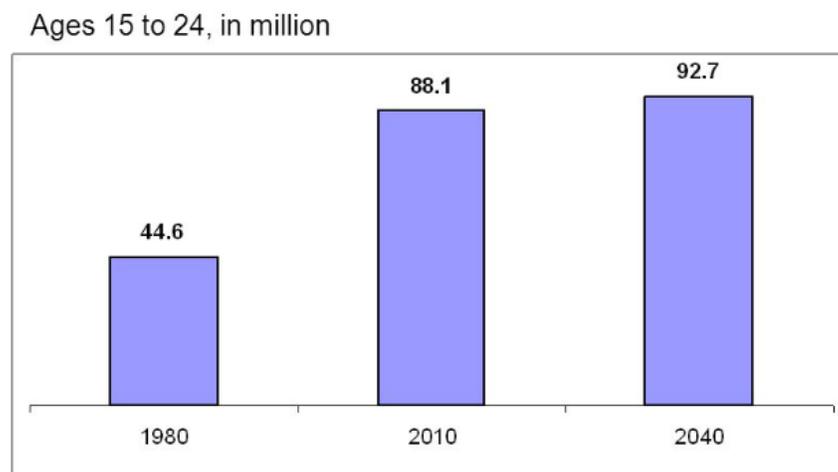
Modern risks in the Arab context: stalled transitions

Although systemic changes and economic development in the region have affected traditional Arab societies, they have not necessarily made today's youth transition smoother. The dramatic social, economic and political changes of recent decades in the MENA region have contributed to new challenges for young people and a deterioration in their situation (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009; Kabbani & Kothari, 2005; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). In terms of the economy, while young people benefited throughout the 1970s from the achievements of welfare era, including guaranteed employment in the public sector, vacancies in the public sector have become fewer since the end of the 1980s. Economic stagnation and falling oil prices in 1980 led to a retraction of state spending, forcing governments to make privatisation and liberalisation reforms. Nevertheless, this failure of the economic model was not matched with alternative institutional changes to prepare young people for the liberal market and protect them from modern global market changes. Education, most importantly, has not been reformed to serve the private sector's needs (Murphy, 2012). Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008) argued that public institutions have failed to provide young people with the skills needed by the labour market, or to adapt to changing global circumstances. In addition to these economic changes, political upheavals experienced in the Middle East such as the Palestinian uprising and the Gulf War, have had a major impact on youth transition from school to work and have increased uncertainty, as have demographic pressures such as the substantial influx of expatriate workers, the expansion of education and increased female participation in the labour force.

The literature has used the term ‘waithood’ to convey the uncertain and bewildering nature of the search for employment, and the long waiting phase faced by young people while doing so, in the MENA region before their move to the independence stage and the assumption of adult roles and responsibilities and citizenship rights (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008; Singerman, 2007). As Dhillon and Yousef (2007) and Singerman (2007) have argued, this term reflects the multi-faceted experience of transition, as it goes beyond securing a job and extends to other aspects of life, such as accessing educational opportunities, civic participation and forming a family. According to Honwana (2014), it represents the contradictions generated by modernity, in which young people hold broader and rising expectations and aspirations in an era of globalisation, yet at the same time find themselves restricted by local social institutions, cultural practices and political and economic instability. Nevertheless, Honwana (2014) argued that young people in a state of waithood are struggling and using their agency actively to interact with the community. The revolutions and social movements in some Arab countries such as Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia are examples of how young people are fighting to achieve freedom from want and fear. The prolonging of the transition to adulthood or the move to independent living is also true for many young people across the world. White (2016) argued in the Indonesian context that as young people stay longer in education, as their access to the labour market is postponed and marriage is delayed, so the period of being totally or partially dependent on their parents becomes longer and social adulthood is stalled. According to Sutopo (2015), Indonesian youth have faced difficult times and experienced an uncertain school to work transition over the last thirty years. Although the overall pattern is that the new generation of young people is better educated than the older generation, the problem of finding employment in the formal sector, especially with a limited role played by government in supporting jobs, has continued since the 1980s.

Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008) discussed some of the factors that prolong the waiting period to enter the labour market among young people in the Middle East; strong demographic pressure and the youth bulge is among these factors. Al-Munajjed and Sabbagh (2011) argued that the GCC is undergoing a unique period, as half to a third of their population are under 25 years of age. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU, 2009), the bulge of population in the GCC was in the under-15-year-old age groups in 2009, suggesting that the

GCC would stay a youthful region until 2020, unlike the ageing populations of Western Europe and the US. Figure 2.2 illustrates the growth in the number of young people aged 15-24 in the MENA region in general (Population Reference Bureau, 2011). In addition, the recent and continuing educational expansion for females in the GCC, with their commonly high levels of educational attainment, suggests that females' rate of entry into the labour force is likely to rise over the forecast period. This suggests that the long waiting period to enter the labour market is likely to continue among young people in the GCC over the coming years.



Source: Population Reference Bureau, 2011 www.prb.org

Figure 2.2: Youth population growth in the Middle East and North Africa region

Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008) added that the nature of economic institutions in Middle Eastern countries, dominated by the state and heavily dependent on the public sector, is inadequate to accommodate these demographic pressures. According to the World Economic Forum (2014), the public sector in GCC states has reached saturation point, as it has become unable to absorb the enormous number of young people seeking jobs, resulting in unemployment among them. Salehi-Isfahani (2006) argued that although when they were initially created the institutions in the Middle East were designed to achieve the principle of social justice and the provision of welfare, they inadvertently had an adverse effect on incentives for citizens. For example, guarantees of government employment in the GCC states reduced workers' motivation to seek high-quality education, develop critical skills and compete in the private sector for good jobs (Shediak & Samman, 2010). In addition, job security, high wages and benefits in the public sector for nationals also undermined their

incentive to seek work in the private sector or pursue self-employment. Nowadays, despite increased competition from the global economy, institutions in the Middle East continue to maintain the same policies and incentives. This literature on the nature of institutions and youth unemployment in the Middle East context is significant as an initial reference in understanding the general conditions be faced by young people in Kuwait.

The rigidity of the labour market in the Middle East plays a role in extending the waiting period for a job and increasing unemployment among the young. The imperative and rules of labour market institutions both govern and influence individuals' behaviour in searching for work. According to Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008: 14), market institutions, as well as other social institutions in the Middle East, “provide the signals that tell young people what skills to learn, tell firms whom to hire and how much to pay, tell credit agencies and banks to whom to lend, and tell families how to evaluate the potential of a young person as future spouse and parent”. Under such circumstances, individualisation theory, which assumes that institutional and societal constraints have been displaced, and individuals no longer need to behave in the way society tells them to, but can instead choose their own way, may be less relevant. The role of young people's agency is more likely to be diminished with the existence of permanent structural constraints that limit and mask their choices and options in terms of career pathways.

The economic environment of the Middle East is characterised by a primary reliance on the public sector for employment, heavily subsidised higher education, the limited contribution of the private sector to economic activities with stricter regulations governing this sector, and less protection and flexibility in the non-formal sector (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). Young people in flexible labour markets try to move between short-term jobs in the informal sector, gaining new experience and skills which they hope will be beneficial to their long-term careers and enable them to eventually secure stable employment. However, this situation is not prevalent in the Middle East, where short-term jobs are considered as just a form of ‘waiting’. The majority of young people in the Middle East prefer to search for secure, long-term jobs in the formal sector, often in the public sector, which offers the greatest incentives. Because the experience of short-term work, particularly in the informal sector, is not recorded, and

information about employees' skills is of less value in this sector, it does not provide young people with a foundation for the expansion of their human capital, and does not lead to future productive careers. Thus, temporary work experience in the informal sector is not attractive to them (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008).

It has been argued that the nature of the labour market also has an influence on families, schools and community norms. For example, in order to ensure access to university and achieve the higher education degree required to take up good jobs in the public sector, parents are ready to pay huge amounts of money for private tutoring for their children to ensure that they pass preliminary tests for university entrance. In addition, social norms place a higher value on young men in the marriage market who are seeking a formal steady job as a stable breadwinner, instead of working in a short-term job or an informal career. Consequently, good jobs are mostly associated with working in the public sector (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). According to Bourdieu (1990) an individual's habitus is their system of thinking, habits, behaviour, feeling, and ways of acting, and seeing the world, this is not easy to replace. It is acquired during the primary socialisation that comes from the earliest stages of life, and can be transferred from one social field to another, such as the workplace (1977a, 1990, 1977b). Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical model of habitus (1990), it can be argued that the nature of institutions and social norms towards work plays a role in prolonging job searches by affecting how individuals think. How individuals act and make decisions without being asked or told by anyone, forming them through early learning in the family and society, is considered self-evident. In a sense, society and family create the unconscious ways that an individual's everyday actions and practices are articulated (Bourdieu, 1990).

Indeed, rising household income levels, and the benefits that families receive from government subsidies resulting from oil rents, have also encouraged families in GCC societies to support their children financially into their twenties rather than allowing them to accept a low-status job. Oil rents have also contributed to rising reservation wages (the minimum wage at which a person is willing to accept employment), a major determinant in making young people in the Middle East willing to wait for a formal job in the public sector rather than accepting an immediate informal job (Blomquist, 2008; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008).

Thus, along with the dominant social norms, oil income has reduced the motivation for early self-reliance, and prolonged job searches, among young people in the region.

Social norms form an even greater challenge for females in many Middle East countries, as they allow them fewer options to deal with the waiting period and enter the job market (Karshenas, 2001; Assaad & Barsoum, 2007). The rates of enrolment and success of women in education has increased; nevertheless, they face challenges resulting from the restrictions and social norms imposed on their movement in the workplace. In the case of Kuwait as well as in many other Arab countries, public space is regulated to some extent by tradition¹⁶, and in other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, by law.

To sum up, it appears that young people in the Arab Middle East context are similar to those in the northern context in terms of experiencing a different kind of transition from previous generations. They are spending more time in education, delaying entry to the labour market and facing more risk and uncertainty in their lives. At the same time, this context is characterised by different conditions that contribute to uncertainty and the long phase of waiting such as the heavy dependence of the economy on the public sector, the rigidity of institutions, and the nature of demographics and social norms. The following section focuses on the differences, mostly in education and employment, between GCC and global northern countries, particularly the UK and the European community.

Youth, education and employment in GCC

Following the pattern of the UK and other European countries, GCC societies underwent an economic revolution and reached a post-industrial period, albeit two centuries later. The new economic structure has helped to establish both economic and social infrastructures in both the global north and the GCC, but with significant differences in the processes and routes taken.

¹⁶ Except that the separation of males and females in the field of school teaching is enforced by law in Kuwait.

What distinguishes the European world from the GCC states is that the pace of economic integration there progressed slowly, becoming more securely established and bypassing many of the difficulties that accompanied the integration process. In addition, the economy of European states was based on a variety of sectors and activities, especially the industrial sector, from the beginning. However, the integration of the GCC countries was belatedly launched only when oil wealth began to flow in the 1940s and 1950s (Fakeeh, 2009). At this time, their economies were suffering from a lack of infrastructure, including the absence of an effective education system and a skilled local labour force. In other words, the wealth of the GCC countries was created almost immediately without any pre-existing history of intellectual and industrial development by either their governments or people (Fakeeh, 2009). As a solution, these countries brought in foreign workers to meet the demand for labour to sustain economic growth and implement social and economic development programmes (Ashkanani, 1988). Thus, the expatriate labour force became a dominant characteristic across the Gulf countries. It still constitutes the majority of the workforce in all these countries, and keeps most of their services running. GCC countries are also characterised by a lack of economic diversification, relying heavily on a single source of income: oil (Mohamed Nour, 2013). The 1970s oil boom and importing the technology necessary to improve the oil industry made the Gulf countries rich, but they failed to take advantage of other resources and their natural wealth to expand their industrial infrastructure, or to tap into their own human capital. One of the main reasons for the failure of industrialisation in the GCC countries is their lack of long-term plans for their development as industrial nations, which has led them to fall into the Dutch Disease¹⁷ trap (Mohamed Nour, 2013: 14).

Despite the abundance of financial resources and economic development in the GCC countries over the past decade, these countries are still facing hurdles in their job markets, with their national workforces facing employment problems. The major challenges plaguing these countries include a lack of employment opportunities for the growing numbers of nationals in

¹⁷ Dutch Disease is an economic term used at global level to explain the apparent causal relationship between the increased exploitation of natural resources and the decline in other sectors, such as manufacturing or agriculture. This term initially appeared more than 30 years ago in describing the economic problem in the Netherlands. The discovery of large natural gas deposits in the North Sea off the Netherlands in 1959 resulted in the decline of the country's manufacturing sector and in ignoring the diversification of the economy and its reliance on a single supplier. See: http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1064&context=econ_honproj

the public sector, a shortage of domestic skilled workers, mismatches between job seekers' skills and the needs of the labour market, and manual work usually being considered socially undesirable by local people (Salih, 2010; Al-Ali, 2008; Al-Munajjed & Sabbagh, 2011).

According to a report by Shediac and Samman, *Meeting the employment challenge in the GCC* (2010), the population needs to be seen as two groups: the economically active, and the economically non-active. The first group includes all working-age nationals who are either unemployed or employed: "The unemployed represent the segment of the active population most at risk. Because they are young, on the whole, there is a social cost to their unemployment: discouraged youngsters don't become productive members of society" (Shediac & Samman, 2010: 3). Most unemployed active people in the Gulf countries are aged younger than 30, and large numbers of them, especially males, have low levels of education. Shediac and Samman (2010) indicated that the latest available figures for unemployment show that the proportion of unemployed nationals holding a high school diploma or below range from 69% in Kuwait to 53% in Saudi Arabia. Despite the efforts of GCC governments, an increased segment of nationals are sitting without work for long periods of time, thus contributing to reducing the overall level of skills and expertise of the workforce. This situation may also result in increased frustration and lack of desire to continue job seeking, consequently increasing the number of economically inactive people.

Most employed GCC nationals work in the public sector, and many are underemployed. Underemployment among GCC citizens results from several factors, including overstaffing and mismatches between the local labour supply and the demands of the labour market. Some underemployment represents a phenomenon of masked unemployment resulting from the quota system in the private sector which requires the employment of nationals, who are added to the payroll without their labour actually being used. According to Markaz, the Kuwait Financial Centre, "the GCC average does not account for masked unemployment and underemployment which have similar implications as unemployment ... For this reason, the unemployment in the GCC is swayed to look lower and less challenging than its actual connotations, especially with the rising population" (2012: 21).

The second group, the economically inactive, represents working-age people who are not actively seeking work for various reasons, such as a health condition, studying, family care, or early retirement. The economically inactive population forms a larger segment in the Gulf states than in many other countries: in 2003, for example, they totaled more than 40% compared with 19.2% in the UK (Gulf Investment Corporation, 2012).

Young people, including students, represent a large proportion of the inactive population in the GCC, which may explain this disparity; however, Shediak and Samman (2010) suggested that other elements are responsible for the number of inactive working-age people in the region. First is the low participation rate of females in the workforce in GCC countries, compared to other countries such as the UK, the United States, and Australia. As data from the World Bank (2017c) shows, the proportion of females aged 15+ in the labour force in 2010 in the GCC countries ranged from 18% in Saudi Arabia to 52% in Qatar; the rate was 59%, 58% and 56% in Australia, the US and the UK respectively in the same year. Secondly, some citizens prefer self-employment, as there is insufficient employment in the public sector; this is strengthened by a general unwillingness to work in the private sector. For various reasons, many young people are therefore ready to become voluntarily unemployed instead of working in the private sector. According to Kapiszewski (2000), one of the causes of unemployment in the GCC is the overall work ethic of the national labour force. Citizens are often reluctant to work in low-skilled jobs; at the same time; the education system suffers from inadequate preparation to address the problem of how to restore traditional work values. The local workforce tends to seek to work in socially appropriate, prestigious and modern posts, linked with the white-collar environment. However, with the increasing number of young people and their concentration in the public sector for different reasons, governments have become unable to ensure such jobs for their citizens. Thus, as Fakeeh (2009) has argued, the current economic environment in the region is becoming much less forgiving than before, and young people are finding that they need to fight more to become qualified and improve their job prospects.

One of the main reasons for many of the employment problems in the Arab Gulf states is the failure of their education systems which, unfortunately, are ineffective in creating highly skilled national workforces able to survive in today's rapidly changing and highly competitive

environment. Mass education in Europe and other northern world countries, however, has generally evolved to meet the need for skilled and literate human resources. The findings of Nour's study (2014) showed that educational policies in the Gulf countries share many problematic attributes, requiring plans to reform the systems to ensure consistency between educational outputs and labour market requirements. First, the pattern of educational policies in the GCC states is characterised by highly centralised and rigid bureaucracies. The governments represented by the Ministries of Education are in control of, and intervene, in all educational institutions. According to Al-Sulayti:

The Ministries of Education administer around 95% of educational affairs; consequently the educational institutions are lacking independence. Moreover, the educational institutions are characterized by bureaucracy, routine, institutional rigidity and lacking perfect understanding of educational policies, dynamism, flexibility, planning, organizational development, monitoring, assessment, cooperation and problem solving ability (2002: 30).

Another common feature of GCC educational policies is that most states have insufficient regulations in place regarding the years of compulsory education, compared to developed countries (Al-Sulayti, 2002). While students attend 12-13 years of compulsory education in Germany, the UK and the USA, the duration of compulsory education in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait is just 6-9 years (Al Masah Capital Management Limited, 2014). Important problems also include the biased structure of tertiary education, where there is higher enrolment in the arts, social sciences and law, than in fields such as the natural sciences, medicine, technical education and engineering. In addition, educational policies in the Gulf states have failed to provide training, or to integrate and cooperate with training policies. Nour's earlier findings (2005) indicated that the lack of a link between educational and training systems obstructs the implementation of plans for enhancing and developing skills. A further problematic characteristic appears in the form of inadequate investment in vocational education and the lack of regularity between vocational education policies and the economic development of the states (Nour, 2014).

Another characteristic of the Gulf states' societies is that tribal and family ties form the basis of social life (Arnett, 2007); in this respect, they can be considered collective societies. Traditionally, individuals are raised from childhood and trained to be close and loyal to their tribes or families. Overall, many aspects of the unique context of Kuwait society make it inappropriate to deploy the social thought and knowledge about youth transition derived from a European, and wider northern, context.

Individualisation, habitus and youth transitions in Kuwait

As discussed above, this study draws on Beck's works and thoughts about modernisation and individualisation in order to understand the impact of rapid changes in Kuwait on youth transition. Beck's work offers a fresh theoretical framework for understanding the impact of radical changes on contemporary life and provides a valuable reference for youth research in sociology. What makes it even more interesting for this study is the fact that he subsequently called for the need to broaden and reassess his theory by studying modernity in non-Western contexts (Beck, Bonss & Lau, 2003). Thus, guided by the theoretical framework developed on the basis of Beck's assumptions, this study attempts to explore the ideas that may be useful for understanding the impact of rapid changes in Kuwait on youth transitions. It explores a dialogue along the lines suggested by Beck and the potential role of the Kuwaiti context in redefining individualisation by looking at Beck's insights from a non-Western perspective.

Beck (1992) used the term simple modernity to refer to an industrial society which is in a state of semi-modernisation and contains factors that hinder further modernisation. Second or reflexive modernity refers to the characteristics of the risk society, such as uncertainty, risk globalisation, democratic dialogue, collapse of job security, unemployment and individualisation. For Beck, with increasing global risks and uncertainty threatening contemporary life, it is no longer possible for traditional social institutions and practices to be sustained. The complex historical and structural processes that radically changed institutional arrangements from simple modernity to second modernity have eroded class solidarity and

traditional patterns of life. The advance of modernisation has led to increasing individualisation, in which individuals are freed from traditional communities and structures including family, kinship, social class and gender, becoming more responsible for their own survival (Beck, 1992). Overall, the key assumption that underpins Beck's theory is that the progress of modernisation and radical change in contemporary societies has led to the emergence of a new form of society, producing a "social surge of individualisation" (1992: 87), that can no longer be understood through classical social models.

However, it has been argued that the debate on reflexive modernisation fails to examine whether the perspectives presented apply to the Third World or non-Western countries (Pick & Dayaram, 2006). The central premise of reflexive modernisation theory is the re-forming of Western society after the Second World War. Beck (1994) examined the role of modernisation in dramatically changing traditional Western European society into industrial social forms and the subsequent reflexive modernisation of that society. Although there is doubt as to whether Beck's framework is suitable for analysis in non-Western countries, at a time when Kuwaiti society is confronted by increasingly complex economic and social changes and problems, especially with regard to youth unemployment, such new ideas and insights are still valuable. In particular, reflexive modernisation is useful in this regard as it can help to explore and understand the relationship between society, individuals and government in global, regional and local contexts.

In applying Beck's theory and approach to the course of change in Kuwait and its impact on youth transition from school to the labour market, it is likely that many of the theories developed in the Western context, such as individualisation, would be inapplicable to the Kuwaiti context. This assumption is based mainly on the fact that Kuwait has witnessed hyper-fast waves of social and economic changes in a short period and has not gone through the first stage of modernity, experiencing no industrial revolution. Beck argued that the clear distinction between the simple (first) modernity and the second modernity established a distinct outline for theoretical inquiry. He pointed out that although first modernity is a prerequisite for second modernity, there are countries including parts of Africa and Asia in which this does not apply. For Beck, although these areas are now facing the same

destabilising forces and the complex global economic, social and political problems faced by Western societies, they never experienced a first modern society (Beck, Bonss & Lau, 2003).

Based on this view, it can be predicted that the relationship between individuals and society has to some extent changed in Kuwait. To be more specific, Kuwait experienced global openness and the information revolution, greater democracy, radical changes in the economy and society, the restructuring of the labour market, the rise of unemployment and the emergence of the welfare state, which Beck considers provide the individual with greater choice and freedom (Beck, 1992). Economic prosperity and the provision of public goods like education, social support services and economic subsidies have helped to break down traditional social structures including class, gender and religion and have freed individuals from externally imposed constraints (Beck, 1992). Hence, with these factors experienced in Kuwait, a strict application of Beck's theory would suggest that social relations have changed, with young people now freer than previous generations to shape their own life pathways to work. At the same time, since Kuwaiti society has not passed through the first modernity which in the West paved the way for the liberation of individuals from the traditional restrictions imposed by institutions and structures (Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001), tradition has not been lost completely in contemporary Kuwaiti society. To put it more bluntly, modernity in the West has been energised by its own tradition of enlightenment. According to Beck (Beck & Grande, 2010), modernisation started in the West as an active, internal and self-sustaining programme of transformation and was frequently extended, not compressed as in Kuwait which advanced quickly through the stages of economic growth. For this reason, contemporary Kuwaiti society may witness the continued role of traditions that bind individuals with collective networks and traditional forms of life. It can therefore be predicted that young people's transition from school to work in Kuwait is likely to be influenced by traditional guidelines. Their pathways and career decisions are likely to be shaped by external constraints such as gender, religion, strong social and family ties, religion and social division. Contrary to Beck's expectation that individualisation is a historical process of transformation, in Kuwait young people have less control over their own individual biographies as their lives are still constrained by several factors and external influences resulting from non-linear compressed modernity.

Beck's theoretical framework of reflexive modernisation has been criticised for its too cognitive orientation, assuming that the subjects exist in some way outside the social world and cognitively reflect the world in a realist or objectivist manner. It removes them from real-life conditions (Lash, 1994). In a sense, it assumes that the forms of self-consciousness are by some means isolated from real life. Taking all the above into consideration, and in particular given that tradition and collective norms may still be rooted in the current Kuwaiti society and that their role is likely to continue to affect young people's lives, it was useful to integrate Beck's theory in this study with a theory that complements and extends it in a way that aids analytical purchase. Hence, the conceptual framework of Bourdieu, in particular his theoretical model of habitus (1977b, 1990), was found to be appropriate and helpful in understanding traditional norms when exploring youth transition in Kuwait. The integration of Bourdieu's theory, and especially the understanding of habitus, allows for the situating of individuals in their own lifeworld (Lash, 1994), in order to break with the problematic objectivism of Beck, and gain a better understanding about the lived experiences and practices of contemporary young people in Kuwait.

According to Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977a, 1990), in order to understand the practices of actors, it is essential to understand the origin and nature of the environment in which they exist and operate. Bourdieu portrays habitus as a product of individuals' history and their circumstances of existence as being "necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning giving perceptions" (Bourdieu, 1984: 169-170). He suggests that habitus "is an infinite capacity for generating products — thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions — whose limits are set by the historically and socially situation conditions of its production" (Bourdieu, 1990: 55). It governs behaviours and perceptions based on the practices gained through communication with others at home or school as individuals move physically through society and institutions. It is clear from Bourdieu's view that the research design does not need to consider individuals' experiences as separate, but how individuals and institutions connect and operate in the environment in which they exist (Webb et al., 2017).

Habitus is a fundamental concept in the theoretical framework of Bourdieu and has a major role in what people do in their daily lives or practices. However, the wider model involves

more than habitus. Through his model of practice, Bourdieu conceptualises action as a result of the relationship between habitus, field and capital (Swartz, 1997). Fields are made up of dominant positions and a set of relationships that may be intellectual, educational, religious, etc. They refer to the different institutional arenas in which people express their dispositions and reproduce and compete for the distribution of various types of capital (Gaventa, 2003). As there are different types of field, so there are different forms of capital (Swartz, 1997). The four main forms identified by Bourdieu are: economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986: cited in Navarro, 2006: 17). These forms of capital can be produced under various strategies and can be transferred from one field to another and exchanged with other forms of capital. They are the mechanism that creates distinct forms of social hierarchy and power, becoming, therefore, goals of struggle as forms of valued resources (Navarro, 2006). The ideas on the persistence of social inequality are lengthily developed in Bourdieu's study of French society, *Distinction* (1984). In this study, Bourdieu shows how "the social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds" via "cultural products" which include systems of education, language, values, methods of classification and everyday interactions (1984: 471). Together, this leads to the unconscious acceptance of social differences, to "a sense of one's place" and to behaviours of self-exclusion (1984: 141).

Overall, it is apparent that the theoretical framework of Bourdieu as a whole does not fit completely with Beck's; their theories, like many others, contain contrasts and contradictions (Woodman, 2007). Before moving to the paragraphs naming some of these contradictions, it must first be clarified that habitus is removed from the wider framework for use in this study. According to Wacquant (2014), as in every concept "partaking of a flexible and open analytic framework", habitus is a "detachable capsule" that can "perfectly be separated from the other notions that compose that framework, provisionally or even permanently" (2014: 123-124). In several cases, Bourdieu himself used it independently from other notions (Wacquant, 2014). As this chapter has shown, the literature on the Arab world suggests that a set of traditional social and cultural norms embedded in the family and society play a role in prolonging the duration of young people's transitions (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). Based on the understanding of habitus, the ways of thinking of young people and their behaviours and perceptions around work in Kuwait are likely to be created through everyday interactions

within the social institutions in which they live; these traditions and norms can be passed on to young people via the process of cultural reproduction and perhaps disrupt the harmony of young people living with social change and the requirements of the modern economy. According to the nature of Arab social and educational institutions already discussed in this chapter, they can be expected to reduce the choice of certain routes to employment, such as non-public sector or manual or low-skilled jobs. The concept of habitus is used to explore and understand how the behaviour of young people is maintained during their transition to the labour market or entry into the workplace; and how the nature of institutions, particularly home and school, in one non-Western society, can facilitate or restrict their pathways or their ability to do what they want. In a sense, the use of Bourdieu's habitus allows the exploration of routine practices, the role of institutions in the Kuwaiti context and the degree of young people's struggle, and explains the continuity of tradition as it is passed across generations through cultural reproduction.

One of the contradictions between Beck and Bourdieu is that the latter originally developed his theory within the frame of the nation-state, particularly within the limits of France and Algeria (Woodman & Threadgold, 2014). In contrast, Beck sees the nation-state as a zombie state that is increasingly affected by factors that cannot be controlled and as a rapidly eroding entity under the growing risks faced in the modern world (Beck, 2000). According to Beck's ideas, the nation-state became an obstacle when faced with global issues. He argued that Bourdieu's concept of different forms of capital requires rethinking in the trans-national context. He asserts that Bourdieu's attempt to broaden the idea of class is restricted by the concept of the nation-state, explaining how the possibility of transferring capital for immigrants collides with national barriers and racism in their new country (Beck, 2002; Beck & Willms, 2004). The most critical tension between the work of Bourdieu and Beck is that Beck is usually considered as a thinker who represents agency, freedom and individual biographies. In contrast, Bourdieu's theoretical repertoire has been subjected numerous times to criticism for being overly deterministic, representing reproduction and structure, and accordingly leaving no room for independent choice (Jenkins, 1992; Evans, 2002). They often appear as opponents on which some middle-ground theories like bounded agency are build (Evans, 2007), as this chapter earlier reviewed.

However, this study believes that, and as Woodman (2007) argued, the theory of Bourdieu is open to more than one interpretation. It can be read as deterministic in that Bourdieu empirically sought to explore social problems that often involved social reproduction within French society; alternatively, Bourdieu's concepts can be interpreted as not involving determinism (Woodman, 2007). The concept of habitus, which is central to Bourdieu's theoretical framework, as was reviewed above, refers to the set of individual dispositions that regularly operate at an unconscious level, and which arise during on-going life experiences in a particular social and institutional arena (Bourdieu, 1990). In the words of Fraser and Hagedorn, "daily interactions are structured by our habitual range of responses within a specific 'field' of action ... whose logic, rules and forms of 'capital' are deeply embedded in our daily routines" (2018: 48). Thus, the concept of habitus draws attention to the way that regularities and enduring patterns of behaviour are linked with social structures, such as class, gender and ethnicity, without seeing social structures as deterministic behaviour and without losing recognition of the role of individual decision making and the individual's own agency. Despite the fact that individuals' history and the social structures embodied in habitus do not determine behaviour, individuals are predisposed to act according to the social structures that have shaped them, because they carry these social structures with them. As Wacquant (2008: 267) outlines:

These unconscious schemata are acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, via the internalization of external constraints and possibilities. This means that they are shared by people subjected to similar experiences even as each person has a unique individual variant of the common matrix (this is why individuals of like nationality, class, gender, etc., spontaneously feel 'at home' with one another).

It has been said that criticisms regarding determinism are derived from 'lazy' readings of Bourdieu's works (Atkinson, 2010: 47), and "fail to recognize fully the force of Bourdieu's insistence that habitus is not to be conceived of as a principle of determination but as a generative structure" (McNay, 2000: 38). In effect, habitus was conceptualised by Bourdieu primarily for overcoming the dichotomies between objectivity/subjectivity and

structure/agency (Bourdieu, 1990). Looking at Bourdieu's concepts in this light, avoiding considering him as simply representing structure or overemphasising objectivity, allows us to see the positions of the two thinkers, Beck and Bourdieu, as not completely opposed. Thus, this opens a possibility to bring together their insights, to benefit from the strengths of both theories. This study in particular benefits from Beck's framework to explore the impact of rapid change on contemporary Kuwaiti society and young people's lives, while drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus as an analytical tool helping to understand the continuity of tradition as it is transmitted to young people through the process of cultural reproduction, especially via family and school socialisation.

Within youth sociology, drawing on Beck's work has been the common strategy used in understanding social change, while critiques of Beck, and the attempts to understand social continuity, have been usually based on Bourdieu's model of practice. Although Bourdieu's theory can be criticised for dwelling on reproduction and not enough on change, he did consider change as possible and embedded in the world (Woodman, 2007). Both theorists pointed to social change as well as uncertainty and tensions arising from it, opening up a new way to understand the nature of change and ways to respond to it (Woodman, 2007). In his early work on Algeria (1979), Bourdieu showed how local people react to the rapid change in their social environment; he called the situation where the experience of habitus and the social worlds it inhabits are out of step the 'hysteresis effect'. He traced the transition from a rural peasant society to one forced by French colonialism into capitalism. He focused on the question of what uncertainties and sufferings people feel when their habitus is overwhelmed by rapid change in objective structures. His sociological purpose was to provide examples showing that economic structures and habitus do not change in harmony, and that behavioural disposition does not automatically adjust to a new economy, because of the mismatch between economic and social change (Bourdieu, 1979). In this regard, Woodman and Threadgold (2014) argued that Bourdieu's concept of hysteresis and how the temporal gap resulting from rapid change can result in suffering can provide a useful concept for the sort of conditions Beck highlighted, particularly in the context of globalisation. They asserted that youth studies can benefit from this concept of Bourdieu's in understanding what living in a changing world might mean for the sort of habitus that is formed (Woodman & Threadgold, 2014). These

ideas about the tensions and suffering resulting from rapid change can be of more benefit to this study, which focuses on the lives of young people who are growing up in a society undergoing a profound transformation.

Studies within youth sociology that seek to bring together the works of Bourdieu and Beck, especially the concepts of habitus and individualisation, are growing. Woodman and Threadgold (2014) argued that this is a fruitful strategy to reduce the shortcomings, weaknesses and gaps in each of their theories. For example, although Beck pointed out several times that contemporary young people become actively in control of their own biographies in new ways, he did not provide enough explanation on how they actually respond to the large-scale processes he examines. In his more recent writing he recognised this, considering his work as a framework to explore how these processes work in particular empirical examples, but admitting that this work is only a starting point (Beck, 2009, cited in Woodman, 2010). What is interesting is that Beck referred in the same work to the theory of ‘practical experience’, claiming that it is based on the logic of habitus explicated by Bourdieu as a model of human action that underpins his sociological thinking (Woodman, 2010). Although Beck does seem critical of some of Bourdieu’s points, this claim is important as it indicates that Beck does not completely reject Bourdieu’s idea of habitus. These thinkers do not have to take extreme opposing positions on how people engage with the world. This claim makes it reasonable to draw on the concept of habitus as a useful tool to integrate with Beck’s theory in this study, to support the understanding of young people’s transitions in contemporary Kuwaiti society.

The current study therefore seeks to contribute to recent debates in the field of youth studies suggesting the need for a theoretical dialogue between Beck and Bourdieu (Threadgold, 2011; Woodman, 2009, 2010; Roberts, 2010)¹⁸ as a way of conceptualising the continuity and

¹⁸ In recent years, a fascinating conversation has taken place in the *Journal of Youth Studies* on the work of Beck and Bourdieu, most notably between Woodman (2009, 2010), Roberts (2010) and Threadgold (2011). This debate began with Woodman (2009), who defended Beck’s work, while also criticising the middle-ground approach of youth studies. He stressed that the youth researchers who criticised Beck for overemphasising agency, tend to selectively and incorrectly read Beck. In response to this, Roberts (2010) argued that Woodman was too generous in his reading of Beck and offered several quotations from Beck’s works to show that he overemphasises agency. More recently, intervention by Threadgold (2011) provided a more balanced perspective between those of Woodman and Roberts, bringing Beck’s work into dialogue with Bourdieu’s. He provided an accurate critique of Beck’s contribution to

change in youth transitions in late modernity. Through developing a theoretical framework based on a combination of Beck's work and Bourdieu's habitus, this study seeks to gain a more complete understanding of how Kuwaiti young people respond to and engage with the world and social change, taking into account their history, experiences and the setting in which they take place. Consideration of the role of institutions in affecting youth transition is particularly important here, since the power of tradition is more likely to continue in a rapidly changing society, and given a culture and pathways to modernity that differ from those in the West. The lack of a theory in sociology that can be applied directly to account for the Kuwaiti context and its changes fosters the need to bring together different theories to develop a more balanced and appropriate theoretical framework to understand the transformations in this society. This demonstrates the demand for an improved global sociology and the urgent need to rectify the Northern bias in this field (Connell, 2007).

To sum up, the above review shows that despite the contradictions that appear at first glance between the works of Beck and Bourdieu, there are still common and compatible points in their ideas. Although Bourdieu's framework has often been criticised for being too structuralist, the concept of habitus, which can be flexibly removed from his wider framework, clearly shows that Bourdieu leaves room for agency, freedom and change (1977b, 1990). It is necessary to clarify that this study believes in the possibility of the continuation of structures in shaping the life experience of young people, especially in Kuwaiti society, which was subjected to a rapid transformation. However, it does not support the concept of habitus as a "principle of determination" but instead as a "generative structure" (McNay, 2000: 38). The combining in this study of Beck and Bourdieu's work provides a more appropriate framework for the Kuwaiti context and reduces the ambiguity and gaps in Beck's theory by taking advantage of the strengths of the two theorists' work. On one side, Beck is considered one of the most important contemporary thinkers especially in social change, offering important conceptual contributions to exploring the impact of rapid changes on institutions and individuals and contemporary youth transitions to work in Kuwait. On the other side,

understanding contemporary inequality and introduced a Bourdieu-inspired approach as an alternative framework for youth studies to benefit from it. He argued that the toolbox of Bourdieu still offers the best way for understanding contemporary inequality and its reproduction and experience, calling for further attention to Bourdieu's work in youth studies in order to properly understand the contemporary lives of young people.

Bourdieu still provides a good approach to understand the routine practices and how human actions are predisposed to be in harmony with social space and the conditions that shaped their behavioural disposition, which supports the exploration of how young people can respond to social change.

Conclusion

The chapter began by reviewing the literature on youth transition in the northern context, and traced how new factors, such as unemployment, the collapse of the youth labour market, and the expansion of training have led to a boom in research on the topic. From the 1980s, youth transition studies, especially those examining the steps that young people take from school to work, have moved away from cultural studies and became a major preoccupation of social studies (MacDonald & Marsh, 2001).

The global progression has caused significant changes to occur in transition patterns. The traditional transition to adulthood, which was linear, sequential and limited in choice, no longer holds. Young people's transition to adulthood in general, and the route they follow between school and work in particular, has become more complex and difficult to achieve (Furlong et al., 2003; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). The new patterns of transition have contributed to the emergence of a theoretical theme in the youth transition literature, stressing the individual level. Due to the fundamental structural changes in western societies, it has been argued that there is much diversity, especially in the early stages, in the life course (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). This has increased the available choices for young people and the ability to shape their own pathways through life (Beck, 1992; du Bois-Reymond, 1998; Giddens, 1991). Researchers have recently tended to emphasise the importance of individual agency in creating and negotiating their biographies within risk societies, simultaneously taking into account structural factors (e.g Furlong & Cartmel; 1997; Evans, 2007, and others).

The literature has emphasised that the three classic phases of the life course, in other words the steady movement from education or employment preparation to work and then to retirement,

no longer hold (Heinz, 2003). Current cohorts of young people are likely to navigate multiple transitions and work in various jobs rather than acquiring a job for life. The highly competitive and volatile nature of the labour market requires young people to be more adaptable and flexible, with a need for continuing education, or additional certificates. Changes in occupational structures, and the dominance of the service sector and knowledge industries, all play a role in restricting job opportunities and replacing many previously full-time positions with temporary and part-time jobs (Furlong, 2009; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007).

Despite a broad body of literature in the northern context, it is difficult for analytical purposes to apply the findings in the same way to other contexts, such as Kuwait, largely because of the different cultural perspective and social restrictions on individual actions in that society. Even with a growing number of studies in southern contexts, Kuwait and the GCC have distinct economic features that set them apart from other societies. Indeed, the Kuwaiti context seems to be located somewhere between northern and southern norms. In other words, it is likely to represent a new synthesis, with some aspects similar in both contexts, and others which are totally different.

With a lack of prior studies on youth transition in Kuwait, the chapter has reviewed the literature in the context of the Arab world that can be applied to understanding the case in Kuwait. Differences in the patterns of young people's transition between traditional and modern Arab societies have been highlighted. A prevalent path in traditional Arab societies featured a short period of education followed by early transition to work (usually within a family enterprise) as a casual or irregular wage labourer, engaging in economic activities passed down through the generations. In many modern Arab societies, and in the light of educational expansion, economic development, and the provision of social benefits resulting from the oil boom, completing secondary and higher education has become increasingly common for young people of both genders. Working in a formal and full-time job, often in the public sector, after an extended period of unemployment while seeking that work, seems to play a key role in the modern work transition. In addition, the participation of women in education and the labour market, whose role was traditionally limited to domestic space, has

increased. However, the shift from traditional to modern transitions, accompanied by the emergence of modern risks, presents new challenges for today's youth in the Arab world.

Although this indicates that the transitions of young people today have changed from previous generations and became more extended and associated with risks, similar to what has been argued in the northern context (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007), there are still different conditions which young people in the Arab Middle East context must face. Researchers (e.g. Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008) have discussed some of the factors that contribute to the uncertain and increasingly prolonged nature of youth transition to work in the region, such as the youth bulge, oil rents effects in strengthening social norms, and the rigidity of state institutions.

The fourth section of this chapter showed further differences between the GCC and global northern countries which make it difficult to apply and generalise the dominant studies and theories within youth literature. This was followed by the last section, which highlights the theoretical perspectives that the study draws on: how and why the study combines Beck's work with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, and what predictions can be made regarding young people's transitions from school to work in Kuwait on the basis of this theoretical framework. Further insights into specific aspects of Kuwaiti society are set out in the following chapter, which discusses the historical development and the progress of modernity that Kuwait is undergoing. The chapter draws on Beck's ideas of second modernity and individualisation.

Chapter 3 – The impact of compressed modernity on contemporary Kuwaiti life: historical context

Introduction

As explained in the previous chapters, the dominant studies on youth have largely argue that young people's lives and their transitions have been influenced and restructured by the changes that have taken place over recent decades (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Changes in economic structures, the characteristics of democratisation, and the emergence of modernisation strategies such as information technology have brought with them new social risks which have simultaneously unleashed the emergence of individualised forms, which can be best understood by Beck's work on individualisation and reflexive modernisation (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994) and the risk society (Beck, 1992). In this sense, outlining the changes that have taken place in Kuwait becomes important in order to provide a better understanding of the reality of young people's today lives. This chapter therefore highlights the process of modernisation in Kuwait and its social consequences for the labour market, migration, employment, social division, youth unemployment, and the family. It sets the historical changes in a Kuwaiti context, drawing on Beck's ideas, in order to build understanding of the subsequent empirical chapters on the experience of youth transition from education to work in contemporary Kuwaiti society. The present chapter shows how some of the ideas suggested by Beck may be useful in explaining the changes in the Kuwaiti context, especially in understanding unemployment as a product of the reflexive stage of modernity. At the same time, other ideas, such as individualisation, Brazilianization (Beck, 2000), and the negotiated provisional family (Beck, 2001: 203, 1992: 129), are also considered.

The first section of this chapter reviews the concept of multiple modernisations theory, and the new perspectives on modernity as approached by Beck, following clarification of the traditional models of modernisation. This outlines how scholars' modern perspectives

emerged in reaction to classical theories. The second section of the chapter deals with the modernisation process in Kuwait in particular. It is initially descriptive, but is followed by a conclusion which links, in a critical way, the ideas of Beck and a number of significant points built on the understanding of the dynamics and nature of Kuwaiti society.

Classical theories of modernisation

Modernisation theory was one of the most widespread perspectives in sociology in the 1950s. An initial understanding of the process of modernisation primarily came from the works and contributions of classical sociological theorists such as Marx's theory of capitalism, Max Weber's work on rationalisation, and differentiation and new arrangements of solidarity in Durkheim (Zapf, 2004).

Sociology's interpretation of the processes of modernisation was located in a historical context in order to better understand the society under consideration, in the sense that society and its organisation progresses through a series of gradual evolutionary stages, from lower to higher status (Bhambra, 2007). Modernisation theorists differentiated between traditional and modern societies by characterising the latter with a greater ability to exert rational control and influence over the social and physical environment. This influence is based upon the idea of increased "control over nature through closer cooperation among men" (Rustow, 1967: 69). Unlike pre-modern society, modern society is characterised by a massive expansion of knowledge which is a consequence of education, increased communication, mass media and literacy, in addition to better levels of healthcare and life expectancy, and high levels of social, geographical and occupational mobility (Huntington, 1971). Huntington (1968) also stated that modern society involves the replacement of traditional political authority by a national one, the rationalisation of authority, differentiation in political structures, and increased public participation.

Generally, enlightenment thinkers and classical scholars tended to understand modernisation by defining the stage of development that all societies must follow. Rostow (1960) suggested that five stages of economic growth were required to reach modernisation, based on the past experience of western economic development: traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity, and age of high mass-consumption. Similarly, Lerner (1958), in his famous book *The passing of traditional society* based on several empirical studies in six Middle Eastern countries, saw the western model of modernisation as the ideal that other countries might follow, stressing the importance of urbanisation, industrialisation, mass media and literacy in developing a society.

As Bendix (1967) helpfully summarised, there are three linked assumptions on which modernisation theory rests. The first is understanding modernity against tradition, in the sense that as modernisation takes control, traditional characteristics, cultures and religious beliefs usually become less important and fade. Second, social change happens as a result of “phenomena internal to the society changing” (Bhambra, 2007: 62). Third, as modernity will eventually exclude all tradition, the same effects will occur everywhere in the world and the differences between societies will be erased as a result of “a process of the global diffusion of western civilisation and its key institutions” (Wittrock, 1998: 19). Thus, modernisation was considered as involving global homogenisation and convergence, with all societies heading in the same direction towards a single type of modernity: westernisation (Bhambra, 2007). However, this theory has received strong criticism since the end of the 1960s, and was replaced by an alternative approach, the multiple modernities paradigm, in an attempt to redress the erroneous assumptions of the old versions of modernisation theory.

Multiple modernisations

The work of Eisenstadt (2000) and other European historical sociologists such as Wittrock (1998) was the foundation of the multiple modernities paradigm, arguing that the problem with the classical sociological approach was its understanding of modernisation as a singular and uniform process that began in the west; through global diffusion, different cultures would move in the same direction as the west (Eisenstadt & Schluchter, 1998). The new approach,

which contradicted the convergence of industrial societies and the dominance of western methods of sociological analysis, is regarded as a reference point away from historical precedence (Eisenstadt, 2000).

Essentially, as Eisenstadt pointed out, the multiple modernities approach emphasises the importance of “specific cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences” (2000: 2). Rather than arguing that differences between countries will simply disappear through a gradual process of modernisation, there is an appreciation of cultural differences and the diversity of local traditions. Thus, how countries adapt to the process of modernisation may differ, leading to multiple modernisations. Modernity is still seen as European in origin, but the possibility of multiple paths is recognised. As Eisenstadt and Schluchter (1998) indicated, in reality, the homogeneity that classical modernisation theorists presumed has not led to convergence even within the western world. Instead of a linear progress, multiple modernities call for “pluralized understandings of multiple modernities” (Bhambra, 2007: 65). Beck (2000, 2006) agreed with the multiple modernities approach in its general analysis, arguing that:

The western claim to a monopoly on modernity is broken and the history and situation of diverging modernities in all parts of the world come into view (2000: 87).

Through his version of cosmopolitanism, Beck has argued that it is necessary to consider the era of globalisation as a multicultural period, with multiple modernities appearing as an expression of cultural differences between countries. Beck (2006) even went beyond this by classifying modernity into stages, first modernity and second modernity (which is also called reflexive modernity). He proposed (2000, 2006) that the previous social concepts found in the literature became a part of the past as they struggled to understand the world of the first stage of modernity and the nation state. Further, Beck (2011: 1349) expressed the belief that the past methodological nationalism was no longer sufficient to understand and deal with the new processes appearing in the contemporary world, which is no longer contained within national borders but is instead subject to a common global fate. In a globalising world, not only the cosmopolitan paradigm but also new social concepts such as second and reflexive modernity are needed. A new understanding of modernity means the end of the ideas of classical theorists

such as Max Weber, who did not witness the globalisation which Beck lived through (Katouraa, 2015). Beck perceived the shift from a process of singular modernisation to one bringing about multiple modernities as a shift from the first age of modernity as a national state project, to a second modernity as a global cosmopolitan age. From here, he suggested that the multiple modernities approach and engaging with divergent modernities is the most appropriate frame for understanding a new world society and global processes (Bhambra, 2011).

The current study argues that Beck's thoughts on multiple modernities are still considered problematic, and that his model of cosmopolitanism is insufficient. His theory of reflexive modernity is not very different from classical modernisation theory, and it still presents the path of western modernisation and its historical stages as a reference point for other societies. This makes many of his ideas, which were derived from western modernity, difficult (or inappropriate) to apply in other global contexts. According to Dawson (2010), Beck's only serious addition to cosmopolitanism was recognising cultural differences. He perceived the need to bring forward different experiences and historical ideas; however, a better understanding is needed of the different cultures and specific historical circumstances faced by different societies. In this context, Bhambra (2009) expressed the view that instead of arguing that modernity emerged in Europe and spread to other parts of the world, it was produced through prior overlapping global processes between north and south. Therefore, modernity in global southern countries must be understood according to their own conditions and terms, and the discourses of multiple or alternative modernities, which still consider modernity as a product exported from Europe, must be overcome.

The discussion in the following sections moves on to show how Kuwaiti society has undergone various changes, for example in the labour market, family, education and gender roles. Specific historical circumstances and cultures within this society, and differences in the speed of change, modernisation, and its consequences on an individual's life, result in a different picture from that portrayed by Beck in the western context. Consequently, some of his ideas associated with second modernity are challenged in the context of contemporary Kuwait. One of the most prominent characteristics of the modernisation process in this

society, making Kuwait a distinct case, is its rapidity. As has already been explained, Beck (1992) described the stages through which western societies have passed to reach second modernity, shifting first from a pre-modernity society (the traditional stage) into the first stage of modernity (industrial society). In this new stage, risks were related to industry, and the process of individualisation to some degree became present. Western societies then moved to the second modernity stage in which the political, cultural and social forms of the first modernity had disintegrated, and global risks and new demands and incentives appeared, leading to implicit individualisation becoming clearer and more explicit (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001).

In contrast, Kuwaiti society, in a brief period of 35 years and mainly as a result of the discovery of oil in 1946, shifted from a traditional society into a rich modern city state, almost completely skipping the industrial stage that paved the way for the emergence of second modernity in developed western industrialised societies. Kuwaiti society has undergone rapid changes and incoming waves of modernity, with extensive economic growth, urbanisation, consumerism and increasing democracy, all within an extremely short period of time; a useful analytical term to describe this condition would be compressed modernity. Rapid modernisation in Kuwaiti society has resulted in massive social changes that have impacted upon a wide range of layers of society, such as the family, employment, education, and social roles. Shifts in the types of risk and employment patterns present in the country, and a change, to some degree, in the forms of living and gender roles have occurred. Contemporary modern Kuwaiti society is affected by the global risks that Beck associated with the second modernity stage, and unemployment has emerged as a modern, widespread risk. However, simultaneously, the compressed modernity which the country has experienced has resulted in the persistence of some of the old features in contemporary life, such as tribal ties and the roles of religion and the extended family. This makes Beck's assumption about the end of the dominance of old forms of life over individuals' lives an ongoing challenge in Kuwaiti society. His idea about Brazilianization (Beck, 2000) is also difficult to apply given the nature of economic change, culture and the social division that feature in Kuwaiti society. Beck (2000) discussed how contemporary labour markets in the developed world are absorbing features usually linked to the less developed world, such as the spread of insecure, informal

and precarious work; and how more and more individuals in western economies (or the global north) are entering the world of semi-employment, moving back and forth between regular and non-regular or insecure employment. He calls this process ‘Brazilianization’, as in the case of Brazil only a minority of the economically active population earns their living from full-time employment; the vast majority of workers occupy an uncertain grey area between employment and unemployment.

In order to clearly understand the modernisation process in Kuwaiti society, this chapter divides the development history of Kuwaiti society into two phases: the pre-oil phase, and the post-oil era transitional stage as the country moves towards modernity. The latter clearly shows that oil is, in itself, a major explanation for the modernisation of society, and the main key in forming the pathways of change and introducing new forms of globalisation.

The Modernisation process in Kuwait

Pre-oil

The creation of Kuwait

Since Kuwait was established as a state in the eighteenth century, it has been a politically independent entity ruled by individuals from the Al-Sabah family (Crystal, 1992). This family, along with other tribal groups (Badu) mainly from the Utub tribe, migrated at the beginning of the eighteenth century from the Arabian Peninsula (Najd) as a result of drought and famine, and settled on the small piece of land later known as Kuwait. Other non-tribal groups came from Iraq, Bahrain, the Emirates and Iran (Alenizi et al., 2008), joining with the tribal majority to form Kuwaiti society. Even though the members of the tribes now live in the city, their origins go back to the desert and a nomadic way of life (Bruce, 1986). Having some knowledge of tribal attributes, as the foundation of the society’s cultural values, is important in understanding the reality of young Kuwaiti’s lives today. Generally, the Bedouin Arabian tribes are Muslims, and they share main cultural characteristics. They are known for their

cohesion, homogeneity, strong respect, and loyalty to the tribe. *Asabiyyah* was the term used by Ibn Khaldun (1967), a leading Arab sociologist, to describe the social cohesion, solidarity and group feeling within Arab tribes and clans. The loyalty of a tribe's members starts with the family as a foundation, broadening through sub-groups to the tribe. Tribe members tend to be very conservative, clinging to customs, tradition, language and religion (Elbedour & Bouchard, 1997). Paternal authority and the support of endogamy and polygamy are other phenomena in most nomadic Arab tribes. This stage therefore, reflects that of the traditional society of Beck's model (1992). It has been argued that the relationships and contact between individuals at the traditional stage of society were formed in the first place by defining themselves as a part of 'we' rather than 'I'. Individuals' lives were shaped and embedded in an extended network of relationships and a village community that provided a specific role and identity for each subject, giving individuals a sense of belonging (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994).

Although the settlers who came to Kuwait were nomadic Bedouins used to travelling and grazing, they saw that these traditional practices were no longer workable with the presence of the sea on shores of Kuwait (Al-Sabah, 2013). As Ibn Khaldun (1967) pointed out, nomadic civilisation, or *umran Badawi*, is a primitive form of civilisation which was not designed to acquire many of life's necessities. He stressed the influence of nature and the geographical environment on human beings, their ways of life, productivity, and type of crafts. Thus, the new settlers who came to Kuwait adapted to their new environment by seeing the sea as a sanctuary and a primary source of income (Al-Sabah, 2013). They started to fish, pearl dive and build boats, partly because of the virtual absence of agriculture in the rough desert environment. Nonetheless, a minority of settlers kept to the Bedouin way of life and continued practicing grazing and overland trade. The practice of these activities, both those related to the sea and to traditional grazing, meant that life was controlled by the occurrence of natural risks or disasters such as storms and drought. According to Beck (1992), what distinguished the stage of traditional society from the later stages is that it was shaped by natural hazards.

In 1756, Kuwait townspeople elected one of the Al-Sabah family, Sabah Ibin Jaber (1756-1762) as their leader, after agreeing on his wisdom, and give him unlimited authority. Since

then, Kuwait has been a hereditary emirate of the Al-Sabah dynasty. Since the creation of Kuwait, its political situation has been unstable, and conflicts with neighbouring countries have occurred. In 1899 the seventh ruler, Sheikh Mubarak (1896-1915), chose an alliance with Britain to protect the security of Kuwait, mainly to remove the constant threat from the Ottoman Empire and to deter its attempts to intervene in his country's internal affairs. This gave Britain control over Kuwait's external policy over a long period of time (1899-1961), although with lesser control over its internal affairs (Crystal, 1992).

Social and economic life

Prior to the oil era, Kuwait was a society with a strong collective consciousness and social norms, well-regulated social behaviour, a limited division of labour, similarity of occupations, and close-knit traditional ties. Kuwaitis lived in extended families in houses made of mud which were close to each other on narrow streets inside an old walled city¹⁹. Relationships and ties between its society's members were strong and cohesive, and these social networks furthered their common interests and improved working conditions. Neighbours and families shared their everyday lives and celebrated special occasions with each other (Al-Rashid, 1971; Al-Nakib, 2016).

Since the majority of the population were from Bedouin backgrounds and showed a strong respect for fatherhood (Gebrael, 1988), the lives of young people and other family members were managed by absolute parental authority. Their lives were also defined and formed according to the logic of the extended family, which Beck (1992) considered to be among the most important institutions responsible for situating and shaping the life of each individual in traditional societies. Young married men (with their wives and children) lived in their parents' houses and shared their livelihoods. Hence, it was difficult for them to feel that they were free from their father's control and domination, even after marriage. Before marriage, which traditionally happened at an early age, young women spent their time at home helping their mothers with household chores. They continued with the same tasks after they moved to their husband's house. Across the Arab Gulf, including Kuwait, women's traditional role was

¹⁹ In 1760, Sabah Ibin Jaber, the first ruler of Kuwait, "built a wall around his small settlement, signaling the moment when Kuwait become an independent, viable, and self-sufficient town" (Al-Nakib, 2016: 22).

limited to the domestic sphere: cooking, looking after children, and sometimes some simple work to make enough money in the absence of men (if they were away for several months to earn a living), such as sewing and trading simple goods among the women of the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, the young men spent their time working with their fathers in jobs typically related to the sea (Al-Sabah, 2001; Al-Nakib, 2016: 62).

Work in the pre-oil period meant hardship and endurance. Old Kuwaitis dived for pearls and roamed the seas in ships they had made themselves, transporting goods and trading between the ports of the Arabian Gulf, Africa and the coast of India. The writings of various historians and foreign shipmasters show their admiration for this maritime activity, which was carried out despite the risk and roughness of the work. For example, Villiers, an Australian writer who sailed for several months in early 1939 with a Kuwaiti sailing ship to observe life on board, wrote in his book *Sons of Sindbad* that Kuwaitis raced to accomplish the harshest work and crossed ten thousand miles amid many dangers without grumbling (Villiers, 2006).

Kuwait society was poor in basic services such as education, health, and a transport infrastructure at the start of the twentieth century. During the reign of Sheikh Mubarak (1896-1916) some features of state building appeared, such as the first regular school (1911), the first clinic (1913) and the first hospital (American Hospital) (Al-Tuwaijri, 1996). It must be noted here that unlike the situation in neighbouring areas, no religious influence was exercised nor were Kuwait's leader allied with any religious movement. In Saudi Arabia, by contrast, the ruling family of Ibn Saud allied with strict reformist religious movement, *Wahhabism*, in 1902. This movement aims to purify Islam of fads and sins and to inform people about God's laws and Islamic practices. The religious influence became more extensive in Saudi Arabian communities after recruiting the *mutawwa*, Islamic experts who impose punishment and discipline in the name of Islamic rituals (Fakeeh, 2009).

Nevertheless, Islam was taught in Kuwait in Koranic schools. Indeed, education prior to the introduction of modern teaching was through *AlKattatib* (primitive or Koranic schools), where boys gathered in a house to be taught the Holy Quran and the principles of reading, writing and mathematics by the *Almutwaa* (the teacher) for a small sum of money. Modern sciences

were not taught, and craft skills were learned through practice with no school specifically operating for that purpose. Although most of population was illiterate, men were in a better position than women due to their frequent travelling, contact with foreigners, and the presence of the *Alkatattib*. Al-Saleh (2002) mentioned that although boys had been educated in *Alkatattib* since 1887, Kuwaiti girls remained illiterate until the establishment of the first *ketab* for girls in 1926. This shows the historical sexual bias in the country, which ensured male supremacy and enjoyment of social and educational privileges.

In 1911, a well-organised school for boys, Al-Mubarikiya School (Al-Tuwaijri, 1996) was launched, followed by another boys' school ten years later (Al-Jasem, 1992), supported by donations from merchants. These schools remained the only two in Kuwait until 1936, and the educational process was not based on a clearly developed strategy. Education was divided into five levels, with boys moving to the next, higher level when they had completed a set of lessons, without a specified time period. Few reached the fifth level, as they interrupted their study in order to help their fathers in diving, travel for trading, or in other jobs (Shehab, 1988). Al-Nouri (1962), a school teacher, found no more than seven pupils in the fifth level during his five years of teaching. At the time when Kuwait's international trade was expanding, as the news about oil extraction agreements became known, it became necessary to prepare for the era of oil. Therefore, in 1936 education in Kuwait came under government financial supervision, but only for primary education (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2002). This explains the rapid transition of young people to work at that time.

The establishment of elementary schools for girls was intended to give equal educational rights to both genders, owing to the changing social infrastructure and the need to prepare females to take on new responsibilities in society as a labour force. However, this change met strong resistance from Kuwaiti society. According to Al-Saleh (2002) this was expected, given the strict control wielded by representatives of the old social values that distinguish between gender roles. The main concern was that sending girls to these schools might expose them to new social values and unwelcome ideas and influences. Nevertheless, the first girls' school was established in 1938, and because of difficulties in finding well-educated women in Kuwait at that time, two female teachers were hired from Palestine. However, the *AlKattatib* system

continued teaching girls until 1950, reflecting the reluctance of some Kuwaiti families to send their daughters to these new formal schools (Al-Saleh, 2002). The ideas of Beck concerning the control of institutions and structures over agency in the pre-modernity stage are manifested here. Beck (1992) argued that in the traditional society stage, institutions provided individuals with the symbols that gave them their meaning and purpose in society. The reality experienced by Kuwaitis indicates how their society worked according to the norms and principles of religion and family: individual's opportunities had been largely controlled according to their gender, as a social category that constrained agency.

As fishing and the pearl trade were the essential activities in Kuwait in the pre-oil phase, a segment of the old society were merchants, along with other groups of labourers, divers and shipbuilders who made the vessels required by the traders (Al-Naqib, 1981). Al-Rashid (1971), a Kuwaiti historian, indicated in his remarkable book *The History of Kuwait* that merchant families had a central role in the expansion of economic activity and in making Kuwait an important commercial centre in the region. They also had a political influence, manifested through the consultation of governors with them in many matters. The strongest evidence for merchants' political influence is their rejection of the idea of the fourth ruler of Kuwait, Shaykh Sabah II (1859-1866) to take advantage of Kuwait's geographical location by imposing taxes on imports. Thus, the structure of society, rather than the obvious classes, was formed by a social division between workers and merchants, as well as the ruling family who enjoyed continuous economic and political dominance.

It should be remembered that all important political issues in Kuwait until 1921 were determined by decisions enacted by the ruler himself without the presence of government or judicial authorities and ministries. The first organised political event was established through the creation of the Shura Council in 1920 (Al-Hajri & Al-Anzi, 2011), based on an exchange of views between the ruler and the ruled, especially in trade affairs with the consultation of leading merchants. However, this lasted for only a few months before it was dissolved (Khazal, 1962; Al-Rashid, 1971), leading merchants to form the first political group, the National Group, to demand the restoration of their political participation. This resulted in the establishment of the first elected legislative council in 1938, which had a monopoly of

National Group members. However, like the previous council, this one ceased shortly afterwards, leading to public complaints, especially among the merchant group. A political recession prevailed in the 1940s due to World War II (Al-Hajri & Al-Anzi, 2011).

To sum up, until the twentieth century, everyday life in Kuwaiti society was relatively rural, traditional, and communal, with strong family ties, rigid social norms and tight-knit traditional bonds. This phase of Kuwaiti society reflects the pre- modernity stage identified by Beck in which traditional structures such as the village, extended family, and church shaped individuals' lives and formed social communities (Beck, 1992). It is apparent that the main risks and conflicts in old Kuwait related to the people's ability to cope with the tough environment. The harsh climatic conditions forced people to accept the rough marine environment and face significant challenges in order to make a living. This type of risk is similar to what Beck portrays in traditional agricultural societies in the pre-modern stage, but with the main lines of work in Kuwait being fishing and pearl diving rather than farming. Beck (1992) argued that the traditional hazards in earlier times originated from the forces of nature, so rather than being linked to man-made or individuals' actions, life was perceived as determined by nature and fate (1992 [1986]: 19–20).

Post-oil era

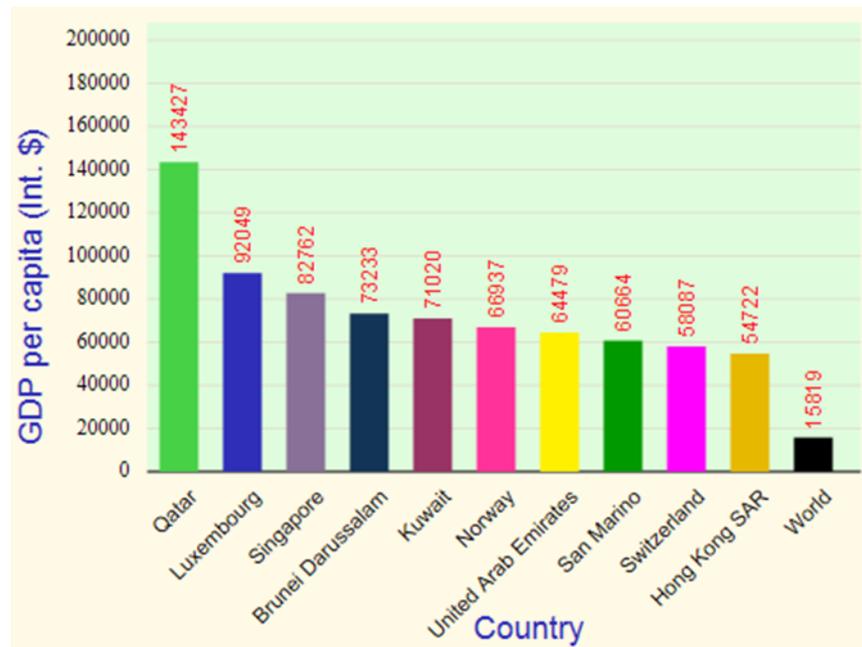
With the discovery of oil in Kuwait, a sudden and sharp shift took place from a poor traditional society to one of affluence, westernisation, and consumerism. Improvements in living conditions were clear in numerous areas including housing, cars, dress, schooling and jobs. Nevertheless, the economic change, which went against tradition and the older communal form of living, resulted in a range of new risks and tensions. New collective problems and complications arose in individuals' lives, with youth unemployment among them.

Economic transformation

Although oil was discovered in 1937, the first commercial shipment was only made in 1946, following World War II (Kuwait Ministry of Oil, 2016). With the flow of oil, the pattern of

economic activity changed fundamentally. The traditional, relatively similar, occupations were replaced by new and different categories of occupation. The seafaring industries receded and the traditional relationship between human and economic resources changed. For example, the number of ships that went pearling decreased from 82 in 1948 to only 11 in 1955 (Ismael, 1982). The features of a modern economy appeared, characterised by the separation of economic activities from the traditional environment, increased complexity in the major markets which require differentiation and specialisation in economic roles, and based on the high level of technology and knowledge essential for serving the new sectors, such as the service sector and the commercial and industrial sectors, as Eisenstadt (1966) and other modernisation theorists have stressed. However, as the following discussion shows, the way in which the state responded to the economic shift to heavy dependence on the oil sector and migrant workers, alongside the small size of the national population and the enormous wealth from the oil, made the features of Kuwait's modern economy structure different from most other countries.

Kuwait's state oil production grew rapidly, especially with the Iranian oil crisis in the 1950s. It increased from approximately 16,000 barrels to 951,000 barrels per day between 1946 and 1954, reaching 1,823 million barrels per day by the beginning of the 1960s (Kuwait Ministry of Oil, 2016). This steady increase in national oil production paved the way for economic expansion. Despite the lack of reliable statistics on Kuwaiti GDP before 1961, the rapid expansion of oil exports is a clear indication of economic growth. Exports grew fast, and reached a per capita level of more than \$280 by the beginning of the 1950s, then increased fourfold with a per capita exceeding \$780 in the 1960s. The estimated GDP in 1961 was around \$1,708 billion, ranked as one of the highest in the world (Khouja & Sadler, 1979). Figure 3.1 shows that the average per capita income in Kuwait is still high, and is comparable to the highest performing countries in terms of GDP per capita.



Source: International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook (2015)

Figure 3.1: The ten highest countries by GDP (PPP) per capita in 2014

Within ten years of starting to export oil, Kuwait was able to achieve significant upgrading in terms of its economic infrastructure to move into a new stage of development (Khouja & Sadler, 1979). It became an important and influential regional and global economic centre, which was (and is) considered one of the largest economies in the GCC, as home to one of the world's largest oil reserves. Recent OPEC²⁰ statistics indicate that Kuwait has the fifth-largest oil reserves of all the member states of the organisation, with a reserve of 101,500 billion barrels at the end of 2013, making up 8.4% of global oil reserves (OPEC, 2014).

With increasing participation in the oil and capitalist global markets, Kuwait became more open to the world and enjoyed more mobility of goods and capital. Thus, its economy became significantly more vulnerable to global economic and financial crises, especially fluctuations in world prices of oil, the mainstay of the state. Beck (2006) observed that risk in the new stage of modern society is not restricted to one place or country, but affects all countries. He argued that because there is no global government, market risks cannot be reduced or controlled (Beck, 2006).

²⁰ Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

With oil as the main engine of economic activity from the late 1940s to the present day, economists sometimes refer to Kuwait as suffering from Dutch disease (Mohamed Nour, 2013). Oil production accounted for an estimated 56% of GDP in 1968, which had increased to 70% by 1975 (Kuwait Ministry of Planning, 1977). Recently, oil revenues have represented more than half of GDP and 94.5% of total public revenue. This is followed by revenue collected from services offered by the state, then taxes and fees on international trade and transactions (Kuwait Ministry of Finance, 2012). Importantly, rather than developing productive forces within the state itself, Kuwait has generated its wealth through renting and exporting its natural materials (crude oil) to external clients, which has required imported expertise and a handful of local forces, with a generous distribution of wealth owned and controlled by the state.

It is clear that the development of the economy in Kuwait is completely different from the model of modern capitalist economies seen in countries such as Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. While Kuwait has depended on the export of raw materials ever since their discovery, these other countries succeeded in developing their economies quickly through the adoption of a manufacturing strategy, and promoting exports of manufactured goods (Isbister, 2001). In the 1960s, attempts were made to diversify Kuwait's economy through the creation of industrial zones, mostly related to petrochemicals, then other industries such as construction, metals and food industries. Despite these efforts towards industrialisation, the pace was slow, and the sectors, still plays a limited role in the economy. The attempted economic diversification has also included the development of services in the last three decades such as trade, real estate, business services, banking, and shipping services (Khouja & Sadler, 1979). However, according to the 2013 Economic Report of the Central Bank, non-oil sectors still only constituted 39.4% of GDP. The leader of these sectors was community, social and personal services (including public administration, defence, education, and health), with a relative contribution of 31.6% to the non-oil GDP, followed by financial services and real estate, while manufacturing was only about 8.9%, and transport, storage and communications contributed 8.3%. Other sectors wholesale and retail trade with 7.2%, electricity, gas and water with 4.6%, construction with 2%, restaurants and hotels with 1.5%, agriculture, livestock, fishing and hunting with 0.8%, and other activities related to mines and quarries

(Central Bank of Kuwait, 2013). Since the government owns the petroleum industry, the main component of the national GDP, it dominates most economic activities, industrial and commercial companies, land property, and investment. This limits the chances of non-government investment projects and marginalises the role of the private sector. The private sector's contribution to GDP recently amounted to only 37% (GSSCPD, 2009).

One of the social changes associated with the emergence of a new economic structure is the rapid transformation of the population. From the 1950s onwards, Kuwait's population increased dramatically; in 1949 it was estimated at around 100,000, but "Between 1957 and 1975 the population increased 557%, an annual average increase of 24% over this period" (Ashkanani, 1988: 25). This increase was mainly a result of the state's policy of importing foreign workers. Since the Kuwaiti population was (and still is) limited in size and was previously lacking in expertise and modern skills, foreign workers came to cover the labour shortage in and around the industrial sector, especially with a growth in the need for building, maintaining and staffing new infrastructure projects and welfare institutions, as will be discussed later. The influx of migrant workers has included professionals (architects, engineers and teachers), as well as skilled and unskilled workers (Ashkanani, 1988). Cheap low-skilled labour still imported from less developed countries in the Arab world and from Asian countries (Gulseven, 2015).

Like the mobility of non-human capital across regional borders, the regional transition of human capital (migrants) is an example of the globalisation of labour. Over the last two decades, immigration studies have received much attention in the field of social sciences in the context of globalisation, cosmopolitanism, and the re-production of capital. In this context, Cohen (2006) and Cheah (2006) have argued that uneven development has played an important role in increasing immigration in Southern and East Asia. While the economies of the so-called 'Asian Tigers' such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia have developed enormously in recent decades, other countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia have failed to keep up with this development. Due to poor economic conditions and unemployment, and as a response to the increasing world demand for cheap labour, the Philippines has instead become a global source of labour. At the same time, with the rapid

expansion of the industrialised economies of the Asian Tigers, the need for low-skilled manual labour has emerged, to fill dirty, dangerous and demanding or '3D' jobs (Cheah, 2006: 186).

Therefore, workers from underdeveloped countries have been imported into Kuwait and the wider GCC region, and they are willing to accept lower wages than the local population which still gives them access to higher wages than those in their country of origin. Notable examples of migration include Indian and Pakistani workers to several Middle Eastern countries to work in the construction industry. According to recent data, the number of Indian migrants in the Arab Gulf region had increased over four decades from nearly 250,000 workers in 1975 to about 8 million in 2012 (Dahiya, 2014). The immigration of Filipinos into the Gulf states is also striking, as in 2014 Saudi Arabia and the UAE together attracted about 40% of total Filipino immigrant workers worldwide; Kuwait attracted some 5%, after Singapore with 6% (Hussain, 2015). As Sassen (1988) has observed, migrant labour has positively contributed to the global market and international developmental processes. On the one hand, labour importation helps the receiving countries to implement their development plans and to meet the needs of industrial economies by taking advantage of a docile, flexible and cheap workforce (Cohen, 2006). On the other hand, migrants serve their home countries' economies through sending home remittances. The estimated value of remittances from the Arab Gulf is nearly \$80 billion annually, a large number compared with global levels, as well as providing a decent livelihood for millions of individuals from different countries (Hussain, 2015). Ashkanani (1988) argued that workers migrated to Kuwait from various Middle East countries to send remittances to their families, take advantage of social services, and receive much higher wages for manual labour than they could in their home countries.

Despite the crucial role of labour migration in the economic and industrial development process in Kuwait, the phenomenon has affected many aspects of society, including the creation of a structural imbalance in the labour market and the population in general. Over three decades, Kuwaitis became a minority in their own country, down to 41% of the total population by 1980 (Ashkanani, 1988). In his study of social change in Kuwait, Ismael stated that:

What is significant about the demographic transformation of Kuwait... is the fact that the distinction between Kuwaiti nationals and non-Kuwaiti nationals is the fundamental classification of the population in every category of each of the censuses (1982: 118).

More recent data from 2013 showed that the expatriate labour force represented 82.6% of the total workforce in Kuwait; the number of Kuwaiti workers was 410,000 of the 2.33 million workers in the country collectively (national and expatriate) (Kuwait Public Authority for Civil Information, 2013). Thus, rather than only filling certain needs in the economy, migrant workers now form the vast majority of the workforce. The role of Kuwaiti workers has become limited to white collar careers employees in roles provided by the government, which has taken upon itself the responsibility for employing all citizens. With the upgrading of citizens who have become highly educated and the certainty of comfortable jobs in government ministries, menial work is shunned by nationals. It became unwanted, both in terms of social status and wage rates, and is mostly performed by cheap low-skilled and unskilled foreign workers (Al-Munajjed & Sabbagh, 2011). According to Shah (1986) only 23% of Kuwaitis in 1970 worked in production, and only 11% in sales. These percentages had declined to 10% and 3% respectively by 1993 (Shah, 1995), as national workers played a very limited direct role in economic production (Massey et al., 1998). Recent statistics indicate that, and as shown in Table 3.1, the Kuwaiti labour force is concentrated in the category of professionals, clerks, legislators, senior officials and managers, while a small group works in crafts, services and shops, and in technical occupations. Conversely, most foreign workers are employed in primary occupations, and some in crafts and service occupations (Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, 2014). It is clear that the occupational distribution of foreign females contrasts sharply with that of national females. Non-national women are mostly (51%) bound to primary occupations. In marked contrast, most female nationals are clerks and professionals, and only 0.1% work in primary occupations. This outstanding segregation in the Kuwaiti economy between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, and its influence in shaping young people's transitions, will be discussed later in this chapter, when highlighting changes in social divisions in the post-oil era.

Table 3.1: The percentage distribution of employed individuals in Kuwait by occupation, nationality (Kuwaiti / Non-Kuwaiti) and sex for 2014

Occupation	Nationality and sex								
	Kuwaiti			Non-kuwaiti			Total		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Legislators, senior officials & managers	35.9	7.1	24.0	4.6	1.4	3.6	9.0	2.6	7.0
Professionals	22.6	37.1	28.6	6.9	12.2	8.5	9.1	17.6	11.8
Technicians & associates	16.2	14.4	15.5	3.8	11.0	5.9	5.6	11.7	7.5
Clerks	14.9	37.3	24.2	3.7	4.5	4.0	5.3	11.7	7.3
Service, shop & market workers	4.5	3.3	4.0	16.0	18.9	16.9	14.4	15.5	14.7
Skilled agricultural & fishery workers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
Craft and related trade workers	3.9	0.6	2.5	26.0	0.7	18.5	22.8	0.7	15.9
Plant & machine operators & assemblers	1.3	0.1	0.8	14.0	0.3	10.0	12.2	0.3	8.5
Primary occupations	0.7	0.1	0.4	24.8	51.0	32.5	21.4	39.9	27.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau "Labor Force Survey 2014" http://www.csb.gov.kw/Default_EN.aspx

In a similar case, Cheah (2006) explained that the expansion of capitalism in Singapore has left a shortage of workers willing to do in menial jobs that are important to the economy as they are undesirable to local workers who upgraded to cover the demands of the capital-intensive economy. Thus, menial work has been outsourced to workers from poorer countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia. To sum up, after the emergence of the oil economy in Kuwait and with the increasing importation of workers, the labour market has developed a bilateral nature with segmentation between nationals and foreign labour in terms of occupational activities and sectors.

Implications for the current Kuwaiti labour market

Kuwait state policy developed over more than 30 years in relation to recruitment, migrants and the control of the economy, with the marginalisation of the private sector and small and

medium enterprises; this has created a challenge for the present-day government. With the increasing number of young people, the public sector has now become overcrowded and is unable to absorb additional numbers of employees. Although unemployment in Kuwait is not high compared to global level, this does not mean that the labour market supports the ideal structure of full employment (Garrison, 2015). As discussed in the previous chapter, many of the employed GCC nationals who work mostly in the public sector are already underemployed due to a mismatch of skills and overstaffing. The continuity of employing and ‘accumulating’ Kuwaiti workers in this sector has led to the emergence of disguised unemployment which is not taken into account in the official unemployment statistics despite its serious consequences (Salama & Alanzi, 1999). In other words, too many employees fill too few jobs, with no addition to the total output; the workforce is larger than is required for all the work to be done, and the level of productivity is therefore low. This typically prohibits taking advantage of the full potential of national human capital to be employed in more productive work, and especially wastes the potential for youth efficiency since most of the national workforce is young (see Table 3.2) and highly educated. The statistics for 2014 indicated that 43.3% of Kuwaiti workers hold a first university degree and above, followed by those who hold qualifications above secondary school but below university (19.7%) (Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, 2014). At the same time, the jobs that require greater effort and more actual production are left to expatriate workers in the private sector (Al-Sharah, 2008), who hold lower educational qualifications (35.6% with primary and below, 32.3% with intermediate) (Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, 2014).

Table 3.2: The percentage distribution of employed individuals in Kuwait by age, sex and nationality (Kuwaiti / Non-Kuwaiti) for 2014

Age Group	Nationality and Sex								
	Kuwaiti			Non - Kuwaiti			Total		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
15-24	11.8	7.9	10.1	6.3	10.2	7.5	7.1	9.7	7.9
25-34	40.4	44.5	42.1	39.2	46.0	41.2	39.4	45.7	41.4
35-44	31.4	33.2	32.2	31.9	29.9	31.3	31.9	30.6	31.5
45-54	13.3	12.4	13.0	16.6	11.4	15.0	16.1	11.6	14.7
+55	3.1	2.0	2.6	6.0	2.5	5.0	5.5	2.4	4.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau "Labor Force Survey 2014" http://www.csb.gov.kw/Default_EN.aspx

The nature of unemployment in Kuwait

From the above discussion, it is clear that the concept of employment, and consequently unemployment, in Kuwait has a special nature in which the local labour force is actively searching for employment in certain sectors and economic activities rather than in others, which it generally shuns. This suggests a phenomenon known as voluntary unemployment (Salama & Alanzi, 1999). In the words of Karl Pribram, “[U]nemployment is a condition of the labour market in which the supply of labour is greater than the number of available openings” (cited in Bhushan & Sachdeva, 2012: 276). For Fairchild it meant “forced and involuntary separation from remunerative work on the part of the normal working force during normal working time, at normal wages and under normal conditions” (cited in Bhushan & Sachdeva, 2012: 276). In addition, unemployment was defined as a “condition of involuntary idleness” by Naba (1968). While unemployment occurs when a person is able and willing to work normally but is unable to find a job due to non-availability of work, voluntary unemployment occurs when individuals are physically capable of working but choose to remain out of work; they may be unwilling to work in jobs which they perceive as lower than their skill level and/or which are paid less than expected. Conversely, involuntary unemployment refers to the situation where job seekers are willing to work at the going wage but cannot find jobs. In practice, it is difficult to draw a line between voluntary and

involuntary unemployment (Al-Qudsi, 2005). In the case of GCC countries, and according to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), “it is estimated that most of the unemployed in all the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are the so-called voluntary unemployed, in that a lot of young people are waiting to get a highly paid job in the public sector” (2007: 7). According to the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (2014), 44% of unemployed Kuwaitis refuse jobs in the private sector if they are offered them.

Al-Qudsi (2005) has argued that “The proposition is often put that unemployment in the GCC is voluntary in nature for two reasons. The first is the high non-wage income of Gulf households which enables job-seekers to live off their own families. The second is related to the structure of the labour market which provides a persistent disadvantage to low-wage Gulf nationals who are competing for jobs” (2005: 11). Hence, given that unemployed nationals could accept work in some available activities but choose not to do so, this might make unemployment a luxury, confirming the argument of voluntary unemployment among GCC nationals.

An economic literature review by Al-Qudsi (2005) found a variety of empirical evidence for the link between unemployment of GCC nationals in countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and high expectations and salary demands. He concluded that the failure to fulfil GCC nationals’ demands discourages them, so they prefer to wait and continue to search for work which meets their expectations. Referring to a recent empirical study conducted in the UAE, Al-Qudsi (2005) noted that given the low salaries offered in the private sector, which is filled with cheap low-skilled and semi-skilled foreign workers, and with the fear that income from self-employment or private enterprises would be lower than a guaranteed government income, UAE nationals preferred to remain unemployed and wait. Thus, as searching actively for work relies on accepting the wage offered, unemployment is likely to be endogenous. Al-Qudsi also remarked in his study with Abu-Dahesh (2004) on productivity in the private sector in Saudi Arabia that the established welfare economy and the increasing aspirations of new Saudis who enter the labour market have led to obvious changes in job preferences, which are reflected in the refusal of unemployed nationals to become new entrants in 3D jobs, such as plumbing, welding, automobile repair, and carpentry. Along with these arguments and the empirical

evidence briefly summarised here, the present study provides further understanding of the reasons why young Kuwaitis, in particular, tend not to participate in non-governmental sectors. These reasons include educational, cultural and social barriers that restrict their professional choices.

Unemployment statistics in Kuwait and the Gulf countries show a large age differential, with the majority of the unemployed being young people of less than 30 years old. Hence, “the heart of the unemployment problem in the GCC countries is that the new entrants into the labor force cannot be absorbed by economic activity, which entails long-term unemployment” (Al-Qudsi, 2005: 8). With a growing number of graduates seeking jobs in recent years, the rate of unemployment is increasing and is expected to continue to rise in coming years. The estimates indicate that the near future may witness an increase of 2-3 million unemployed nationals in GCC countries, unless there are substantial and effective new solutions and policies. The job forecast for Kuwait is that some 73,000 additional job opportunities will be required during the period 2015-2020 (International Monetary Fund, 2011).

A localisation policy has been in force in GCC, called Kuwaitisation in Kuwait, intended as a solution to the unemployment problem, and to reduce the dominance of the expatriate labour force in the labour market (Salih, 2010; Gulseven, 2015). It has become more pronounced since the 1990s and takes many forms: for example, in 1997 a decision was made by the Civil Service Council to introduce a programme to replace the expatriate workforce with Kuwaiti workers, at a rate of 10% yearly, in government ministries and departments. In 2001, the Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme (MGRP) was established to find innovative solutions to developing national employment opportunities and to direct workers to non-government organisations and support small businesses (Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, 2014). This suggests that instead of the previous generation of young people whose pathways to the labour market were oriented towards jobs in the public sector, youth pathways nowadays can become more diversified with these policies encouraging the direction to non-governmental sectors. Even though the literature does not yet analyse the achievements or otherwise of this policy in Kuwait, there are some indicators of its

failure to meet all the desired goals of localisation programmes in GCC countries in general (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2005; Al-Ali, 2008).

To summarise, with the flow of oil and increasing participation in the global and capitalist oil markets, Kuwait became an important and influential regional and global economic centre. As a way to distribute wealth, the government assumed responsibility for employing all its citizens, at high salaries. With the upgrading of citizens' living conditions, foreign labour was (and still is) imported from various countries to fill low-skilled manual and menial jobs in the labour market (Ashkanani, 1988), driving private companies and institutions to hire non-national workers as they accept lower wages than local people. Thus, Kuwaiti workers have increasingly become limited to certain careers provided by government. However, this has created an ongoing challenge to the government at the current time. With the increasing number of young people, the public sector has, in recent years, become overcrowded and is unable to absorb the additional numbers of employees, leading to the emergence of unemployment and underemployment (World Economic Forum, 2014). This means that, instead of the previous fast and stable pathway to the world of work, young people today are facing a more challenging reality towards work with the limited jobs in the state sector.

Social changes

Changes in social division

The literature contains many different viewpoints on the extent of the change that has occurred in the social structure of Kuwaiti society, and in the Arab Gulf states generally. For example, the work of Held and Ulrichsen (2012), who studied the transformation of the Gulf states from anthropological and political perspectives, expressed the belief that the social structures of the Gulf societies in the past were radically changed when socio-political power shifted away from the hands of old dominant groups, due to the emergence of a new middle class. Others, such as Longva (2005), a researcher in social anthropology interested in the Arabian Gulf region, have argued that the change in the social structure has been small, with continued economic and political dominance exercised by the ruling family members alongside wealthy merchant families. Tetreault and Al-Mughni (1995) also asserted that these groups gained the

large share of distributed cash from oil revenues and profited most from the land acquisition policy. They hold the lion's share of prominent positions in the government and in key businesses sectors. The enhancement of major merchants' economic dominance is apparent with their large-scale possession of banks and car companies, and their control of the Kuwaiti Chamber of Commerce, which was founded in 1958 (Ghabra, 2002). It has been argued that despite a number of new rich families managing to win lucrative contracts and finding themselves a place in modern society, the bulk of the dominant families are the old ruling and merchant families (Longva, 2005, Tetreault & Al-Mughni, 1995). With this consideration in mind, according to Longva, social improvements do not contribute effectively to social mobility in the sense that it is not the case "each individual has the opportunity to work their way upward" (2005: 129).

However, although some old features of the socio-economic structure remain, most notably that the Al-Sabah and other merchant families have conserved their social and political prestige, the change in the social structure is nevertheless visible and clear, with the appearance of a new working class represented by migrant workers at the bottom of the hierarchy, and the rise of a well-established middle class. This process has led to society in Kuwait being divided into two categories, foreign migrants and nationals, which is very different from models in Europe and most of the rest of the world, except the GCC. In a sense, the oil boom brought a comfortable collective living, with nationals having priority and many opportunities and social privileges, and high positions especially in government institutions. According to Held and Ulrichesn (2012), the majority of the population in the Gulf, 80% of citizens, enjoy a middle class status (largely equating to the description of white-collar workers in western nations). They are made up of "the new bourgeoisie, prosperous businessmen and entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, military and security officers, the intelligentsia, and professionals of all types, such as teachers, doctors, and lawyers" (Held & Ulrichsen, 2012: 16). It is obvious from Table 3.1, presented earlier, that there is a clear social division in the economy, with a significant imbalance in the occupational structure between national and expatriate labour. This sharp and striking segregation in Kuwait is crucially important to this study's analysis, as it may be one of the fundamental factors in forming young people's transitions and influencing their pathways to work.

The link between work possibilities and class or inequality was addressed early in youth studies. Roberts (1968), for instance, drew attention to local opportunity structures, and this has been pursued by others. These social mechanisms were also focused on by Hodkinson et al. (1996), who developed a social model of ‘careership’ and the concept of ‘horizons of action’, based on the conceptual tools of Bourdieu. This concept suggests that career decisions are determined by what is possible for individuals and what is culturally permissible. People are strongly influenced by their positions, the nature of the domain or field in which they are placed, the objective social networks and cultural traditions, in addition to their own embodied dispositions. Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) suggest that most individuals appear to make career decisions that are ‘pragmatically rational’. That is, decisions are made from what Bourdieu describes as individuals’ dispositions that arise during their on-going life experiences and interactions with others in a particular social area in which players have different resources of power. These issues were also captured by MacDonald et al. (2005) in their research on England’s deprived areas; they explored how individual decision making interacts with local opportunity structures. Following Furlong and Cartmel (1997), MacDonald et al. (2005) argued that in spite of the fact that the risks of restructured transitions tend to blur social class and create greater individual autonomy, the individual’s original position in the class structure continues powerfully to influence the final destinations and create individual, and shared, pathways of transition. The concept of opportunity structures has been used in other modern youth studies to consider the importance of inequality and class in shaping the lives of young people. For example, by drawing on the concept of opportunity structure, Thompson (2017) discussed the processes leading to young people becoming NEET, classified as not in education, employment or training, after leaving school in northern England. He discussed how becoming NEET is associated with a range of social and economic disadvantages that can be considered as part of the endogenous dimension of an opportunity structure. He argued that “Although the external dimensions of opportunity structures – for example, labor markets, employer practices and educational systems – have a profound impact on the prospects of young people, the relationships between these dimensions and individual backgrounds determine the nature of the specific transformations” (Thompson, 2017: 751).

Therefore, bearing all of the above in mind, it can be argued that since young Kuwaitis are living and interacting in a society structured over more than 60 years into specific social and economic divisions, with Kuwaitis in the middle class and migrant workers at the bottom of the hierarchy with unequal economic and social resources of power, their pathways to employment might be affected. The circumstances, traditions, historical experiences and the location of young people in society may position their final destination far away from the occupational pathways culturally and traditionally associated with the working class. In a sense, the occupational concentration of expatriate workers in low-paying and low-skilled jobs in specific sectors such as services, crafts and primary occupations means that there is a limit to local opportunities for young people to work in these sorts of jobs, and their pathways are likely to be structured only towards middle-class occupations or white-collar jobs. Applying Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1990, 1977a), it can be said that, since white-collar employment is the traditional route of work among Kuwaitis, this practice or tradition can be transmitted down to young people through generations, contributing to shaping their contemporary transition to the labour market.

Beck presented the idea that the contemporary labour markets in more developed societies involve a massive workforce in low-paid jobs and in temporary or part-time insecure employment contracts, which he referred to as 'the Brazilianization of the West' (Beck, 2000). In the Kuwaiti context, immigrants, who traditionally work in insecure positions, represent this situation, while Kuwaiti nationals usually have more opportunities to work in stable, secure and high-paying jobs. In addition to the good economic conditions enjoyed by nationals, the country's Constitution, which was written in 1962 after independence from Britain, stressed the equality between citizens, granting them the right to participate and engage in the election process and legislating new laws through the National Assembly; this served to underline the political presence of various Kuwaiti social groups, and to increase public participation. Kuwait's Constitution also officially confirmed that Islamic *Sharia* is the main source of the state's laws. Furthermore, it clearly outlined the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities, provided that they remain under the leadership of the Emir with the continuity of the hereditary system of monarchy (Al-Hajri & Al-Anzi, 2011).

Returning to the social division of the country, it is significant that despite the fact that foreign workers from different national and ethnic groups are also concentrated with locals in a single large city, they generally live in separate residential neighbourhoods and do not mix socially or culturally with locals (Khalaf & Hammoud, 1987). Unlike Singapore, for example, where the government encourages skilled foreign workers to obtain citizenship and permanent residence in the country (Ong, 2006), Kuwait applies strict laws in granting citizenship rights to immigrants. In her study on migration in Kuwait, Longva (1997) described Kuwaiti society as a plural society. This term was first and well established by Furnivall's work *Colonial Policy and Practice*, which defined it as follows:

It is in the strictest sense a medley, for [a people] mix but [who] do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideals and ways. As individuals, they meet, but only in the marketplace, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines (1948: 304).

The following section on the social life of Kuwaitis also shows that even the traditional small communities and tribes which were prominent in pre-oil society have become mixed geographically in the post-oil era; however, the tribe is still important. Individuals in each tribe still experience a sense of belonging to their group, and do not fully combine with other groups in the nation. This challenges Beck's argument that the loyalty of individuals to small communities and extended families in the traditional society's stage has been replaced and is now grounded on the self (Beck, 1992).

Social life

Contrary to Beck's (1992) argument about the change in the collectivity of individuals' identity with the development of the nation state, this identity is still maintained in modern Kuwaiti society even with the emergence of a welfare state. In the 1950s, the government developed a plan to transfer Kuwait's population from the old towns into newly-designed suburbs, liberating them from the traditional environment inside the walled city. The

government encouraged people to move out of their old houses by buying them at high prices and providing land in expanded residential areas at lower than cost price. Moreover, soft loans were extended by government to eligible citizens to facilitate the purchasing and construction processes. In 1953, a programme was established to offer new houses for low-income families at subsidised prices. Between 1953 and 1981, more than 25,000 such houses were built (Khouja & Sadler, 1979). The new residential suburbs were designed in accordance with modernist ideologies, and the new approach included the expansion of the road network and the establishment of shopping malls, businesses and commercial buildings and other public buildings inside and outside the city walls. In the 1950s and 1960s, the term *alIttafra alomraniyya*, referring to the radical changes and boom in the building environment, came to be commonly used among Kuwaitis. This expression included the replacement of any old buildings by new ones deemed more suitable in the era of modernity (Al-Jassar, 2009).

The new housing distribution system was based on the first-come-first-served principle for married couples. This meant that rather than the traditional and tribal living patterns that combined related groups in adjacent residential neighbourhoods, different social groups came to live in one big urban community with modern institutional welfare. However, this strategy of housing distribution does not mean that traditional social ties and *asabiyyah* within tribal groups disappeared. Many people use a special corner of their house, called *Diwaniyya*, as a place for everyday gatherings of extended family and friends. Chay (2016), by applying the theories of Bourdieu on capital and habitus, showed how this traditional social practice continues in modern Kuwaiti society despite urbanisation and the emergence of oil wealth. According to Kostiner (2016), despite the impact of modernisation and urbanisation on tribal segments in Arab Gulf societies and the relaxation of the strong original tribal framework, some authors have emphasised the continuation of separate identities and fragmented feelings. In this context, Al-Saffar (1995) argued that although tribal and family ties have been negatively affected during recent decades due to cultural and socio-economic changes, they are still considered stronger than in other societies. The forms of solidarity and tribal loyalty still appear in modern society in terms of the leveraging of social relationships between tribal

members and extended family to access more opportunities in society, now known as *wasta*²¹, Chapter Six provides a further discussion of this term. Generally, GCC states are largely ruled on the basis of favouritism and nepotism, and the individual's potential is determined according to tribal affiliation or family name. This has an effect on individuals' ability to gain prestigious positions in government ministries. Al-Saleh (1996), in considering the case of Kuwait, concluded that favouritism is one of the main causes of inflation and of the ineffectiveness of the public sector, with the regular appointment of unqualified and unnecessary people to government institutions. According to Fakeeh (2009), this makes less fortunate individuals in society feel that they will never reap the rewards of a lifetime of hard work, since society puts advance limits on their potential and social mobility. She added that this may be a considerable element in building negative traits such as irresponsibility, low productivity, and a lack of motivation among the young.

Overall, all these practices demonstrate that the prevalent characteristics of social life in traditional Kuwaiti society, such as the strong social ties, collective pattern of living and families' shared everyday lives, are still maintained and embedded in modern times.

The expansion of education

According to Beck (1992), unlike traditional societies, technological information revolutions no longer require older, uneducated manual workers, but on the contrary they need well-educated, highly skilled professionals. Beck (1992) also argued that the tendency of the individual as the centre of life had deepened its hold in western societies with the emergence of educated classes. Broadly, one of the general characteristics that theorists associate with modernisation is the spread of education and literacy that contributes to the modernisation of society as a whole. Educational services in modern societies are characterised by becoming highly differentiated and diversified. This includes their ability to provide a greater supply of well-educated manpower, the growth of specialised educational roles and organisations, a

²¹ Arabic term that reflects the intervention of social ties and broad family networks to achieve personal interests in different aspects of society such as employment. It is similar to, but more comprehensive than, nepotism and cronyism (Mohamed & Mohamad, 2011).

variety of educational facilities, and schools covering different levels from kindergarten to university (Eisenstadt, 1966).

With the increase in income generated by the country's growing oil production, the Kuwaiti government invested a huge amount of funding into the expansion of education services. In 1965, a law on universal compulsory education was adopted under the Constitution of the State of Kuwait, stipulating that education be free for all Kuwaiti children, males and females, up to 18 years old. The current education hierarchy begins with kindergarten, which is an optional phase (lasts two years). Compulsory education begins with the primary stage (lasts five years), followed by the intermediate stage (lasts four years). The secondary stage (lasts three years) is non-mandatory (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014a).

The net results of the new education system rapidly became apparent: the number of students rose from 3,600 to 250,000 from 1945 to 1975. The story of girls' education was even more striking, as their participation increased from 5% to 45% during the same period (Khouja & Sadler, 1979). According to recent statistics (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014b), the total number of both male and female students was 647,238 in 2014. The government also made efforts to reduce the overall illiteracy rate by opening the first literacy centre in 1957. The illiteracy rate declined significantly over time, from around 50% in 1965 to 3.3% among males and 4.5% among females in 2012, the majority concentrated in the 60 and over age group (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014a). According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2015), the literacy rate among young people (aged 15-24), males and females, in Kuwait was 99.26% in 2015.

With increasing economic development and a more complex division of labour in modern society, many diverse labour categories have appeared, as well as new types of occupations. These trends have increased the demand for specialisation and high educational qualifications as prerequisites for entry into many occupations. Kuwait University was opened in 1966 with the establishment of the Colleges of Science and of Literature and Education. Over the years it has expanded, with the number of colleges currently at 16. The number of students rose from the initial 413 to 35,705 in the academic year 2013-2014 (Kuwait University, 2012). By 1975, there was a clear need for educated technical workers in order to diversify the local economy.

Thus, it was decided to establish the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), which opened in 1978-1979 (Al-Khoury, 1982). This body includes many colleges and training institutes that enable students who graduate from secondary education (some courses are open to students graduating from intermediate and primary education) to obtain professional and technical knowledge and skills (International Bureau of Education, 2008). More recently, since 2000 several private universities and post-secondary colleges have been established in Kuwait.

Thus, students who successfully complete secondary education in Kuwait can nowadays take different educational paths under the supervision of the Ministry for Higher Education. These include access to one of the specialised colleges at Kuwait University to obtain a bachelor's degree, such as the College of Social Science, the College of Engineering, or the College of Law. Students can also choose to join one of the private universities in Kuwait especially after a domestic scholarship policy was approved in 2006 to meet the limited spaces available in Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Education. Enrolling with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training is another option. Students are awarded a bachelor's degree after completing four years of study, or a diploma after two years at the college or institution under this authority, depending on the type of study and specialisation. As for education outside the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, students can also take a shorter track to the labour market by attending training centres and taking special courses, leading to obtaining a training certificate rather than an academic one. This type of education is supervised by social service centres run by the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and Kuwait University, in addition to some ministries and some involvement by the private sector. Joining the military or police academies is another path for secondary school graduates, which enables them to enter the labour market directly.

The official data indicates that, in general, the number of Kuwaitis obtaining academic certificates is greater than those with training certificates. In more detail, available data indicate that 9,467 Kuwaitis graduated from universities in the year 2014/2015, including those who graduated from Kuwait University, private universities in Kuwait and universities outside Kuwait. The number of Kuwaiti graduates from different colleges of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, including those who obtained a bachelor's

degree or a diploma, was 8,913. 10,813 graduated from training centres after taking special courses (Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, 2015).

Increased educational and training opportunities and the diversity of academic disciplines open to Kuwaiti young people in modern times have led to their becoming better educated and spending longer in education before joining the labour market. Thus, and as has been shown in the literature on youth transition, young people in contemporary society are experiencing different pathways from previous generations, as their transition from education to work is now characterised by more choice and a longer timespan (Furlong, 2009). The transitions into working life of previous generations meant joining the labour market immediately after limited schooling, with few opportunities for education in the pre-oil era, the dominance of manual occupations and the reluctance of families to send their children, especially their daughters, to school. However, economic and social changes have led to very different transitions today. The characteristics of opportunity structures have all changed interactively. The encouragement of government and families, the expansion of education, as well as the new occupational structure and new requirements of the labour market have led young people to seek higher qualifications and spend longer time in education. This shows how young people respond to their environment and are governed by the opportunity structures surrounding them (Roberts, 2009). While the transition to the labour market in previous generations did not require individuals to be highly educated, the majority of government institutions now expect high educational qualifications from job seekers (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014a). Recent statistics indicate that the proportion of Kuwaitis who have obtained a university degree and above form the largest proportion of the total Kuwaitis employed in the public sector, at 46.4%, while those with secondary education form 21%, followed by only 14% with below-secondary education (Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, 2018). According to AlBadir (2013), the university degree is perceived by Kuwaitis as a passport to join the public sector, as the main employment sector that provides an attractive environment and good working conditions for graduates. Graduates will not need to be concerned about being fully employed with a wide range of skills, as the employment policy in the public sector enables new graduates to join the public sector, allowing them to occupy respectable and comfortable jobs

and earn a decent salary. In contrast, employers in the private sector prefer to recruit more fully skilled and productive workers (AlBadir, 2013).

Despite initiatives designed to increase human capital and the expansion of pathways and options within post-compulsory education and training in Kuwait, the review of the literature shows that this investment has so far failed to meet the requirements of the country's labour market. According to the Department of Research Studies, Kuwait's educational system is facing a significant problem in meeting the needs of its labour market (National Assembly, 2007). A survey by Arabia Inform in 2008, for example, indicated that most organisations in Kuwait suffer from skills gaps and shortages, which means that job applicants do not meet employers' needs and requirements (AlBadir, 2013). The shortage of skills has created more obvious constraints in relation to employment opportunities in the private sector, which places great importance on the skills needed in the competitive workplace environment. Due to the inadequate quality of the Kuwaiti workforce, expatriates fill most of the posts in this sector. This lack of skills hinders the effectiveness of policies that were designed to direct young Kuwaitis to non-government sector jobs in order to solve unemployment and underemployment (Salih, 2010; Al-Ali, 2008).

Data from the Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme (2015) on the educational needs of the labour market in the private sector indicates that there is an imbalance between supply and demand between the private sector and education outputs, not only in terms of skills but also in terms of qualifications and specialisations. The data on the demands of the private sector labour market show that holding a university degree is less important than the demand for job seekers with secondary-level education and below, and diplomas. The requirements were as follows: 2,878 entrants with secondary education and below, followed by 2,511 with diplomas and only 605 with university degrees. However, the highest number of Kuwaiti job seekers registered in the restructuring programme according to qualification were those with university degrees (6,515), followed by those with secondary education and below (3,407) and diploma holders (2,569). With regard to the supply and demand according to educational specialisation, the number of graduate job seekers with specialisations in accounting, civil engineering, law and basic education exceeded what is required by the private sector labour market. In contrast, specialisation in management is in high demand in

this sector but the supply is low. In terms of the specialisations for the diploma qualification, supply is greater than demand in banking, accountancy and law, while demand exceeds supply in the specialisation of business management and information technology and communications (Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, Roberts (2009) argued that job pathways are determined by different factors including the structures of the educational institutions that learners are leaving, labour market processes, and employers' recruitment practices and requirements. Overall, the above paragraph indicates that there is an imbalance between the requirements of the private sector and the supply of education outputs. While many Kuwaiti young hold high academic qualifications, the private sector is looking for those with lower qualifications but high skill levels. This nature of the private sector's requirements, along with the quality of education in Kuwait, may contribute to shaping the young peoples' career pathways. The limited number of opportunities for Kuwaiti graduates in the private sector and their shortage of skills may well increase the pressure on the crowded public sector. The possibility of job seekers with high qualifications experiencing underemployment and unemployment is of crucial importance. It has been widely argued that there is a positive correlation between education and investment in human capital, and access to good jobs (AlBadir, 2013). However, obtaining high qualifications does not necessarily mean getting a good job, with the likelihood of those who hold these qualifications suffering from underemployment in the public sector. The findings of this study will be shown to confirm this argument.

Paying particular attention to the expansion of education and the inclusion of females, the increasing numbers of girls attending school has led to reduced difference in enrolment between genders at all education levels. According to data from 2014, the net enrolment ratios in primary schools were equal for males and females (93%). The net enrolment ratios in secondary school were similar: 81% for males and 85% for females, according to statistics from 2012 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015). Beck (1992) argued that categorical inequalities such as gender are reduced in modern society, as the concepts of responsibilities and individual rights become more important. In the case of Kuwaiti society, young women in the pre-oil era were deprived of their rights in education and work, and their role was very different from men's. With the process of modernisation of society reaching their country,

women obtained their right to be educated at different educational levels until, quite recently, their numbers became equal with males in terms of school enrolment. Since the late 1960s they have participated in the workplace beside men, although this situation has been concentrated in certain occupations such as teaching (Shah & Al-Qudsi, 1990). However, young women nowadays are competing more with their male peers in different types of careers such as lawyers and ministers, more than their mothers did when comparing between generations. Nevertheless, despite this change and the fact that women nowadays have far more freedom and independence in their choices, this does not mean that gender inequality has disappeared, or that women have full equality with men, as the following chapters show, confirming the debate in the youth literature on the continuation of gender in young people's lives and limiting their life chances (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997).

This point also requires consideration of the continuance of traditions and cultural values in schools. The education strategy in Kuwait underwent a number of changes in order to accommodate trends in contemporary educational philosophy, and to modernise the system in accordance with newly-emerging challenges. The use of technology, communication networks between schools, and concern for democratic values are some of the contemporary issues that have received more attention recently under globalisation and the technological revolution. Despite the constant development of education to bring it in line with the needs of the modern era, educational institutions remain strongly aligned to the nature and traditional values of Kuwaiti society, and the core of Islamic and cultural beliefs are still embedded in schools. Gender segregation is one example, as male and female students are taught separately, and teachers and other staff are the same gender as their students, with the sole exception of kindergarten where they can be mixed (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2007). The strong association between the philosophical framework of education and the philosophical framework of society and its local culture contributes to preventing many western influences and ideologies from being adopted or permeating inside educational institutions. A large number of studies relating to schooling in Arab and Islamic regions, especially those interested in women's status in education (Abu Nasr, Khoury & Azzam, 1985; Peterson, 1989; El-Sanabary, 1989) or the influence of Islamic ideology and principles on schools (Shorish, 1988; Talbani, 1996) have drawn a distinct image of those schools as combining the receptiveness of

some global and international trends in their educational curricula and policies while simultaneously refusing to make concessions to traditional social, cultural and religious ideology. This indicates the challenge in applying Beck's ideas on the removal of traditions in the new stage of modernity and how this introduces new ways of living (Beck, 1992); traditional and cultural values are still embedded in the main institutions, such as school, in contemporary Kuwait.

Transformation in family structures and family members' roles

In the context of family life, it has been said that the conditions in second modernity contrast with the past, with their traditional gender roles and stable extended family (or stable nuclear family in first modernity) (Beck, 1992). In the present day, parental authority is less taken for granted than in earlier times (Giddens, 1991). Indeed, it has been argued that the model of the traditional family has been eroded and replaced by a new type of 'negotiated provisional family' (Beck, 2001: 203, 1992: 129). The patriarchal family has been undermined by the increasing trend towards gender equality, and people's actions are increasingly influenced by calculations of their own self-interest. Thus, the negotiated provisional family has emerged where "responsibilities are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated under the pressure of occupational commitments, educational constraints and individual mobility" (Cheal, 2005: 31). Instead of the fixed gender roles found in earlier societies which were defined by law or tradition, men and women are generally more liberated from traditional roles now, and couples are able to define freely their own relationship themselves (e.g. choosing to cohabit rather than marry). This perception to some extent plays differently in the case of Kuwait, where tradition, law and religion still shape family life and define the gender roles. In fact, religion is not an independent context in Kuwaiti society; rather, it penetrates and imposes its presence and influence on all societal contexts. For example, according to Islam, it is not permissible for a woman to marry without the consent of her father or guardian.

According to El-Haddad (2003), economic changes and urbanisation, including the emergence of the welfare state and education, have brought about important changes in the typical family structure in Kuwait. Instead of living in extended families, the formation of small nuclear families has followed from urbanisation; government houses are built for one generation,

consisting of a couple and children, with social service and support provided for elderly care. As most Kuwaitis earn their livelihood from government-sourced incomes, the former economic dependence on the extended family has also diminished. Despite the increasing numbers of nuclear families and the increased public care assistance, traditional tasks such as providing care for the elderly remain the private responsibility of the family, and the support provided by members of extended families and kinship ties are still maintained (El-Haddad, 2003). It must be recognised, then, that the nuclear family in Kuwait differs from that known in the west, as it integrates features from both traditional extended and modern western families.

The new role played by women within the family is no doubt one of the most remarkable changes in society as a whole. Rather than playing limited roles in the domestic sphere, Kuwaiti women in modern society are generally highly educated, working, and helping (by their own wish) to meet the needs of their household. This role replacement appeared after the efforts made by government in the 1960s via its equal opportunities policy in education and employment to overcome the cultural barriers that had left half of the population educationally and economically inactive in the past (Garrison, 2015; Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014a).

Hence, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter, newly-educated young Kuwaiti women are starting to take their place in the labour market, moving from working almost exclusively in teaching and nursing to taking up office jobs in state ministries, particularly in education and health. Obtaining higher degrees has gradually opened up opportunities for them to secure prestigious jobs such as lecturers in higher education institutions (Tijani, 2009). Thus, Kuwaiti women's participation now constitutes an important part of the labour force, increasing from 2.5% in 1965 to almost 14% in 1985 (Shah & Al-Qudsi, 1990), and reaching 29.8% in 2014 (World Bank, 2014a). According to recent data, 48% of females aged 15 or over were in the national labour force in 2014. This remains lower than the proportion working in other countries, although it is converging quickly with the average rate (51%) in the OECD²², most of whose members are considered developed nations (World Bank, 2014b). Forecasts by the

²² The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is an international economic organisation of 35 member countries, including the UK, the USA, France and Canada, that aims “to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world”. See: <http://www.oecd.org/>

Public Authority for Civil Information suggest that the gap between males and females will shrink over the coming years as more educated women choose to enter the labour market (Gulf Investment Corporation, 2012).

The emergence of migrant domestic workers since the 1970s (Fernandez, 2014) was another significant factor in encouraging women to participate in the labour market. The nature of employing domestic workers in Kuwait is similar to that which Ong described in the case of destination countries in East and Southeast Asia. He stated that “[h]aving a maid at home is a social right, like access to good schools, housing, and shopping malls, and leisure, all entitlements of the middle-classes bent on buying their way to the good life” (2006: 201-202). Recent statistics have shown that the official number of migrant domestic workers in Kuwait rose to more than half a million by 2010 (Fernandez, 2014).

It is worthy of note that in the 1980s, Islamic movements like the Salafi and Muslim Brotherhood took up prominent positions in Kuwait. These groups dealt in different ways with women’s issues and in determining their role in life. Some of them largely opposed the liberation of women and imposed dress codes, with the *hijab* acting as a symbol of the Islamic identity of women. Nevertheless, the *hijab* does not prevent women from participation in the labour force and other areas of community life (Alessandra & Al-Kazi, 2011). Kuwaiti women have taken the lead among Gulf women in assuming positions of leadership both at local and international levels, by being appointed to key roles such as ambassadors and ministers. Feminist movements have evolved in relation to political participation, especially after women served side-by-side with men during the Iraqi invasion in 1990. In 2005 Kuwaiti women were finally allowed to vote and run for parliament (UNICEF, 2011).

Beck (1992: 11-14) has suggested that with the emergence of new patterns of family life and liberation from the traditional relations between the genders, women are more exposed to risk and poverty as they lose the protection of their husband’s income. However, it is important to recognise that in Kuwait, even when women work and receive a monthly salary, they remain dependent on the husband’s income as he is financially fully responsible for his wife and family, in line with Islam teaching. In this sense, unlike Beck’s argument, women have

become more secure, even if they earn less pay, as they have their own income as well as benefiting from their husband's income to meet other needs. Unmarried women are economically the responsibility of their father until they are married, indicating that the patriarchal features of the family still prevail. Although Kuwaiti women may have succeeded in breaking down traditional barriers and taking on new roles outside the home, custom and Islamic law still enforce the division of roles between genders. Thus, in the legal and customary sense, a woman is still supposed to maintain her traditional role in the family as a mother and obedient wife (Crystal, 1992).

In summary, the traditional family structure and gender roles have changed in Kuwait, but this change does not mean that family arrangements are no longer defined by tradition and laws, as Beck recognised as having become the case in western societies. The changes in Kuwait do not include new family arrangements that have emerged in other societies such as cohabitation rather than marriage, female-headed households, or single men adopting children. The change is instead evident through the shift to the nuclear family and women's participation in the labour market.

Conclusion

In building better understanding of the contemporary lives of young people in Kuwait, and conceptualising Beck's ideas within the Kuwaiti framework, it is necessary to have clear knowledge of modernisation and to understand the dynamics of Kuwaiti society, including its welfare state, education system, family, employment, and gender customs, and developments in the labour market. The transition to modern Kuwaiti society can be best explained in terms of the host of developments and socio-economic changes that took place simultaneously in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Using the common expressions deployed by modernisation theorists, it can be said that Kuwaiti society has shifted from a traditional society with a simple division of labour, limited specialisation, high levels of illiteracy and strong solidarity, to a

modern society with a high level of complexity in its labour market, wider education, expanded urbanisation, and increase public participation.

Yet, unlike Beck's model of modernisation that is based on the transition from industrialisation to second stage of modernity, modernisation began in Kuwait while it was still at the stage of the traditional economy dependent on maritime trade and with most of its population still illiterate and technologically unskilled; as a result, many of the old, traditional features remain in the modern society. According to many modernisation theorists, including Beck's model, tradition, culture and religion are fading elements in modern societies (Bendix, 1967). However, the model of modernity in Kuwait appears to be different. Tradition is apparent in the Kuwaiti case, with continued adherence to the Islamic religion and with many traditional and cultural values retained within its social institutions.

More particularly, despite the relative change in gender roles (greater freedom has been given to women in the context of education and participation in the labour market) and the greater tendency towards westernisation and consumption patterns in lifestyles, religious beliefs and traditional cultural norms such as tribal and kinship ties continue to have a significant influence, and their impact may be more powerful than the cult of the individual. They remain embedded in society and manifest in various social forms in individuals' lives, including marriage, work and education. Tribal norms and the support of relatives can also be seen in the labour market in form of nepotism in employing connected individuals and ensuring better positions.

Beck (1992) argued that the welfare state replaced the collective individual identity, manifested in the support of families, traditional social ties, and the local community. This process in turn liberated individuals from traditional paths and the influence of these institutions on attitudes, and "increasingly threw them onto their own resources and their individual fate" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001: 30). However, in the Kuwaiti context it is apparent that family support and social relationships based on tribal cohesion retain their importance even with the emergence of a welfare state. In family life, in spite of new living arrangements such as the nuclear family instead of the extended family which was dominant in the old society, the features of traditional extended families are still present; the patterns of

family life associated with the high level of individual risk that Beck (1995) referred to, such as the negotiated provisional family, single men adopting children, and female-headed households, are not found in contemporary Kuwaiti society. Based on all the above considerations, Beck's individualisation seems to be complex in its application to the Kuwaiti context. It is expected that young people's pathways and decisions regarding education and work are still affected by social institutions, cultural norms and social categories such as family and gender.

As a result of the massive influx of foreign workers into Kuwait, social division in general, and within the labour market in particular, has taken a distinct form, with non-nationals filling low-status jobs and nationals usually holding high-status jobs with high social security benefits and wages. In this case, Beck's thesis of Brazilianization (Beck, 2000) or the increasing prevalence of casual flexible temporary work and low wages, are difficult to apply to Kuwaiti nationals, who enjoy good and secure opportunities in the labour market, although these are not generally available to immigrant workers. Beck's (2000) assumption of a growing engagement of individuals in part-time work to make a reasonable living in the contemporary era is also challenged by the presence of nationals in full-time government employment.

Nevertheless, Beck's ideas on the risk society and reflexive modernity stage (1992, 1994), which explain how contemporary society is increasingly confronted with its own risks and results, and how youth are increasingly subjected to risk in the modern labour market, may still have some degree of relevance. It is true that Kuwaitis today are facing a more uncertain employment reality than the previous generations did, with the emergence of unemployment and the inability of government at the present time to ensure sufficient opportunities for all job seekers, along with the growth of underemployment in public institutions. Young people are perhaps the most likely to suffer from the impact of the early days of the welfare state, established in the aftermath of the oil boom, and resulting in a dependency and reliance on government jobs. The growing population, limited government jobs and a less forgiving labour market all mean that contemporary young Kuwaitis will have to lower their expectations in future. They will have to be proactive, qualified, and equipped to manage their pathways to work; these will not necessarily be similar to those simple paths pursued by their

parents that ended in the public sector. Risk in contemporary young people's lives also appears in relation to the assumption that they are becoming more economically independent from their families, in light of changing family living patterns. This situation of increasing risks calls for self-will and personal strategies. The following chapter explains the methodology used for this study, followed by chapters presenting the findings which show how contemporary young Kuwaitis are experiencing the transition from school to the labour market in this era of compressed modernity and the persistence of traditions.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods chosen to investigate the transition of young people in Kuwait from education to work. It is clear from the previous chapters that a gap exists in the literature on this topic. In order to address this large gap in the current knowledge and explore this complex social phenomenon, a mixed methods research methodology was chosen. This type of research design involves two ways of collecting and analysing data.

Quantitative data was collected from 1,120 young people in secondary schools, aged 15-18, by using a questionnaire, to identify their behaviours, concerns and preparations regarding their transition to the labour market, and examine their relationship with external factors, such as family, gender roles, social division, and the wider social cultural factors, that are likely to influence their pathways to the labour market. Qualitative data was also gathered from in-depth interviews with 24 young adults aged 22-30 who work in various jobs to gain wider and deeper understanding of the nature of youth transitions in Kuwait and the challenges that young people are experiencing.

This study considered the methods used by Paul Willis (1977) in his classic work *Learning to labour* in researching young people's experiences in school and later in the labour market. However, Willis' work in the UK aimed to discover how and why "working class kids get working class jobs" (1977: 1), using only qualitative research methods, while this study uses qualitative and quantitative methods to focus on the connection between and opinions of young people in school and afterwards.

The chapter begins by introducing the pragmatic approach and its main principles as a philosophical underpinning for the research. This is followed by an explanation of the research design in the form of a brief history of the mixed methods approach and justification for adopting this approach. The research questions are restated in this section, which argues that combining qualitative and quantitative data is the best strategy by which to inform them and

provide a richer and more complementary understanding of the research topic. The chapter then outlines the two research methods, beginning with the quantitative method (questionnaire). This is followed by the qualitative method (interviews). Grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) was adopted with interview data to allow the exploration of anticipated and emerging concepts and themes. The procedures used to access samples, construct tools, collect and analyse the data, along with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of both research methods, are presented for each method. Ethical issues are also outlined in the final part of each method section. The conclusion provides a brief account of how the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data is presented in the findings chapters (5, 6, and 7).

The research paradigm: pragmatism

Researchers can choose from a variety of different possible ways to approach social reality. These approaches not only depend on the procedures of sampling, collecting and analysing data, but also on the philosophical ideas or worldview that guides the research methodology. The worldview or paradigm is “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990: 17). The researcher’s philosophical assumptions, beliefs and practices depend on their ontology (the view of the nature of the reality) and epistemology (the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched) or “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 2003: 3).

Positivism and interpretivism (constructivism) are considered the two extremes that hold contradictory positions in epistemology and ontology (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2009). Positivism holds that there is a single reality which can be measured and deduced in a scientific way. It assumes that knowledge exists externally, and that researchers objectively gather data. It usually focuses on testing hypotheses and theories, making broad generalisations, and using statistics for prediction, description and causal explanation. Accordingly, quantitative instruments such as questionnaires are favoured by researchers who adopt this position (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In contrast, the key idea of interpretivism

is that there are multiple realities and that reality thus needs to be interpreted. Knowledge can be detected through constructed meaning and subjective inquiry. It is usually associated with qualitative instruments such as interview and observation (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

This discussion suggests that the researcher should select a particular philosophical position of either positivism or interpretivism, that in turn will influence the research approaches and methods (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). However, it has been noted that many researchers are becoming more open in their approaches, and more flexible in terms of their research questions (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2009). They follow the pragmatic worldview which asserts that the most important aspect of the selection of a research philosophy is the research problem, and what works best and is most practicable in solving the problem and providing insight into the questions (Creswell, 2003).

Pragmatism sits mid-way between positivism and interpretivism (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It portrays the world as having “different elements or layers, some objective, some subjective, and some a mixture of the two” (Dewey, 1925: 40, cited in Feilzer, 2009: 8). Therefore, it supports both singular and multiple realities (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Pragmatists argue that the research problem is driven by the methodology and not the paradigm itself. In this sense, rather than imprisoning researchers in a particular chosen research method, pragmatism allows them to be mentally and practically free from the limits imposed by “forced choice dichotomy between postpositivism and constructivism” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011: 44). According to Creswell (2014: 10), pragmatism claims that knowledge:

Arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in postpositivism)... Instead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem.

Based on these clarifications and the nature of the problem in the present research, which will be discussed further in the following sections, pragmatism was considered an appropriate philosophical lens. By selecting it, rather than being restricted to a specific perspective, the

researcher can study what she finds relevant and the best fit to gain better understanding of the research problem without committing to a specific philosophical system. This gives the researcher the freedom to choose between the methodologies that they deem to be best for researching youth transition and most likely to produce useful results. As Tashakkori and Teddlie (1988: 30) pointed out:

...Pragmatism is intuitively appealing, largely because it avoids the researcher engaging in what they see as rather pointless debates about such concepts about truth and reality...you should study what interests you and is of value to you, study in the different ways in which you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system.

By following a pragmatist philosophy for this study, the researcher was able to openly adopt different views and perspectives. This can mean using deductive and inductive thinking, testing theories such as individualisation and developing new ideas or meanings, and applying mixed research method, which is the most common approach associated with the pragmatic worldview in social and behavioural research. The epistemological position of this study builds on the positivist approach of deductive thinking, reductionist measurement and testing theories, along with the interpretivist approach of inductive thinking, developing new ideas and meanings, and the ability to therefore provide deeper and more meaningful knowledge to inform theory and practice than would have been possible through one approach alone (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The next section illustrates how mixed methods research emerged, and why it was adopted in this study.

The research design: Mixed-methods approach

Historical foundation of mixed methods

In the late 1980s, a number of publications from several countries focused on defining and explaining what is now well-known as mixed methods research design (Molina-Azorin, 2012).

It emerged in the United States and Europe, particularly in the fields of health, education and the social and behavioural sciences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011: 8-20). According to Creswell (2003):

A mixed methods approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (e.g., consequence-oriented, problem-centered, and pluralistic). It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information (e.g., instruments) as well as text information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information.

Collis and Hussey (2009) explained that before this methodology became widespread, researchers in the social sciences traditionally chose one paradigm, either positivism or interpretivism. This explains the lack of a mechanism that combined qualitative and quantitative data in the same study before this time. According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011), the idea of using different methods was introduced in 1959 by Campbell and Fiske. However, the mixed methods approach has only achieved popularity and obtained support and acceptance as a third methodological movement in social science research during the last twenty years, and in the time since has particularly been applied to deal with complex social phenomena (Creswell et al., 2006).

As was explained earlier, qualitative and quantitative methods are based on different epistemological, ontological and methodological positions (Bryman, 2008). However, this does not preclude their use in the same study since a clear-headed understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches is possible, retaining the original concepts of each perspective. Thus, quantitative and qualitative methods collect different but not conflicting data.

Indeed, the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods was the subject of debate for a long time in the social sciences (Bryman, 2008). The core of this debate was that each

method is designed to deal with certain types of research question, and to gather different types of data that result in a different set of answers (Kinn & Curzio, 2005). From the perspective of qualitative researchers, the behaviour of humans can only be studied through qualitative research as it allows meaningful analysis of their experiences and lives (Pope & Mays, 1995). On the other hand, those who oppose the idea of the monopoly of qualitative research in studying how individuals behave, act and think (Creswell, Fetters & Ivankova, 2004; Bryman, 2008) argue that quantitative research is also able to uncover meaning. For example, many quantitative researchers are also concerned with discovering meanings through including questions related to individuals' behaviours and attitudes in their survey research (Marsh, 1982). The Youth Cohort Study (YCS)²³ is a famous example of the ability of quantitative research to study youth behaviour.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) illustrated that both qualitative and quantitative research can explore meaning, although each has its own ways of investigation. For example, quantitative research can involve scales or other techniques to examine individuals' attitudes, while qualitative research often studies the behaviour of people in a specific context to provide an interpretation based on the norms and culture of this particular context or community. In this way, and as Bryman (2008) has argued, the mixed methods approach, which represents combination of these two research strategies, is one solution to breaking down the divide between them, to benefit from each method's advantages while avoiding their individual limitations.

Through this understanding, the present study has adopted a mixed methods approach to take advantage of the features of both quantitative and qualitative methods. As was discussed earlier, studying young people's transition and their lives in general is a complex undertaking, since it covers many different issues and topics, including education, employment and politics. This complexity, beside the lack of information in the prior literature on the lives of young people in Kuwait, reinforces the need for a methodology that allows this social phenomenon to

²³ A set of longitudinal surveys that monitor the decisions and behaviours of young people from age 16, in England and Wales, when they make the transition from compulsory to higher education or to the labour market, to identify various factors that affect these transitions. See: <https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/series/?sn=2000061#years>

be defined as clearly as possible, and its different aspects to be understood as fully as possible. The following chapter restates the research questions to clarify in detail how the mixed methods approach is useful to this study, and how they are related to the choice of methods.

Research questions

Based on a pragmatist approach that puts the problem of research as the central focus in determining the methodology of the study instead of philosophical positions, this section restates the research questions. By considering these questions, the mixed methods approach was found to be the best strategy to inform them.

Revisiting the research questions

The study set out to answer the following three questions:

- 1) What are the consequences of Kuwait's compressed modernity on young people's transitions from school to work?
- 2) To what extent is the contemporary experience of Kuwaiti young people's transitions from school to work distinct from that in other global contexts?
- 3) To what extent does Beck's 'individualisation' thesis help to explain young people's transitions from school to work in non-western contexts?

Due to the lack of previous descriptive research to provide theoretical foundations for the thesis topic, the research approach, as is apparent from the research questions, is largely of an exploratory nature. Rather than testing hypotheses about relationships between cause and effect, this research explores a complex phenomenon that has not previously been studied in the Kuwaiti context. Specifically, it explores the nature of youth transitions from school to work in this society in the light of modern social changes. It seeks clear understanding of the nature of young Kuwaitis' experiences, challenges and the structural factors that affect their behaviour and attitudes towards work. This is done to explore how their transitions differ from

those in other contexts, and the extent to which the individualisation thesis is helpful in understanding this context. Individualisation is used here to refer to the loss of the previously existing frameworks of life, and of the societal and institutional guidelines that framed people's lives, and the possibility of young people engaging individually in controlling their pathways and making their own decisions in relation to their transitions from school to work (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

Thus, the quantitative method has mainly been used to identify the environmental context or landscape in which young people live before they engage in the labour market, and more broadly, to understand diversified patterns of young people's experiences, feelings, concerns, attitudes and the environmental constraints surrounding them during the last stage of schooling. It seeks to clarify the relationship between young people and the variables that are likely to influence their transitions, including family, gender, social ties, and social division and institutional policies, which can best be analysed via quantitative data. This is mainly done to understand the extent to which young people are continuing to be controlled and influenced by traditional forms of life and structural restraints. Previous youth studies have shown that factors such as gender, parental education and family background may all have an influence on young people's biographies. Thus, quantitative methods have been also used to control for these factors and explore relationships to better understand young people's experiences in different social and familial settings.

This present study does not stop at this point; it also seeks to provide a deep and holistic understanding of the nature of youth transitions as an undiscovered phenomenon in this region. Therefore, the qualitative method was also used to explore in-depth how young people are experiencing their transitions and how they are responding to the environmental and cultural context in which are they placed. Furlong (2015a), in reference to the research on youth transitions, argued that quantitative research helps to reveal the impact of barriers to young people's pathways, and to identify diversified patterns of experiences. It may identify winners and losers, those who participate in risky activities, and what kind of young people cope with difficulties; it also maintains awareness of the continuing force of social structures. However, it is sometimes insufficient simply to identify the societal trends leading to these

outcomes, and to focus on the present, without considering the long-term processes. Furlong (2015a: 19) concluded that “the best research in the transition tradition combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, providing robust evidence of outcomes and a fuller understanding of experiences”. This argument is followed in this study, as although quantitative approach helps to reveal some aspects of the topic, complex dimensions remain which cannot be discovered solely by this method, such as the level of detail required to fully understand the nature of youth transition and the subjective positions of young people. Therefore, the qualitative method is used to identify in greater depth and detail, how individual young adults have experienced the transition to work, how they got there, and the difficulties, constraints and opportunities faced during this journey. Thus, combining the two methods achieves the required understanding of the various aspects of the researched social phenomenon, effectively overcoming its complexity (Creswell, 1999).

By thinking of social phenomenon as a prism with multiple facets, choosing only one side to look at a phenomenon may limit understanding. Similarly, using a single technique such as a questionnaire survey investigates only one side of this phenomenon but does not explain the social phenomenon itself. Instead, using multiple facets of investigation, by conducting a survey and then in-depth interviews, together with the theoretical investigation, examination of the phenomenon can take place from different angles and the reality can be more accurately captured. The researcher believes that the picture will be clearer with the integration of techniques from both qualitative and quantitative approaches rather than choosing one alone. Combining different methods allows the use of “different lenses to calibrate an optimally clear vision” (Saukko, 2003: 24). It gives the opportunity to get closer to the phenomenon, and to clarify unexpected results or possible contradictions.

As Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) stated, mixed methods research has methodological superiority over a single design approach in several areas. It offers a broad scope, basically enabling “the researcher to simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions, and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study” (ibid.: 15). In the present study, mixed methods allow the researcher to answer the exploratory questions while at the same time confirming and verifying theories, and constructing and developing new ideas. As was

mentioned in Chapter One, this study seeks to test the validity of the wider models and ideas in the youth literature that have been developed in other contexts, as well as testing and refining the bigger social theories to describe the transitions of young people in Kuwait, and mixed methods offers a useful approach to achieve that. Mixed methods research also can offset the disadvantages associated with single methods. In the current study, the quantitative methods (questionnaires) ensure sufficient breadth of enquiry and results, while the qualitative methods (interviews) ensure adequate depth. This mixing of methods facilitates more comprehensive results and a more complete picture of a complex topic (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). In particular, the quantitative components enable the investigation of a large sample of young people in the last stages of education, to gain a snapshot or a situational picture and identify different patterns in term of their experiences, perspectives, and obstacles they face(d), and to discover the role of external forces over their future pathways in a systematic and comparative way (Janes, 2011). The qualitative method records the experiences of recently employed young adults to discover the wider contexts and to generate new concepts. It seeks to understand the challenges and the impact of continuing structural forces on young people's lives in a deeper way and to provide more details of the effectiveness of educational and employment policies in the long term.

The common criticisms of the use of combining two methods focus on triangulation studies that use different methods to address a single question. These studies traditionally focus on how to cross-validate findings using different methods; their key goal is seeking to obtain convergent findings across different methods. Basically, different qualitative and quantitative studies are conducted in the hope of producing similar results. The use of triangulation decreased after a series of studies that failed to produce convergent conclusions. Instead, it has generally been found more useful to use different methods in pursuing complementarity (Morgan, 1998). The main goal of complementarity, as stated by Plano-Clark and Creswell (2008), is “to measure overlapping but also different facets of phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon” (ibid.: 126). It seeks “elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the result from the other method” (ibid.: 282). This study therefore corresponds to this described approach, as it

uses relatively different questions for the same phenomenon and combines quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic.

Although the use of the quantitative method preceded the qualitative method in the present study, the processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation were overlapping as they were carried out at approximately the same time. Since the participants in the qualitative research were not the same as the group researched in the quantitative data, there was no need for the sequence commonly used to gain more insight and explanation from the participants about their answers in the quantitative instrument (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Thus, driven by the pragmatism principle (the researcher selects what is deemed appropriate to the study), the data for the present study were collected in a single phase, and a concurrent triangulation design was therefore used. This design generally involves the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in a single but separate phase so that the researcher can better understand the problem and then integrate the data from each method, bringing together the separate results in their interpretation (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011); this is the strategy used here.

Research Methods

Survey-based method

The target study population for the questionnaire was the 58,763 Kuwaiti secondary students, both male and female, studying in government schools in the academic year 2014/2015. The questionnaire was distributed to 1,200 students from 16 of the 139 secondary schools in Kuwait, selected by geographical area. Secondary school students in Kuwait generally fall into the age group of 15 to 18, and the same educational and future career tracks are open equally to all these young people. At this stage they are required to choose their educational specialisation, paving the way to their college enrolment in the case of higher education, or to other opportunities that will open up various channels for them to find work. This category was seen as appropriate to finding out a great deal about the potential or initial orientation of

young people towards work and general future prospects, how they manage and plan for their future from the beginning, and how certain factors may continue to impact on their decisions and future plans. A further aim was to understand the nature of social reality and opportunity structures experienced by the young people, such as their family and school, from the early stages of shaping their paths. Young people in secondary school can provide up-to-dated information on the effectiveness of the current educational environment and government support in facilitating youth transition at this stage.

The survey is a practical tool for handling a large sample of participants, and is thus better able to generate powerful and accurate data, than semi-structured interviews, allowing comparisons between groups and then generalisation to be drawn from the data. As Kvale (1994: 164) stated, compared to qualitative explanations, “when it comes to convincing an audience, the hard quantified facts may appear more trustworthy”. Hence, a survey questionnaire was seen as useful instrument in this research to quickly reach a relatively large sample of students from different geographical regions in a flexible and cost-effective way, and to deal with large amounts of data (Bryman, 2008). It was successful in terms of building up detailed statistical data about students’ experiences and views, and in comparing male and female groups and other groups from different family backgrounds. Although the questionnaire did not include sensitive questions, it was anonymous and its confidential nature gave participants greater freedom in answering the questions, especially those of a personal nature, and reduced the tension that might result from face-to-face interactions (Jyrinki, 1977). As Bryman (2008) pointed out, questionnaires do not suffer from the problem of asking questions in different ways or/and in a different order, as is the case in interviewing techniques; in other words, the interviewer’s variation and its effects are absent. The standardised layout of the questionnaire means that all participants are exposed to a uniform method, in turn preserving validity. Like any other research method, the survey questionnaire has some weaknesses, such as not allowing participants to express in detail what they want to say, or finding an appropriate category in answer to closed questions (Bryman, 2008; Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2007).

To deal with these issues, the option ‘Other’ was added whenever necessary, to allow the respondents to write their own answers in more detail. Further, an open-ended question was

added at the end of the questionnaire for participants to express their experiences and thoughts about the difficulties or any other matters concerning them about their transition from school to work, freely and with limited influence from the researcher (Patton, 1987). Most of the responding students gave in-depth answers and explained their thoughts openly, although some left this question blank. Although ample space was provided for participants to respond to this question, some used extra room on the paper, reflecting their care, honesty and reliability in responding. The way in which the questionnaire was administered and distributed may also have encouraged the participants and made them more interested in fully answering the questions. Before turning to the procedure for administering the questionnaire, how the questionnaire was designed is now described.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to gather a large amount of detailed information about the attitudes and concerns of young people in Kuwait, their future plans, and the factors that influence their choices, in addition to their points of view on social restrictions. The items were created from several sources to ensure content validity; these sources included reviewing the literature, regular discussions with supervisors, taking advantage of some questions used in previous youth surveys (e.g. Millward et al., 2006; Perkins & Peterson, 2005), and new questions which were added to meet the aim of the study.

To obtain accurate and clear answers, the questionnaire used a varied set of question formats, including multiple choice questions, rating scales, dichotomous questions (yes or no) and demographic questions. The questionnaire consisted of five sections, starting with demographic data, which is helpful to boost the confidence of participants (Hoinville & Jowell, 1987), including questions on their gender, current educational level, and general family background, such as the socio-economic status of the family and the parents' educational qualifications. The second section contained items seeking information about professional orientation and attitudes, and future expectations including their plans after graduation from secondary school, work preferences (such as job sector), the perceived barriers that may prevent them from achieving their occupational ambitions, and the extent of

their experience with the skills required by the labour market. The third section covered the opportunities available to the students at school and the support they received from their teachers in terms of professional preparation, offering the following response options: (1) always (2) often (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never happens. The fourth section contained a series of statements asking for their levels of satisfaction with, and agreement about, various topics. The topics covered various events related to the preparation for, and transition to, the world of work. These events were divided into five sections, as follows: your school, your parents, your future, yourself, the state. As this section aims to discover the extent of youth satisfaction and agreement, the categorical variables in which the categories are ordered are appropriate here, thus ordinal variables were used, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. More specifically, a five-point scale (strongly agree, agree, partially agree, strongly disagree, disagree) was used to allow the individual to express how much they agreed or disagreed with a particular statement. In some parts of the data chapter (Chapter Six), the response options were combined to make the results clearer to the reader. Combining the categorical variables also provided more insights into the young people's experiences and their points of view. There were different possible ways of combining the variables; for example either the various degrees of agreement (strongly agree and agree) could be combined into simply 'agree' and the various degrees of disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) combined into simply 'disagree', leaving the 'partially agree' in one neutral category, or to consider 'partially agree' as a degree of agreement and combine it with the 'agree' category. Combining 'partially agree' with the 'agree' category was thought to be more logical than combining it with the 'disagree' category, as it still expresses a degree of agreement, even though that agreement is incomplete or weak. Although the second way was followed, the first one was also considered, and information about how the results would differ if the first way had been followed was added to the footnotes in the data chapter (Chapter Six).

Five items were taken from the Pearlin Mastery Scale (locus of control) as a tool that helps to understand how participants feel about control over their lives. It is a well-established and validated scale that measures "the extent to which one regards one's life-chances as being under one's own control in contrast to being fatalistically ruled" (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978: 5). In brief, those individuals who believe that their life is controlled by fate, luck or some outside

force, are said to have an external locus of control, and those who think that their future is determined by their own actions are said to have an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1990). A growing body of research in sociology as well as in psychology and economics is focusing on the role of, and supporting the impact of, these internal-external attitudes, alongside other non-cognitive skills, on the social behaviours and decisions of individuals, the labour market, educational outcomes and investment in human capital (Wang et al., 1999; Bandura, 1989; Coleman & DeLeire, 2003; Benabou & Tirole, 2002).

After the questionnaire had been designed, it was carefully translated into Arabic to ensure that the participants had no problems in understanding the meaning of any of the questions. Once the questionnaire had been translated, and in order to identify any ambiguous questions, it was piloted with 100 participants before being used in its final form. Walliman (2010: 175) stated that the pilot study is “A pre-test of a questionnaire or other type of survey on a small number of cases in order to test the procedures and quality of responses”. Further, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) stressed the importance of a pilot study in examining the responses of participants to the questions to acquire feedback. In order to gain a realistic assessment of the feasibility of the main project, the pilot survey was therefore completed in the same settings and circumstances as the final survey (that is, in the classroom). The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire while thinking out loud. Their feedback and comments were written down, and based on these some improvements were made, with some words and phrases replaced by terms considered more appropriate by young people.

Administering the questionnaire

The investigation and process of data collection in this project were approached systematically. First, an appropriate time was agreed in the calendar of the academic year of Kuwaiti secondary schools to ensure the avoidance of school holidays and exams, and to have plenty of time to collect the data. The period between October and January was found to be most suitable. Accordingly, research materials and instruments for each method were prepared in advance, also considering the time required for meeting the ethical requirements according to Glasgow University’s regulations.

The period of field-work in Kuwait (encompassing data collection via both methods) lasted for five months, from September 2014 to January 2015. During the first month, the researcher sought permission to access schools, which was achieved in two steps: first, gaining permission from the Research and Development Department of the Ministry of Education, and secondly, gaining permission from the Assistant Undersecretary of each educational region. Approval permissions from each of the educational region are provided in Appendix Eight. After these permissions were obtained, 16 schools, eight for female students and eight for males²⁴, were chosen randomly from different geographical regions.

A similar procedure was followed for school visits. The researcher met one of the school administrators to show them the permission for access, and to provide information about the purpose of the data collection and the research. A representative then introduced the researcher to the teachers and students, and the questionnaires were distributed in three classrooms for the different educational stages. The questionnaires were only distributed to Kuwaiti students; in fact, few non-Kuwaitis students were present anyway. The number of students within each class was 25 or above, so around 75 questionnaires were obtained from each school. In some cases, students from other classes were asked to participate in order to achieve the required number.

The process of gaining permission to access participants in the schools was comparatively straightforward, as school administrative procedures are not complex in Kuwait. However, some teachers showed a degree of disappointment at the upset to their study plans and asked the administration to look for other classrooms. This was handled in different ways, some administrators preferring to distribute the questionnaire during non-compulsory lessons (or optional subjects) such as art, physical education and music. Other administrators preferred to set a specific time of 30 minutes, either at the beginning or the end of lessons, leaving the remaining time for the teacher.

The questionnaire was self-administered and completed under the researcher's supervision, after clearly clarifying the instructions, the aim of the project, and the nature of the final

²⁴ As explained in Chapter Three, government schools at all levels, with the sole exception of kindergarten, are gender-segregated.

results. The importance of giving careful and accurate answers was also stressed. The questionnaires were handed out to students in their classrooms, and collected once they had been completed. This approach avoided several risks that appear with the usage of postal or e-mail questionnaires, which by necessity are completed without the presence of the researcher. These risks, as explained by Bryman (2008), include not knowing who has answered the questionnaire, low response rates, missing data, and inability to help participants with any problems of understanding. The researcher personally encouraged participants to complete all the questions, and to request assistance in the case of difficulty or of any unclear points. All student enquiries were answered, so the risk of misunderstanding and the problem of missing data resulting from skipping ambiguous questions was reduced. This also provided the opportunity to interact with, and get closer to, the young people, encouraging their enthusiasm and desire to participate in a project related to their future, especially for those in the last stage of compulsory education. Two 17-year-old female students expressed their gratitude for the effort in conducting this kind of study, and they asked me to raise their voices and concerns as stakeholders to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth. This reflects the need for more attention to be paid to young people in Kuwait, and to gain a deeper understanding of their lives and the issues worrying them.

The questionnaires were completed individually, in a quiet environment and with sufficient space between desks; in other words, the conditions were similar to those of an examination room. Due to the limited time specified by some schools' administrators, a few participants were unable to answer all the questions within the prescribed time. Unfortunately, this meant that 10% were not included in the sample, although a sufficiently large sample size was achieved. Thus, the final size of the sample was 1,120 students, of which 50.3% were male and 49.7% female; 32% were in the first grade (aged 15-16), 36% in the second (16-17) and 33% in the third (17-18). Although this represents a good balance, it was a challenge to control the balance of student numbers from the chosen specialisations (science/humanities²⁵), with

²⁵ According to the Kuwaiti education system, during the first stage in secondary school, students only study compulsory subjects, divided into 35 lessons per week (an average of seven lessons daily). At the end of the first year the student determines her/his academic specialisation (either science or humanities). Thus, in the second and third stages, there are six compulsory subjects, five specialised subjects and two optional subjects as free activities. Students with humanities specialisation tend to study academic subjects such as philosophy, history, French and geography whereas those specialising in scientific subjects tend to study mathematics, chemistry and

the result that science specialists numbered double that of the humanities. Chapter Five illustrates these characteristics in more detail.

The students usually took 25-35 minutes to answer and return the questionnaire. The length of the questionnaire was a concern from the beginning. The considerable length arose from the desire to cover all the aspects needed to understand the research questions. During several discussions with the researcher's supervisors, the questions were adjusted and reduced until the length and content of the questionnaire was approved. Generally, few of the participants commented on or complained about the questionnaire's length. As Bryman (2008) argued, it is difficult to determine when a questionnaire is too long, as participants may find the content interesting and tolerate answering many questions.

Data entry and analysis

The data collected through the survey questionnaire was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23.0, computer software for handling large data-sets (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). The data was entered, coded and recoded in SPSS, an extremely time-consuming task given the large amount of the sample size and data-sets. Checks were made for missing data to avoid any errors that might reduce the strength or validity of the conclusions. Frequency tables and basic descriptive statistics were first constructed for all the data in the questionnaire, for exploratory and confirmatory analysis. The second phase of analysis considered if differences existed between two qualitative variables, and was achieved using the Pearson Chi-square test. This is a test of statistical significance deployed to investigate the relationships between two categories of variables, although it cannot provide information on the strength of the association (Wood, 2003, Field; 2005). The significance level (p-value) is set α at 0.05, thus if $p > 0.05$ this indicates that the two variables are independent. All the responses to the open-ended question were read. This process was time-consuming but valuable in providing meaningful and interesting information. The participants' texts were summarised and categorised manually, and some direct quotations were captured and combined with the results.

Ethical considerations

All the measures required to maintain privacy, veracity, confidentiality, data protection and fidelity were taken (Kent, 2000). Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the School of Social and Political Sciences Research Ethics Forum at the University of Glasgow on 24 July 2014, after making minor amendments based on the committee's recommendation. The letter of approval is provided as an Appendix to this thesis (see Appendix Eight).

Although the aim of the questionnaire was explained verbally to all participants, it was also accompanied by an information sheet that explained in more detail the purpose of the data collection and how it would be used in a totally overt and non-deceitful way. This sheet also emphasised that participation was voluntary, and that the participants had the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason (see Appendix Two). Only one male student refused to take a part in the research and none of the participants withdrew. Kent (2000) argued that informed consent can be given only by participants over the age of eleven. If this research had been undertaken in Scotland then parental permission would have been required, but in Kuwait this was not necessary. As has been described above, access to the schools and completion of the questionnaire were authorised by the Ministry of Education and the respective school administrations.

Since the interactions between students and school staff might make students feel obliged to participate, the questionnaire was completed while teachers and school administrators waited outside the classroom. This also ensured the freedom and confidentiality of all the participants in answering without being held accountable or punished, particularly with regard to the questions that related to the school and teachers' issues. The names of the participants were not required and no-one could identify them in person, thus guaranteeing their safety.

Interview-based method

Despite the advantages of the quantitative approach, it may be unable to provide the required depth of understanding of broader social processes. The qualitative approach was therefore also adopted in this research to collect in-depth data. Interviews were used for sharing ideas,

meanings and stories using language as a tool for producing, organising and presenting knowledge. Bowling (2014) argued that interviews are a useful method that enables the participants to provide detailed and in-depth responses about complex topics. In order to explore the experiences of young people and to gain understanding of the complex issues, it was necessary to engage in a dialogue with them. The resulting illumination of the sampled young people's views and experiences at two different periods of life, during the last stage of schooling (questionnaire) and once at work (interviews), provided a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of youth transitions in this society.

An important point about the qualitative approach is that it is not aimed at generalising but rather at providing a rich understanding of some aspects of human experience through studying particular cases within specific situations (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Polit & Beck, 2010). In a sense, since qualitative data are usually collected from a few cases or participants, findings should be generalised to a wider population only with caution. These participants are likely to provide a version or view of reality, not reality itself; thus, a gap in knowledge may still exist. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013: 94) emphasised that “results of qualitative studies illuminate one version of truth, one perspective, one voice in this multi-voiced, everyday world”. Based on these considerations, a greater degree of caution has been taken when presenting and interpreting the qualitative data, avoiding over-generalisation or over-statement of claims from the participants' narratives. Even in the case of collective responses or agreement appearing among the majority of participants, and even with referring to previous studies that provide similar results, the researcher treats the findings cautiously, as representing one of many possible versions of reality or as offering a partial truth. Paying attention to this issue and the recognition of the possibility that not everything which participants say is true is particularly important when dealing with young people, according to the idea of the epistemological fallacy suggested by Furlong and Cartmel (1997). As mentioned earlier, under the epistemological fallacy, young people are likely to be blind to the existence of the structural conditions shaping their lives, and to factors that may, in fact, have social and economic causes and contributions. Therefore, they may well tend to emphasise individualistic interpretations and expectations rather than socio-political ones.

As this study is investigating the experiences of young Kuwaitis, non-Kuwaitis were not included in the sample. The age of the participants for interview ranged from 22 to 30. The common age of entry into the labour market in Kuwait is 22, and the age range was extended to 30 for two reasons. First, as was discussed in the literature review, many researchers have recognised the current extended, diverse and non-linear transition to work in modern societies, compared to the predictability of previous generations (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Since the experiences of young people have become more protracted, overlapping and unstable in recent times, this has led some researchers to argue that it has become meaningless to look for an end point for youth transition to work (Furlong, 2015a). Based on this idea, it was thought better to extend the age of the sample of participants to 30 to fit the contemporary discourse of youth transition and modernisation projects and to allow the capture of the different experiences of young people that might include long and multiple pathways in the dynamic and non-linear nature of their life-courses. Second, the objective of the interviews was not only to obtain information about the experiences of individual participants or their personal stories, but also to gain general insight into the experiences of young people in Kuwait. The gathering of young people's perceptions within this age group ensured that they had sufficient experience to enrich discussions about various issues concerning the education system, employment policy, and the impact of certain variables or factors on youth transition. In addition to this wide age range, both genders, different educational levels and both public and private sectors were covered by the sample in order to obtain a diversity of perceptions and clear knowledge.

In order to capture the experiences of young workers, grounded theory was adopted. This approach involves a systematic process of gathering and analysing data; new themes may emerge out of the data, and thus theory is developed throughout the process of gathering and analysing the data (Charmaz, 1983). Although the interview schedules were prepared in advance to reflect the research aims, the participants were encouraged to deviate and talk about topics outside the schedule, which in turn allowed unexpected themes to emerge. This meant recursively going back and forth between data and theory during the data analysis process (Bryman, 2008), a flexible approach that worked effectively in producing and enriching the concepts involved (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The following sections outline the processes of data collection and analysis which reflected the principles of grounded theory.

According to Creswell (2003), there are different options for in-depth interviews: individual or group interviews, structured or semi-structured interviews, recorded audio or hand-written notes interviews, and face-to-face or remote interviews. A semi-structured and personal interview approach was followed in the present research, which meant that all the interviews were done face-to-face and recorded by audiotape while hand-written notes were made simultaneously. This approach was chosen in order to obtain the effective degree of freedom to overcome the complexity of the research topic and at the same time to maintain the reliability of the approach by using a certain level of standardised questions to minimise bias. Semi-structured interviews have a flexible nature and allow participants to explore their own views and perspectives (Bryman, 2008). The researcher determines the topics and questions to be discussed, but the order of the questions can be changed during interview, and new questions not included in the plan can be added too. This allows the interviewer to diverge to some extent to gain more detail in certain areas (Britten, 1995). This type of interview was deemed appropriate here, as the interviewees experienced different pathways after schooling and were employed in different sectors and jobs; therefore, different questions were likely to arise with each of them.

An interview guide was developed to list and organise the topics and questions which the research intended to explore during the interview. Patton (2002) noted that preparing this guide guarantees that the same basic issues are followed with each participant. It also enables the researcher to use the limited time available in a productive way, and “helps make interviewing a number of different people more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting in advance the issues to be explored” (ibid.: 343). During the interviews, several additional questions emerged. Probing questions were asked to draw attention and dig deeper into particular topics. For example, when some participants talked about their parents’ objection to their choosing a certain job, questions such as “How did you respond to this or how did you feel about it?” were asked. Mason (2002: 67) clarified that the qualitative interviewer should be careful in handling social dynamics. Here, although the nature of the interviews was similar to regular conversation, and many topics were touched upon, the interview was never allowed to drift too far from the research goals and the main topics that had already been decided. This style of interview, with an open and semi-structured nature, succeeded in providing rich,

reliable data about a range of different issues. It also led to unexpected information that had previously been outside the scope of knowledge of the researcher. The next section explains more about the design of the interview and the nature of the questions asked.

Interview design

Using the knowledge and experience of the researcher and with the help of supervisors, initial interview questions were established. The interaction with students and conducting of the interviews was beneficial, and a few extra questions were added. The interviews covered five areas: 1) introduction; 2) general questions; 3) family role; 4) educational system; and 5) state and society. Within these items, basic forms of questions were asked, as identified by Patton (2002), including those on the interviewees' background, value and opinion, experience and behaviour, feelings and knowledge. The first section used background questions to provide demographic data about the interviewees' age, job title, social and marital status, and number of years of employment. Starting with such questions helped to reduce any tension and create a more comfortable environment for the participants. The second section involved questions designed to determine how the interviewees had experienced the transition to the labour market and become involved in the world of work. It covered their preparation for the labour market, selection of the desired working sector and job, and the difficulties they encountered during this transition. Although the next three items also involved questions that reflected the personal experience of the participant, opinions and feelings were encouraged in investigating the role played by various factors in the school to work transition in general. The third and fourth sections focused on the participants' opinions and feelings about the role of their family and the educational system, before the last section focused on the role of wider societal aspects and government policies. Since the last section was about the state and society, the participants' opinions were sought on various topics, such as unemployment and supportive government policies, in addition to asking for their feelings about society's perception of manual work and other societal barriers that young people are likely to face in their transition to work. The questions were kept clear and easy to understand, neutral (participants were not steered towards a specific answer), open-ended to allow participants to respond in detail, and unambiguous in introducing a single idea at a time (Patton, 2002).

Recruitment of Participants

The interviews were conducted a week after completion of the questionnaires. Access to employees and times and venues for interviews were prepared a month in advance, and they began in November 2014. As has already been explained, the sample aimed to capture a diverse range of opinions and experiences from young Kuwaiti male and female employees, aged 22 to 30, from different educational levels. Care was also taken to involve participants from both the public and private sectors. Since different dimensions were used as the basis for selection, the technique employed here was purposive sampling, defined by Bowling (2014: 209) as a “deliberately non-random method of sampling which aims to sample a group of people or settings with a particular characteristic”. To obtain the required characteristics with the limited time available, official lists of employees in government bodies were consulted; this also avoided researcher bias in the choice of participants.

Employees in the Kuwaiti public sector are recruited by the Civil Service Commission, which holds all information on workers in state ministries and institutions, as it is responsible for supervising and regulating employment, promotions, and working conditions in the public sector. Private-sector employees must register with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, so access to these employees was obtained through that body. This method of identifying participants also ensured that they were at no risk of being penalised through being accessed through their place of work. Appendix Eight provides the approval permissions to gain access to participating workers through these two bodies.

The procedures for visits to both bodies were similar: the researcher was directed by the reception desk to the department providing basic information about employees. The administrators were shown the official papers confirming the PhD study based at the University of Glasgow, UK. The objectives of the research and method were discussed, and the required criteria in selecting workers were then determined:

- 1) All participants should be Kuwaiti citizens.
- 2) All participants should be in the age range 22 to 30.

- 3) All participants should have completed at least secondary school education. This is important to ensure that participants have experience and clear knowledge about all levels of the education system.

Based on these criteria, the researcher was given a list of employees. She contacted a number of them by phone to ask if they were interested in taking part in the research. Around 50 employees were contacted, and since they had the right to refuse, a sample of 24 participants (11 males and 13 females), was eventually obtained. Fourteen of the participants were working in the public sector, and ten in the private sector. They included a teacher, a banker, a technician, a lawyer, a secretary, a worker in customer service, and others. Sixteen held a Bachelor's degree or a Master's, and eight high school certificates or diplomas. Appendix Three details the background information of the interviewees.

The fact that Kuwaiti society holds to cultural traditions and Islamic norms regarding gender separation was reflected in the sample. Since there is sensitivity about communication between males and females, and as the researcher is female and of the same age as the participants, gaining the consent of potential male participants to take part in this study was to a certain extent challenging, generally taking longer than for female participants. Although some males were willing, traditional restrictions on personal meetings with a female remained as barriers to others, and are reflected in the greater number of females than males in the final sample. This fieldwork challenge is a clear reflection of how Kuwaiti culture has been an integral part of this thesis, and even shaped its methodology. Despite the difficulties and dilemmas that confronted the researcher relating to getting the agreement of male participants, they provided valuable evidence to question the dominant theoretical and methodological models of youth studies which are too often biased to northern cultural contexts.

The interview situation (ensuring rigour)

The reliability of an instrument is assessed by testing and re-testing the procedures (Seal & Silverman, 1997). This can be applied to structured interviews by using a precise schedule with each interviewee and comparing the results. Since the questions in this research were varied according to the personal circumstances of each participant within the chosen semi-

structured format, it was difficult to confirm reliability in this way. Several issues can affect the validity of interviews, including timing and ensuring that they are conducted without problems or complaints (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). Within this framework, the interviews took place after arrangements had been made with the participants. They were contacted at least ten days before the interview to confirm a time and place appropriate to them. The choices of venue were often a public library or a quiet cafe. Since the interviews did not take place in the participant's work place, there was no need to gain permission from their employers. Each of the interviews took 45 minutes to an hour. The personal characteristics shared between the researcher and interviewees, age, nationality and cultural background, contributed to creating a relaxed atmosphere and facilitated open conversation.

The communication skills of the interviewer (Barriball & While, 1994) and establishing trust and rapport are important elements in ensuring the validity and reliability of interview data (Gubrium et al., 2012). Kitsuse and Cicourel (1963: 133) also stated that "Individuals are much more likely to disclose potentially discrediting or salient information if they feel comfortable around the researcher". With this in mind, the researcher found it useful, for example, to use a common language, show enthusiasm and interest and share facial expressions, with participants, to make the interviews more like informal encounters in the hope of generating the most truthful and reliable data. These techniques helped to break down barriers, especially with the male participants. Ethical considerations are also very important in terms of the validity, integrity and reliability of qualitative findings. In light of this, ethical issues such as transparency, consent, and privacy were carefully considered.

Ethical issues

Obtaining the informed consent of the interviewees was necessary to guarantee that they did not feel coerced into participating. An information sheet was given to each of them to explain the goals of the study before the interview began (see Appendix Four). It stated that the participant was free to decline to answer any of the questions during the interview, and could withdraw at any time from the research without giving a reason. All the participants were also asked to read, understand and then sign a consent form giving the researcher permission to

audio-record the interview. They were assured that all the information gathered would be kept strictly confidential, and that the data would be destroyed at the end of the research. To ensure the confidentiality of personal views and experiences, all the participants' names were replaced by pseudonyms. Since the interviews were conducted in Arabic, interviewees were asked if they were happy for the transcriptions of the audio-tapes to be translated into English.

Data analysis

After completion of the interviews, all the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim and then translated into English. The notes taken during each interview helped to add detail to the participants' recordings. The transcripts were read and re-read several times; this allowed the researcher to familiarise herself with the data. As was explained earlier, analysis of the qualitative data was carried out in accordance with the basic principles of grounded theory. Bryman (2008) stressed that one of the key processes of grounded theory is coding, which necessitates reviewing the transcripts and treating data as potential indicators that appear fit for interpretation into significant theoretical concepts. This creates a link between the original data and the conceptualisation of it. Therefore, after reviewing the transcripts and notes, and as an initial step in coding, labels were given to the salient data and social concepts such as agency and structures. Key codes and themes were discovered during this stage, not all of which had been anticipated. This 'initial coding' has been described as "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 61). At a later stage, the researcher employed axial (or focused) coding in which the primary set of codes was refined and developed to produce theoretical concepts that were also widened by linking them to larger social themes. Through these two phases of coding, the researcher was able to establish the sub-themes that emerged within each category. For example, under the discussion of agency, 'individual projects' arose as a sub-theme. It is necessary to clarify that the method of coding used in qualitative analysis was different from that used for quantitative coding. Charmaz (1983: 111) has stated that:

Qualitative coding is not the same as quantitative coding... Quantitative coding requires preconceived, logically deduced codes into which the data are placed. Qualitative coding...means creating categories from interpretation of the data.

Therefore, the coding of qualitative data does not depend on standardised procedures and predefined categories, as is the case in quantitative analysis. The aim in the latter was to merge the data into preconceived categories, rapidly fixing the quantitative coding frame. However, as the conceptualisation was under continuous review and revision in the coding of the qualitative data, the process tended to be more provisional. The codes represented more levels of elaboration, some codes emerged which conflicted with others, and some, as mentioned, were developed theoretically at a later stage. This way of coding contributed to creating a framework for presenting and discussing the qualitative results in a natural manner. It should be mentioned here that the process of analysing the quantitative data preceded the qualitative analysis, but only by a short time. The initial understanding of the separate results of each method can then provide better understanding of the problem before considering their interpretation together. This reflects the pragmatic principle by which the researcher chooses the procedure most appropriate to the study.

Conclusion

In summary, this research was influenced by the key assumptions of pragmatism that provide an alternative worldview to interpretivism/constructivism and positivism, and positions the problem being investigated as the central point. The use of the mixed methods approach underlined the practical link between philosophical pragmatism and the research methodology, as it was found to be the most flexible and suitable for the present research problem and in acquiring the relevant information. The argument for mixed methods in this thesis is that because the social phenomenon is complex and because the methods of data collection are not unlimited, the use of mixed methods is required to best understand this complexity and to eliminate some disadvantages of a single method (Byrne & Humble, 2007). In other words, the

decision to mix both methods was a pragmatic one, taken because it was felt that using only one method would give an incomplete response to the initial objective of the research, while using both methods and different points of view would contribute to understanding the phenomena more accurately. The quantitative survey and the qualitative in-depth interviews thus allowed the different strengths of each method to contribute to the study. While the quantitative survey supports concepts such as generalisation, validity, objectivity and reliability, the qualitative element via the in-depth interviews adds credibility and dependability (Hamberg et al., 1994).

The chapter has presented the processes of collecting and analysing the data gathered using each method, conducted independently at approximately the same time, thus, representing the concurrent triangulation design of mixed methods. The difficulties encountered by the researcher in the field work were also outlined. The next chapter is the first of three data chapters. Chapters Five and Six introduce the main themes produced from the analysis of the data and the responses obtained from the quantitative survey. The analysis of the qualitative data from the in-depth interviews is presented in Chapter Seven. Some qualitative data and quotations from the quantitative component are also presented in this chapter. Although Chapter Seven attempts to link some of the quantitative data and some of the findings from the previous chapters with the qualitative data in order to build a bridge between the two different approaches, the results of both methods are more fully clearly drawn together in Chapter Eight, the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 5 - Setting the scene: Youth, education and the 'skills gap'

Introduction

This chapter, together with the following chapter, focuses on the quantitative findings (with some of the qualitative components of the quantitative survey) from the questionnaire responses of the sampled Kuwaiti school students aged 15 to 18. They give a picture of the current opinions of young people in the final stage of schooling in the country. As an introduction to the empirical work, this chapter sets the scene for the subsequent chapters by describing the quantitative sample, and data related to the educational environment. The argument is that for a better understanding of youth experiences it is necessary to consider the broader contextual reality of young people's lives as explained by the young people themselves. This provides a wider understanding of factors likely to drive and shape young people's perceptions and attitudes towards work. Bourdieu (1990, 1977b) emphasises that institutions create ways of thinking rooted in individual minds that are likely to persist throughout their lives; highlighting the reality of the major educational institutions in individual life, such as family and school, is therefore critical.

Thus, while the other data chapters are more analytical this one is slightly more descriptive, explaining the experience and skills acquired by young Kuwaitis at home and in school. Moreover, it helps to build understanding of the series of arguments and underlying explanations that emerge in the following empirical chapters, especially Chapter Seven, which focuses on how young adults experience and respond to the factors that constrain their transitions to work. The study reveals that young Kuwaitis' pathways and challenges are shaped by diverse, complex and interconnected educational and socio-cultural contexts. The current chapter helps in understanding some of the reasons behind young adults' challenges and tensions.

Living in late modernity means that young people live in an era of lifelong learning, with many elements in the education process, such as the separation of communities and educational institutions, becoming outmoded as time goes on (Wyn, 2009). Many educators are debating the role of education in preparing students for employment in the 21st century through fostering inherent flexibility, critical thinking and communication skills (Uchida, Cetron & McKenzie, 1999). This chapter argues that young people in Kuwait seem to grow up in social environments where the skills and activities they need in the modern labour market are limited; they are therefore often unprepared for the high competition for government jobs. This argument is built up gradually throughout the chapter. It provides support for youth transitions literature in the Middle East on the failure of educational institutions to cope with the modern labour market and economic changes (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). It also supports the criticisms emerging from GCC employers about the inefficiency of educational institutions in supplying employees with the technical qualities and soft skills, such as customer communication skills, which are required for employability. It has been argued that this is behind the reluctance of some employers in the private sector to hire GCC nationals (Al-Ali, 2008; Fakeeh, 2009).

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first deals with demographic data to provide general information about the participants, then the second section highlights the feelings of the participants about their readiness and preparation for the transition to work. It reveals concerns and a lack of confidence among the majority of participants, especially females. The lack of different skills appears to be one of the reasons behind this concern, especially with the limited experience of participants in the activities that contribute to enhancing individual soft and work-relevant skills. The third section focuses on the support students receive from their families, showing that Kuwaiti families pay little attention to ensuring access to activities that expose their children to work skills, such as taking on part-time jobs, compared with academic skills and obtaining certificates. This discusses how culture and certain economic conditions can contribute to different experiences for young people from different global contexts. The next part of this section focuses on the support given by schools, showing that the school environment seems to fail to support students in acquiring the necessary skills for the competitive labour market, and those required by private employers in particular (Salih, 2010;

Al-Ali, 2008). The last section of the chapter shows that a lack of skills is not the only possible element playing a role in young people's concerns about work transition, as it appears to be a common feeling prevalent even among students with relatively good skills. This section anticipates the following chapter that focuses on young people's feelings of control, and discovers the tensions in their lives in relation to wide cultural and social factors.

Characteristics of the respondents

Table 5.1 illustrates the respondents' characteristics numerically and by percentages. A total of 1,120 questionnaires from secondary school students were analysed. 50.3% from males and 49.7% from females. 31.4% of the responses came from students in the first grade (15-16), 35.6% from the second grade (16-17) and 32.9% from the third grade (17-18). In all, 61.5% of the students who completed the questionnaire were specialised in science (or intended to specialise, in case of the first stage students) and the rest in the humanities (or intended to specialise in humanities), see footnote 25 in Chapter Four. In terms of family economic wellbeing, more than 48% of the participants come from high income families, 48.5% considered their families to have an average economic level, and only 2.7% a low economic level. Responses on the family's education level, measured by the highest educational level attained by the parents, for high school (or less), diploma, bachelor's degree or postgraduate, were 22.8%, 20%, 38.5% and 18.7%, respectively (for the separate responses for the educational level of the father and mother, see Figures in Appendix Five). The students were asked to rank their family from very traditional to very modern, compared to other families. More than half (51.4%) said they came from a modern family, 39.3% from middle (or in-between) and 8.4% from the traditional family²⁶.

²⁶ Chapter Three explained how the understanding of the modern family in Kuwait differs from that in different cultures. Thus, self-classification was useful here; students were asked to rate their families (from 1 to 5: traditional =1, modern=5) in terms of the extent to which their families are committed to old habits, beliefs and values. On the one hand, using this position allows flexibility for respondents to position themselves; on the other hand, as the sample size is large, individuals can interpret the question differently. With a sufficiently large sample (1,120), some reliability was anticipated in how people understood these terms. In order to clearly

Table 5.1: Characteristics of respondents in percentages (%) and numbers (n=)

Gender	Current educational stage	Area of specialisation	Family economic level	Family education level	Level of modernisation of the family
-Male: 50.3% n= 563	-1 st stage (aged 15-16): 31.4% n= 352	-Humanities: 38.5% n= 430	-High: 48.8% n= 545	-High school (or less): 22.8% n= 191	-Modern family: 51.8% n= 576
-Female: 49.7% n= 557	-2 nd stage (aged 16-17): 35.6% n= 399	-Science: 61.5% n= 688	-Average: 48.5% n= 542	-Diploma: 20.0% n= 167	-In between (or middle) family: 39.6% n= 440
	-3 rd stage (aged 17-18): 32.9% n= 369		-Low: 2.7% n= 30	-Bachelor's degree: 38.5% n= 322	-Traditional family: 8.5% n= 94
		* Number of missing data= 2	* Number of missing data= 3	* Number of missing data= 284 including the responses of students who were not sure about their parents educational level	* Number of missing data= 10
Total: 1,120					

Confidence and readiness for the transition to work

Several questions were asked which aimed to find out what young people at this stage felt about their transition to work. 71% of participants were worried about the transition, and nearly half said that they were not ready or prepared for the labour market. Although there was no significant difference between age groups in this regard, this was not the case with gender. Table 5.2 shows a significant gender difference ($\chi^2=45.246$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in the extent to which participants felt concerned about the transition from school to work. Table 5.3 shows a

interpret the chi square test to see whether the differences between groups were statistically significant, the data was transformed into traditional family, middle family and modern family. This was done by combining the responses of 1 and 2 as a traditional family, and the responses of 4 and 5 as a modern family, leaving 3 to represent a middle family.

significant gender difference ($\chi^2=13.397$, $df=1$; $p<0.05$) in the extent they felt unready for the transition to work. 61% of the male students felt concern, and 81% of female students, with a similar difference in those unready for the transition to work.

Table 5.2: Students' concern about the transition from school to work, by gender

I am concerned about the transition from school to the workplace		Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
		Male	Female			
Agree	Count	265	365	630	45.246	0.000
	Within Gender%	61.2%	81.7%	71.6%		
Disagree	Count	168	82	250		
	Within Gender%	38.8%	18.3%	28.4%		
Total	Count	433	447	880		
	Within Gender%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Table 5.3: Students' feelings about readiness for the transition to work, by gender

I feel that I am not ready for the transition to the labour market		Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
		Male	Female			
Agree	Count	188	231	419	13.397	0.000
	Within Gender%	42.5%	55.0%	48.6%		
Disagree	Count	254	189	443		
	Within Gender%	57.5%	45.0%	51.4%		
Total	Count	442	420	862		
	Within Gender%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Thayer-Bacon (2003) argued that we are 'socially determined' by our society: individuals are social beings, whose sense of self is formed through their relationship with others. Their identities are largely affected by those around them. Certain community values determine appropriate and inappropriate roles for both genders, which are transmitted through multiple institutions, becoming an integral part of their identities and instilling in them a belief of their own limited aptitude. Al-suwailan (2006: 160) has claimed that "the formation of Kuwaiti women's identity and role needs more attention both in the family and in the school since those are the primary transmitters of societal values that affect women's perception of themselves and the world around them". Hence, it can be argued that females' concerns over their transition to the labour market are likely to be a product of old societal norms and values

in relation to gender roles; that is, the traditional belief that Kuwaiti women should stay at home, and that they are less able than men in relation to work. This perception may still exert a negative effect on women's perceptions of themselves and their potential.

Lack of skills

When participants were asked in the open-ended question that: *What are the main difficulties and challenges that you are concerned about in the transition from school to the labour market?*, some of them, who were of different ages, genders and family characteristics, linked their concern to educational attainment and a lack of knowledge and skills related to work. For example, some stated that their anxiety was caused by their perception of the weakness of the relevant skills taught in school, whereas others said that the lack of information about the workplace and the shortage of the skills and qualities needed for the labour market, made them feel worried and lacking in confidence. Inadequate training in technical and soft skills (people skills), social communication (interpersonal skills), taking responsibility, and self-reliance were frequently mentioned.

There is no doubt that activities such as work experience programmes and part-time jobs provide an opportunity for young people to enhance their skillsets. Indeed, as has been observed in prior research: "The work environment is an especially opportune context where adolescents can explore their identities and social roles while developing vocationally relevant skills (e.g. social skills and problem-solving abilities) and interests" (Mortimer & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007: 258). When considering the extent to which participants engage in such activities, the present findings indicate that only 38% of the 1,120 people surveyed replied 'Yes' when they were asked: *Have you ever joined training courses, workshop sessions or seminars that prepare youth for a future career?*. In terms of engagement in part-time or temporary summer jobs, only 7% replied 'Yes'.

The literature strongly supports the role of the home environment and parental involvement in enhancing students' academic achievement. Epstein (1989), who examined six home environmental factors that contribute to academic achievement, argued that the disparity in students' motivation to learn and do well academically can partly be explained by the overlap between the family environment and school. Together with academic skills, youth studies, especially those in the context of employment, have emphasised the role of the exposure of students to individual soft and work-related skills in leading to smoother and better outcomes in their transition from school to work. These skills can be obtained in several ways, such as by providing them with opportunities to engage in activities that foster individual skills in school, by exposing young people to the workplace through work experience programmes and vocational training programmes, and by engagement in part-time jobs. The connection between education and the labour market gives students the opportunity to meet employers or take part in the world of work, enabling them to acquire the principles and skills they will need in the workplace (Oxenbridge & Evesson, 2012). The following sections discuss how the participants are exposed to few opportunities to build their skills, and receive limited support from school and family with regard to engaging in such activities.

Youth transitions and habitus

According to Bourdieu, the primary habitus, which Bourdieu (1977b) also calls class habitus (*habitus de classe*), "is about 'internalizing the external' as the parents' modes of thinking, feeling and behaving that are linked to their position in the social space are internalized in the children's own habitus" (Walter, 2014: 13). One's habitus is also acquired through secondary socialisation, resulting in a secondary habitus (*habitus secondaire*) built on the stable primary habitus. It results from different life experiences, but especially from the individual's education at school and university (Walter, 2014). Bourdieu believed that the patterns that stand behind individuals' thinking in a given period or a certain generation can be established and developed through the school system alone. This occurs by practice through which ways

of thinking are created and reproduced unconsciously, which then prevail for a whole generation (Zeuner, 2003).

From this consideration, describing the nature of the family and school environments is important in terms of their role in creating ways of feeling, thinking and behaving. This contributes to building a better understanding of the experiences of young adults within the labour market (a topic which forms the focus of Chapter Seven) and the patterns that lie behind their ways of behaving and acting in this field.

Support for transition from the home

The review of youth transitions literature within the Middle East context showed that the nature of the labour market, which relies heavily on the public sector, has an influence on families and social norms. According to Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008), this can appear with the families' interest in providing support for their children to ensure they obtain higher education qualifications that equip them for a good public service job. This seems sound in the Kuwaiti context as the data show evidence of families' interest in students' academic issues, at the same time paying limited attention to the development of the critical work skills required by the private sector (Salih, 2010; Al-Ali, 2008).

Generally, and as can be seen in Table 5.4, most of the participating students reported that their families were supportive and motivated them to achieve academic success. Parental practices such as following children's progress and ensuring a suitable environment for study are largely present within their homes.

Table 5.4: Extent of participants' agreement with statements regarding the academic support they receive from their families

Do you agree or disagree with these statements ?		
Students were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the following statements:	Percentage of respondents who selected this option	
	Agree	Disagree
I receive good support from my parents in my study	95.1%	4.1%
My parents follow up my studies and school matters	87.2%	12.8%
My family provides a suitable and comfortable studying environment	89.1%	10.9%

However, the students appeared to receive less parental encouragement in relation to acquiring work-related skills. Specifically, they responded that they were not exposed to experiences such as work placement or assistance with different tasks and activities within the family that would be likely to build their vocational identities (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). When students were presented with the statement: *My parents give attention to academic matters without giving me other tasks to carry out, such as helping with household chores, shopping for family needs or assembling car engines*, a large majority, 86%, agreed.

Regarding participation in part-time work, many previous studies from different national and regional contexts have insisted on its positive outcomes. In the Australia, for example, Patton and Smith (2010) concluded in their review of students' part-time work that there is a general consensus that it has a positive effect on their prospects after school, as it develops their technical and employability skills to a considerable extent. It has also been argued in different contexts that mixing paid work and post-school study has become commonplace among young people in recent decades, especially those with financial difficulties. For example, based on qualitative data from 50 participants in a longitudinal study of post-secondary school transitions in Australia, Woodman (2012) argued that young people are increasingly combining study with variable hours of employment. He discovered that while they recognise the need for this mixing, they had difficulty in controlling their schedules and finding regular periods to maintain social relationships and enjoy family life. However, this was apparently not experienced by young people in Kuwait, as the findings of this study suggest.

As was mentioned earlier, only 7% of the participants had work in part-time jobs, although nearly 75% believed in the importance of a part-time job in developing skills which would improve their employability. However, 39% of the participants said that they had been involved in voluntary work. In terms of parental encouragement, the majority of the students (65%) said that their parents did not encourage them to take part-time or temporary jobs during the summer vacation.

It may be said that the culture of part-time work therefore appears to be largely absent in Kuwaiti society. Some might argue that this culture might be more obvious at the post-

secondary stage, rather than during secondary education, but the results from the interviews with young adults are consistent with these findings, as few of them held part-time jobs during university or before taking up a full-time post. Al-Munajjed and Sabbagh (2011), who investigated youth in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, discovered that young people in these countries were not used to considering these experiences as part of preparation for entering the labour market. They stated, “Our research has found that employers complain about the lack of a work ethic in youth—something that can be learnt early through part-time jobs” (ibid.: 33). However, only 41% of the surveyed participants worked in temporary jobs while they were at the university stage, during their summer vacations. The majority of those who did not work gave various reasons such as enjoying spending their time travelling, and preferring to rest and relax at home.

This is important, as it shows how young people from different national contexts with different labour market nature and economic and cultural conditions are likely to have different life experiences. It seems that the affluence of GCC societies contributes to the prevalent attitude towards part-time work while studying, that young people should primarily be able to enjoy their social lives. It can be argued that the comfortable economic conditions enjoyed by families in GCC countries, together with children’s financial reliance on parents, may mean that young people do not need extra financial input through earning money. This argument was reflected in the present data, that indicates that more students are involved in unpaid voluntary work than working in paid part-time jobs. Further support for this argument is presented in the analysis of the qualitative data in Chapter Seven.

The female students appeared even less likely to receive encouragement from their parents in this regard. Table 5.5 shows significant gender differences ($\chi^2=8.494$, $df= 1$; $p< 0.05$) in the extent to which participants received encouragement from their parents to work part-time.

Table 5.5: Encouragement from parents to work in part-time jobs, by gender

My family encourages me to work part-time or in the summer holidays	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Agree Count	170	133	303	8.494	0.000
Within Gender%	39.9%	30.4%	35.1%		
Disagree Count	256	304	560		
Within Gender%	60.1%	69.6%	64.9%		
Total Count	426	437	863		
Within Gender%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Social beliefs and traditional social roles are one possible explanation for this pattern, as work in this area has traditionally been associated with men. In other words, encouraging women to develop their work skills is not necessary in line with the traditional and religious-based belief that a woman's primary social responsibilities are as mother and a wife. This finding on gender differences in receiving encouragement from the family reinforces the earlier finding about higher female concern compared to males. It also emphasises the claim that Kuwaiti women need more attention from the family in terms of their role and identity, which affect their perceptions and self-confidence (Al-suwailan, 2006).

Support from the school

As school is a critical social environment in which young people spend a large part of their day, their habits and attitudes are likely to be shaped there. In Bourdieu's words (1990), and as discussed earlier, individuals' habitus, in the form of their ways of thinking and deeply ingrained skills are established and developed at school. Hence, skills such as communication, discipline, responsibility, order, and other soft and individual skills which serve in building vocational identities and which are needed in the modern labour market, could be instilled in individuals by their school, by providing them with different opportunities and activities (Uchida, Cetron & McKenzie, 1999).

The literature on youth transitions in the Arab and Middle East context pointed out that despite the changes in the labour market and the overcrowding of the public sector, educational institutions are still not in line with these changes. They are not preparing young people by

meeting the requirements of the private sector (Murphy, 2012; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon; 2008). There are also many criticisms in the literature of the educational systems in the GCC region and how their processes and curricula are not commensurate with living in the 21st century or with the needs of the modern labour market. De Boer and Turner (2007: 113), for example, have claimed that “schools at all levels in the GCC states are failing to produce students with the skills and attitudes a modern productive economy requires”. Abdul Sami (2007) concluded that there is disappointment among young people themselves in Arab countries with the employability skills provided for them by the education system over their years of study. Most importantly, some prior studies have argued that the incompetence and lack of necessary skills and technical qualities in many Kuwaitis prevents some employers in the private sector from hiring them (Salih, 2010; Zafer, 1999).

It should be emphasised that different programmes have been organised recently by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and several public and private organisations, as a part of strategy to enhance the link between students and the labour market. These programmes aim to increase young people’s awareness about the world of work and the professions, and to develop their skills so that they can participate in the labour market (Kuwait Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, 2014). The cooperation of the Ministry of Education with the INJAZ Al-Arab Organization²⁷ and the Archicamp Programme²⁸ are examples of these programmes. However, this section provides empirical evidence to support the arguments about the inefficiency of the educational system by exploring the perspectives of the students themselves and the requirements they feel they still lack.

The data gathered by this study shows that nearly half the sample (52%) were dissatisfied with the role played by the education system in motivating and supporting them in acquiring the different skills required by modern productive workplaces. It is evident from Table 5.6 that

²⁷ A non-profit organisation aiming to promote youth education and training in the Arab World under three pillars: workforce readiness, financial literacy and entrepreneurship. It offers programmes that assist in preparing students for the real world and educating them for their own economic success. <https://www.jaworldwide.org/>

²⁸ An intensive programme designed for secondary school students who intend to work in architecture. This programme gives students the opportunity to explore the principles of this career through lectures and workshops. <http://www.archicamp.co/>

many students believed that opportunities for working as a team and preparing presentations had been encouraged. However, more said that activities that strengthen creativity, innovation and a competitive sense, such as individual project work, competitions, and extra-curricular activities, are not encouraged in their schools. With regard to opportunities to develop their knowledge of the nature of workplaces, the majority of students answered that there were no opportunities to obtain information about the nature of work, or to meet entrepreneurs.

Table 5.6: Encouragement of different tasks and events in school

To what extent are these tasks encouraged in the classroom/school ?	Percentage of respondents who selected this option		
	Always/often	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Students were asked to indicate whether this event always, sometimes, rarely(or never) happens			
Working as a team and forming study groups	43.5%	26.9%	29.6%
Student presentations	43.3%	25.4%	31.4%
The school promotes a culture of creativity and innovation	34.5%	23.9%	41.6%
Individual project work	30.6%	26.0%	43.3%
Competitions and incentives	28.8%	24.9%	46.3%
Extra-curricular activities that promoting a variety of students' strengths and skills	31.8%	22.4%	45.8%
Providing information and guidance in relation to career pathways	34.8%	20.5%	44.7%
The opportunity to meet with entrepreneurs and employers	19.90%	16.30%	63.80%

The discontent among the sampled young people regarding the support provided by their education system in preparing them for the labour market was one of the key findings in AlMunajjed and Sabbagha's (2011) study on other young GCC citizens. Only 22% of their study's sample believed "to a large extent" that the educational system in their country had prepared (or was preparing) them to succeed in their chosen career. These results indicate that claims about the inefficiency of the education system in Kuwait, and GCC states in general, in encouraging the building of self-responsibility or the individual skills required by the harsh and competitive nature of the private sector, are likely to be true. Failure to meet the requirements of the private sector means the continuation of the traditional trend of seeking employment in the public sector, which aggravates the problem of overstaffing in public sector institutions (underemployment). This also means that waiting periods before obtaining employment in the government are likely to be prolonged, especially with the expectation of continued growth in the number of children and young people (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014a). However, statistics offer a limited view, and analysis of the qualitative data in Chapter Seven provides a more detailed account, clarifying the ways in which young people are

dissatisfied with the education system and how this affects their transition to the labour market and their experiences within the workplace. Overall, the results presented in this chapter provide some understanding about the limited supported of family and school in developing young people's skills for the modern labour market. The policy implications of such findings and suggestions are outlined in the concluding chapter.

Common concerns

Although the findings drawn from the responses to the open-ended question revealed that some students' concerns related to their lack of skills, and despite the fact that 92% of participants agreed that equipping students with different skills, such as those relevant to work, would overcome their concerns around transitions to work, other data suggested that feelings of concern are common among all students including those with existing skills and preparation.

Considering the relationship between young people's concerns about the transition to work and their (self-assessed) level of employability and soft skills (such as self-management and communication skills, confidence and showing initiative), no significant statistical difference ($\chi^2=1.232$, $df= 1$; $p>0.05$) was found between those with good skills and those with weak skills. 75% of those who rated their employability and soft skills as weak, and almost 71% of those who rated them as good, said that they were concerned about the transition to work. Similarly, no significant statistical difference ($\chi^2=.247$, $df= 1$; $p>0.05$) was found between groups of students with weak and good academic skills; 73% and 71% respectively were concerned. Tables 5.7 and 5.8 illustrate these findings.

Table 5.7: Concern about the transition to work, according to the respondents' possession of employability/soft skills

I am concerned about the transition from school to the workplace		Employability/ soft skills		Total	χ^2 value	P value
		Good	Weak			
Agree	Count Within Employability/ soft skills%	519 70.8%	110 75.3%	629 71.6%	1.232	.267
Disagree	Count Within Employability/ soft skills%	214 29.2%	36 24.7%	250 28.4%		
Total	Count Within Employability/ soft skills%	733 100.0%	146 100.0%	879 100.0%		

Table 5.8: Concern about the transition to work, according to the respondents' possession of academic skills

I am concerned about the transition from school to the workplace		Academic skills		Total	χ^2 value	P value
		Good	Weak			
Agree	Count Within Academic skills%	468 71.2%	162 73.0%	630 71.7%	.247	.619
Disagree	Count Within Academic skills%	189 28.8%	60 27.0%	249 28.3%		
Total	Count Within Academic skills%	657 100.0%	222 100.0%	879 100.0%		

In a similar way, the comparison between participants who had joined activities likely to prepare them for work and those who had not joined any such activities revealed no significant statistical difference ($\chi^2=2.211$, $df= 1$; $p>0.05$) their concern about the transition to the labour market. Interestingly, 75% of the students who had joined training courses, workshop sessions or seminars to prepare them for work were still concerned about the transition to work, against only 70% of those who had not attended such courses; see Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Concern about the transition to work, according to attendance at career training sessions

I am concerned about the transition from school to the workplace	Have you ever joined training courses, workshop sessions, or seminars that prepare you for future careers?		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Yes	No			
Agree Count Within Have you ever joined training courses?%	240 74.5%	389 69.8%	629 71.6%	2.211	.137
Disagree Count Within Have you ever joined training courses?%	82 25.5%	168 30.2%	250 28.4%		
Total Count Within Have you ever joined training courses?%	322 100.0%	557 100.0%	879 100.0%		

Overall, these findings indicate that students are concerned not only about skills, but that there are other factors. This suggests, and at the same time encourages, the introduction of data analysis related to the role of wide social and cultural factors, to understand the main concerns and challenges to young people, which is the focus of the next chapter. It will be evident from the following chapters that compressed modernity and its various consequences, including conflict between older traditional values and modern lifestyles, are creating tensions in young people's lives. This is a likely explanation for the greater anxiety among female students than male ones, as discussed above, as the data in the following chapters demonstrate the persistence of old, traditional cultural beliefs and gender discrimination in society.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the issues surrounding the general educational support received by young people from their school and family, and their readiness for the subsequent transitional period into the workforce. As a starting point for the more analytical chapters, it has shed light on the nature of the environment or the core institutions in which individuals are raised, as a foundation likely to shape their ways of thinking. The chapter has suggested that young people at the school stage are not adequately exposed to social settings which will be supportive for

the development of work-related skills. Families generally, as the findings suggest, have low interest in building up young people's social and professional skills, and there is little encouragement for part-time work during the school years. While young people combine education and work in other countries, such as Australia (Woodman, 2012), this appears not to be supported by Kuwaiti families. This confirms that the experiences of young people vary according to specific conditions including cultural practices, socio-economic conditions and the nature of the labour market (Heinz, 2009: 6), requiring further research into the experiences of young people in different locations.

Despite recent changes in education, the participating students still felt that schools were weak in providing them with the different skills they required for productive workplaces, reducing their chances of finding employment alternative to the public sector. These results tend to support the youth transitions literature within the Middle East context, which indicates the failure of educational institutions to adapt to changes in the labour market as they are not based on the development of various critical skills (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon; 2008).

As institutions seem still not to be adapting to the changing circumstances in the labour market, this could remain a challenge to the transition of young people. Chapter Seven focuses on young adults' experiences and shows how the nature of educational institutions appears to restrict their professional pathways and directed their decisions. The weakness of educational institutions also challenged some of them to adapt to the competitive work environment of the private sector. Further challenges and tensions will be explored in the following chapters, which tend to emphasise the conflict between tradition and modernity. Chapter Six more specifically examines the external forces, such as family control and cultural and social influences, in structuring youth transitions.

Chapter 6 – Societal cultural tensions: control, power and agency

Introduction

As Chapter Two discussed, contemporary youth researchers have proclaimed the role of individual agency in shaping modern transitions. Rather than relying on traditional institutions that provide structure, young people have increasingly had to individualise their lives. The roles of agency, free choice, individual decision and self-direction have become centres of the individual's life course in the risk society (Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Côté, 2000). The term agency refers to the sense of responsibility for one's life course, the control over decisions and the confidence in ability to overcome the obstacles that hinder one's progress (Schwartz, Côté & Arnett, 2005). Some researchers have operationalised agency as an internal locus of control and as sense of purpose of life. It has found that these features positively predict the extent to which individuals are able to embed themselves within the community (Côté, 1997). However, the findings of this chapter indicate that external factors appear to continue to play a role in structuring young people's lives and controlling their agencies in contemporary Kuwait. This confuses and worries the young people, who find themselves caught between making individual decisions and achieving their personal goals, and the restrictive power of socio-cultural factors.

This chapter particularly examines the data relating to the influences and controls operating on the students' transitions from school to the labour market. In doing so, it seeks to build a broad picture of their experiences and feelings in their last years of school in relation to the external and internal influences on their transition to work. The chapter deals with manifestations of the individual sense of control and decision making, and attempts to uncover the role of parental input (alongside the structural characteristics), and to investigate the wider social and cultural influences on young people. This ultimately helps in assessing the process of individualisation, which involves the erosion of traditional ways of life and the roles of institutions in providing structure, increasing the ability of individuals to decide and plan for

the future (education, employment, marriage) on their own (Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001).

Of course, the separation of the individual on the one hand, and the influence of external factors such as parental control, discrimination, and wider social and culture influences on the other, is not easy, and the data shows an overlap between these influences. This in turn has informed the way the chapter has been framed. In order to avoid this overlap as much as possible, the chapter is divided into two sections. The first section establishes the issues relating to students' feelings of control and the role of agency. Specific questions were developed in order to uncover these issues, including ones asking them about the degree to which they determine their personal goals in their education and future career pathways, rather than being influenced by external elements. The questions on the locus of control were also useful in understanding the extent to which they felt in control of events and forces, rather than being ruled by them. The second section then analyses the influence of different social factors as external forces that control young people's agencies. The section begins by focusing on issues related to parental control, before moving to control based on gender, and finally to the influence of broader society, including social division, strong social ties, and unemployment.

This chapter suggests that young Kuwaiti appear to be living in a conflict between individual aspects and external forces represented by the power of social and cultural factors over their agencies. As can see in this chapter, the continuation of parental control, the influential role of family on their children's decisions in regard to their future career pathways, social networks and relationships are all factors evident from the data. The findings, when taken together show that, contrary to Beck's claims about individuals in modern times becoming detached from traditional norms and rules (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001), these traditional norms and constraints appear to continue to play a role in Kuwaiti society and to structure young people's lives. Overall, this chapter supports the previous chapter's argument that young people's anxiety and stress seem not so much linked to the lack of skills, as to the conflict between traditional cultures and modern lifestyles and the continuity of control over their agency. Living in a time of globalisation and the need to adapt to modern changes make reliance on

the old ideas of previous generations difficult for today's young people. Hence, the chapter concludes that the tension and risk evident in individuals' lives is not necessarily a result of the journey of society through three stages to reach second modernity, as Beck assumed (1992). Rather, they are possibly caused by the rapid transition from pre-modern to affluent society, and its consequences for young people's experiences.

Sense of control

Beck argued that a characteristic of contemporary societies is the growing importance of self-reliance, meaning that individuals and their efforts are the main determinant of their destiny, rather than the traditional guidelines and support networks (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). Young people are expected to determine their own life trajectories, control their transitions to work in highly individualised ways, make an effort and be personally active (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). The results in this section generally show that participating students tended to emphasise the role of agency and belief in the importance of self-effort.

When the participants were asked about the reasons determining their specialisation in secondary school; the majority (62%) indicated that they chose it from personal preference and to achieve personal goals. In contrast, only 7% said that they chose it according to their parents' wishes. A further question asked how strongly participants agreed with the statement: *I will determine my profession according to my personal choices and wishes*. By combining the 'strongly agree', 'agree' and 'partially agree' responses, the study revealed that nearly 86% of students thought that their choices depend on their personal wishes. In contrast, only 14% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with this statement²⁹.

Moreover, the data show that when determining their future career, the participating students paid more attention to the elements within their own control (such as getting a job that

²⁹ If we take 'partially agree' as a separate category and combine the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' categories together, and the 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' categories together, the results still show that more students (61.4%) agreed that their choices depend on their personal decisions; only 14.2% of student disagreed, and only 24.3% said that they partially agreed.

satisfied their personal preference, or one that gave them a sense of pride when practising it) rather than to external elements, such as maintaining family traditions. While 65.6% of participants said that they would consider their personal preference as an element in determining their future career, only 4% answered that keeping family traditions was important. This indicates that the students recognise the importance of agency and the need to individualise their lives, and to rely on themselves in planning and designing their biographies.

The present data suggest that the majority of the students tended to believe that the acquisition of qualifications and schooling investments was important in achieving future plans. Table 6.1 shows that almost all believed that assiduity and working hard at school were sources of success in their future careers. Nearly half, 45%, strongly agreed that their school qualifications would allow them to achieve their future goals, and 36% and 28% respectively responded to the question with ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that these qualifications would help in gaining future happiness.

Table 6.1: Agreement with statements related to schooling investments

All respondents	
Diligence and assiduity in secondary school are very important for success in a future career	
Strongly agree	68%
Agree	15%
Partially agree	11%
Disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	2%
My study qualifies me and will help me to achieve my future plans after getting a high school certificate	
Strongly agree	45%
Agree	28%
Partially agree	16%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	4%
My study will become a source of my happiness	
Strongly agree	36%
Agree	20%
Partially agree	20%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	12%

In general, the analysis of the data on students’ future plans after leaving school indicates that the majority intended to move on to study at higher education institutions, especially

university. These findings may be an indication of young people's belief in self-effort and that their own actions and capabilities will influence their future outcomes. They may also suggest that faith in working hard and competing to achieve high educational qualifications is evident even among young people who are living in comfortable economic conditions in an affluent society. Further detailed findings (from an analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data) on the increased competition among young people in obtaining qualifications and guarantees are presented in the following chapter, in the context of current changes in the labour market and increasing uncertainty.

However, although the above findings support the element of agency and stress individual efforts, it cannot entirely be assumed that students do not believe that external factors have a role in shaping their lives, or that they think they are fully in control. It has been argued that individuals with negative locus of control results tend to believe that their lives and future are controlled and determined by an external force, and their actions are the results of external factors. As they do not believe in their own internal control, they tend to blame others (Rotter, 1990; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). The overall results from questions about control over life (locus of control) tend to some degree to be negative. Table 6.2 demonstrates that around half (45%) of respondents stated that they have *little control over the things that happened to them* and 23% strongly felt it. As was expected, younger students more strongly felt that they have little control over things that happened to them. More than half of the sample agreed or strongly agreed (34% and 23% respectively) with the statement: *There's really no way I can solve some of the problem I have*. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, the participants tended to agree with the statement: *I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life*. Female participants felt more helpless in dealing with the problems of life than male participants. Again, more than half of the sample felt that *sometimes they were being pushed around in life*. In similar pattern with the first statement, younger students more strongly felt that they are being pushed around in life. Generally, these results are an indication of external control; however, there was a notable exception: 47% strongly agreed that what happens to them, in the future mostly depends on them and 40% agreed.

Table 6.2: Students' views of their control over their lives

All respondents	
1- I have little control over things that happen to me	
Strongly agree	23%
Agree	45%
Disagree	23%
Strongly disagree	9%
2- What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me	
Strongly agree	47%
Agree	40%
Disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	3%
3- There's really no way I can solve some of the problems I have	
Strongly agree	23%
Agree	34%
Disagree	31%
Strongly disagree	11%
4- I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life	
Strongly agree	19%
Agree	33%
Disagree	32%
Strongly disagree	16%
5- Sometimes I feel that I am being pushed around in life	
Strongly agree	22%
Agree	32%
Disagree	29%
Strongly disagree	17%

The tables in the following few pages support the arguments about age and gender differences. Table 6.3 shows a significant age difference ($\chi^2=8.856$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) in how much participants felt they had control over the things that happened to them. More specifically, 65% of students aged 17-18 felt that they had little control, compared with 75% of those aged 15-16. Table 6.4 shows a similar pattern ($\chi^2=7.917$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) in terms of participants' feelings of being pushed around in life. A total of 49% of respondents aged 17-18 replied that they were being pushed around, and almost 60% of those aged 15-16 said the same. This may indicate that younger people are likely to perceive themselves as being less independent than their older peers, although as they grow up they have greater opportunities for self-direction and control over their environment.

Table 6.3: Students' views of their control over things that happen to them, by age

I have little control over things that happen to me		Current educational level/ age			Total	χ^2 value	P value
		1 st Grade (15-16 year old)	2 nd Grade (16-17 year old)	3 rd Grade (17-18 year old)			
Agree	Count Within Current educational level%	261 74.8%	266 66.7%	240 65.2%	767 68.7%	8.856	.012
Disagree	Count Within Current educational level%	88 25.2%	133 33.3%	128 34.8%	349 31.3%		
Total	Count Within Current educational level%	349 100.0%	399 100.0%	368 100.0%	1116 100.0%		

Table 6.4: Students' views on being pushed around in life, by age

Sometimes I feel that I am being pushed around in life		Current educational level/ age			Total	χ^2 value	P value
		1 st Grade (15-16 year old)	2 nd Grade (16-17 year old)	3 rd Grade (17-18 year old)			
Agree	Count Within Current educational level%	208 59.6%	220 55.1%	181 49.2%	609 54.6%	7.917	.019
Disagree	Count Within Current educational level%	141 40.4%	179 44.9%	187 50.8%	507 45.4%		
Total	Count Within Current educational level%	349 100.0%	399 100.0%	368 100.0%	1116 100.0%		

Table 6.5 shows a significant gender difference ($\chi^2=4.732$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in participants' feelings about being pushed around in life. While 49.6% of male participants agreed with this statement, 56% of female participants also agreed. Social researchers have recognised the significance of cultural traditions which support the dominance of men and the negativity and submissiveness of women in contributing to gender differences, and their relationship with self-concepts (e.g. Cross & Markus, 1993). As Chapter Three revealed, the Kuwaiti woman is traditionally expected to be submissive and guided by the collective goals and societal values that mostly restrict her role to the home. In this context, Al-suwailan (2006: 159) stated that "History reveals that Kuwaiti women's identity is seen in relation to societal norms and values". It can be argued that this difference, even if it is not huge, can be attributed to the societal values relating to gender roles, and to the perceptions and images instilled in

individuals until they become part of their identities and self-perceptions (Al-suwailan, 2006). Further results will appear in this chapter about traditional cultural values and women's feelings.

Table 6.5: Students' feeling of helplessness in dealing with problems in life, by gender

I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Agree Count Within Gender%	279 49.6%	310 56.2%	589 52.8%	4.732	0.030
Disagree Count Within Gender%	284 50.4%	243 43.9%	527 47.2%		
Total Count Within Gender%	563 100.0%	553 100.0%	1116 100.0%		

Overall, the findings suggest that the responding students had mixed feelings that combined the importance of individual factors, and at the same time indicated a sense of being pushed around and restricted by external forces, especially among the younger and female participants. This encourages an investigation of the roles played by other factors such as parental control and influences, gender discrimination, and other social and cultural influences upon these young people's lives. The next sections address these aspects, starting with the data related to parental control over their school to work transitions. This is set alongside a consideration of the differences in family and individual characteristics which might lead to the disparity observed in the responses regarding the students' sense of control. As the following sections show, this disparity is particularly influenced by gender and the level of the modernity of the family.

Parental control

The findings in this section show that young people still feel that they are being controlled by their parents, a factor which is likely to contribute to the conflict between taking individual

paths and achieving individual desires, and surrendering to parental control, bearing in mind that obedience to one's parents is a substantial basics part of Islamic teaching. Two pertinent questions in the research's survey were: *My parents always interfere in my daily life's choices*, and: *My parents insist on identifying my future career*. The results show that, after combining the 'strongly agree', 'agree' and 'partially agree' responses, nearly 70% of students thought that their parents interfered in their general life choices. The percentage of students who said that their parents insisted on identifying their career pathways was 49%³⁰. Tables 6.6 and 6.7 display the responses to these questions. These findings suggest that a large number of families still control their children's lives, even in an apparently modern society, although this control appeared to be lower concerning decisions related to future work than in relation to other life matters.

Table 6.6: Parental control in terms of daily life choices

My parents always interfere in my daily life choices	
	Percentage of respondents who selected this option
Strongly agree	15.3%
Agree	17.3%
Partially agree	37.6%
Disagree	18.3%
Strongly disagree	11.5%

Table 6.7: Parental insistence on identifying their children's future career

My parents insist on identifying my future career	
	Percentage of respondents who selected this option
Strongly agree	8.7%
Agree	14.0%
Partially agree	26.3%
Disagree	26.0%
Strongly disagree	25.1%

³⁰ When 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' are combined, leaving 'partially agree' as a third category, the results show that 32.6% of students thought that their parents interfered in their general life choices, a number which is still greater than those who disagreed with this statement (29.8%), with a large number of students saying that they partially agreed (37.6%). However, the results are slightly different regarding the second statement when these combinations are used. The results show that the percentage of students who strongly agreed or agreed that their parents insisted on identifying their career pathways was 22.7%, while those who partially agreed represented 26.3% and 51.1% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There are several possible explanations as to why parents exert less control over their children's career choices than over other matters. One is the rapid modernisation of Kuwait and recent changes in its labour market which have meant that the increasing scarcity of employment opportunities in the public sector have forced parents to reduce their intervention in their children's wishes regarding employment. This coincides with the second stage in modernity of Beck's model (1992), which argues that the emergence of new risks and changes in the labour market in the industrialised age has forced traditional constraints and structures, including the family, to interact with these changes, and has meant that individuals have a certain amount of freedom to shape their lives (Beck, 1992). In a similar way, modernisation and changes in the labour market in Kuwait may have led some families to be more flexible and to move beyond traditional and cultural norms in exercising control over young people's transition from school to work. Nevertheless, because Kuwaiti society did not experience all the various stages of modernity proposed by Beck, its compressed modernity has probably not erased the traditional roles and constraints and the tradition remains important. The findings show that more than 11% of the sample considered customs and traditions as barriers to achieving their future career. More than 10% of the participants also indicated that parental objections were an obstacle to choosing their career goals. Thus, this suggests that the continuity of traditions and the old cultural practices of parents in contemporary society are contributing to increasing tension in young people's lives. These barriers are likely to create more challenges for some young people than for others, as families hold different degrees of traditional values and beliefs. This argument is supported in the following section.

Adhering to tradition

There is evidence from the findings that a student's family's degree of adherence to tradition is likely to play a role in their perceived control over their choices. There is significant statistical difference ($\chi^2=12.246$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) between traditional and modern families when considering personal preference as a reason for choosing their specialisation at school. It should be noted that the distinction between modern and traditional family was based on participants' self-classification (see footnote 26 in Chapter Five). Students from modern

families (67.5%) placed more importance on their personal preferences and goals when they chose their specialisation in school than students from traditional families did (47%). Similarly, a significant statistical difference was evident ($\chi^2=9.393$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) between students from traditional and modern families in considering ‘satisfying my personal preference’ as an element in choosing future careers. Students from modern families are more likely to get a job according to their personal preference. Some may argue that this could be an indication of how students are influenced by the nature of the family characteristic, rather than being controlled. However, the significant statistical difference between traditional and modern families is repeated in further questions, which indicates that students from traditional families are more likely to be controlled and guided by tradition and old cultural practices, such as parental objections. When students were asked to tick one or more factors which they considered obstacles to choosing their preferred job or career goal, 9% of young people from modern families considered parents’ objections as obstacles conflicting with their desire to choose a job they loved but the percentage increased to more than 19% among those from traditional families.

In a similar pattern, both male and female students from traditional families considered ‘traditions and customs’ as barriers that would prevent them from getting the job they wanted; fewer male and female students from more modern families gave this answer. Table 6.8 in the next page provides evidence for this argument, as it shows a significant difference ($\chi^2=11.873$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) and ($\chi^2=6.360$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) in how many participants considered customs and traditions as obstacles that may prevent them from choosing a job they loved³¹. These findings are very important, as they appear to explain how the experiences of contemporary young people who live with still-prevalent traditions and customs restrict their ability to map out their own routes. It can thus be argued that these findings summarise how continuing traditional cultural and parental practices in modern times can conflict with the agency power of young people, adding more pressure to their transition to work.

The importance of these findings on change and continuity and the differences among young people also lies in their empirical support for middle-ground theories (Furlong & Cartmel,

³¹ The first information represents the difference between males, and the second between female participants.

1997; Roberts, 1993, 2003; Evans, 2007). As has been already stated, the middle-ground position is between agency level and structural level, highlighting the inequality in youth experiences, and how the agencies of some people are more bounded than those of others. By examining the responses of young people from a range of backgrounds, this study has tended to confirm that while some appear able to plan their future according to their own preferences, with less control of traditional norms and constraints over their agencies, other young people (from traditional families) are more restricted, and still appear to face constraints on their agencies arising from traditional practices as in the past.

Table 6.8: Tradition as an obstacle to choosing their preferred job, according to the level of modernity of the family, by gender

What are the obstacles that may prevent you from choosing a job you love (Customs and traditions)	Do you think your family is traditional or modern?			Total	χ^2 value	P value	
	Traditional family	Middle	Modern family				
Male					11.873	0.003	
Yes	Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	10 25.6%	21 9.2%	24 8.3%			55 9.9%
No	Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	29 74.4%	208 90.8%	266 91.7%			503 90.1%
Total	Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	39 100.0%	229 100.0%	290 100.0%	558 100.0%		
Female					6.360	0.042	
Yes	Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	10 18.2%	34 16.3%	27 9.5%			71 13.0%
No	Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	45 81.8%	175 83.7%	257 90.5%			477 87.0%
Total	Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	55 100.0%	209 100.0%	284 100.0%	548 100.0%		

Returning to the finding that parental interference in determining their children's careers was lower than for other everyday life choices, another possibility is that the students themselves did not, in fact, consider this parental attitude as intervention, but merely saw it as advice or the exercising of parental responsibility. In other words, some students may be happy with their parents' intervention in their future career choices. One of the findings that supports this argument is that more than 80% of the participating students confirmed that they turn to their

parents for advice and discussion about their future career. Table 6.9 strikingly illustrates that parents are seen as a primary source of information and advice for students, followed by friends (27%), whereas only 16% and 11% of students seek guidance from careers counsellors or teachers respectively. Some indicated other sources of guidance, such as sisters and brothers with experience in their chosen career, or nobody at all.

Table 6.9: People to whom students turn for advice about future careers

Students were asked to tick one or more of the following options	percentage of respondents who selected this option
Parents	82%
Friends	27%
Employers and Careers counsellor	16%
Teachers	11%
Other	5%

It is not surprising that young Kuwaiti people prefer to talk first with their parents, especially with the strong family ties which feature in Kuwaiti society. Wiseman and Alromi (2003), in discussing the situation in Saudi Arabia, claimed that instead of the institutional link between schools and the labour market, the transition from school to work is largely influenced by social norms and Islamic culture, which urge the maintenance of strong family relationships. Some studies in the northern context have arrived at similar conclusions. For example, Millward et al. (2006) found that young people in Britain generally prefer to seek advice about jobs from their parents. In the same context, Bynner et al. (2002: 71) stated that “parents are usually the first adults young people turn to for advice about jobs”. However, findings from other countries have suggested that parents are not necessarily the most highly-rated group as a source of advice about students’ future careers. For example, according to the survey of the Brotherhood’s Parents as Career and Transition Supports (PACTS) programme completed by students aged 7-12 from 11 schools in Australia, the most popular group with whom students like to talk about their future career was careers counsellors (74%). Parents were second with 63%, and teachers third with 55%. Other surveyed students like to talk with other groups, including friends and family members (Perkins & Peterson, 2005).

With this tendency to consult parents alongside strong family bonding and social ties in Kuwaiti society, it is to be expected that the students are highly susceptible to parental influences and wider social and cultural influences. The next section shows how students are likely to be influenced by their parents' views, before moving on to how social and cultural influences generally play a role in shaping their future career orientation.

Parental influence: social and cultural norms

As was expected, the majority of participants said they would prefer to work in the public sector (68%), against 32% in the private sector. To a large extent, as the previous chapters have illustrated, employment in the public sector arises directly from the social contract in place in Kuwait by which employability in government bodies is considered as a means used by the government to redistribute oil wealth. The fact that the state is responsible for securing jobs for all citizens leads the majority to turn automatically to government facilitated methods gain secure employment after graduation, by enrolling in the Civil Service Commission and waiting their turn to be accepted into one of the government ministries. The literature review, in the context of localising the private sector in GCC countries, also revealed several factors that contribute to GCC citizens' preference for public sector employment, as shown in the next section (Salih, 2010; Al-Ali, 2008). However, it is interesting that the orientation of students towards a certain job sector is likely to be influenced by their family advice. As shown in Table 6.10, the chi square test indicates a significant association ($\chi^2=201.501$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) between the encouragement received from family and the preference of students for a certain sector. In a sense, this suggests that students are likely to work in the private sector if they receive encouragement from their families to do so. In general, these findings suggest that young people's choices are influenced not only by the organisation of the local labour market, but also by the the opportunities presented to them through their family, where parental encouragement and guidance towards certain job sectors seem to influence young peoples' decisions about their career pathways. The implications of such findings for policy stakeholders are outlined in the concluding chapter.

Table 6.10: Preferred sector to work in, according to students and their families

Which sector would you prefer to work in?	Which sector does your family encourage you to work in?			Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Public sector	Private sector	Indifferent			
Public sector Count Within Which sector does your family encourage you to work in?%	297 91.4%	15 16.1%	451 64.7%	763 68.4%	201.501	.000
Private sector Count Within Which sector does your family encourage you to work in?%	28 8.6%	78 83.9%	246 35.3%	352 31.6%		
Total Count Within Which sector does your family encourage you to work in?%	325 100.0%	93 100.0%	697 100.0%	1115 100.0%		

Family influence becomes visible elsewhere in the data. When participants were asked directly if they wanted to follow their parents' and siblings' professions, 39% (a total reached by combining those who replied 'strongly agree', 'agree' and 'partially agree') agreed to follow their parents, and 46% their siblings, in their choice of careers³², as Tables 6.11 and 6.12 show.

Table 6.11: Extent to which students would like to follow their parents' career routes

I want to follow my father's/mother's profession in the future	
	Percentage of respondents who selected this option
Strongly agree	14.6%
Agree	7.2%
Partially agree	17.1%
Disagree	29.2%
Strongly disagree	31.9%

³² By combining those who replied 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree', 21.8% said that they wanted to follow their parents, and 53.6% said that they wanted to follow their siblings in their choice of careers.

Table 6.12: Extent to which students would like to follow their siblings' career routes

I want to become like my older brothers/sisters in my career life	
	Percentage of respondents who selected this option
Strongly agree	14.7%
Agree	13.8%
Partially agree	17.8%
Disagree	27.9%
Strongly disagree	25.7%

This data suggests that despite changes in the labour market resulting from modernisation and the economic shift which has offered young people a greater choice of occupation, social and cultural influences still seem to play a role in shaping their career paths. In other words, the traditional practice of Arab societies of passing occupations from one generation to the next and walking in the footsteps of family members (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008) still appears to exist. These findings challenge Beck's argument that individual options on the contemporary era are not restricted by previous social models of lifestyles and traditional constraints, and that children are not expected to follow their parents' fate through the adoption of their careers and living conditions (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). On the contrary, the findings of this study suggest that there are still children who seek to follow the lives of their parents.

Comparing the groups, a significant association ($\chi^2=10.978$, $df=3$; $p<0.05$) was found between the highest-education level of the parents and whether or not the students wanted to follow them (see Table 6.13). In order to clearly interpret the chi square test to discover whether or not the differences between groups are statistically significant, the data was transformed into two groups: agree and disagree. This was done by combining the responses of 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and the responses of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', treating 'partly agree' as missing data. Table 6.13 shows that 49% of students who said they would follow their parents' career came from families in which the highest level of education, was postgraduate; the figure decreased to 32% and 34% for students from families whose highest level of education was diploma, and high school or less respectively.

Table 6.13: Following parents' career, according to highest education level of parent

I want to follow my father's/mother's profession in the future	Highest educational level of parents				Total	χ^2 value	P value
	High school or less	Diploma	Bachelor's degree	Postgraduate (MA, PhD)			
Agree Count Within Highest educational level of parents%	66 34.6%	54 32.3%	128 39.8%	76 48.7%	324 38.8%	10.978	.012
Disagree Count Within Highest educational level of parents%	125 65.4%	113 67.7%	194 60.2%	80 51.3%	512 61.2%		
Total Count Within Highest educational level of parents%	191 100.0%	167 100.0%	322 100.0%	156 100.0%	836 100.0%		

An earlier study (Watfa, 2011) in the Kuwaiti context also linked the educational pathways of young people with their parents' educational status. His research was conducted in 2008 with 3,816 students at Kuwait University, and showed that the majority came from families with high levels of education: 80% of fathers and 66% of mothers had a high school degree and above. However, one of the most interesting findings in the current study is that the students' plans after graduation are statistically associated with their fathers' educational level, whereas no relationship is apparent between the students' plans and their mother's educational level. Table 6.14 shows a significant association ($\chi^2=11.443$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$) between the education level of father and the plan of student after graduation from secondary school. It illustrates that students whose fathers have a higher education certificate are more likely to attend university than other students. Similarly, the chi square test shows a significant relationship ($\chi^2=40.490$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) between the job sector of the father only and the sector that students were willing to work in. Table 6.15 displays this relationship.

Table 6.14: Relationship between students' future decision to attend university and education level of father

What are you planning to do after graduation from secondary school?	Highest educational level of father			Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Less than high school	High school or diploma	Bachelor's degree or higher			
Attend university Count Within Highest educational level of father%	90 64.7%	275 73.7%	310 79.1%	675 74.7%	11.443	.003
Not university Count Within Highest educational level of father%	49 35.3%	98 26.3%	82 20.9%	229 25.3%		
Total Count Within Highest educational level of father%	139 100.0%	373 100.0%	392 100.0%	904 100.0%		

Table 6.15: Relationship between students' employment sector preference and current employment sector of father

Which sector would you prefer to work in?	Sector of father's job		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Public sector	Private sector			
Public sector Count Within Sector of father's job%	507 73.4%	42 42.0%	549 69.4%	40.490	0.000
Private sector Count Within Sector of father's job%	184 26.6%	58 58.0%	242 30.6%		
Total Count Within Sector of father's job%	691 100.0%	100 100.0%	791 100.0%		

Hence, it can be hypothesised that students are influenced by their fathers more than by their mothers, which in turn reflects the traditional picture of the leading role of fatherhood within the family in Kuwait society. It suggests that the old principles which form the dominant patterns of patriarchy and parental authority have not necessarily been destroyed by modern changes, and appear still to have an impact on family members and to play a role in determining individuals' daily life choices. Although the role of women has become more effective in modern times in terms of participating in education and labour markets, as Chapter Three discussed, the values of the role and authority of the father seem still to remain intact. The data generated by this study shows that no large gap exists between mothers and fathers in terms of education (see Appendix Five). Only 16.3% of the mothers were educated to below

high school level, 40.7% of them hold a bachelor's degree or higher, and 42.8% hold a high school certificate or diploma. 70% of the participants' mothers are working or have worked. The growing number of female participants in the education system in Kuwait is contributing to the increase in females enrolled at university and higher education institutions in general. Recent data, such as Kuwait University's report for the academic year 2011/ 2012, indicated that females heavily outnumbered males in terms of the total admitted students; the percentage of females was 69%, with only 31% males (Kuwait University, 2012). Female participation in higher education in Kuwait generally exceeded 60% of total enrolment in 2008 (UNESCO, Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab states, 2009).

This generally supports the argument that despite significant changes in many aspects of life in GCC societies, including an increased participation of women in the labour market and education, and the diminishing differences between gender roles in society, other aspects of life have resisted the modernisation process and changes (Abdullah, 2012). In other words, although Kuwaiti society has experienced rapid change, as can see from the the study's findings, it remains wrapped in the principles of a traditional society, challenging Beck's ideas about the shrinking role of traditional forms of living at the second modernity stage and the subsequent emergence of individualisation (Beck, 1992, 1994).

The above discussion on male authority in this society sets up the next section to focus on the data related to gender and control, especially exploring how young women today see themselves, and how young men see them. The following section shows that traditional ideas about women's work and restrictions on their freedom appear to still exist in Kuwaiti society. These may make young women feel more worried that these barriers will conflict with their future goals. It also shows how female participants appear more willing and passionate about opening up in modern times. This is understood through the findings that show a greater desire to achieve their personal ambitions and to build their own careers compared to males.

Gender and control

The female students indicated lower level of parental interference in identifying their future careers than the male students did. While nearly 39% of male students agreed that their parents insisted on identifying their future career, only 23% of females agreed with this statement. This result was found by reducing the responses to ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ and comparing genders using the chi square test. Table 6.16 shows a significant gender difference ($\chi^2=22.995$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in the level at which participants perceived interference from their parents in identifying future careers.

Table 6.16: Parents’ insistence on identifying students’ future careers, by gender

My parents insist on identifying my future career	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Agree Count Within Gender%	155 38.7%	98 23.2%	253 30.7%	22.995	0.000
Disagree Count Within Gender%	246 61.3%	324 76.8%	570 69.3%		
Total Count Within Gender%	401 100.0%	422 100.0%	823 100.0%		

By tracking Kuwaiti women’s position, it can be observed that they have been given greater opportunities, than previous generations in terms of participation in the labour market and in engaging in more fields of work. As was discussed previously, women in Kuwait have recently taken up their places in both education and the labour market. In the 1960s families began to allow their girls to receive education and then go out to work, initially limited to areas such as nursing and teaching, until they gradually became engaged in broader fields such as higher education institutions and politics (Shah & Al-Qudsi, 1990; Tijani, 2009). This great change in women’s position, and the increasing opportunities granted to them by society and families may be behind this gender difference. In other words, women have been given greater opportunities than ever before to choose their career in different fields of work, unlike men who have not witnessed this clear change in their choices, and this has contributed to making females feel that they receive less intervention from their families than males do. However,

this does not mean that females are actually being given more freedom than men in choosing their field of work, or that they are less concerned about gender control. This can be seen in the following findings, which also suggest that females have a stronger desire to achieve their personal goals and make individual decisions than their male peers.

The findings show that more female students (14%) considered the objections of their parents as a factor which was preventing them from finding a job they wanted than male students (8%). This fear, as was expected, was greater among female students from traditional families (26%) than among those from modern families (11%). This finding confirms the hypothesis in the above discussion that tradition can put greater pressure on young people as they navigate their transition to work. The tables which follow show evidence of the above arguments. Table 6.17 shows a significant gender difference ($\chi^2=9.159$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in the levels at which participants considered parents' objections as an obstacle to choosing the jobs they wanted, and Table 6.18 shows a significant difference between females from families with different levels of adherence to tradition ($\chi^2=7.861$, $df= 2$; $p<0.05$).

Table 6.17: Parents' objections as obstacles to choosing preferred jobs, by gender

What are the obstacles that may prevent you from choosing a job you love (Parents' objections)	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Yes Count Within Gender%	45 8.0%	76 13.7%	121 10.8%	9.159	0.002
No Count Within Gender%	515 92.0%	480 86.3%	995 89.2%		
Total Count Within Gender%	560 100.0%	556 100.0%	1116 100.0%		

Table 6.18: Female students' consideration of parents' objections to career, by level of modernity of the family

What are the obstacles that may prevent you from choosing a job you love (Parents' objections)	Do you think your family is traditional or modern?			Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Traditional family	Middle	Modern family			
Yes Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	14 25.5%	29 13.9%	32 11.3%	75 13.7%	7.861	0.020
No Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	41 74.5%	180 86.1%	252 88.7%	473 86.3%		
Total Count Within Do you think your family is traditional or modern?%	55 100.0%	209 100.0%	284 100.0%	548 100.0%		

The analysis of the qualitative component of the quantitative survey also suggests that female students, especially those who come from traditional families, are more concerned than males about not being able to freely choose their jobs due to the beliefs held by their family about women's work and study.

Some examples of the responses include:

My father and brothers oppose my working alongside men, or in a field of work where there is physical contact with men, such as in the media sector.

I wish to study abroad and get a certificate of engineering, but because I'm a girl ... I do not think my parents will allow me to travel alone.

I'm afraid that my parents will not allow me to become a doctor, as this job requires staying overnight outside the household.

These findings tend to support the argument made by Al-Munajjed and Sabbagh (2011), who said that women in the GCC countries still face discrimination in the labour market due to the traditions and principles of the patriarchal system, which continues to keep them out of some professions. When the students were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement: *Kuwaiti women are restricted in their career choices*, the majority (more than 76%) of the sample, both female and male participants, agreed (see Figure 6.1).

Kuwaiti women are restricted in their career choices

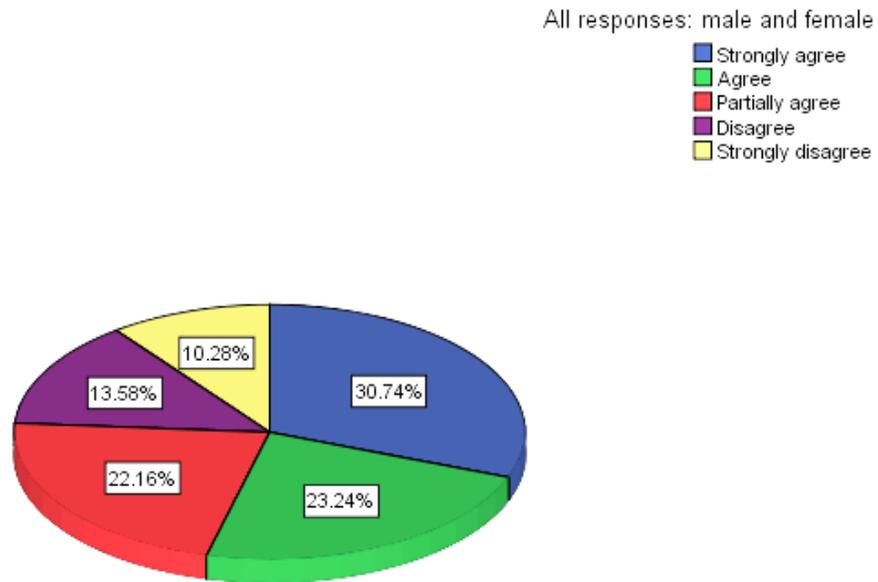


Figure 6.1: Kuwaiti women are restricted in their career choices (survey responses from both males and females)

However, the data shows a difference between the views of males and females about women's freedom to choose their work and their equality with men. When the participating students were asked about whether women should have more freedom to choose their field of work, 95% of females agreed with this idea, compared with only 71% of males. Similarly, 92% of female participants agreed that women should have the same opportunities as men in employment, while only 61% of males agreed. The tables in the next page provide evidence for the above arguments. Table 6.19 shows a significant gender difference ($\chi^2=93.272$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in how many participants believed that women should have more freedom to choose their field of work. Table 6.20 shows a similar pattern ($\chi^2=124.771$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in the

proportions of participants who believe that women should have the same opportunities as men in employment.

Table 6.19: Agreement that women in Kuwait should have more freedom in choosing their field of work, by gender

Women should have more freedom to choose their field of work	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Agree Count Within Gender%	305 71.3%	468 94.7%	773 83.8%	93.272	0.000
Disagree Count Within Gender%	123 28.7%	26 5.3%	149 16.2%		
Total Count Within Gender%	428 100.0%	494 100.0%	922 100.0%		

Table 6.20: Agreement that women in Kuwait should have the same opportunities as men in employment, by gender

Women should have the same opportunities as men in employment	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Agree Count Within Gender%	259 60.7%	450 91.6%	709 77.2%	124.771	0.000
Disagree Count Within Gender%	168 39.3%	41 8.4%	209 22.8%		
Total Count Within Gender%	427 100.0%	491 100.0%	918 100.0%		

These findings are consistent with those of Al-Munajjed and Sabbagh (2011), who found that 76% of females but only 46% of males in their sample believed in equal opportunities between the genders in employment. In their study, 60% of young men thought that the role of women in society was to be a housewife and mother, while 71% of females thought it was to seek employment and provide financial assistance. This suggests that while women seek to fulfil their aspirations and ambitions, and insist on participating more in the labour market, more men are likely to believe that their main roles should still be within the household framework. These findings on Kuwait society's continued negative view of women support the argument made previously in this chapter linking a female sense of control with traditional societal

values. These findings can also explain the following findings, which suggest that females have a greater desire to achieve their personal goals than males.

The data shows a significant relationship ($\chi^2=14.698$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) between gender and the level to which participants consider ‘satisfying my personal preference’ as an element in determining their future career. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, this element was the most important for the majority of students of both genders, although more females tended to choose it than males (see Table 6.21 for detailed statistics).

Table 6.21: ‘Satisfying my personal preference’ as an element in choosing future jobs, by gender

What are the elements/factors that you would consider when determining your future career? (Satisfying my personal preference)	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Yes Count Within Gender%	339 60.2%	396 71.1%	735 65.6%	14.698	0.000
No Count Within Gender%	224 39.8%	161 28.9%	385 34.4%		
Total Count Within Gender%	563 100.0%	557 100.0%	1120 100.0%		

The findings also indicate that female students were less likely to be influenced by parental career pathways. Table 6.22 shows a significant gender difference ($\chi^2=28.862$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in the participants’ willingness to follow their parents’ professions in the future. The table shows that whereas nearly half of the male respondents were willing to follow their parents’ career pathways, the figure for females was only 31%.

Table 6.22: Extent to which students would like to follow their parents' career routes, by gender

I want to follow my father's/mother's profession in the future	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Agree Count Within Gender%	263 46.7%	173 31.1%	436 38.9%	82.862	0.000
Disagree Count Within Gender%	300 53.3%	384 68.9%	684 61.1%		
Total Count Within Gender%	563 100.0%	557 100.0%	1120 100.0%		

Generally, there is evidence that females have been impacted by the importance of building ones' own biography (as reflected in the success in education and work) more than males (McLeod & Yates, 2006). The recent historical and social changes in Kuwaiti society may have even more impact on young women in other contexts. As Kuwaiti women were largely restricted in the past, getting rid of the traditional restrictions which previously kept them at home and increasing their entry into the labour market in recent times may be one of the reasons behind this difference between the responses of young males and females. The traditional restrictions over their agency and relatively new roles granted for females may appear to give them a more urgent desire to achieve their personal goals, make individual decisions and be less willing to be influenced by others, in comparison to their male peers. In contrast, the fact that men, socially and in Islam, have traditionally been the main breadwinners of the family, is more likely to influence issues relating to having a productive job and securing a better future for their family. Thus, these matters mean that young males may appear less concerned about 'being your own person'. The data provides evidence for this argument, as more males reported that a high income was important in determining their future career than females: this factor was in second place among males (40%), but fourth among females (23%). Table 6.23 shows a significant gender difference ($\chi^2=35.391$, $df= 1$; $p<0.05$) in relation to income. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, despite the fact that women in Kuwait are becoming involved in the labour market and receiving a monthly salary, allowing them to help their household financially, in Islam it is the man, not the woman, who is fully responsible for maintaining the family. Thus, the role of men as required by Islam and the community may make them more concerned about wages.

Table 6.23: Consideration of high income in choosing a career, by gender

What are the elements/factors that you would consider when determining your future career? (High income)	Gender		Total	χ^2 value	P value
	Male	Female			
Yes Count Within Gender%	221 39.3%	127 22.8%	348 31.1%	35.391	0.000
No Count Within Gender%	342 60.7%	430 77.2%	772 68.9%		
Total Count Within Gender%	563 100.0%	557 100.0%	1120 100.0%		

While the previous paragraphs have examined the data related to parental control over young people and the social and cultural influences within the family frame, and shown the differences in responses between genders and between other groups, the chapter turns in the following part to focus on wider societal and cultural influences. It seeks to understand the role of other variables or factors in shaping young people's lives and how these can create control over their agency and increase their challenges during their transitions to work. It will show that Kuwaiti young people from different backgrounds, where there were no clear differences between the groups, are seem to be exposed to different societal factors that contribute to influencing their pathways to work. These influences included society's perceptions regarding work in which the social division, along with current labour policies, have contributed to their formation. The issues of nepotism and the present lack of job opportunities are also highlighted in the next part of the chapter.

Wider societal and cultural influences

Social division

The thesis argued earlier that the social division and the apparent inequality between Kuwaitis and foregin workers in society and the labour market may contribute to influencing young people's transition to work and restrict their pathways toward occupations associated with the working class and manual skills. This assumption was built on the arguments of scholars on

the important role that the individuals' original position in the class structure, and the general opportunity structures available to them, play on their pathways to employment (Roberts, 2009; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; MacDonald et al., 2005). Several findings emerging from the data show how the career orientations and attitudes of the students are likely to be subject to wider societal and cultural influences such as social division, especially as this division is reflected in the social environment in which young people find themselves, appearing to create a culture that prevails among Kuwaiti families. More specifically, the influence of social division appears in the distribution of students' families among certain professions. When the participants were asked to order a group of professions from the worst to the best according to their families' preferences, those occupations involving manual skills, such as cook, technician and carpenter, were ranked the lowest (see Table 6.24).

Table 6.24: Families' preferences of career

Order your family's preferences for these professions (Best=1, worst=10)										
Professions	Percentage of responses according to rank									
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Doctor	56.9%	17.2%	8.2%	6.0%	4.5%	2.4%	1.5%	0.9%	0.8%	1.6%
Engineer	22.1%	52.3%	9.8%	5.0%	3.6%	2.6%	1.5%	1.3%	1.3%	0.5%
Lawyer	6.0%	12.9%	43.6%	19.9%	8.6%	3.7%	2.1%	2.3%	0.7%	0.3%
Teacher	5.7%	7.3%	19.2%	29.5%	17.7%	10.0%	4.9%	2.5%	1.7%	1.3%
Desk clerk	1.8%	2.9%	6.8%	16.8%	30.8%	22.3%	11.8%	3.2%	1.9%	1.7%
Armed forces	4.8%	2.8%	5.7%	12.6%	16.8%	21.7%	15.1%	6.7%	5.4%	7.4%
Artist	1.2%	1.3%	2.9%	5.7%	11.0%	20.3%	22.7%	8.3%	11.4%	15.2%
Carpenter	0.5%	0.7%	1.1%	1.3%	3.0%	5.9%	13.9%	27.8%	21.3%	24.4%
Technician	0.4%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	1.9%	3.5%	10.5%	26.3%	32.3%	21.7%
Cook	1.1%	1.3%	1.4%	1.8%	2.4%	7.5%	15.9%	21.3%	23.0%	24.2%

These attitudes towards different professions are probably linked to the shift which took place with the discovery of oil, as was discussed in Chapter Three. The huge influx of foreign workers resulting from economic change and globalisation in Kuwaiti society led to the emergence of social division, clearly shown in the segmentation of the labour market between nationals and foreign labour in terms of occupational activity and job sector. With regard to occupational activity, and according to statistics published by the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (2014), the Kuwaiti labour force is concentrated in white-collar jobs, mostly represented by office workers, senior officials, managers and professionals; while primary

occupations, crafts (hand or manual work) and service work such as in markets and shops, are generally filled by non-Kuwaitis. This division has likely led to the emergence and consolidation of a pattern whereby Kuwaitis reject manual work. In all, 86% of the sample strongly or partly agreed that Kuwaiti nationals shun manual and low-skilled work and the majority, as Figure 6.2 illustrates, confirm that the social stigma attached to this kind of work is considered an obstacle to young Kuwaitis taking such jobs. Generally, 14.4% of the sample indicated that society's perceptions are among the barriers that prevent them from choosing certain future pathways towards work. Overall, these results suggest that the local opportunity structures available to young people for manual work are limited by the severe social division between Kuwaitis and foreign workers and the absence of a culture or preference jobs in the family and society in general for working in such jobs.

One of the barriers preventing Kuwaitis from manual work and technical jobs is the fear of social stigma

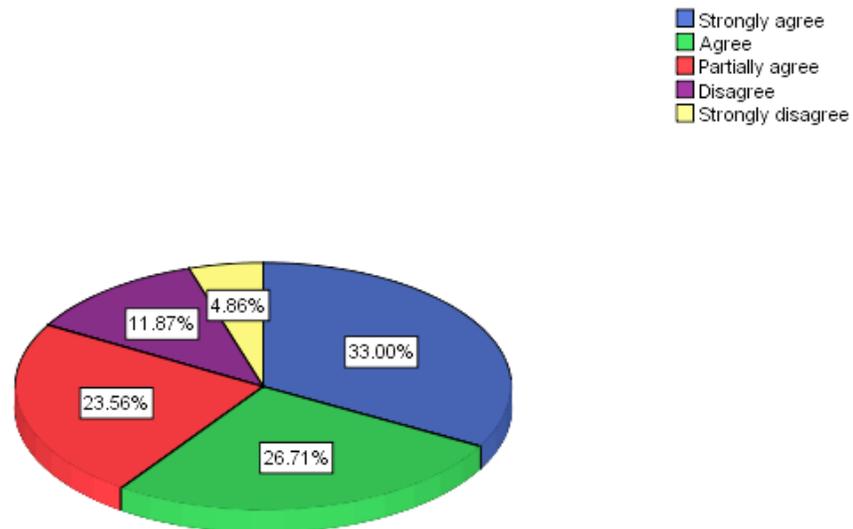


Figure 6.2: Social stigma preventing Kuwaiti youth from accepting manual work

Social divisions in the labour force are also evident with regard to employment. As was already noted, the data shows that the majority of the students would prefer to work in the public sector. According to statistics from the Central Statistics Bureau 2014, the workforce of Kuwaiti nationals differs significantly from non-Kuwaitis in their choice of the sector in which to work. The majority of Kuwaitis (84.1%) work in the public sector, with only a small percentage (9.8%) in the private sector. On the other hand, the majority of non-Kuwaitis work in the private sector (69.4%), followed by 18.7% in the household sector and a small percentage (7.5%) in the public sector.

The second most popular reason why Kuwaitis are reluctant to work in the private sector, as perceived by the sample, is that the private sector prefers to hire foreign labour rather than Kuwaiti citizens (see Figure 6.3).

Some people think that young Kuwaitis are reluctant to work in the private sector, Why do you think that?

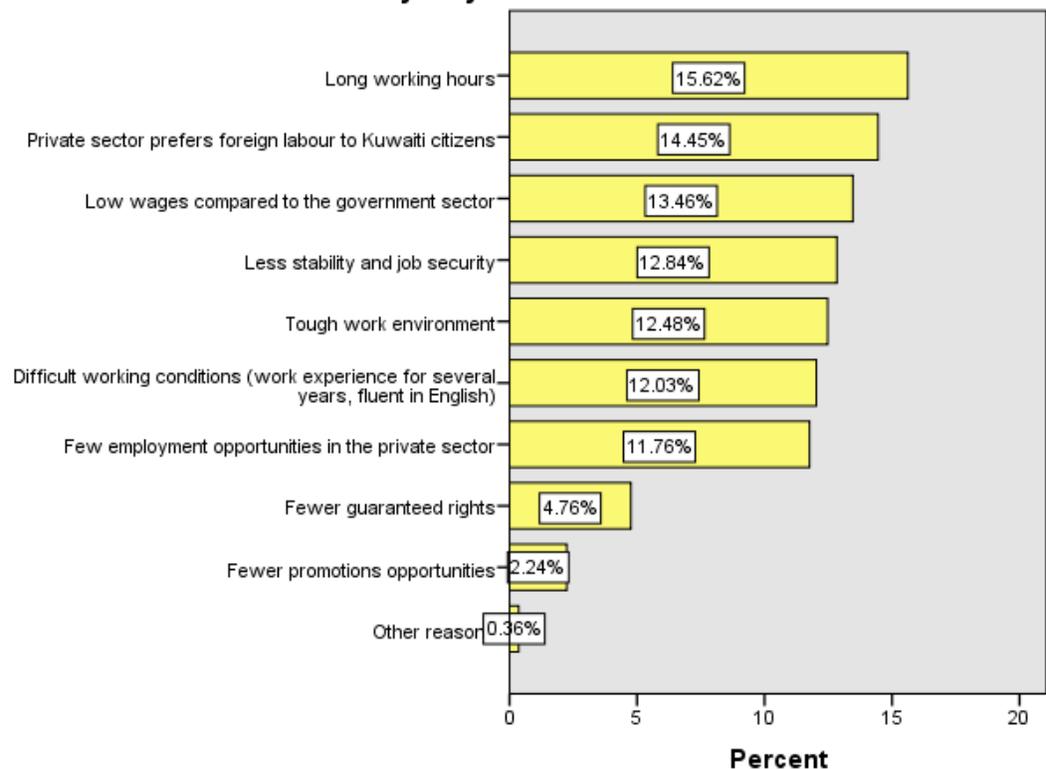


Figure 6.3: Students' views about why Kuwaitis are reluctant to work in the private sector

When searching for explanations in the literature of this apparent preference for non-nationals in the GCC generally, most studies linked this trend to the behaviour of the national workforce. Al-Ali (2008), for example, argued in the context of the UAE that one of the obstacles preventing the employment of UAE nationals in the private sector, especially in jobs in industrial sectors such as construction and road maintenance, was that they had a passive attitude towards work that requires physical effort. Similarly, it has been argued that young Saudi people are difficult to place in menial jobs that require loading and standing for long hours; they prefer sitting in air-conditioned offices and working in prestigious jobs. Saudi youth have also been criticised, mostly by the private sector, for lacking qualities such as the motivation to deal with customers in the services sector (Fakeeh, 2009). Madzikanda and Njoku (2008) found that the demand for high wages and the pressure for productivity and obedience are behind the hesitation of many private companies in Kuwait to employ nationals. According to Salih, even it sounds severe, an accurate description of Kuwaiti workers behaviour is that they “are used to high wages, short working hours, generous benefits and retirement packages, and lack of work pressure and absence of performance evaluation” (2010: 172).

To discover the impact of such findings, the students who would prefer to work in the public sector were asked about their reasons for this preference. As Table 6.25 shows, nearly 26% said that ‘More holidays and leave benefits’ was one of their important reasons for preferring to work in the public sector, while 20% cited ‘fewer working hours’.

Table 6.25: Respondents’ reasons for preferring to work in the public sector

If you would prefer to work in the public sector, why?	
Students were asked to tick <i>all</i> responses that apply	Percentage of respondents who selected this option
More stability and job security	51.5%
Satisfying my personal ambitions and goals	30.4%
The level of wages and salaries	29.6%
More holidays, vacations and sick leave	25.9%
Fewer working hours	19.7%
Greater legislation guaranteeing the rights of the employee	19.7%
Less pressure, responsibility and punctuality	9.4%
Others	1.80%

The data also supports the participants' belief that the longer working hours characterising the private sector was the main reason deterring Kuwaiti youth (see Figure 6.3). Moreover, this factor was represented by the second highest percentage of responses when the students were asked: *What are the obstacles that may prevent you from choosing a job you love?* As was discussed previously, Kuwaiti society cherishes family gatherings and social interactions. Thus, a probable explanation is that long working hours in private companies, with fewer benefits such as plenty of vacation leave as can be found in the public sector, may risk placing limits on daily socialisation with family and friends, especially since some companies require people to work six days a week³³. According to Salih (2010), there is ample evidence that the issue of long working hours in the private sector is one of the reasons for the lack of enthusiasm among GCC citizens for working in this sector. He argues that Kuwaiti society is very social, and that working long hours in private companies can restrict and limit socialising on a daily basis.

Only 9% ticked 'less pressure, responsibility' as a factor in their preference for working in the public sector. This perhaps shows that young people are willing to take responsibility and to be disciplined at work, and perhaps want to change the negative ideas about the behaviour of the national workforce: that they lack accountability and are used to less stressful jobs, as perceived by some private employers. More weight was given to factors related to the level of salaries and stability. The level of wages was the third most important factor (29.6%), following 'satisfying my personal goals' (30%), that made participants want to work in the public sector. It should be remembered that since the evolution of the economy in Kuwait, the government has provided generous wages for nationals in government ministries which are usually above those provided by companies and private institutions. However, to combat the

³³ It should be clarified that Kuwaiti labour law stipulates that the general daily working hours required from employees in both sectors should not exceed eight hours a day. According to Kuwaiti labour law for the public sector, Article No. 13 states the following: *Maximum actual working hours are eight hours a day; each department has the right to regulate working hours as it deems appropriate. However, workers shall not work more than five consecutive hours a day without a break of a minimum of half an hour that is not included in the working hours.* According to Kuwaiti labour law for the private sector, Article No. 64 says: *It is forbidden to allow workers to work for more than 48 hours per week or 8 hours a day, except in such events as are specified in this Law.* However, working hours in government ministries are usually fewer than in the private sector, which is commonly associated with longer and extra working hours. There are also differences in the nature and requirements of work and the perceptions of employers between the two sectors.

increasing over-employment of nationals in this sector, aligning the public sector with the private has become a widely acknowledged necessity. The government started to grant financial privileges to Kuwaiti employees in the private sector as part of the National Manpower Support Law introduced in 2001. These financial benefits include a social allowance, a child allowance, a high standard of living allowance, and any other financial gains enjoyed by government employees. Table 6.26 shows data from the Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme (MGRP) concerning the social allowance given to Kuwaitis according to their educational qualifications and marital status.

Table 6.26: Social allowance given to national workers in the private sector according to educational qualifications and marital status

<u>Social Allowance Paid to Kuwaitis Working in the Private Sector</u>		
<u>Educational Level</u>	<u>Single (in KD)</u>	<u>Married (in KD)</u>
1 University degree and above	190	278
2 A diploma or high school + two-year training certificate	169	250
3 High school + one-year training certificate or secondary school + three-year training certificate	161	242
4 High school or secondary school + one-year training certificate	147	222
5 Secondary school	141	216
6 Below secondary school	126	211

Source: Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, 2008 issue.

According to Al-Majdali (2013), the Secretary General of the MGRP, Kuwaiti employees in the private sector receive government financial support which is higher than the basic salary received from their companies and institutions. Thus, the gap between the wages of Kuwaiti employees in the private and public sectors has been reduced. Moreover, the salaries of Kuwaiti workers in the private sector who also receive government manpower support exceed their counterparts' salaries in the public sector, such as in oil companies and banking and communications sectors. For example, a single graduate working in a bank earns 500 KD (1,077 GBP) from the bank and 740 KD (1,590 GBP) from the government as manpower support. The total salary therefore equals 1,240 KD (2,670 GBP) per month, while the same

person if appointed in the public sector earns only 850 KD (1,830 GBP). It has been argued that the introduction of allowances and extra pay for citizens was one of the key drivers in increasing the participation of Kuwaitis in the private sector (Salih, 2010). The findings of the current study support this, as the wages and bonuses offered by the private sector was the reason given by 46% of the students who favoured working in this sector.

However, the level of wages in the public sector was still given as a reason for preferring that sector, despite the support and generous financial benefits available to nationals working in the private sector; this can be explained in two possible ways. Either participants are unfamiliar with, or aware of, the wage difference between the two sectors; the data in Figure 6.3 above confirms that only 13% thought that the reason for the reluctance of young Kuwaitis to enter the private sector was lower pay. Alternatively, they may believe that wages in government departments are still attractive, perhaps in combination with the convenient working conditions and hours of work. In other words, the advantages of working in the public sector may reduce the attraction of the higher wages in the private sector.

The trend that is most immediately apparent is that ‘stability and professional security’ is a key reason for participants reporting that they prefer to work in the public sector (52%). There seems to be a widespread belief among Kuwaiti young people that work in the private sector is not safe; many employees have been dismissed recently by companies for no serious reason. A few months before the distribution of the questionnaires a private company dismissed 150 Kuwaiti employees and replaced them with non-Kuwaiti workers to reduce its costs, an incident which sparked outrage in the Kuwaiti community. This perhaps contributed to young Kuwaitis’ bad impression of the private sector environment, seeing it as insecure. In fact, there are laws which protect government workers, represented by the Administrative Court, which employees can turn to in grievance cases over any administrative decisions related to their job; however, the labour courts in Kuwait cannot force an employer to reinstate an employee in the private sector. It is argued that the current labour law (number 38/1964) has aggravated the problem of the high concentration of Kuwaitis in the public sector, as it does not set minimum wage in the private sector. Al-Ibrahim (1996) asserted that labour regulations have long been

unstable, a situation which has increased insecurity and the lack of confidence in the private sector among Kuwaiti people.

Overall, it can be concluded from the above findings that, along with the social and cultural perceptions built up over the years in forming national career attitudes and creating resistance to the private sector, the current labour policies and laws and the continued private sector employment of a foreign labour force appear to preserve and strengthen this resistance. These findings suggest an amendment of some of the strategies relating to working hours, benefits for leave, and more importantly the policies concerning financial and professional security; these changes might encourage young people's movement into the private sector and to some extent alleviate the rate of youth unemployment. As was already mentioned, the concluding chapter includes a section discussing the potential implications of the study's findings on policy.

Nepotism (*wasta*) and unemployment

Data gathered by this study on wider social and cultural influences also included responses on the role of social relationships and networks in obtaining employment. Nepotism and cronyism, or *wasta* as it is called in Arab, can be understood as a form of intervention through social connections and wide family networks to achieve personal interests by altering public policy or bypassing rules and laws. Although *wasta*, nepotism and cronyism are all based on the use of social relationships to facilitate the distribution of resources and advantages, *wasta* is the most comprehensive. According to Mohamed and Mohamad (2011), while nepotism is defined as partiality and favoritism to kinship, and cronyism to friendship, *wasta* involves relatives, friends and also sometimes includes strangers in attempts to obtain resources or privileges. In this way, nepotism and cronyism are considered parts of *wasta* (Mohamed & Mohamad, 2011). This social practice is confirmed as part of Kuwaiti culture early on in Kuwaiti people's lives. As was explained in Chapter Three, ancient Kuwaitis emphasised the importance of loyalty to family members and blood relations, and then to wider groups. This social dynamic infiltrates various aspects of modern Kuwaiti everyday life, whether social, political, or in the labour market (Salih, 2010). Even though government employment is a

right of every citizen, individuals can still use a social relationship to speed up and facilitate their appointment or obtain a better job in the government body of their choice. The findings strikingly illustrate the students' belief in the existence of *wasta* in employment; most believed that it was prevalent in recruitment (63%), and nearly 39% strongly thought that other applicants received less favourable treatment.

Favouritism, and the use of relationships and social networks in employment and obtaining privileges is not limited to Kuwaiti or Arab culture, but also appears in other international cultures. For example, in the early stages of Japanese society, the people there hesitated to do business dealings with foreigners; instead, they preferred to deal with friends, a phenomenon called *kanaki* in Japan (Larson & Kleiner, 1992, in Jiang, Lo & Garris, 2012). *Blat* was a phenomenon that characterised life and transactions in the USSR; it was a system of using informal personal networks and contacts to secure social resources (Kaurinkoski, 2000, in Jiang, Lo & Garris, 2012), which was similar to *wasta*. A similar mechanism also exists in China, known as *Guanxi*. *Guanxi* “is used, consciously or unconsciously, by Chinese as cultural strategy to mobilize social resources for survival and development in various spheres of social life” (Jiang, Lo & Garris, 2012: 217). Mohamed and Mohamad (2011) have claimed that while there are some arguments about the positive effect of *guanxi* on performance and organisational competitiveness, there are no such debates around *wasta*. On the contrary, they reviewed a number of prior studies which have argued that *wasta* is inefficient and responsible for the deterioration of the economy and poor job performance in the Arab world. In addition, it has been suggested that practicing *wasta* in employment can contribute to creating feelings of injustice and frustration among those who are qualified for employment, but who lack *wasta* networks (Fakeeh, 2009; Makhoul & Harrison, 2004). In examining the participants' views of this matter, more than half of the sample strongly agreed that *wasta* prevented a large segment of young people from accomplishing their career goals. Although the participants had not yet gone through recruitment and its procedures, they had possibly witnessed this situation through the experiences of older siblings or friends.

Al-Saleh (1996) criticised the role of members of parliament in contributing to breeding *wasta* in Kuwait. He argued that in their own self-interest in elections, some members of parliament

intervened by employing nationals in government bodies, even when those people were unqualified or simply not needed, Salih (2010) agreed, observing that:

Wasta seems to play a huge role in the employment system in Kuwait. People are recruited in many government departments even when there is absolutely no need for them. These “hidden” forces along with the open-door employment policy have created what is called in Kuwait a “masked unemployment” in almost every government establishment.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that since social networks play a role in securing good conditions job for individuals, on one hand *wasta* can work as a contributing factor in reducing the sense of individual responsibility. On the other hand, it may represent one of the constraints that obstruct other individuals, who lack *wasta*, from achieving their individual desires and gaining access to appropriate opportunities in the labour market. In that sense, it is likely to put further pressure on young people, in addition to the reality of limited opportunities in government jobs. The following chapter, which focuses on the experiences of young workers, provides confirmation of the impact of this phenomenon and the resulting frustration among young people.

In seeking in the students’ knowledge of the current reality of an increasing lack of job opportunities, the data in Table 6.27 shows that ‘lack of employment opportunities’ was the largest category (28%) they chose as a barrier to achieving their career goals. These results strongly suggest the students’ awareness about the current changes and increasing risk in the labour market.

Table 6.27: Challenges and barriers to choosing preferred job

What are the barriers that may prevent you from choosing your career goal/preferred job?	
Students were asked to tick all responses that apply	Percentage of respondents who selected this option
Lack of employment opportunities	27.8%
Working hours	19.4%
Society's perception	14.4%
Lack of training opportunities	14.2%
Other barriers	13.4%
Customs and traditions	11.6%
Parent's objection	10.8%
Level of wages	10.6%

These findings support the results of Al-Munajjed and Sabbagh (2011), who asked young participants from different GCC countries: “What do you think are the major challenges affecting the GCC region today?” Unemployment ranked number two in the responses they received among challenges that included the economic crisis, housing, and Middle Eastern conflict. A total 87% of the surveyed young people replied positively when asked if they considered unemployment to be a serious problem facing them in their countries of residence. Although young people in Kuwait and in the GCC more widely do not encounter the same lack of employment opportunities as those in other Arab countries, they perhaps believe that the economic conditions and social and political developments in the Gulf countries do not conform with those of neighbouring countries. In a sense, it can be assumed that the financial strength and economic wealth of the GCC, a unique feature in the region, may raise the expectations of young people regarding the availability of employment opportunities worthy of a welfare society. At present, the rising number of young people and the increased number of job seekers have become clearly visible.

Conclusion

In summary, it seems that even in a society where the welfare threshold is high, there is still competition and the kind of stress and concerns among young people which are normally

associated with traditional cultures. Beck (1992) assumed that risk is linked to the transition of societies through three stages of change, and that the industrial stage paved the way for the emergence of individual uncertainty. However, it appears that uncertainties also arise in the case of compressed modernity in a country which has moved from a traditional nomadic society to a very affluent one in a short space of time. As the findings suggest, in a period of rapid modernisation, young Kuwaitis have found themselves in a state of confusion, torn between on the one hand, taking individual paths and achieving their individual ambitions, and on the other, the sense of being controlled by other forces. Modern life and globalisation seem to have given the current generation of young people in Kuwait a stronger desire to be liberated from outside influences, with a greater awareness of the big picture, and determination to use their individual agency in shaping their future. This became apparent from various results, including those related to the reasons behind their choices of educational and future career pathways, which indicated a general recognition amongst the young people of the increasing need of the role of agency in modern times. However, the sense of being constrained has also clearly been shown by the results on the locus of control, and other findings that illustrate the continuation of parental control and old cultural influences affecting their transitions to work.

The persistence of traditional aspects of culture possibly explains the concern expressed by the participating young females over their transition to work which was confirmed in the analysis of the data. In fact, the results suggest that women are gaining more freedom to make their own decisions and appear more willing to achieve their individual ambitions. Modernity has granted Kuwaiti females more rights regarding participation in education and at work, and has reduced the gender gap. However, the trend that is most immediately apparent from the findings is that young females feel more uncertain than their male peers, and feel the need for more opportunities and greater freedom. The commitments imposed on women's roles by traditional and tribal values and Islamic teachings appear to worry them and to make them feel restricted. This means that female students who live in traditional family environments are more likely to worry that traditional parental practices will impede their future goals.

The results also show that young people's choices are likely to be influenced by wider society's attitudes towards work; for example, some careers are considered inferior, and linked to non-national workers. Working in government jobs is another aspect of local culture that appears to shape young people's attitudes towards work. Labour policies and differences in the conditions of the public and private sectors also seem to play an influential role in shaping youth pathways; young people appear to prefer the greater stability and security, and longer leave and shorter working hours, that characterise the public sector. The spread of using social relations to facilitate access to careers appears as a traditional cultural practice which almost all the participants believe prevents many young people from achieving their personal goals. This cultural practice in society presents another possible challenge to young people, especially with their apparent concerns about the increasing lack of employment opportunities and recent changes in the labour market.

With these indications of the potential role played by social, cultural and institutional structures over the students' perspectives of their transition to work, Beck's account of individualisation, which argues that the individual's life is no longer forced into traditional models imposed by social constraints, is difficult to accept in the Kuwaiti context. Beck (1992) proposed that who you are is what you think, not what the family, gender or traditional norms place on you; however, young people's transitions to work in Kuwait are still likely to be influenced by socio-cultural insights, parental encouragement and trajectories, and other traditional societal restraints. The following chapter delves deeper into the nature of youth transition in this society, and explores how various factors are continuing to shape young people's pathways towards work, and how the young people are responding to control over their agencies. Some of the issues addressed in the quantitative data chapters, such as the role of education and social relationships, are covered, but in more detail. In addition, new themes that emerged through the analysis of the experiences of young people and their views are also discussed.

Chapter 7 – Young people’s experience of work and struggles between tradition and modernity

Introduction

The previous two chapters focused on the views of young people in the final stages of their school studies in an attempt to understand their perspectives, challenges and concerns about their future transition to work, and the role of certain variables in influencing their lives. This chapter focuses on young adults, aged 22-30, who have recently become employed in the Kuwaiti labour market. The aim is to explore in depth how young Kuwaitis are experiencing the transition from education to work, and the nature of their challenges in doing so. The chapter tends to show that the variables that control young people, including the family, gender, and social norms, are likely to result in tension in young adults’ journey, to work, and even after they have found employment. This chapter shows that, while the quantitative data indicate that the majority of students would prefer to work in the public sector, the qualitative results add that the majority of those participants who joined this sector suffer from disappointment and frustration. Although the earlier findings showed that the lack of skills was only one of several concerns for young people of school age, it appears to be an important factor in influencing their pathways towards work and making their transitions more complex. New understandings emerge in this chapter about the current behaviour of youth towards work that are starting to surface, and their struggles with the structures. New ideas relating to Beck’s individualisation are also appearing, associated with continuing family protection, parental guidance and strong social relationships. This reflects some of the strengths of the methodology adopted by this study; the investigation of two different periods of life by recruiting two different samples of participants, and the use of mixed methods in order to obtain more insight into the research topic.

This chapter, consistent with the literature, suggests that young people’s transition nowadays in Kuwait has changed significantly from that which was experienced by earlier generations. It is possible that changes in the labour market have introduced more challenges, driving individuals to become more interested in, and aware of, the need for skills and good qualifications. However, this does not mean that mainstream concepts from youth studies can be transferred unproblematically to Kuwait with the different nature of its labour market, the nature of unemployment, government policies in terms of education and employment, and its distinct cultural and social values. Many new forms of work have emerged in young lives in different parts of the world in response to recent changes. However, the data gathered from the interviewees suggest that young people in Kuwait are still likely to encounter social, cultural, political and educational barriers impeding their taking alternative routes to the traditional path taken by former generations. Since historic changes took place over a relatively short period of time in Kuwait, various features of the pre-modernity stage remain in the contemporary lives of Kuwaitis. This probably hampers young people’s ability to cope with changing labour market conditions by actively and freely searching for new courses of action, as their peers in other global contexts can do. The chapter argues that ideas such as free choice of lifestyle and how individuals have become the centre of their own life plans (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001) are difficult to apply to Kuwaiti society, as the collective feelings and traditional structures, including religion, family and gender, have not lapsed.

The first section of this chapter presents results that suggest how young adults’ awareness and experience of the recent labour market tend to change in the face of increased competition, unemployment and underemployment. Some additional quantitative data generated by this study, from secondary school students, and statistical information from official bodies, including statistics from Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, is presented in this section, helping to enhance understanding and strengthen the argument. As was discussed in the methodology chapter, the mixed methods approach seeks to enhance and clarify results from one method through the outcomes of the other approach (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2008). Furlong (2015a: 19) also argued that combining qualitative and quantitative approaches helps to provide ‘a fuller understanding’ of young people’s experiences. Thus, this section reflects on how adopting this methodology enabled the

researcher to build a bridge between the two different approaches, providing as much understanding of the social phenomenon as possible. The following section focuses on the theme of agency and structures (constraints). It shows how certain factors or barriers; including social stigma, employment politics, and the educational system, are likely to pose a challenge to young Kuwaitis who seek alternative work pathways to the formal ones usually associated with the public sector, such as engaging in part-time or temporary work, or the emergence of the wish to run one’s own small business. The final section deals with more findings that challenge Beck’s account of individualisation, focusing on social constraints, such as strong family and social relationships, and gender. It shows that even with the relative change in courses of action towards work and the tendency to take individual decisions, Beck’s idea of presenting individual choice as the most powerful current in the contemporary era is hard to apply in the Kuwaiti context, with its different overall cultural, emotional and religious perspective. This suggests a new theoretical direction in which the changing relationship between the individual and society and free choice need to be understood differently in societies that experience compressed modernity, and where the collective identities and traditional values remain embedded in individuals’ everyday lives.

Increased competition, unemployment and underemployment

In Chapter Two, the review of the youth literature showed that the contemporary era has brought new risks and a more complex labour market which requires young people to be equipped with additional qualifications and wider knowledge to enable them to negotiate an uncertain world. More pressures are felt by young people as a consequence of living with uncertainty and the increasing complexity of the labour market (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, 2007). This study finds that this seems to occur even in more affluent and less competitive labour markets such as Kuwait.

The responses of the interviewees indicate their awareness of the recent changes in the labour market and how the situation has become riskier and more demanding for them than it was for their parents. They appeared to feel less fortunate than former generations which enjoyed a more favourable situation, when the majority of work seekers immediately found employment in the public sector with fewer qualifications. Azeez, who was aged 26 at the time of the interview and holds a Bachelor's degree, said that:

20 years ago, the person who got a high school certificate was considered highly qualified at that time... my father is a diploma holder, and he was a head teacher! Yet, times have changed; no school graduate can find a job because of increasing competition in the labour market. Therefore, youth have to develop and boost their skills and knowledge...

The analysis of the quantitative data indicated that most of the responding students intended to continue their studies into higher education, especially university. According to a report issued by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States (2009), Kuwait experienced a significant increase in student enrolment in higher education, jumping from 22% to 49%, between 1998 and 2008, constituting the second highest enrolment ratio in all the Arab countries. The data from the present study indicates that 74% of the secondary school students planned to attend university, others planned to enrol in colleges, institutions of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, training courses, or the armed forces; lastly, a minority had different, or no specific, plans.

It is likely that this majority is an indication of the ambition and striving of most contemporary young people to secure advanced qualifications. However, their aspirations cannot be achieved without difficulty in the context of increasing competition and a more uncertain world. This point can be supported by comparing students' plans and official statistics. Although the findings of this study show that the majority of students at the late school stage wished to attend university rather than other institutions and colleges, recent statistics show that the numbers of Kuwaiti students registering with, and graduating from, the applied education colleges outweighed the total number of university graduates (Kuwait University and private universities). According to statistics from Kuwait University and the Public Authority for

Applied Education and Training, the total number of Kuwaiti graduates from applied education in the first semester of 2010/2011 was 3,864; 2,071 students graduated from Kuwait University and other private universities in the first semester of the following academic year (Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, 2013). As stated in a report by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States (2009), the factors that hinder the growth of higher education opportunities in Kuwait include: “the continuous increase in the outputs of public education, the wide gap between aspirations and conditions on the ground, the increasing trend toward higher education in general, at rising rates that move more quickly than the possible growth in enrollment capacity or space available to higher education institutions” (UNESCO, Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, 2009: 41). In fact, the challenge faced by Kuwait University due to the strong pressure of demand for the limited spaces available led it to raise the level of admission grades imposed by the University Council in 2001. Thus, the proportion of secondary school graduates who were accepted at university had declined from an average of 42% in 1995/1996 to 32% in 2004/2005 (Al-Atiqi et al., 2010). Some of the students who participated in this study considered this change of grades for entry to the University an obstacle to the achievement of their ambitions, as expressed in their responses to an open-ended question. For example, an 18-year-old female student in the last stage of secondary education who had a science specialisation, stated that: “I’m worried about not being able to enrol at Kuwait University, as the admission grade is too high and the available space is limited”³⁴.

Overall, it is reasonable to assume from these results that competition among young Kuwaitis has increased in recent years, and they are likely to be more concerned with guarantees facilitating their transition to the labour market. This is consistent with the results in the previous chapter suggesting that working hard to obtain high qualifications has apparently become a necessity recognised by young people, even in a society that enjoys a high standard of living. The above results show how young people feel more responsible for their life events in an uncertain world, and how these feelings are associated with a fear of failure. A theoretical implication of this kind of failure in obtaining a smooth transition and blocking

³⁴ It is important to mention that admission to Kuwait University is determined using an equivalent average system that combines the high school grade point average of students (GPA) with aptitude test results.

aspirations among youth is the possibility that they may become more vulnerable to psychosocial disorders and mental health problems (Smith & Rutter, 1995; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007).

The interview findings indicate that most participants, especially the less educated among them, had experienced a long wait for a job in the public sector. Some of them had been forced to accept the first job opportunity offered by government, even “it’s entirely unrelated” to their field of study. This happened with Abdullah, an Assistant Mechanical Engineer in the public sector, who was 30 years old and held a diploma. The majority of interviewees spoke unfavourably about the strategies of government recruitment and how the increasing pressure on this sector has led to graduates employed in jobs irrelevant to their major. In this context, Al-Humoud (1996) has argued that serious effort is needed from the government to deal with unemployment, instead of only employing the increasing numbers of young people randomly in the public sector, without regard to their suitability or specialties and qualifications. Although such claims emerged two decades ago, it seems from the findings that no serious consideration has been given to this matter. Given that the findings are based on a limited number of Kuwaiti young adults, the results should still be treated with caution.

According to these strategies of recruitment indicated by a number of participants, young public-sector workers may feel dissatisfied and disappointed even after they commence employment in government bodies. Several interviewees expressed shock at the crowded situation of this sector, and how this had led to them wasting their potential and receiving low fulfillment at work. Their responses suggest that because of the accumulation of workers in the workplace, there is no real work or “nothing to do!” during working hours, resulting in some of them spending their time watching movies, smoking, or chatting. In this context Hussain, who was 30 years old and had worked in the Ministry of Information for seven years, said that:

I’m a TV programme director and I had some aims to be fulfilled. With the passage of time, I’ve become shocked with the reality of the public sector. It doesn’t give an opportunity to youth for creating. Officials in the ministry ask us not to attend! As for me, I

only go to my office once a week to sign an attendance record. To sum up, it's underemployment. It's only registered in government records that I'm an employee and take a monthly salary without doing anything.

This experience in the Kuwaiti context conjures up the case of the 'warehousing' of young people that emerged in the 1980s in the UK (See Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). It seems to form the same function, but with different policies adopted in each context, leading to different experiences in young people's biographies. With changes in the labour market and a decline in the number of jobs available to young people in the UK, training schemes and programmes increasingly emerged. There was a debate in the youth research about such a state of training; while some argued that these policies were positive in developing the level of youth skills and qualifications, critics pointed out that the policies only led to the 'warehousing' of young people on training programmes until jobs became available for them (Cieslik & Simpson, 2013). In Kuwait, despite the increasing inability of the public sector to absorb young people, the state still employs them, in order to alleviate youth unemployment. However, the sense of suffocation and pointless accumulation in this sector has caused a situation in which, although they are employees, young people's role as actual workers is not yet complete; alternatively, they might be considered as 'warehoused'.

This situation, as the findings show, has been associated with frustration among the majority of participants, who expressed sentiments blaming the state. In light of the complaints made against the government, the researcher asked some of the interviewees why they were not using their own initiative to find something productive to do with their time, for themselves or for the ministry. How did they legitimatise their lack of effort? Where were their work ethic and sense of responsibility as an adult? Hussain, for example, replied that at the beginning of his employment he had tried to be productive for the ministry, but over the years and with the lack of support, he gradually lost his enthusiasm. This had pushed him recently to think about being productive for himself by looking for afternoon work for a private company.

Asrar, a 25 year old who has worked as a public relations officer in a public ministry for two years and holds a Bachelor's degree, mentioned that despite there being no real work

opportunities on offer to young workers in the public sector, she often created a task to do at work, even if it was simple. She added that:

I don't wake up every morning to sit in my office without work! It is not acceptable to receive a monthly salary from the state free of charge! So rather than wait for work, young people have to take the initiative and contribute to anything for their ministries.

When the public workers were asked why they did not turn to full-time job opportunities in private firms, different reasons were given, such as the difficult conditions for admission, competition from foreigners, and the strict regulations and conditions. The length of working hours emerged, especially among females' responses, in addition to several social, cultural and educational factors. This suggests that young people's pathways to the labour market in Kuwait seem to be controlled by opportunities and restrictions. This relates to Roberts' (2009) opportunity structures. Roberts asserts that young people's pathways are not only dependent on their individual choices, but also on opportunities and constraints in their lives that are outside their control (1993, 2003). The findings tend to confirm that young people's decisions about taking pathways towards the private sector are restricted by the limited opportunities presented to them by education and the labour market.

Although workers in the private sector appeared more positive than those in the public sector in terms of achieving their professional ambitions, some expressed difficulty in adapting to the harshness of this sector. Some linked their struggles to their lack of required skills, especially given the ineffective educational environment in which they were brought up; a later section in this chapter shows how participants spoke about education in more detail.

In summary, it may be said that with the increasing pressure on the public sector, contemporary young Kuwaitis seem to be competing for qualifications to ensure and speed up their employment, and are facing new challenges that may reduce their hopes. These include stricter admission conditions for university, longer waiting periods, and underemployment in the public sector. In addition to the new challenges, which require them to adapt to current circumstances and use their agencies to search for alternative work opportunities, and as the

following sections show in more detail, there are various cultural, social, educational and political factors that are likely to prevent them from taking this course, meaning that they may feel let down when faced with the reality of work in government bodies. This feeling among young workers adds new understanding to the quantitative data. Despite the clear tendency of young people during studying to join the public sector, influenced by incentives and social perspectives, and with the competition in obtaining high level certificates to ensure them those jobs, the qualitative data showed the emergence of frustration among young adults after entering this sector. Some interviewees offered the advice to school graduates and those younger that they should reduce their expectations, stating that: “dreams should be at the level of the reality where we live” (Batool, age 29). These data also indicate that youth challenges in the labour market today might not necessarily be associated with participating in the unsecured and precarious work usually portrayed in youth studies (Beck, 2000; Furlong, 2015b), but also seem to appear when employed in stable and secure jobs.

Agency/Structures

The literature in the context of the global north has shown that young people have become increasingly engaged in the development of their personal skills, and are forced to take part in unstable short-term work as a reaction to recent labour market changes (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, 2007; Beck, 2000). Some youth studies in the southern world have explored how young people from rural areas respond to difficult working conditions in their local area by looking for job opportunities in more developed countries (see Punch, 2010, 2015; Jeffrey, 2010). ‘Entrepreneurship’ has also emerged as a strategy pursued by contemporary young people in dealing with difficult economic conditions and fulfilling their social responsibility (Jeffrey & Dyson, 2013). However, this section suggests that the agencies of young Kuwaitis are likely to remain constrained by certain factors that prevent them from taking action like their peers in different global contexts. The unique nature of the modernisation of Kuwaiti society, with its inherent culture and rigid policies, may present Kuwaiti youth with obstacles to taking new pathways to work, so that unemployment needs to be understood differently within this society.

Short-term work

Overwhelmingly, youth scholars have emphasised that the traditional transitions from education to stable and permanent work no longer exists. As a response to changes in global labour markets in modern times, young people are increasingly experiencing new forms of employment, characterised as casual, flexible, unsecured and short-term, such as part-time and temporary jobs (Hall & Mirvis, 1996). According to Furlong and Cartmel (2007), the development of unsecured flexible employment emerged with the recession in the 1980s; consequently, employers sought to find ways to reduce their labour costs, and hiring part-time and temporary workers was one way to solve this problem. Standing (2011) also highlighted how precarious work is increasingly experienced by people all over the world. As neoliberalism has become dominant in western societies, it has impacted upon the labour market and on young people’s choices. Neoliberalism involves “the belief allowing markets to operate with as few impediments as possible, even while for the market to reach its full potential, the State has to be active in creating and sustaining the institutions which make that possible” (Gamble, 2006: 2122; Robison, 2006: 3, cited in Burrows, 2013: 4). Since the social protection of organised labour and the welfare state have been weakened, the flexible labour market and a reduction in costs have become required, and these are closely associated with the observed increase in precarious work (Burrows, 2013). Furlong argued that part-time work in the 1970s and 1980s was normally the preserve of females who were caring for families, or of youth who needed to support their lifestyle while at school or college. Nowadays, however, part-time work is common among young people, many of whom would prefer to work full-time. It is not unusual for young people to take on a number of part-time jobs simultaneously as a way to earn a decent living, even after they graduate from university (Furlong & Cartmel, 2009).

There is evidence of the persistence of these forms of insecure employment in different countries, although varies in its severity across those countries. By using data from both the UK and Australian Labour Force Surveys, Furlong and Kelly (2005) showed that youth experiences have been affected by insecure forms of employment in the two countries, but that this norm appeared more prominently in the latter, and was more obvious among young

women and those in less skilled occupations, and in certain sectors of the service labour market. Indeed, recent evidence on insecure work has found that the Australian labour market is experiencing the largest growth in casual jobs, which has become a trend affecting over two million Australians (Rafferty & Yu, 2010). In a number of European countries, one in two of temporary workers is under 25 years old (Arrowsmith, 2006). MacDonald and Marsh (2005) highlighted the spread of ‘fiddly jobs’, in which young people with fewer qualifications are forced to “experience a succession of insecure, unpredictable and informally organized work within the service sector” (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007: 40). They take up this form of employment as a strategy by which to deal with lack of mainstream job opportunities and to survive in hard economic conditions.

However, and as was discussed in previous chapters, such forms of work, to which Beck refers as the Brazilianization of the West (Beck, 2000), may be difficult to apply in the Kuwaiti context where citizens are still enjoying good, secure opportunities in the labour market. Researchers in Middle Eastern contexts have also argued that the good economic conditions and family financial support resulting from oil rents are among the factors that make young people in this region more able to endure a period of unemployment and wait for a formal job, instead of moving between several short-term jobs in the informal sector while seeking a more permanent and secure job (Blomquist, 2008; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008).

A closer look at the participants’ answers seems to support these arguments. The findings show that only five out of twenty-four participants, four male and one female, had experienced part-time or temporary work before acquiring permanent full-time positions. Some of them worked for a few months during their higher education, and others during a period of unemployment, in different workplaces such as advertising companies, supermarkets, and fuel stations. When asked about their reasons for undertaking these forms of work, only Abdullah (who worked after secondary school at a fuel station from 2pm to 10pm for five months) referred to the economic factor, replying that he did so: “to get my own salary without relying on my family”. The others pointed to reasons such as developing skills and spending their leisure time doing something useful. This suggests that wealth might be one of the factors in the lack of a national culture of youth working in short-term jobs or informal careers.

Although these findings corroborate the previous quantitative findings around the contribution of economic conditions in the Kuwaiti context to shaping attitudes towards part-time work, and provide a rich and detailed understanding of young Kuwaitis' experiences, it is still difficult to see them as facts that are applicable to the population at large, as other data considerations might be missing.

It should be remembered that unemployment benefits are provided in the form of social welfare benefits by the Kuwaiti government. In 2010, social welfare expenses in Kuwait accounted for some 30% of total government spending (Markaz, 2012). According to the research published by the Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz, 2012), with the social security system and extensive state help in GCC, "citizens can afford unemployment, living off the paradise supply of transfers from their governments which derive from unsustainable oil rent" (ibid.: 14). In this sense, it seems likely that extensive government assistance would indirectly demotivate young people and reduce their determination to actively seek work.

Other results indicated that: "the public sector does not value such experiences" (Noor, age 27); this could suggest that young people have no interest in pursuing part-time or temporary work. In other words, because the experience of these forms of work, particularly in the informal sector, is not recorded, and information about employees' skills is of less value in recruitment in the public sector than an academic certificate, such experience is unlikely to be valuable or attractive to young Kuwaitis. This factor may explain the tendency of the majority of participants who entered part-time work to translate their experiences into jobs in the private sector, which is more interested in hiring young people with a base of skills, as has been discussed in previous studies (see Salih, 2010). These findings are highly significant in terms of how the rules and policies of the labour market in Kuwait are expected to influence individuals' attitudes and behaviour toward work. According to Shediak, Haddad and Klouche (2010: 2), part-time or temporary work also receives little attention in terms of arrangements in the Gulf region: "In the GCC, flexible work arrangements are largely ignored by laws and regulations, which focus mostly on full-time arrangements and therefore are impractical for flexible work".

It may be said that these findings of the qualitative analysis on the economic conditions enjoyed by Kuwaiti youth and the labour market's policies adopted by government, alongside the lack of encouragement from family, combine to explain why a culture of part-time and temporary work is absent among young people in this society. To sum up, at a time when the changes in the labour markets worldwide have prompted young people to take new strategies into work, several factors have prevented such strategies from appearing among Kuwaitis. Thus, the generalisability of many of the published youth studies on this issue is in question. However, the data presented in the next section describes a new course of action that seems to be emerging towards work among young people, but it also does not occur without a struggle with structures.

New forms of work: individual projects/small business

The analysis of the qualitative data tends to suggest that a new attitude to work seems to be starting to emerge, of people wishing to run their own businesses as mechanics or retailers, reminiscent of the *freeter* phenomenon (Reiko, 2006) which appeared in the late 1980s in Japan, when many young Japanese refused to become permanent workers. They instead chose to work in part-time or temporary jobs, hoping ultimately to become professionals in different fields, such as music. This term later included other groups: those forced to take temporary or part-time jobs as a result of the decline of employment opportunities for young graduates from secondary school and universities due to the economic recession of the early 1990s. It also refers to those who delay the choice of profession because they have not decided what they want to do (Reiko, 2006).

A number of participants said that, due to frustration and the failure to achieve career goals among young people, especially because of the crowded public sector, young people had recently begun to turn to individual projects or to owning small businesses. The following statements emerged from the interviews:

Despite the stereotype about certain professions in the society, nowadays, a lot of the youth run their own businesses, such as barber shops or mechanics, because of a lack of real work in their government jobs. (Hussain)

We see many young people, via social networking websites, present their own businesses, such as candy shops and car washing. (Asrar)

These excerpts suggest a possible shift towards young people wanting to choose their career, and the emergence of beliefs about making their own biography. This formation of new values and ethics among young Kuwaitis could lend some support to the concept of individualisation put forward by Beck and the theoretical studies on the impact of globalisation on individuals more generally. The common belief that the value and activity of self-identity has increased in the contemporary era and that authority tends increasingly to be positioned in individuals who become responsible for their own choices and make their own decisions about what is right and wrong (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). The theoretical model of Giddens, 'the reflexive project of self', is useful here. He pointed out that psychic reorganisation is always a part of the transitions in the individuals' life. While it was formed in traditional cultures by ritual, in settings of modernity, by contrast, "the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change" (Giddens, 1991: 33). More particularly, Giddens stated that "the reflexive project of self which consists the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems" (Giddens, 1991: 5). He recognises that the forms of change represent "fateful moments", or times in which individuals stop "at the crossroads" to alter projects and change their habits (Giddens, 1991: 113). This is reflected in the situation of some young people in the Kuwaiti context, as suggested by the findings of this study; as an alternative to the old values, some young people appear to be starting to take more unusual attitudes and adjusting their projects.

However, the data suggest that there could be a significant complex relationship in society between individual actors, the societal and cultural constraints they face, the resources and opportunities given to them, and external forces. This complexity weakens and conflicts with

ideas of the ‘reflexive project of the self’ and individualisation, which are basically associated with the loss of social and structural constraints on the traditional role and its influence in the formation of values (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). The majority of participants believe that this new attitude in Kuwait, expressed by owning a small business or being a mechanic, for example, is still not without difficulties, given the dominant social and cultural barriers. Before considering what the interviewees said on this issue, it is necessary to illustrate the opportunities provided to young people by the government in this form of employment.

Recently, the efforts of the Kuwaiti government to support young people in setting up their own businesses and entering free employment have been growing, in an effort to diversify the production and service base of the local economy and reduce youth unemployment. The government has established the Small Business Administration, overseen by the Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, to provide free consultation and training courses specialised in creating small projects and the preparation of feasibility studies in various fields. The government also finances and supplies soft loans to nationals wishing to set up their own projects after an economic feasibility study. The funding is given through the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development, established by the state in 2013³⁵, or the Handicraft and Small Enterprises Financing Portfolio, established by the state and managed by the Industrial Bank of Kuwait³⁶. According to the Industrial Bank of Kuwait, finance is available for handicraft activities in which young people use their professional and manual skills. The projects provide professional and technical services and training in commercial business. Initiatives to support young people in this regard have also appeared among local companies. For example, ‘Give Kuwait’, a recent campaign by the Wataniya Telecom company³⁷, aimed to enable some young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to present their ideas through one of the largest exhibitions in Kuwait. One of the participants, Faisal, mentioned that the company that he works with has organised a monthly festival for exhibiting small projects by young people since 2013, through this festival, he noted that Kuwaiti young people are eager to show their different local products and crafts. Despite events and initiatives like this, different barriers often still prevent young people from benefitting from these opportunities

³⁵ See: <https://nationalfund.gov.kw/en/>

³⁶ See: <http://www.ibkuwt.com/ibk/web/en/>

³⁷ See: <http://www.ooredoo.com.kw/Frontend/Reports/AnnualReportEnglish2012.pdf>

and taking up this form of work. The following section of this chapter offers more understanding on this.

Social and cultural barriers: social stigma

The qualitative findings suggest that even with increasing concern on the part of political leadership regarding ways of inspiring young people to manage their own projects, especially in areas considered socially undesirable, such as manual activities, community perceptions and social stigma remain hurdles to taking up this employment pathway. Fatimah, who was 29 years old at the time of interview, talked about her brother’s experience and how he was hoping to manage his own project as a car mechanic. She said that since childhood her brother had been interested in repairing cars, so had studied in this field and worked in a car repair company to gain experience to enable him to run his own business eventually. However, his work there was criticised by his relatives and the community, making him reconsider his future. This would seem to suggest that young people are attempting to liberate themselves from traditional constraints and build their identities with new values of work, although it is not without difficulties.

Most of the interviewees in this research stressed how it is hard for Kuwaiti young people, who often enjoy good social and economic status to set up a professional or handcraft project. As Mohamad, 24, stated, “even if a young man has a vocational certificate such as in iron welding, it is impossible to work in this profession due to the fear of people’s criticism”. Saleh also said that:

The view of society prevents youth from manual work. Some families consider the job of a young man asking for their daughter’s hand in marriage, rather than his moral conduct.

The thesis indicated earlier how some sociologists stressed the continuing role of the individual’s origin in the social structure in influencing their final employment destination (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). It has also been argued that young people’s career decisions are shaped by the nature of the domain in which they are positioned, by what is possible for them, what is culturally and traditionally acceptable, and by objective social networks (Hodkinson et

al., 1996). Thus, a possible explanation for these results may be that since individual projects are usually associated with manual and low-skilled work, which is largely seen as the province of foreign workers, or the working class, in the Kuwaiti labour market such projects are difficult to implement. In this case, these findings may provide some confirmation of the unusual divisions in Kuwait's society and economy discussed earlier, and their likely role as constraints on young people's transitions to work. The findings suggest that this social division that places almost all Kuwaitis in the middle class creates difficulties for Kuwaiti young people to work in employment sectors that are most often occupied by non-Kuwaitis. However, these findings do not rule out the influence of other possible factors in restricting young people from manual work.

In contrast, Furlong (2015b) argued that in the western context strong competition has prevented many graduates from securing a job which is commensurate with their qualifications, and they are therefore increasingly involved in part-time employment and working in lower-skilled jobs, such as in the hotel and restaurant sectors. In 2005, 38% of young workers aged 15-24 in the UK were employed in these sectors, and 48% in the Netherlands (European Agency for Health and Safety at Work, 2007). However, even with increased competition for jobs in Kuwait, participation in low skilled jobs is still considered socially unacceptable and engagement in such forms of work is likely to affect the reputation of young individuals and their future lives by reducing their chances of marriage. This supports the argument that traditional social norms in the Arab and Middle East region place greater value on young people who seek formal, secure and stable jobs (even if this means waiting for one rather than working in a manual job); this contributes to uncertainty and the long waiting phase before they move to the independence stage and the assumption of adult roles (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008; Blomquist, 2008). This phase is, as was mentioned earlier, referred to by scholars in the MENA context as 'waithood' (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009; Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008; Singerman, 2007).

Interestingly, some participants pointed out that even with the emergence of young people's new attitudes to such forms of work, these are still not obvious and because of the social stigma, they can only be regarded as a hobby. In other words, instead of becoming self-

employed and relying on their own projects for their basic livelihood, in order to retain social acceptance they have to consider it as a hobby alongside their main, stable, formal job. This happened with Ali, a 24 year old who has worked as an art teacher in a government school for around two years. He worked in the afternoons on his own project in floral design, to earn additional income to his main salary. More importantly, he did so “to do something I love” and “feel the achievement” that he lacks in his work in the public sector. Yousef, a 25 year old relationship officer in a bank, also pointed out that this new action towards taking up small projects might be no more than an attractive method of delivering a message to society:

I’ve never met a Kuwaiti barber nor welder; there are some young people who have started free working as a chef, but I don’t know whether it’s a real change of the youth view about these professions or just a show-off way to attract people’s attention; saying “look, there isn’t any problem occupying these jobs”.

Overall, it may be said that these findings seem to strengthen the arguments made in the Arab literature that community norms add more pressure to young people in this region, making their transition to work more challenging and bewildering (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). These findings suggest that young Kuwaitis appear to be struggling free from traditional social norms to start to use their agency and engage in novel work pathways. However, economic and cultural factors and the division between the national and non-national workforce in this society are still likely to limit these chances. The findings also suggest that decision makers need to be more aware of the messages delivered to the whole community.

This study provides further empirical evidence to support the argument made in the literature about how the rigidity of Middle Eastern social institutions, including education, hinders young people from dealing with the increasingly flexible nature of the labour market (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). The next section presents the current study’s findings relating to the criticism of public education and its failure to produce creative energies for self-reliance in managing projects or participating in serious private institutions. Accordingly, education appears as another possible structure with an influence over agency to track alternative routes to work, instead of the traditional path of the public sector without restrictions.

Critique of education

A quarter of a century ago, Ammar (1992) argued that public education in the Arab world generally encouraged a reliance on government jobs by instilling an obsession with gaining certification as a key to getting a government job, with less attention paid to lifelong learning and practical skills. The findings from this study suggest that the educational institutions in this region, despite the changes in the labour market, seem to continue to guide the behaviour of young people towards government work, or still, as Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008: 14) have stated, “provide the signals that tell young people” what they should to learn and what they have to do.

Almost all the participants agreed that education in Kuwait depends on traditional methods based largely on repetition and learning information by heart. They believe that public education mainly qualifies young people to pass exams and get the GPA which they need as a main admission requirement for entering university, to obtain high qualifications and thus to immediately join the public sector. The system puts less focus on promoting practical understanding and instilling lifelong skills such as self-reliance, communication, entrepreneurial skills, and others required by the private sector or self-employment. Although the younger participants appeared to experience some activities in the areas in their schools³⁸, they still believed that they are limited and insufficient. These findings suggest that the school environment in which young people are located and the limited opportunities provided through this environment to acquire the skills required by the private sector may be one of the factors that contribute to hindering them from taking a path towards the private sector.

Another important finding is that the lack of skills acquired by young people in education, next to the fact that the majority of them do not gain experience and skills through part-time work, creates more pressure on them to engage in the workplace. This appeared more with the participants who worked in the private than those in the public sector. Many workers in the private sector described experiencing difficulties at the beginning of their work resulting from fear and shyness towards daily contact and dealing with customers and colleagues. Salah, 28,

³⁸ Perhaps a sign of recent practices and programmes introduced by the education system (Kuwait Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, 2014)

and a computer programmer in a bank, pointed out that he had been reluctant to apply for his current job because of his lack of social skills, which he had not acquired during his education. Shikha, 28, works in one of the oil companies as an accountant:

Throughout my academic period, I haven't presented any project or engaged in group-work. Thus, I'm suffering now at my workplace from lacking presentation skills at seminars... I think it's the simplest thing: students should learn in school how to improve their presentation and speaking skills.

She added that for this reason, her company was forced to organise annual courses to develop Kuwaiti employees' skills in many areas, such as intercommunication, and cooperation with others. Fatimah, who had four years' experience of working in a private bank, pointed out that she met many Kuwaiti employees who could not adapt or survive in this demanding sector, which requires a high level of social and individual skills, and that these shortcomings had led to their resignations within a few months of starting work. Taken together, these findings suggest that government policies might seem to be contradictory; while they attempt to direct young people to private work and self-employment to reduce unemployment, they possibly fail to prepare students by providing them with the skills and requirements needed in these sectors. The Secretary General of Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, according to Salih (2010), seeks to act as a bond between the private sector and Kuwait University, but he has admitted that the problem is rooted in the educational system, whose outputs do not satisfy the private sector's requirements.

The findings of the current study further support the anecdotal evidence that young Kuwaitis studying in private educational institutions or abroad lean towards working in the private sector. Salih (2010) gave some support to this theory through interviewing some professionals from the private sector in Kuwait, who confirmed that young people joining them had usually received an education that offered them set ways of performing things in a specific manner. One of the interviewees in that study added that they were likely to have been exposed to a non-government curriculum during secondary education or university, or to have studied abroad in Europe or the United States. However, Salih (2010) suggested a need for further

empirical research to support this hypothesis, to which this study contributes. Although the present sample focused on employees who had graduated from public secondary education, three said that they had been educated abroad during the university stage, and all three of those individuals were now employed in the private sector. Faisal, who graduated from an American university, said that:

The education system in Kuwaiti secondary schools didn't improve my skills. It does not motivate students' sense of individual responsibility. On the contrary, during my university study in the USA we had to prepare a presentation twice weekly. In fact, this helped me to learn many skills such as conversation, losing my fear in front of the public, communication with others, and others that I needed to learn from an early stage.

Faisal added that this poor reality of public education in Kuwait was now forcing him to pay half his monthly salary towards educating his children, who are sent to non-government schools. Although Batool, 29, has worked in the public sector and spent all her education in government institutions, she had observed during her university studies that:

The skills of graduates of private schools are greater and deeper than those who graduated from public ones. Those students have always clear future aims and good speaking and debating skills, exceeding those of other students. This is clear evidence of the significance of skills development at secondary school stage.

This suggests the importance of the social environment and conditions, including education systems, that are likely to form individuals’ ways of thinking, skills, behaviours, or habitus (Bourdieu, 1990) as they grow up. The findings in this section confirm that the pattern of education is probably responsible for forming and directing the attitudes of individuals towards work. It tends to show how government institutions in Kuwait fail as a social environment in giving young people the confidence to walk along different work pathways and easily engage with them. However, with the limited number of young adults interviewed in this study and the possibility of missing data from young Kuwaitis who did not participate

in this research, these data must be interpreted with caution. It might have been useful to have more participants who studied abroad or in non-public schools.

In general, based on all the above findings, difficulties arise when an attempt is made to implement Beck’s idea of individualisation in the Kuwaiti context, which posits individuals as free from traditional structures (Beck, 1992). The agency of young Kuwaitis appears to remain burdened with the existence of the traditional structural constraints that limit their choices and options in terms of career pathways. They are expected, both socially and culturally, to stay away from engaging in certain types of job (e.g. manual work). Furthermore, they appear to be controlled by local institutions that drive them along a traditional route towards government jobs rather than allowing them to look for unfamiliar directions to work which, in turn, would alleviate unemployment. These results confirm the preliminary findings that emerged in the previous chapter indicating that Beck’s individualisation appears difficult to apply to Kuwait, given that the traditional constraints on youth transition still appear to exist at the present time and are likely to continue. The next section, however, argues that individualisation can be understood in different ways than that portrayed by Beck, with the emergence of some trends towards individuality among contemporary youth in this society.

Individual choices and social constraints

It has been argued in youth literature within the southern context that young people, for example in Indonesia and Vietnam, are largely embedded within their families and communities, indicating that strong links will not be broken when they reach adulthood (Nilan, 2011). According to Nilan (2011), as these cultural contexts differ from those in the west, the concept of independence, individual choice and planning for life can not apply in the same way as in the west. The following sections suggest that in spite of the changes in young Kuwaitis’ lives and their increased sense of individual choice, solid connections appear to be linking them with commitments and social networks. This, together with the unique

characteristics of Kuwaiti society such as continuing traditional values and Islamic logic, necessitates individualisation in Kuwait being understood differently.

Free choice, family guidance and patriarchy

In the Saudi Arabian context, it has been argued that parents usually take responsibility for their children, not only because of poor institutional support during the transition, but also because it is a social expectation. In a sense, parents feel that their children are not ready socially, and are in need of their support to introduce them to the world of work and manage their lives (Wiseman & Alromi, 2003). The results of this study are consistent to some extent with this argument, as the findings suggest that families’ intervention in their children’s educational and professional paths appears to be a routine part of Kuwaiti culture. Although the majority of participants felt that their career paths had to some extent been taken individually, it was clear from many responses that these decisions had, in fact, been taken under family protection, and had been influenced by parental guidance. In other words, when discussing their lives and how their career decisions have been made, young people spun a story of self-decision and agency. However, when the language of encouragement was used in the interview to engage in more detail, the structural side and the external forces, and the role of parents in particular, emerged as influencing their decisions and pathways to work. This perhaps is in keeping with the epistemological fallacy (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997), as most participants tended to feature themselves as the key authors of their pathways toward work. However, silence about structures does not mean that they are unimportant in the lives of individuals, although they may be omitted from the individual narratives provided in the research interviews (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005; 418). For example, Fatimah said that her job as a banker was her own decision; yet when the researcher asked further questions and dug deeper, she referred to her father’s influence and encouragement to work in this position, adding that:

He advised me not to work in the public sector due to its boring routine. He always told me that the government employee spends his time reading the newspaper or

talking with colleagues. As for my mother, she didn't interfere in my choice, saying: "It's your future and you are the decision maker".

Noor, who began work four years ago and is already married, is another example, as she stated that she worked as a Physical Education teacher, like all her siblings, because of their father’s guidance (he also worked in the same profession). Her father was always highlighting the good aspects of this job and how comfortable and profitable it was. Zaid, 23, and a Maintenance Supervisor in a fuel company, admitted that his father was primarily responsible for his choice of job. He stated that “he didn’t hit the target when he chose my first job in one of the oil companies, but the second choice is better”.

These findings suggest that whatever their age and gender, and even after marriage and independence from the family, young people seem to be reluctant to reject or contradict the advice of their parents. Regularly, children in Kuwaiti society are expected socially and culturally to respond to their parents’ orders; Islam also stresses the importance of obedience to one’s parents. Allah in the Qur'an instructs Muslims: “do not say: "Fie on you", nor rebuke them (parents), but speak to them with words of respect (The Qur'an, *Al-Isra'* 17. 23). The findings also suggest that, unlike the mother’s role, the father’s intervention and influence were repeated frequently in the participants’ responses, supporting the preliminary results that emerged from the quantitative data that the traditional perspective of the father’s authority continues to dominate in the Kuwaiti family and in children’s lives. These findings also tend to confirm the previous quantitative findings, which suggested that individual options in modern societies can still be restricted by traditional cultural practices, with children adopting similar professions to those of their parents. Thus, despite modernisation and the huge economic transformation of Kuwaiti society, traditional practices, including the father’s authority, family management of their children’ lives, the subordination of children to their parents’ decisions, and the adoption of their father’s profession all appear to prevail.

While in general, the present research’s participants pointed to the importance of self-reliance and taking individual paths, and seemed convinced that young people nowadays

are freer from others’ control over their decisions, they simultaneously suggested that the family played a primary role in encouraging and guiding them, setting out their plans, and choosing their future paths. One participant added that this responsibility has become increasingly demanding with the competition for university places and the complexity of the labour market. Booth (2002) argued that the system of values and principles that young people in the Arab and Islamic region are brought up with may conflict with the new ideas associated with current economic development and globalisation, such as increasing individualism. While Beck argued that traditional family guidelines and support for social networks have been eroded in the contemporary era, allowing individuals to be themselves at the centre of their own life plans (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995), this support seems to continue to shape the lifestyle of individuals in the Kuwaiti context. Rather than modernisation leading to the frustration of individuals and the weakening of basic social institutions such as the family (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995), in modern Kuwaiti society it appears difficult for young people to be completely liberated from the family and collective ways of life. This partly backs up Furlong and Cartmel’s (1997:2) argument on the epistemological fallacy of late modernity, which emphasises that social life in the present is separate and different from the past. Instead, they argued for the need to see the social world as a continuum in which the past and present are connected. Even with increasing changes and risks and the growing tendency towards individual values, human interdependence continues to exist in late modernity.

Wider social networks and youth frustration

Further results show that social support is not limited to the family network, but is also likely to extend to wider social networks in securing jobs for young people (*wasta*). While Beck (1992) argues that traditional obligations and inequality are weakened and replaced by expectations of self-fulfilment and increased reliance on individual resources, this section suggests that youth transition in Kuwait still appears to be influenced by the wider social networks and reliance on collective resources, limiting the prospects of some young people. This was shown through several interviews, especially when the interviewees were talking

about the problems faced by young Kuwaitis generally and the personal challenges standing between them and their career goals. Ahmad, 26, who holds a Bachelor’s degree, said in this context that:

I and one of my secondary school colleagues had applied for the same work position ... Even though my qualifications are higher than his and I accomplished all the recruitment requirements, I was rejected and he was chosen! He admitted then that he used relatives to obtain this position.

Similar stories were told by Azeez and Zain, who stressed that others’ use of personal networks had prevented them from reaching their career goals. They demanded that government be stricter and fairer in its practices, enacting laws that limit this widespread social phenomenon in different institutions. Hussain added that his father had encouraged him to get a master’s degree to secure his future. However, he was not motivated to do so since he found that a number of his colleagues received this degree easily through *wasta*. While the findings on family guidance seem to partially support the epistemological fallacy, young people’s responses here appear to challenge the idea that they are blind to the structural conditions that shape their lives, and tend to individual interpretations (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). Instead, they seem to be aware of the structural constraints affecting their lives.

These results in general illustrate two possible points. First, contrary to some authors’ belief that traditional values have been affected by economic and social changes in Gulf societies (see Held & Ulrichsen, 2012), the findings suggest that the nature of modernisation still supports the continuity of traditional values from one generation to another. Although *guanxi* in China has a long history and is even considered a key focus of Confucian ethics in its promotion of collective ties, some researchers have argued that institutional changes, capitalism and westernisation have eroded *guanxi* in modern China (Jiang, Lo & Garris, 2012). In contrast, the present study suggests that a similar Kuwaiti or Arab cultural value, *wasta*, which is traditionally based on favouritism benefiting the family and tribal affiliations, still appears to play a critical role and continues to hold significant authority over individuals’ lives and behaviour. This may confirm the idea that the recent changes in living and the

growth of nuclear families in GCC countries do not negate the continued affiliation of family members to their extended family and broader kinships (El-Haddad, 2003).

Secondly, as was discussed in the previous chapter, such advantages in GCC and Arab societies can result in frustration among less fortunate individuals (Fakeeh, 2009; Makhoul & Harrison, 2004). A young person enjoying more or stronger family networks is more likely to be recommended for a job than one with fewer networks. Thus, it can be argued that social networks are another possible factor limiting the individual power of young people in shaping their career pathways. In other words, and as has been shown by the data, while some young people have and use strong social relationships (or *wasta*) to achieve their personal interests in employment, this might reduce the possibility and freedom of others in achieving their goals.

Women’s freedom between modern and traditional values

This section explores the evidence around the persistence of traditional values that restricted women’s freedom, despite the changes in their roles and increase modern values. Beck argued that gender as a social category has vanished from the new stage of modernity (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). Many comments from the interviews indicate that the community perspective of gender has changed from that of the pre-oil period. While the role of women in the past was confined to the home and fathers were reluctant to send their daughters to school, female participants indicated that their fathers encouraged them to participate in the labour market and even in areas of work not previously occupied by women. Hawra’a, a 28 year old married public servant, said that despite her engineering degree, she expected to become a housewife and take care of her children. However, her parents motivated her to search for a job. Asrar also argued that:

We see a lot of women taking part in teamwork with men in the private sector or working in the media field. As for me, my father encouraged me to write books, and to appear on radio and TV programmes.

As mentioned earlier, Fatimah’s father was behind her working in a bank rather than in a government office job, despite requiring greater contact with men and longer hours away from home. Sheikha, whose employment requires her to spend most of her days at work, at some distance from home, said that the increasing pressure on the public sector, together with the high salary and other privileges granted by her current job, motivated her to join the company. She added that these conditions and incentives started to erode some of principles that families hold, regarding mixing between woman and men at work and long hours. This tends to confirm the preliminary hypothesis in the earlier chapter, that increased competition and the complexity of the labour market, with growing unemployment, seem to encourage families to be more flexible in terms of their children’s career choices.

Despite the above data, other findings suggest that the restrictions on women have not completely faded; nor do all females appear to have freedom of choice. The data showed that while some female participants enjoy more freedom than before, social and cultural considerations remain as barriers preventing others from reaching their career goals. These considerations hindered Batool, an engineer, from studying abroad and achieving her ambition to become a doctor. She said that since she was unmarried at that time, her parents forbade her to travel alone. According to Fay, who was aged 28 at the time of the interview and worked as a Public Relations Supervisor in a private company, these considerations and Islamic morals were behind her family’s objection to her becoming a fashion model as she had wished. Family obligations continued to prevent some female participants, especially married ones, from working in the private sector since the long hours conflict with performing their role as wife and mother. This perhaps explains why almost all the female participants working in the private sector were unmarried.

The experiences of Dalal and Hessah further indicate how the community perspective, especially of men on women’s work, may have changed, but not disappeared. Hessah, who holds a master’s degree and works as a lawyer, expressed her difficulties in working in a male community, believing that they are not used to “seeing a woman who is better than them”. She argued that despite the fact that Kuwaiti women are nowadays better able to occupy leading positions, the old thoughts of some men towards women are difficult to change. She was

therefore struggling to defend her goals and fight against those who wanted to see her fail in workplace. With reference to Dalal's experience as a medical laboratory assistant technician, she said:

Some male patients refuse to deal with me, as being a woman, preferring to work with a man! ... Another thing that I worry about it is that I'm currently an assistant technician and after some years I'll become a technician, which will require working on the night shift. I'm worried about what people will say about my night work.

These results suggest that although modernisation has changed the perceptions of some families, allowing the emergence of some individual tendencies among females at work, traditional values towards gender still abound. This conflict between the new and old values seems to create tension in youth transition, and especially impedes young women's movements. While the traditional values continue to prove themselves amidst changes, young women still appear to be restricted and confined to certain areas. These results also tend to strengthen the recent theoretical argument made by scholars, such as Furlong and Cartmel (2007) and Roberts, (1993, 2003), who adopted middle-ground positions. According to these theories, even with the changes that have led to the increasing role of the individual, young people's desires and opportunities in the context of the school to work transition are still shaped and restricted by social structural divisions such as gender.

Based on all the above considerations, it can be concluded that the nature of modernisation in Kuwait, where some traditional characteristics appear still to exist beneath the modern template, means that youth transition from school to work and Beck's individualisation need to be understood differently. The pattern of value configurations in Kuwait seems to involve a delicate and culturally specific balance: a dynamic balance between the individual and society, modernity and tradition, mind (and Islamic logic) and emotion. This balance has been strongly constructed into the collective attitudes and mentality, and the local way of life. Individualisation in this society can be seen together with family protection, collective solidarity, and a reactivating society. It seems possible that this process reflects the distinctive historical change undergone by Kuwait society. Hence, like any other social theory, the basic

principle of individualisation cannot be applied in the same manner in different parts of the world. What is represented in the western context as the universal manner and logic of individualisation is, indeed, a limited model linked culturally and historically to the western context; it is a consequence of a special integration of modernisation and individualisation in this context. A different path of individualisation and modernisation seems to be indicated by the present study, alongside those presented in East Asian studies such as the Chinese (Yan, 2010), South Korean (Chang & Song, 2010; Shim & Han) and Japanese (Ishida et al., 2010) contexts. Thus, it necessary to dismantle, redefine and rebuild the concept of individualisation in a way that works with various social, cultural and historical cases and on a global level more generally.

Conclusion

Despite the common global reality of an increasing complex labour market in modern life and increased challenges in young people's pathways compared to previous generations, the findings of this study suggest that Kuwaiti young people is still facing distinct situations from those facing young people in most other parts of the world. Their problem with unemployment seems a complex structural issue with profound economic and social roots, governed by cultural behaviours and norms, and shaped by different structures including the country's state structure, labour market and educational institutions.

While young people in Kuwait appear to recognise that they live in a different and more challenging time than that experienced by their ancestors, requiring them to act positively to face new challenges, the traditional culture and structures passed down from the time of their forefathers still seem to exist. This in turn may create confusion about which values to embrace during their transition to work. Young Kuwaitis therefore appear to live in an environment of conflict and tension, resulting mainly from the contradictions between agency and structure, individual and family and wider social relations, and between old and modern values.

A tone of pessimism and frustration was shown in the responses of the interviewees about the complicated social reality faced by Kuwaiti youth. The results suggest that the nature of education and government employment policies does not help young people adapt to the increasingly competitive environment of the labour market. These factors, in addition to cultural and social factors, may make young people struggle to start taking alternative ways of working, such as participation in the private sector, or self-employment. Although some try to look for new job opportunities and tools to satisfy their ambitions and hopes, a major challenge faces them in how to transform these hopes into reality within the traditional societal and educational constraints. This observation emphasises how different policies and different social, cultural and economic conditions might mean that youth transition and challenges occur in different ways in different societies.

Although young people in Kuwait seem to have more freedom and a tendency to individual pathways than before, the paths they pursue to work still appear to be based on traditional structures and individual decisions associated with the old collective ways. The following chapter discusses the main findings of this study and how it contributes to the literature on youth and social theory. It brings a more critical perspective to Beck's individualisation and his vision of cosmopolitanism. Recommendations for future studies and policy implications are also provided.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis has explored the nature of contemporary youth transitions from school to work in Kuwait, one of the Gulf Arab states. The main aim of the research was to enrich the youth literature by investigating new experiences in young people's lives beyond the northern metropole, in a context that has not previously been researched. It sought to offer insights into a new example of the contemporary nature of youth transitions under the impact of different tracks to modernity. Based on quantitative and qualitative data obtained from young people via survey and interviews, the research explored the experiences of Kuwaiti young people in the light of social changes and the broad cultural, social, educational and economic dynamics within their society. It discovered the experiences of young people facing a complex reality in which traditional norms and cultural restrictions are in conflict with modernity. It investigated how young people presently navigate their pathways to work in the presence of features of traditional society and the continuing constraints imposed on their lives by certain factors, including family, gender, religion, social division, and education.

In so doing, the research has sought to challenge traditional approaches to youth studies in understanding contemporary young people's experiences in light of their growing inability to find jobs, due to the non-availability of work opportunities, increasingly precarious working conditions (Beck, 2000; Furlong & Kelly, 2005; Standing, 2011), difficult financial conditions, and migration (Punch, 2010; Jeffrey & McDowell, 2004). It has also sought to challenge the debate about current individual trends such as free choice and designing one's own biography. The main argument made here is that the shift to modernity and its sequence alongside the specific conditions in certain societal contexts can impact differently on youth transitions and produce different challenges among young people from different global contexts. It is argued that due to the speed of change, or compressed modernity, which has occurred in Kuwaiti society in recent decades, young people may find themselves unable to adapt to freely individualising their lives. It is also argued that the economic conditions enjoyed by young people in Kuwait can free their transition from the frustrations associated

with engaging with poor conditions of employment and precarious and unsecured work, as young people in the global north generally do. The title of the thesis summarises some of the basic arguments. It reflects that the nature of the social changes and the speed of modernity in Kuwaiti society have created different challenges from those experienced by young people in other global contexts. The tension in Kuwaiti youth's transition mainly results from conflicts between tradition and modernity, and individual and collective ways of living. In short, this thesis argues for the need to explore empirically and theoretically the experiences of young people in different cultural and geographical contexts, in order to enrich the previously narrow knowledge and understanding about youth outside the northern metropole, and to develop sociological concepts suited to the global era.

The study set out to answer the following three questions:

- 1) What are the consequences of Kuwait's compressed modernity on young people's transitions from school to work?
- 2) To what extent is the contemporary experience of Kuwaiti young people's transitions from school to work distinct from that in other global contexts?
- 3) To what extent does Beck's 'individualisation' thesis help to explain young people's transitions from school to work in non-western contexts?

These questions were designed to expand the scope of knowledge by investigating the experiences of young people in a society that has undergone a process of compressed modernity, exploring how contemporary young people in the age of globalisation navigate their pathways to work through traditional norms and cultural constraints. The study has attempted to understand where Kuwait sits *vis-à-vis* the literature, and at the same time, has tested the appropriateness of Beck's theory in explaining youth transitions in Kuwait. Because each research question intersects with the others, this chapter deals with the questions together, throughout its sections. It was thought that dealing with the questions individually would lose the dynamic that exists between them and lead to repetition. Thus, all parts of the

chapter, but specifically the first two sections, present an overarching argument, relevant to all three research questions.

The chapter begins by summarising the main findings and reflecting on the collected data. The second section of the chapter focuses on the contribution of the thesis. It is divided into two parts: first, the study's contribution to youth literature is discussed by considering the study findings and linking them to global youth studies; second, the broader theoretical contributions of the study are outlined. This section suggests that a shift in Beck's model is required to account for this study's findings as well as to indicate future directions for researchers. The implications of the study's findings for stakeholders, policy makers and educational bodies are outlined in the final section of the chapter.

Summary and reflections on the data

The study has found that young people in Kuwaiti society experience tension resulting from the entanglement of old and new cultures. There is conflict in making active choices regarding education and employment under the constraints of certain variables over their life tracks and actions. The quantitative data on students' sense of control and the role of external factors on their agencies, has revealed that young people experience a state of confusion and conflict between taking individual paths and achieving personal ambitions, and the sense of being restricted by external forces. These restrictions are manifested through parental control, by the social and cultural influence of family (in following their fathers' career pathways), and traditional values regarding gender roles. The quantitative data presented in Chapter Six demonstrated how students who have categorised themselves as coming from traditional families are more likely to suffer from difficulties in achieving their personal career goals than others who come from more modern families. This finding clearly demonstrates how the experiences of contemporary young people who adhere to the old characteristics of traditional Kuwaiti society are challenged in forming their own pathways. The experiences of young adults paints a clearer picture of how young Kuwaitis in a society that has undergone a process

of compressed modernity are struggling during their own transitions to work, facing a complicated social reality that combines old and new styles of living. Traditional guidelines and social constraints, including family, gender, religion and strong social relationships, are persistently influential. While individuals in the second modernity phase of Beck's model are largely expected to make their own individual choices in shaping their life biographies (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995), young people living in a society that mixes characteristics of old and modern stages struggle to do this. Hence, the fundamental tensions in young people's lives in this society result from a contradiction between modernity and tradition, conflicts between agency and structure, and collective and individual ways.

Young Kuwaitis are brought up in an environment that takes a special perspective of education and guiding young people's pathways to work. One of the obvious attitudes and behaviours towards work relates to joining the public sector, a tradition for over half a century. With the discovery of oil and as a form of the distribution of wealth, the state has provided various government jobs with attractive features for all its citizens. This has created a set of collective attitudes to the nature of work, which has been transmitted down through generations. This culture was formed around working in offices or in white collar jobs, traditionally in a government body, characterised by short working hours, stability, high wages and a comfortable working environment. This makes young people today reluctant to accept other jobs in the private sector, and puts pressure on the government to provide enough jobs for them, especially given their growing overall number. This has been reflected in recent government policies as an attempt to reduce the pressure on government jobs, policies such as localisation (Salih, 2010; Gulseven, 2015) and support for youth in setting up their own businesses and entering free employment (Manpower and Government Restructuring Programme, 2014).

Nevertheless, the present study, particularly the quantitative data in Chapter Six, has shown that young people still tend to prefer to work in the public sector, influenced by its various advantages. They compete fiercely to obtain university degrees as the key to gaining a government job after graduating. The data in this chapter showed how in the last years of schooling, they believe in the importance of working hard, the majority planning to enter

university. The new understanding that emerged with the qualitative data on young adults is that, despite the motives and traditional values relating to working in the public sector, signs of frustration are spreading among young adults as they recognise the problems of overcrowding and underemployment in the public sector. This finding is a new contribution to the field.

There is a widespread orthodoxy that the investment in human capital gives access to good jobs (AlBadir, 2013). However, what seems to be emerging from the results of this study is that obtaining high qualifications does not necessarily mean getting a good job. The findings suggest that even young adults who hold high qualifications are subject to underemployment. Despite the fact that working in the public sector means good earnings, the results suggest that many young adults are feeling let down as they attempt to find a relationship between working hard throughout their studies and the reality of working in a public sector job that does not stretch them. The perceptions and desires gained during their education must be translated into the contrasting reality of the workplace. The quantitative data in Chapter Six showed that the pressure of work was not a significant reason preventing young Kuwaitis from working in the private sector. This can be regarded as an indication of their willingness to participate in an environment conducive to hard work and effort, unlike unstimulating environments where employees cannot demonstrate their youthful potential, as some of the interviewees described work in state ministries.

Hence, the model that is starting to emerge in young people's lives is of a moratorium period in which they have to think about who they are and the kind of career they aspire to. The results indicate the emergence of individual attempts to alter the traditional attitudes towards work in the public sector. These appear through young people's efforts in running their own small business, or working as mechanics or retailers. Nevertheless, social, political, cultural and educational barriers challenge the fulfilment of these individual tendencies and conflict with pressure to work in the public sector. Among these social and cultural barriers are the strong relationships and family ties which place children under the control of their parents and make them susceptible to their parents' decisions and career pathways, especially as the majority of parents themselves, as shown in Chapter Six, work, or worked, in the public

sector. The influence of parents, especially the father, is reinforced by Islamic teachings that demand obedience to parents and traditions, and place great value on the authority of the father over family members. This is evident from the data which showed that students' plans in regard to the employment sector are influenced by the father's work choices, but not the mother's. Moreover, the data showed that there is a significant relationship between young people's educational plans after graduation and the father's level of education, while this relationship does not appear with the mother.

The educational barriers also take the form of a race to secure government jobs, as families put greater emphasis on their children's academic results than on the soft employability skills demanded by private employers. This is evident from the data in Chapter Five, which showed that schools also pay little attention to activities that promote individual responsibility and develop students' social and long-term skills, which are increasingly required in the changing labour market (De Boer & Turner, 2007; Oxenbridge & Evesson, 2012). The responses of the interviewees also suggest that policies in this direction have been ineffective; little value has been placed on the experiences to be gained from part-time work and short-term jobs. The fact that the educational and social environment does not instil individual responsibility or develop employability and soft skills, means young Kuwaitis' pathways to work in the private sector are not smooth. Chapter Seven showed that the young adults who do work in the private sector, given their lack of preparation, had difficulty in adapting to, and meeting the needs of, this sector.

It can be concluded from the above that the pathways of young people are part of the opportunities available to them. Despite the fact that opportunity structures have been replaced as economic and social changes have led to the expansion of education, an increase in occupational options and relative individual freedom compared to previous generations, opportunities for Kuwaiti young people to attain certain goals or pathways are still shaped by the way society is organised or structured. As Roberts (2009) argued, opportunities are offered to individuals through education, home and the local labour market organisation. If the opportunity structures are not available, then the ability to access them would unavoidably be limited. The findings of this study suggest that opportunity structures, including restrictions,

still appear to play a key role in limiting young people's career pathways, goals and aspirations. Even if young people hope to break out of the main career pathways that may make them fall into the trap of unemployment or underemployment, their ability is controlled by different factors including the shortage of skills, the lack of acceptable opportunities in the private sector, lack of encouragement in the family or the influence of parents and the role of social and cultural norms. Roberts (2009) asserts that it is not only young people making the 'wrong choices', but also the goals failing to match the opportunities.

Social division and the fear of stigma also emerged as a contributory factor in restricting the attitudes of young people. Society's view prevents them from taking on manual labour jobs or participating in certain professions. Working as barber or a chef, for example, was traditionally associated with foreign workers, and this career pattern might affect other aspects of life, such as marriage prospects. Thus, social stigma limits choice and creates a contradiction in the lives of young people between the achievement of their personal desires and how society will judge them.

While Beck (1992, 1994) argued that young people in contemporary life build their pathways to the labour market in individualised ways, the findings of this study tend to reflect a lack of individual liberation from traditional structural constraints, as Beck had claimed would happen. The sort of youth transitions in contemporary Kuwaiti society seems to indicate that social division continues to play a role in shaping their pathways to work. Chapter Three shows, by tracing the historical track in Kuwait, how economic changes affected the ways in which social and economic inequalities between the social classes prevailed in the pre-oil era. Although literature on youth transitions to work in the pre-oil era and its relationship with social division is limited, the path of young people in the footsteps of their fathers' professions, or passing on occupation across generations, can clarify this relationship at this time (Salehi-Isfahani & Dhillon, 2008). However, the rapid changes that took place after the discovery of oil, including the changes in the labour market, the spread of education, and government policy in employment and other social welfare services, led to convergence between Kuwaitis from different social groups and contributed to the emergence of the middle class, which includes most of the citizens. However, the new mechanisms of modernisation

have led to the re-establishment of other types of social and economic inequality in society with a new working class emerging, represented by the expatriate workers. The findings of this study tend to show that the youth transitions present in Kuwaiti society are influenced by this social division. This reflects a lack of individual liberation from structural constraints. The filling of certain occupational sectors by non-Kuwaiti workers since the discovery of oil has meant that these kinds of career paths are now socially unacceptable for Kuwaiti young people. In other words, the social division between national and non-national workers in this society limits young people's opportunities to look for work in occupations that are historically, culturally and socially associated with low-skilled/low-paid foreign workers. For the majority, this means spending more time waiting for the prestigious and comfortable jobs that have traditionally been provided by the government in the public sector, contributing to the increase in youth unemployment and underemployment while those vacancies are awaited. Overall, the results of this study tend to confirm the continuing role of inequality in influencing the transitions of contemporary young people to work, standing against the death of social class (Beck, 1992). It shows how the collective pathways of young Kuwaitis to the labour market seem to be shaped in particular by manners due to their position in society. While the forms of opportunity structures seem to have changed from those of previous generations, young people's place in the class structure appears to maintain its role in influencing their transitions and determining their final destinations (Roberts, 2009; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; MacDonald et al., 2005).

Of all the young people in contemporary Kuwaiti society, females appear to experience even more tension as a result of continuing societal perspectives towards their expected role. Generally speaking, women can now participate in various educational and professional fields and are breaking into professions that were formerly limited to men, such as law and diplomatic positions. According to the global indicator of 136 countries on closing the gender gap, Kuwaiti women continue to make great progress, rising from 60th place in educational achievement in 2012 to 57th in 2013. Kuwait also rose from 71st position in 2012 to 65th in 2013 with regard to the indicator for economic participation and opportunities (equal pay for equal work) (Kuwait Economic and Social Council, 2014). Despite this, the present findings indicate a continuation of the cultural norms and principles that emerged from the traditional

patriarchal system, emphasising differences in gender roles and a tendency to limit female opportunities in the labour market.

It can be argued that the persistence of the old culture and traditional institutional frameworks has emerged as a main difficulty faced by young people. While young people in a global context appear to respond to the radical changes brought by modernisation by seeking to be more flexible and mobile in the face of the changing conditions in the labour market, and are becoming more reliant on their individual agencies to accept different patterns of work, those in Kuwait have struggled to do this. The persistence of traditional contexts and societal constraints hampers them from adapting to the changing labour market and achieving their personal goals. The study indicates that the concerns of young people in the last stage of their schooling do not stem from the lack of skills or poor preparation for the labour market as much as from the conflict between their desire to take individual pathways to work, and the sense of being constrained by external forces or variables, including family, gender roles, wide social ties, religion, and social division between nationals and non-nationals within the labour market. The present research's exploration of experiences of young adults now in the workplace provides greater understanding of the role of these variables and how they restrict individual pathways to work.

By combining the quantitative and qualitative results, it has become obvious that although youth transition in Kuwait has received limited attention in youth literature, which focuses almost exclusively on the northern metropole, mixed methods have enabled a wide scope of consideration, which has encompassed as much of the social phenomenon as possible. This approach allowed the researcher to draw closer to the phenomenon and look at its multiple dimensions in order to build a clearer understanding. A feeling that understanding is still limited may result from only one method being used. The findings generated by each method have built on and complemented each other, giving a stronger indication of what is happening in reality. They also allowed the emergence of new information that would have been lost if only one method had been used. This is especially apparent in the new knowledge that emerged from the qualitative data regarding the frustration among young workers in the public sector, the role of education in affecting youth transition, and the new individual pathways

toward work. This methodology also contributed to enabling the study to test and validate some of the broad ideas in the youth literature and to offer some new understandings of the contemporary and theoretical debates on young people's lives.

In general, this study was able to obtain data from a broad range of young people on the transition from education to the labour market in Kuwait, through using mixed methods as well as a large sample size and selection of participants from a wide range of backgrounds, age and experience. The lack of previous literature in this area means that the findings of this study are really new, although it is necessary to treat any generalisation of the findings with great care, as reported in the data chapters. There was difficulty in finding evidence and stories to support what the research participants said. Thus, given this lack of corroboration, further research is needed to confirm this study's tentative findings. Studying the experiences and views of more young people in different regions and schools, of those in non-government schools, those in post-compulsory education or those who are not Kuwaitis, could illuminate wider aspects and provide data that may be missing from this study. Furthermore, considering the view of other relevant groups such as teachers, parents, policymakers and practitioners would be beneficial in future research. This would help to build a richer picture of youth transitions, with wider implications.

While this section discussed the main findings of this study and the understanding that has emerged about the Kuwaiti youth experience, the next section considers these experiences within other global contexts. In particular, the following paragraphs outline the significant contributions made by the study to the current debates in global youth studies and social theories.

Study's contributions

Contribution to youth studies

By focusing on the relatively unexplored topic of the consequences of rapid change in youth transitions in contemporary Kuwaiti society, this thesis contributes to the slowly growing, but still limited, body of literature exploring young people's experiences outside the northern metropole. Despite the recent increased attention and research into the lives of these young people (for example, the papers presented at the *Symposium: Youth Outside the Northern Metropole, 2014*³⁹), these studies tend to be based on theory rather than empirical work. The developments made by international researchers to expand the scope of knowledge beyond the northern metropole are undoubtedly important, as has been acknowledged. However, theory needs to be empirically grounded, and the present thesis contributes to this, addressing this gap by offering an example of young people's transitions beyond the northern metropole, both as a theoretical and as a lived experience. Moreover, the origin of this thesis was the idea of a study of young people living in different societies that combine the characteristics of the global north and global south, of modern and traditional ways of life, as this was thought likely to offer new insights and understanding of the lives of contemporary young people. This example of Kuwaiti young people's transitions has been shown to upset the conventional narratives existing on youth studies, as well as challenge some dominant assumptions in sociological theories.

The study shows that the experiences of Kuwaiti youth and the difficulties they face during their transition from school to work differ from the conventional understanding presented by scholars on young people from other parts of the world. First, the literature on youth within the global south has shown that young people live in difficult economic and social environments. Changes in labour markets and a lack of employment have affected them and reduced their opportunities to obtain employment in the formal economy. It is widely believed that such conditions cause frustration, which can possibly be associated with risky behaviour

³⁹ Abstracts available online at: <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/education-arts/newcastle-youth-studies-group/conferences-and-symposiums/youth-outside-the-northern-metropole-symposium-2014> [Last accessed 06/06/2017]; downloadable as pdf file *YouthOutsideTheNorthernMetropole_Booklet*.

and the emergence of protests. In spite of this picture, many of these young people nevertheless successfully manage to find work and improve their lives through taking different paths (Gough, Langevang & Owusu, 2013). These include migration, which is chiefly visible among young people from rural areas searching for jobs in cities or in more developed countries (Punch, 2010; Jeffrey & McDowell, 2004), and setting up their own enterprises (Langevang & Gough, 2012; Jeffrey & Dyson, 2013; Gough, Langevang & Owusu, 2013).

Second, the literature on young people in the global north has also indicated that young people's lives have been affected by structural changes in the global labour market, economic crises, and rising unemployment rates. As a response to the changing labour market and in order to survive economically, young people's trajectories to work have involved new strategies, including expanding their education and training and engaging in informal employment and insecure work (Furlong et al., 2003; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Unemployment and poor working conditions are not problems which are only faced by young people in the global south; a large number of young people in many countries in the global north are also increasingly working in poor and low-paying jobs and in precarious work with unsecured work arrangements, including part-time or temporary jobs and self-employment (Standing, 2011; Beck, 2000).

Generally, the previous research clearly shows that it is young people who suffer most in the new economy of high unemployment and harsh labour market conditions. It has been argued that with the global changes in employment opportunities, youth unemployment has become a major concern in a wide range of countries (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997, Woodman & Wyn, 2014). Researchers' attention has not been limited to focusing on unemployment; they have also explored how the new changes have led to new conditions of insecurity in which homelessness and poverty are also dimensions (Farrugia, 2016). They show how precarious forms of employment have increased throughout the world, leading to serious consequences for young people (Furlong, 2015b).

This thesis has investigated the lives of young people living in a more economically developed society than those in the less developed parts of the world, and even than some in developed

countries. It has shown that young people's transition in this society occurs without problems of financial deprivation, homelessness, migration, poverty, or insecure and precarious forms of work. The trend toward small businesses which has recently emerged in Kuwait might be considered as precarious (Standing, 2011), as its nature is still undefined. It may also be considered as a hobby for young people in many cases, in parallel with their main employment or a response to their individual motivation. In Kuwait, rather than mixing study and part-time jobs, or engaging in a series of insecure jobs and moving flexibly between casual, flexible part-time/temporary jobs, the common form of youth transition from education to work still involves seeking formal government jobs, usually after completing a high level of education. The interviews with young adults showed how the majority of them did not participate in part-time jobs or any form of unsecured work before acquiring permanent full-time positions. They referred to the good economic conditions and employment policies in the public sector to explain this. In other words, waiting for employment does not mean enduring difficult financial conditions that push them into unstable or low-paying jobs.

Indeed, the changes to the economy and society have led young Kuwaitis to live in a more severe reality than the generation of the golden age. They have a greater need to extend their education, must usually experience a period of waiting for government jobs, and then face underemployment associated with the accumulation of workers in the public sector. They also need to develop skills to meet the demands of employers in other sectors if they are to have the choice to work in the private sector. Many of the interviewees, as Chapter Seven has shown, stressed the importance of acquiring skills and a good higher education to cope with changes in the modern labour market, increased competition with expatriate labour, and the growing rate of youth unemployment, compared to previous generations.

Nevertheless, despite this reality, contemporary youth transitions in Kuwait are still stable compared to those experienced by young people in other contexts. The study highlights a culture built into this society associated with the features and privileges of working in government institutions, that reduces the wish to work in other sectors, for which young people are in any case not culturally or educationally prepared. Some manual jobs are not socially welcome, and may attract stigma. All these factors make young people hesitate to

look for work in other sectors, and more willing to wait for the government job. The waiting period for employment is usually devoid of attempts to earn a living in unstable forms of work, or to migrate to find work; nor does it usually involve poverty or homelessness, with the existence of good economic conditions and family financial support for Kuwaiti nationals. Some may even enjoy their social life and consider the time as a rest period. The new and distinctive reality of unemployment might therefore be conceptual ‘until employment’. This term represents the situation of young people waiting to be employed in formal jobs, with few of the accompanying difficult economic conditions usually associated with youth unemployment in other societies. This situation also generally does not involve attempts to engage in unstable work or migration to earn a living as is commonly seen in youth literature (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Punch, 2010, Jeffrey & McDowell, 2004).

This new knowledge, then, changes the traditional view from youth literature and fosters the investigation and rethinking of young people’s situations across different societies and cultures. This is not limited to the situation of young people in Kuwait but can be extended to reflect the situation in other GCC societies, which have many similar cultural, social and economic conditions. This suggests that youth researchers in the global context need not just think about youth studies in terms of the global north and global south. The case of the present study is an example of young people who are living in a context that fits neither of these paradigms, leading to the emergence of new knowledge about work and unemployment. This proves the need for an enriched global sociology (Bhambra, 2009; Connell, 2007) which also looks at the space between global north and south and does not consider them as binary.

Overall, the issues of precarious job conditions, financial deprivation and poverty that appear as global problems currently facing youth and dominating contemporary youth studies on employment, unemployment and underemployment, do not appear to form part of the reality of young Kuwaitis. Once their transition to stable employment had been completed, the young adults still largely felt disadvantaged. Few of the interviewees considered their current employment in government to be a ‘good job’. There was widespread acceptance that government employees lack effective work opportunities as a result of the mismatch between their perceptions and aspirations and the reality of the jobs, which are insufficiently

challenging for those used to competing for opportunities. Overcrowding and underemployment are pushing some young people to change their ambition and modify old beliefs. However, certain variables stand in the way of achieving this desire, including education, whether from the family or at school. Similarly, many young people who choose to work in the private sector feel disadvantaged by their lack of skills and professional experience. They are living in a risky competitive environment alongside foreign professionals who are perceived by their employers as better qualified to cope with the working conditions. The existing constraints also include social stigma, employment policies and the traditional values imposed on young people, such as those related to women's roles and parental influence, and control over their children's professional choices, in the sense that the young people struggle to find resources that will allow them to take realistic steps towards the jobs they want.

To sum up, this thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge in relation to youth employment and unemployment. The problem of youth unemployment is typically associated with economic difficulties and a lack of employment opportunities. However, by highlighting young people's experience in Kuwait, this thesis emphasises that youth unemployment everywhere does not necessarily fit this image. Rather, even with the availability of local job opportunities, and in generally good economic conditions in a wealthy state, many young people prefer to endure a period of unemployment until they are able to obtain their preferred formal public sector jobs. This thesis has presented youth unemployment as being formed and rooted in wider issues in society. In particular, the problem of youth unemployment can be explained by the crowded public sector, good economic conditions, competition from foreign labour and the fact that the life of the individual is burdened by institutional restrictions and traditional social constraints. Despite the changes in the labour market, and the saturation of the public sector in particular, for economic, religious, cultural, social and educational reasons, Kuwaiti young people feel restricted and unable to engage in other forms of work, including the private sector, temporary work, or self-employment.

This section has discussed the contribution of the present study to youth literature and the emergence of new knowledge about youth employment and unemployment, suggesting the

need for further investigation into the experiences of young people in the regions located between the global north and global south. The next section focuses on the theoretical contribution.

The broader contribution to theory

This study critically evaluates the northern focus of social theories, using Beck's work as an exemplar of northern theory. Beck (1999) noted that modernisation includes two phases, first modernity (the industrial stage) and second modernity. The new stage of modernity has brought about structural changes and greater risks affecting individuals' lives and identities. Rather than the traditional guidelines and support networks, free choice and individuals designing their own biographies have become the basic characteristics of this stage of modernity (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). This study recognises that Beck provided an important reference and framework for understanding the implications and massive changes to contemporary life brought about by modernisation, and how uncertainty has become an essential element of the individual's everyday life. Nevertheless, the present research argues that his stages of modernisation, and his assumptions of individualisation and how tradition has lost its previous role, are limited and experimentally flawed in the Kuwaiti context.

By demonstrating the impact of the fast track to modernity on youth transition, the study shows that societies do not necessarily need to undergo the two previous stages of change (pre-modernity and first modernity), contrary to Beck's claims. Radical economic change has allowed traditional rural Kuwaiti society to enter a new stage of development, civilisation and affluence which mimics Beck's second modernity without having experienced the industrial stage. Risks and tensions in individuals' lives have emerged through this rapid shift from a simple traditional society to a rich one, challenging Beck's assumption that uncertainties are linked to the transition through three stages.

The nature of change in Kuwaiti society and its cultural characteristics thus challenge Beck's ideas of individualisation and the erosion of traditional contexts and guidelines. Indeed, this study shows that Beck's core assumptions are generally helpful in explaining the impact of

modern change in non-western contexts such as Kuwait on individuals' lives, and how such change can play a role in the relationship between the individual and society. The findings of this study support the predictions developed in Chapter Two of the thesis. The findings indicate that the changes in Kuwaiti society have given young people more freedom of choice than in previous generations. As has shown in Chapter Six, students feel that their families have less control over their career choices than other matters. This was analysed to investigate the effect of the changes in the labour market and the increasing lack of employment opportunities in the public sector in recent times. The interviewees also stressed how Kuwaiti women have become freer with the relative change from the traditional, pre-oil stage perspective of gender roles that placed them in the home. Further, they appear less constrained to follow routes into government jobs, although these are not seen as integral to forming a good marriage; however other constraints exist, as discussed below. The interviewees generally believe that young people nowadays are more in control of their decisions and setting their future career plans, compared to those in previous generations. The results on the emergence of some new paths toward work, like the individual projects which some interviewees referred to, are also indicative of the impact of change on individual lives.

Nevertheless, as the thesis predicted, it is difficult to apply Beck's theory of individualisation clearly and explicitly to this society. Beck (1992, 1994) argued that individualisation can be understood as moving from the obligations and contexts of support and dominance, guidelines and inequalities of the traditional society, to a new kind of social commitment (the dimension of control) where biographies are produced and staged by individuals themselves (Beck, 1992, 1994). This study empirically shows that traditional obligations, guidelines and the culture of the pre-oil society, including strong social and family ties and gender and religious norms, still exist in modern Kuwaiti society and play a significant role in shaping young people's lives. Their decisions and career pathways are still affected by collective ways of living and traditional patterns and beliefs. In other words, instead of young people in contemporary Kuwaiti society being totally freed from the traditional forms of life, these forms continue to exert authority over them and prevent them from making their own individual biographies.

The role of traditional beliefs and religion in relation to a strong family was discussed in the findings presented in Chapters Six and Seven, indicating that some families continue to identify their children's career pathways and that young people are largely influenced by their parents' guidelines regarding the work sector, especially their fathers' pathways. This is further evidence of the continuation of the role of the old principles, related to patterns of patriarchy, in shaping contemporary youth transition in Kuwait. It was also found that the wider social networks have contributed to controlling their pathways: some of the interviewees said that *wasta*, a widespread and deeply ingrained cultural and social form of nepotism (Mohamed & Mohamad, 2011; Salih, 2010), hindered them in freely making their own decisions and achieving their personal goals.

In relation to gender, the traditional beliefs about women's work and the restriction of their freedom still appear in Kuwaiti society. The majority of the participating students believe that Kuwaiti women remain restricted in their career choices. The responses to the open-ended question in the survey also established that more females than males reported that their personal goals regarding their future educational and career routes may be difficult to achieve while their families believe there should be no physical contact with men, such as in the media, or that they should not travel alone to complete their study. Portraying women as unequal to men in relation to employment opportunities is likely to make young females feel more restricted and worried about their future than are males, as Chapter Five showed. Some female workers also pointed out that the community perspective on women's roles and family obligations can conflict with their participating in the private sector, which requires long working hours or working in professions that require communication with men.

In summary, the findings of the study show that although young Kuwaitis may feel more liberated than previous generations in shaping their own biographies, in general their attitudes and individual pathways to work are generally still influenced by existing social forms such as gender roles, strong family networks, and religion. In other words, even with the tendency towards individual pathways and efforts being made to be personally active, this does not mean that freedom of the individual from traditional contexts as depicted by Beck has arrived. It is argued that social norms in modern Kuwaiti society have not lost their old, typical

features of being at the core of an individual's course, the process referred to by Beck as de-traditionalisation (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). The findings suggest that as Kuwaiti society has undergone a compressed modernity resulting in conflict between the old and the new in young people's lives today, Beck's individualisation is unable to account for youth transition in this context. In a sense, as Kuwaiti society did not experience the first stage of modernity that paved the way for individualisation by gradually reducing the traditional contexts and obligations that clearly controlled individuals' agencies in the traditional stage in western contexts, individualisation needs to be understood differently in Kuwaiti society.

Many youth sociologists have criticised Beck, arguing that he overemphasises agency and claiming that structures such as social class and gender still exist and shape young people's lives (Evans, 2002; 2007, Furlong, 2009; Lehman, 2004, amongst others). Although this study provides support for these arguments, especially in relation to the continuity of inequality between genders, despite social change, it goes further to understand individualisation beyond the global north. It shows that the ideas about agency and free choice in this society are more restricted due to different constraints linked to the local cultural and socio-economic influences and strong collective values. The study concludes that individualisation in Kuwaiti society, which experienced a process of compressed modernity, can be understood with reference to the persistence of collective protection, family support and the Islamic and cultural norms that together form the basis of young people's lifestyles, behaviours and identities. Hence, this new knowledge suggests that, like many concepts within sociological theories, Beck's individualisation needs to be refined and developed for successful adoption in global contexts and in different cultures.

This conclusion calls for further empirical and theoretical studies exploring young people's lives in various cultures. It emphasises the urgent need for a more cosmopolitan sociology with different foci and levels. Sociological concepts and perspectives need to be developed for this new global era using, in Threadgold and Woodman's words, a "reinvigorated and global sociological imagination" (2014: 6). As a consequence of globalisation, people have become more closely bonded across borders and the world has shrunk, requiring more than ever a global approach to sociology. In other words, a cosmopolitan outlook would benefit from the

examination of transnational processes and the expansion of communications and media, by going beyond global studies and effectively comparing different styles of life. As globally connected individuals on this small planet, individuals from many different cultural contexts are facing common global risks, and sociologists therefore are bound to grasp the realities of life in different cultures and among various ethnic and national groups. According to Fraser, “As processes of globalisation confound and disrupt the traditional dualisms of East/West and North/South, there is a pressing need to develop ‘thinking tools’ for research that are sensitised to this complexity” (2014: 3-4). This research agrees with this statement, and notes that there is a critical requirement in our new times to increase awareness of the importance of others, as “the ‘global other’ is in our midst” (Beck, 2011: 1346).

Despite Beck’s hopes of establishing a cosmopolitan sociology, contradictions and flaws can be found in his ideas. The process of individualisation actively involves how a society changes and adheres to, or lets go of, culture and prevailing concepts; it is sensitive to cultural disparity and historical conditions. This requires understanding and familiarity with the cultures and historical circumstances in which the societies have developed. However, Beck’s theory of individualisation is largely based on the western path as a starting point for reflexive modernity and understanding contemporary life. Beck himself subsequently admitted that his theory of reflexive modernity is to a great extent a western modernity theory, sharing a number of beliefs with classical theories of modernisation. Among other ideas, “it had the same universalist aspiration, i.e. it assumed that its norms, principles and institutions could (and should) be applied (sooner or later) throughout the globe” (Beck & Grande, 2010: 416).

It can be argued that Beck seems more ambitious in his ideas on reflexive modernity, and the risk society and its products as a global approach. His vision of cosmopolitanism has been criticised by Holton, who argued that it is not necessarily to be seen as a product of second modernity, as Beck had suggested, but rather, that it has been “around for a long time in a variety of modalities and special settings” (2009: 82). Holton proposed that Beck’s claims were due to his normative desire to offer the best probable case for cosmopolitanism, which reads too much like ‘rhetorical special pleading’. Bhambra (2009), who also argued that Beck attempted to universalise his approach, proposed that instead of calling for a global sociology

open to more voices in the face of globalisation, Beck needed to recognise more about “provincialized European understandings, not one based on the perpetuation of ‘triumphalist’ ideas of Europe’s singular contribution to world society” (Bhambra, 2011: 12). This is not only to bring different experiences and historical ideas forward, but also to be familiar with the cultural and historical particulars of different societies. Bhambra thus called for a ‘connected histories’ approach in which modernity is not seen as a phenomenon derived originally from Europe, but rather as a process in which countries have always been connected, and have contributed towards its outcomes. These criticisms encourage further rethinking about modernity paradigms and call for a common understanding with the contribution of sociologists from the periphery and their engagement in debates with the centre (Bhambra, 2009; Burawoy, 2008).

If Beck’s model is to be adjusted to become more comprehensive, and thus specifically more beneficial in building understanding of the impact of contemporary changes on the transition of Kuwaiti young people, the following shift is required: rather than the understanding of a risk as based only on the situation of societies that have gone through three stages to reach second modernity, it would be more useful if his model also incorporated societies that have undergone compressed modernity, or otherwise not followed the proposed sequence in the stages of modernity. Kuwait is such an example, having bypassed the first stage of modernity, or the industrial society that paved the way for removing the old forms of living and structures prevailing in the traditional stage. This case of a society’s experience can be called an ‘unpaved pathway to modernity’, as it carries some of the old characteristics of the traditional stage into the contemporary stage. There are other societies where the process of modernisation was fast and the industrial stage appears to be absent, such as the Gulf and Arab states. Exploring youth transitions in these societies may add new understandings on the impact of modernity on the lives of contemporary youth.

Despite this current reality in Kuwaiti society, there are indications that a new stage may emerge which would translate better to Beck’s individualisation approach. One such indication is the emergence of individual tendencies and the attempts of some young people to stop and think about changing the old beliefs and attitudes related to work, a situation explained as ‘the

reflexive project of self' by Giddens (1991: 33). In settings of modernity, with increasing changes in labour markets, deteriorating economic conditions, and reformed economic policies aiming to reduce reliance on the state, old habits are likely to be filtered and traditional norms may be eroded, allowing individual trends and actions to grow more freely.

This thesis recommends the investigation of different issues in contemporary life in Kuwait, or in other Gulf and Arab societies, to enrich Beck's model of modernisation and individualisation. Various interesting areas offer opportunities for researchers to address these contexts, such as the personal relationships between men and women in the context of the conflict between modernity and tradition. One typical example given by Beck (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001) for understanding reflexive modernity is the impact on individuals' marriages. Beck argued that marriage is no longer a part of the Christian world order or a goal of the state in contemporary western societies, but its core in the modern version becomes an individual concept, defined by parents who participate in it. In a sense, it "is not merely an individual order but an 'individual situation dependent on institutions' (Beck, 1986)" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001: 12). This assumption stimulates the possibility of an experimental enquiry into marriage in the lives of contemporary young people, and the impact of change on marriage forms in modern Gulf societies. This topic would include many social aspects related to gender, religion, and the cultural and economic issues that provide sociologists with serious dimensions for discovery.

Moreover, the present thesis opens up space for studying several topics, including new patterns of work that have begun to appear in youth experience, such as self-employment or starting to work in small/medium-sized businesses. Many questions arise about this pattern, such as what forms of youth culture and identities are encouraging individuals to enter this new type of work. How do they face the pressures related to cultural expectations, such as the fear of stigma and labelling; and what are the main reasons prompting them to take this riskier form of work? Cross-generational research is another future direction suggested by the findings of the present study. This line of enquiry would allow for more understanding about how the changing world may reshape youth experiences. Inter-generational comparisons could support greater understanding of social changes over time in the Kuwaiti context, by tracking

different life patterns and focusing on the most important differences and similarities between the experiences of individuals born in different decades. Future research in this direction would benefit from the recent work of sociologists that has focused on social generations in youth studies, such as Woodman's *The sociology of generations and youth studies* (2016) and Woodman and Wyn's *Youth and generation* (2014). Many previous studies have also provided useful examples in inspiring a methodological frame for future research. Among these, the Life Patterns research programme, based at the Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne, is designed to follow the life patterns of young Australians' lives over time by using a mixed-method design of survey questionnaires for all participants and semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants over two decades. It seeks to provide a holistic understanding of the impact of the rapidly changing world on two cohorts of youth experiences in relation to education, the labour market, and other areas of life during the third and fourth decades of life in contemporary Australia (Crofts et al., 2016). There was a greater expectation in the current study that interviewees would generate stronger data on the rapid transition to modernity and how Kuwaiti society skipped the industrial stage, or discuss, for example, the collective history on which this society was traditionally built (Chapter Three). However, this discourse did not emerge, probably because the participants were not witnesses to the distant (in terms of time), very traditional society and the transition to the post-oil era. Hence, adding parents and grandparents (or generation after generation) in future youth research will help to preserve the historical narrative and enrich understanding.

To sum up, and more broadly, this study proposes that an intensification of social research is needed in the Gulf countries, and wider Arab region, which has experienced a fast track to modernity and seems to sit in the space between global north and global south. Watfa and Almjedl (2009) have previously stressed this need, arguing that development of Arab social research and studies is required for more precise understanding and better clarification of Arab social reality and its dynamics. The *World social sciences report* by UNESCO and ISSC (2010) also emphasised that social research in the Arab states is generally marginalised, and receives limited attention; therefore, its role in feeding the process of policy formulation is limited.

Policy implications

Despite the great financial resources available in Kuwaiti society, these appear not to be effectively directed towards supporting the aspirations of young people. Serious government actions are required that can effectively contribute, either directly or indirectly, to facilitating their pathways to various forms of work and to reducing their feelings of frustration. Hijazi (2008) argued that the issue of young people and their future in Arab Gulf society generally presents two possibilities; either utilising the states' financial abundance in the interest of young people by guiding their potential and capacities in a way that serves their own life and society's future; or failing to exploit their potential. Aspects of gender opportunities need additional, careful focus to promote equality.

The population of Kuwaiti is estimated to increase to 4.6 million by 2040. As children and youth represent the largest segment of the population, this will put further pressure on the government to provide or facilitate real working opportunities for them, as well as setting a challenge for young people (Kuwait Ministry of Education, 2014a). Much more attention needs to be given to correcting the situation of young people through better strategic planning and formulating effective policies to address the imbalances in the labour market and the large concentration of national employment in the public sector. Despite recent policies and incentives offered by the government to take alternative forms of work as a way of dealing with the lack of diversification in the economy and high youth unemployment, different obstacles exist in young people's lives that disrupt the formation of new principles of work. This study has demonstrated that young people's attitudes towards work and youth unemployment in Kuwait are complex; they are formed based on various cultural, social, economic and educational aspects which require comprehensive reforms, including community awareness and educational policies. The following paragraphs provide some suggestions, based on the findings of the study, that might alleviate the problems young Kuwaitis face and direct national youth manpower towards work in non-public entities.

The findings of the study suggest that young people are clearly influenced by their parents' guidelines, so strategies should include community-based programmes and media campaigns

as a starting point to achieve increased parental and family awareness about youth unemployment and the need to diversify the local economy. Strategies might include familiarising young people in schools with different professions and the available employment opportunities around them in different sectors (including in private firms, and the option of self-employment), taking advantage of cooperation with professionals and counsellors. This can also include training students in the field of handicraft activities and manual and semi-skilled occupations, which are not usually occupied by Kuwaitis, through organising seminars that educate young people about the importance of such work in reducing youth unemployment and underemployment. Making students more familiar with the support and financial assistance provided by the government and private entities for young people who intend to work in private companies or engage in small and medium enterprises would also be effective. The findings on the reasons behind students' preference for working in the public rather than the private sector suggest that a reduction in the disparity between the two sectors would encourage more young people to move into the private sector and help to alleviate the problem of youth unemployment. More attention needs to be paid to amending policies in relation to working hours, benefits for leave and, perhaps most importantly, policies concerning financial and professional security. Taking into account the cultural and traditional norms that prevent women from working in the private sector, conflicting with their responsibilities and role as mothers, special exceptions for women may be useful, such as further reduction in working hours. Moreover, with regard to the cultural norms that prevent some young women from working side-by-side with men, although companies usually require dealing with both male and female customers, the provision of separate rooms and facilities within the workplace for men and women might encourage some women to work in the private sector.

The results of the study indicate that a general lack of skills is one of the factors hindering the participation of young people in private companies and stopping them from aspiring to run their own small or medium-sized business enterprises. There is also considerable evidence for the argument that in Kuwait and GCC countries, young people do not fully meet the requirements of employers in the private sector (Salih, 2010, Zafer, 1999). Hence, educational strategies to prepare young Kuwaitis for these competitive work environments are both

essential and urgent. The findings concerning support from schools suggest that government schools should develop more activities which aim to build work skills, such as individual project work and extra-curricular activities. Promoting involvement in outside activities, such as student-run radio stations or participation in volunteer work, would expose students to more skills and sectors and compensate for their lack of part-time work engagement. Attention should be paid to ensuring that these opportunities for extra-curricular activities are inclusive. Cultural and traditional norms need to be taken into account making them accessible to girls and women; using mentors to act as chaperones might be one solution. Instilling these skills, including those relating to self-motivation and healthy risk-taking in youth, is critical to Kuwaiti society, where new ways of looking for job opportunities are needed in order to reduce the dependence on government jobs. A similar message about the importance of developing work-related and soft skills should be sent to families and society as a whole; more opportunities are required to expose young people to employability skills through encouraging part-time work, which may then be translated into job opportunities in the future. Activities and tasks that provide and strengthen missing skills, such as taking responsibility, self-reliance, teamwork and discipline, are required as early as possible in the education process.

Appendices

Appendix One: Study plans for secondary education, showing the number of lessons per week for each subject

1-Study plan for the first stage of secondary education

Education subjects	Number of lessons
Holy Quran	1
Islamic education	2
Arabic	6
English	5
Mathematics	6
Science (Chemistry-Physics)	6
Science (Biology-Geology)	2
Social studies	3
Physical education	2
Informatics and research methods	2
Total number of lessons	35

2- Study Plan for the second stage of secondary education

Compulsory subjects for the second stage:

Education subjects	Humanities	Science
Holy Quran	1	1
Islamic education	2	2
Arabic	6	6
English	6	5
Physical education	1	1
Informatics and research methods	1	1
Total number of lessons	17	16

Specialised subjects (Science)

Education subjects	Lessons
Mathematics	6
Chemistry	3
Physics	3
Biology	2
Geology	2
Total number of lessons	16

Specialised subjects (Humanities)

Education subjects	Lessons
History	3
Geography	3
Philosophy	2
French	5
Mathematics and statistics	2
Total number of lessons	15

3- Study Plan for the third stage of secondary education:**Compulsory subjects for the third stage:**

Education subjects	Humanities	Science
Holy Quran	1	1
Islamic education	2	2
Arabic	6	6
English	5	5
Physical education	1	1
Informatics and research methods	1	1
Constitution and human rights	1	1
Total number of lessons	17	17

Specialised subjects (Science)

Education subjects	Lessons
Mathematics	6
Chemistry	3
Physics	3
Biology	3
Total number of lessons	15

Specialised subjects (Humanities)

Education subjects	Lessons
History	3
Geography	3
Philosophy	2
French	5
Mathematics and statistics	2
Total number of lessons	15

4- Optional Subjects

1	Art	8	Media and press (in Arabic)
2	Music	9	Media and journalism (in English)
3	Physical education	10	Mental health
4	French language (for students specialising in science)	11	Awareness of traffic
5	Environment	12	Principles of scientific report preparation
6	Family and consumer sciences	13	Dealing with institutions
7	Agriculture and greening	14	Volunteer work

Appendix Two: Plain language statement for students



Plain Language Statement

University of Glasgow, School of Social and Political Sciences

Date:

Project Title: Motivating and Preparing Youth in Kuwait for Successful Transitions to Employment

Student Researcher: Fatimah Alnaser

Supervisor: Fred Cartmel, Andy Furlong

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to do so it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out, and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information.

This study aims to identify the ways in which the educational system prepares secondary school students for future career. 1,200 students will be asked to participate in this research. The questionnaire will give students the opportunity to provide their views on the different influences that motivate them in their future work and to gain the skills needed in the modern work place. The research will be used in a PhD thesis and conference papers. The results of the research will be made available to participants as a dissertation, and it will be presented to responsible educational authorities and the Ministry of Youth Affairs in Kuwait. The results may include your own words, but remember that **your name will NOT be required on the survey** and no-one will be able to identify you in person.

If you decide to take part, you will be invited to answer survey questions. The survey will be conducted in students' classrooms and it will be administered by me (the researcher) in the absence of teachers, to ensure freedom of answering and confidentiality of information. This survey will last for 30 to 45 minutes. All the

information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any personal information about participants will be destroyed within three months after the data collection (30/03/2015) by using paper shredders for written data and deleting electronic files, and other research data will be destroyed at the end of the research (01/10/2017).

Everything you say will be treated with the strictest confidence. No-one outside the study team will be able to identify you. Your name will NOT be required on the survey.

The project has been reviewed by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about the research or what is involved contact me, Fatimah Alnaser, at 1011074A@student.glasgow.ac.uk or by phone on 55553525. You can also contact my supervisors Fred Cartmel Fred.Cartmel@glasgow.ac.uk and Andy Furlong Andy.Furlong@glasgow.ac.uk or by phone on +44 141 330 6870.

If you would like to raise any concerns about how any aspect of this research has been conducted, please contact the College Ethics Officer, Dr Muir Houston on Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk or +44 141-330-4699.

Thank you for reading this.

Appendix Three: Background information on the interviewees

	Name	Gender	Work sector	Occupation	Level of Education	Age	Marital status	Years of work experience
1	Noor	F	Public	Physical Education Teacher	Bachelor	27	Married	4
2	Azeez	M	Public	Administrative Coordinator	Bachelor	26	Married	3
3	Batool	F	Public	Engineer	Bachelor	29	Married	5
4	Abdullah	M	Public	Assistant Mechanical Engineer	Diploma	30	Married	5
5	Sara	F	Public	Administrative Assistant Coordinator	Diploma	25	Married	2
6	Zainah	F	Public	X-ray Technician	Diploma	23	Unmarried	2
7	Zain	M	Private	Customer Service	Bachelor	28	Married	5
8	Ahmad	M	Public	Teacher	Bachelor	26	Unmarried	4
9	Hawra'a	F	Public	Engineer	Bachelor	28	Married	3
10	Dalal	F	Public	Medical Laboratory Technician	Diploma	25	Married	2
11	Reem	F	Public	Scientific Laboratory Technician	Diploma	30	Married	5
12	Salah	M	Private	Computer Programmer in Bank	Bachelor	28	Married	5
13	Shikha	F	Private	Accountant in Oil Company	Bachelor	28	Unmarried	6
14	Mohamad	M	Public	Diver in the Navy	High School	24	Unmarried	4
15	Yousef	M	Private	Relationship Officer in Bank	Bachelor	25	Unmarried	2
16	Zaid	M	Private	Maintenance Supervisor	High school	23	Married	5
17	Fatimah	F	Private	Premier Banking Officer	Bachelor	29	Unmarried	4
18	Hessah	F	Private	Lawyer	MA	27	Married	5
19	Fajer	F	Private	Secretary	High school	25	Unmarried	3
20	Ali	M	Public	Art Teacher	Bachelor	24	Married	2
21	Asrar	F	Public	Public Relations Officer	Bachelor	25	Unmarried	2
22	Hussain	M	Public	TV Director	Bachelor	30	Married	7
23	Faisal	M	Private	Real Estate Director	Bachelor	30	Married	7
24	Fay	F	Private	Public Relations Supervisor	Bachelor	28	Unmarried	6

Appendix Four: Consent Form for interviewees



Consent Form

Title of Project: Motivating and Preparing Youth in Kuwait for Successful Transitions to Employment

Name of Researcher: Fatimah Abdulameer Alnaser

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I consent to this interview being audio-taped yes no
(Please tick)
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant Date Signature

Researcher Date Signature

Appendix Five: Additional figures

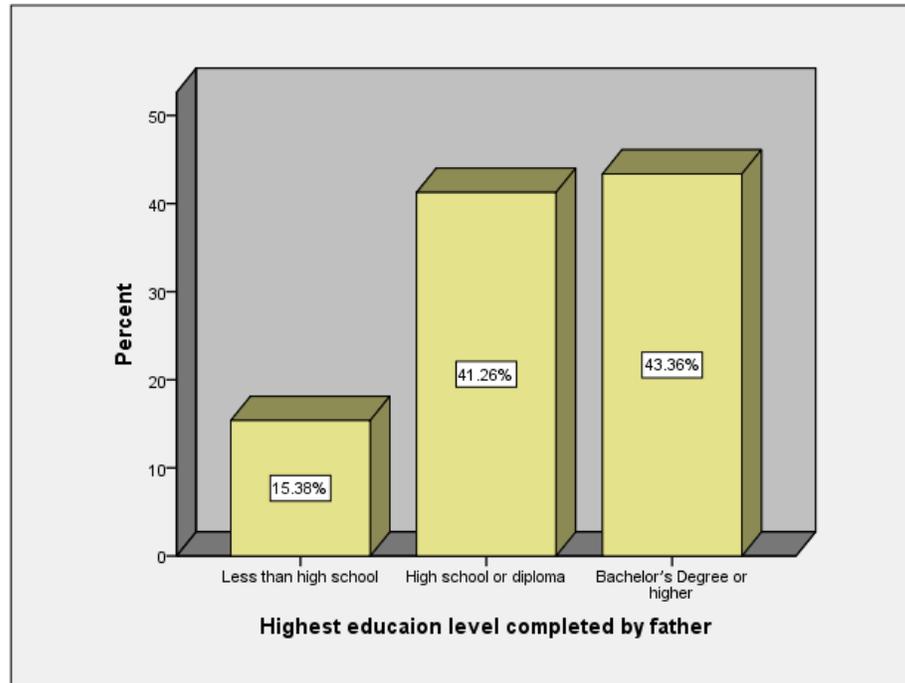


Figure 1: Responses by the educational level of the father

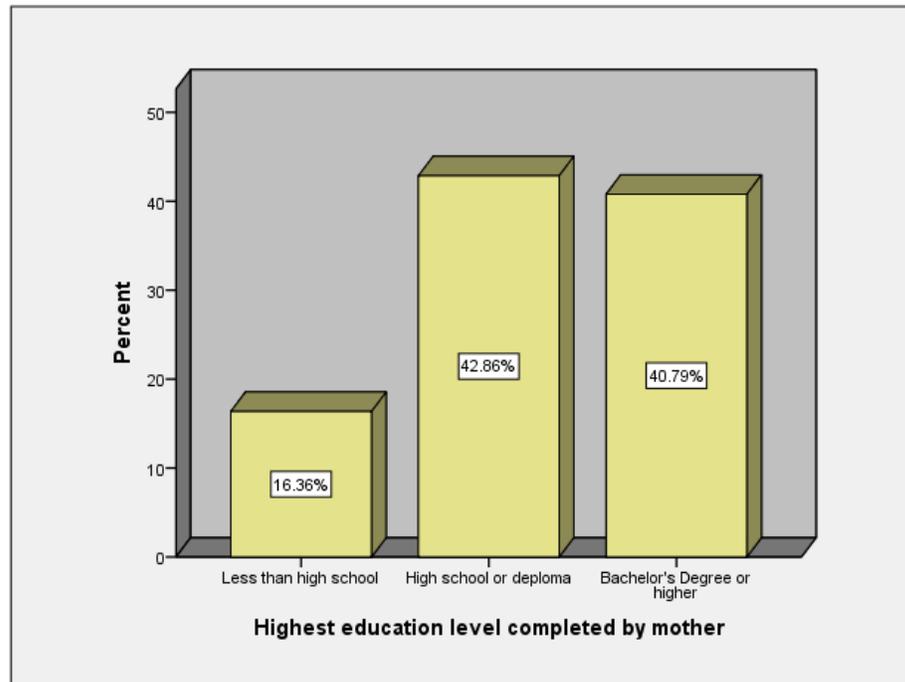


Figure 2: Responses by the educational level of the mother

Appendix Six: The questionnaire



Questionnaire

I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and I agree to take part in this study. Your name is NOT required on this survey.

*DO NOT write your name

1. General Data

*Name of school:

1.1 Gender *Tick one box only*

- Male Female

1.2 Current educational level (years of study) *Tick one box only*

- First grade Second grade Third grade

1.3 Area of specialisation (education major) *Tick one box only*

- Humanities Science

1.4 I chose this major because: *Tick all that apply*

- I like this field Avoiding a certain teacher It's easier (shortest route to graduation)
 It's my parents' wish Other reasons.....

1.5 Highest educational level completed by your father and mother: *Tick one box only*

	Father	Mother
Did Not Complete High School		
High School		
Diploma		
Bachelor's Degree		
Postgraduate (e.g. MA, PhD)		
Not Sure		

1.6 Compared with other families, how well-off do you think your family is financially? *Tick one box only*

- Very well-off Somewhat well-off Average Not very well-off Not at all well-off

1.7 Do you think your family is? *Check one circle only*

Very traditional

very modern

- 1 2 3 4 5 6

1.8 Father's profession *Tick one box only*

- Government employee Private sector Freelance worker Retired or not working

1.9 What is his field of work? *Tick one box only*

- Education Health Engineering Policy Administrative work Attorneys and law
 Defence and Army Business and marketing Media Other.....

1.10 Mother's profession *Tick one box only*

- Government employee Private sector Freelance worker Retired Housewife

1.11 What is her field of work? *Tick one box only*

- Education Health Engineering Policy Administrative work Attorneys and law
 Defence and Army Business and marketing Media Other.....

2. Future career

2.1 What are you planning to do after graduation from secondary school? *Tick one box only*

- Attend university
 Attend a college (Public Authority for Applied Education and Training)
 Join the military ranks (police, army, air force, etc.)
 Training courses
 Other.....
 I do not have specific plan
 Something will come up (wait and see)

2.2 Have you ever been involved in voluntary work? *Tick one box only*

- Yes No

2.3 Have you worked in a part-time job / temporary job for students? *Tick one box only*

- Yes No If yes, what kind was it?.....

2.4 Have you ever attended training courses, workshop sessions, or seminars that prepare young people for future careers? *Tick one box only*

- Yes No If yes, did you find it/them useful?.....

2.5 What are the barriers that may prevent you from choosing your career goal/preferred job? *Tick all that applies*

- Society's perceptions
- Customs and traditions
- Parent's objection
- Lack of training opportunities
- Working hours
- The level of wages and salaries for that job
- Unemployment (lack of employment opportunities)
- Other barriers.....
- Which of the above is the **most** important obstacle?.....

2.6 Which sector would you prefer to work in?

- public sector Private sector

2.7 If the answer is the public sector, why? *Tick all that applies*

- The level of wages and salaries
- Greater stability and job security
- Less pressure, responsibility and punctuality
- Fewer working hours
- More holidays, vacations and sick leave
- Greater legislation guaranteeing the rights of the employee (health insurance, retirement)
- The lack of employment opportunities in the private sector
- Satisfying your personal ambitions and goals
- Other reasons.....
- Which of the above is the **most** important reason?.....

If the answer is private sector, why? *Tick all that applies*

- Wages and bonuses commensurate with effort
- Greater respect and regard for employees
- Work is more serious and active
- More promotion opportunities
- Greater opportunity for creativity and innovation
- It puts the right person in the right position
- Employment in the public sector means more waiting time
- Satisfying personal ambitions and goal
- Other reasons.....
- Which of the above is the **most** important reason?.....

2.8 Which area does your family encourage you to work in? *Tick one box only*

- Private sector Public sector Indifferent

2.9 What type of work environment do you prefer? *Tick one box only*

- Professional and technical environment
- An office environment

2.10 Do you prefer to work? *Tick one box only*

- On a team
- Independently

2.11 Do you prefer to work in? *Tick one box only*

- A closed environment
- An open environment

2.12 What is your preferred field of work? *Tick one box only*

- Education
- Social work
- Health
- Finance and banking
- Precision production, craft and repair occupations
- Administrative work
- Engineering
- Attorneys and law
- Defence and Army
- Media
- Policy
- Other.....

2.13 What are the elements/ factors that you would consider when determining your future career? (Tick the most important reasons: you can tick more than one)

- Moral appreciation from the community
- High income
- A great role which benefits society
- In keeping with family tradition
- Relates to my field of study
- Satisfying my personal preference
- A sense of pride when practising this profession
- It is an easy job
- Other reasons

2.14 Order your family's preferences for these professions (best = 1 to worst =10)

Doctor	
Chef (cook)	
Technician	
Teacher	
Engineer	
Carpenter	
Lawyer	
Desk clerk	
Artist	
Armed forces	

2.15 Some people think that young Kuwaitis are reluctant to work in the private sector? Why do you think that is? *Tick one box only*

- Lower wages compared to the public sector
- Fewer employment opportunities in private sector
- Private sector employers prefer foreign labour to Kuwaiti citizens (competition from non-Kuwaiti labour)
- Long working hours
- Tougher work environment (strict adherence to punctuality policy)
- Difficult working conditions (requires work experience for several years, requires fluent English).
- Less stability and job security
- Fewer guaranteed rights for employees (health insurance, retirement)
- Fewer promotion opportunities
- Other reasons

2.16 Who is responsible for preparing young people for the labour market and building their personality as employees? (Order them from the most important to the least important, most = 1 to least =4)

- Educators (in schools and other educational institutions)
- Parents & Family
- Employers
- Policy makers
- Others.....

2.17 If you need advice about your future career, do you seek guidance from:

Tick all that apply

- Parents
- Teachers
- Employers and Careers counsellor
- Friends
- Other (mention them).....

2.18 Are you familiar with the nature and details of the job you wish to apply for? *Tick one box only*

- Yes
- No

2.19 How do you rate your level and experience in these skills:

	Excellent	Good	Weak	Do not have any skills
Knowledge of the world of work				
Employability/soft skills (such as self-management and communication skills, confidence, and showing initiative)				
Technical skills				
Academic or school-related skills (such as grades, certification and behaviour reports)				

3. For each of the following statements, please indicate whether this event always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never happens.

3: 1 Your Teachers

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I have opportunities for discussion and debate freely with my teachers within the classroom					
I tell my teacher when I disagree with him/her about important matters					
Our teachers urge us to be studious and to persevere with our study					
Our teachers raise questions that require critical thinking and creative problem solving					
Our teachers ask us to provide further explanation and interpretation in our answers					
Our teachers help us to develop a sense of individual responsibility and personal initiative					
Our teachers encourage learning by encouraging us to search for information by ourselves					
I receive support and motivation to achieve my future goals from my teachers					

3: 2 Your School

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
We are given tasks that help us to acquire social and academic skills					
Working as a team and forming study groups are encouraged					
Preparing presentations is encouraged in our classes					
Individual project work is encouraged in the school					
The school manages competitions and programmes and grants incentives					
When I have a school problem, I ask for help from fellow students rather than handling it by myself					
The school arranges extra-curricular activities to promote a variety of students' strengths and skills					
The school provide technical and					

professional training for students					
The school promotes a culture of creativity and innovation					
The school provide us with information and guidance in relation to career paths					
The school manages seminars and workshops that open professional prospects to students					
The school give us the opportunity to meet with entrepreneurs and employers					
The school administration takes into account the suggestions of students					

4. For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, partially agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

4:1 Your School

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My study qualifies me and helps me to achieve my future plans after getting a high school certificate					
I feel that the teaching methods used in my school are traditional and inappropriate for the present time					
I feel satisfied with the vocational and technical training provided by my school					
I feel satisfied with the academic qualifications and training experiences of my teachers					
I feel satisfied with the opportunities available in my school to develop our skills in different fields					
The education system motivates students to learn the skills needed in the modern work place					

I feel satisfied with the positive spirit and incentives promoted by teachers among students					
--	--	--	--	--	--

4:2 Your Parents

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My parents provide for all my needs					
My parents listen and discuss my dreams and desires with me					
I receive good support from my parents to success in my study					
My family gives me strong support and encourages me to achieve my future ambitions					
My parents always interfere in my daily life choices					
I deal with my problems by myself rather than asking my parents for help					
My parents follow up my studies and school matters					
I usually receive strict criticism from my parents about studying					
My family always provides a suitable and comfortable study environment					
My parents ask me to do other work in addition to studying (such as helping with household chores and shopping for family needs)					
My parents prefer me to concentrate only on my studying without giving me other tasks					
My family encourages me to participate in voluntary work					
My family encourages me to work part time or in the summer holidays					

4:3 Your Future

I want to follow my father's/mother's profession in the future					
I want to follow my brother's/sister's profession in the future					
My parents insist on identifying my future career					
Most young Kuwaitis are considered to be dependents					
I am used to taking responsibility within the family					
I am concerned about the transition from school to workplace					
I feel that I am not ready for the transition to the labour market					
Equipping young people with work skills in schools is important for them to overcome their concerns about their future career					
My study qualifies me for and will help me to achieve my future plans after getting a high school certificate					
Students must acquire the skills needed for the workplace before they enter the field of work					
The best time for young people to acquire work skills is when they enter the world of work and engage with the workplaces					
Diligence and assiduity in secondary school are very important for success in a future career					

4:4 Yourself

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am satisfied with the quality of the curricula					
Our lessons provide us with useful topics that help us to					

succeed in modern practical life and daily activities					
I'm able to continue my study in this field					
My study will become a source of happiness					
I have already set a goal for my education major at university or college					
I have clear plans about my future goals and career					
I will choose my profession according to my personal choices and wishes					
I have given the freedom to participate in decision-making to my family					
Working part-time is important for young people to develop their employability skills					
Having a domestic worker at home is essential.					
I could do all the maid's work if she left					

4:5 The State

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The state encourages the creative and innovative capacity of the young					
The state provides material and moral incentives that attract young people to invest their leisure time in positive projects					
I feel satisfied with the summer jobs offered by some companies to prepare students for the labour market					
I feel satisfied with the job training programmes organised to prepare young people for the future labour market					
Equal opportunities in employment is ensured among Kuwaitis (no applicant should receive unfavourable treatment)					
Kuwaiti society is suffering from the spread of nepotism and cronyism in employment					

Nepotism and cronyism prevent a large segment of young Kuwaitis from achieving their career ambitions					
One of the barriers preventing Kuwaitis from manual work and technical jobs is the fear of social stigma					
Kuwaiti nationals shun technical and vocational careers					
Kuwaiti nationals look for office and administrative careers rather than manual careers					

4:6 Opportunities

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Kuwaiti women are restricted in their career choices					
There are prevailing social traditions which oppose women's work in the private sector					
There are prevailing social traditions which oppose women's work in manual and technical jobs					
Women should have more freedom to choose their field of work					
Women should have the same opportunities as men in employment					

5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please tick one box for each statement

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have little control over things that happen to me.				
What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me.				
There's really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.				
I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.				
Sometimes I feel that I am being pushed around in life.				

6. Open questions. In your opinion:

- What do you think are the main difficulties and challenges that you are concerned about in the transition from school to the labour market?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your cooperation

Appendix Seven: Interview guide

1- Introduction- demographic data

- Age:
- Job title:
- Marital status:
- Number of years of employment:

2- General questions

- Are you happy with your job?
- Are you convinced you chose the right career?
- Was this job your career ambition? (If not, Why not? What are the barriers that prevent you from achieving your goal?)
- Why did you choose this sector (whether public or private)?

3- Questions about family influence

- Did your family have a role in choosing current job? How?
- To what extent do families contribute in motivating and guiding young people to plan their future?
- How do families influence the professional future of their younger members and develop their sense of individual responsibility?

4- Questions about the educational system

- To what extent did your school help you to achieve your career goals by influencing, motivating and inspiring you?
- Do you think the educational system motivates secondary school students to learn the skills needed in the modern work-place in Kuwait?
- Do you think the education system in Kuwaiti secondary schools motivates students' sense of individual responsibility?
- What are your suggestions for improving the learning in schools to motivate young people to work in various fields and sectors?

5- Questions about the state and society

- What are the most important challenges linked to employment faced by young Kuwaiti people?
- What are the most important problems faced by young Kuwaiti people at work?
- To what extent do society and the state motivate young people to work in various fields and sectors?
- What social problems and barriers may prevent young people from choosing a job they love?
- Do you think young Kuwaitis are earnest and capable of innovation and creativity in both work sectors?
- What do you think the government can do to make young people more motivated at work?
- Why do you think the percentage of Kuwaiti employees in the public sector outweighs that in the private sector?
- How would you increase the potential of Kuwaiti youth to work in the private sector?
- Do you think the private sector in Kuwait prefers foreign employee to its citizens? If yes, why?
- Why do manual work and technical jobs suffer from a lack of Kuwaiti manpower?
- Are you satisfied with the job training programmes organised to prepare young people for the future labour market?

Appendix Eight: Letter from University of Glasgow and approval permissions from the Ministry of Education in Kuwait



CSS Oct 2013

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application

Application Details

Application Number: 400130218
 Applicant's Name: Fatimah Alnaser
 Project Title: Motivating and Preparing Youth in Kuwait for Successful Transitions to Employment

Application Status **Approved**

Start Date of Approval *_(d.m.yr)* 24 July 2014

(blank if Changes Required/ Rejected)

End Date of Approval of Research Project *_(d.m.yr)* 01/10/2017

Only if the applicant has been given approval can they proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Recommendations (where Changes are Required)

- *Where changes are required all applicants must respond* in the relevant boxes to the recommendations of the Committee and upload this as the **Resubmission Document** online to explain the changes you have made to the application. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded.
- *(If application is Rejected a full new application must be submitted via the online system. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document uploaded as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated.*

(Shaded areas will expand as text is added)

MAJOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE

APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

--	--

MINOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE

APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS

--	--

University of Glasgow
 College of Social Sciences
 Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF
 The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

Tel: 0141-330-3007
 E-mail: Terri.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk

CSS Oct 2013

REVIEWER COMMENTS**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO REVIEWER COMMENTS***(OTHER THAN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS)*

Many thanks for responding to our comments in a clear and constructive way.	
--	--

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics Administrator.

End of Notification.

To The secretary General Fozi Almajdi,

Subject: Facilitate the task

I am a PhD student from the University of Glasgow and I need to access to Kuwaiti workforce in the private sector and get statistics about Kuwaiti employees who were hired by Manpower and Government Restructuring Program, so I kindly ask you to accept my request to facilitate access to that data.

Applicant / Fatima Alnasser

Civil number: 287012400125

نود الافاده بانه نذ تم
توفر البيانات للطالبه



٢٠١٥/١٧

هندية مساهمة للنيلس
راقب تطوير وتنظيم
مركز نظم المعلومات

To the general manager,

Subject: Facilitate the task

I am a PhD student from the University of Glasgow and I need to access and get statistics to Kuwaiti workforce in the public sector, so I kindly ask you to accept my request to facilitate access to that data.

Applicant / Fatima Alnasser

Civil number: 287012400125

عبدالله الناصر
١١٨
مصلحة وقاية البيئة
إدارة تطوير المنظمة

75 / 30 / EA0085698/05/5000

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Educational Research and
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EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



وزارة التربية
قطاع البحوث التربوية والمناهج
إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14 هـ
الموافق 19 / 23 / 2014 م

الرقم : وت / 1231
مرفقات /

Mr. supervisor of hawaly education region

Respected greetings,,,

Subject: facilitating a task

Please facilitate the task of the student /Fatimah al-naser registered in the PhD's degree at the university of Glasgow for completing a study entitled (motivating and preparing youth in Kuwait for successful transitions to employment).

Therefore, please facilitate the abovementioned student's task by applying the research tool (questionnaire) in the schools that followed your educational region during the year 2014/2015.

With all respect

Director of educational research & development
administration

أ. إيتسام الحاي
مدير إدارة البحوث التربوية

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- Nawara



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إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14 هـ
الموافق 4 / 9 / 23 م

الرقم : وت / 1230
مرفقات /

Mr. supervisor of jahra education region

Respected greetings,,,

Subject: facilitating a task

Please facilitate the task of the student /Fatimah al-naser registered in the PhD's degree at the university of Glasgow for completing a study entitled (motivating and preparing youth in Kuwait for successful transitions to employment).

Therefore, please facilitate the abovementioned student's task by applying the research tool (questionnaire) in the schools that followed your educational region during the year 2014/2015.

With all respect

Director of educational research & development
administration

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الموافق 19 / 4 / 2014 م

الرقم : وت / 1235
مرفقات /

Mr. supervisor of al assma education region

Respected greetings,,,

Subject: facilitating a task

Please facilitate the task of the student /Fatimah al-naser registered in the PhD's degree at the university of Glasgow for completing a study entitled (motivating and preparing youth in Kuwait for successful transitions to employment).

Therefore, please facilitate the abovementioned student's task by applying the research tool (questionnaire) in the schools that followed your educational region during the year 2014/2015.

With all respect

Director of educational research & development administration

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أ. إبتسام الحاي
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التاريخ / / 14 هـ
الموافق 4 / 9 / 13 م

الرقم : وت / 1232
مرفقات /

Mr. supervisor of farwaniya education region

Respected greetings,,,

Subject: facilitating a task

Please facilitate the task of the student /Fatimah al-naser registered in the PhD's degree at the university of Glasgow for completing a study entitled (**motivating and preparing youth in Kuwait for successful transitions to employment**).

Therefore, please facilitate the abovementioned student's task by applying the research tool (**questionnaire**) in the schools that followed your educational region during the year **2014/2015**.

With all respect

Director of educational research & development administration

أ. إبتسام الحاي
مدير إدارة البحوث التربوية

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إدارة البحوث والتطوير التربوي

التاريخ / / 14 هـ
الموافق 23 / 9 / 2014 م

الرقم: وت / 1234
مرفقات /

Mr. supervisor of Mubarak alkabeer education region

Respected greetings,,,

Subject: facilitating a task

Please facilitate the task of the student /Fatimah al-naser registered in the PhD's degree at the university of Glasgow for completing a study entitled (motivating and preparing youth in Kuwait for successful transitions to employment).

Therefore, please facilitate the abovementioned student's task by applying the research tool (questionnaire) in the schools that followed your educational region during the year 2014/2015.

With all respect

Director of educational research & development administration

أ. إبتسام الحاي
مديرة إدارة البحوث التربوية

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الموافق 19 / 4 / 2014 م

الرقم: وت / 1233
مرفقات /

Mr. supervisor of alahmadi education region

Respected greetings,,

Subject: facilitating a task

Please facilitate the task of the student /Fatimah al-naser registered in the PhD's degree at the university of Glasgow for completing a study entitled (motivating and preparing youth in Kuwait for successful transitions to employment).

Therefore, please facilitate the abovementioned student's task by applying the research tool (questionnaire) in the schools that followed your educational region during the year 2014/2015.

With all respect

Director of educational research & development administration

أ.إبتسام الحاي
مدير إدارة البحوث التربوية

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P.O.Box :16222 - QADSI AH - 35853- KUWAIT- Tel. : 4842404 - 4838321 - Fax : 4837909 - 4842404

Appendix Nine: Application form for ethical approval

For office use only:



University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

COLLEGE ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR NON CLINICAL RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

EAP - APPLICATION FORM FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

This application form should be typed, and submitted electronically. **All questions must be answered.** "Not applicable" is a satisfactory answer where appropriate.

(Instructions: In Word format, click on shaded area within box to enter text, boxes will expand as required).

Applications should be submitted **at least one month in advance** of the intended start date for the data collection to allow time for review and any amendments that may be required.

1 Applicant Details

1.1 Project Title Motivating and Preparing Youth in Kuwait for Successful Transitions to Employment
1.2 Name of Applicant FATIMAH ALNASER
1.3 School/Subject/Cluster/RKT Group School of Social and Political Sciences
1.4 Student I.D. or Staff Number 1011074a

2 This Project is:

Staff Research Project <input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate Research <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Submit application through Research Ethics System https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/login/
Postgraduate Taught <input type="checkbox"/>	Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/>	Submit application via email to School Ethics Administrator: see College ethics website for contact http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/ethics/whotocontact/
(Programme Convenors Only) Full Course Project within a PGT or UG Programme <input type="checkbox"/>		Submit application via email to School Ethics Administrator: see College ethics website for contact http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/ethics/whotocontact/

2.2 Programme Title: Student applicants only

PhD in Sociology of Education (Postgraduate Research)

2.3 Ethical Risks: Application will NOT be considered if this section is blank

Supervisors should complete section **2.3a** Staff applicants should complete section **2.3b**

EAP October 2013

2.3a COMMENTS FROM SUPERVISOR: (All Student Applications) Comment on the research ethics risks involved in the project

I do not consider there to be any ethical risks with this piece of research as access to the schools has been granted by the Department of Education in Kuwait. If this research had been undertaken in Scotland parental permission would have been required before Fatimah would have been permitted to distribute the questionnaire. In Kuwait, there is a cultural difference where young people do not require parental permission before completing the questionnaire. The interviews with employers will take place in a public location and will inform a family member of her location so the student will be safe.

I have checked this application and approve it for submission for review to the Ethics Committee.

Supervisor's NameFred Cartmel..... Date29/05/2014.....

Risk Assessment: (UG and PGT applications only). Does this application qualify for a low risk review or fall within the applicable programme parameters? Please refer to **Low Risk Research Guidance** on College ethics webpages for clarification. <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/ethics/forms/>

YES NO

2.3b RISK ASSESSMENT FROM STAFF APPLICANT: (All Staff Applications) Comment on the research ethics risks involved in the project

2.4 All Researcher(s) including research assistants and transcribers (where appropriate)

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email (This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)
Alnaser	Fatimah	07907423022	I011074A@student.gla.ac.uk

All Supervisor(s) Principal First (where applicable)

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email (This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)
P: Chief Adviser Cartmel	Fred	Tel: +44 (0)141 330 6870 Tel: +44 (0)141 330 5359 Fax: +44 (0)141 330 3554	Fred.Cartmel@glasgow.ac.uk
Professor Furlong	Andy	Tel: +44 (0)141 330 4667 Fax: +44 (0) 330 1821	Andy.Furlong@glasgow.ac.uk

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2.5 External funding details

Note. If this project is externally funded, please provide the name of the sponsor or funding body.

Sponsor/Funding Body: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in Kuwait

3 Project Details

3.1a Start date for your data collection and end date of data collection involving human subjects.
Refers to data collection for the research covered in this application.

From: (dd/m/yyyy) <u>01/09/2014</u>	To: (dd/m/yyyy) <u>30/ 08/2015</u>
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3.1b Proposed end date for your research project. This should be when you expect to have completed the full project and published the results - (e.g expected date of award of PhD, book publication date)

To: (dd/m/yyyy) 01/09/2016

3.2 Justification for the Research

Why is this research significant to the wider community? Outline the reasons which lead you to be satisfied that the possible benefits to be gained from the project justify any risks or discomfort involved.

Young people are the most important group in their community, which depends on them to improve different areas of life: economic, social, cultural and political. However, young people in Kuwait need more motivation and occupational inspiration; the education systems, should provide them with opportunities to take responsibility and develop skills related to the real world of work. Teachers and parents should be acting as facilitators, pointing the way for students to develop their sense of individual responsibility and personal initiative. Equipping young people with these skills is very important, especially at the current time. the government jobs sector in GCC states has already reached saturation point. and the competition for work in the private sector in Kuwait has become fierce, employees in the private sector must be adept at problem solving, agility, brainstorming and creative thinking. Unfortunately, most school systems in the Gulf states do not fully prepare students to meet these needs. Therefore, the education systems in Kuwait should be aware of the demands of employment (in both private and public sectors) and tailor themselves accordingly. Hence the importance of this research, which aims to identify to what extent is the educational system prepares secondary school students for building their future and navigating their careers, how motivation is encouraged in the family system as well as discover social and cultural barriers that hinder the motivation of young people.

3.3 Research Methodology and Data Collection

3.3a Method of data collection *(Tick as many as apply)*

Face to face or telephone interview <i>(attach a copy of the interview themes. This does not need to be an exact list of questions but does need to provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to form a clear view of the project and its ethical implications.)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Focus group (provide details: themes or questions. This does not need to be an exact list of questions but does need to provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to form a clear view of the project and its ethical implications. Also information on recording format)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio or video-recording interviewees or events (with consent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire (attach a copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online questionnaire (provide the address/ or paper copy if not yet available online) http://	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participant observation (attach an observation proforma)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other methodology (please provide details – maximum 50 words)	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.3b Research Methods

Please explain the reason for the particular chosen method, the estimated time commitment required of participants and how the data will be analysed (Use no more than 250 words).

To achieve the goals of the study, the point of view of secondary school students (aged 16 to 18 years) will be investigated. The study will use a descriptive research method, in common with most educational studies. This approach seeks to reveal the nature of the relationships within the educational social phenomena and provides an objective framework for the movement of educational phenomena. It stems from feeling the problem and identifying it, then building hypotheses, gathering information and, finally, testing these hypotheses in a scientific manner.

As for the search tool, since this study seeks knowledge about many views and opinions of students, it is appropriate to use questionnaires to cover a large sample of participants and thus to contribute to increasing the reliability of the research. Moreover, the use of the questionnaire helps participants to express themselves and answer more freely without identifying themselves. For these reasons, the quantitative method of using a questionnaire has been chosen as the most suitable methodology and then the data will be analysed by SPSS. The questionnaire will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. In addition to the questionnaires, up to 20 face to face interviews will be conducted with employees from both public and private sectors to discuss on a range of issues relating to Kuwaiti educational system and the motivations of young people towards working. The total time needed per interview will be approximately 30 minutes.

3.4 Confidentiality & Data Handling

3.4a Will the research involve: *Tick all that apply

Participants consent to being named?	<input type="checkbox"/>
De-identified samples or data (i.e. a reversible process whereby identifiers are replaced by a code, to which the researcher retains the key, in a secure location?)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject being referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anonymised samples or data (i.e. an irreversible process whereby identifiers are removed from data and replaced	<input type="checkbox"/>

by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers. It is then impossible to identify the individual to whom the sample of information relates)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete anonymity of participants (i.e. researchers will not meet, or know the identity of participants, as participants are part of a random sample and are required to return responses with no form of personal identification)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any other methods of protecting the privacy of participants? (e.g. use of direct quotes with specific, written permission only; use of real name with specific, written permission only): <i>provide details:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.4b Which of the following methods of assuring confidentiality of data will be implemented?
**Tick all that apply*

Note: The more ethically sensitive the data, the more secure will the conditions of storage be expected to be.

Location of Storage Storage at University of Glasgow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stored at another site (<i>provide details, including address</i>) While I am in Kuwait the data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only by me, in my home. (Address: Kuwait City, Adan, Block 6, Street 18, House No.12).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paper Data to be kept in locked filing cabinets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Data and identifiers to be kept in separate, locked filing cabinets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic Access to computer files to be available by password only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Any other method of securing confidentiality of data in storage: <i>provide details:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.5 Access to Data

3.5a Access by named researcher(s) and, where applicable, supervisor(s), examiner(s), research assistants, transcribers

3.5b Access by people **OTHER** than named researcher(s)/Supervisor(s), examiner(s), research assistants, transcribers

Please explain by whom and for what purpose:

3.5c Retention and Disposal of Personal Data

**(personal data means data which relate to a living individual who can be identified –
 (a) From those data, or*

(b) From those data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of, the data controller, and includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller or any other person in respect of the individual." Data Protection Act 1998 c.29 Part 1 Section 1

The 5th Principle of the Data Protection Act (1998) states that personal data must not be kept for longer than is necessary based on the purpose for which it has been collected. Please explain and as appropriate justify your proposals for retention and/or disposal of any **personal** data to be collected.

Where appropriate (and it normally will be appropriate) explain **when** and **how** the data you have collected will be destroyed.

Any personal information will be destroyed within 3 months after the data collection by using paper shredders for written data and deleting electronic files.

3.5d Retention and Disposal of Research Data

(For Postgraduate and Staff Research University of Glasgow Research Guidelines expect data to be retained for 10 years after completion of the project) Please see University Code of Good Practice in Research for guidance, <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/postgraduateresearch/pgrcodeofpractice/>

Please explain and as appropriate justify your proposals for retention and/or disposal of **research** data to be collected.

Data will be destroyed at the end of the research (01/10/2017) by deleting electronic files and using a cross-cut shredder for paper records.

3.6 Dissemination of Results.

3.6a Results will be made available to participants as: (Tick all that apply)

Note: Intended method of dissemination ought normally to take account of the age, capacities and situation of participants.

Written summary of results to all <input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of final manuscript (e.g. thesis, article, etc) presented if requested <input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal presentation to all (information session, debriefing etc) <input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation to representative participants (e.g. CEO, school principal) <input type="checkbox"/>
Dissertation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other or None of the Above <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Please explain</i>

3.6b Results will be made available to peers and/or colleagues as: (Tick all that apply)

Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/>	Journal articles <input type="checkbox"/>
Thesis (e.g. PhD), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Book <input type="checkbox"/>
Submission <input type="checkbox"/>	Conference Papers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p>Other or None of the Above <i>Please explain</i> The research results will be sent to educational authorities in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs in Kuwait for them to consider the issues raised and to satisfy professional aspirations.</p>	
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3.7 Participants

3.7a Target Participant Group (Please indicate the targeted participant group by ticking all boxes that apply)

Students or Staff of the University <input type="checkbox"/>	Adults (over 18 years old and competent to give consent) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children/legal minors (under 18 years old) <input type="checkbox"/>	Adults (over 18 years who may not be competent to give consent) <input type="checkbox"/>
Young people aged 16-17 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

3.7b Will the research *specifically* target participants with mental health difficulties or a disability?

YES NO

If YES, please explain the necessity of involving these individuals as research participants

3.7c Number of Participants (if relevant give details of different age groups/activities involved)

Questionnaires will be distributed to students from 8 secondary schools (which will be around 1,200 students aged between 16- 18 years old, around 150 students from each school), taking into account the factors of gender (male and female schools) and the school's location (rural and urban) to ensure that the study includes participants from different social classes.

In addition to the questionnaires, in order to seek Citizens' opinions about Kuwaiti educational system and the motivations of young people towards working, up to 20 employees will be interviewed from both public and private sectors.

3.7d (i) Explain how you intend to recruit participants.

Questionnaires will be distributed to students from eight secondary schools (totalling 1,200 students aged between 16-18, i.e. around 150 students from each school), taking into account gender (male and female schools) and the school's location (rural and urban) to ensure that the study includes participants from different social classes.

Participants (students) will be recruited through their school; I will select classrooms from each grade randomly (two to three classrooms from the three grades, depending on the number of students in each class in each

school). I will ask the school administration to give me approximately 30-45 minutes for each class to complete the questionnaires. I will administer the survey in the absence of teachers while students answer the questionnaire to maintain the confidentiality of information and make sure they express themselves freely. Note: I have received verbal approval from the Ministry of Education to access the schools and be given time to complete the questionnaires; the written permission will be attached later.

Employees from the public sector will be recruited via the Civil Service Commission (which is responsible for employment in all government agencies in Kuwait). Employees from the private sector will be recruited via the National Labor Support (responsible for financial support to all employees in the private sector). I will select the employees randomly from a list provided by the Civil Service Commission and the National Labor Support, taking into account the diversity in the nature of jobs and the age of young employees (18-32). I will contact employees by telephone or email, informing that I will send the research results to the official educational authorities and the Ministry of Youth Affairs in Kuwait. The prospective respondents will be written to, with a copy of the plain language statement. Respondents will be encouraged to contact me if they have any question about the research. The consent form will be signed at the same time as the interview is held. All employees will be interviewed in public libraries in Kuwait City, which gives them more freedom to express their views and ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Note: I have changed the answer in (3.7f) about the location of interviews with employees.

3.7d (ii) Incentives

If payment or any other incentive (such as a gift or free services) will be made to any participants please specify the source and the amount of payment to be made and/or the source, nature and where applicable the approximate monetary value of the gift or free service to be used. Please explain the justification for offering payment or other incentive.

No incentives

3.7e Dependent Relationship

Are any of the participants in a dependent relationship with any of the investigators, particularly those involved in recruiting for or conducting the project? (For example, a school pupil is in a dependent relationship with their teacher. Other examples of a dependent relationship include student/lecturer; patient/doctor; employee/employer)

YES NO

If YES, explain the relationship and the steps to be taken by the investigators to ensure that the subject's participation is purely voluntary and not influenced by the relationship in any way.

3.7f Location of Research

University of Glasgow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside Location Provide details of outside locations, including as much information as possible.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Questionnaires will be distributed to students in their classrooms in a number of government schools in different Kuwaiti areas, taking into account that teachers will not be present during answering the questions	

of questionnaire to ensure confidentiality. -The interviews will be conducted with employees in public libraries in Kuwait City.	
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4 Permission to Access Participants

4.1a Will subjects be identified from information held by another party?
 (eg. a Local Authority, or a Head Teacher, or a doctor or hospital, other organisation or Glasgow University class lists)

YES NO

If YES describe the arrangements you intend to make to gain access to this information including, where appropriate, any other ethics committee that will be applied to. Permission is being sought from the Ministry of Education for access to students; the Ministry will then provide me with a form (Facilitating a Task), which authorises me to have access to any school throughout Kuwait. Then I will select eight secondary schools randomly and I will ask the school administration to give a time for distributing the questionnaires to students in their classrooms. In relation to employees, I will gain access to them via lists provided by the Civil Service Commission and National Labor Support . Since I will not interview employees within their organisations, I will not need permission from their employers or other parties.

4.1b Permissions/Access

Permission is usually required to gain access to research participants within an organisation (e.g. school, Local Authority, Voluntary Organisation, Overseas institution)

Is this type of permission **applicable** to this application? YES NO

If Yes:

Is evidence of this permission **provided with** this application?

YES NO

OR is it to follow?

YES NO

(If this is the case, this should be forwarded to Ethics Administrator as soon as it is available.)

4.1c Does this application involve the survey of University of Glasgow students?

YES NO

If YES, separate permission to survey students needs to be obtained prior to any such survey being undertaken. Normally this permission should be sought from the **appropriate authority after** ethical approval has been granted. *(See application form notes for detail). Once obtained, a copy of this permission should be forwarded to the Ethics Administrator.*

4.1d Is this application being submitted to another ethics committee, or has it been previously submitted to another ethics committee?

YES NO

(If YES, please provide name and location of the ethics committee and the result of the application.)

5 Informed Consent

If you require information on the age of legal capacity please refer to the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/50/contents>

5.1a Have you attached your Information Sheet (also known as Plain Language Statement (PLS)) for participants?

The Information Sheet is written information in plain language that you will provide to participants to explain the project and invite their participation. **Contact details for Supervisor** if applicable and **College Ethics Officer MUST** be included. Please note that a copy of this information must be given to the participant to keep.

YES NO

If NO please explain

5.1b How will informed consent by individual participants or guardians be evidenced?

Note: In normal circumstances it will be expected that written evidence of informed consent will be obtained and retained, and that a formal consent form will be used: A copy of which should be provided.

*If written evidence of informed consent is not to be obtained a **substantial** justification of why not should be provided.*

(Note: Please ensure that you have checked the box for all types of consent to be used, eg signed consent form for interviews/ implied for questionnaires.)

Signed consent form <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recorded verbal consent <input type="checkbox"/>
Implied by return of survey <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Provide details</i>

Justification if written evidence of informed consent is **not** to be obtained and retained:

6 Monitoring

Describe how the project will be monitored to ensure that the research is being carried out as approved (e.g. give details of regular meetings/email contact).

I meet with my both supervisors at monthly interval and they comment on research material submitted electronically.

7 Health and Safety

Does the project have any health & safety implications?

YES NO

If YES, please outline the arrangements which are in place to minimise these risks

8 Insurance

Have you checked that this research does not come under the exclusions to the University insurance cover for research?

YES NO

The University insurance cover is restricted in certain, specific circumstances, e.g., the use of hazardous materials, work overseas, research into pregnancy and conception and numbers of participants in excess of 5000. All such projects must be referred to Research Strategy and Innovation Office before ethical approval is sought. Advice or authorisation given must be included with this application.

Please visit:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/rsio/forstaffcampusonly/researchgovernanceframeworkandclinicaltrials/section4insuranceandindemnity/> for information.

9 Protection of Vulnerable Groups and Disclosure

Does this project require PVG clearance?

YES NO

If Yes, evidence that this has been obtained **MUST** be provided with this application.

If application for PVG registration is currently in progress, please provide details here:

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 came into effect on 28 February 2011. This replaced the previous Disclosure Scotland checking system for individuals who work with children and/or protected adults. The University is a Registered Body under this legislation.

Please consult the University Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme webpages

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/humanresources/policies/p-z/protectionofvulnerablegroupsscheme/> for guidance.

10 UK and Scottish Government Legislation

Have you made yourself familiar with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002?

YES NO

If NO please explain

(See Application Guidance Notes for further information. In addition visit <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/dpfooffice/> for guidance and advice on the Act).

Please ensure you have read the [eight basic Principles underlying the Data Protection Act 1998 \[DPA\]](#) that protect the rights and freedoms of individuals with respect to the processing of their personal data.

The Freedom of Information Act 2002 ["FOI"] provides a general right of access to most of the recorded information that is held by the University. The Act sets out a number of exemptions/exceptions to this right of access.

11 Declarations by Researcher(s) and Supervisor(s)

The application will NOT be accepted if this section is blank

- The information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.
- I have read the University's current human ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with the guidelines, the University's Code of Conduct for Research and any other condition laid down by the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee and the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

(Full details of the University's ethics guidelines are available at: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/research/aimsassessmentandpolicies/ourpolicies/ethicshomepage/>)

- I and my co-researcher(s) or supporting staff have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached application and to deal effectively with any emergencies and contingencies related to the research that may arise.
- I understand that no research work involving human participants or data collection can commence until ethical approval has been given by the either the School Ethics Forum (UG & PGT students only) or the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee (for PGR students and Staff).

This section MUST be completed to confirm acceptance of Code of Conduct. If there is no scanned signature then please type the names and date into the boxes below.

	Signature	Date
Researcher (All applicants)	Fatimah	20/03/2014
Principal Supervisor (Where applicable)	Fred Cartmel	25/03/2014

End of Application Form

Applications should be submitted electronically as follows:

➤ **Postgraduate Research Student (PGR) and Staff applications submission:**

Please upload the completed form, along with any other required documents by logging in to the Research Ethics

System at - <https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/login/> this will then be considered by the College Research Ethics Committee.

PGR students are required to upload their application which is then forwarded to their named supervisor for approval and submission to the Ethics Committee.

➤ **Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Student (UG & PGT) applications:**

Should be sent to their **School Ethics Forum (SEF)** via email to their local administrative contact.

Please see contact details on College ethics website. <http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/ethics/>

For these student applications, there are two options for submitting Supervisor approval:

1 The student e-mails the application to their supervisor, who checks it and submits it to their local SEF contact (UG and PGT only)

Or

2 The student e-mails the application to the SEF contact and the supervisor sends a separate e-mail to the appropriate administrative point of contact giving the details of the application and confirming approval for the submission.

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