

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
NEW FACTORS IN REGIONAL POLITICS

by

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The events of 1973 have had a dramatic effect on the demography of the Middle East, the implications of which are not yet fully appreciated in either academic or policymaking circles. The conventional view of the area as harboring countries with a common language and religion, a similar culture, and a shared history contributed to an image which tended to emphasize the homogeneity of the region, rather than the distinctiveness of its demographic characteristics. The rise in oil prices has emphasized the differences between rich and poor countries, but these differences are only the tip of an iceberg -- of demographic, technological, and economic differentials

This paper highlights recent changes in the demography of the region, most notably the extensive and large-scale movements of labor to the oil-rich countries from countries that are less fortunate in resource endowments. These movements are characterized by complicated webs and flows of migration, the effects of which are both political and economic in nature.<sup>1</sup> In this region, population shapes the parameters of politics and, in turn, politics determines the extent to which population movements across national boundaries will be allowed to continue. In the last analysis, the economic determinants of migration will respond to political interventions and to policy responses. Unless these trends are recognized, their full implications will be only dimly understood.

Toward this end, we review briefly the traditional features of the population characteristics in the Middle East, noting trends in governmental approaches to population problems, and then describing the major aspects of

## II. TRADITIONAL FEATURES OF REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHY

Popular views of the Middle East tend to overlook sharp differences in demographic patterns and in the movement of population across national boundaries. So, too, the great heterogeneity among these countries in terms of population size, composition, and distribution, combined with differences in density, resource availability, and level of knowledge and skills, remains insufficiently recognized, both here and abroad. It is precisely these differentials that provide the demographic context for political changes, and have shaped the patterns of inter-Arab politics.

Dramatic differences among the Middle East countries in terms of resource availability (as reflected in summary form by GNP per capita indicating oil money) reinforce differentials in population size. Indeed, the resource-rich countries are generally those with the smallest populations. This incongruous situation has tended to reinforce and consolidate patterns of migration from the more populous and resource-poor countries to those that are rich in resources but have relatively small populations. And when differentials in knowledge and skills are also taken into account -- the high-population and resource-poor countries having a higher level of knowledge and skills -- the movement of population across national boundaries approximates the conventional idiom of "push and pull" -- "push" in that skilled workers are almost forced to the wealthy countries in order to find jobs with their skills and "pull" in that all workers are attracted to the wealthy countries because of higher wages and greater employment opportunities.

The most pervasive difference among the countries of the Middle East is not so much their fertility rate -- they are all relatively high --

but their population size, the characteristics of the labor force, and the patterns of population movement. It is these latter variables that place fertility rates in proper context and that, together, provide the demographic parameters for political development. Table 1 presents some demographic and economic characteristics for the countries of the region.

The differences among the countries of the region in population size are well recognized. These differences constitute a focal point of the region's demography, and shape conventional descriptions of the more recent changes. Among the Arab countries, Egypt is the most populous, a factor that has contributed to its traditional role of leadership in the area. Algeria and Morocco are the next largest countries, although considerably smaller than Egypt by 20 million each. In 1977, only two other countries exceeded 10 million, and four registered populations of less than 1 million. Iran, Turkey, and Israel, the three non-Arab countries of the region, have distinctive demographic characteristics that elude any ready categorization. Iran is roughly similar to Egypt in its demographic features, although the differences in resource endowments overshadow the similarities in population. Turkey differs from both Iran and Egypt in its long tradition of encouraging labor movement to western Europe. Israel's composition is such that it warrants separate treatment, and the policy issues faced by the leadership in approaching population problems are also distinctive.

The least populated countries of the region have, traditionally, been in the Gulf area. The difficulties associated with prevailing estimates make it difficult to describe with any certainty the conventional features of demography in the Gulf. Except for Bahrain, they are all sparsely

Table 1

Some Demographic and Economic Characteristics

<u>Country</u>	<u>1977 Population Size</u> (in millions)	<u>Crude Birth Rate</u> (per thousand)	<u>1970-77 Population</u> <u>Growth Rate</u> (%)	<u>1977 Pop. Density</u> (Pop./sq. km.)	<u>Urban</u> (%)
Algeria	17.91	47.8 (1975)	3.2	8	50 (1975)
Bahrain	.27	30.0 (1970-75)	2.9	452	78.1 (1972)
Egypt	38.74	37.7 (1975)	2.1	39	44 (1976)
Iran	34.27	45.3 (1970-75)	2.6	21	44 (1975)
Iraq	11.91	48.1 (1970-75)	3.3	27	64.8 (1976)
Israel	3.61	28.1 (1976)	3.2	174	81.9 (1974)
Jordan	2.78 (1976)	42.5 (1976)	3.2 (1970-76)	28 (1976)	42.0 (1974)
Kuwait	1.13	47.1 (1970-75)	5.9	71	22.1 (1965)
Lebanon	3.06	39.8 (1970-75)	3.1	294	60.1 (1970)
Libya	2.54 (1976)	45.0 (1970-75)	4.1 (1970-76)	1 (1976)	29.8 (1974)
Morocco	18.24	46.2 (1970-75)	2.9	41	38 (1975)
Oman	.82	34.1 (1970)	3.6 (1971-77)	4	
Qatar	.20*	51.9 (1970)	12.7	18	
Saudi Arabia	9.52	49.5 (1970-75)	3.0	4	21 (1970)
South Yemen	1.80	49.6 (1970-75)	3.2	6	33.3 (1973)
Sudan	16.95	47.8 (1970-75)	2.4	7	20.4 (1976)
Syria	7.84	45.4 (1970-75)	3.2	42	46.6 (1976)
Tunisia	6.07	39.4 (1975)	2.4	37	47 (1975)
Turkey	42.13	39.6 <sup>+</sup> (1970-75)	2.7	54	44.5 (1976)
United Arab Emirates	.694* (1976)	38.0 (1970)	25.5 (1971-76)	8 (1976)	
Yemen	7.08	49.6 (1970-75)	2.9	36	9 (1970)

Table 1 (cont.)

<u>Country</u>	<u>1976 or 1977 GNP/Capita at Current Prices in US dollars</u>	<u>1976 GDP Derived from Agriculture (%)</u>	<u>Growth Rate of Real GNP or GDP/Capita: 1970-77 (%)<sup>#</sup></u>
Algeria	858 (1976 GDP)	8	7.4 (1970-76 GDP)
Bahrain	2538 (1976)		20.3 (WBA)
Egypt	484 (GDP)	30 (1975)	4.4 (GDP)
Iran	2214	9	14.9
Iraq	1385 (1976)	7 (1975)	15.3 (1970-76)
Israel	2501	7	1.0
Jordan	591 (1976)	15 (1975)	0.7 (1970-76)
Kuwait	12072 (1976)	0 (1975)	12.0 (1972-76)
Lebanon	1183 (1974)	9 (1973)	NA
Libya	6053 (1976)	3 (1975)	16.3 (1970-76)
Morocco	542	24 (1975)	0.1
Oman	3082 (GDP)	2 (1975)	34.0 (1971-77 GDP)
Qatar	10970 (1975)		-0.4 (WBA)
Saudi Arabia	5787 (GDP)	1	9.8 (GDP)
South Yemen	274 (1976)	19 (1970)	-5.8 (1969-75 WBA)
Sudan	354 (GDP)	22	5.9 (GDP)
Syria	844 (GDP)	39	2.5 (GDP)
Tunisia	833	17	5.7
Turkey	1055	27	4.3
United Arab Emirates	13991 (1976)		1.6 (WBA)
Yemen	224 (1976)	61 (1973)	1.0 (1972-76)

Table 1 (cont.)

Notes:

\*Alternative estimates of the populations of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are 98,000 and 240,000 respectively. These estimates apparently exclude immigrants. We chose to use the higher estimates because the populations of other countries are either known or believed to include immigrants (Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in particular). The population of 200,000 for Qatar comes from the World Bank Atlas for 1977. The population of 240,000 for the UAE comes from The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1979.

<sup>+</sup> Other sources estimate the crude birth rate for Turkey to be 32 per thousand

<sup>#</sup> The growth rate of real GNP per capita was calculated from International Financial Statistics (May 1978 and February 1979). In order to adjust the GNP figures to real (1975) values, we divided the current GNP figure by the wholesale price index (item 63). If the wholesale price index was not given we used the consumer price index (item 64). The figures marked "WBA" come from the 1977 World Book Atlas and are 1970-75 real GNP per capita growth rates.

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World Bank, World Bank Atlas, Washington, D.C., 1977.

populated with low rates of density and low rates of urbanization. Their individual demographic profiles are dramatically different from those of large, more urban countries, and the policy problems associated with demographic issues are, therefore, fundamentally different.

Table 1 presents estimates of population size in the latest year for which mid-year estimates are currently available. For the sake of convenience, the countries are listed in alphabetical order, although at least three distinct groupings are discernable. First, of course, are the high population countries of Egypt, Iran, Turkey and, to a lesser extent, Algeria and Morocco. Second are the mid-range countries in terms of population size, such as Iraq, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen and, if the estimate is believable, Saudi Arabia as well (subject to appropriate caveats regarding the basis on which this figure is derived). Third are the Gulf-region countries with small populations, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, South Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan, roughly the same size, are countries with distinctive demographic conditions resulting from their particular historical situations. This classification is useful only for indicating the range of differences in size; but population size is only a point of departure, whose implications can be understood only with reference to the resource endowments and economic characteristics of the individual countries.

Rates of population increase for selected years, also presented in Table 1, are not uniformly due to natural increase, but also to patterns of migration. In Egypt, Iran, Algeria, Morocco and, to some extent, Libya, these rates represent the differences between live births and deaths. For



they neither extensively export nor import labor (Tunisia, Iraq, and Morocco).

In addition there has been some major movement of Palestinians within the region and an inflow of Pakistanis and Indians, primarily to the states in the Gulf area.

The traditional demographic characteristics of the Middle East countries reflect a variety of interrelated considerations -- high fertility, declining mortality, changing rates of population growth, differential size and patterns of movement -- and few generalizations can capture the overall patterns in the area. There is some indication, however, that the prevailing trend is consistent with the theory of demographic transition despite the ambiguity of the evidence and the ambiguity of the "theory". This "theory" stipulates that fertility declines are associated with economic development, and that as countries become more urbanized, more industrialized and more "developed", their fertility rates will decline accordingly.<sup>2</sup> Its usefulness lies perhaps more as a description of historical trends in the developed states, thus alerting observers to anticipate trends in developing countries, than as a logically consistent statement of aggregate demographic behavior.

With placing undue emphasis on the transition perspective for interpreting recent trends in the Middle East, it is revealing to note some underlying trends that are obscured by observations in Table 1 for one point in time. In all countries of the Middle East, mortality rates have declined over the past 20 years. A change in crude births is discernable, but the trend is uneven, although the differences between birth and death rates remain extensive, due largely to more rapidly declining mortality rates. None

of this ought to obscure the prevalence of persistently high rates of natural increase. Finally, it must be stressed that the traditional demographic characteristics in the Middle East region provided the basis for social and economic interdependencies, the nature of which were only barely discernable prior to 1973, and have come into sharper focus since then. The movement of population across national boundaries is the key to this interdependence. Population policies must now be extended beyond fertility control to the regulation of interstate migration as well.

The following section reviews governmental responses to demographic problems during the decades of the 1950's and 1960's. It is designed to provide a basis for indicating the extent of demographic changes since 1973, and the attendant reactions of the national governments.

III. GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES TO POPULATION TRENDS -- PAST TRENDS AND FUTURE PROBLEMS

The four types of population profiles characterizing the traditional features of the region's demography prior to 1973 reflect different definitions of population problems, with different relationships to social and economic problems and differing impacts for development planning as well as differing emphases on internal or external migration.

Countries from Group 1 have defined the population policies almost exclusively in terms of fertility control (Egypt), although this is generally accompanied by a concern for rural-urban migration. In some cases, there is also an awareness of the effects of fertility on the changing composition of the population (Lebanon and Jordan are the dramatic examples). However, this exclusive focus is currently being questioned, mainly in Egypt, and there is a new concern for the other aspects of the country's demography, such as migration across national borders.

Countries in Group 2 did not regard high fertility as particularly problematic; their key development issue pertained to the dearth of manpower and the long-term implications of an alien component in the total population. Developing means of curtailing natural increase was viewed as neither appropriate nor relevant. Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have no family planning programs and except for Libya's pronatalist policy there are no formal population policies other than those pertaining to regulating migration. Yet, persistently high fertility rates will invariably pose those government with developmental as well as distributional problems.

Countries in Group 3 viewed their population problem largely as one

of high fertility rates. However, the governments in question tend to define that problem as a developmental one, and not exclusively in demographic terms. Algeria takes the view that any solution to the demographic problem lies in socio-economic development and not in family planning activities, although it does have a family planning program. Turkey has adopted voluntary planning of births as a national policy, but there is only a modest government effort in that direction. Both countries regarded the migration of labor to Europe as an integral aspect of their labor policies, but neither viewed external migration as central to their migration policies.

Countries in Group 4 have traditionally regarded high fertility as defining the central nature of their population problems, and birth-limiting policies are adopted for that purpose. The development programs of both Morocco and Tunisia comprise a strong rural development component, and controlling fertility may come to be regarded as an integral aspect of such development. Although Morocco's population program is largely in the nature of providing information and supporting services, there are some attempts to manipulate incentives, and to develop supporting social laws. By contrast, in the case of Tunisia, fertility control programs have been imbedded in a broader approach to social change, centering primarily around the modification of legal tenets affecting birth, marriage, abortion, inheritance provisions, and so forth. In this respect, Tunisia has gone farther than any other countries of the Middle East to intervene in the social processes that encourage a high birth rate.

All four groups of countries adopted policies that in fact have influenced the characteristics of their population. In almost all cases,

there remains an unclear perspective on the full implications of demographic trends, and the lack of clarity as to which population characteristics are, or ought to be, regarded as a problem. Table 2 presents, in summary form, the official policies pertaining to population in 16 Middle East countries. Prior to 1973, the emphasis has been overwhelmingly on fertility control.

As with other regions of the world, the relative isolation of population policy from economic policymaking or foreign policy is due, first, to the exclusion of demographic influences from economic planning, a consideration that is shared by almost all countries of the world; second, to the prevailing ambiguities regarding the actual impacts of demographic policies upon economic or foreign policy processes; and third, to the political sensitivity of formally seeking to manipulate demographic characteristics and the common preferences of governments for avoiding that which might unnecessarily contaminate the minimum consensus required for the formulation of development policies. Again, none of these factors are idiosyncratic to the Middle East. What is distinctive about the area, however, is an emerging recognition of the interdependence of population and development problems, and new interest in influencing labor force characteristics and regulating manpower movements.

A closer look at the population policies of one country exemplifying each of the four demographic profiles prior to 1973 may reveal further the differences in demographic characteristics and traditional policy responses.

This review summarizes the policy approaches in the regional equilibrium of the past two decades. The events of 1973 disturbed the equilibrium, contributed to changes in population profiles and, by extension, in government policies toward population. Four countries represent well the demography

Table 2

Government Policies and Public Postures on Population Growth and Migration

Country	1977 Population in Millions	Government Position A, B, or C *	Year Adopted	Comment
Algeria	17.91	B	1971	Solution to the problem lies in social and economic development, but the government supports family planning for the purpose of "child spacing." With assistance from international agencies, plans are to reinforce the four centers now in operation and to expand the maternal and child health system through a training program to meet "spacing" needs. In 1973, the government suspended all new worker emigration to France.
Bahrain	.27	B	1974	In 1974, the government expressed its intention to launch family planning through the Ministry of Health. Immigration policy is liberal, i.e., it is easy to obtain work permits, but citizenship laws and requirements for naturalization are very rigid.
Egypt	38.74	A	1965	The presidential decree of 1965 established a national policy to reduce the population growth rate. The target adopted in the Ten-Year Plan (1973-82) has been to reduce the crude birth rate by one point per year for ten years. The government encourages emigration through bilateral agreements to export workers and through legislation that has removed disincentives to migrate. The Third Five-Year Plan (1978-82) anticipates an increase in migration and actually makes provision for training facilities to foster migration
Iran	34.27	A	1967	To facilitate socio-economic growth, the official policy is to reduce population growth rates from 3.2% to 1% over 20 years. Legislation pending to repeal restrictive abortion laws. Literacy, Health and Development Corps (military conscripts), Women's Corps, and Armed Forces health personnel are trained to work in the program. University and high school curricula include family planning materials. No official policy toward migration.
Iraq	11.91	B	1972	Although Iraq has no population policy, with the assistance of W.H.O., the Iraqi Family Planning Association provides services in Ministry of Health Clinics. The Association was founded in 1971. All types of contraceptives are imported duty free. No formal policy toward migration.

Table 2 (cont.)

Government Policies and Public Postures on Population Growth and Migration

Country	1977 Population in Millions	Government Position A, B, or C	Year Adopted	Comment
Israel	3.61	C	--	No official policy on population, but unquestionably pronatalist. Under the Law of Return of 1950, every Jew who enters Israel with an immigrant visa acquires automatic Israeli citizenship, unless the immigrant declares a desire not to be naturalized. Non-Jews are not covered by the 1950 Law of Return. Jewish immigration is encouraged by the Jewish Agency, which helps immigrants find jobs. Loans are made available on easy terms to assist immigrants who wish to start their own businesses and special privileges in education are given to immigrants in their first few years in Israel.
Jordan	2.78 (1976)	C	--	Jordan has no organized family planning program, but it has received support from the Pan Arab Medical Union and the Grand Muftie of Jordan. The government recognizes that emigration is a problem, but believes it can only impact marginally on the outflow of labor.
Kuwait	1.13	C	--	There is no official population policy, but there is a tendency to pronatalism with regard to Kuwaitis. There are no organized family planning services, but both private and government medical services give family planning advice. Development plans have recognized the need to import foreign labor, but there is a determination to reduce this dependence. Foreign workers have no residence or naturalization rights, and their social and education opportunities are curtailed by law. The government discourages foreign workers from bringing their dependents with them.
Lebanon	3.06	C	--	No formal policy regarding population growth exists. The traditional posture supports emigration and encourages foreign remittances and savings.
Libya	2.54 (1976)	C	--	Official policy is frankly pronatalist.

Table 2 (cont.)

Government Policies and Public Postures on Population Growth and Migration

Country	1977 Population in Millions	Government Position A, B, or C	Year Adopted	Comment
South Yemen	1.80	C	--	The government favors an increase in population. There are no family planning services. The government has been actively encouraging its citizens working abroad to send remittances home. This active encouragement to remit money has been the result of a drastic decline in remittances following the nationalization that began in South Yemen after 1969, and the fear they engendered among Yemenis abroad of their remittances being confiscated.
Sudan	16.95	C	--	Official concern about emigration dates back to only 1976. More frequently, the presumed benefits of emigration -- a source of foreign exchange, a means of reducing unemployment, and a means of enhancing Sudan's international stature by supplying educated manpower to Arab countries which would also increase the amount of aid recipient Arab countries would provide the Sudan -- are proclaimed by government officials. There are schemes to encourage remittances, especially from professionals outside the Sudan. The Land for Emigration Scheme provides first and second class housing in the Khartoum area in exchange for foreign-earned currencies. Given the shortage of housing in Khartoum, this is an incentive to return and to spend the foreign currencies in the Sudan. Another policy, the Nil Customs Policy, permits nationals to obtain imports custom-free, up to the amount of foreign currency held in their accounts at the Sudan Bank, provided the currency has been remitted from outside the Sudan and has been in the account for at least 6 months.
Syria	7.84	C	--	No population policy although official interest in family planning has been expressed and a special unit for family planning and maternal and child health (MCH) has been created in the Ministry of Health. The government supports the Syrian Family Planning Association, formed in 1974. However, an official ban on contraceptives raises doubts about official policy on population growth. The government recognizes that the "brain drain" is a serious problem and has discouraged the emigration of skilled labor.



Table 2 (cont.)

Government Policies and Public Postures on Population Growth and Migration

Country	1977 Population in Millions	Government Position A, B, or C	Year Adopted	Comment
Tunisia	5.97 (1976)	A	1964	According to the provisional new plan for 1973-76, the national policy is to reduce the gross reproduction from 3.1% in 1971 to 1.2% in 2001. Bill No. 73-17, passed in March 23, 1973, created the National Family Planning and Population Office to implement the government's population policy. The program, the most advanced in North Africa, provides free services within the government health system. Laws have been passed to (1) legalize the sale of contraceptives; (2) limit child allowances to the first 4 children; (3) increase minimum legal marriage to 20 for men, 17 for women; (4) legalize induced abortion on social grounds for women with five or more living children, and on therapeutic grounds to protect the physical or mental health of the women; (5) abolish polygamy and (6) establish equal rights for women. Emigration is seen as a partial, short-term solution to unemployment in Tunisia. Labor migration is controlled by an organization within the Ministry of Social Affairs. This organization has made agreements with other countries to export labor. The government has an agreement with France for the immigration of French professionals to Tunisia.
Turkey	42.13	A	1965	The official policy, expressed in the family planning law, advocated voluntary planning for the desired number of children. The program is publicized through the mass media and by mobile teams, which also distributes contraceptive supplies. The IUD is the main method used in the program. Oral contraceptives are obtained through the private sector and account for much current practice.
United Arab Emirates	.24	C	--	No official population policy exists. There is apparently no problem for foreign workers to obtain work permits, especially if they have any skills.
Yemen	7.08	C	--	There is no official population policy, but those family planning services that exist are reported to be in strong demand. Despite exporting proportionately more workers than any other country in the world, Yemen has restrictions on emigration. The government is considering a law that would permit foreign construction workers to immigrate to Yemen.

Notes:

\* Key

- A - official policy to reduce the population growth rate. In addition to supporting family planning to implement this policy, countries in this category also support family planning for reasons of health and as a human right.
- B - Official support of family planning for other than demographic reasons. Countries in this category usually support family planning for reasons of health and as a human right, but an antinatalist effect is a by-product, not an objective.
- C - Residual category countries neither have a policy to reduce population growth rate, nor do they support family planning programs for any reason. The list includes countries that are neutral toward their population growth rate as well as those that are pronatalist, but the distinction between "neutralist" and "pronatalist" is too conjectural to warrant separate categories.

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of the region and attendant policy responses prior to the events of October 1973: Kuwait, Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco.

Kuwait illustrated importers of professional and semi-professional labor; Egypt reflected the exporters of skilled (professional) manpower; Algeria was indicative of countries exporting factory workers; and Morocco traditionally represented the comparatively self-sufficient states, although the government has recently sought to encourage migration to Europe. In the last respect, Tunisia might be a better example, but since the numbers were considerably smaller than Algeria and the type of manpower exported is generally relatively unskilled, and unlike the case of Egypt where the numbers were small but the composition represents a critical technical component of the labor force, the Moroccan case may well be sufficiently distinctive to warrant separate and closer examination.

A. Egypt

Egypt has an official population policy -- conceived largely in terms of family planning to assist in curtailing the birth rate -- and there is a general recognition in government circles of the country's pressing population problem, which is defined in terms of high fertility, coupled with increasing pressures on arable land, and an attendant acceleration of migration rates from rural to urban areas. This recognition is expressed in the 1973-82 Development Plan which has as an objective the reduction of the birth rate from 34 per thousand in 1973 to 24 per thousand in 1982.

The First Five-Year Plan (1965-70) did not consider instruments to regulate fertility or migration. It simply assigned a target of a 17%

increase of employment over the Plan years. The Follow-up Report acknowledged that failing to meet projected targets was due, in part, to an unanticipated increase in fertility rates. The expectation has been for a growth rate of 2.4% annually; in retrospect the rate was 2.8%, representing an increase from 25.6 million to 29.5 million. The Follow-up Report recognized that this increase prevented any growth in per capita income, provided added pressures on public services, and diverted investments toward consumption, all of which were detrimental to economic growth.

The Egyptian case is thus one in which the failure of development was attributed in part to an unanticipated increase in fertility. The result was an official recognition of the need for formal measures of population control; but the attendant implication of the foregoing was not drawn -- that there is a need for formal inclusion of the demographic variables and projections in the formulation of the economic analyses at the data basis for development planning. The fact that the government had conflicting economic priorities, with potentially conflicting policy instruments, simply accentuates the distorting effects of neglecting population variables in development planning for a country whose major problem is acknowledged to be one of high fertility.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequent plans were interrupted by wars with Israel. Evolving government policy, however, was to affect demographic variables through social and economic variables, most notably those related to agricultural employment and incentives for reducing rural/urban migration. The government's persisting concern for welfare and equity has increased the priority of agrarian issues, social security legislation, and the like, in comparison

with measures required to affect population variables directly.<sup>5</sup> More recently, the emphasis has been expanded beyond family planning and has taken a holistic view of the country's overall demographic profile. So, too, the economic implications of out-migration have, until recently, been ignored. Before 1973, no one in Egypt seriously considered emigration to other Arab countries as an important factor in the country's economy or in the region's development.

#### B. Kuwait

Kuwait has no official population policy, nor explicit provisions for fertility control. An implicit pronatalist position is adopted, one that is moderated only by the potential political implications of such a posture.

The present population of Kuwait is subject to debate; estimates range from 700,000 to over 1 million, depending on inclusion of aliens. However, the historical trends are less ambiguous. From 1957 to 1975, the total population of the country rose from a little over 200,000 to close to 1 million with a growth rate of 8.9% per year. By 1975, 53% of the population was alien, and 73% of the labor force was non-Kuwaiti (78% of which was from other Arab states). Most skilled labor was Arab, particularly Palestinian, Jordanian, and Egyptian. The unskilled labor came traditionally from the Gulf area and South Arabian states.

The First Five-Year Plan (1967-72) stressed the need for the regulation of migrant workers and for the development of guidelines covering general population issues.<sup>5</sup> Of the eleven goals specified in the plan, four were

concerned directly with population issues:

- (1) Increasing the Kuwaiti population to a majority status;
- (2) Assuring a Kuwaiti majority in the labor force;
- (3) Creating employment opportunities and expanding the size of the citizen labor force;
- (4) Restricting the use of migrant labor, except in highly skilled and technical vocations.

At the same time, official government policy was to provide incentives for young Kuwaitis to study abroad so as to eventually constitute the required majority in professional vocations. Since the end of the first Plan period, the government has restricted the flow of skilled manpower. As long as Kuwaiti salary scales are dramatically higher than other Arab states, and as long as the government seeks to collaborate economically and politically with its neighbors, a policy of total restriction of migrant workers is unlikely. Although planners were intuitively aware of the socio-economic and political implications of the demographic structure of the country, and good statistics were kept, there was an insufficient appreciation of the effects of varying fertility rates of the Kuwaiti population in the long-run upon projections for manpower requirements, educational opportunities, and economic investments by sector, or of different rates and composition of immigrant labor for the economy and the polity in the shorter-run. The events of 1973 and subsequent changes in the region's demography made population an even more salient policy issue for Kuwait.



C. Algeria

The Algerian government has traditionally adopted the view that solutions to demographic problems are to be found in economic development, not in discrete investments in fertility control. Algeria has spearheaded the movement of those developing countries that argued at the World Population Conference in 1974 that the key issues at hand were developmental and not demographic, and that the debates ought to revolve around developmental policies and not demographic ones.

Although Algeria's rate of population growth is among the highest of the Middle East countries (3.2%), it does not consistently pursue any population control policy. On the face of it, it seems that this increase in population is contributing to accelerated rates of rural/urban migration and high rates of unemployment.

The migration of labor to France constituted an important backbone of the government's economic policies. The regulation of flows, the encouragement of remittances, and the development of viable long-term policies with the French were all evidence of official concern for controlling the characteristics and movement of the labor force, and for using migration as a means of reducing the social and economic impacts of growing unemployment.

Development plans did not consider, nor did they refer to, policies as instruments to lessen population pressure in urban areas; not because of the lack of recognition of economic difficulties related to population variables, but because of political and traditional interests that oppose direct interventions. Religious leaders were reluctant to accept the concept of population control as a legitimate instrument of development, and

various political groups equate national strength with large populations. Even migration to France was regarded in some circles as counterproductive to the national interest. Consequently, a movement was begun in order to reincorporate return migrants into the economic fabric of the country.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Algeria attempted to further routinize the emigration of its labor to France, and to regulate the increase in the flow of workers from other Arab countries into Algeria.

By 1968, however, liberation of religious circles and an increased awareness of demographic-related problems contributed to official efforts toward incorporating population policies within the Five-Year Development Plan (1964-73). Background work was well underway when the government reverted to its original position, and formally opposed the inclusion of population targets, or even any explicit reference to population control in the Five-Year Plan. Recently, it has retrenched its migration policy.

#### D. Morocco

Morocco was "self-sufficient" in its labor requirements relative to other states, although there was some labor migration in the late 1960's.

In 1968, the government adopted a policy of reducing the crude birth rates from 49 per thousand in 1972 to 45 per thousand in 1977. The focus was on a family planning program based largely on making information available for practicing voluntary fertility control. By 1969, it was estimated that the growth rate in Morocco was 3.3% and, despite the fact that the majority of the population lived in rural areas, rates of urbanization were growing at twice the population growth rate, further accentuating Morocco's

population problems. The First Morocco Plan (1965-67) acknowledged the increase in population attributing it to high levels of fertility and to a decline in mortality produced by the government's health and sanitation program.

The 1968-72 Plan placed considerably more importance on job creation, but little emphasis was given to it at the implementation state. The 1973-77 Plan also stressed the reduction of unemployment as one of its major goals. In both cases, temporary migration as a short-term means of reducing the negative impacts of unemployment was raised as a policy option. However, of the 900,000 emigrants between 1960 and 1971, <sup>90,000</sup>~~500,000~~ were Moroccan Jews emigrating permanently to Israel, and the government's encouragement of out-migration for Moroccan workers had only marginal effects. Despite the recent signature of labor conventions with West Germany, France, Belgium, and now Libya that provide further opportunities for concentrated out-migration, the incentives for such a movement have been too weak to result in any definable effects.

The latest development plan placed greater emphasis upon family planning, but in the context of stressing the creation of education, information, and the training of staff. As yet, there is no substantial population component. Unlike the other three model cases, the events of 1973 have had relatively modest effects on Morocco's demographic characteristics, or on its population policies.

#### E. New Trends

Since 1973, the demographic characteristics of the Middle East have

undergone such rapid transformation as to make the traditional policy responses that focused on fertility control singularly inappropriate. The demographic changes since 1973 have been so pervasive as to necessitate a reappraisal of population policy, economic policy, and even foreign policy for most of the countries in the area. The population "map" of the region is changing dramatically, necessitating a reassessment of traditional views of the Middle East.

#### IV. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES SINCE 1973

The petroleum crisis of October 1973 clearly dramatized the differences among the countries of the Middle East in terms of size and wealth. Except for Iran, the most populous countries continue to be the poorest in natural resources, while the richest countries remain the smallest in population. At the same time, differences in the level of technological development and manpower characteristics have been further accentuated. The largest countries in population continue to be most developed in terms of overall knowledge and skills. For the smaller but wealthier countries, technology and manpower availability have become perhaps the single most import constraint on economic development. Since 1973, traditional differences among the countries of the region have contributed to sharp patterns of migration across national boundaries and to the dramatic growth of both skilled and unskilled labor. This migration constitutes the most significant demographic change since 1973.

The events of 1973 have changed the migration patterns in the Middle East, necessitating the addition of three more demographic profiles to the four described earlier:

- (5) Countries which both import and export labor, usually importing relatively skilled labor and exporting unskilled labor (Jordan and Oman);
- (6) Countries which now import labor extensively from outside the region as a whole because of both lower wage rates and fewer problems with keeping the migrant workers separate from the native population (Kuwait, U.A.E., and Qatar).

- (7) Countries which export generally unskilled labor (Yemen, South Yemen, and Sudan).

Clearly, these seven categories are not mutually exclusive. Countries are now exhibiting several distinct migration characteristics. The "map" of the region is becoming increasingly complex.

The issue of labor migration in the Middle East has, to date, been largely overlooked by political analysts, economists, and area specialists alike. Political scientists tend to concentrate on the cultural homogeneity of the Arab states, their conflict with Israel, and the dispute over petroleum prices. Economists typically focus on macroeconomic performance, on the effects of the new oil prices, or on sectoral problems, for one country or another. And area specialists have provided descriptively rich analyses of the region, but have expressed little concern for the apparent implications of the new labor movements. The dramatic changes in migration trends in recent years may well have major national as well as regional ramifications. That migration is characterized by a complex network of flows, with a web of in-and-out migration for almost every country in the region and is dominated by Egyptian workers in other Arab states. Figure 1 presents the major flows of 10,000 or more.

The distinctive features of this migration are the following:<sup>7</sup>

First, it is a pattern of flow among developing countries; labor remains within the region, rather than migrating externally.

Second, it is composed neither of skilled nor unskilled labor alone; the entire structure of the labor force is involved in and, in turn, affected by this movement.



Third, it is not permanent in nature, but temporary, generally from one to four years.

Fourth, it is generated and maintained by underlying economic and political forces that create the incentives for movement and the regulations for sustaining the flows.

Fifth, it is recognized by both sending and receiving countries as an explicit feature of the political economy of the region, whereby both the political and the economic dimensions are given equal weight.

Sixth, these perceptions in policymaking circles are maintained by economic imperatives; the supply and demand for labor generate an underlying rationale that places pressures on policy responses to regulate and facilitate the movement of labor.

Together, these six characteristics of migration in the Middle East generate a pattern of movement that is distinctive to the types of economies in the region. The interdependence of economic and political factors shapes the new labor movements and may, in turn, transform both the politics and the economics of the area in what can only have profound consequences. Cultural similarities contribute to these patterns, but are not determinant in their influence. The costs and benefits of this migration have been examined elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> In many cases, the interstate migrants are more skilled, more educated, and more politicized than the local population. In addition, they command a monopoly of the skilled jobs. For this reason, they are increasingly perceived as potentially threatening to the established political order.

To a great degree, regional flows are determined by individual responses



to economic and social incentives, yet shaped by political constraints. Economic incentives, such as higher wages and greater employment opportunities, are modulated by social incentives such as better quality of life, greater access to social services, and better prospects for social mobility. Political constraints on migration include new, direct governmental controls, encouraging or impeding movement as the case may be, the use of immigration laws as a foreign policy instrument, and the use of tax policies as a means of encouraging or hindering labor mobility.

The new migration in the Middle East is dominated by the movement of Egyptians to other Arab countries, motivated largely by economic incentives. Egypt has long provided the technocracy of the Middle East, exporting professional manpower and, more recently, relatively unskilled workers as well. Egyptian teachers, engineers, lawyers, doctors, and the like have migrated to other Arab countries in search of better opportunities. They have formed the backbone of the professional communities in Libya, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the other Arab states in the Gulf area. It is not the fact of Egyptian emigration that is novel, but its extent, rate of increase, and role in the economies of the recipient countries.

In the past, Egyptians who moved to other Arab lands went largely to Libya and to the Sudan. They were often skilled, yet represented only a small and relatively unimportant fraction of the labor force. There were also skilled Egyptians working in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region for many years, but again the numbers have been small until recently. For example, in 1965, the census of Kuwait reported 11,021 Egyptians, compared to 500,000 Kuwaitis. In 1975, census reports placed this figure at 60,534.

It was not until the war of 1973 that a marked and accelerated increase in Egyptian migration took place. Although precise figures are not available, educated guesses of total migrant workers range from 250-600,000, and possibly as high as 1 million or 10% of Egypt's total labor force. The 1976 census estimates that there were 1.425 million Egyptians abroad, including dependents, during that year. Table 3 presents alternative estimates of the distribution of Egyptian workers in other Arab countries.<sup>9</sup>

In Kuwait, as well as Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, it is government policy to plan for the eventual takeover of all alien jobs by nationals. It is difficult to envisage at this point how the transition could be accomplished without substantial dislocation, particularly in view of the politicization and potential mobilization of the migrant population. The Kuwaiti government has long been concerned with finding a means of promoting national development without substantially changing the nature of the political community or the privileged position of its citizens -- and the issue of migration is of high political salience. But this predicament is not that of Kuwait alone; it is typical of those Arab states where professional, technically skilled manpower is the single scarcest resource.

Egypt's position as a major donor to other Arab states is due to a particular mix of supply and demand relationships.<sup>10</sup> On the supply side, three factors stand out. First is an extensive Egyptian infra-structure that produces a large number of university graduates every year. Second are the limited domestic opportunities for the employment of these graduates. Third is the resulting pool of employable manpower that is not absorbed by the internal workforce. These factors are reinforced by the social equity

**Table 3**  
**Alternative Estimates of Egyptian Migration to Other Arab Countries**

Destination	International Migration Project (1)		International Migration Project (2)		MIT Migration Project		Al-Ahram	
	# of Egyptians <sup>1</sup>	% of Egyptians <sup>2</sup>	#	%	#	%	#	%
Libya	229,500	59.6	336,000	59.6	596,000	59.6	500,000	35.9
Saudi Arabia	95,000	20.4	122,400	20.4	204,000	20.4	500,000	35.9
Kuwait	37,558	9.5	57,000	9.5	95,000	9.5	150,000	10.8
UAE	12,500	3.1	18,600	3.1	31,000	3.1	150,000	10.8
Qatar	12,200	3.0	18,000	3.0	30,000	3.0	15,000	1.1
Bahrain	2,500	.6	3,600	.6	6,000	.6		
Oman	1,500	.4	2,400	.4	4,000	.4		
Other	13,150	10.4	62,400	10.4	104,000	10.4	75,000	5.4
TOTAL	403,908	100	600,000	100	1,000,000	100	1,390,000	100

<sup>1</sup>When a range of numbers was provided, we used the median of the range as our estimate.

<sup>2</sup>These are the percentages provided by the International Migration Project. We applied the same percentages to other estimates of the total number of Egyptian migrants to get a country by country breakdown.

Sources on the following page.

Table 3 (cont.)

Sources:

International Migration Project

J.S. Birks and C.A. Sinclair, Codirectors and Principal Researchers, International Migration Project Country Case Study: Arab Republic of Egypt, International Migration Project, University of Durham, March 1978.

MIT Migration Project

Nazli Choucri, Richard S. Eckaus and Amr Mohie-Eldine, Migration and Employment in the Construction Sector: Critical Factors in Egyptian Development, (MIT: Technology Adaptation Program, 1978).

Al-Ahram

Al-Ahram, September 18, 1978.

programs of the government and its commitment to the expansion of the country's educational base irrespective of employment opportunities.

On the demand side, the most important factors are the economic incentives in the Arab states that have provided the transitional motivations for emigration. These were reinforced by the petroleum crisis of October 1973, with the attendant price increases and the generation of surplus revenue enabling the oil-rich states to pay high wages. The formulation, often hasty, of elaborate development programs that called for mass reliance on imported labor provided a clear economic rationale for emigration.

The demand for Egyptian manpower is further reinforced by the long-standing role of Egyptians as mediators between Western technology and Arab requirements. A two-step flow of technology transfer in the Middle East has evolved during the past twenty years, channeling flows from the industrial states to Egypt and from Egypt to the other Arab countries. The brokerage role of Egyptians in technological transfers was reinforced once more by the increase demand for Western technology in the oil-rich states following the rise in petroleum prices.

In addition, some non-economic factors further affect the demand for Egyptian labor. In the area of manpower, Egypt's advantage lies in the cultural similarity that reduces the difficulties of accommodation and adaptation to an alien environment. Although other Arab states import labor from elsewhere, most notably Iran, Pakistan, and India, Egyptian labor is clearly more desirable. So, too, the country's traditional role of political leadership in the Middle East is undoubtedly an important sociological consideration contributing to the demand for Egyptian labor.

Egypt has long set the lines of regional policy, shaping ideological debates and serving as the hub of communication throughout the Arab world. Closely related is Egypt's position as cultural leader in the region, serving the educational requirements of all other Arab states.

The flow of manpower, however, is only partly determined by the supply of Egyptians and the demand in other Arab states. Migration has become, for both donor and recipient, an indirect and often inadvertent instrument of foreign policy. Regional politics and migration patterns are inextricably intertwined. Times of poor relations among the Arabs are reflected in the decline of migration; occasional inter-Arab detentes accelerate the flows. For example, the large-scale migration of Egyptians to Libya during 1969-73 and again in 1975-76 coincided with the period of closest Libyan-Egyptian economic and political cooperation. Since 1973, the issue of migrant workers has been used for political leverage by both Egypt and Libya. Periodic conflicts between the two countries have drawn attention to the importance of labor movements for both.

In the Middle East, political objectives have long dominated economic priorities and shaped economic policies.<sup>11</sup> Should migration be explicitly regarded as a political weapon, the volume of Egyptian workers in Arab countries would become a serious foreign policy issue for all states in the region.

The countries of the Middle East have uniformly recognized the interdependence, possibly to mutual advantage, generated by their respective demographic and economic characteristics. A general, though relatively unarticulated, awareness exists that the demographic structure of Middle East

countries has contributed to set patterns of interstate migration. This migration provides the basis for economic cooperation and for the development of joint policies for the management of manpower requirements and for development planning. Increasingly, the development plans of one country are affected by the population, migration, and manpower policies of the other countries. National policies designed to influence demographic characteristics will invariably have regional implications.

V. POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The patterns of migration described in the previous section of this paper provide some clues for generating an initial assessment of possible policy interventions on both sides of the flow. Migration processes among developing countries are sufficiently distinctive that policy "importation" -- from other patterns of migration -- can only be a point of departure in any assessment of policy options.<sup>12</sup>

Typically, governments have found it difficult to regulate rural/urban migration. The incentives for movement virtually all work in the direction of the city. Therefore, unless concerted efforts are made to enhance employment opportunities in rural areas or to equalize wages between rural and urban centers, cityward movements in the Middle East will not abate and may continue to be a prime source of labor for foreign destinations. Efforts to develop alternative urban centers and to "redistribute" population are still in the blueprint state.

The most well documented forms of migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers (e.g., Mexicans, Turks, Yugoslavs, Algerians, and Portuguese) provide better insights into sets of appropriate policy interventions for regulating population movements among the countries of the Arab world. The Turks have opted for a "rotating" principle, whereby groups of workers are sent to Europe and are expected to return.<sup>13</sup> They are viewed as "guests" by the receiving country. At one point, Algerians opted for a similar approach, yet sought to integrate their migration policies more closely with their overall relations with France.<sup>14</sup>

To a large extent, the present patterns of policy intervention in the



Middle East reveal similar features. Egypt officially supplies certain categories of workers to other Arab countries and, in turn, contributes to the setting of conditions for their employment. Egyptian nationals are not viewed as "guests", in accordance with the Arab predisposition to regard the citizens of the individual states as "brothers".<sup>15</sup>

Policy interventions for regulating illegal migration are less salient to the Middle East today since, with few exceptions, movements are legal and those that are not remain unpublicized lest they embarrass any of the Arab governments. Many states in the region maintain officially that there ought not to be any barriers to migration among Arab states. Only Iraq adheres to this policy, though. In fact, there are strong barriers, most notably in the Gulf countries.

Finally, there are the responses to refugees. Since the Palestinians constitute a high proportion of the total population of Kuwait, Jordan and, to a lesser extent, Lebanon, the refugee issue has always been of concern to all Arab governments. Naturalization of the Palestinians has been a policy only in Jordan and, to a much lesser extent, in Kuwait. In many other Arab countries, the Palestinians are considered primarily as nationals in their own right. At the present time, the predisposition in the Middle East is not to distinguish between policies designed to regulate the movements of labor and those directed specifically to regulating the flow of refugees. The disposition now, unlike the early 1950's, is to focus on nationals and view the Palestinians as nationals of a state to be.

Relative to other Arab states, Egypt is a developed country, sending its skilled

manpower in other Arab countries of the region. Egypt officially takes pride in this role of "technical assistance" which is frequently mentioned in governmental reports on manpower problems in Egypt and in the Middle East. However, there are political costs associated with this posture and other countries in the region have accused Egypt of "imperialism". Such accusations have periodically led to a reconsideration of the country's migration policies and their political consequences.

The fundamental changes in regional policies, characterized by a movement from ideological politics to pragmatic stances and by Egypt's willingness to relinquish a position of dominance in the Arab world, contributed to the reduction in inter-Arab hostilities.<sup>16</sup> The Sadat regime liberalized domestic politics and, following the 1973 war, proclaimed an "open door" policy. To the Egyptians, it signified not only the possibilities of foreign investment in Egypt, but prospects for Egyptian migration abroad. In contrast to emigration restrictions in the earlier years, the new Sadat migration policy has become singularly "open". In effect, Egypt argued for an appreciation of the new leverages associated with oil revenues and recognized the consequences of alienating the oil-rich states by pursuing the old Nasser strategy of Egyptian dominance. By accepting, even arguing for, a new role in Arab politics, Sadat allayed his neighbors' suspicions and, more important, indirectly reaffirmed Egypt's cultural and political importance to the other states in the region.

This shift in realpolitik has had significant effects upon patterns of migration throughout the region. The demand of other Arab states for skilled manpower could not be met by the outflow of Egyptians without immediate

political obstacles being interposed. In short, while the increase in petroleum prices and attendant growth in surplus revenues of the oil-rich states resulted in an immediate growth in demand for skilled Egyptians, the ability of the Sadat government to convince neighboring Arab states of its benign political intent was undoubtedly the most important factor directly responsible for increased migration. Other than an occasional recognition of the potential importance of Egypt's manpower as a national resource, its workers have usually been ignored. There are signs of change. In 1974 and 1976, the government signed labor protocols and agreements with Qatar, Greece and the Sudan governing conditions for the exportation of Egyptian labor. But aside from these agreements and a set of ad hoc procedures with other Arab countries, Egypt still has no concerted migration policy.

Egyptians tend to move for short periods. Existing rules and regulations are such that they reinforce short durations. Should these change, it is likely to be largely in response to economic pressures in Arab states, not to political pressure exerted by the government of Egypt. In addition to the Palestinians, Egyptian manpower comprises the backbone of the educated personnel in the Arab countries of the Gulf area. These trends persist. However, unskilled workers have also been migrating to the Gulf. To the extent that such flows persist, they may well constitute a net drain on Egyptian manpower resources at some levels, one that might impact upon the skilled and perhaps the unskilled components of the labor force.

The growing interdependence among the countries of the Middle East, generated in large part by the increasing flow of Egyptian labor, has created a situation where the search for mutually beneficial policies is becoming

more salient. From the donor's perspective, at least four policy options emerge, with varying implications for the recipients.<sup>17</sup>

First is the policy of levying a tax on individual migrant earnings. This possibility has been suggested in various circles, but never seriously entertained either in the Middle East or elsewhere. The difficulties of raising and collecting such a tax are extensive, given the problems of control, monitoring migrant earnings, and devising means of extraction. Further, such a tax would produce the same macroeconomic effects as capturing remittances.

Second is a bilateral state-based agreement which would entail an overall charge from the Egyptian government to recipient countries for the employment of Egyptian manpower. That charge would depend upon the composition of migration, its duration, the tax structure of the recipient countries, and possibly the value of remittances.

A third possibility is to develop a consortium of major interests or parties participating in the flow of manpower by industry, activity, or occupation, and to devise exchange policies to be agreed upon, and implemented, at the state level.

A fourth policy option is to formulate a barrier function on the basis of international rules and regulations that establishes state-based contributions to manpower development on a regional basis. In this event, all participating countries in the Middle East will become involved in devising the means and procedure of exchange.

Options two, three, and four place the migration issue in an interdependence context and seek to employ labor movements as the focal point of an overall exchange among the countries of the Middle East. That exchange

would be designed to enable each country to capitalize on its respective characteristics in the broad political economy of the region. The guiding principle for defining the nature of such an exchange is the following: to find a procedure for channeling national resources to support services that benefit the region directly or indirectly without jeopardizing national objectives. The underlying precept is to tax human capital movement and to organize physical capital flows so as to affect and/or maintain human capital flows. This tax thus represents only that part of an overall exchange framework that pertains to manpower flows.

From the exporters' point of view, the major incentive for such an exchange perspective -- as opposed to a policy taxing the earnings of individual migrants or a policy of ignoring the migrants -- is to protect its position of labor advantage. The importance of Egyptian knowledge and skills in the area may be of short duration unless attendant educational and other relevant institutions are expanded effectively. Unless that role is protected and utilized as a national resource, its usefulness for developmental purposes will be short-lived.

Discernable migration-controlling policies are now apparent in the recipient countries. The posture of the Arab states importing manpower has been one of dependence upon the Egyptians and other nationals, coupled with caution at times bordering on suspicion, if not hostility. Kuwait, for example, has effectively segregated its citizens from the alien population, and it has developed an intricate system of regulations to safeguard this segregation. To the extent that immediate "solutions" lie in separating the alien workforce and preventing its effective integration into the body

politic, a two-class system will be consolidated leaving the migrant population essentially politically disadvantaged in their host countries. In short, what the other Arab states will do will inevitably affect the Egyptians. Similarly, Egyptian politics may well have reverberating effects.

Policymakers in the labor-importing countries are intuitively aware of the social, economic, and political implications of the demographic structure of the country, and good statistics are kept; yet there is an insufficient appreciation of the effects of restrictive or, alternatively, expansionary migration policies. Indeed, the contradiction between the country's avowed commitment of resources for Arab development and the restriction of Arab workers is not fully understood. The persistence of conflicting objectives, such as rapid economic development and manpower self-sufficiency, highlights the problems generated by alien workers in Kuwait. The Kuwaiti predicament is shared by other Arab countries that depend upon citizens of other countries for their professional manpower.

The dilemma of the government of Kuwait is to find a means of promoting national development without substantially changing the nature of the political community and the underlying demographic characteristics of the society. Professional manpower remains the scarcest resource. In confronting this dilemma, the government can adopt several alternative strategies. Among these are (i) placing a ceiling on the number of migrants; (ii) placing restrictions on the composition of the migrant population (in terms of country of origin, ethnic composition, linguistic dominance, etc.) so as to maintain the dominance of the Kuwait population; (iii) rendering preferential treatment to the Arab immigrants rather than to non-Arabs, such as Indians

or Pakistanis, who today represent a sizable proportion of the migrant population; or (iv) rendering preferential treatment to non-Arab immigrants, in that they might be perceived as less threatening to Kuwaiti hegemony. There are other policy options as well.

Each of these potential strategies would require legal instruments on the issues of citizenship, employment opportunities, property ownership, housing, and so forth. They would involve constitutional questions, particularly on the issue of immigration from other Arab countries. Kuwait, like other Arab states of the region, regards itself as part of the larger Arab nation. Presently, the naturalization regulations for Arab immigrants are easier than for non-Arabs. What would Kuwait do if it decided to reduce the Arab component of its immigrant population? What would be the impact on the donor countries (most notably Egypt)?

The current political structure in Kuwait (a sheikdom) is based on a traditional, hierarchical ordering of society and, as a result, is freed of many of the ideological difficulties of denying citizenship to about half the total population. Under the present system, citizen participation in government is limited. Citizenship is granted on the basis of value to the state and is limited to about 50 foreigners per year, although attempts are underway to permit certain categories of foreigners to acquire permanent residence. Policies designed to manipulate the flow of population and policies designed to respond to these flows will undoubtedly remain at the forefront of governmental concerns for years to come. In view of the magnitude of dependence on foreign labor, any policy changes in Kuwait will invariably affect the neighboring countries, particularly Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon.

But they will also affect the United Arab Emirates which rely heavily upon Kuwaitis for their educational system.

From a regional perspective, taking into account the consensus of both exporter and importer countries, a critical policy issue is that of skill redistribution. Since skilled (or professional) labor does not generally leave the area (they simply migrate to another part of the Middle East), the problems of the "brain drain" may not arise in the conventional guise.<sup>18</sup> There may be other effects at work that may be to the advantage (or disadvantage) of donor and recipient alike. These, as yet, have not been identified, nor addressed in systematic analyses of population movements in the region.

This situation points out the need for a careful assessment of the implications of interstate migration (and policies toward migration) for development planning in the Middle East. In terms of national development policies particularly, all these countries are deeply affected by the structure of their labor force. Patterns of migration are emerging as important parameters in economic equations, with accompanying political ramifications. Where manpower needs and manpower resources are so closely intertwined, often appearing in the nature of symbiotic relationships between donor and recipient countries, any sharp change in the migration or population policies of one state will have reverberating effects on its other social policies, and upon the other states as well. The patterns of interstate population movement in the Middle East appear such that a seemingly stable equilibrium could be readily disrupted. Such disruptions may have important and potentially unsettling effects upon other aspects of development planning for all countries in the region. The critical policy issue for the future, therefore,



is devising equitable means of labor exchanges and transfers of skills across national boundaries.<sup>19</sup>

## VI. CONCLUSION

Labor migration in the Middle East is creating new bargaining power for all countries involved. How that power is used will not only have national implications, but regional implications as well. To fully appreciate the demand thus placed upon all governments, it is important to understand the characteristic features of such movements, the interdependence imbedded in the structure of migration among these countries, and the basic policy options available to donors and recipients.

Migration among the countries of the Middle East is created by the political economy of the region and, in turn, will generate greater interdependence among sending and receiving communities. The policy options adopted by each must be coordinated such that the costs and benefits of population movement will be equitably distributed. The exchanges are complex, and any unilateral interventions may result in greater costs than benefits. All countries in the Arab world are beginning to appreciate the prospects of common gain from regulated access to the region's labor force. This appreciation is a necessary step toward the development of a more viable exchange.

From the perspective of the region as a whole, the major incentive for such an exchange is the possibility of encouraging short- and long-term skill redistribution in the region. Planning for technological change may be facilitated with the assurance of orderly access to regional skills. Such an exchange will facilitate the ordered channeling of the existing two-step flow of the transfer of technology in the Middle East -- from the advanced industrial states to Egypt and from Egypt to other Arab countries --

and will lead to more rational approaches to the utilization of existing skills for national growth and regional development.

FOOTNOTES

1. Nazli Choucri. "The New Migration in the Middle East: A Problem for Whom?" International Migration Review. Vol. II, No. 4, (Winter, 1977), pp.421-443.
2. In the May 1978 issue of Studies in Family Planning, Mauldin and Berelson argue that changes in socio-economic variables indicating economic development coincide with fertility declines (an  $R^2$  of .66), but the multiple correlation goes considerably higher if one adds the effect of having population control (generally family planning) programs -  $R^2 = .83$ . In fact, the programs alone are more closely related to fertility declines than the socio-economic variables ( $R^2 = .73$ ), but this should be tempered by the fact that those countries with population control programs (particularly strong programs) are much more likely to rank high on the socio-economic variables. See W. Parker Mauldin and Bernard Berelson with a section by Zenas Sykes, "Conditions of Fertility Decline in Developing Countries, 1965-75". Studies in Family Planning. Vol. 9, No. 5, (May 1978), pp. 90-147.
3. Robert Mabro and Samir Radwan. The Industrialization of Egypt: 1939-1973 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).
4. For a review of these changes, see Nazli Choucri and Richard S. Eckaus, "Interactions of Economic and Political Change: The Case of Egypt". World Development (in press).
5. Ministry of Planning. The First Five-Year Economic and Social Plan: 1966/67-1970/71. Government of Egypt.
6. For a review, see Stephen Adler, Migration and International Relations: The Case of France and Algeria (M.I.T.: Center for International Studies, Migration and Development Study Group, C/77-3, April 1977).
7. See Choucri, "The New Migration in the Middle East", International Migration Review, 1977.
8. Nazli Choucri, Richard S. Eckaus and Amr Mohie-Eldine. Migration and Employment in the Construction Sector: Critical Factors in Egyptian Development (M.I.T.: Technology Adaptation Program, October 1978) with respect to the construction sector in Egypt.
9. Nazli Choucri. Labor Transfers in the Arab World: Growing Interdependence in the Construction Sector (M.I.T.: Center for International Studies, 1979).
10. Nazli Choucri. Migration Processes Among Developing Countries (M.I.T.: Center for International Studies, May 1978).

11. Nazli Choucri (with Vincent Ferraro). The International Politics of Energy Interdependence. (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1976).
12. Choucri, Migration Processes Among Developing Countries, 1978.
13. Suzanne Paine. Exporting Workers: The Turkish Case (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).
14. Adler, Migration and International Relations, 1977.
15. The Egyptian Ministry of Labor is concerned with the working conditions of emigrant labor and attempts to prevent exploitation by contractors.
16. See Chapter 4 of Choucri, International Politics of Energy Interdependence, 1976; and Nazli Choucri, Continuity and Change in Egyptian Politics (unpublished manuscript).
17. Choucri, "The New Migration in the Middle East," 1977; and Choucri, Migration Processes Among Developing Countries, 1978.
18. Jagdish N. Bhagwati and Martin Partington (eds.). Taxing the Brain Drain: A Proposal (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1976).
19. Choucri, Labor Transfers in the Arab World, 1979.