

THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION FLOWS IN THE GULF STATES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE YOUTH

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The issue of migration in the states of the Arab Gulf is a unique one. In the classic migration model, there exists a south-north movement of migrants with people from the poorer developing countries in the south searching for better opportunities in the industrialized developed countries in the north. The impact is largely negative for both sides as it results in a qualitative brain-drain for the emigrant country and a heavy burden on limited public resources for the immigrant host. That individuals have an inherent right to search for a better life, whether it is to escape possible persecution or simply to seek greater economic opportunities is not the subject of debate. Rather, the reaction of the receiving countries has in general been one of rejection for incoming migrants or at best one of limited enthusiasm.

The Arab Gulf States defy this normative model making them a distinctive case-study example of newly emergent economy structured around the importation of foreign labour. The states that form the Gulf Cooperation Council – GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) in the meantime are active importers of foreign labour. Due to their tremendous wealth brought about by immense oil revenues accumulated over the past forty years, Gulf States require a tremendous influx of foreign workers to assist in their national development. Moreover, their wealth also allows them to delegate most manual labour tasks to immigrant workers without having to consider problems of budgetary constraints. As a result, an unspoken social contract remains in place in the Gulf with workers in general receiving adequate compensation (certainly when compared to possible incomes in their home countries) in exchange for abrogating the majority of their legal political rights¹. Two things however are important to remember in

this regard. First, there is no sign of a reverse process setting in any time soon. Despite numerous pronouncements by Gulf governments about the need to develop national labour skills and cordoning off certain labour market sectors, so-called ‘Saudization’ or ‘Emiratization’ programs, the inflow of foreign workers continues unabated². The current high oil price environment and numerous development projects will thus ensure a level of continuation. Second, the flow of labour into the Gulf is not solely composed of third world labourers seeking new opportunities but also involves a relatively significant percentage from the developed industrialized countries including Europe, Australia or South Africa. In that context, the brain drain phenomenon also exists in reverse with Gulf States importing knowledge as a means to affect necessary technology transfer.

1. The Current Status of Youth in the Gulf

The contextual background is crucial to any assessment of the impact that migration patterns have on the status and situation of the youth population in the GCC states. To begin with if one were to assess the current status of youth in the Gulf and the corresponding influence of migration flows on that status, the immediate inclination would be to characterize the present situation as highly negative. This is to a large degree due to the fact that the Gulf region is seen as a region of permanent crisis with developments ranging from autocratic governments inhibiting the political

(1) The remittances of emigrants have become a major economic factor sustaining not only the family left behind but also becoming a valuable source of foreign exchange reserves for home governments. Saudi Arabia, for example, ranks second in the world as a source of remittance payments (15.1%) behind the United States.

(2) Programs to replace foreign workers with national labor exist in all the Gulf states and are usually centered around imposing quotas in specific labor market sectors. Thus, for example, in Saudi Arabia, the goal is for 70% of the workforce to be Saudi by the year 2007. In September 2002, Saudi officials decreed that within 6 months, foreign taxi drivers would be barred and they would have to be replaced by Saudis. That meant replacing 50,000 or around 90% of all cab drivers. Needless to say, such efforts are often falling well short due to the unrealistic targets being set.

participation of the regional population to outright hostility marked by war and conflict. In this context, the Gulf, as an integral part of the Middle East, is seen as a region where the population appears caught in a seemingly never-ending cycle of instability marked by tyrants of the caliber of Saddam Hussein and the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. In such an environment, it is a well-established fact that youth suffer the consequences to a greater degree than other population segments, or at a minimum that they are severely hindered in their natural development process³. To this notion of war and conflict has been added the specter of international terrorism following the events of September 11th which had led to corresponding images of radicalized youth from the Gulf ready to fight the West in a looming clash of civilizations. The fact that actions such as suicide bombings or terrorist bombings of civilian targets are most often the result of widespread social frustration is mostly ignored or willfully pushed aside. Even up to this day, the question of why 19 young men are ready to give their lives for a seemingly incomprehensible cause as was the case with the hijackers or why 16 and 17-year old Palestinian boys and girls are among those most willing and fervent to sacrifice their lives as suicide bombers against the Israeli occupation has not been adequately analyzed or answered.

The same goes for the question of why the youth in the Gulf remain very much susceptible to the call of Islamic extremism. Yet the argument put forward here is that despite its straight-forward appearance, the above characterization would be short-sighted and incorrect. Specifically, if one takes a closer analytical look at the actual situation in the six countries that form the GCC, the status of youth in the region is actually quite positive. There are a number of reasons for such an assessment which are worthwhile exploring in greater detail. For one, the actual conflict that has gripped the region has largely been confined to the countries of Iran and Iraq, if one excludes the invasion and occupation of Kuwait by the regime of Saddam Hussein in 1990/91. Even in the latter

case, Kuwait was a victim of a blatant aggression. Certainly, the other five GCC states have not served in the capacity of the actual battleground for warring parties and have not witnessed the almost daily experience of violence and destruction that is for example currently taking place in Iraq. Second, the GCC states have been politically very stable with no violent opposition groups and sustained revolutionary upheaval. To that stability can be added a high degree of legitimacy for all the GCC ruling regimes. Only in the past eighteen months, beginning in May 2003, has Saudi Arabia experienced a far-reaching challenge from a more widespread and internally organized extremist Islamist opposition. Such phenomenon has not spread to the other GCC states and even within Saudi Arabia the challenge has not reached the point where it threatens the overall stability of the government. Third, the GCC states are mostly defined by prosperous economic systems with some of them, Qatar and the UAE for example, ranking among the highest in the world in terms of per capita income, \$30,800 and \$20,509 respectively⁴. All of the states received respectable rankings in the 2004 Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with four states listed in the high human development category (Bahrain ranked 40th, Kuwait 44th, Qatar 47th, and the UAE 49th), and the other two in the medium human development category (Oman as 74th and Saudi Arabia as 77th)⁵. Their current comparable ranking is not a singular event occurring due to the sudden rise in state income but is in fact the result of sustained spending over a period of time.

Therefore not only have Gulf societies established a firm base from which to support future growth but with oil prices currently reflecting the highest prices since the beginning of sustained production, the progress of development could even be accelerated further in the coming years. With the Gulf being home to 30% of the daily output of oil and 2/3 of the known world's reserves, coupled with a probable continued rise in oil demand, the economic outlook for the region is bright indeed. As a result of the current high price environment, all of the GCC states have been posting strong economic growth rates in 2003 ranging from 4.1% for the UAE to 8.8% for Qatar⁶. In

(3) One aspect that this paper will not focus on is the indirect impact on youth as a result of Gulf migrant labor being sent home due to issues of war and conflict. For example, as a result of the first Gulf War from 1990-1991, two million immigrants in Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia returned to their home country, some of them forcibly as was the case with Yemenis working in Saudi Arabia. The result for the host countries was a sudden rise in unemployment as the sharp decrease in the percentage of remittances as part of overall GDP. See, for example, "International Migration in the Arab Region and Suggestions for key actions, League of Arab States, Third Coordination Meeting on International Migration, UN/POP/MIG/2004/10, October 20, 2004.

(4) Gulf News, September 1, 2004 citing Shaikh Fahd Bin Faisal Al Thani, Deputy Governor, Qatar Central Bank. For the UAE, Arab Monetary Fund. Figure for 2002. For the rest of the GCC states Kuwait was listed with a per capita income of \$14,597, Bahrain \$11,374, Saudi Arabia at \$8,053 and Oman \$7,933. See Gulf News, January 30, 2004.

(5) UNDP Human Development Report 2004.

(6) For Qatar, see Gulf Times, August 22, 2004 citing Planning Council figure. For the UAE, see Gulf News, September 6, 2004 citing official figures. The growth rates for the other states are

addition, the GCC states are scheduled to record the largest oil income ever at nominal prices with over \$180 billion expected to be generated in 2004. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have recently recorded their highest budget surpluses in decades with surpluses of \$35 billion and \$4.38 billion respectively⁷. The net result has been that GCC states have been able to balance their budgets, build up their foreign reserves, pay down debts and increase both private and government investment. This is a development that is positive for the region as a whole in terms of promoting economic prosperity and lessening regional tensions. Rising income has directly led to sustained social spending in particular as far as education and infrastructure is concerned.

This has led to tangible benefits for the Gulf's youth population. The above conditions have led organization like UNICEF to state that the Gulf countries have made remarkable progress in advancing the situation of children⁸. The net result can be seen in available statistics as shown in Table 1. Not only has general economic development provided greater access to health care facilities but overall social spending has also opened opportunities for greater educational access both at the primary and secondary level. If one combines this with the associated spread of information and communications technologies, the status of youth in the Gulf region cannot be measured solely in terms of the conflict potential that exists in the broader Middle East region. To leave it at such an assessment however would be to paint an over optimistic picture and ignore some of the looming challenges that do exist in terms of the status of youth in the region. It also does not provide an assessment of the role that migration plays in terms of either enhancing to degrading the opportunities available for the region's youth. In order to provide a more comprehensive and complete picture, there are thus two areas which will need to be further focused on. First, the impact of labour migration into the region and its role on youth both inside the Gulf and abroad in the home

countries of the arriving labourers has be examined more closely.

The latter point is one that is not often considered in the available literature. Second, there is a need to look into the rising battle over education both in terms of available spaces and resources. Certainly, the expansion of migration into the region, in particular as far as mobilized middle class is concerned has a direct impact on the educational opportunities that are available to the local youth population⁹. Consequently, it is then possible to offer a more holistic assessment of the status of youth in the Gulf.

2. Labour Migration and Youth Unemployment

The Gulf States employ the greatest contribution of migrant workers in the world. The remittances from migrant labour now exceed the overall value of trade in goods. A look at the available statistics certainly points out the imbalance that exists within the Gulf States labour markets. In Saudi Arabia, there are approximately 7 million foreign workers (figures for 2003) thus constituting about one-third of the total population. But those 7 million represent two-thirds of the available workforce and 95% of the workforce within the private sector. Overall, the percentage of nationals as part of the labour force ranges from 10.0% in Qatar (with the UAE a close second at 10.2%) to 46% in Bahrain just ahead of Saudi Arabia at 44.2%. Kuwait has a figure of 19.6% while that of Oman is 35.7%¹⁰.

The labour migration phenomenon has been in existence since the oil boom of the 1970s when the large manpower needs resulted in a steady inflow of foreign workers. The migration involved largely labour from South Asia as it was thought that this group would be less likely to settle,

Bahrain 5.4% (Bahrain Monetary Agency quoted in Gulf News, September 1, 2004); Kuwait 5.3% (Kuwait Times citing Central Bank of Kuwait, September 4, 2004); Oman 6.3% (Central Bank of Oman as cited in Gulf States Newsletter, August 27, 2004); and Saudi Arabia 6.4% (Gulf News citing National Commercial Bank (NCB) of Saudi Arabia, September 10, 2004).

(7) For Saudi Arabia, see Agence France Press, August 22, 2004 citing SAMBA and Saudi National Commercial Bank. For Kuwait, see Kuwait Times citing Central Bank of Kuwait, September 4, 2004.

(8) See, for example, the various country reports available on the UNICEF website available under:

<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/>

(9) Since this paper is focused on the impact on the local national youth, the role of such issues as children trafficking as a persistent problem in the Gulf region is not covered although it should not be overlooked. This issue is one that has been particularly tied to the use of children as camel jockeys. In the UAE, it is said that there are as many as 5,000 young boys, most between the ages of 7 and 12 who are used as camel jockeys. Such practice is officially against the law and with increased publicity the attention of the governments in the region has been focused on eliminating such issues. The UAE has also established a first rehabilitation center for young children before repatriating them to their home countries. See Gulf News, December 2, 2004.

(10) See Nasra M. Shah, "Arab Migration Patterns in the Gulf," Arab Migration Report 2003, International Organization on Migration, 96.

less likely to organize and therefore easier to control. But the demand for such labour has, apart from brief periods of economic downturn, never relented. With oil prices reaching new heights through 2004, the stream of workers has increased even further especially in boom areas like the UAE where it is expected that the population of Dubai will rise by 30 percent over the coming 4 years almost exclusively composed of foreign labourers¹¹. To combat this imbalance, each of the GCC states have instituted programs to raise the percentage of national labour within the workforce, so-called Saudization, Emiratization or Omanization programs.

As the inaugural HSBC-MEED Middle East Business Confidence Survey pointed out: "Demographic pressure and the limited remaining capacity of the state to act as a sponge soaking up each year's new wave of labour market entrants, has forced the issue [job creation] to the top of the agenda"¹². Among the specific reasons cited for this concern are the continued dependence on foreign labour skills, the domestic socio-political impact as well as the loss of large sums of money in the form of remittances. In addition, large scale amnesties have been announced whereby illegal workers have been given the opportunity to leave their host country without fear of prosecution¹³. Finally, governments have introduced programs to limit the entry of immigrants, for example, in Saudi Arabia by announcing a 20% ceiling on expatriate labour to be implemented over a period of 10 years or in Kuwait where ministries are not allowed to re-hire more than 35% of the previous expatriate workforce.

For most of the period since their inception, these programs have only been enforced half-heartedly and thus their effect has remained minimal. More recently, however, governments have become more stringent in enforcing the directives leading to complaints from within the business sectors of higher costs due to the fact that local labour is not as qualified and more expensive than the expatriate worker. Saudi Arabia has set up a Manpower Development Fund to train Saudi nationals and to pay part of their salary in the private sector. In the UAE, career advice centers have been set up in order to guide nationals students into those fields where there is likely to be the highest demand over the coming years¹⁴. The problem however is specifically exacerbated when combined with current

population data which suggests a large percentage of youth in each of the GCC states. In 2004, one in every two Saudi was below the age of 15 and an estimated 60% of the population was below the age of 20. This places great strains upon the Saudi system as the rising youth population will in the coming years have to be incorporated economically in terms of job opportunities and increased educational access. Moreover, with a current birth rate of around 3% in the kingdom, the issue of youth integration will remain high on the public agenda. The changing demographic patterns certainly constrain the state in terms of maintaining large-scale and increasingly expensive social programs. As the 2002 Arab Human Development Report pointed out, a high rise in the youthful population "can be either a demographic gift or a demographic curse, depending on whether countries can use the human potential represented by their populations well enough to satisfy people's aspirations for a fulfilling life"¹⁵.

In that context, it is the provision of adequate job opportunities that has proven to be key for young people in establishing an independent existence. But as a recent report by the International Labour Office clearly states: "Compared to adults, the youth of today are more than three times as likely to be unemployed"¹⁶. Moreover, it is the immigrants that compete with the local population over the job openings whenever they become available. Youth unemployment is thus a rising phenomenon in the GCC states and a key factor behind the many social crises that the governments of the region currently confront. From a social perspective, unemployment contributes to the marginalization, exclusion and frustration of the individual and consequently tears at the whole existing social fabric.

As the ILO report makes clear "an inability to find a job creates a sense of vulnerability, uselessness and idleness among young people and can heighten the attraction of engaging in illegal activities." The report also shows that youth unemployment is the most pronounced in the region of the Middle East and North Africa where the percentage stood at 25.6% in 2003¹⁷. The region has by far the lowest employment-to-population ratio, with only every third young person working in 2003.

(11) Unpublished information from a government official.

(12) Excerpts from the report were printed in the Gulf News, July 20, 2004.

(13) For a table summarizing the various amnesty programs, see Shah, p. 108.

(14) See Arab News, July 10, 2002 and Gulf News, January 15, 2003 for the respective programs.

(15) UNDP, Arab Human Development Report 2002, p. 38.

(16) International Labour Office, Global Employment Trends for Youth, August 2004 available on the organization's website under www.ilo.org

(17) ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth, Foreword.

Table 1. Selected Youth Statistics for GCC Countries

Countries	Total Literacy % 2002	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births) 2002	Net Primary School Enrollment Rate 2001/2002	Net Secondary School Enrollment Rate 2001/2002
Bahrain	88.5	13.0	91.0	86.0
Kuwait	82.9	9.0	85.0	79.0
Oman	74.4	11.0	75.0	68.0
Qatar	80.8 ^a	11.0	94.0	80.0
Saudi Arabia	77.9	23.0	59.0	51.0
UAE	77.3	8.0	81.0	74.0

^aData for 1999

Source: World Development Indicators Database, April 2004; UNESCO, Global Education Statistics 2004, Arab Human Development Report 2002 and 2003.

Table 2. Population of Nationals and Expatriates 2001-2002

Countries	Nationals	%	Expatriates	%	Total
Bahrain	410,000	60	280,000	40	690,000
Kuwait	885,000	37	1,475,000	63	2,360,000
Oman	2,330,872	80	577,293	20	2,908,165
Qatar	165,000	28	420,000	72	585,000
Saudi Arabia	16,000,000	70	7,000,000	30	23,000,000
UAE	622,000	20	2,488,000	80	3,110,000
Total GCC	20,000,000	61.5	12,500,000	38.5	32,500,000

Source: Numbers have been taken from Andrzej Kapiszewski, "Political Reforms in the GCC Countries: Are Monarchies of the Gulf Democratizing?," *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*, No. 15 (2002), 7. The author draws for his numbers on a variety of sources mostly the annual reports of the GCC secretariat in Riyadh as well as the Ministries of Planning. His wide contacts throughout the region especially also within the wider diplomatic community who take care of their own nationals in the host countries gives his research a degree of authority. In general, the above numbers represent the consensus figures for people working in the field as the data tends to be widely dispersed and unreliable. Some commentators would argue that these numbers are also on the conservative side. For example, the Central Bank of Kuwait cited in *Kuwait Times* on September 4, 2004 listed the percentage of expatriates in Kuwait at 80.9%, thus significantly higher than stipulated here. Without comparable data from the other GCC states drawing on the same variables, however, the above source was chosen.

As John Waterbury has noted: "Unemployment rates for those between 15 and 25 years of age, the range in which entire region. Disguised unemployment is considerably higher"¹⁸. The figures for the Gulf States are difficult to come by but given the large percentage of youth as part of the total population in the region, the figures are likely to be equally as high as the entire Middle East. In Saudi Arabia, where the unemployment rate stands at approximately 10%, the rate for youth – those between the ages of 20 and 24 - is estimated at 32%¹⁹. The situation has reached a boiling point stage in the past with youths in Bahrain staging a sit-in protest outside the Ministry of Labour Affairs in 2001 to demand greater attention and

most high school and university graduates are concentrated, are over 40% for the opportunities²⁰. Over time, migration into the Gulf has exacerbated these tensions as increased competition has also spread from the so-called professional fields to the more menial labour tasks. Again to cite the example of Bahrain, the majority Shi'a are prevented from taking on certain tasks due to the fact that the ruling Sunni government has preferred South Asian workers who are much cheaper to employ. As Fuller suggest, in that instance employment practices turn into a means to enforce indirect government control²¹.

(20) See Agence France Press, May 11, 2001.

(21) Graham E. Fuller, "The Youth Factor: The New Demographics of the Middle East and the Implications for U.S. Policy," Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, Analysis Paper No. 3, June 2003, 16.

(18) John Waterbury, "Hate Your Policies, Love Your Institutions," *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2003, p. 62.

(19) See Shah, p. 107.

Table 3. Selected Gulf Country Populations Statistics

Country	Total Population 2000	Projected Population 2050	% of Population below Age 24 2000
Bahrain	640,000	1,008,000	43.7
Iran	70,330,000	121,424,000	59.3
Iraq	22,946,000	53,574,000	61.7
Kuwait	1,914,000	4,001,000	54.5
Oman	2,538,000	8,751,000	63.4
Qatar	565,000	831,000	39.3
Saudi Arabia	20,346,000	59,683,000	62.2
United Arab Emirates	2,606,000	3,709,000	41.3
Yemen	18,349,000	102,379,000	68.3
Total	140,234,000	355,360,000	56.2

Source: United Nations Population Division taken from Christian Koch, "Societal Sources of Change in the Middle East," *International Politics and Society*, October 2004.

A survey conducted by the UNDP in conjunction with the publications of the first Arab Human Development Report indicated that the priorities for youth in the Gulf region included job opportunities (45%), education (23%) and the environment (12%). The concern about work availability and the distribution of incomes and wealth was particularly acute among women with concern garnered towards the reliance on foreign labour and job squeezes in labour market segments where expatriates and national workers compete. The result of the survey and the corresponding negative views about future developments in these fields, led 51% of older youths to express a desire to emigrate to other countries clearly underlining their dissatisfaction with the current conditions and future prospects.

A clearly related phenomenon is the increased desire of the current generation to distance themselves from the foreign population also as a means to protect their own national identity. Among the youth growing up in the Gulf states, the required presence of expatriate labour is being questioned more broadly with views ranging from resentment for taking away job opportunities to outright xenophobia. As one youth in Saudi Arabia stated: "The biggest achievement for Saudi Arabia would be to get rid of the foreigners and hence solve the unemployment problem. We give our money to the foreigners"²². Such statement does not signify that today's youth in the Gulf is ready to take on most the jobs currently being filled by

expatriates. Yet, the inability of the government to provide the same kinds of social provision and protection as extended to the previous generation is resulting in higher levels of frustration and thus opposition to the regimes in power. This is a phenomenon that is most directly pronounced in Saudi Arabia but similar patterns could also emerge in the other GCC states.

As such, one might be witnessing a shift in the migration pattern in the Gulf away from simply being dominated by an influx of outside labourers. Even the GCC states are, albeit only to a limited degree for now, being impacted by the consequence of their own "brain drain" whereby young educated professionals migrate out of the region to search for better opportunities elsewhere. In the Arab world, 450,000 graduates have settled in European countries and the United States in 2001 resulting in a tremendous loss of human and economic potential and resulting in an overall negative impact on development²³. Unless GCC government are able to provide the opportunities that the emerging youth will be looking for in the coming years, this trend could also begin to manifest itself more clearly in the rich oil-producing countries of the Gulf.

While the labour migration into the Gulf states represents its own distinct problem, it also has to be realized that the extent is probably more dramatic than the official statistics reveal. If one takes the example of the United Arab Emirates, in addition to the large number of people entering the country for employment purposes, the issue of illegal immigration exacerbates the problem even further.

(22) See Mai Yamani, *Changed Identities: The Challenge of a New Generation in Saudi Arabia* (London: Royal Institute for International Affairs, 2000), 84.

(23) UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2003*.

During the years 2001 to 2002, there were 54,888 infiltrators captured by the internal security forces, 14,617 people caught by the Coast Guard (2001 only) and 101,503 people deported for illegal residence²⁴. The typical person caught was an Asian male in the 18 to 35 years old job seeking category, thus representing precisely that category that is currently competing with the emerging national labour market.

There are two other issues that need to be briefly mentioned in this regard but which fall outside the scope of this paper. The first is the impact on youth from the vantage point of the emigrant, i.e. the person who seeks employe elsewhere for economic reasons and generally leaves behind his family in the home country. There can be no doubt that the children of the foreign labourer, growing up separated from their parent, usually the father, and largely left to their own devices to maintain the family left behind, are adversely affected by the migration into the Gulf states. This might be a point of departure for future research. The second is the impact of Gulf nationals who over the current generation have been raised to a large degree by foreign maids mostly from southeast Asia. While on the one hand, the current youth complain about the dilution of their national identities, this in turn is directly the result of the labour market practices of the past twenty years. One could suggest a correlation between the current increased radicalism and the overall breakdown of the family unit in terms of proper parental responsibilities and rearing practices. This again however should be the subject of more expanded and separate research.

3. Youth and Educational Opportunities

Due to the sense of competition in the labour market, a separate debate has also been initiated about both the access and the deficiencies within the educational system of the Arab Gulf States. This aspect has presented itself on several levels. For one, as Fuller points out, there exists a mismatch between the needs and requirements of the job market and the output of the respective educational systems, i.e. "... the education needs for growing numbers of Muslim youth are not being met"²⁵.

(24) Statistics according to the UAE Ministry of Interior Coast Guard Statistics and Follow-up and Monitoring Statistics 2001/2002.

(25) Fuller, "The Youth Factor: The New Demographics of the Middle East and the Implications for U.S. Policy," 13.

Despite the abundance of government income in the GCC states, education programs particularly at the university level remain underfunded. Thus, Saudi Arabia can only provide a university place for one-fifth of its applicants while even qualified candidates have recently been turned away in the UAE due to cost restrictions. And while there has been an effort underway in recent years to expand the capacity of education programs, this remains an uphill battle. As was shown above, the large percentage of youth within Gulf societies ensures a level of demand that any government however willing has difficulty in meeting.

A second problem is the fact that with a rising expatriate middle class in the Gulf, the competition over available educational opportunities has increased. Thus again, national youth are competing with expatriates in critical fields. In conjunction with the rise of private institutions, those at the public level remain either insufficiently funded or their curriculum does not meet expected standards, which exacerbates the situation. As a result, national youth venture into the private sector education field because it is at this level that they receive the education that they seek. Third, the demands for more educational services leads to a further influx in expatriate teachers thereby maintaining the existing imbalance in the labour market as covered extensively above. When Saudi Arabia announced its new policy of introducing English as part of the curriculum into secondary school, it quickly became apparent that such a shift would require the import of more than 50,000 new teachers into the kingdom. All of the other GCC states are facing a similar dilemma.

The example of the United Arab Emirates proves illustrative when combining the issues of youth populations, expatriates vs. nationals and labour market and educational opportunities. In the UAE, the number of youth nationals increased from 181,000 in 1995 to a projected 262,000 in 2005 and a further 290,000 by the year 2010. In terms of youth foreigners, there were 522,000 in the country in 1995 with projected increases to 842,000 by the year 2005 and 913,000 by 2010. Youth constitute a major part of the immigrant community to the country, most of them young males from developing countries. Most of those are of the prime age of starting their work careers and entering the labour market, therefore competing with the national youth for available job opportunities. For the state, the problem is more multifaceted as the increasing numbers of youth have to be accommodated with expansion in secondary and higher education and with employment opportunities when they graduate from school. The youths also need to be trained on specific skills to engage in productive activities. Moreover, as youths move up the age scale, their demands will change according their

shifting social and economic status. One particular aspect is the fact that the current young generation is much more exposed than the previous ones to foreign cultures. They derive their knowledge and information not only from surrounding family and community environments, but also from the world at large through the media and the Internet. In order to address these concerns, the UAE has been contemplating a comprehensive youth strategy that takes into account these dimensions. The realization that the capacities of youth-related institutions need to be developed is gaining ground throughout the country. But as experience has shown, and in particular as far as education is concerned, these are generational issues that do not necessarily respond to a sudden shift in policy or are prone to easy adjustment.

4. Migration in the Gulf and its Impact on Youth

Education and labour market pressures are the two main areas in which migration patterns display a direct impact on the current status and future development of youth in the GCC states. While there are no doubt other aspects that in one way or another also reflect on certain youth

communities, whether a certain age group within the national community or in terms of a different impact on national and expatriate youth for example, it is in the fields examined here that the impact have been felt the most direct. The end result is a double-edged sword with youth exposed to numerous pressures emanating out of a wide variety of situation in which there are no easy policy prescriptions. Certainly, as far as the national youth population is concerned, there are no easy answers as their demand for better and broader job and educational opportunities will be directly coupled to their ability to engage themselves and take advantage of the prospects that are provided. In order, however, to avoid having the rising youth population also becoming a largely disgruntled and explosive one, it is essential for the governments of the GCC states to institute far-reaching funding programs that allow for proper educational opportunities coupled with a curriculum that prepares the incoming generation for the labour market challenges of the future. With the boom in the Gulf continuing, there is no sign that labour migration patterns are about to undergo a significant shift. In such an environment, it is all the more necessary that additional resources are made available so that the indigenous population can withstand the increasing pressures towards which they will be exposed in the coming years.