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## **Literature Survey and Bibliography on Fertility in**

### **Qatar and the GCC**

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## I. Literature Survey

Fertility has attracted the interest of scholars and policy makers seeking to understand the determinants of fertility and formulate appropriate theories and models tested in different parts of the world. In contrast with efforts made to understand the transition of fertility in many parts of the world, demography is still understudied in the GCC countries. This is all the more remarkable as the region is undergoing profound demographic change and rapid social transformation even as it retains strategic significance. In addition to paucity in academic contributions, the limited nature of publicly available demographic data in the GCC countries constitutes a major hindrance for studying fertility changes in the region. The absence of longitudinal and transversal data renders any quantitative or qualitative research very difficult to undertake and hinders empirical and in-depth demographic research on fertility issues. Moreover, that the GCC countries do not have surveys of DHS type,<sup>1</sup> Pan Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM)<sup>2</sup> or fertility surveys of World Fertility Survey (WFS) type<sup>3</sup> complicates the task of undertaking comprehensive demographic studies. No national survey on fertility has indeed been conducted in any of the six Gulf countries.

### 1. Fertility Theories and Analytical Framework

Several models have been put forward to explain fertility patterns based on the argument that social, economic, cultural, political, and demographic variables can affect fertility in different ways.

#### a. “Intergenerational Wealth Flows” Theory

Caldwell's wealth flow theory (1976) proposes that the economic value of children and the direction of transfer flows determine one incentive for childbearing. Fertility decline is in fact related to the changing direction in the net intergenerational transfers, and more particularly to changes in the family's internal economic structure (economies of familial production). In primitive and traditional societies in which children were assets to the family, high fertility was economically advantageous and rational. The flow of wealth was thus directed from children to parents. When the direction of this net flow of wealth<sup>4</sup> changes (meaning a flow from parents to children), low fertility becomes economically rational. The direction of this flow will also change when the family is largely nucleated both emotionally and economically. The emotional bond between husband and wife (or “emotional nucleation”) constitutes thus a central force shaping the transition from unlimited childbearing to fertility limitation (Caldwell 1982). Emotional and economic nucleation can be brought about by importing a different type of culture – notably westernization – implying the European concept of family relationships and obligations with strong ties between husband and wife, and concentration of concern and expenditure on one's own children.

#### b. New Home Economics

Gary Becker has largely contributed to family and household economics. In his economic theory of fertility choice (Becker 1960), children are analogous to consumer durables (such as cars or houses). Becker argues that as income increases, households substitute fewer children of higher quality for more children of fewer quality. The concept of a quantity-versus-quality trade-off is thus important in fertility choice. As households get richer, for the most part, they do not buy larger numbers of cars or houses, but instead go for

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1

<http://dhsprogram.com/Where-We-Work/Country-List.cfm>

2

<http://www.papfam.org/index.php/en/component/content/article/31>

3

<https://opr.princeton.edu/archive/wfs/>

4

"Wealth flows" are defined as the money, goods, services and guarantees that one individual provides to another.

higher quality. On this basis, Becker concludes that the income elasticity for child quality (spending per child) should be high whereas the elasticity of quantity (number of children) should be low: if child quality increases (more spending per child), increasing quantity (more children) becomes more expensive. Conversely, if quantity increases, increasing quality also becomes more costly, because the spending on quality accrues for each child.

### **c. Institutional Approach**

Most fertility analysis refer to individual or family-level behaviour. However, fertility is also influenced by broader institutional setting and by patterns of social control located above the family. Fertility behaviour takes place within a particular institutional and cultural environment and responds to changes in that environment. McNicoll (2001) offered a broader view on political demography, and his approach explores the ways institutional settings can influence the fertility decision-making environment facing individuals. His argument starts from the assumption that a person does not experience this environment as a whole, but as a series of domains within each of which behaviour is adaptive, that is (subjectively) rational. This perceived environment establishes the premises of the relevant decisions.

### **d. Gender Equity Theories**

“Gender equity” theories provide a framework for understanding fertility decisions in the current socio-economic context. According to this approach, fertility rates in modern societies depend on the coherence between education and career opportunities that are available to women and their ability to exploit them. In the past, the majority of women were segregated in the role of housewives and they did not have the same education and employment opportunities as men. In such a context, they were not exposed to conflicting expectations, and high fertility rates were the norm. Today, in many countries experiencing very low fertility rates, women’s access to education and jobs is almost equal to men. Yet, in order to fully exploit these opportunities, they may be forced to renounce or reduce their fertility goals. As McDonald (2000) explains it: “if women are provided with opportunities nearly equivalent to those of men in education and market employment, but these opportunities are severely curtailed by having children, then, on average, women will restrict the number of children that they have to an extent that leaves fertility at a precariously low, long term level”.

The attractiveness of gender equity theories lies in their ability to account both for the generalized decline in fertility rates over the last thirty years or so, and for the reversal observed in some countries since the 1990s. The decline is accounted for with reference to growing incoherence between women’s opportunities and the ability to exploit them, which remains high in some countries (Southern Europe). The reversal, most notably in the Nordic countries, is explained through the adoption of women and family friendly social policies and labour market practices which allow Nordic women to exploit their career.” Macro-level studies comparing fertility rates across countries have shown that today’s higher fertility rates are related to higher rates of female employment and to the presence of family-friendly policies, in particular child care.

### **e. Political Demography: A Link between Migration, Fertility, and Identity**

Demographers have developed powerful tools for analysing and projecting population trends using the so-called “demographic transition” (first mortality then fertility decline). Yet, international migration attracted only limited attention and was never addressed intensively. Teitelbaum and Winter (1998) showed how fertility, migration and issues of national identity intersect in North America and Europe according to a nation’s institutions and traditions. Their claim is that nearly every developed nation in the 1990s faces problems and tensions arising from specific demographic and political instabilities, notably the coupling of very low fertility rates with rising levels of volatile and unpredicted international migration. This “new fertility-migration nexus” characterises what the authors called the “migration generation,” a demographic shift that was troublesome because it coincided with momentous changes in the nature of the international political system such as the end of the Cold War, the construction of nation, and rising political significance of nationalism. Demographic movements intersected with highly charged debates about national identity.

Coleman (2006) proposed that international migration flows observed in low and very low fertility countries, and the consequences of this migration in terms of size and ethnic composition of the population, are seen as a new transitional movement, or a “Third Demographic Transition”. According to Coleman, the prerequisites for this “Third Demographic Transition” are the persistently low fertility levels, associated with high international migration rates. This combination results in a progressive increase of migrants and their descendants and the relative decline of the native population. The speed of the compositional change depends on the growth rates (i.e., fertility) of natives and migrants and the net migration into the country or region.

In *Population, fear and uncertainty, the global spread of fertility decline*, Murray and Teitelbaum (2013) considered that the old notion of “modernization” - as the fundamental economic process driving fertility declines- is not longer sufficient basis for understanding fertility declines, and that politics is what matters in this domain. Politics, “from the family to the neighbourhood to the town to the city to the region to the state”, is thus an integral part of the demographic history. Political decisions that promote or discourage marriage and childbearing, facilitate or discourage contraception and abortion, and stimulate or restrain immigration, all have played significant roles in recent trends. Instead of economic determinism, the authors emphasized the significance of *uncertainty* -political, social and economic uncertainty- in the history of fertility decline, situating the perception of risk at the centre of fertility decision and childbearing.

## f. Proximate Determinants Model

Bongaarts' model examines the relative contributions of proximate determinants to fertility change (contraceptive prevalence, marriage pattern, induced abortion, and postpartum infecundability). The four proximate determinants are considered to be **inhibitors of fertility**, because their action means that fertility is lower than its theoretical maximum. Fertility is indeed lower than its maximum because of delayed marriage and marital disruption; use of contraception; induced abortion; and postpartum infecundability due to breastfeeding and postpartum abstinence.<sup>5</sup>

The relation between TFR and the inhibitors of fertility is expressed in the following equation:

$$\text{TFR} = \text{TF} \times \text{Cm} \times \text{Ci} \times \text{Ca} \times \text{Cc}$$

where: TFR = total fertility rate / TF = total fecundity rate / Cm = index of marriage  
Ci = index of postpartum infecundability / Ca = index of abortion / Cc = index of contraception

The value of each index ranges between 0 and 1; the lesser the index value, the greater the inhibiting effect of the variable. Analysis of the relative contribution of the various proximate determinants of fertility could have important policy implications for countries. One objective is for instance to notice if the rise in contraceptive prevalence, breastfeeding or marriage is leading to fertility decline over the period, and to notice which determinant is the most (and the least) important proximate determinant of fertility.

## g. Theory of life course and transition to adulthood

Theories related to life course and transition to adulthood are also important to consider in analysing the fertility and childbearing domains. The concept of early adulthood, sometimes called *emerging adulthood*, as a life stage was developed in the early 2000s, as observers noted the longer time that young people were taking to complete the transition to adulthood. A dramatic lengthening of the transition to adulthood occurred as more young people attended colleges and graduate schools, postponed marriage, and remained in their parents' homes into their twenties. Arnett (2004) is the first author to propose a full theory on emerging adulthood, or the age period from the late teens through the mid- to late 20s, explaining that this category (ages 18-25) struggle with 'identity exploration, instability, self focus and feeling in between', characterized also by a reevaluation of the parent-child relationship and sexual relationships.

More particularly, the place of marriage in the transition to adulthood has changed. Fusternberg (2010) explained that a half-century ago, when typical ages at marriage were much lower and cohabitation and non-marital childbearing were less socially acceptable, getting married was an important step early in the transition. Today, marriage occurs later in the transition. Studying the American case, the author argued that Americans currently see both having children and marrying as less central to becoming an adult. More important now are other markers such as achieving financial independence, completing one's education, and working full time, and being able to support a family. For Fusternberg (2010), the advent of the 'post modern family' has been marked by sharp increases in women's labor force participation, a gradual breakdown of the gender-based division of labor, a precipitous fertility decline (owing in part to postponement of marriage and parenthood and in part to the growing number of childless couples), and rising rates of divorce, cohabitation, and nonmarital childbearing. Fusternberg examined how the Western, and most particularly the American, family is affecting and, in turn, being affected by the newly extended social timetable for entering adulthood.

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[http://papp.iussp.org/sessions/papp101\\_s05/PAPP101\\_s05\\_040\\_020.html](http://papp.iussp.org/sessions/papp101_s05/PAPP101_s05_040_020.html)

## 2. Gulf Literature on Fertility, Marriage, and Family

*[This section discusses literature on fertility, marriage and family in the Gulf published since 2000.*

*Publications previously are included in the reference section but for reasons of readability and space are not discussed here.]*

Fertility studies on the Gulf countries suffer from a real paucity, especially in comparison to the more abundant literature on Gulf migration. Few comparative studies were conducted in the region during the last decade, with very limited recent studies on GCC fertility. No fertility studies are actually available on Qatar, whereas studies on marriage have been more abundant since 2014.

### **a. Fertility Studies: Trends, Levels, and Differentials**

Most fertility studies on Gulf countries are concerned by explaining the main socio-economic variables that determine fertility levels, with a special look into the relation of women's education and fertility. Al Kandari (2007) examined the impact of socio-cultural variables on Kuwaiti women's fertility, noticing that fertility was higher among Sunni Muslim women, those of Bedouin ethnicity, and those in a consanguineous marriage. Dorvlo, Bakheit, Al-Riyami, Morsi and Al-Adawi (2006) examined fertility patterns of ever-married women in Oman, studying the relation between age, education, residence, and fertility rate and change between 1994/95 and 1999/2000 using data from the Oman National Health Survey (2000). The study confirmed that the higher the education of the woman the lower her fertility, and that fertility is on the decline in Oman. Islam, Dorvlo, Ahmed and Al Qasmi (2011) examined also in their paper the proximate determinants of declining fertility in Oman in the 1990s based on the Oman National Health Survey (2000), delivering a mathematical study on the main determinants of fertility based on the Bongaarts framework. The results indicated that two most important mechanisms of fertility decline in Oman are the decrease in the age-specific proportions of women who are married, followed by an increase in contraceptive use. Women education and employment are likely factors that encourage couples to delay marriage and use modern family planning methods and thus reduce marital fertility. Kraif, Abdul Salam, Mutairi, Elsegaey and Jumaah (2017) studied the education's impact on fertility in Saudi Arabia. Conducted with university women in King Saud university, the study revealed that education, explained as the 'best contraceptive', plays a vital role on fertility. Education has high predictive value on age at marriage, age of husband at marriage, ideal family size, and contraceptive use. Although not predictive, it creates variations on number of children, years lived with husband and intended number of children. "The route of education in this high income academic community reflects its route to fertility control under high socio-economic conditions". Thus, the improving educational levels at current pace shall bring down fertility remarkably warranting attention, policy measures and population programs to retain it above the replacement level. A recent contribution to fertility has come from the study of Al Awad and Chartouni (2010) which seeks to determine the main factors that have contributed to fertility decline in the UAE. Using the 2008 UAE Household Expenditure Survey, the study concluded that economic factors are not important determinants of fertility, due to the large size of social insurance provided by the UAE government. In addition, labour market participation does not play a critical role in determining fertility in the UAE. The two principal causes of fertility drop are late marriages or late first births, and higher levels of female education. On the other hand, the size of household residences and number of domestic workers working in a household contribute positively to fertility. The study concluded that encouraging earlier marriages and promoting marriages can be very successful in raising fertility by increasing the numbers of years available to conceive children. Policies that encourage female labour force participation should also be implemented as a female's employment status is not a very important determinant of fertility. According to the authors, it might, on the contrary, offset in part the reduction in the labour force that results from reduction in fertility among nationals. These policies could be directed towards increasing maternity benefits, offering part time jobs in private and public sector, and providing suitable nursing facilities in large working centres. Alnuaimi and Poston (2009) are among the first to examine the effect of polygyny on fertility in an oil-rich country still characterised by relatively traditional norms regarding marriage and the roles of women. The results confirmed the hypothesis of a positive effect of polygyny on fertility among Emirati women. One of the main questions is whether polygyny might become a component in a UAE population policy to increase the fertility of UAE nationals.

In addition, studies on Arab fertilities are useful to be introduced in the present research, as fertility rates in some Arab countries are experiencing paradoxical patterns compared to Gulf fertility. As explained by Courbage (2015), fertility in Egypt was decreasing until 2005, but has recently started to increase. Algeria's fertility has also been steadily increasing (a 26% increase since 2000). But in contradiction with most large Arab countries, fertility has continued to decrease in Oman and in Kuwait. The author asked if a stalling or



reversal of demographic transition signals halt modernization, paving the way to the persistence or the return of traditional families, rigid social structures and authoritarian regimes? For Courbage, a promising avenue of research should look at the labor market situation, particularly female employment. “Fertility decrease might be ephemeral, if female educational progresses, even at secondary and university level, are not supported by the entry of women into the labor force with rewarding jobs. Women could soon return to the status of housewives, with the temptation to marry early and have more children”.

### **b. Studies on Population Policies, Fertility preferences and the Role of the State**

Efforts to understand population policies in the rich and pro-natalist GCC countries have attracted little attention. In his book on political demography, Winckler (2009) gave an overview of the Arab fertility and the population policies, notably regarding the Gulf pro-natalist measures. Drysdale (2010) examined the population policies in Oman, focusing on the birth spacing programme implemented in 1994. Safar (2013, 2015) described pro-natalist measures in Kuwait compared with the family planning (birth spacing programme) in Oman, showing the shift in the official ideal toward a small, Muslim, and ‘modern’ Omani family. Belwal and Belwal (2104) analysed family-friendly policies (FFPs) in Oman by studying employers perspectives of working women. Family-Friendly Policies aim to help employees manage their family responsibilities, create flexible-work conditions and enable women to perform better on both domestic and work fronts. By resorting to in-depth interviews of selected top-level managers from government, public, and private sector organizations, this study informed Oman lacks a clear-cut policy on FFPs and recommended that Governmental interventions are needed to direct organizations to classify some jobs as ‘Family Friendly’. The study outcomes help senior management and policy makers in understanding the importance of FFPs in employing women. Adherence to FFPs in employment policies can help women reduce their juggling between home and work life and increase their motivation and productivity. This research suggested ways of dealing with work-life balance-related issues, especially from the employers’ perspectives. These insights would help policy makers in shaping the employment policies of the Sultanate, especially for working women.

Besides that, a few studies have discussed the Arab and Gulf reproductive behaviours. Arbab, Bener and Abdulmalik (2011) examined the prevalence, awareness, and determinants of contraceptive use among Qatari women. They determined the knowledge of, attitude to and practice of contraception and the associated socio-demographic factors among a representative sample of 1,130 Qatari married women aged 18–49 years. Knowledge of contraception increased with increasing levels of education but decreased the lower the household income. Only 47.8% women were currently using contraceptives, which was significantly associated with age, husband’s age, years of marriage, education level, income level and attitude to family planning. The most commonly known and used contraceptives were intrauterine device and pills. Friends were the most common source of knowledge about family planning methods. In addition, Al Balushi, Ahmed, Islam and Khan (2016) studied the contraceptive method choices among women in Oman using data obtained from the 2008 Oman National Reproductive Health Survey (ONRHS). Multilevel analysis was conducted to investigate associations between individual and religion level characteristics and different type of contraceptive method and to obtain a better understanding of the factors associated with contraceptive method choices used by 15-49 years women in Oman. The results confirmed the importance of individual’s own characteristics have enduring effects on contraceptive method choices and for a given individual, contraceptive method choice varies across women’s age, education level and their number of living children.

### **c. Studies on Marriage**

Fertility is intimately linked to marriage in Arab societies where procreation happens exclusively within the marriage institution. Studies on marriage patterns in the Gulf remain nevertheless rare, although a growing body of literature on this issue occurred since 2014, especially for the case of Qatar.

Concerning Arab countries, Rashad, Osman and Roudi-Fahimi (2005) examined the marriage patterns in the region. Rashad (2015) analysed also the tempo and intensity of marriage in the Arab region, contributing to the knowledge base on the recent profiles and key challenges associated with them. The analysis suggested that the patriarchal system and gender dynamics are supporting the occurrence of three types of challenges (early marriage, delayed marriage and celibacy) that are not conducive to the wellbeing of a population, as well as translating themselves into possible neglect. The study also investigated the implications of the analysis on public policies and research. Salem (2016) analysed the gendered effects of labour market

experiences on marriage timing in Egypt. The paper investigated gender differences in the determinants of marriage timing, including employment history, job characteristics, education, and urban residence. The results indicated that, to some extent, never-married men who have favourable labour market experiences marry earlier. The same experiences bear no association with women's marriage timing. For men, being employed and having a public sector job are important economic prerequisites for marriage. Evidence indicated that Egyptian men with favourable labour market experiences attract a spouse and establish an independent household faster than others. The male breadwinner ideal is therefore a powerful force in dictating who marries when in Egypt today.

Roylance and Barlow (2015) used qualitative interviews with diplomats to the United Nations from Arab countries to help understand the decline, or delay, in family formation, and the resulting increase of single women in the 35–39 year age group in Arab countries. Several factors which seemed significant in reducing or delaying family formation are: higher rates of tertiary (college) education among women, reduced job availability for men, worry about the potential of divorce and the modernization or globalization of society. The authors have concluded that the biggest contributor to a decline, or delay, in marriage is a change of attitude about the importance of the family, and the value of a woman as a mother in society—created through modernization or globalization. The global focus on women's rights has tarnished the image of women as wives and mothers, and created a desire for an occupation and to escape from the considered "oppression" of the past generations. Other significant contributors to delayed marriage are the improved education of women, and depressed economies causing the lack of good employment for men. An educated Arab woman is now more interested in marrying a man who is better educated and can provide well for a family. The authors laud the improvement of education for women in Arab countries and believe that better educated men and women are key to the wellbeing of Arab societies. They concluded the study with a challenge to the leaders of Arab countries to re-awaken a focus on the importance of women as mothers, and show greater appreciation for the vital role they play in the society.

De Bel-Air (2012) analysed marriage patterns in the GCC countries, giving a comparative perspective on marriage dynamics in the region. Shah, Thalib and Al Ateeqi (2014) offered interesting conclusions on the relation between mortality and marriage, showing that at each age group among Kuwaiti nationals, widowed men and women have the highest mortality followed by divorced and never married. Among non-nationals, the patterns are more variable. In addition, a number of studies conducted in the Gulf on blood marriage (consanguinity) are useful to understanding fertility levels, due to a positive correlation observed in some studies between consanguinity and high fertility. Islam (2012) analysed the prevalence, trends, and determinants of consanguinity in Oman. Al-Arrayed and Hamamy (2012) explored the changing profile of consanguinity rates in Bahrain in 1990-2009. Increasing the literacy of the public and of the health care providers on prevention strategies for genetic diseases could have contributed to this decline in consanguinity rate in Bahrain. Harkness and Khaled (2014) examined the notion of "modern traditionalism" in Qatar, explaining the social process that shapes normative consanguineous marriage formation and progression. On the basis of in-depth interviews with men and women engaged or married to a cousin, they showed that Qatar's rapid modernisation has coincided with increased rates of endogamy. Also, the study of Sandridge, Takettin, Al-Kaabi and Frances (2010) on consanguinity in Qatar examined the knowledge, attitude, and practice in a population born between 1946 and 1991. The study of Kilshaw, Al Rasi and Alshaban (2015) on arranging marriage and negotiating risks considered how the globalised discourse of genetic risk in cousin marriage is shaped, informed and taken up in local moral worlds within the context of Qatar. The research demonstrated how risk, consanguinity, morality, and gender intersect to help Qatari citizens make decisions through kinship. However, amongst the younger population, it appeared that marrying in the family may no longer be the desired arrangement. With more opportunities for socialization between the sexes, younger Qataris are increasingly likely to meet and develop relationships. Increased exposure to biomedical discourse, particularly genetics, can alter society. "The younger generation may be seizing such information to provide support for marriage partner preference. Alternatively, the younger generation may be more exposed to the discourse of genetic risk through education, premarital screening and the media and, thus, it may be that they are more influenced by it". In this vein, Al Harbi, Al Shaia and Al Hamam (2015) studied the attitudes of Saudi Arabian adults towards consanguineous marriage and its associations with socio-demographic characteristics. Social and traditional culture were found to be the predominant reasons for favouring consanguinity in Saudi Arabia. One in every two Saudi adults favours consanguinity. However, Saudi men and women differ in their attitudes towards consanguinity. Receiving health information on consanguinity was associated with a negative attitude towards this practice. For its parts, Bakoush, Bredan and Denic (2016) analysed kin and non kin marriages and family structure in the United Arab Emirates. The respondents were 217 national medical students whose families are proportionally distributed to the population of the country emirates. The social status and mean size of consanguineous and non-consanguineous families were not significantly different. In non-consanguineous

families, polygamy was more common and the number of half-siblings per family was higher. The extended families were on average 7% larger among non-consanguineous families. In contrast, for the extended families of the participants' grandparents, non-consanguineous families were smaller than their consanguineous counterparts. Participants from consanguineous families indicated that marriage of either a son or daughter was more difficult to arrange than did participants from non-consanguineous families. Though consanguineous parents had their offspring marry consanguineously more often than non-consanguineous parents, the numbers of married offspring in the two groups of families were not different. Consanguineous parents have more difficulty than non-consanguineous parents in finding spouses for themselves and for their offspring, and they arranged kin marriages for their children more often. Studies on mixed marriages are also important to highlight while studying fertility. One of the first empirical study to analyse and outline the trends and patterns on mixed marriage among Qatari nationals has been published in 2015 (Al Harahshed, Modieddin and Almeer, 2015). The results of this study indicated that although the endogamous marriage is the main marriage pattern among the Qatari population, mixed marriage in Qatar is on the rise. For the authors, mixed marriage need to be a central focus for family policy because of its demographic, social, cultural and policy implications for Qatar, such as the high percentage of never married women and the decreasing fertility rate.

#### **d. Studies on Domestic Workers**

Studies on the role of domestic workers in building Gulf family are very rare, notably the relation between high fertility and the presence of domestic worker in the household. Shah, Badr and Makhdoom (2012) in their paper examined domestic workers as caretakers of older Kuwaiti men and women, analysing the main socio-demographic and health correlates. They found that domestic workers played a substantial role in providing assistance in activities of daily living and in providing care during illness. The reliance on domestic workers is increasing and such reliance will remain necessary in the absence of culturally acceptable alternative institutional arrangements. An inquiry into the reality of domestic work in the UAE and the life of domestic workers was conducted by Sabban (2012).

#### **e. Family and Women Studies in the Middle East**

In the book *The Gulf Family: Kinship Policies and Modernity* edited by Alanoud (2007), some chapters related to marriage and family gave interesting insights on family dynamics in the Gulf. More theoretical and empirical studies on family demography in the Middle East are edited by Rashad and Yount (2008). Hasso (2011) analysed the family crisis and the state in the Middle East, concentrating on Egypt and the UAE. Al Barwani (2007) studied this topic in the Omani context.

In addition, literature on the notion of patriarchy and women's status help understanding the reproductive behaviours, family building, and gender roles inside the conjugal unit. In her book *Patriarchy in Transition: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East*, Moghadam (2013) explored fertility in transitional Arab societies from a social perspective. In her anthropological study. Le Renard (2014) and Al Rasheed (2013) examined social changes in Saudi society; and Bristol-Rhys (2010) studied changes in marriage, education, and family of Emirati women. Also, divorce in the Gulf has been analysed by a few studies notably by Al Munajjed (2009) and Al Kazi (2008), while polygamy had been examined by Yamani (2008) on Saudi Arabia. Wang and Kassam (2016) studied college students' attitudes toward love, marriage and family. In the UAE. Changes occurring in the social institutions of marriage and family, which are central to Emirati society, reflect shifting attitudes toward traditional gender roles and gender relations that inform some of the essential norms and values in Emirati society. The paper drew on data from a survey of college students enrolled in the American University of Sharjah, focusing on their attitudes toward love, marriage, and family — including mate selection, polygamy, family size, and women's participation in the workplace. Arab Emiratis were found to be more likely to conform to "traditional" norms than non-Arab Emiratis or Arab and Asian expatriates, although Arab Emirati women displayed more "modern" values than their male counterparts. This study explains shifting gender relations in Emirati society and will hopefully enable social scientists and policy makers to forecast future changes in the UAE. Golkowska (2014) studied how new identities are being forged and social roles re-negotiated in Qatar. This article asked how young Qatari women's personal stories fit into the national narrative of change and gender equality, and what they see as the best path to agency and empowerment. The discussion revolved around the issues of education, employment, political participation, and empowerment. Al Muftah (2010) examined the organizational constraints to the advancement of women in Qatar. Although Qatari females have increased their economic participation and reached remarkable educational attainment over the last decade, this has not been paralleled with good representation at management position. The study revealed that Qatari females are still

very lowly represented at senior management levels although they have made good progress at medium and lower levels of management. Gender-specific as females' family commitments was reported as the main constrain to their promotion from the males' perspective and gender-difference as uncertainty of real increased responsibilities and authorities level were the main constraint to females' promotion from the females' perspective. The study ends by recommending, "on the absence of major organizational discrimination, that greater inclusiveness of Qatari females in decision- making positions and greater accountability of organization to advance females should be considered critically in order to ensure the ease advancement of Qatari females to the top". Other studies have also been concerned by the constraints Qatari women are facing in balancing work and family. Shockley (2016) investigated the gender gap in political interest in Qatar, incorporating factors such as education, income, marital status, age and generational effects. It also incorporated religiosity, beliefs about traditional gender roles, and the impact of social media and Twitter usage as predictors of political interest. Nationally representative survey data from the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute from 2011 to 2014 were used to examine attitudes of political interest. Results indicated that gender gaps are persistent in spite of significant progress made by women in this area. Education and age are consistent predictors of political interest, followed by weaker positive effects for social media activities. In her article, Mitchell, Paschyn, Mir, Pike and Kane (2015) stated also that Qatari state needs more information about the drivers and obstacles of Qatari women's engagement and empowerment in order to help women balance work-life commitments and ensure successful personal and professional lives. By studying the opinions and choices of Qatari women in *majaalis al-hareem* (women's gatherings), the research offered a contribution on female participation in public and private life in the Arab Gulf. The research revealed "the conflict between, on the one hand, Qatari women's increased ability to pursue higher education and enter the public sphere through participation in the workforce or political arena and, on the other hand, traditional social norms and attitudes that prioritize domestic life—a conflict that necessitates complex personal and professional choices for Qatari women today". The findings made clear the importance of supporting both the personal and professional needs of Qatari women. "With fuller support from both government and society, Qatari women will be able to make the best individual choices for themselves, whether these choices involve pursuing higher education, entering the public sphere through the workforce or political arena, and/or maintaining a strong family structure". Although creating this support is a gradual process, the authors highlighted some policy solutions that the government could implement quickly: implementing gender quotas in Qatarization policies, equalizing salary benefits for married couples, increasing family- friendly policies and childcare facilities in the workplace and the higher education system, strengthening the rates of Qatari men graduating from higher education, and awarding citizenship to the children of Qatari mothers.

Finally, James-Hawkins, Qutteina and Yount (2016) analysed the *patriarcal bargain* in Qatar by studying normative gender roles and women's role conflict. Interviews with 27 18–25 year-old Qatari women enrolled in college in Qatar were used to illustrate the conflict between norms about education, workforce and family, and how the patriarchal bargain influences young women's aspirations as they transition to adulthood in a context of rapid economic, social, and cultural change. The authors found that women have aspirations for higher education and employment but simultaneously hold customary norms about the family. Thus, young women are in a quandary, caught between social expectations to become a wife and mother and pursuit of personal educational and workforce goals. "Competing ideals shaped women's aspirations and choices in different ways and were, at least in part, reactions to fear of future family instability and perceived rising divorce rates in Qatar". The authors called the Qatari government to revisit the appropriateness of continuing to emphasize the patriarchal family structure and socially conservative family norms, if they desire to advance women in their society.

### 3. National Surveys and Censuses in the GCC

Historical and actual demographic data in all GCC countries have numerous gaps and do not provide a full comparative and comprehensive analysis of fertility across time and space. The unique comparative sources of fertility and marriage data are two national surveys on reproductive behaviours, the *Child Health Survey* conducted during 1987-88 (see below 1.2.3.a) and the *Gulf Family Health Survey* conducted during 1995-98 (see below 1.2.3.b), presenting data on reproductive health, fertility behaviours, and marriage patterns across the GCC countries. Censuses have also been conducted in each of the GCC countries (see below 1.2.3.c).

### **a. Child Health Survey**

The *Child Health Survey* was designed to provide the Ministry of Health and research or policy studies centres with factual data that can be used in the evaluation of ongoing health programmes as well as in the formulation of new health policies and programmes. The survey was conducted during 1987-88 as part of the *Gulf Child Health Survey* programme (GCHS), using the standardised set of model questionnaires. The *Child Health Survey* was conducted in Qatar (1987), United Arab Emirates (1991), Bahrain (1989), Saudi Arabia (1987-88), Kuwait (1991) and Oman (1988-1989).

### **b. Family Health Survey**

The *Gulf Family Health Survey* (GFHS) was conducted during 1995-98 by the Ministry of Health as part of the *Gulf Family Health Project* (GFHP), which is being executed by the Executive Board of the Council of Health Ministers of GCC states, in collaboration with the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organisations and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

The relevance of the GFHS lies in the data it provides on health status, and on equity in health and health care that cannot sufficiently or efficiently be collected by other methods. The report gathered data needed for measuring indicators for family health and child health. The GFHS was initiated in 1994 to alleviate the lack of detailed information on the patterns and determinants of family health and reproductive health in the region. The findings from this research programme make a significant contribution to meeting this shortfall; they give even greater relevance to the family health objectives that Gulf countries committed themselves to achieve on the road towards health for all and equity in health and health care. It is a nationally representative household sample survey. The survey was conducted in Qatar (1998), Kuwait (1995), UAE (1996), Oman (1995), Saudi Arabia (1996-97), and Bahrain (1995).

### **c. Census**

Regular censuses have been conducted in some Gulf countries. In 2010, each GCC country (except the UAE) conducted a census as a major move for harmonizing data.

Table 1 Censuses in GCC Countries	
Country	Censuses (Years)
Bahrain	1941, 1950, 1959, 1965, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2010
Kuwait	1957, 1961, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1995, 2005, 2011
Qatar	1970, 1986, 1997, 2004, 2010
UAE	1968, 1971 (Abu Dhabi), 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2005
Saudi Arabia	1962/63, 1974, 1992, 2004, 2010
Oman	1993, 2003, 2010

### **d. Vital Statistics**

Vital statistics are based on the continuous record of births, marriages, divorces and deaths by age and sex. In countries where registration is complete, vital statistics are the most important source of data on the natural growth of the population. Combined with population censuses, they make it possible to precisely describe and analyse population trends and to carry out population projections.

#### 4. International Surveys

Demographic data published by international institutions (United Nations, Arab League, World Bank)<sup>6</sup> on fertility rates in the Gulf countries need to be treated with circumspection. These data do not actually reflect the demographic behaviours of the nationals because they deal with the total population in the countries without distinction between national and foreign populations. In countries like Kuwait, Qatar, or the UAE where foreigners constitute more than half of the total population and where these foreigners are generally (much) less fecund than nationals, it becomes risky, even incorrect, to rely exclusively on international sources to understand national evolutions. These data situate fertility of some GCC countries close to the replacement level (estimated at 2.1 children), whereas the fertility of nationals is much higher. International statistics tend therefore to erase local specificities and underestimate the real levels of fertility among nationals. For instance, international sources on Kuwait (such as *World Fertility Patterns 2013*) provide a total fertility rate (TFR) of 2.0 children per woman in 1995-2000<sup>7</sup>, an average which actually combines an extremely low TFR amongst foreign-nationals with a well above-replacement level TFR amongst Kuwaiti nationals (close to 4.0 children per woman) as demonstrated by further analyses.

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6

The World Health Report; World Population Data Sheet, Demographic Yearbook; World Fertility report, etc.

7

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/fertility/world-fertility-patterns-2013.pdf>

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