GROWTH OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND BUREAUCRACY IN KUWAIT

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This paper aims at studying the phenomenon of increasing public expenditure and growth of bureaucracy in Kuwait. The study attempts to assess the impact of certain macro and micro factors on public expenditure through statistical analysis. The findings show a very strong positive correlation between public expenditure and certain micro factors such as expansion of education and health services. There is also a positive relation between public expenditure and such macro factors as per capita income and population. However, this correlation is not as strong as with the micro factors. The study suggests six groups of factors that may have been responsible for the growth in public expenditure which is not explained by the micro factors specified above. In the light of this evidence, the paper puts forward some recommendations and points out certain areas for future study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing public expenditure and growth of bureaucracy at rates that surpass those in many of the advanced as well as developing countries constitute a serious phenomenon in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, including Kuwait (Nasser, 1977; El Sheikh, 1972; Central Bank, 1981 and 1985). This situation has been aggravated by the fluctuation in oil prices and the increasing demand on the state's financial resources after the evil invasion of Kuwait. In view of the similarity of the Gulf countries' economies and of the challenges they face, a study of one of these countries may serve as a basis for studying the others. It is true, of course, that there are some differences in the structure of these economies, but these differences will by no means affect the validity of the findings to be generalized in respect of the other GCC countries. Selecting Kuwait as a case study for an in-depth investigation to generalize the findings for the other Gulf countries is justified by the fact that Kuwait represents the average Gulf state in terms of the size of economy, population, and area. In addition, as the availability of accumulated data is a fundamental factor in the accuracy of analysis and the validity of conclusions, Kuwait is the most suitable case for this study, since more data is available in its case.

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Increases in public expenditure in Kuwait, as in all other GCC countries, constitute a major challenge to the national economy and is cause of constant concern for policy-makers. This is evident from the average rate of increase in the annual government expenditure in Kuwait which amounted to 11.83% during the period 1962/63 to 1988/89. This average rate of increase is more than the corresponding rate in most of the countries (Rowat, 1990). Moreover, the cost of public administration has been soaring as manifested by the fact that the average ratio of public expenditure to GNP increased from 24.06% during the period 1970/76 to 47.71% during the period 1984/89. This high rate of increase is much more evident in the share of public sector wages and salaries in the GNP which increased from 8.5% in 1975 to 11.6% in 1985 at a rate of change of 36.5% which is more than any such rate in advanced countries (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

SHARE OF PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES AND SALARIES IN GNP IN KUWAIT COMPARED TO THOSE IN ADVANCED COUNTRIES

Country	**1975**	**1985**	**Rate of Change (%)**
Kuwait	8.5	11.6	36.5
France	6.3	8.1	28.6
Switzerland	1.3	1.5	5.5
U. K.	6.2	5.2	-16.1

Source: IMF, Financial Year-Book for years 1976, 1986.

In spite of the importance of the phenomenon of increasing public expenditure and growth of bureaucracy and its impact on the political, social and economic situation in the GCC countries, including Kuwait, it has not received due attention in research. This highlights the need for a study such as this. Moreover, it is one of the basic principles of Islamic economics to direct financial resources to priority areas, and to prevent squandering of resources and extravagance on both the individual and the state levels. Hence this topic should be accorded a high priority in research and analysis from Islamic perspective.

Though many governmental reports in Kuwait (Central Bank, 1985; Supreme Council of Planning, 1990) have tackled the problem of the growth of bureaucracy and public expenditure, they only diagnosed the ailment and were short on prescribing the remedy. Similarly, though some research papers on this topic (El Sheikh, 1972; Nasser, 1977; Abdul Khalik, 1987) have drawn attention to this increase in public expenditure, they have neither probed it in-depth nor made a thorough analysis of its causes.

In the literature, many studies dealing with the growth of bureaucracy and public expenditure were conducted in industrial countries, especially after the Second World War (Peacock and Wiseman, 1961; Lowe, 1984; Downs, 1967; Crozier, 1964). Researchers at first focussed on demand side or the impact of the increase in the demand for services (e.g. Wagner and Weber, 1966), stating that growth of public expenditure is associated with change in the demand for services, which in turn change due to the change in the income per capita, population, etc. It is argued that public expenditure grows faster than demand for services or has income elasticity greater than one, and consequently, public expenditure increases by more than the cost of services provided by the bureaucracy.

Peacock and Wiseman (Peacock and Wiseman, 1961) have explored the supply side of the equation in their displacement effect hypothesis. They argued that the supply of public revenues is limited by the level of taxation which could be disturbed by the occurrence of war. Such disturbance increases the power of bureaucracy and provides it with permanent and continuous expansion. Therefore, public expenditure increases with the increase of taxes levied in these countries. This postulate has come into vogue with the emergence of the theories of public choice or budget maximization (Niskanen, 1971; Jackson, 1983) and the transaction cost theory (Williamson, 1964) which highlight that the cost of public services is higher than the intrinsic cost of such services due to the increase in the cost of transactions. These theories are based on certain assumptions e.g., the availability of tax resources, the existence of trade unions, negotiations on wage contracts and complicated systems of contracts and transactions. They also assume the existence of a certain financial system and structure.

Many of these hypothesis are not appropriate in the case of the GCC countries, and in particular in that of the State of Kuwait. The relevance of per capita income in Wagner's law to GCC countries is absent since these countries develop rapidly with their per capita incomes doubling or tripling in one year. As such, per capita income is an inappropriate index of economic development. On the other hand, the supply side is not applicable since tax systems are marginal or completely absent in GCC countries. Hence, these theories cannot be used to explain the phenomenon of increasing expenditure in Kuwait and other GCC countries.

There are others who attempt to explain the phenomenon of increasing public expenditure based on the classical theory of government, where the authority is vested in the people, and the public policies of expenditure reflect the Black's median voter theme (Black, 1958), the models of voters (Meltzer and Richard, 1978), the interest group behaviour (Bush and Denzau, 1977) or the legislative decision making (Fiorina and Noli, 1978). The assumptions underlying these theories are in general not applicable to Kuwait and the GCC countries because of difference in social and political institutions and absence of strong interest groups as compared to the Western countries.

Cameron's theory, (Cameron, 1978) which assumes that public expenditure is associated with the degree of openness of the economy (measured by the ratio of total imports to GNP), also does not apply to Kuwait. We have found that the openness of the economy is the least important of the factors responsible for the increase in public expenditure (see Table 5). What is common in all these theories and models is that they assume social, political and economic values and structures that are not prevalent in the GCC countries, including Kuwait. Therefore, using them to justify the increasing public expenditure would be unrealistic. It follows then that we should identify other factors that may have an association with public expenditure in order to provide an intrinsic explanation of the growth of bureaucracy in Kuwait, an explanation that can also be applied to other GCC countries.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

This paper aims at finding out specific answers to the following questions: Is it valid to use the models and theories available in the literature to explain the phenomenon of increasing public expenditure and growth of bureaucracy in Kuwait? What are the causes of growth in public expenditure in Kuwait? Is this growth justifiable? If not, what suggestions can be made in this regard?

As we have stated, the current theories aimed at explaining the phenomenon of increasing public expenditure and growth of bureaucracy* do not apply to the case of

* There are various definitions of the term bureaucracy. In the present study, the term refers to all the governmental organs that aim at achieving the objectives of development. It does not include the

Kuwait, owing to the difference in the social and economic values and structures. In view of this shortcoming, this study aims at identifying the causes of this growth and the factors that are particular to the case of Kuwait. After identifying the real causes, their impact, individually or jointly, could be determined in a later study. Thereafter, necessary measures and action can be taken in order to improve the utilization of available financial resources by directing them to the important economic sectors.

judiciary and the military. The terms "civil service" and "public administration" are alternatively used to refer to bureaucracy in this study.

2.2 Methodology and Sources of Data

The methodology followed in this study is both statistical and analytical. It aims at measuring the regression coefficients between public expenditure and various macro and micro factors, in order to identify the areas where public expenditure can be justified and where it is a waste of resources.

The study is based on a set of data collected and processed by the author from the statistics issued by the Ministry of Planning, the Central Bank reports and the Budgets of the State of Kuwait issued by the Ministry of Finance.

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND RESULTS

Though it is obvious that the public expenditure in Kuwait is on the increase, yet there have been variations in this increase in various sectors. Table 2 highlights these variations which range between 14.67% and -2.6%.

TABLE 2

AVERAGE GOVERNMENTAL EXPENDITURE BY SECTOR FOR THE YEARS 1985-90

	Average annual Expenditure in million Kuwaiti Dinar	Percentage Rate of Increase or Decrease 1985-1990	Percentage of the Average Public Expenditure
Public Services	490.98	0.06	16.51
Defence	366.04	- 1.00	12.31
Social Services including:	920.02	3.80	30.95
Education	383.14	5.07	12.89
Health	212.64	2.26	2.15
Social Security and Social Affairs	324.24	3.50	10.91
Community Services	342.06	0.024	11.50
Economic Services	616.80	- 2.60	20.75
Others	237.26	14.67	7.98

Source: Ministry of Planning, Statistical Yearbook 1990/91, State of Kuwait.

Table 2 shows that the highest rate of increase in the specified sectors (excluding the unspecified ones) is in social services, which amounted to 3.8%. It is also observed that social services represent 30.95% of the total public expenditure, which is higher than any other sector. This highlights the need to analyze the main components of these services and their impact on public expenditure.

Breaking up the category of social services into its components, we find that it includes education, health services, social security and social affairs. It is easy to measure the causes of growth in education and health services because they are concentrated in two ministries only, viz., Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Health respectively. That is why we have started by studying the association between public expenditure in these two areas and services rendered by them (e.g. number of students and patients respectively). As for social security and social affairs, these are services rendered by several ministries. Consequently it is not easy to collect accurate information to measure the association between the expenditure involved therein and the services rendered by them. Moreover, it is easy to find out the extent of the association between expenditure and the services rendered in the first case. The students, in the case of the Ministry of Education, and the number of patients who visit hospitals, in the case of the Ministry of Health, can be used to represent these services. Hence, these two ministries have been chosen to measure public expenditure and its association with the expansion in services, at the micro level.

Our choice of these two ministries to find out the association between public expenditure and its targeted receivables as micro factors is supported by the high percentage of salaries to the total expenditure in these two ministries as compared with the other ministries (Table 3).

TABLE 3

SHARE OF SALARIES IN THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE BY MINISTRIES FOR THE YEAR 1990/1991

Ministry	Total Expenditure in Thousand Dinars	Share of Salaries in Total Expenditure (%)
Education	331.870	87.9
Health	234.380	68.91
Social Affairs and Labor	27.077	36.32
Defence	401.654	2.13

Source: Ministry of Planning, Statistical Yearbook 1990/91.

After identifying the macro and micro factors to be studied, analysis of individual regressions has been used to measure the coefficient of association between public expenditure and the macro and micro variables. We used public expenditure as the dependent variable and some macro and micro factors as independent variables. These include:

a) Change in per capita income
b) Change in population
c) Number of school students
d) Number of hospital patients
e) Openness of the economy (Imports/GNP)

We also measured the coefficient of association between expenditure in certain sectors (education, public health) as the dependent variable and the recipients of the services provided as independent variables (number of students and patients).

The results of regression analysis are reported in tables 4 and 5.

TABLE 4

COEFFICIENT OF REGRESSION OF EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE, HEALTH EXPENDITURE, EDUCATIONAL POSITIONS AND HEALTH POSITIONS AGAINST NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND NUMBER OF PATIENTS

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R^2	Years
Public Expenditure on Education	Number of Students	0.9376	1966-1987
Public Health Expenditure	Number of Patients	0.8881	1966-1987
Number of Educational Employees	Number of Students	0.9740	1964-1989
Number of Health Service Employees	Number of patients	0.9618	1963-1988

We observe that the association between pubic expenditure on education and the number of educational employees (dependent variables) and the number of students (independent variable) is almost perfect -- 0.9376 and 0.9740 respectively. This means that the increase in both public expenditure and the number of the employees in education is practically completely explained (in statistical terms) by the increase in the number of students. In other words, both expenditure and the number of employees rose (over 1966-87) very closely in step with the number of students. This of course also means that productivity of expenditure and employees in the education sector remained constant. This may be interpreted as implying that increase in both the dependent variables was `justified'. We should observe that productivity here refers only to the quantity (number of students and patients) of services; it says nothing about the quality of the services provided.

The same conclusion holds for expenditure on health services and the number of employees in this sector. The very strong correlation between these variables and the number of patients (0.8881 and 0.9618 respectively) means that the growth in expenditure and the number of employees is statistically explained by the number of patients. Again, this may be interpreted as implying that the increase in expenditure on health and in the size of the health labour force is `justified'.

TABLE 5

COEFFICIENT OF REGRESSION OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPENDITURE AGAINST: ECONOMY OPENNESS, PER CAPITA INCOME, POPULATION, NUMBER OF STUDENTS, NUMBER OF PATIENTS

	R^2	Years
Economy Openness (Imports / National Income)	0.1503	1964-1988
Per Capita Income (Macro factor)	0.4780	1964-1988
Population (Macro factor)	0.4900	1964-1989

Number of Students (Micro factor)	0.9218	1961-1988
Number of patients (Micro factor)	0.8715	1961-1988

Let us now turn to table 5 where the results of regression of government expenditure on a number of micro and macro variable are presented. We find that the openness of the economy has very little explanatory value. On the other hand, increase in population and increase in per capita income, taken individually, explain statistically half of the variation in overall government expenditure. This result is not surprising -- increases in per capita income and population would be expected to be associated with increases in overall public expenditure. Increase in per capita income indicates increase in available resources, and increase in population indicate increase in the need for public services such as health, education, and social security. There are obviously other factors influencing increase in overall public expenditure, and it would be interesting to identify them. In the present study non-availability of the relevant data prevented this aspect of the problem to be examined.

We consider now the relationship between government expenditure and the two micro variables -- the number of students and the number of patients. There is no direct economic connection between total government expenditure and the number of students and patients in the country. And yet we find very strong association between them. The association between total government expenditure and each of the number of students, and the number of patients was 0.9218 and 0.8715 respectively. What is the explanation for this observed relationship between total government expenditure and the number of students and patients?

We suggest, first, that the real (positive) relation is between overall government expenditure and expenditure on education. The two move in step. And since the number of students has an almost perfect correlation with expenditure on education as shown in table 4, it also has, necessarily, a strong relation with overall government expenditure. The real significant relationship, we suggest, is between overall government expenditure and expenditure on education. Similarly, the very strong relationship between overall government expenditure and the number of patients is explained by the strong relation between the latter and expenditure on health and the expected relation between expenditure on health and overall government expenditure. Clearly, the two move together.

In the light of the previous analysis, we can safely classify governmental expenditure and its increase into two categories: the first which is obviously related to health, education and other basic services; and hence is justifiable and the second for which no specific explanatory factor can be identified. It has to be seen whether the growth in this latter category of expenditure is justified or not. The factors that led to this growth are numerous. We can classify these factors into six groups.

1. Reaction of the bureaucracy to the instability and the change in the surrounding environment and the absence of effective public policies which lead to direct resources to areas that are of no modest value for the society. For instance, absence of educational policies or manpower planning has led to an increase in the number of graduates compared with available jobs (Arab Planning Institute, 1978). This has rendered a good number of valuable human resources inactive. Moreover, the inconsistency between the kind of graduates and manpower requirements has led to a decline in manpower utilization and a deterioration in productivity. This growth may not be justifiable and consequently there is a need for reviewing the policies related to human resources in order to provide appropriate means and mechanisms for manpower planning.

2. The bureaucrats' personal interests and demands, as some modern theories point out that the bureaucrats divide the available resources between providing the services assigned to them as such and using these services to obtain higher salaries, more staff, more authority or more facilities, such as travelling (Niskanen 1971; Marris, 1964). What may support this is the increase of salaries and benefits by far more than the increase in governmental positions. Increase in salaries was at the rate of 11.76% p.a., while the increase in public positions was at the rate of 4.34% (Doubleday and El-Arabi, 1986). This unjustifiable growth, therefore, warrants an overall revision of the recruitment policies and requires establishing specific criteria for linking salary to productivity and performance coupled with increasing the effectiveness of the control mechanisms over bureaucrats' expenditures and demands.

3. Increasing the role and number of public audit and planning organs such as, the Accounting Bureau, the Civil Service Bureau, and the Ministry of Planning, which are not involved in providing direct services to the public and have no connection with the factors responsible for the demand in services. With the growth of bureaucracy, a need has been felt for controlling its different activities. This has led to the establishment and development of control agencies. Such flourishing in control capacity necessitate the bureaucracy to grow. This part is

quite justifiable because it helps rationalizing the bureaucracy and streamlining its procedures and services.

4. The ineffectiveness of bureaucracy in Kuwait, due to many reasons, e.g., vagueness of objectives (Murphy, 1978), over-centralization (Al Jawaan, 1974; World Bank, 1979), lack of appropriate distribution of responsibilities between institutions and ministries (Asker, 1977), staff inefficiency due to inappropriate recruitment policies (Klawdow, 1977; Danton, 1977), and excessive routine (World Bank, 1979). The major part of the unjustified growth of bureaucracy may be attributed to such ineffectiveness. Therefore, there is a pressing need for enhancing the current administrative reform efforts, focussing on the factors influencing the effectiveness of the bureaucracy and upgrading its administrative capacity.

5. The considerable overstaffing in public services due to high demand for governmental positions, especially in clerical jobs (Iskander and Kasrwani, 1975), for various social reasons. This include the existence of social employment policies, low recruitment in private sector, dislike of menial and vocational occupations and women's choice of employment in specific jobs (Al-Ghazali, 1989). Consequently, there is a need to minimize the influence of social and political factors on the expansion of bureaucracy. This may be achieved by reconsidering the social employment policy and changing the social attitude towards work and types of jobs.

6. The availability of financial resources has increased the tendency to expand the bureaucracy. For instance, we note that rates of employment go up when there is an increase in the average surplus revenues, and the rate of increase goes down when there is a decrease (Table 6). This indicates a clear association between the lack of financial restraints and the degree of bureaucracy expansion. However, a fall in the surplus revenue only slows the growth of bureaucracy. This reflects the need to reorganize the public finance system in order to direct the bureaucratic growth toward the desired sectors and objectives, by improving decision-making, budget implementation and budget control and monitoring.

TABLE 6

RATIO OF AVERAGE SURPLUS REVENUES TO AVERAGE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE COMPARED WITH THE GROWTH IN GOVERNMENTAL EMPLOYMENT 1965-90

Years	Ratio of Average Surplus Revenues to Average Public Expenditure	Growth in Government Employment
1965-75	38.2%	4.94%
1975-84	49.82%	5.38%
1984-90	-19.20%	1.93%

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Many of the theories and models put forward in the literature of public administration and economics to explain the phenomenon of growth of bureaucracy do not apply in most of their assumptions to the state of Kuwait. Consequently, there is a need to work out a theory that is compatible intrinsically with the circumstances in Kuwait and through which it would be possible to explain this growth and subsequently apply it to other countries similar to Kuwait like the GCC countries.

2. There is a need to review and develop general policies for public expenditure and link this expenditure to a clear program of activities in the framework of an annual plan integrated into a five-year plan, through a well-planned system for budget preparation, approval and monitoring. Balance should also be maintained between national income and public expenditure, together with imposing legislative and organizational controls on the volume of public expenditure vis-a-vis national income.

3. A considerable portion of the unjustified expansion of bureaucracy is clearly due to social factors, and to the weakness in the formulation and implementation of public policies. There may be a need to upgrade the efficiency in formulating public policies, especially in the post Gulf war period due to the scarcity of financial resources.

4. This study can only be considered as a first step towards the identification of the factors involved in the growth of bureaucracy. There is a need for further investigation and analysis of the topic and for assessing the impact of other factors, and the extent of their interaction. One of the theories (Peacock and Wiseman, 1961) maintains that a

country's public expenditure increases after a war and this increase continues even after the end of the causes that led to that increase. Increasing public expenditure in Kuwait after the evil aggression may form the basis of an academic study to investigate the validity of this theory.

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