ABSTRACT

In terms of social and demographic situation Kuwait does not differ from its neighbours: the majority of the population there is represented by expatriates, while the nationals constitute a minority. Despite the fact that the presence of such a big amount of foreign workforce in Kuwait is an obvious necessity, it inevitably poses a range of threats to the outnumbered indigenous population.

The present work bears an attempt to analyze what measures the state takes in order to protect the high social status of the local minority and to set a clear barrier between the two types of population – Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis – so that the foreigners can not endanger the well-being of nationals. The state is granting all the social and political rights and welfare benefits to those who are considered “insiders” – citizens, and is leaving “outsiders” in restricted and dependent position under the control of the former. By doing so, it creates a closed strong-knit elite group of nationals.

Basing on the conclusions, I will assume that this strategy is aimed to raise and strengthen a feeling of social cohesion and solidarity alongside with a clear sense of belonging to the community – a feeling that has a traditional historical pattern in Arab society and known as ‘asabiyya’. The cultivating of this traditional tribal notion while renovating it and “upgrading” to the state level, plays an important role in creating strong national identity, loyalty to the ruling powers, and thus in building the basis of their legitimacy. In this sense, Kuwait’s social policy complies with the key concept of the fourteenth-century philosopher Ibn Khaldoun, according to whom, ‘asabiyya’ and Islam constitute the two crucial instruments for Arab leadership.