

# AN EXPLORATION OF THE POTENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN KUWAIT



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## **Abstract**

In recent decades, sustainable tourism has emerged as an alternative to traditional mass tourism approaches to tourism development, as the latter has struggled to cope with many detrimental impacts to the socio-cultural and natural environments and, indirectly, the broader tourism economy. Tourism is now embracing the principles of sustainability to safeguard and conserve the very resources on which it depends. Sustainable tourism development recognises the importance of the cultural and ecological resources of the local community, which are regarded as essential to achieving better socio-cultural and economic results. The available studies of socio-cultural impacts are mainly based on a Western perspective and there is a dearth of information about Islamic destinations from the socio-cultural angle. The aim of this research is to assess the potential for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait, which fills a gap in knowledge.

Although Islamic teaching and principles encourage people to travel as well as to be hospitable to guests, doubt exists that the development of tourism will only bring negative socio-cultural impacts for host communities. Islamic destinations have a lifestyle connected with Islamic traditions and cultural values that are often in conflict with the needs of tourism development and leisure activities, which are mainly geared to Western culture.

However, tourism development is an effective tool of economic diversification for many Islamic countries, especially in oil-dependent economies, as it can generate substantial revenues through foreign exchange earnings and thereby enable countries to withstand economic fluctuations created by non-renewable crude oil resources. Kuwait is an example of an Islamic destination that depends on oil as the main source of income and it has a unique socio-cultural context that revolves around customs and traditions originating from Islamic religion and tribal roots. Therefore, a culturally sustainable tourism policy from an Islamic point of view, closely aligned to the socio-culture of the countries involved, is likely to be preferable to the host community.

This study used a qualitative approach to explore the potential for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. The primary data were collected through face-to face semi-structured interviews. The findings illustrate that there is a potential for tourism development in Kuwait as there is acceptance of and potential for different types of tourism such as family, business and cultural tourism. Enthusiasm for tourism development relates to the potential to diversify the Kuwaiti economy and to create new jobs for locals, as well as to enhance the Kuwait image nationally and internationally.

Additionally, analysis of the findings shows there is some enthusiasm for tourism development in Kuwait if it is appropriately tailored to the Kuwaiti socio-cultural context and if the government supports it. Unfortunately, the findings highlight that the Kuwaiti government attitude is negative generally; tourism is not prioritised, and legislation has not been developed to support tourism development. Furthermore, issues such as bureaucracy, corruption and the fear of the local community add more barriers to the potential for tourism to flourish in Kuwait.

The study shows that there is potential for tourism development in terms of identifiable products and resources but the barriers to development outweigh the opportunities, with a key problem being indifference on the part of government. It is hoped that this study will help the Kuwaiti government and tourism stakeholders to rethink its approach to tourism as one of the diversification options; recommendations for practice are offered.

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## Abbreviations

KCSB	Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau
KFAS	Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science
KPC	Kuwait Petroleum Corporation
KOC	Kuwait Oil Company
KIA	Kuwait Investment Authority
CBK	Central Bank of Kuwait
MOP	Ministry of Planning
BOT	Build, Operate and Transfer
FCIC	Foreign Capital Investment Committee
FCIB	Foreign Capital Investment Bureau
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
MPA	Mega Projects Agency
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HMZ	Hong Kong, Macau and Zuhai
KGO	Kuwait Government Online
CC	Carrying Capacity
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
NAFTA	North American Free Trade agreement

DMOs	Destination Marketing Organisations
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
SCT	Supreme Commission of Tourism
PAAET	Public Authority of Applied Education and Training
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
QTA	Qatar Tourism Authority
VRF	Visiting relatives and friends

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# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Introduction to the Research Topic**

This study aims to assess the potential from the perspective of key stakeholders for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. In both developing and developed countries, policymakers have recognized the important role of developing a sustainable tourism approach in enhancing not only the economy, but also in protecting the environment as well as the socio-cultural context of the country. There has been a growing interest in developing sustainable tourism approaches, all over the world in recent decades (Reddy and Wilkes 2012; Sharpley 2008) and Kuwait, the context of this study, is no different.

Sustainable tourism development is of particular relevance in regions or nations where tourism resources are in close proximity to and interact with the local resident populations (Andereck et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2013; Mason 2008; Sharma et al. 2008). Tourism can lead to both positive and negative impacts on the culture and traditional values of a destination (Flecha et al. 2010; Mason 2008; Vafadari 2008). It is often observed that tourism activities produce negative results through the erosion of traditional values and cultural norms by imitating foreign cultures (Kim et al. 2013; Flecha et al. 2010; Saarinen 2006). Negative influences from this include drug and alcohol abuse, increases in prostitution and rises in criminal incidents (Hall and Lew 2009; Sarinen 2006; Vafadari 2008). The notion of social carrying capacity is relevant to a discussion on sustainable tourism, meaning that tourism should develop only at a rate and size that is not damaging to its environment, both physically and socio-culturally (Deery et al. 2012; Kim et al. 2013; Yang et al. 2013). It is often the case that the social carrying capacity, of the destination, is challenged, creating upset in the socio-cultural and environmental framework of the host community (Hall and Lew 2009; Sarinen 2006; Mason 2008; Liu 2003).

The fundamental considerations in sustainable tourism development are long-term vision and equal opportunity for current and future generations. In addition to this, focus on the local community is an inevitable part of any successful sustainable tourism development project. In this context, it plays an active part in the group of stakeholders, which benefits the project's life span (Fyall et al. 2012; Garrod et al.

2012). Therefore, it is necessary to have appropriate stakeholder involvement, to ensure their views and perceptions influence the management processes in the tourism system (Garrod et al. 2012; Getz and Timur 2012). The implementation of sustainable approaches to tourism faces many challenges due to varying levels of interpretation of what constitutes sustainability by key stakeholders in tourism systems.

Furthermore, there is a need for sustaining the socio-cultural context of any destination, if the aim is to develop a sustainable tourism industry. Islamic countries are no exception. However, some governments of Islamic destinations do not appear to be concerned with the sensitivity of the local culture, traditions, faith, norms and Islamic values, such as Egypt and Dubai (Aziz 2001; Sharpely 2008). This may ultimately cause conflict between communities and governments, especially because there is an increasing number of followers of conservative Islamic movements who are more sensitive to and keen on maintaining their socio-cultural identity (Stephenson 2013; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). Islamic destinations are likely to encounter problems in tourism development because the predominant westernized orientation of tourism development and recreation activities often goes against Islamic traditions and cultural values (Aziz 2001; Din 1989; Henderson 2003; Hoffstaedter 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010; Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012).

In Muslim nations, social norms are influenced to varying degrees by the principles of Islamic law, which also inform the recreation and travel activities on offer (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). Islamic law comes from the Quran and from Sunnah (the examples and teachings from the Prophet Mohammed's daily life) (Hallaq 2009). Conflict may arise in local communities if tourists come from different religious backgrounds and are therefore dissimilar from the host community. Moreover, Islamic values may have an effect on the various stakeholders in tourism systems and therefore on tourism policy formulation and implementation (Poria et al. 2003; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010).

In Kuwait, the daily life revolves around a framework of Muslim religion, Arabic tradition and local customs (Euromonitor International 2014). Casey (2007) remarks that Kuwait is a tradition-minded and religiously conservative Muslim country. As Henderson (2003) observes, Islam forms the basis of public and private life in

Muslim nations. Culturally sustainable tourism in such a context will aim to safeguard socio-cultural values, by maintaining a focus on the community, enhancing positive socio-cultural outcomes and minimizing any undesirable socio-cultural changes associated with tourism development and activities. Thus *Halal* tourism may be the most culturally sustainable as it is compatible with Islamic law (Duman 2011).

Tourism may provide substantial promise for some of the oil-dependent economies, as it is one of several options for diversification and thereby provides a way to withstand fluctuations in the global oil market (Henderson 2003; Mansfeld and Winckler 2004; Sharpley 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). For example, Qatar is currently developing its tourism industry in anticipation of depleting oil and gas reserves in the future (Morakabati et al. 2014). The Qatari tourism strategy will focus on business and leisure tourism within a framework of sensitivity to the socio-cultural context of the local community (Morakabati et al. 2014; QTA 2013). Oil is the major contributor to Kuwait's economy, representing around 66% of the gross domestic product and 90-95% of total export earnings (Euromonitor International 2014; OPEC 2013). However, Kuwait and other GCC countries authorities are keen to minimize their over-dependence on oil, through long-term strategies designed to cope with depleting oil reserves (Morakabati et al. 2014), ensuring that alternative sources of income are developed (Al-Otaibi 2004).

## **1.2. Rationale for Choosing the Topic**

Academic research on tourism in Islamic destinations is limited in terms of quantity and quality. A literature review reveals that very little research has investigated the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism in Islamic destinations especially in oil-dependent Gulf countries (Henderson 2003; Mansfeld and Winckler 2004; Sharpley 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010; Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012). This study will fill a gap in the literature on sustainable tourism in Islamic destinations as well as providing a knowledge base that will help practitioners. Tourism has become one of the world's most influential industries (Sharpley 2009), and in view of its importance, many studies relating to sustainable tourism have been conducted, in many different parts of the world, but not in an Islamic context. Furthermore, most research has been conducted from a Western perspective. It was felt important that this research should contribute to knowledge on adopting culturally sustainable tourism development from an Islamic point of view.



It is clear that Kuwait is known to the world as a wealthy oil based nation. However people are generally unaware of its other attractive assets, as Sapsted (1980) commented more than three decades ago: this image of Kuwait still holds true (Casey 2007). This perception could be changed and a new image of Kuwait could be created if tourism is successfully developed. The development of a tourism industry could promote the nation and provide it with a more diverse image. As Kuwait is currently in a strong position economically, there is not an urgent economic need (Al-Otaibi 2004). Tourism could therefore be developed gradually, to ensure that negative impacts are minimised, by introducing a culturally sustainable form of tourism. This study could offer direction to those policy-makers who may eventually be in charge of developing tourism (should it materialise).

It is common knowledge that oil reserves will eventually deplete. As a result governments in the gulf region will have to devise alternative strategies for providing a more diversified income (Al-Watan 2013a). Abu Dhabi is an example of an Emirate that has invested in developing tourism in the last decade and this has helped to strengthen its economy (Ponzini 2011; Sharpley 2002). There are similarities in the socio-cultural contexts of Abu Dhabi and Kuwait, as both are oil rich and in need of diversifying their economies. Abu Dhabi's economy could serve as a useful example for Kuwait to follow. Out of the many options available for diversification, tourism could be a viable and attractive option for Kuwait. It is hoped that dissemination of findings from this study will encourage the Kuwaiti government to consider developing the tourism industry as a way of generating income in the future, when it can no longer depend on oil exports for its revenue. This study will indicate how this may be achieved within an Islamic framework, and it will point to the challenges that may be faced.

### **1.3. Aim and Objectives**

*Aim:* To assess the potential from the perspective of key stakeholders for the development of sustainable tourism in Kuwait.

In order to meet this aim, the research has six objectives:

1. To discuss the development of sustainable tourism in an Islamic context.
2. To analyse some of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development that Kuwait is likely to face in the future.
3. To identify the governmental efforts for developing tourism in Islamic culture in Kuwait.
4. To explore the barriers and the opportunities for developing tourism in Kuwait.
5. To evaluate the types of tourism that are suitable in Arabic and Islamic culture in Kuwait.
6. To propose a model for developing culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait that could be implemented in other conservative Islamic destinations.

### **1.4. Chapter Outline**

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The content of each chapter is summarised as follows:

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter introduces the aim and objectives of the research and contains the rationale. The structure of the thesis is also presented.

#### **Chapter 2: The Kuwaiti economy and the development of tourism**

This chapter presents the economic variables that might affect tourism development in Kuwait, including rentierism and FDI. The chapter also presents the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan that was formulated in 2005.

#### **Chapter 3: Tourism, culture and sustainable development**

This chapter covers the following topics: tourism and development, religion and sustainable tourism, the positive and negative impacts of tourism. The challenges

facing tourism development in Islamic destinations are presented. Finally the collaborative approach to tourism development is discussed.

#### **Chapter 4: Methodological Approach**

This chapter details the methodology adopted in conducting this thesis, comprising semi-structured interviews with stakeholder participants in the tourism industry in Kuwait. It covers the qualitative approach and method adopted, as well as the data collection process. Finally, it presents the sampling strategy used as well as the participant profile. Finally it discusses validity, analysis and the limitations of the research.

#### **Chapter 5: Tourism Development in Kuwait: Opportunities and Barriers**

This first findings chapter presents the following themes that emerged from analysis: the economic benefits of tourism development, government attitudes towards tourism development, marketing Kuwait as a tourist destination, the need for tourism planning and using the collaborative approach towards tourism development.

#### **Chapter 6: Tourism impacts and tourism products**

This second findings chapter presents the following themes that emerged from analysis: suitable tourism types for Kuwait, the positive and negative sociocultural impacts of tourism development, and finally community attitudes towards tourism development.

#### **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

This chapter revisits the research objectives and shows how they were met. It reviews the main findings and highlights the study's contribution to knowledge, which includes a model for sociocultural sustainable tourism development in Kuwait. It presents recommendations for practice and further research, and finishes with personal reflections on the research journey.

## **Chapter 2. The economy of Kuwait and its development of tourism**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter will provide an overview of the state of Kuwait, presenting Kuwaiti society, the political system, religion, culture, and the socio-economic condition of Kuwait, as well as tourism in Kuwait. Kuwait is a small society with a unique culture and a strong national identity that is embedded in an Islamic outlook. This outlook is promoted at the government level to help reinforce that identity. Given the importance of this identity to government and the embedding of identity within a wider religious framework, it is possible that only an approach to tourism development that prioritises the safeguarding of this identity will be encouraged in Kuwait.

The socio-economic condition of Kuwait section includes two main sub-sections: Kuwait's quest for independence from the oil economy and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Kuwait. This section will review the economic variables, including rentierism, in Kuwait. It will discuss the use of natural resources and the necessary diversification of the Kuwaiti economy. It will also shed light on the role of FDI and the private sector. The tourism in Kuwait section has four sub-sections to provide knowledge about the current situation of tourism in Kuwait. These are Kuwait and the hotel sector, the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis for the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan and the challenges for tourism development in Kuwait.

### **2.2. Kuwaiti society**

Kuwait is an independent and sovereign Arab state extending outwards from the Arabian Gulf Coast and its land is shaped like a triangle, covering a total area of 6,880 sq. miles (17,818 square kilometres) (Al-Ansari 2011; Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (KCSB) 2014). Kuwait's climate is hot, rising from 30°C to over 49°C between April and September, with dry summer winds and extremely high humidity during August and September. The weather conditions from October until March are very pleasant and comfortable for visitors. January is the coldest month of

the year, as the temperature fluctuates between 5 °C and 16° C. The rainfall is minimal, with less than 150 mm per year, mostly occurring in the winter season (KCSB 2014). Kuwait is a small traditional society, with a unique culture and a strong national identity that is embedded in an Islamic outlook (Casey 2007). This outlook is promoted at the government level to help reinforce that identity and the embedding of identity within a wider religious framework.

To understand what type of society has been developed in Kuwait it is essential to know what the effects of the construction of this community are. The formation of Kuwaiti society is made up of different groups, which include: the ruling family, the merchants of Kuwait, and two other social groups - people with Bedouin backgrounds and Alhader (Slot 1991). Although Kuwait is a modern country in the Middle East, the majority of its citizens strictly adhere to shared social values and norms. Its society comprises Bedouin tribes who hail from the desert and the Al Hadhr, who were coastal dwellers (Al-Sabah 2001; Slot 1991). People from both backgrounds add value to Kuwaiti society without infringing upon its shared value system. The Bedouin tribes and the Al-Hadhr bring with them unique cultural and traditional values and norms that enhance the socio-cultural system. This is a prime example of how citizens can happily coexist within the same socio-cultural system (Hashimoto 2002; Zamani-Frahani and Musa 2012). Through the cultural and traditional practices of both groups, which have many differences as well as some similarities, tourists can gain knowledge of the values and norms that make up Kuwaiti identity (Al-Sabah 2001; Casey 2007).

The family unit has an important cultural influence in Kuwait (Toama 2013). Traditionally, family members were a part of an economic unit that took care of its members, and this is still the case today (Al Mughni 2009). Each member has a rank in the group according to age and gender, and children do not move out of this unit until they are married. Male children often continue to live in the family home after marriage, along with their own families (Toama 2013; Casey 2007). Thus, the traditional patriarchal family is a large one, since many generations live in the same household (Casey 2007; Al Mughni 2009). Kuwaiti families enjoy spending time together and are known for their hospitality, with guests being warmly welcomed to enjoy meals with them (Toama 2013; KCSB 2014). In addition, the background of the family and its name are significant in Kuwaiti society. If a surname is recognised

positively for past and present reputation, this will enable a person to gain entry into many places, due to the respect held for the family.

The concept of '*Wasta*' has emerged from this tradition, in which favours are given to those with the right family connections to open closed doors. It has been argued that *Wasta* in the old Arab culture had to come from the leader of the tribe, the sheikh, who sat in an appeal council and helped his followers in getting their needs without any obligation. On the other hand, recently *Wasta* has come to refer to any person who receives a price for his services, resulting in it turning into corruption (Hooker 2008). This has now really become an issue in daily life, where everyone is looking to have *Wasta* in order to deal with their needs.

### **2.3. The Political System of Kuwait**

Kuwait's political structure is divided into three sections. Firstly, the Emir is the head of state and this position is hereditary for the members of the Al-Sabah dynasty, which has ruled Kuwait for more than three hundred years (Al-Sabah 2001; Casey 2007; Toama 2013). Secondly, the government is made up of cabinet ministers who assist the Prime Minister; the Prime Minister is also the head of the government and he is chosen by the Emir and not elected (Kinninmont 2012; Toama 2013). The Emir must also be chosen from the Al-Sabah family (Casey 2007). It is the Prime Minister who chooses the cabinet ministers. Thirdly, the National Assembly is a parliament elected by the people and comprises of fifty Parliament Members (MPs) who represent their constituency (Al-Baghli 2012; Shultziner and Tetreal 2012). Al-Baghli (2012) argues that the National Assembly has the power to carry out a vote of confidence and impeach ministers, as well as questioning the actions of the executive authority. This is because the fundamental features of Kuwaiti society consist of public rights, duties, general powers of the Head of State, legislative, executive and judicial powers, and general and transitional provisions (Al-Baghli 2012; Casey 2007). On the other hand, Power (2012) claims that the lack of official political parties in Kuwait is a factor contributing to a weak performance by the parliament, as is the fact that the economy has not been opened up. Although the Kuwaiti constitution does not prohibit political parties in the country, none have been legalized since independence in 1961. Therefore, Herb (2009) argues that the opposition is not united and is not working for change yet in this traditional society. This may explain why the Kuwaiti parliament is not demanding greater power

(Kinninmont 2012; Toama 2013). Additionally, this also has been reflected in the working of the government, as even though there are not official opposition parties in Kuwait there are many movements and groups who are influenced by national and international parties. There are three main types of groups representing different parties, which are: Islamic, Populist and Secular. Firstly, the Islamic parties have two main divisions: Sunni Islamists, such as the Islamic Constitutional Movement, known as Hadas (Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood), and the Civil Conservative Party. Also, the Shia Islamist division has many groups, such as the Justice and Peace Alliance and the National Islamic Alliance. These Islamic parties represent conservative people in Kuwaiti society. Secondly, there are populist currents such as the Popular Action Movement (Hashd) and the Kuwaiti Democratic Forum, who represent the intermediate group in society. Finally, secular parties, for example the National Democratic Alliance, represent the liberal political bloc as well as liberal people in society (Al-Zumai 2013). Although the Emir and the National Assembly have legislative power, the Emir, the Cabinet and the Ministers hold the executive power (Shultziner and Tetrealt 2012). The Emir, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, appoints the ministers.

However, democracy is actively expressed through the Assembly, which has the authority to question the government about its policies. This is separate from the privilege of investigating the functioning of the executive branch and monitoring the social and economic policies of the state (Casey 2007; Toama 2013). Although democracy in Kuwait is still evolving, it has only existed since 1963. In comparison with other countries in the Gulf area, Kuwait has one of the oldest semi-democratic type governments (Alnajjar 2000; Kinninmont 2012). The people do not elect the Prime Minister and the Emir, they are appointed by the Al-Sabah family (Kinninmont 2012; Toama 2013). However, the National Assembly is a democratic body and is influential in both making laws and in keeping a check on the performance of those involved in all aspects of the government (Casey 2007; Herb 2009). In comparison with other constitutional monarchies in the area, the role and effectiveness of the National Assembly in Kuwait has a strong reputation (Alnajjar 2000; Al-Zumai 2013). Some would argue that the Kuwaiti constitution, which was established in 1962, has had a very favorable effect on the country regarding the monitoring of fair practice (Alnajjar 2000; Toama 2013). Moreover, the division of powers in Kuwait is seen as a positive characteristic (Al-Zumai 2013; Segal 2012). It should also be noted that

Kuwait has developed from a society that was based on a tribal framework, as have other countries in this region, so this needs to be taken into consideration when analysing its political system (Herb 2009; Segal 2012). Al-Baghli (2012) highlighted that the tribes have considerable power and influence in Kuwaiti society. In addition, this represents one of the key components of the political system in Kuwait. He also refers to the different levels of involvement of the tribal members in the election process and the formation of the government.

Examples of recent progress towards democracy that have been made are increased political rights for women in 2005 and the election of four women as Members of Parliament (MP) in 2009 (Al Mughni 2009; Tétreault et al. 2009). In addition to this, the roles of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister were split in 2003. The removal of the prime minister in three consecutive years, due to corruption, led to a strengthened parliament (Al-Zumai 2013). It has been argued that Kuwait is also seen as one of the freer countries, politically, in this region (Alsalem 2015). However, this status has been called into question following the clash between the government and the parliament, which has resulted in a condition of instability of the political system in Kuwait recently. Paris and Rubin (2012) claim that the lack of political parties' opposition and the conflict between the Members of Parliament, as well as their disagreement with the government's performance, has led to the delay in the progress of development of certain mega projects and the issuing of some unexpected laws. An example of this is the law that was issued to control what had to be published in the media; two newspapers were recently prevented from publishing for two weeks, as a result of breaking the law of media publications (BBC News 2014).

Conversely, in recent years there has been a lot of turbulence in the political arena, with eleven governments being created and five National Assemblies disbanded, all in the space of six years (Al-Zumai 2013). In 2006 the parliament gained extra status indirectly when it took a vote to replace the Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdulah Al-Sabah, who was very sick and old, with the current Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. On the other hand, Power (2012) suggests that the lack of political parties in Kuwait is a factor contributing to a weak performance by the parliament, as is the fact that the economy has not been opened up. Herb (2009) proposes that the opposition is not united and not working for change. This may explain why the Kuwaiti parliament



is not demanding greater power. Furthermore, this is connected to the Kuwaiti voters being undecided about moving towards a complete democracy (Kinninmont 2012; Toama 2013). It is interesting to report that during a recent election to choose new parliament members, there was a boycott from Kuwaiti youth, who were seeking to change the election system: they wanted to have a fully elected government rather than an appointed prime minister and ministers. This caused conflict in the country, although it was not as intense as the events of the Arab Spring in other Arab countries. This may be because what distinguishes Kuwait from its neighbours is that Kuwaitis, even those boycotting the election, are people who are loyal to the Al-Sabah family. Therefore, the election went ahead (BBC News 2013).

A significant feature of Kuwaiti socio-culture is the power to influence and shape political thought through the *Diwaniya*. This is literally '*the room in which guests are entertained*' (Casey 2007, p.147). In modern times, it is a social custom in which Kuwaiti males meet on a weekly basis to informally discuss politics, among other things. A *Diwaniya* is a room or building near or attached to a house for informal social gatherings (Casey 2007; Toama 2013). The *Diwaniya* plays a significant role in shaping political decisions in Kuwaiti society (Al-Kandari 2009; Toama 2013). The meetings held in the *Diwaniya* influence the way people think and make decisions regarding social and political issues, as not all people's interests are represented in the Parliament of Kuwait. Historically, the principles of democracy were set in the *Diwaniya*, laying its first foundations in the country (Al-Kandari 2009; Al-Zumai 2013). The *Diwanis* are very active and busy in the weeks leading up to an election, with visits from the political candidates making speeches, drawing large crowds (Al-Kandari 2009; Toama 2013). However, it should be noted that traditionally there have been no *Diwanis* for women to discuss issues, although in the last decade a few have been established, particularly since 2006, when women in Kuwait gained the right to vote. They are still rare and women participate in the political system much less than men, which is another reason why Kuwait can be seen as a semi-democratic country.

## 2.4. Religion and Culture

Kuwait is a small society with a unique culture that represents their pride in Kuwaiti identity, which has its roots in Islamic principles and Arabic traditions (Al-Shehab 1992; Casey 2007). The adjacent countries share many characteristics, such as language, beliefs, norms and values (Toama 2013; Al-Sabah 2001). The official religion in Kuwait is Islam and the vast majority of the population (85%) is Muslim. The State also has other religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism and Pars, which represent 15% of the population (Casey 2007; KCSB 2014). This is because there are a high number of foreign workers working in Kuwait and the majority of them come from the East and Far East Asia (KCSB 2014). Moreover, there are two main Islamic groups in Kuwait; the Sunnis represent 70% of the State's Muslims while the Shias account for 30%. Also, there are different interpretations of these two groups by different sectors of the population.

It has been argued that religious freedom is guaranteed under the constitution of Kuwait (Al-Shehab 1992; Casey 2007; KCSB 2014). However, this religious freedom is granted on condition that any sort of religious practice should be in accordance with public policy and morals being based on Islamic law (*Sharia*) (Al-Shehab 1992). There are more than 450,000 non-Kuwaitis and only 200 Kuwaitis who are practising Christians (KCSB 2014). They have churches provided by the government (Casey 2007; Al-Shehab 1992). There are also many immigrants with different beliefs such as Hindus, estimated at 600,000. They cannot practise their religion in public but they have the right to do so privately. Some might argue that although religious freedom exists in theory, in practice it is limited and selective (Casey 2007).

Hofstede (2009) states that Kuwaiti culture can be better understood within the framework of Islam, Arabic traditions and customs: every country has its unique cultural components, which distinguish it from other countries. This section presents and discusses Kuwait and Islam and how it influences Kuwaiti culture. The issuing of any law has to be according to Sharia, the Islamic law. According to Al-Shehab (1992) the second article of the Kuwaiti constitution considers that the Sharia is a main source of legislation. This has had a very favourable effect on the country regarding the monitoring of fair practice (Alnajjar 2000; Toama 2013). In addition, the constitution allows some religious freedom as the State is obliged to protect the freedom of any religious practices in accordance with traditional norms (Casey 2007;

KCSB 2014). Moreover, this can be seen to have an impact on individuals' behaviour because it is affected by the practice of Islamic laws, customs and traditions, and this acts to guide states of mind towards tourism and recreational activities. For example, there is strict punishment for individuals who are caught indulging in inappropriate actions such as consuming alcohol or having intercourse outside of marriage.

According to Hallaq (2009), the Arab-Islamic culture mainly stems from the Quran and Sunnah, which call for coexistence, dialogue and understanding (Toama 2013; Casey 2007). Most Kuwaitis strongly relate to their religion; they follow the Quran and Sunnah teachings in all aspects of their lives, as well as in the laws and regulations that control the country. However, there are examples of activities which are not permitted by *Sharia* law, including consumption of alcohol, gambling, immodest dress, public displays of affection and adultery. This has led to hypocrisy in Kuwaiti society; for example, the consumption of alcohol in public is not allowed by Kuwaiti law, which is based on the writings from Quran and Sunnah. It is mentioned in the following saying from Surat An-Nisa' in Quran: '*O ye who believe! Draw not near unto prayer when you are drunken*' (verse 42). However, there are some people who do drink alcohol in private or in abroad, for instance in their own homes, but this is viewed negatively by the community. As Kuwait is a traditional society, with very strict Islamic morals, anybody known to be drinking becomes isolated from the community and gains a bad reputation, and this way of thinking explains why the majority of Kuwaitis are cautious about expanding tourism to non-Muslim visitors. Moreover, in Surat Al-Ma'idah in Quran (verse 90), it is made clear that gambling is *Haram* and therefore not allowed by Islamic law (Doi 1984; Hallaq 2009). Although Muslims should not take part in gambling activities, realistically some do. However, if they are found out they will be arrested and prosecuted, as it is regarded as a criminal activity in Kuwait.

Al-Otaibi (2004) argues that there is a great impact of religion, as well as the tradition of Kuwaiti society, on leisure and recreation activities. For example, there are few sports clubs for females and it is not allowed for males to enter these sport clubs as they are for females only. The dress code in Kuwait is more relaxed compared to the restricted dress code in Saudi Arabia, but it is also related to the *Sharia* law, which states that dress should be modest. In Kuwait women can choose whether to wear the hijab or not. Consequently, many women are free to dress in Western-style

clothes, side by side with those wearing Islamic dress (Al Mughni 2001). Therefore the dress code in Kuwait is varied. It depends on each individual woman's personal choice combined with her cultural background (Toama 2013; Al Mughni 2001; Casey 2007). Additionally, Western-style clothing is very popular among the youth of Kuwait, so the majority wear Western clothes rather than the traditional dress, as it is more practical in daily life (Toama 2013). Although there is no law regarding dress code, it is seen as culturally inappropriate if a woman does not dress relatively modestly. In addition to this, modesty is not only expected in one's clothing, but also in people's behaviour in public.

Tétreault et al. (2009) argue that new wealth after the discovery of oil in Kuwait was significant in making life for women very different, and this transformation needs to be understood in relation to gender issues in Kuwait. However, women are gradually appearing in high-level positions and in key jobs. As Askar and Ahmad (2003) argue, Kuwait is a traditional society where most of the development processes and modernity are considered to be antithetical to the traditional order of society. Similarly, Al Mughni (2009) argues that the impact of traditional Kuwaiti culture must continue to be considered in future research with respect to women's affairs, as it still creates difficulty for women wishing to pursue an active role in society. The effect of this is that there is still significant employment inequity for women in high-level jobs, even after the Emir of Kuwait issued several landmark decrees about women's suffrage, economic liberalization and nationality, which culminated in the National Assembly passing a law on May 16th 2005 giving women their political rights. Shultziner and Tetrealt (2012) claim that issuing this law has granted Kuwaiti women the right to vote and to stand for local and parliamentary elections. For example, Masouma Al-Mubarak was appointed as Planning Minister and Minister of State for Administrative Development Affairs in 2005, and in 2008, Moudhi Abdulaziz Al-Houmoud became Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Development Affairs. Al Mughni (2009) presumes that since then the Kuwaiti public has witnessed the gradual strengthening of female representation in the cabinet. Moreover, the 2011 National Development Strategy Master Plan for the state of Kuwait has focused on the issue of encouraging women's involvement in all aspects of the public and private sectors as one of the main concerns for the development of the country (KCSB 2014). Also, this will be viewed more as there will be an opportunity for women to take up jobs in a newly-developed tourism industry (KCSB

2014; Sabah Al-Watan 2011), perhaps in the form of running businesses, such as restaurants and cafes (KCSB 2014). For example, a TV interview showed a Kuwaiti woman who had completed her studies in nutrition in the UK. She explained how she was planning to set up a restaurant specialised in breakfast and brunch with an emphasis on a healthy menu, catering to tourists and locals (Sabah Al-Watan 2011).

## **2.5. Socio-economic condition of Kuwait**

Kuwait is a rentier state which means it uses its natural resources (oil and gas) to support its citizens and develop its political system (Al-Zumai 2013; Fromherz 2012). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Kuwait's economy was focused around exchange; it was known to be a harbour founded at the northern part of the Arabian Gulf, doing trade with India and diverse parts of the Middle East (Abu Hakim 1984; Al-Shehab 1992). By the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the economy depended fundamentally on pearl diving; further it had a flourishing shipping trade (Casey 2007; KCSB 2014).

In 1938, oil was found and since its production and export, which started after World War II, financial gains were enormous (Al-Sabah 2001; Al-Shehab 1992). Kuwait's generally open economy is subject to petroleum, with self-reported unrefined petroleum stores of around 96 billion barrels (bbl) – 10% of world stores. Petroleum represents a large portion of GDP, 95% of income, and 80% of government salary (Al-Sabah 2001; Casey 2007; Toama 2013). The nation is viewed as the holder of the fifth-biggest oil holds on the planet, after Saudi Arabia, Canada, Iran and Iraq (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) 2013).

Kuwaitis and expatriates can enjoy free health care, housing, education and tax free incomes. In addition, the Kuwaiti government subsidises prices of essential commodities such as basic food supplies and utilities (Casey 2007; Al-Ansari 2011; KCSB 2014). Throughout history Kuwaiti rulers strived to make Kuwait a rentier state using oil and gas as their main resources to maintain the population (Al-Zumai 2013; Fromherz 2012). In 1934, the Kuwait rulers allowed an oil admission to the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), mutually claimed by the British Petroleum Company, and the Gulf Oil Corporation. In 1976, the Kuwaiti Government nationalized the KOC (Al-Zumai 2013; KCSB 2014; Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) 2011). Kuwait started efforts in the early 1970s to exert full control over its own common oil assets,

through agreements with the organisation's two unique accomplices (British Petroleum and Gulf Oil). In 1975, an understanding was reached by Kuwait and the two oil organisations granting Kuwait complete possession and control of its oil assets; subsequently, KOC was nationalised (El Mallakh and Atta 1981). The abundance of oil provided what seemed like limitless monetary stores, which propelled the powers to expand the economy (Abulhasan 2004). Furthermore it has led to a hugely bureaucratic state, as the government is the major employer.

Kuwait does not fit into a classification of either developed or developing economy, it falls into some place between the two (Al Matar 2011). It could be classified as a developed economy according to Dashti et al. (2011), who state that a developed economy is the one which has a strong yearly growth rate and a regular supply of balance payments, which applies to Kuwait. It also shows the characteristics of a developed economy due to Kuwaitis having the best paid citizens worldwide (Al Matar 2011). On the other hand, due to its reliance on oil and consumer commodities as well as its limited number of skilled local workers it may be categorised as a developing country (Dashti et al. 2011). According to Abulhasan (2004) the trade in oil allows the government to control the economy by being the main employer and provider of welfare. This results in enormous financial reserves and consequently, the government has no motivation to investigate alternative sources of income and diversify the economy (Al Anjari 2015).

The size and structure of Kuwait's economy is unique because it is one of the smallest countries in the world, but with one of the highest per capita incomes. This is primarily due to rich oil reserves (Casey 2007; KCSB 2014). It is the use of oil wealth that has created a high standard of living for the population (Al-Kosose 1983). There has been considerable growth over the past three decades in the fields of industry, social services, housing, transport, education and many other sectors (Ministry of Planning (MOP) 2010). Despite the colossal damage caused during the Iraqi invasion of 1990, the country has recovered effectively through hard work, policy development and implementation (Casey 2007). The table below shows some of the significant world development indicators to provide more understanding regarding Kuwait.

**Table 2.1 World Development indicators for Kuwait**

World Development indicators	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Population (million)	2.70	2.85	3.0	3.12	3.25	3.37
GNI per capita (current US\$)	50,830	45,500	42,480	44,380	51,190	55,470
GDP (current billion US\$)	147.4	105.9	115.4	154.0	174.0	175.8
GDP growth (annual %)	2	-7	-2	10	7	1
Inflation	19	-17	11	17	7	1
Exports of goods and services (%GDP)	67	59	67	73	75	72
Imports of goods and services (%GDP)	28	29	30	26	26	27
HDI			0.786	0.788	0.790	

Source: adopted from the World Bank (2015).

As can be seen from the table, the population rose by 150 thousand from 2008 to 2009 but this figure includes citizens as well as immigrants. Interestingly, the population increased by a similar amount each year between 2008 and 2013. Conversely it can be noticed that following the global financial crisis, the GNI per capita dropped from 50,830 to 45,500 million US\$ from 2008 to 2009, with another decrease to 42,480 million US\$ in 2010. After this the amounts began to increase, with the largest amount being from 2011 to 2012. By 2012 the GNI per capita indicated that the economy had recovered.

However, the relatively open economy depends heavily on an expatriate labour to maintain its industrial and physical infrastructure. In fact, this dependence has become an impediment, as it has restricted the full realization of national potential (Al-Ansari 2011; Casey 2007). In addition to this, the high occupancy level of expatriates makes Kuwaiti citizens apprehensive, as the indigenous population has emerged as a numerical minority, leading to conflicting feelings of inferiority and superiority towards expatriates (Al-Ansari 2011; KCSB 2014).

The majority of human and financial resources in Kuwait directed towards investing abroad (Alanjiri 2014). The external private Kuwaiti ventures in 2012 totalled about \$37 billion, concentrated generally in America and Europe. Other private Kuwaiti investments are found in Asia and North Africa including Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. These investments account for 7 billion of the outer Kuwaiti investments (Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) 2013). On the other hand, the local private sector

investment is still very limited due to bureaucracy as well as unclear visions for development through investment. Therefore, the majority of Kuwaiti investment focuses on land aggregates abroad at a rate extending somewhere between 50 and 80% (Alwatan 2014). This could be due to the fact that the majority of land is owned by the state and there is an absence of private land areas (Hertog 2010; Hvidt 2007).

### **2.5.1. Kuwait's quest for independence from the oil economy**

As indicated before, Kuwait's economy is heavily reliant on oil; nevertheless, it is seeing indications of a lessening of income and consumption of its oil reserves (Al-Zumai 2013; KCSB 2014). Such a decrease in incomes led to an uncovering of new oil wells, increasing oil creation from the current 2.5 million bbl/day to a significant 4 million bbl/day in 2015 (KCSB 2014; KPC 2011). However, moving towards independence from the oil economy is key to Kuwait expanding its capacity to manage its financial life span. While the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have indicated a readiness to broaden their economies through different strategies such as drawing in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Kuwait has not yet been successful in this respect (Al Tony 2009).

Given that gas and oil resources are non-renewable revenue and energy sources, countries which are solely reliant on them encounter problems. This is because they are continuously using their capital rather than their income. Eltony (2007), states that the value of a country's capital decreases if all revenue is used within each period. Furthermore, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) (2011) reports that the economy of Kuwait and the range of its activities were dramatically altered by the first international oil price increase in 1973. For example, the GDP and per capita earnings in Kuwait increased by 137.7% and 125.1% correspondingly between 1973 and 1974 (Ahmad and Mottu 2002; Al-Zumai 2013). The growth in per capita earning produced an increase in the need for goods and services that consequently increased the need for labour and goods to be imported, therefore adding to a disproportion in the balance of the labour force and the population (Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010; KCSB 2014). Throughout this time, the total revenue was made up mostly by public spending (80%). Salaries accounted for 45% of total permanent outgoings. Therefore, citizens were guaranteed employment by state policy in order to distribute wealth.



Humphreys et al. (2007) state that a raise in national income results in an increase in pressure from the population who want evidence of quick and visible enhancements in their living standards, which consequently leads to further spending of capital. Such demands have been evident in Kuwait which put an ambitious welfare system in place, leading it to spend its revenues from oil wealth in the 1960s-70s (Ahmad and Mottu 2002). This put much stress on Kuwait's administrative capacity which was limited (Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). Gray (2011) states that this led to the implementation of the 1962 constitution: new ministries were created that saw quick growth; Kuwaitis were employed in big numbers as a way of nationally redistributing the oil revenues, and an out-sized bureaucratic machine resulted. The economy is restricted because the government controls most employment (Gray 2011).

Furthermore, discrepancies in rates of extraction and the timing of payments by oil organisations, led to oil incomes becoming profoundly volatile (Ahmad and Mottu 2002; Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). The drawback of volatile revenues is that long term financial planning becomes very challenging and is sometimes impossible; particularly when the goods value is inconsistent. Humphreys et al. (2007) state that the outcome can be high levels of spending in positive years and steep cuts in spending in bad years. This, consequently, can result in 'boom- bust cycles' and the positive effects in good years can often become fleeting; where the issues encountered in bad years remain static. Thus, oil stagnation in the 1980s and late 1990s, and a sharp decrease in oil costs in 2014, whereby, the cost of a barrel of oil dropped from \$110/bbl to beneath \$50/bbl, impact on the health of a nation's development (Al-Watan 2013a). Therefore, foreign direct investments and other alternative sources of income (FDI) are called for.

### **2.5.2. Foreign Direct Investments in Kuwait**

The principle intention in drawing in foreign direct investment into Kuwait is to pull in a different type of income to the state budget (Enderwick 2005; KIA 2013). Additionally, this will lead to job creation in the private sector (Lipsey 2004). However, up to now Kuwait's economy has not benefitted from foreign direct investment (FDI) as it faced challenges in regulating these kinds of investment (Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010; Herb 2009).

Foreign investment in Kuwait totals \$398 million, which means that the investment environment is rather unattractive for foreign investors (Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010; KIA 2013). The ministry of Commerce and Industry is the power appointed to issue FDI licenses for foreign investors and to allocate resources to designated areas. Potential investors wishing to put resources into Kuwait need to submit an application to the Foreign Capital Investment Committee (FCIC). The FCIC, through its specialised agency called the Foreign Capital Investment Bureau (FCIB), reviews the application for approval as per the guidelines and regulations of the State of Kuwait (Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). There is a law that regulates and directs the activities of the (FCIB) and offers incentives to attract investors into Kuwait (Al Kateeb 2010). According to the FDI law, foreign investors hold all rights procured in their nation of cause, including exchange names, licenses, and trademarks.

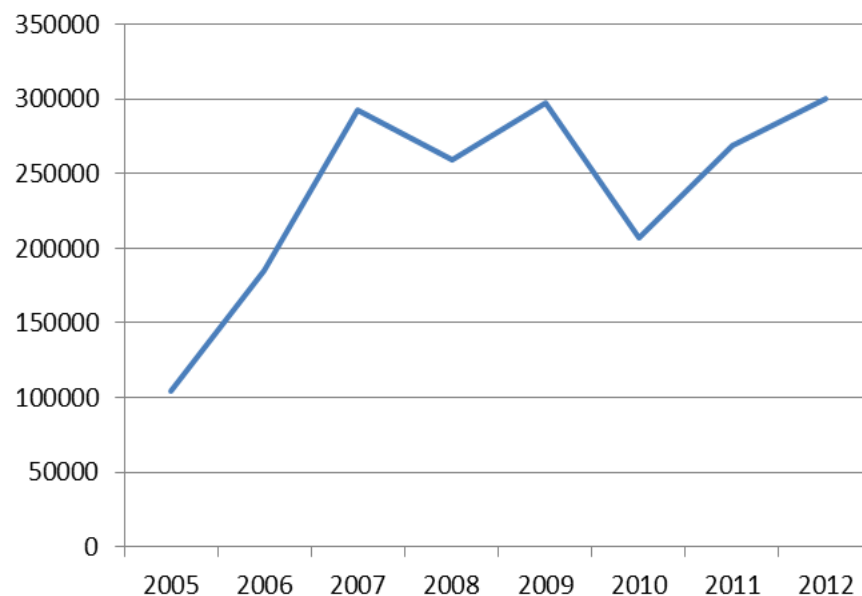
### ***The procedures involved in obtaining an FDI license in Kuwait***

Following FCIB regulations, once an application for a FDI permit has been put together by a foreign investor, FCIB's staff must survey the application within one month from the date of submission to decide if it will be considered (Al-Watan 2014). If it is to be processed, the FCIC should settle on an outcome within a timeframe of up to six months from the date of the application. Where the application for a speculation permit is approved, the KFIB will inform all the concerned parties of the outcome. In the event that the application for the permit is declined, this must be explained and justified. In all cases, the investor must then be informed of the decision within a maximum of 15 working days following a decision. If the application for the permit is denied, investors cannot appeal the outcome or reapply for new permit inside a year (Al Kateeb 2010; Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). While there is a system in place to draw FDI into Kuwait, the lengthy process makes it unattractive to foreign investors (U.S. Department of State 2014). This is at a time where the international drop in oil prices is causing the state's revenue to become increasingly volatile (Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). It can be argued that there is a strong case for economic diversification through attracting and facilitating FDI. However, this can only be possible with the elimination of institutional obstructions. The drawbacks for the development of tourism, with the necessary involvement of the private sector, are clear to appreciate.

## 2.6. Tourism in Kuwait

Tourism in Kuwait is still a relatively new concept that needs to be developed. An official tourism body was established in 2002 under the supervision of the Ministry of Information, but in 2006 the supervision was transferred to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This action has impacted negatively on this department and led to high levels of employee disappointment. Also, it has led to the resignation of the head of the sector, Mrs Nabiala Alanjiri. There are several obstacles challenging the development of tourism in Kuwait, in spite of a significant number of tourists, as the government of Kuwait does not actively promote international tourism (Al Hemoud and Armstrong 1996; Al-Watan 2013a). Al-Otaibi (2004) claims that considerable awareness needs to be raised within Kuwait's public sector regarding the importance of domestic growth and regional tourism demands. This might take the form of visiting friends and relatives (VFR) tourism from the Middle East region (KCSB 2014; Law 1993).

**Figure 2.1**The number of international tourist arrivals to Kuwait 2005/2012



Source: adopted from the World Bank (2015).

According to the above figure, the number of international tourist arrivals to Kuwait has been significantly increasing between 2005 and 2007, but in 2008 there was a slight drop in the number of the arrivals, which then grew again from 2009 until 2010

(the period of the global financial crisis), at which point there was a dramatic drop in the arrivals number. This is maybe also resulting from the period of the instable political situation in Kuwait at that time (BBC 2013). However, it is rising again as the Kuwaiti government aims to develop a national strategy for the country's economic future development, and some of these policies relate to the development of the tourism industry. A new airport terminal is expected to start operation in 2016 and this is expected to increase the number of passengers to around 20 million annually (Al-Watan 2013a; KGO 2014).

It has been noticed that there have been a growing number of visitors coming from the GCC countries to Kuwait in the past few years (Alanba 2013). Also, this has taken the form of families' tourism or VFR tourism, which is more welcomed by Kuwaiti society. The increase in visitor numbers coming from GCC countries is seen as positive action, especially on the official holidays in Kuwait and the rest of the GCC countries, such as Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha holidays and Islamic festivals (Oxford Business Group 2014). However, there is not any specific data base for the number of arrivals, nor about the purpose of the visit. As mentioned earlier by Casey (2007), Kuwait is a traditional society and the majority of local people are conservatives, and this is why Kuwait may potentially attract visitors from similar cultures in the future. There is currently a demand from tourists from the GCC countries, such as the high number of visitors from Saudi Arabia (KCSB 2014). This is because it is important to observe the local socio-cultural values, which means that intra-regional tourism would be well-received as the majority of visitors have a similar cultural background. Zeppel (2010) claims that the conflict between unfamiliar cultures in many destinations can be minimized through the targeting of visitors from a shared cultural background. However, this may make many Kuwaitis nervous of international tourists in Kuwait, as they may be seen to have only a negative influence on Kuwaiti society. Additionally, they do not want to bring in the negative socio-cultural impacts of developing tourism that they have experienced in other destinations such as Dubai (Stephenson et al. 2010; Stephenson 2013).

Tourism in Kuwait is, however, underdeveloped when compared to the other GCC countries (Paris and Rubin 2012). In the other GCC countries the tourism sector can be attributed to the efforts made by government as well as the economic boom in the region, which is has been supported by rising oil prices (Mansfeld and Winckler

2004; Morakabati et al. 2014). The revenues from oil are used for investment in other sectors. Tourism is considered by authorities to be a key option for economic diversification, as oil is a non-renewable resource (Morakabati et al. 2014; Sharpley 2008). For example, Morakabati et al. (2014) suggested that Qatar has great potential to develop the tourism sector as one way of diversifying their economy. However, the growth in tourism in the Middle East is not representative of the whole of the region, but is restricted to a few destinations (Sharpley 2008). This indicates that there is potential for future development in other parts that are not currently popular on the international tourism map, especially since the Arab spring (Stephenson 2013).

Kuwait, for example, ranked last among the GCC countries in terms of the size of its tourism industry, with 300,000 tourists, and receipt of only 424 million US\$ in 2012 (UNWTO 2014). On the other hand, the number of Kuwaiti tourists who travelled outside the country increased by 11.7 % in 2012, compared with 2011, with an expenditure of 2.4 Billion KD, about £4,800,000,000, on tickets and accommodation alone (Al-Watan 2013a). This is because the majority of Kuwaiti people have a high standard of living and they value entertainment; the limited opportunities in Kuwait means that they prefer to travel abroad. It is very interesting to notice that the majority of Kuwaitis are traveling around the world, especially to Western countries, but they have many fears regarding visitors from the West (Alanjiri 2015). In 2013 tourism contributed 0.5% of the country's exports while the outbound tourism expenditure has increased to reach 26% of the country's imports (World Bank 2015).

Although Paris and Rubin (2012) argue that the Kuwaiti government have to begin to rely on the importance of the tourism industry as one of the new sources of income which may replace the heavy dependence on oil production, they nevertheless criticise the level of tourist attention in Kuwait and the lack of interest of the Kuwaiti government given to tourist attractions and tourism activities. Alhemoud and Armstrong (1996) conducted a study among Kuwaiti university students and English-speaking foreigners to identify the tourist attractions in Kuwait. They concluded that neither group was satisfied with the country's tourist attractions, man-made or natural.

Paris and Rubin (2012) argued that there are a lot of opportunities for Kuwait to be a tourist destination but the challenges seem to be greater than what was expected.

For example, they claimed that Kuwait has many possible attractions related to the natural resources, such as the desert in winter and the sea in summer. These attractions include Failaka Island, the City Wall, art galleries and a number of museums (Al Hemoud and Armstrong 1996). Furthermore, pearling is potentially a popular cultural attraction for visitors to Kuwait. It is an ancient occupation that was vital to Kuwait's economy at the end of the 19th century but, in the 1930s, this lucrative trade began to fade away (KNM 1996). The desert is one of the natural attractions and is related to the culture and heritage of Kuwait (Al Watan 2013a; Mahgoub 2007). Kuwaiti families enjoy camping at weekends as it is a very popular practice during the camping season, which runs from the beginning of November till the end of March (Casey 2007; KCSB 2014). In summer Kuwaitis spend their holidays with recreation activities near to the sea, such as swimming, jet skiing, boating and fishing, either on public beaches or chalets (Paris and Rubin 2012). Another example related to the sea is the nine natural islands located just off Kuwaiti shores. For instance, Failaka Island was designed and built in order to become a place for leisure tourism (KCSB 2014; KGO 2014). It has been argued by Paris and Rubin (2012) that these projects can be very popular in the region as most Kuwaitis travel abroad, so there is a potential demand for domestic tourism to flourish.

### **2.6.1. Kuwait and the hotel sector**

The type of tourist accommodation in Kuwait ranges from hotels, resorts to furnished apartments (KCSB 2014). During the last few years, the hotel sector has been growing in Kuwait and can be classified according to the size, quality and range of facilities offered (Hotelier Middle East 2012; Oxford Business Group 2014). The Kuwaiti hotel sector currently consists of 92 hotels ranging from five to one star hotel, totalling 7519 rooms (KCSB 2014). The following tables 3.1 ; 3.2 and 3.3 provides figures regarding number of hotels guests, and numbers of nights spent and origin of hotel guests.

**Table 2.2 The Number of Guests According to Hotel Classification**

Hotel classification	Number of Guests/ thousands						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
5 stars	50973	52546	64046	29640	33275	37580	49196
4 stars	42161	39413	35808	37023	43235	46991	66986
3 stars	14015	10434	13625	10304	20096	24157	35091
2 stars	11923	4211	3412	4595	6651	6761	6026
1 star	7435	3948	6720	5479	7529	5679	1393

Source: adapted from KCSB 2014

It can be seen from the table above that there was a small increase in the number of guests between 2007 and 2008, and then in 2009 there was a rise in the number of guests using 5 star hotels. However, the figure dramatically dropped in 2010 to more than half the number of guests in 2009. The numbers then rose gradually in the following years. It might be that Kuwaiti nationals became interested in spending their holidays in Kuwait due to political instability in the rest of the region in the past few years.

**Table 2.3 Number of Nights According to Hotel Classification**

Hotel Classification	Number of Nights						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
5 stars	100961	99641	73817	50879	55578	55233	75730
4 stars	92642	85513	72836	60898	84679	75109	66986
3 stars	23206	15872	22955	18793	35949	42691	58580
2 stars	10372	5484	2445	4438	6305	6705	7673
1 star	5778	3784	9497	6711	9426	7649	3129

Source: adapted from KCSB 2014

The above table gives the number of nights spent in different hotels which has decreased from 100961 nights in 2007 to approximately half that number in 2012, but this figure then increased in 2013 to reach 75730 nights. In addition, according to statistics from the tourism sector at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the number of hotel rooms in the country in 2012 was about 6927 rooms, including 3002 rooms in five-star hotels, 1376 rooms in four star hotels, 1297 rooms in three star

hotels, 226 rooms in two star hotels and 54 rooms in one star hotels (Alanba 2013; Hotelier Middle East 2012). Kuwait is increasingly being chosen by hotel chains as a tourism destination to build new and exclusive 5 star hotels (Al-Watan 2014), for example, the Golden Tulip, the Hilton Olympia, the InterContinental, Swiss-Belhotel Plaza, Hotel Missoni and the Ibis Sharq (Hotelier Middle East 2012; Oxford Business Group 2014). It is expected that more newly classified accommodation will follow as demand rises (Al-Otaibi 2004). The new hotels will put their emphasis on attracting more business tourists and developing entertainment facilities in Kuwait (Hotelier Middle East 2012; Oxford Business Group 2014).

## **2.7. The Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan**

The 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan highlighted the role of tourism as a diversification option for Kuwait and stressed the need to establish an independent body to carry out a comprehensive and balanced study of what is needed in Kuwait for it to become a world-class tourist destination (Alanjiri 2014; ASIA Travel Tips (ASIA) 2015). The 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan reports that Kuwait should boost leisure activities and instigate mega projects such as Madinat Al Hareer (the Silk City) and the Failaka Island development (Al-Shamari 2011; Paris and Rubin 2012).

Alanjiri (2014) claims that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan was acknowledged in that developing tourism in Kuwait can play a leading role in solving many problems, including unemployment. She also stresses that the plan offers a good vehicle for economic diversification, as well as progress in local and international investments. It can also help promote and support several economic sectors and reduce the dependency of the tourism industry on foreign employment (Alanjiri 2014; Alwatan 2013). The percentage of Kuwaiti workers in the tourism sectors (restaurants, hotels and offices of tourism and travel) is less than 1% (Alanjiri 2014; Al-Watan 2013a).

Tourism could also help reduce the next budget deficit, which could reach, according to preliminary estimates, about 3.5 billion dinars per year (MENA Tourism and Hospitality Report (MENA) 2013). This requires the diversification of sources of income during the next phase, especially in light of falling oil prices (Hotelier Middle



East 2012). The table below illustrates the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, which recommended the following actions to the Kuwaiti government:

**Table 2.4 The most important issues in the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan**

Objective	Strategy
Establish a Tourism Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen an independent entity concerned with the affairs of the tourism sector.</li> <li>• Implement the approval of current and potential tourism projects.</li> </ul>
Develop a marketing plan for Kuwait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for a budget to properly invest in promoting Kuwait as a tourist destination.</li> <li>• Improve the marketing plan to communicate the potential of Kuwait in attracting local and international tourists.</li> <li>• Tourism promotional materials need to work in alignment with marketing plans developed by the GCC, and provide special deals and discounts to its citizens.</li> <li>• Improve tourist facilities and recreational attractions for visitors from home and abroad.</li> </ul>
Train and develop national staff to work in the tourism sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ Kuwaiti nationals to work in tourism, as a part of the policy of Kuwaitization of the workforce.</li> <li>• Improve working conditions in the tourism industry.</li> <li>• Establish a college or institute specialized in the field of tourism.</li> </ul>
Promote the benefits of tourism to the Kuwaiti population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spread awareness through various media about the benefits of tourism to local citizens.</li> <li>• Encourage Kuwaitis to take up employment in tourism.</li> </ul>
Encourage small and medium size enterprises in the field of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver career opportunities in the private sector through small and medium size enterprises such as restaurants and cafes, travel and tourism offices, transport facilities, and tour guide</li> </ul>

	<p>companies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate recreational initiatives presented by the private sector.</li> <li>• Facilitate investment projects through attracting Kuwaiti investments in tourism and recreation.</li> </ul>
Privatise state facilities related to tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privatise all assets of the tourist state-owned public sector.</li> <li>• Creating revenues from privatisation will help to fund the development and promotion of tourism.</li> </ul>

*Source:* Adopted from: Alanjiri (2014); Alanjiri (2015)

The table above highlighted that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan considered a number of important areas for tourism development in Kuwait. It highlighted issues that have impeded progress in the tourism sector. These include a lack of skilled labour, a lack of awareness among the local population with regards to the benefits of tourism, and a relaxation of restrictions on investment. While the plan was not enrolled in the 2005 Kuwaiti government agenda, it was resubmitted in 2011, which signifies that it has been given some consideration without having been fully activated, and is still on the waiting list of the government agenda (Paris and Rubin 2012). There are, however, important benefits offered by the approval of the national Five-Year Plan in 2011 for tourism development, including the building of basic infrastructure such as roads and the expansion of the airport (Ministry of Planning 2010). Also relevant is the emphasis on encouraging partnerships between the public and private sectors, and developing commercial and labour legislation to keep pace with global developments and standards. The streamlining of administrative and regulatory barriers in the business environment is also proposed to facilitate investment in the private sector. It has been argued by Paris and Rubin (2012) that the investment environment in Kuwait is very challenging and there is a need to support small and medium businesses to attract local as well foreign direct and indirect investments. Of further interest is the goal to support human and community development (Ministry of Planning 2010). Kuwait's oil revenues constitute 93% of total government revenues (Al-Watan 2014), therefore diversification is vital for Kuwait sooner or later (Alanjiri 2014; Alanba 2013). Therefore, Kuwait could aim to be a destination for business tourism, according to both the Emir of Kuwait and the Tourism Master Plan. There were 11,000 business tourists in 2012 (UNWTO 2014) but for this to increase, improvement of the facilities

needs to take place. Whether the goal of attracting more business tourists will be reached remains to be tested.

### **2.7.1. SWOT analysis for the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan**

In order to investigate the situation of the development of tourism in Kuwait, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis is used, based on the secondary data. Alanjiri (2015) believes that SWOT analysis is an important tool for the tourism planning process in tourism development; the unique conditions of a destination, including the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the development, must be identified and fully analysed. Fleisher and Bensoussan (2003) consider that SWOT analysis offers an enhanced way of thinking through the range of viable tactics or strategies in response to the competitive environmental dynamics. It is also an effective means for assessing a destination's core capabilities, competences and resources. It reveals development opportunities and vulnerabilities to internal and external environment changes.

#### ***Strengths***

Al-Anjari (2015) mentioned the main strengths in Kuwait, such as the flexibility of gaining a visa on entrance to the country; this is currently available for 34 nationalities and there is an attempt to include more nationalities in the near future. Moreover, Kuwait is a member of GCC, which gives the right for all citizens of these countries to enter a fellow GCC country without having a visa (KCSB 2014). It is interesting to notice that the status of Kuwait is attractive to many people from GCC countries, as Kuwait is still the only country in the Arabian Gulf which combines a strong Islamic identity and a modernity of lifestyle. Furthermore, Al-Otaibi (2004) argues that Kuwait and the other GCC countries share similarities regarding historical background and cultural characteristics, which can easily attract visitors from those countries and enhance visitor arrivals in Kuwait. This, as mentioned earlier, enhances the attractiveness of Kuwait as a tourist destination for neighbouring countries. Another important point as highlighted by Al-Anjari (2015) is to promote the licensing of private aviation companies, which will impact on strengthening the development of tourism in Kuwait. This is significant because at the moment there is only one private airline in addition to the state-owned Kuwait

Airways. Issuing more licenses to private airlines will make it easier for overseas visitors to travel to Kuwait as there will be more options such as ticket prices and flight times. This also will be more applicable when the new airport will be built; Paris and Rubin (2012) claim that the new airport will be able to accommodate more than a million visitors by 2016.

In addition, the Kuwaiti government is working on finding an alternative source of income, and developing tourism can be one of the options for that. According to Morakabati et al. (2014), the tourism industry is an option for Qatar to enhance their economy. Therefore, what can fit in the Qatari context can be acceptable for the Kuwaiti context too. This is mainly because Kuwait and Qatar are similar in many aspects, such as weather, geographic features, religion and traditional society. Furthermore, Al-Otaibi (2004) and Morakabati et al. (2014) claim that the Kuwaiti and GCC countries authorities are keen on minimizing their over-dependence on oil through long-term strategies designed to cope with depleting oil reserves, ensuring that alternative sources of income are developed.

### ***Weaknesses***

The human resources deficiency poses a bigger challenge in Kuwait; the proportion of Kuwaiti nationals who work in the tourism sector is very small, considering the population, which is approximately 1,089,969, with a working population of about 350,220 (KCSB 2014). The numbers of Kuwaitis in the total workforce represents 32.1%, and 73.3% are non-Kuwaiti labour. These statistics show that a high number of foreign workers are required to make the country function. Additionally, there is a need for planning programs to create new jobs and raise the awareness for the potential of the Kuwaiti tourism industry; this may provide new job opportunities as it was recommended by Harrison (1995) that tourism provides new opportunities for employment.

The tourism sector, in particular, created a lot of employment for local people. Ladkin (2011) states that 3% of global employment comes through the international tourism industry. Similarly, UNWTO (2013) argue that tourism creates 235 million jobs directly and indirectly. According to Helmy (2004), Egypt's tourism policy has enabled it to gain substantial foreign exchange, as well as providing direct and indirect employment opportunities for local people. On the other hand, the Kuwaiti

government is still struggling with the new Kuwaiti graduates and job seekers trying to find employment (Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). The exposed and rapid growth of the Kuwaiti economy has led to the availability of a massive amount of work opportunities, particularly for locals (KCSB 2014). Al-Otaibi (2004) pointed out that tourism development in Kuwait needs to be forming an independent 'Supreme Tourism Authority' or organization to take care of touristic issues and make the needed decisions without having to go through the tedious routine that has been hindering tourism development until now. Also, Sharpley (2002) highlighted in his study on Cyprus that the national tourism organisation was established to help develop the tourism sector authority. But the situation in Kuwait is different and there is a need for an authoritarian approach. This led to tourism in Kuwait facing a shortage of human resources. This obstructs the development of the tourism industry. Importantly, this may affect the quality of service in the tourism sector, which is important for the experience and satisfaction of the visitors.

The condition of tourist attractions and services has been without any maintenance since they were established in the 1970s and 1980s, which means that they are in very poor shape and cannot be a competitive attraction. For example, Al-Anjari (2015) criticizes the authorities for neglecting the maintenance of tourism attractions, and she said that while Kuwait had originally taken the initiative in developing many recreation facilities since the 1980s, such as the dancing fountain, it had since become a waste place, whereas Dubai's dancing fountain became an international tourist attraction. On the other hand, while land shortage limits the scope of Kuwait's tourism development, it causes limitations to be used for building touristic facilities as well, as it leads to high prices of available land. In order to facilitate the development of tourism, the tourism industry has to have some privileges and assistance, including allocating new land in their development of new cities such as Madinat Al Hareer or the Silk City (Paris and Rubin 2012).

An additional weakness is the lack of specific legislation regarding the tourism industry. Hall (2009) has argued that legislation can attract the private sector to invest in the tourism sector, and any government should address issues that would create a conducive business environment and develop framework that might strengthen the government's negotiating capacity. Similarly, Tosun (2001), in his study, supported the view that legislation has a significant influence on tourism

development in Turkey. Therefore, Kuwait should have the choice of developing its own legislation and laws regarding tourism activities and how to manage destinations.

Lastly, it has been seen that there is a lack of collaboration between different departments in the Kuwaiti government. This reflects on the progress of the development plan of the country generally, and specifically this has influence on the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, which is waiting to be activated. Paris and Rubin (2012) argue that there have been many obstacles facing the development plan, such as the disagreements between the government parties as well as the investors, whether they are local or international. They also refer to bureaucracy in their paper as a complicated issue hindering the development plan. In addition, Aas et al. (2005) and Lee et al. (2010) claim that generally to have a successful collaborative approach in any destination there must be an understanding, and having communication channels between the key stakeholders is a primary prerequisite. In the case of Kuwait, it seems that there are many challenges that are delaying the progress of the development plan of the country as a whole, and the practical development of the tourism industry by activating the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan.

### ***Opportunity***

The opportunities for making Kuwait a touristic destination can be seen as the chances to find an alternative income and to invest in natural and man-made resources other than oil. It has been argued that Kuwait is a wealthy country, not only with ease of use of money but also with national human resources that are desirable for activating the tourism sector to be at a competent level. Al-Anjari (2015) claims that implementing the tourism strategy could help in solving the unemployment challenge that is facing the Kuwaiti government, because tourism is an industry that could provide 30,000 job opportunities for job seekers in the nearest future.

Furthermore, Mahgoub (2007) claims that Kuwait has a unique desert environment, as it makes up more than 90% of the total area of the country. Therefore, Al-Anjari (2015) suggested that the huge land of the desert can be used to establish many touristic and medical treatment resorts. She also argues that camping is an activity

that most Kuwaiti families like to do every year in the camping season, but it has to be organized to sustain its natural attraction. In addition, Paris and Rubin (2012) consider that sustaining the desert as a tourist attraction can also preserve the wildlife, thereby making it possible to promote Kuwait as an ecotourism destination, although Al-Anjari (2015) claims that the infrastructure in Kuwait is semi-ready to receive tourists. Finally, there is the location, which is strategic, as it can play an important role as a gateway to the Middle East and a transit point for many destinations. Moreover, tourists will spend money in any destination as long as conditions in the location are of a tourist standard and this, in turn, will lead to growth in the economy (Marzuki 2011; Oh 2005).

### ***Threats***

The 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan was presented to the Kuwaiti government as a solution for the over dependence on oil as a renewable source of income. Also, this plan was seen as an alternative source of revenue that the majority of the other GCC countries may follow. But, disappointingly, there was a delay in processing the plan in the government agenda, which led to a postponement of the decision making. This highly affected many of the tourism projects that had been studied but were not put into action. Moreover, there are some intervention bodies that do not appreciate the importance of the tourism industry, and they have conflicting interests with developing tourist activities. Morakabati et al. (2014) argue that in the GCC countries the tourism sector can be attributed to the efforts made by government, as well as the economic boom in the region, which is supported by rising oil prices. However, Mansfeld and Winckler (2004) claim that when the revenues from oil are at a high value, it is better to be used for investment in other sectors, such as the infrastructure for tourist attraction resources.

A significant threat for the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan is a severe competition with the neighbouring countries, as almost all GCC countries have already developed a tourism industry and they have become international destinations. For example, Dubai has emerged as a popular destination on the international tourist map, following a strategic move by the authorities to invest heavily in the development of its infrastructure to adopt international tourism (Henderson 2006 a,b). Stephenson (2013) claims that the Dubai government has invested in marketing in order to introduce the destination as an international

business hub and leisure spot. In addition, Morakabati et al. (2014) suggested that Qatar has great potential to develop the tourism sector as one way of diversifying their economy. Therefore, the threat is growing from the GCC countries, and the Kuwaiti government has to take the right decision before it is too late. However, in reality the Kuwaiti government at the moment is showing a deliberate ignorance in establishing new public touristic facilities or even maintaining existing tourist resources (Al-Watan 2013a). With this poor condition, Kuwait attracts visitors mainly from the Middle East (around 60%) and the Asia-Pacific region (33.2%), with fewer coming from Europe and the US (8%) (KCSB 2014).

Another threat for Kuwait as a tourist destination is the political instability in the region, which might affect the perception of potential tourists who may view Kuwait as a high risk destination. When tourists decide where to go on holiday, safety is one of the priorities, and it is therefore important for destinations to maintain a secure image, especially when it is positioned in a politically unstable area. However, it can be noticed from Morakabati et al. (2014) that Kuwait is mentioned as a medium to low risk country for tourists.

### **2.7.2. The challenges for tourism development in Kuwait**

Kuwait could very well adopt Islamic tourism, which can include Islamic religious and cultural features, with its own tradition and costumes. It has been argued that challenges include whether the tourism industry is capable and skilled enough to implement such a task of merging elements of the conservative Islamic lifestyle with the modern tourism industry. For example, neighbouring Saudi Arabia has opened the country up for tourism with Islamic values, but one must not lose sight of the fact that other types of tourism, for liberal Muslims and non-Muslims, must be options as well.

Furthermore, the fact that the majority of land is owned by the state and there is an absence of private land areas means that offering land for local investors to create tourism projects is very costly and requires huge budgetary liquidity (Hetrog 2010; Hvidt 2007). This has resulted in a limitation in the supply of private land and makes the prices very high. Therefore, any investor will need the support of the government through a system such as BOT collaboration, which will be discussed in the next chapter. There is also a need for reasonable legislative activities, as well as a clear



vision for the development of tourism (Al Fulaij 2008; Taw El-Lail 2014). On the other hand, the neighbouring states, such as UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, designate more facilities for foreign investments and recreation interests, which leads to attracting investment from all around the world, including Kuwait (Alanjiri 2014). As stated before, there seems to be a lack of a suitable environment to attract FDIs, as well as local investments in Kuwait. This calls for a change in regulations surrounding the application process and other related procedures for local and foreign investors alike. This is seen to be critical if a tourism industry is to be developed (Alanjiri 2014).

One major concern about the development of tourism in Kuwait, however, remains the strong religious beliefs of the Kuwaitis, which are tightly weaved into the social fabric of the country (Taoma 2013). Moreover, Kuwaiti law, which is mainly driven by Islamic law, bans some tourism activities, such as establishing night clubs and bars. Therefore, these places are not relevant to Kuwaiti tourist resource attractions, although international tourists might find these attractions in some other Islamic countries, such as Egypt and Dubai. Similarly, Al Hemoud and Armstrong (1996) and Al-Otaibi (2004) argue that the concept of tourist attractions in Kuwait is a spatial frame of tourism which is mainly affective of the moral values of the local community. This can lead to the understanding that the establishment of tourist attractions in Kuwait must be in parallel with the Islamic laws, for example *Halal* tourism. *Halal* means permissible in Arabic and this is applicable not only to food, but to any product, which can range from immunisation to financial products, cosmetics and - particularly significant to this study - to tourism (Battour et al. 2011; Duman 2011). Moreover, Battour et al. (2011) claim that introducing new and more socially acceptable types of tourism development such as *Halal* tourism may be an option for any Islamic destination. Therefore, this type of tourism may fit within the context of Kuwait.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

This chapter provides an overview of the economy of Kuwait and its development of tourism. However, it is argued that this strong economy faces a lot of challenges and there is a need to diversify the income sources (Al-Watan 2013a). Therefore, promoting Kuwait as a tourist destination may help in maintaining high income, creating jobs for locals and new opportunities to help keep their social status.

Tourism development in Kuwait has several objectives before it can be a full reality: to utilise the existing potential, to provide better and more comprehensive services to tourists, to diversify the area's profile and to generate additional employment and income for the local inhabitants, as job opportunities are forecast to contribute over 1% to national GDP and to grow by 4% by 2016 (Euromonitor International 2014). The process of tourism development is a gradual one, in order to maintain or improve the present quality of the environment and to ensure permanent consensus among the parties concerned. The quality of life for local people is closely linked with a deep respect and understanding for their natural environment (KCSB 2014).

Through careful planning, tour operators can help mitigate the seasonal nature of tourism activities by generating positive economic and social impacts that will offer year-round benefits for the communities living in local destinations (Harrison 1988; Mowforth and Munt 2009). Furthermore, the basics of the country's laws come from the principles of *Sharai's* teaching. This has indicated that the effect of Islam provides social norms that establish the socio-cultural context for tourism planning, and these are reflected in the nature of tourism developments plans. Also, this may be considered as an obstacle for some tourism activities, which will not be allowed in Kuwait. However, this can be managed by introducing *Halal* tourism.

## **Chapter 3. Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Distinguishing tourism and identifying its concept as a movement commendable of interest is important in order to set up a precise premise for the study. There have been different definitions of tourism, which mirror its many-sided characteristics. Tourism is a multidimensional, multifaceted action, involving numerous lives and grouped financial exercises. However, the tourism industry is undergoing a dynamic change as the communities and people participating in its spread are increasing (Lee 2013; Leep 2007; Schubert et al. 2011). Therefore, much emphasis is placed on the achievement of economic prosperity through tourism; but there is also a need to ensure the protection of socio-cultural norms and standards among destination communities, along with reducing environmental challenges on the local resources (Shaw and Williams 2004; Mbaiwa 2010).

Sharpley and Telfer (2014) argue that the task of defining tourism is much harder than it initially appears. Tourism is an interdisciplinary subject incorporating perspectives from psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, cultural studies, economics and others. Moreover, definitions are developed in accordance with the context of the situation, and as Mowforth and Munt (2009) claim, tourism has been defined and redefined by scholars and governments in relation to a range of different fields. Ryan (1991) and Leiper (1990) suggest that there are three points of view that should be considered when defining tourism: technical, economic and holistic, and these will be discussed in the following sections.

Technical definitions are frequently utilized for giving tourism data for statistical purposes, and depictions are added that can be used as a part of both global and local tourism settings. Be that as it may, a large number of the prior attempts to define tourism are without a doubt affected by the need of tourism destinations for an arrangement of criteria to be aware of how to measure tourism. Beginning with technical definitions, these empower one to be mindful of ideas of the primary components that are incorporated in tourism phenomena. From a 'technical' point of perspective, endeavours to characterize tourism have been driven by the need to

separate trips from different types of travel for statistical purposes. This is because, as Leiper (1979) stated, *'since the 1930s, governments and tourist industry organizations have tried to monitor the size and characteristics of tourist markets'* (Leiper 1979, p. 393).

Numerous worldwide associations, for example, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), created both supply and demand side definitions of tourism. The following explanation is based on the World Tourism Organisation's definition - *'the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes'* (WTO 1995, p. 21). Shaw and Williams (2002) expressed the view that such definitions have the point of interest of being for the most part effectively quantifiable. Cooper et al. (2008, p.9) contended that *'these technical definitions request that a movement needs to breeze through specific tests before it can count as tourism. Such tests incorporate the accompanying:*

- Minimum length of stay is one night.
- Maximum length of stay is one year.
- Strict reason of visit classes.
- A distance travelled consideration (WTO suggestion is 40-160 kilometers)'.

Shaw and Williams (2002) stated that rather than adhering to any definition, it is adaptable to have an overnight guest for relaxation purposes. Therefore, technical definitions perceive the traveller, keeping in mind the end goal of providing a typical premise by which to gather information in both international and domestic settings.

Stressing the essentialness of the economic measurement of tourism, Williams and Shaw (1991) stated that *'as tourism emerges from the shadows of economic policy to a centre-stage position, it has become imperative to evaluate its role in economic development. The industry is shrouded in myths and stereotypes, and there is a need to examine critically recent trends in tourism, its economic organisation and its contribution to economic development'* (Williams and Shaw 1991, P. 2). In addition, Ryan (1991) defined tourism as *'a study of the demand for supply of accommodation and supportive services for those staying away from home, and the resultant patterns of expenditure, income creation and employment'* (Ryan 1991, p.5). The economic perspective is that tourism is seen as an economic activity and promising

industry. Leiper (1979) proposed a clearer definition when he decided the objective for this industry is to serve the traveller, therefore giving a more extensive aim to tourism. He stated 'the tourist industry consists of all those firms, organizations and facilities which are intended to serve the specific needs and wants of tourists' (Leiper 1979, p. 400).

One of the major criticisms is the absence of a clear-cut definition of tourism, as there are different levels of interpretation (Liu 2003; Mowforth and Munt 2009). This is because there are many suggested definitions available and consequently it is hard to determine a starting point for making such a definition (Hall and Lew 2009). Moreover, Sharpley and Telfer (2014) argue that the absence of a collectively agreed definition of tourism is, to some extent, due to the complicated nature of tourist activities, in addition to differing concerns being focused on varying aspects of tourist action.

A holistic definition tries to embrace the entire quintessence of tourism, which grips both the authentic and hypothetical points of view of tourism (Leiper 1979). Mathieson and Wall (1992) argue that tourism is an amalgamated occurrence that involves a multiplicity of varying factors and the interaction that is evident in the tourist travel process. They defined tourism as a 'multi-faceted phenomenon which involves movement to and stays in destinations outside the normal place of residence' (Mathieson and Wall 1992, p. 14).

Similarly, Cooper et al. (2008) claim that the holistic definition conveys the nature of tourism activities. Firstly, tourism emerges out of a movement of individuals to - and their stay in -different areas or destinations. Secondly, there are two components in tourism: the trip to the destination and the accommodation and the activities at the destination. Then, the journey and stay take place outside the typical environment of living arrangements and work, but it is temporary and their intention is to return in a limited time, not more than a year. Finally, the reasons for going to these destinations are for other than taking up fixed habitation or doing business in the visited areas.

The definitions of Mathieson and Wall (1992) and Cooper et al. (2008) highlight benefits as a critical part of the tourism sector. Tourism seen from these perspectives is an exceptionally adaptable idea created by the connection between

visitor and non-vacationer components and the after-effect of these connections. This permits a more manipulative process and another area to develop from tourism exercises: for example, the effect of tourism on the society or the environment. The holistic definitions of tourism are driven all the more by demand side than supply side contemplations. For this study, the supply and demand side definitions by Mathieson and Wall (1992) and Cooper et al. (2008) are more appropriate. This study will investigate both the attraction potential of Kuwait as a tourist destination based on the demand side, and the facilities which relate to the supply side.

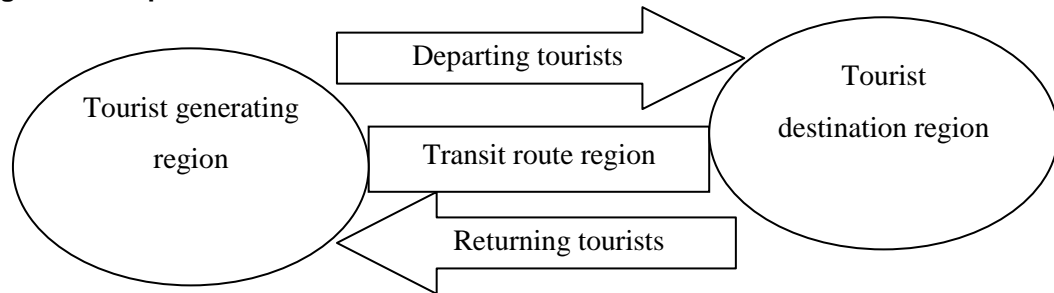
### **3.2. Tourism System**

Tourism systems are complex. They diverge considerably from simple linear 'cause and effect' models since they are characterized by composite interactions and inter-relationships (McDonald 2009; Sharpley 2000). Mowforth and Munt (2009) state that the exclusivity of the destinations, geographical location, socio-cultural context, economic and legal parameters differ from point A to point B in the international tourism map. Therefore, the tourism system approach has the benefit of providing a wider and more dynamic viewpoint as an alternative to models that are insular or exclusive (Morakabati 2011). The system's intention is to investigate, characterise and amalgamate a variety of angles from a general perspective. One model of tourism as a dynamic system is proposed by Leiper (1990) which is discussed in the following section.

Leiper's attraction framework is a tourism destination system which builds on the earlier work of MacCannell (1976) and Gunn (1988). For Leiper the tourism system comprises three elements: a tourist, a sight and a marker (see Hall and Page 2014). Leiper defines a tourist attraction as "a system comprising three elements: a tourist or human element, a nucleus or central element, and a marker or informative element. A tourist attraction comes into existence when the three elements are interconnected" (1990, p138). Leiper (1990) identifies various components that connect inside the traveler movement (see also Hall and Page 2014). These are a tourist (with particular needs and wants); a nucleus (something about the place they is attractive to tourists and motivates them to visit); and a marker (some form of information about the nucleus). Additionally, Leiper argues that the tourism framework is focused around six fundamental divisions: vacation spots, bearers,

settlement, promoting, incidental administrations, and laws and regulations identified with tourism. His model is demonstrated in the following figure.

**Figure 3.1 Leiper's model**



Source: adopted from Leiper (1990)

This model recognizes the importance of taking the requirements of tourists into consideration. Tourists seek to satisfy various needs and wants that will motivate them to travel for leisure away from their homes. For example, the spectators at an international sports event may be classified as 'tourists' because they have travelled a distance to the event (Cooper 2008). This makes sports tourism an interesting system to be examined (Hinch and Higham 2001). The second major element of Leiper's (1990) is the geographical element. Tourism fundamentally involves mobilities of people across space (Shaw and Williams 2002) so that it is possible to identify three fundamental geographical regions involved in tourism:

- a) The traveller-generating region (which represents the generating market and is the source of demands and motivations that, in turn, stimulate travel).
- b) The tourist destination region (TDR) (which corresponds to the sharp end of tourism). At the destination the full pressure of tourism is felt and so the destination is also the focus of the management and planning strategies that are adopted to deal with the impacts of tourists. The desire among tourists to visit a destination fuels the whole system and generates demand for travel in the developing area.
- c) The transit route region characterises not only the travel time to get to the destination, but also the places/destinations that can be visited whilst in transit to the final destination.

Leiper (1990) also raised the idea of a nuclear mix and hierarchy of attractions, which relates to the combination of nuclei that a tourist wishes to experience. This hierarchy suggests that some of these nuclei are more important in influencing visitor decisions than others. This aspect of the attraction is associated with multiple categories of tourism typologies, trips and levels of motivations (Cooper 2008; Gammon and Robinson 1996). This is the site where the tourist experience is ultimately produced, consumed and commodified. Sport for example can act as a powerful symbol of a destination's culture (for example, ice hockey in Canada, Nordic skiing in Norway). The globalisation of sport may, on the other hand, erode the distinction between places in terms of the culture of sport. This inherent uncertainty means that sporting attractions tend to be authentic and renewable. According to Hinch and Higham (2001), Leiper's (1990) model of the tourist attraction system provides insight into the relationship between sport and tourism. Moreover, Leiper (1990) observes that the nuclei (and thus entire complexes) can be organized into a hierarchical structure according to the significance of the attraction. The current study will identify the accessibility of Kuwait, based on infrastructure such as road networks and the airport. Accommodation is also seen as a very important geographical factor because it marks the beginning of the tourists' experience. Therefore, accessibility and accommodation are both regarded as important geographical factors in tourism and they will both be discussed in the context of geographical elements in Kuwait.

Finally, the tourism industry makes up the third fundamental component of Leiper's model. This industry incorporates the array of organisations and businesses which participate in providing the tourism products. Leiper's tourist system model not only emphasises the dynamic relationship between supply and demand but also highlights the interaction between them in the tourism operations which are made up of a range of stakeholder groups including tourist enterprises and governmental agencies (Morakabati 2011). Furthermore, the third component includes information or images, received by a tourist and which can be interpreted as indicators of anything which could be the nucleus of an attraction (Cooper 2008; Hinch and Higham 2001). This framework has been widely tested and contains a number of appealing elements, particularly for developing an understanding of the spatial structure of destination regions. In particular, this could be used to study the way destinations attract tourists, to understand the nature and patterns of visitation to



nodes within the destination, and to provide a window onto the structure and function of attraction complexes as fundamental components of destination regions. Moreover, the Leiper model (1990) recognizes that attractions are the outcome of complex interactions and communications between the different components of the system.

The utility of Leiper's model is that it recognizes that vacation destinations are sub-systems of the overall tourism system. Moreover, it moves away from the long-established view that tourists are 'attracted' or 'pulled' to a destination on the basis of its attractions (Hall and Page 2014). Instead they are also 'pushed' by their own intentions and motivations (Richards 2002) which, in turn, are shaped by their individual needs and wants. They are motivated to travel to experience a nucleus (and its associated markers/information) in contexts where the informative element accords with their individual motivations (Hall and Page 2014).

In the current study Kuwait is a tourist destination region, but it is unclear if the resources in this area are strong enough to attract visitors. As a result, identifying the main tourist sites and activities is very important. The 'pull motives' to go to specific destinations vitalize the tourism system and make travel in these areas attractive. Leiper (1990) regards the amount of tourist sites as the nucleus of the TDR and the location of services. In contrast, Mill and Morrison (2006) and Middleton and Hawkins (1998) claim that tourist destinations are made up of tourist sites and activities, as well as marketing strategies. Leiper's approach is likely to be more relevant because it emphasizes the geographical dimension as the most significant part of the tourism system. This model can be effective to give more information regarding the demand as well as the supply side.

### **3.3. The Development Concept**

Development theories are complex and dynamic regarding the nature of development and its goals. These theories have changed and evolved over time (Telfer 2009). Since the Second World War, the thinking on international development has gone through a number of stages (Mowforth and Munt 2009; Telfer 2009), namely: the modernisation paradigm; the dependency paradigm; the neo-classical counter revolution; the alternative development paradigm. For the purpose

of this study the modernisation paradigm and the alternative development paradigm will be discussed, as they are the most relevant.

### **3.3.1. Tourism and Development**

According to Sharpley and Telfer (2014), the development of tourism has been seen as a vehicle for improvement, growth and modernisation, and it can also become a symbol of Westernisation and economic growth, especially for developing countries (see also Telfer 2009). Also, Jenkins (1991) points out many reasons why tourism has an important role in economic development, such as the steady growth of travel and tourism since the 1960s. In addition, tourism requires limited capital investment in order to develop new products, but it has potential to attract huge amounts of revenue from foreign tourists. That is why many developing countries have made the decision to embrace tourism as a key element of their economic development strategies (Jenkins 1991, Reid 2003; Hall and Lew 2009).

The economic impact of tourism on a nation can be interpreted in terms of its effect on the gross domestic product (GDP), the employment sector and the level of foreign exchange (Fletcher 2008; Jaafar and Maideen 2012; Lee 2013; Scheyvens 2011). The tourism industry is acknowledged as an important sector due to its significant growth and development in many countries, as well as the priority given to this sector by authorities all over the world (Sequeira and Nunes 2008; Slocum and Backman 2011). This is because its contribution to the economy could be more significant than any other industry, for example in countries such as Malaysia and Dubai (Marzuki 2011; Sharpley 2008; Schubert et al. 2011). Poor communities often see tourism development as a positive way of increasing their economy (Sirakay-Turk et al. 2008; Zeng and Ryan 2012).

The UNWTO (2013) states that tourism creates 235 million jobs directly and indirectly, and Ladkin (2011) states that the international tourism industry is responsible for approximately 3% of global employment. In addition, Schubert et al. (2010) demonstrate that the ten nations for which tourism contributes the most to GDP are all small islands. Depending on the tourism industry leads to the faster growth of small economies; examples are the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and St Lucia, which produce more than 60% of their GDP through

tourism (Schubert et al. 2010). Many authors (Di Foggia et al. 2012; Jaafar and Maideen 2012; Nissan et al. 2011; Seetanah 2011) report a positive effect from tourism on economic development; conversely, some other researchers disagree with this. For example, Cortes-Jimenez et al. (2011), in their study of Tunisia, found that there is no proof of a marked contribution to economic growth over the long term. Additionally, Oh (2005) and Payne and Mervar (2010) reported that tourism has not obviously affected the economies in Korea and Croatia respectively. However, many countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean rely on tourism as a major source of income, which also contributes the most to the economy. Furthermore, tourism is an established industry in the economies of Europe, North America and Oceania (Ivanov and Webster 2011). Although tourism is seen as highly beneficial to the economy, there is a fear that over-dependence may make the country vulnerable to foreign action, which could lead to economic crisis (Mason 2008; Sanad et al. 2010).

Conversely, there are also many worries regarding the negative economic impacts of tourism (Andereck et al. 2005). For example, the cost of land will increase with a developing tourism industry and this will affect the local residents, who may not be able to afford higher prices (Kytzia et al. 2011). Moreover, employment in this sector is mostly seasonal (and often part-time) and therefore does not guarantee year-round work for all employees (Mason 2008; Seetaram 2012). This leads to the offer of low quality and low paid jobs, which are disproportionately taken by women (Lacher and Oh 2012; Shakeela et al. 2010).

There are several degrees of effect on the economy resulting from tourism, and they can be divided into three categories: direct, indirect and induced (Fletcher 2008). Direct effects: the direct category of economic effect is the value of tourism receipts minus the value of imports utilised by the primary tourism interfaces (e.g. hotels and restaurants) in rendering tourism goods and/or services (Nissan et al. 2011). Direct effects are greater where the import content (also known as leakage) is lower, which is another cause of economic concern for host communities (Fletcher 2008; Mowforth and Munt 2009). Leakage occurs due to the import of consumable goods and services to meet the demands of guests. Apart from this cash outflow, leakage is also caused by the repatriation of profits by foreign entrepreneurs in the tourism destination; moreover, some foreign currency, created by tourism, is affected by the

exchange process adopted by transnational corporations. Leakage accounts for the loss of more than 50% of tourism revenues from developing countries (Mowforth and Munt 2009).

*Indirect effects:* primary tourism interfaces are interlinked with other sectors of the economy in providing goods and/or services to tourists. For instance, primary tourism interfaces with the need to pay for basic requirements, such as water and energy (electricity), food and drink supplies, amongst others. Thus, some of the money generated from tourism passes to other sectors through the primary tourism interfaces, and thereby has an indirect effect on the economy (Fletcher 2008; Mowforth and Munt 2009). *Induced effects:* the induced effect occurs during the direct and indirect flow of revenue generated from the tourism industry. This leads to the distribution of income among the local community, and any additional income goes towards the development of the locality (Fletcher 2008; Lim and Bendle 2011). Moreover, increased spending on tourism will bring about more activity in connected industries, which will lead to more financial revenue than the earlier cost (Nissan et al. 2011).

There is a role for tourism as a catalyst for economic growth using natural resources. For example, the Maldives has achieved significant economic benefits from the development of its tourism industry, which has helped to raise the standard of living there (Scheyvens 2011). The economic growth of a destination acts as a catalyst, augmenting the growth of tourism in that location (Eugenio-Martin et al. 2008).

Tourism cannot be relied upon as the only tool for economic development for every region, unless it is supported by the socio-cultural, natural and human potential in the destination (Reddy 2008; Saarinen 2006; Sequeira and Nunes 2008). Tourism promotes potential local trade because it creates market opportunities and its development in these destinations enhances the quality of life for the local community (Briedenhann and Wickens 2004; Eugenio-Martin et al. 2008). The growth of tourism in a destination is linked to the GDP per capita, the weather conditions, natural features, the infrastructure and the level of health and education among the host community (Eugenio-Martin et al. 2008; Flecha et al. 2010). If the resources are significant, adopting tourism as a tool for economic development will bring about positive outcomes; on the other hand, if the resources are poor, the outcomes will not be productive.

Sequeira and Nunes (2008) suggest that implementing tourism as a strategic option for economic development in exclusion countries is an appropriate step, because it could have a positive effect on the practices of the government, as well as other poorly managed institutions. Tourism brings a country closer to the international community and thereby creates pressure on the authorities to develop and retain a positive image in order to attract more tourists to maintain economic growth. Glaesser (2006) suggested that a country's image is based on its political arrangements and its international relations. The image of a destination is crucial in influencing travel decisions in terms of preferences, motivation and consumer behavior.

However, the development concept has long been debated and as a term has been interpreted in a multitude of ways by different researchers (Harrison 1988; Mowforth and Munt 2009; Sharpley 2000; Sharpley and Telfer 2014; Wall and Mathieson 2006). There is a need to understand or define development. Rostow (1960) predicted that traditional societies entering the development path would inevitably pass through its various stages by means of the free market, and that they would eventually become similar to the mass consumption societies of the capitalist world. However, this prognosis ultimately proved wrong. Despite the high growth rates of gross national product (GNP) or GNP per capita in the developing countries, still poverty, inequality and unemployment were not eradicated (Lansing and De Vries 2007; Schubert et al. 2011). Therefore, economists looked for alternative definitions of development during the 1970s and 1980s.

Harrison (1988) stated that *'there is no agreed definition of development. It is inescapably a normative term, which at various times has meant economic growth, structural economic change, autonomous industrialization, capitalism or socialism, self-actualization, and individual, national, regional and cultural self-reliance'* (Harrison 1988, p. 151). In addition, Sharpley (2000) defined development as *"an ambiguous term that is used to describe both a process through which a society moves from one condition to another, and also the goal of that process"* (Sharpley 2000, p. 3). However, Mowforth and Munt (2009) argue that *'Development is real thought and is unlikely to disappear as a system of thinking. Development is an industry in its own right (with myriad global agencies, government departments,*

*NGOs, consultants, experts, reporters, academics and so on) that despite good intentions nevertheless makes livings from poverty' (Mowforth and Munt 2009, p. 38).*

Moreover, the table below helps in understanding the concept of development, as well as reflecting the different views and the debates over the nature of development. For example, the approaches and ideas of Mowforth and Munt (2009), Sharpley and Telfer, (2014) and Harrison (1988) are in many respects quite different.

**Table 3.1 The different approaches and ideas of the concept of development**

Authors' Name	Definition of development	Key Themes	Strategies	Limitation to development
Harrison (1988)	Clearly, there is no agreed definition of development. It is inescapably a normative term, which at various times has meant economic growth, structural economic change, autonomous industrialization, capitalism or socialism, self-actualization, and individual, national, regional and cultural self-reliance. P. 151	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development characteristics</li> <li>• Societies modernized or tradition</li> <li>• The perspective of tourism development</li> <li>• Social-cultural impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement toward a valued state social context.</li> <li>• Modernisation as a way for social\economic\political change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability is difficult to measure.</li> <li>• Increases the awareness of the social, cultural and environmental problems that can arise from development and the growth of tourism.</li> <li>• Satisfaction of local people and communities.</li> <li>• The majority of jobs in tourism are not well paid.</li> <li>• The demonstration effects.</li> <li>• The young people in most less developed countries copy Western clothing, the behaviour and lifestyle of tourists.</li> </ul>
Leiper (1990)	The main practical applications would appear in organizations concerned with fostering particular places as tourist destinations. P 382	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism systems</li> <li>• The relationship between supply and demand</li> <li>• The region serves as an important unit for the development and promotion of tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract different types of tourist</li> <li>• Promote diverse destinations</li> <li>• Use many forms of media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The motivations of pull and push factors to a destination are varied and not controlled.</li> <li>• The misleading of information that tourists need regarding the visiting destination.</li> </ul>
Sharpley (2000)	'Development is an ambiguous term that is used to describe both a process through which a society moves from one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vagueness of the concept of sustainability.</li> <li>• Employment creation of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ labour from the host community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given the lack of clarity of what is sustainable, it is hard to measure and therefore monitor.</li> <li>• Interactions of host and guest often result in conflict.</li> </ul>

	condition to another, and also the goal of that process'. P 3	<p>host community, leading to higher income and better quality of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict resulting from interaction between host and guests.</li> <li>• Negative impacts on local cultures and values.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The awareness that tourism development will inevitably lead to changes in host communities, and can have serious adverse impacts on local cultural values.</li> </ul>
Wall and Mathieson (2006)	Development implies change: a progression from an existing situation to a new, ideally superior, state. P290	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing countries have prioritised tourism as a means of attracting external financial resources in order to boost economic growth</li> <li>• Increase the awareness of the social cultural and environmental problems that can arise from development and the growth of tourism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing through word of mouth as a tool for advertising</li> <li>• Using a sustainable tourism approach</li> <li>• Diversity of facilities and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic impact of tourism such as high leakage, high inflation and land speculation, low returns on investment and over dependence.</li> <li>• Incomes and employment for locals in some cases is limited, where the employment of non-locals in managerial and professional occupations provokes resentment that is termed as neo-colonialism</li> <li>• The conflict between development and conservation.</li> <li>• The demonstration effect, as it introduces foreign ideologies into host communities which have not been exposed to international tourist lifestyles.</li> </ul>
Mowforth and Munt (2009)	'Development is real though and is unlikely to disappear as a system of thinking and institutionalisation of action. Development is an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable tourism.</li> <li>• Globalisation &amp; international systems.</li> <li>• Pro-poor tourism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "New forms of tourism in the Third World.</li> <li>• The future development: is it "green," or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework developed needs to be adjusted to the specificities of the destination before it is applied.</li> <li>• The benefits of tourism often do not reach local people.</li> <li>• The uneven and unequal development</li> </ul>



	industry in its own right (with myriad global agencies, government departments, INGOs, consultants, experts, reporters, academics and so on) that despite good intentions nevertheless make livings from poverty.' P 38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low developed countries.</li> <li>• The relationships between the economic, social, cultural, political, and geographical aspects of development.</li> </ul>	<p>“alternative” tourism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation.</li> </ul>	<p>between the First World and the Third World.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The gap between the rich and the poor.</li> <li>• Transitional path.</li> </ul>
Sharpley and Telfer (2014)	It is an ambiguous term that is used descriptively and normatively to refer to a process through which a society moves from one condition to another, and also to the goal of that process; the development process in a society may result in it achieving the state or condition of development. P.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism is interdisciplinary.</li> <li>• Tourism has been recognised as an effective development strategy for countries in the developing world.</li> <li>• Tourism has become the dominant economic sector.</li> <li>• The effect of tourist-host contact in terms of the social and cultural impacts of tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redistribution of wealth and power in the host communities.</li> <li>• Tourism as a vehicle for development.</li> <li>• Promote natural resources.</li> <li>• Backward linkages (through local economy).</li> <li>• Mobilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of development.</li> <li>• The relation of the development to tourism is sparse.</li> <li>• The seasonality of production and the low rate of return on investments.</li> <li>• The danger of overdependence on tourism.</li> </ul>

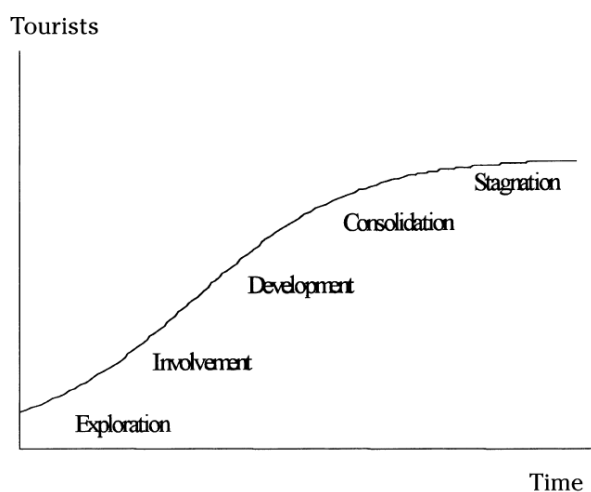
Source: Compiled by researcher

The above table has: demonstrated definitions for a development concept and how it is viewed by different scholars, the key themes in the development, strategies that can be implemented to reach the development and limitations to development. Moreover, the expression 'development' also refers to the condition of underdevelopment to depict a lack of improvement. Similarly, Harrison (1988) stated that the term 'development' refers to an attractive future state for a specific culture - the implications incorporate financial development, auxiliary change, autonomous industrialisation, being actualised and singular, national, provincial, and social independence. So, the verb 'to develop' intends to change slowly, advancing through various stages towards some kind of condition of extension or change where it can identify the nation as developed or less developed.

### **3.3.1.1. *Butler's Lifecycle Model***

Butler's Lifecycle Model refers to tourism development as a series of stages a destination goes through, namely exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation (Butler 1980). Butler's Lifecycle is a conceptual framework for assessing tourism impacts and analysing tourism development in tourist destinations (Hunter 2011; Mason 2008; Shaw and Williams 2002). However, Butler's Lifecycle Model (1980) is not thought to evaluate the effect of tourism directly, because it is geared to the development of tourist destinations. Additionally, Mowforth and Munt (2009) claim that Butler's Lifecycle Model does not discuss the connection amongst players in the industry, such as tourists, service providers, local residents and others involved in the tourism business.

**Figure 3.2 Butler's Lifecycle Model (1980)**



Source: Butler (1980)

According to this model, the shift in the visitor numbers over time corresponds to the growth and decline of the tourism destination. However, this has been criticised because the development of a destination does not just involve visitor numbers, it is also related to many other issues such as sustaining the environment of the destination (Chhabra 2010; Zhong et al. 2008). Additionally, it seems not to take into account the complexity of tourism and assumes that communities are homogeneous and evolve in a uniform (and linear) manner (Deery et al. 2012).

Applying Butler's model to Kuwait would suggest that tourism development in Kuwait is in its exploratory stages with reference to Butler's model (1980). This may provide an opportunity to identify whether Kuwait has the potential to become a location for developing sustainable tourism, by minimizing the negative socio-cultural impacts in advance, by monitoring each stage and trying to reach the stagnation stage with a framework for culturally sustainable tourism. Butler's theory can also be used to identify the life cycle for each product of the tourism industry (such as hotels and resorts) which will give an indicator for developing the tourism industry in Kuwait. This may help in properly representing the different stages of tourism development and how these may affect the socio-cultural context of the destination.

#### **3.3.1.2. *Social Exchange Theory***

Social Exchange Theory was devised by Emerson (1976). The principle is that exchanges will take place if the process generates valued rewards and delivers more benefits than costs (Gursoy et al. 2002). Ap (1992) applied Social Exchange Theory to illustrate the costs and benefits in a host destination in terms of tourism development. It describes the unevenness in response to tourism by individuals and diverse groups during the social exchange process, which connects at the individual and community levels (Lepp 2007). According to Social Exchange Theory, individuals and groups decide on exchanges, depending on the amount of benefits they perceive they will gain from such exchanges. Those who anticipate benefits have a more positive perception than those who anticipate something negative (Wall and Matheison 2006).

In the context of sustainable tourism development, residents may be willing to go through an exchange with tourists, if they perceive that the benefits outweigh the costs (Fletcher 2008; Mowforth and Munt 2009; Robinson 1999; Saarinen 2006;

Wall and Mathieson 2006). However, the level of personal benefits derived from tourism development influences their perceptions regarding the impacts of tourism. In this regard, individuals or groups sharing common resources with tourists may develop positive attitudes towards tourism development, if the resources are enhanced (Oviedo – Garcia et al. 2008). On the contrary, negative attitudes can develop if the resources get degraded in a way which makes the local community suffer as a result. Local community members hold a variety of motivations when entering into social exchanges with tourists. These range from exclusively economic gains, to the pure intention to deliver quality experiences (Moyle et al. 2010).

Some academics view Social Exchange Theory as a suitable framework for evaluating residents' attitudes and perceptions towards tourism development (Ap 1992; Honigsmann 2001). Many studies indicate that the development of a negative attitude towards tourism is common (Guyson et al. 2002). Local community residents become unhappy with tourism development and view visitors as intruders into their personal life (Moyle et al. 2010). Therefore, this model may be relevant and useful for research in the context of Kuwait, and it may help the researcher to understand the exchange process between guests and the host community. Moreover, Ap (1992) suggests that Social Exchange Theory is more relevant to understanding and identifying the socio-cultural impacts of developing the tourism industry. It may then help in providing an overview for the Kuwaiti government and tourism developers about what locals will tolerate in addition to what will be acceptable, or not, with regard the costs and benefits of tourism development.

#### **3.3.1.3. *Social Carrying Capacity Model***

Social carrying capacity is defined as 'the maximum level of use (in terms of numbers and activities) that can be absorbed by an area without an unacceptable decline in the quality of experience of visitors and without an unacceptable adverse impact on the society of the area' (Saveriades 2000, p.150). The two elements of social carrying capacity are: firstly, the quality of the tourism experience those tourists will accept, ahead of choosing any replacement destinations; secondly, the degree of tolerance of the local community towards tourists. From the socio-cultural perspective, the social carrying capacity of the destination is challenged by tourism activities (Saarinen 2006). Tourism activities

beyond the threshold level of the carrying capacity and poor tourism planning can have an adverse impact upon the tangible and intangible cultural value perceptions of the local community (Du Cross 2001). However, the level of carrying capacity structure differs according to the planning and the type of tourism activities (Aref et al. 2010).

The Island of Cyprus offers an example of a destination that has become a victim of unplanned and poorly managed mass tourism policies. This is reflected through an imbalance in the socio-cultural and physical environment of Cyprus (Saveriades 2000). Tourism is the major service industry there and it generates substantial revenue every year. However, this comes with potential costs, such as adverse socio-cultural impacts (Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012). These include changes in socio-cultural practices and outlooks that include the commercialisation of cultural events to attract tourists. This leads to reduced authenticity. Another impact is that the cost of living has increased without a parallel increase in income. Furthermore, an increase in land values poses a threat to local people, with regard to affordable accommodation. There is a perceived linkage between tourism with the spread of diseases, such as AIDS (Fletcher 2008). As an island, the pressure on the limited resources due to tourism development, within a confined geographic area, can put pressure on survival of the host community. Therefore, as the host community depends on the economy, as well as basic facilities, any pressure on existing resources and facilities can create negative perceptions among the host community towards tourism (Saarinen 2006; Saveriades 2000).

#### **3.3.1.4. Doxey's Irritation Index**

Doxey's Index of Irritation (1975) is based on work conducted in Canada and the West Indies. It suggests that communities go through a predictable series of stages as the volume of tourism increases (Wall and Mathieson 2006). It is commonly used to explain the continuum of host-guest interaction in tourist destinations. This starts from a position of initial enthusiasm for tourism and tourists, and moves to a position of final rejection on the part of the host communities. This is a general model (and has generated plenty of criticism and debate), but it is appropriate to include, in this discussion, because it explains the relationship between local residents and visitors over the course of tourism development. Table 2.4 depicts the model.

**Table 3.2 Doxey's Index of Irritation (1975)**

<i>Euphoria</i>	Enthusiasm in welcoming visitors; inadequate planning	<u>Tourism impacts</u> ( + )
<i>Apathy</i>	Development of a 'taken for granted' approach towards guests; the guest-host interactions become formal	
<i>Irritation</i>	Tourism development creates adverse effects on the socio-cultural framework of the destination; serious concerns arise	( - )
<i>Antagonism</i>	Direct and indirect expression against tourism activities and development; wide gap in the guest-local community interaction	

Source: adapted from Doxey (1975)

The model shows the gradation of how the socio-cultural upsets created by tourism development are demonstrated, in terms of the host community's attitude towards guests over time. As communities are heterogeneous, tourism development will have different impacts on various sectors of society and thereby lead to extensive shifts in the socio-cultural and political stability of the destination (Carmichael 2000). The host community interacts with and interprets its own social world and attaches importance to its socio-cultural dimension (McKercher et al. 2004). However, the imbalanced interaction between host and guest upsets the destination and widens the gap between them.

Doxey's model may be relevant to Kuwait's context, but it works in a different order. Based on the initial evidence, it appears that Kuwait is in the final stage of Antagonism. It may be that tourism development will lead to a more receptive phase. However at the current time, this is not looking likely for two reasons. Firstly, oil prices have risen globally so Kuwait is in a good position economically (Annahar 2012). Secondly, there are conflicting views between the government and Parliament regarding the five-year plan for Kuwait's development (Alwatandaily 2010; Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). Therefore, this has a direct impact on the development of tourism. Accordingly it places tourism development at the bottom of the priority list in terms of the development plan. Kuwait is regarded as a traditional society. In this context some of its people may find it challenging to accept visitors from other countries and cultures. There are, nevertheless, a large number of individuals who acknowledge the importance of

hospitality in terms of tourism (Al-Otaibi 2004; Al-Touny 2004). If Kuwaitis are reassured that tourists will not compromise their culture, they will be likely to embrace tourism development positively (Al-Otaibi 2004). Once people are directly involved in tourism activities, as illustrated above, they may see the benefits and therefore become motivated to develop the tourism industry. Moreover, Doxey's model can be of use in measuring the attitudes of local people, rather than focusing on the cultural impacts of tourism development. Therefore it is important, at this stage, to look at and understand the attitudes of the residents, whilst developing a comprehensive strategy for the development of tourism. However there is an important limitation with both Doxey's Irritation Index and Butler's Life Cycle Model in that they both assume that the host community of the destination is homogeneous. It can be argued that Kuwaiti society is not homogeneous, as 60% of the Kuwaiti population (KCSB 2014) is made up of immigrants. This must be borne in mind when attempting to apply these models to Kuwait.

#### **3.3.1.5. The modernisation paradigm**

In the 1950s and 1960s industrialisation was seen as the main means of economic growth under the modernisation theory, as there was a belief that economic development and modernisation went hand in hand (Rostow 1960). Modernisation is a process of change in the social, economic and political systems of any destination (Harrison 1988). Therefore, the modernizers are confident that the main path for poor nations to develop is to take after the examples of the developed countries in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Harrison (1992) illustrates this as a procedure of *'Westernization, whereby the interior structures of "creating" social orders turn out to be more like those of the West, professedly by imitating Western advancement designs'* (Harrison 1992, p. 9). The struggle to change that faces current qualities and standards in customary social orders present it as a hindrance to development. Once those hindrances have been minimized then modernisation, based upon financial development, happens (Harrison 1988).

Mowforth and Munt (2009) claim that one must consider several key factors when looking at developments in less developed countries (LDCs), such as leakage, inflation and low revenues. Rostow (1960) characterised developing countries as those nations that have not yet come to the phase of economic development portrayed by the development of industrialization. Similarly, Wall and Mathieson

(2006) pointed out that the economic impacts of tourism, such as high leakage, high inflation and land speculation, low returns on investment and over-dependence are the limitations of development in many destinations. However, Harrison (1988) claims that modernisation in the Western world went on for centuries to create modern countries and all that this entails took a lot of time, trial and error. He also argued that it is still a challenge for developed countries to find the balance between socio-cultural impacts and modernity, for example the role of women in society (Harrison 1988).

It could be argued that there is a conflict between development and conservation, as a result of the time it took the West to accept development (Wall and Mathieson 2006). This may be asserted that concerns of political and cultural identity and of religious beliefs are still present and are giving rise to religious revivalist movements in the West today. In addition, during this time there was much discussion and disturbance in the form of fights and revolutions, for example in America, France and Russia.

Harrison (2001) claims that the development of areas, including the Muslim world, was based upon the theory of modernisation, which was connected to the idea of a secular society and progressive Westernisation. Thus, according to Sharpley (2000) the modernisation theory can help to some extent to develop tourism for the purposes of economic development. This belief was that as societies modernised, they would reach a stage of economic 'take off', after which development and growth would follow.

An example of Islamic developing countries is Kuwait, where there is a conflict between the modernisation paradigm and the Islamic faith. In this perspective it could be argued that to have more understanding of how to apply this theory in Islamic context we have to realise many aspects. Zamani-Farahani and Henderson (2010) indicated that Islamic economists claim that using a financial system that has 'no connection with their beliefs or background' is mainly responsible for the lack of success of the economies in Muslim countries. The example they cite is the use of an interest-based banking system that is not in line with their beliefs. As a result they believe that progress will not continue if the chosen economic development plan does not reflect religious and moral values.

Although significant economic growth will not take place without changes in fields such as technology and market demand, significant changes in the fields of



social institutions may not be necessary in order to achieve development. Therefore, there has been criticism of the modernisation paradigm for a number of reasons, especially for using classifications of societies such as 'traditional' and 'modern', which are seen as unclear and which imply that they cannot exist at the same time. There is also the expectation that modernity will replace tradition (Harrison 2001; Sharpley and Telfer 2014). Also, this paradigm has mainly been criticised for failing to see development in the context of global interrelations.

#### **3.3.1.6. *The alternative development paradigm***

The alternative development paradigm reveals the shift in development thinking from a prescriptive (which highlights the structure of development) to an analytical approach, which emphasizes the content (Sharpley and Telfer 2014). Recently, the adoption of sustainable tourism has spread. Alternative development is a wide-reaching approach that was created through irritation, due to the lack of success of previous Eurocentric policies (Mehmet 2002; Sharpley 2000). Alternative development suggests a move away from a linear model of economic growth to one that is mainly interested in human and environmental concerns. Sharpley and Telfer (2014) argue that the developmental role of tourism should not be celebrated without an understanding of how development itself is defined, and of the processes by which it might be achieved. Therefore, for less developed nations, tourism can be an optional development strategy with a specific end goal to overcome poverty. In the alternative tourism development setting, the idea of group advancement was investigated as far as strengthening interest and association, group limits, dealing with the negative social and cultural effects of tourism, and group change (Mowforth and Munt 2009; Wall and Mathieson 2006). In the meantime, as Sharpley and Telfer (2014), pointed out, tourism is likewise huge business, due to the capacity of the 'tourism industry' to arrange expanding quantities of individuals everywhere throughout the world to appreciate travel-related encounters. As indicated by Telfer (2002), since the Second World War, development hypotheses and tourism have developed along comparable courses of events. Thus, the nature of the relationship between the tourism industry and development is very complex.

### 3.4. Sustainable Development

The idea of sustainable development arose from a perception of conflict between the processes of development and the protection of the environment (Buckley 2012; Gössling 2009). The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) paper, entitled the Brundtland Commission Report, was the first report that put forward the ideas of sustainable development as a movement that meets the requirements of current society without affecting the next generation's capability to meet their own goals (WCED 1987). The following diagram presents the principles of sustainability that should be implemented in order to achieve sustainable development. Moreover, this diagram shows that to achieve long-term sustainability, the three components must be clearly defined and there must be an appropriate balance between them.

**Figure 3.3 The Components of Sustainable Development**



Source: Adapted from Mowforth and Munt (2009)

Environmental sustainability is usually understood as the protection of natural resources and ecosystems (Donohoe 2011; Fletcher 2008; Mowforth and Muntm 2009; Swarbrooke 1999; Saarinen 2006; Timur and Getz 2009). Protection of the environment and its quality has been of interest in tourism development policy issues worldwide for the last thirty years (Erkus-Ozurk and Eraydin 2010). A main theme of the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987) is that sustainable

development can only be realized if a shared understanding is established between ecological, socio-cultural and economic requirements (Saarinen 2006). The Rio Earth Summit strengthened this concept, seeking to bring together the need for environmental protection with the aims of global economic development (Baker 2006; Park and Boo 2010; Saarinen 2006; Sharpley 2009).

Subsequently, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) organised the World Summit in 1992 to assist governments worldwide with Agenda 21, for the development of policies to fight pollution and the demise of natural resources (Mowforth and Munt 2009). One could argue that the conference made the assumption that the world will progress economically, while in truth the level of development differs depending on the country and the cultural and social context. Economic progress is needed, although some could argue that economic development is to blame for the degradation of the natural environment (Reddy and Wilkes 2012; Sharpley 2008).

Sustainable development is comprised of many different factors, including socio-cultural relations, education, production, the environment and wellbeing. There are many varied ways to achieve development depending on the cultural context of the area, and this should therefore reflect the needs and values of each specific environment. It is considered by Bramwell (2011) that in practice, employing sustainability as an approach will minimise the conflict and tension caused by tourism. In addition, sustainability as an approach will preserve the quality of manufactured and natural resources (Graci and Dodds 2010; Lee 2013; Liu 2003; McDonald 2009). Wall and Mathieson (2006) claim that development must be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major change in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty.

Development, in its essence, must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory and toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better. Sustainable development has triggered extensive debate among decision-makers and scholars (Buckley 2012; Liu 2003; Saarinen 2006). Sustainable development is hard to define, due to the

lack of a definitive meaning that is universally understood. Butler (1999) argues that areas that are affected by poverty cannot concern themselves with the debate of economy against environment issues as their primary focus is on survival. Similarly, Park and Boo (2010) and Saarinen (2006) claim that sustainable development is, therefore, a choice that is effectively only open to affluent countries.

The Brundtland Commission's report '*Our Common Future*', in 1987, shows that sustainability, as a term, can be applied to tourism. In the academic literature, the practices and values of sustainable tourism development have been debated broadly (Buckley 2012; Dodds 2007; Sharpley 2009). Swarbrooke (1999 p.13) provided a valuable definition of sustainable tourism by specifically including the societal framework of the host community: 'Tourism that is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community'. This definition is linked to the resource-based tradition of sustainability in tourism, which reflects the natural context of the related resources and the necessity to protect natural and cultural capital from undesirable changes caused by tourism activities (Graci and Dodds 2010; Liu 2003). However, the concept of sustainable tourism is subjective and it is understood and interpreted in different ways by those involved (Buckley 2012; Mason 2008). Moreover, Sharpley (2000) states that sustainable tourism is a vague idea. He explains that sustainable tourism does not consider the ways in which political and social contexts can act as barriers to implementation.

Liu (2003) believes that the sustainable tourism approach, in actual fact, inspires all of those who are interested in tourism. His intention is to incorporate tourism within the broader economic evolution and the aims of conservation, so that the relationship between sustainable tourism components becomes more balanced (Liu 2003). Buckley (2003) stresses that the values of sustainable tourism can be an advantage to society, as they provide the environment with protection. He also states that areas such as the Londolozi Private Game Reserve in South Africa, Turtle Island in the Pacific and Soufli Froest Reserve in Greece are examples of successful sustainable tourism development that have enabled environmental protection (Buckley 2003). It is argued by Scheyvens (2011) that sustainable tourism highlights the need to reduce negative social effects. Liu (2003), Bramwell (2011) and Buckley (2012) agree that sustainable tourism and its

application will resolve numerous damaging effects of tourism. The debate around sustainable tourism has been in relation to the environment and the majority of studies have been completed in developing countries (Helmy 2004; Reddy 2008; Scheyvens 2011; Shunnaq et al. 2008; Tosun 2001), because it is simpler to research in rural, rather than urban, areas. Nevertheless, it must be noted that sustainable tourism has been criticised as a 'buzzword' rather than something that is always practised (Lansing and De Vries 2007).

Hardy et al. (2002) argue that the idea of sustainable tourism existed in the literature prior to the formal adoption of sustainable tourism by some countries and regions. Butler (1998) and Sharpley 2009 state that there are numerous definitions of sustainable development and sustainability in terms of tourism. Just as sustainable development is defined in a number of ways, so too are there many ways of defining sustainable tourism (Weaver 2006). With the difficulty of providing an acceptable definition of sustainable tourism in mind, some researchers propose a set of principles such as the long-term approach of development and equity, which provides opportunities for all members of all societies to underpin any approach to sustainable tourism management (Buckley 2012; Sharpley 2009; Swarbrooke 1999).

#### **3.4.1. Sustainability principles in the tourism context**

Although there are clear advantages for the economies of tourist destinations, tourism can also bring burdens to these areas (Gladstone et al. 2013; Huang et al. 2007). Concern about the environmental effects of tourism has risen significantly over the last forty years, as it has become clear that tourism can change destination areas dramatically in negative ways (Scott et al. 2011). As the effects on the environment from the tourist industry can clearly be seen, the term 'sustainable tourism' is now a significant and relevant one in the discussion on how to develop the tourist industry in an environmentally friendly way (Gössling et al. 2006). Furthermore, it is important to be aware of which impacts are and are not tolerable, and how they can they be managed more appropriately (Huang et al. 2007). The environment is essential for satisfying tourists' interests and for creating economic well-being for tourism (Dodds 2007; Hall and Lew 2009). In this regard, local communities need to look after their surroundings and keep them in a good condition. This preservation of the environment is aided by the money brought in from visitors whose income can assist in the protection of

the eco-system from very damaging human activity, for example, logging and poaching (Gladstone et al. 2013; Holden 2008).

Sustainability principles have emerged as alternative ways to recover the damage already caused by economic development (Lansing and De Vries 2007; Liu 2003; Mowforth and Munt 2009). In regard to tourism, there must be a balance between the economic, environmental and socio-cultural dimensions, to guarantee long-term sustainability: *`Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability`* (UNWTO 2004 p.7). The following quotation sums up the UNWTO position: Sustainable tourism should *“ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviations”* (UNWTO 2004 p.7).

A healthy environment is a necessity, and any negative impact upon it from tourism needs to be managed properly for the very existence of the tourism industry (Coccossis 2005; Saarinen 2006). Buckley (2012) argues that to ensure environmental sustainability, governments must introduce regulations to minimize negative impacts on the environment from tourism activities. However, the government cannot resolve environmental problems on its own and there is often a need to involve non-government organisations and the private sector to aid this process (Erkus-Ozurk and Eraydin 2010). The beginning of sustainable tourism development focused on the protection and conservation of natural resources and this approach gained international popularity with Agenda 21, which was generated during the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Hardy and Beeton 2002; Fletcher 2008; Holden 2008).

The environment is a very important element for tourists and they mostly have high expectations that their surroundings will be well managed (Buckley 2012). Visitors look for appealing or specific environments where they can enjoy particular activities (Sharpley 2009). However, tourism uses many resources and development of the infrastructure in a tourist area is essential as well as tourists behaving in a way which does not harm the environment (Buckley 2012; Sharpley 2009).

The use of sustainable tourism in connection with the environment may give rise to people travelling to more local destinations and there may be a reduction in the number of people travelling long distances (Buckley 2012; Fletcher 2008; Gössling et al. 2012). With implementation of the `slow travel` concept, when tourists do travel to more distant destinations, they are more likely to stay longer and travel by a means of transport that is the least harmful to the environment, paying more to do so (Dickinson et al. 2010; Hall and Lew 2009). For example, there was an idea of a project to connect all GCC countries via a rail network, starting from Kuwait and going through all GCC main cities (Salama 2013). Also, Hares et al. (2010) argue that if the principles of sustainability are applied from the first step of planning of any sustainable tourism projects, this will increase the success in preserving the environment from an environmental viewpoint.

### **3.5. Socio-Cultural Sustainability**

The focus of this section is on the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development with further emphasis on Islamic destinations. Regarding Islamic destinations especially, there is a dearth of literature available on the socio-cultural impacts of tourism from an Islamic perspective. According to Mowforth and Munt (2009 p.243), *‘cultural sustainability is the capability of the ethnic groups to safeguard or acclimatise components of their culture as an effort to establish their group’s identity to demarcate them from other groups.’* Understanding the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development on a community is of significant concern for authorities in order to take the steps necessary to minimise, or exclude, any adverse reaction from the local community towards tourism development (Deery et al. 2012; Hashimoto 2002). This understanding helps the government to manage the negative effects and to plan for sustainability of the industry without adversely affecting the host communities (Deery et al. 2012; Huttasin 2008; Yuksel et al. 2012).

#### **3.5.1. Tourism and Culture**

There are many definitions of culture; for example, Jenks (1993) defines culture as *‘the way of life of a people and all they produce on their life journey, material and nonmaterial, including clothes, language and behaviour patterns’*. In addition, Hofstede (2001, p.21) defined culture as *‘The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another...The mind stands for the head, heart, and hands that is for thinking,*

*feeling, and acting, with consequences for beliefs, attitudes and skills*'. Consequently, people from different cultural contexts behave very differently in all aspects of life for example, language, religion and moral standards. Ways of living are handed down from one generation to another and they can develop over a period of time (Samovar et al. 2009). Furthermore, people use their culture to identify with their 'own' environment as well as to define them from 'other groups' (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). One of the elements that distinguish the socio-cultural context of a destination is identity. Caneen (2010, p.3) points out that *'identity is the thing of value that guides and gives meaning to life'*.

### **3.5.2. The Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism**

It is difficult to distinguish between social and cultural influence as they can overlap (Hall and Page 2014; Spanou 2007). Thereby it is reasonable to view and assess the impacts as a combined (socio-cultural) one rather than separate influences (Fletcher 2008). Teo (1994, p.126) defines social and cultural impacts of tourism as *'the ways in which tourism is contributing to changes in the value systems, morals and their conduct, individual behavior, family relationships, collective lifestyles, creative expressions, traditional ceremonies and community organization.'* This definition, amongst others, enables researchers to gain understanding of socio-cultural impacts and ways to ensure cultural sustainability (Farsani et al. 2012; Robinson 1999).

Tourism generates impacts on the socio-cultural framework of destinations that are both positive and negative. These can vary according to the level of difference between the socio-cultural backgrounds (such as lifestyles, religious faith, and traditions) of the guests and hosts, (Craik 1995; Hashimoto 2002; Vafadari 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012). Furthermore, these impacts may vary from being obvious and measurable, to those that are very hard to identify and measure in the local community, tourist areas and the visitors (Fletcher 2008; Mbaiwa 2004; Sebastian and Rajagopalan 2009). For instance, changes in customs and code of conduct are hard to recognise and measure because these become more visible only in the long term (Huttasin 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012). Therefore, Haley et al. (2005) argue that the socio-cultural impacts of tourism are both subjective and intangible. Most research into the socio-cultural impact of tourism takes the form of case studies, in a particular destination, or even part of a destination. For example, Haley et al. (2005) studied the social impacts of tourism on the residents of Bath in the UK.



Another example of research is Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2012), who took Sare`in and Masooleh in Iran as case studies to explore the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the local people of these areas.

Due to cultural differences between the guest and host, the chance of miscommunication is high, due to variations in perceptions of cultural values (Samovar et al. 2009; Zeppel 2010). When the guest breaks local norms, it creates tension in the guest-host relationship. Therefore, every guest-host interaction can lead to two possibilities, either respect for or disregard of the host's local norms (Fletcher 2008). For instance, a lack of modesty in dress is viewed as an offense in Islamic destinations (Henderson 2008). Zeppel (2010) reported that cultural friction between indigenous groups, tourists and tourism firms consists of direct and indirect social value conflicts. This is often the result of direct interpersonal conflicts. Zeppel cited three examples of this at Uluru in Australia, Aoraki in New Zealand and Devils Tower National Movement in the USA. The conflicts that occurred between tourists and local people arose from different social and cultural backgrounds (Zeppel 2010).

#### ***Enhanced Local Sentiments***

It is interesting to note that the search for identity and cultural sustainability originates within an indigenous community, from insecurity perceptions generated from encountering foreign cultural components, both tangible and intangible (Robinson 1999; Sharma et al. 2008). Robinson (1999) refers to the reinforcement of cultural identity by the host community using culture as a resource. Reinforcement of cultural identity is vital in the sustainable existence of indigenous communities (Daskon and Binns 2009; Mowforth and Munt 2009). Therefore, tourism makes a positive contribution by generating awareness among the host community of their own cultural and traditional values (Reid 2007; Sharma et al. 2008). This is of relevance to this study, as national pride was found to be important to participants.

#### ***Promotion of Traditional Arts and Crafts***

Tourism may support the revitalisation and conservation of the arts and craft skills of the host population (Alhasanat and Hyasat 2011; Fletcher 2008; UNESCO 2008). Tourism revenues are generated through socio-cultural events that are organised for tourism, and these revenues support the restoration of

local cultural practices. In addition, these activities clearly convey the importance of cultural traditions, advising younger generations to preserve the heritage of their grandparents (UNESCO 2008). Thus, indigenous knowledge (folk dances, songs and other art and craft forms) is transmitted to the next generation as they try to assimilate it for revenue associated with tourism development. For example, local people in Jordan are encouraged to preserve their native culture by taking part in tourist activities and wearing traditional dress to assert their traditional culture, which makes local people proud of their identity and simultaneously gives tourists an authentic experience of the destination (Alhasanat and Hyasat 2011).

### ***Changing attitudes and behavior of locals***

Changing attitudes and behavior of the host community can be seen as one of the positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism. For example, Bleasdale and Tapsell (1999) in their study on Tozeur, Tunisia, noticed that communication between locals and tourists can have a positive effect on the attitudes of the host communities, resulting in changes in behaviour. Leep (2007) claims that positive attitudes towards tourism development will help to create job opportunities, increase incomes, as well as improve the development of the community. Moreover, when the community becomes more developed and sees positive social change, this will enhance the quality of life for the residents (Lee 2013). When people have no income, they resort to negative behaviour such as crime. However, when people are employed and have a steady income as a result of tourism, for example, there seems to be a more positive attitude towards social change.

There has been extensive academic research into the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development (Deery et al. 2012; Marzuki 2011; Park and Stokowski 2009; Sharma 2010; Wall and Mathieson 2006). It is clear that, while tourism can have economic benefits for local communities in destinations, it can also have negative impacts upon these communities which cannot be ignored (Park and Stokowski 2009). Badly planned tourism development in developing countries can modernise and damage traditional ways of life (Kasim 2006), which can cause negative socio-cultural impacts through the loss of cultural identity. Such impacts include family disunity and drug abuse (Kasim 2006; Park and Stokowski 2009; Wall and Mathieson 2006). Moreover, there can be an increase

in crime, traffic congestion and an erosion of community awareness and negative destination image. The evidence indicates that tourism activities can lead to a degradation of traditional and cultural values and norms at destinations (Saarinen 2006; Saveriades 2000; UNESCO 2008; Vafadari 2008).

### ***Demonstration Effects***

The '*demonstration effect*' (Wall and Mathieson 2006; Mason 2008) has been identified as one of the most significant impacts of tourism on the social and cultural life of destination communities (Sharma 2010; Teo 1994). According to this argument, contact with tourists leads to a number of changes in behaviour among the host community. These include shifts in personal behaviour, a decline in perceived morals, upsets in family relations, and irregularities in collective lifestyles and traditional values, all of which are most often indirect rather than direct impacts (Ahn et al. 2002; Milman and Pizam 1988; UNESCO 2008). For example, the sudden move towards modernisation in Botswana led to a decline in the consumption of traditional foods, and a rejection of traditional kitchen tools and housing (Mbaiwa 2005). The demonstration effect can lead to young people moving from rural areas to cities (or even abroad) in search of the lifestyle they have observed among tourists (Mason 2008). In traditional, conservative societies, the clash between younger and senior members is particularly difficult, as the older generations may want to preserve their traditional ways, while the younger ones seek to emulate a Western lifestyle (Wall and Matheison 2006). Furthermore there is an indirect effect on the social culture when local inhabitants are influenced by others living in their neighbourhoods.

The demonstration effect may be most acute when the contact between tourists and locals is minimal (Fletcher 2008; Wall and Matheison 2006). This situation comes about when there are clear differences between locals and foreigners. The demonstration effects are more likely to take place in poorer countries, where locals observe the higher standards of living of the tourists and wish to have the same (Reistingner and Tuener 2003). In the case of Dubai, there are ethical concerns related to the extent to which the local community is willing to accept the Western approach, mostly evidenced in the hospitality sector (Sharpley 2008). More research is needed in the case of Dubai, to more precisely determine the demonstration effect. In contrast, the tourism authorities in Saudi Arabia have decided to develop tourism only in an Islamic context to

minimise demonstration effects (ITN 2009; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010)

However, the notion of the demonstration effect is not without its critics. Some writers have argued that the concept is poorly defined and poorly modeled. In addition, it assumes that the demonstration effect is entirely one-way and fails to recognise that certain types of tourists often enthusiastically seek to imitate the behaviour they see among destination communities (Bryden 1973). Indeed, Crick (1989) argues that tourists have been identified as a convenient scapegoat for social and cultural change in the developing world. There is also a tendency to portray local communities as the victims of tourism development (Shaw and Williams 2004) rather than (as is often the case) the beneficiaries. Other authors have pointed out that there is limited empirical evidence of the demonstration effect (Burns 1999) and that different studies have often reached contradictory conclusions. Some have proposed the concept of 'cultural drift' where changes in the behaviour and values of host communities are both contingent and temporary, and often confined to the tourist 'season' (Shaw and Williams 2004).

Perhaps a more significant criticism is that it is almost impossible to isolate the effects arising from the exposure to tourists from those resulting from broader processes of cultural globalisation. In particular, as a result of satellite television, mobile technologies and the rapid growth of the internet, local communities in tourism destinations are exposed to a multitude of external influences that are entirely unconnected from tourism. This means that tourism is only one vector of change in destination communities (Shaw and Williams 2004) and that other factors may have a far greater influence upon destination communities than tourists. For this reason, the demonstration effect may have been most significant in the past when tourism development was at an early stage and when other external influences were more limited (Hall and Lew 2009).

### ***Crime***

Tourism development might be seen to influence both the subjective and objective perceived safety image of destinations. Some studies have identified that an increase in crime accompanies tourism development (Mathieson and Wall 1982; Ryan 1991). Wall and Matheieson (2006) identify that crime incidents depend on factors such as criminal activity in the area, the phase of tourism

development and the nearness of the tourist region. However, Ryan (1991) suggests that tourism development offers many opportunities for criminal activity.

If tourism is identified as a major cause behind the increase in crime incidents, adequate focus on tourism development is needed to bring down crime rates (Park and Stokowski 2009). Ajagunna (2006) reported on the harassment of and crime against tourists in Jamaica, the main factors identified were lack of education, unemployment, laziness, irresponsibility, broken family ties, and drug use. Locals are also not given ownership or a sense of responsibility in tourism. Tourists are targets for criminals and, with the growth of tourism, crime rates have increased (Ajagunna 2006; Deery et al. 2012). Accordingly, the increase in crime and harassment incidents has resulted in a bad image for Jamaica in terms of safety and security (McElroy et al. 2007). Therefore, one particularly bad instance of crime may put tourists off visiting a destination for a period of time (Ajagunna 2006; Johnny and Jordan 2007). However, once some time has passed, people forget about this and continue as usual. For example, the major tourist destinations in South Africa have a reputation for being high crime areas. However, visitors still go there, as evidenced in the successful FIFA World Cup 2010 (Ajagunna 2006). An important factor is the response of the police and local authorities to crime against tourists and, in some cases, crime has been reduced through concerted action against perpetrators. Furthermore, it has been suggested that tourism can, in fact, reduce crime through creating more employment opportunities for local people (Hall and Lew 2009).

Zamani-Farahani and Musa's (2012) study on the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Iran, found that crime is not a cause for worry. This is because Islam, as a religion, consists of a set of rules which, in effect, organizes the daily lives of Muslims. Moreover, there are many verses in the Quran which advise Muslims to be aware and avoid crime, as they will have a double punishment in this world and hereafter. For example, in Sura Ala`nam Allah said: *'There will afflict those who committed crimes debasement before Allah and severe punishment for what they used to conspire'* (Sura Al-An`am verses 124). Some Islamic destinations impose strict controls on residents and visitors, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). However, crime, whether it is petty or violent, is evident worldwide and Islamic destinations are not exempt. In Kuwait, the crime level is minimal.

### ***Traditions, Values and Norms***

Hofstede (2001) describes values as the foundation of culture, as they are formed in the early stages of life. Each value has a positive and a negative side which varies across cultures (Harris et al. 2004; Mckercher and Ho 2012). As soon as a group is constructed, it has to decide what kind of behaviour is expected within it (Zeppel 2010; Zhang et al. 2006). Subcultures exist inside all cultures and all groups have their own type of subculture, with every member required to accept the rules of the group, which are seen as influential (Harris et al. 2004). As there are differences in the values and norm structures between tourists and the local people of any destination, this may cause change in the socio-cultural system, or may raise the conflict level in the local areas (Zhang et al. 2006; Mckercher and Ho 2012).

There is a long-standing argument which states that tourism development (particularly in the developing world) leads to a loss of cultural identity among local communities (Hunter 2011; Wall and Mathieson 2006). Identity is deeply embedded in cultural heritage, which can be subjected to changes due to the impact of tourism development (Ballesteros and Ramirez 2007; Yang and Wall 2009). The argument is based on the premise that tourists seek (and demand) a version of local culture in the destination which meets their requirements for 'otherness'. This consequently leads to a change in numerous cultural practices in a tourist destination (Hunter 2011; Wall and Mathieson 2006). In particular, local people respond to the demands of tourists by producing simplified and standardised forms of traditional cultural practices that can be easily understood and consumed by visitors. This is a process of commodification (or 'commoditisation') through which cultural practices that were previously embedded in the everyday life of destination communities become commodities intended to generate revenue for the community through being sold (either as performances or souvenirs) to tourists.

The outcome in practice is the creation of new forms of cultural practices and products that superficially imitate local traditions (Diarta 2004; Mowforth and Munt 2009). In particular, the demand from tourists leads to the mass-production of standardised products (which may not even be made in the local area) that have been derided as 'tourist art' or 'airport art' (Graburn 1976; Cohen 1989). Commodification of handicrafts sees traditional products produced for the

purpose of sales to tourists as souvenirs. Traditional production methods are lost as they have to be produced in huge quantities at cheap prices, often in factories. At the same time, traditional cultural practices, arts, crafts, and rituals gradually disappear (because there is declining interest in, or demand for them). This leads to a gradual degradation of socio-cultural roots as culture changes in accordance with the demands and values of tourists (Mason 2008; Yand and Wall 2009). In the long term this leads to a loss of cultural identity in the destination (Cole 2007; Ballesteros and Ramirez 2007).

One strand of this argument frames the issue in terms of authenticity, particularly the demand by tourists for a destination experience that they believe to be authentic (MacCannell 1976; Cohen 1988). Local entrepreneurs in the destination recognise this demand and begin to offer experiences and products that align with the requirements of tourists. The result is what MacCannell famously described as 'staged authenticity'. This refers to a constructed representation of local lifestyles and traditions which is offered to tourists as being the real thing. Tourists are, however, usually unable to distinguish between the authentic and the staged, and accept the staged presentation of local culture as being the real thing. This, in turn, creates a greater incentive for local people to persist with staging local culture, leading to an impoverishment of genuine local traditions, arts and crafts.

Many studies have found evidence to support these arguments in a range of contexts. For example, Diarta (2004) states that in the tourism context of the island of Bali, the food, beverage, accommodation, landscape, arts and crafts all underwent changes to incorporate the demands of tourism. The Balinese people adapted their culture to fit with its changed socio-economic landscape. Diarta (2004) suggests that erosion of identity needs to be stopped in order to retain the uniqueness of Bali. Agba et al. (2010) also report on the erosion of cultural values that takes place through the Calabar carnival in Nigeria. The carnival does not represent the authentic and indigenous Efik culture, as popular music that is deemed to be more attractive is performed. Thus, a significant level of indigenous cultural degradation occurs, with the commodification of cultural resources used in the name of tourism development. This eventually leads to the loss of cultural identity (Agba et al. 2010).

Despite these criticisms, the impacts of tourism development on destination communities and local culture are not always entirely negative. It is clear that many of the debates about the negative cultural impacts of tourism are reductionist and over-simplifying in their assumptions that all local communities inevitably 'succumb' to increasing numbers of tourists in a destination in the same ways. There is also a failure to recognize that all cultures change and evolve in particular ways in response to internal and external influences. Changes in the ways that traditional arts and crafts are produced are just one type of evolutionary adaption to a changing environment (the growth of tourism). Furthermore, some debate about the impacts of tourism development on local communities and culture seems to be founded on implicit value judgments that change in non-Western destinations is fundamentally a bad thing (and that such parts of the world should remain static and unchanging). Such judgments are themselves often based on romanticised or stereotypical views about the nature of non-Western societies.

In addition there is evidence that tourism can be beneficial for local communities and their culture. One argument states that tourism can lead to the conservation (and even renaissance) of traditional practices and arts that might otherwise have disappeared in the course of modernization and globalisation (Wall and Mathieson 2006; Hall and Lew 2009). Indeed, interest from tourists can stimulate a renewed pride and interest in traditional cultural practices and can reinvigorate local cultural identity. Furthermore, some local communities are able to absorb the demand of tourists without leading to fundamental changes in the nature of traditional culture (Ryan and Scotts 1997). It is also important to recognise that many local communities benefit economically from tourist interest in commodified traditions and crafts. In particular, the income from tourism can maintain the viability of a community by creating jobs which enables young people to remain in the area, rather than having to move away to seek work.

Over the past decade, the debate has moved from focusing on the 'impacts' of tourism on local communities to a consideration of sustainable tourism development in destinations. The debate about sustainable tourism was initially framed around environmental issues (Bramwell and Lane, 1993; Weaver 2006) and the need to mitigate the environmental impacts of mass tourism. However, academic analyses of sustainable tourism have increasingly embraced the notions of social and cultural sustainability (Butler 1999) and this study is situated



within this debate. Socio-cultural sustainability refers to 'the ability of people to retain or adapt elements of their culture which distinguish them from other people' (Mowforth and Munt 2009, p.104). This definition will underpin this study. The quest for identity and cultural sustainability emerges in an indigenous community from feelings of insecurity caused by the influx of foreign cultural material, both tangible and intangible (Robinson 1999; Sharma et al. 2008). The more elements that come into an environment, from outside, the more aware the host community becomes of recognising the necessity to preserve its own socio-cultural identity.

Additionally, the purpose of cultural sustainability is to conserve, maintain, and protect local rituals, customs, and norms, and to minimise possible resistance that might arise between tourists and the host communities (Chhabra 2010; Hall and Lew 2009; Mason 2008). Culture is discursive, which means the process of cultural adaptation may be unavoidable. Therefore, cultural sustainability seeks to limit and reduce harmful effects, and to educate tourists to behave in a responsible manner in order to prevent local cultural alterations (Chhabra 2010; Mowforth and Munt 2009). Moreover, tourism development can assist in maintaining elements of the local culture and in preserving cultural identity. Therefore, there is a need to understand and accept the benefits, as well as the perceived disadvantages and changes in the socio-cultural structure, which may happen as a result of the development of tourism in any destination (Sharma et al. 2008). One of the tenets of culturally sustainable tourism is the empowerment of local communities so that they can determine for themselves the nature of tourism development in their locale. Such local empowerment and control is most effectively put into practice through community-based tourism which involves a process of local negotiation and participation (Murphy 1988; Saarinen 2006).

However, Al-Sabah (2001) argues that there are limitations to the development of tourism in Kuwait as there is a tension between modernisation and tradition in some aspects such as gender segregation. This debate is instigated by the more conservative sector of Kuwaiti society, which argues that gender segregation preserves morality, the image of Muslims, and the traditions and culture of Kuwaiti society. On the other hand, Al-Mughni (2009) claims that the more liberal minded members of Kuwaiti society are against segregation, therefore they can view the situation from a different angle. They think that men

and women should be able to mix, to have equal opportunities and to be active members of Kuwaiti society (Al-Mughni 2009).

In addition, Al-Atiqi and Alharbi (2009) pointed out that the majority of Kuwaiti men and women are already mixing in public places and are working together, both in the government and private sector. Also they are studying together in kindergarten schools, private schools and some of the universities. Conversely, there is gender segregation in some leisure areas such as in swimming pools, theme parks and aqua parks (Al-Otaibi 2004). It can be argued that Kuwait could be seen as a classical example of the stereotypically 'traditional' society that lives a very 'modern' standard of living. For example, traditions such as *Wasta* could be seen as corruption in other 'modern' societies (i.e. Western) but in the Kuwaiti context it is an issue of the development debate.

Corruption, on the other hand, can be a major obstacle to a country's economic and social development. It has the effect of weakening a nation's institutional foundations, distorting the rule of law and creating mistrust amongst its citizens (Das and DiRienzo 2010). Hooker (2008) looked at corruption from a cross-cultural perspective, contrasting the Middle East and North America. He looked at how different activities corrupt in different ways, in different parts of the world. For example, nepotism, cronyism or bribery, which is regarded as corruption in the West, may be functional forms of conduct in relationship-based cultures.

Hooker's (2008) observation is very useful in understanding the functional differences between corruption in Arab countries and the West. This is very difficult to understand in terms of the cultural and legal practices within the Arab world. For example, what may be deemed corrupt in other parts of the world may be acceptable, to a certain extent, in relationship-based cultures in the Middle East. However, such practices could be said to be impeding the development of tourism in Kuwait. An interesting point may be observed here: the interest of this study is in exploring the potential for developing culturally sustainable tourism. However, as this section suggests, not all aspects of Kuwaiti culture are worthy of preservation. Of course, what is deemed worthy of preservation is subjectively judged, and influenced by a host of factors.

Through the cultural and traditional practices of both groups, which have many differences as well as some similarities, tourists can gain knowledge of the values and norms that make up Kuwaiti identity (Al-Sabah 2001; Casey 2007).

The potential demonstration effects of tourism in Kuwait are not seen very clearly at this early stage. Wheeler (2000) has argued that the transformations brought about by the discovery of oil, the following modernization and media influence on globalisation trends have not swept away the Kuwaiti people's distinct identity. This may also refer to the deeply rooted identity which combines Islamic principles and Arab culture. For example, the traditional costume in Kuwait is the dishdasha for males, as Kuwaiti men prefer wearing this attire because it is particularly suited to Kuwait's hot and dry climate (KCSB 2014). Similarly, Al-Sabah (2001) argues that the females have their own traditional dress, as they wear the *dara'a*<sup>1</sup> - with *abaya*<sup>2</sup> or without it - at special social events, such as wedding parties, funerals and official ceremonies, as well as at both *Eids* (Islamic festivals).

It should be noted that although there is a variety of dress styles worn by women as well as men in Kuwait there is still concern about the demonstration effects of clothing, especially those worn by international tourists. Another aspect where the influence of demonstration effects can be seen is food. Al-Awadi and Amine (1988) argue that Kuwaiti food has evolved over time, with many of the choices found in the roots of Bedouin, Persian, Indian and Eastern Mediterranean food. However, there are some initiatives that are keen to preserve the traditional Kuwaiti food culture by introducing local, traditional restaurants and cafes, such as *freej shweelh* and cafe *bazah*, where both are famous in the region for cooking authentic dishes (Al-Watan 2013a). As will be discussed in the findings chapters, these varying values will dictate whether Kuwaitis are open to tourism development or not, as development is often associated with a growing influence of differing values from other, often non-Muslim, societies.

### ***The empowerment of Women and Young People***

Women's role in society and in development worldwide is continuously evolving and is recognised as making an important contribution to society. However, Hall and Lew (2009) and Wall and Mathieson (2006) claim that the extent and nature of this contribution vary depending on the cultural differences in each destination. Tourism development has the potential to increase the empowerment of women

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<sup>1</sup> *Dara'a: The traditional indoor dress worn for the females*

<sup>2</sup> *Abaya: It is a cloak worn over the dara'a for outdoor activities.*

in society through increased awareness of women's rights, better education, employment and business opportunities (Cave and Kilic 2010; Mason 2008). For example, Gentry (2007) reported an improvement in the life of Belizean women owing to the economic gains derived from tourism development. Moreover, the business and employment opportunities created by tourism have supported women to improve their financial position in Turkey (Cave and Kilic 2010). Consequently, the role of women in society can change positively, bringing about more emancipation for women as they become the main earner in the family (Cater and Beeton 2004; Gentry 2007; Mason 2008). Social interaction and independence, as well as financial freedom, have helped women to take critical decisions, regarding their personal and public life in Turkey (Tucker 2007; Cave and Kilic 2010). However, Gentry (2007) mentioned the low wages and restricted job positions (bottom level) offered to women employees, working in foreign-owned tourist firms, which implies that women are not being treated on an equal basis with male employees. Another example is in Jordan, where some women are deterred from working in tourism due to the social values of the community, which limits contact between men and women working together (Alhasanat and Hyasat 2011). Some may perceive a conflict between an empowered female workforce and the preservation of tradition. However, Kuwaiti society has long accepted the fact of women working, including in prominent positions, though there will be some restrictions on the type of work women may be allowed to do (Al-Mughni 2001; Askar and Ahmad 2003).

One particular issue is the role of women in tourism development, since women make up the majority of the tourism workforce in most parts of the world (Baum 2013; UNWTO 2011). It has been argued that tourism employment for women has been frequently criticized, since most jobs are low skilled, often part-time, seasonal and involve long, unsocial, irregular hours, and are often poorly paid, and the women earn less than men who work in the sector (Chant 1997; Bird et al 2002; Cave and Kilic 2010; UNWTO 2011). In addition, Baum (2013) claims that women working in tourism also lack equality of opportunity in that they are under-represented in senior management positions and their opportunities for promotion and upward occupational mobility are fewer. Wall and Mathieson (2006) claim that tourism employment for women has also been criticised for reproducing established gender roles and inequalities. Also, Gibsen (2001) argues that much work for women in the tourism sector conforms to long-

established stereotypes about the nature of 'appropriate' work for women. Thus, many women are employed in jobs (such as cleaning, washing or housekeeping) which reflect a traditional association with domestic household duties (Chant 1997; Gibsen 2001; Cave and Kilic 2010, Baum 2013). Therefore, Sinclair (1997) argues that women have been barred from a number of the tourism industry's professions due to religious and customary philosophies of social sexuality and gender. Action and practices within the tourism industry are influenced by the specific situation of individual societies and reflect the gender inequalities that exist in those societies (Ferguson 2011; Mason 2008). Therefore, Shakeela and Cooper (2009) argue that culture, religion and society are important influences on the employment of women in tourism. On the other hand, El-Sherif Ibrahim et al. (2007) claims that there has been very little attention paid to religion and the impact it has on the industry's employment and on the Islamic women's labour market. This is worrying because according to the World Tourism Organisation, over 50% of restaurant and hotel workers are women (UNWTO 2011).

An example of a leading female figure in Kuwait is Mrs Nabila Alanjari, a key figure in the Department of Tourism in the Ministry of Information, who led a team in 2005 to create the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan. Although this plan was not activated, she set the ball rolling for other women, like Mrs Sameera Al Ghareeb, who has now taken her place (AL-Watan 2013a). One of the important things that she did as head of the tourism department in the Ministry of Commerce was to present again the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan to the Council of Ministers in 2011 (Al-Shamari 2011).

However, neither of these two Kuwaiti women has been successful in activating the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, but for different reasons. The instability of the political system and the changes of the Ministers of the government in 2006 have led to the transformation of the Department of Tourism from the Ministry of Information to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Therefore, Mrs. Nabila Alanjari resigned in protest at the decision of change of the location as well as the responsibility of the tourism sector to another ministry. This action of Mrs Alanjari has affected the procedure of putting the tourism development plan on the agenda of the Kuwaiti government, as well as having a negative influence on the employees of the sector. However, this disappointment decreased when the second female, Mrs Sameera Al Ghareeb was appointed. Both of these public figures act as an icon for many other women, encouraging

them to get involved in the tourism sector. Also, they are doing many activities in which they are inspiring Kuwaiti females to take their part in society, as well as empowering them to participate in developing the tourism industry. Additionally, Mrs Nabila Alanjari has started her own business by establishing a company for providing a full range of consulting and training services, exhibitions and conferences (Al-Watan 2014).

### ***Language and Communication***

Language is a significant indicator when analysing socio-cultural change and it can be used to detect the effect of tourism on a destination (Brunt and Courtney 1999; Zhang et al. 2006). Tourism may change language in some ways. Firstly, changes occur because of economic adjustments with immigrants speaking their native language, but also using their language skills to learn the language of the local people. Secondly, changes can be seen in the efforts amongst local people wanting to learn the language of their visitors. This results from face-to-face contact between tourists and the local community (Janta et al. 2012). This can be seen as a positive change where it improves the skills of local communities.

To a certain extent, enhanced intercultural contact promotes group interaction and positive language attitudes, bringing about motivated language learning behaviors at a national level (Janta et al. 2012; Phipps 2009). If there is a language barrier between guests and hosts, tourism as an intercultural exchange will be unsatisfactory (Aziz 1995; Janta et al. 2012). For example, Eraqi (2007) found that local people in Egypt are not keen to undertake some of the more menial jobs in the tourism industry, such as housekeeping, because they lack the language skills needed to interact with foreign visitors, although in most cases, the host community tries to adapt to the language of the visitors, because it is in their interest to please them. Visitors have no desire or great need to speak the language spoken in the tourist destination (Hashimoto 2002; Sebastian and Rajagopalan 2009). For example, the local people in Kerala, India have enhanced their foreign language skills to allow them to communicate with tourists rather than the other way around (Phipps 2009; Sebastian and Rajagopalan 2009).

Tourism is not solely responsible for language change (Harris et al. 2004; Phipps 2009). Some countries are aware that their particular language can represent their culture well. In fact, a native language can be used as a marketing tool to

bring tourists to them. As Ryan (1991) explains, language itself can highlight a particular destination and can be something that is specifically of interest to tourists. For example, Che Mat and Zakaria (2009) referred to encouraging local people to learn and practice the Arabic language to provide new markets in Malaysia for Arab tourists, especially as Arabic is known by Muslim Malaysians from reading the Quran (Che Mat and Zakaria 2009; Henderson 2003).

Within each country, regions display different forms of language, and dialects and accents help to differentiate where people come from (Harris et al. 2004). An example of this, in the Kuwaiti context, is that Kuwaitis from tribal cultures pronounce words differently from those with an urban background. This makes it easier to distinguish between the two groups (Al-Baghli 2012; Casey 2007). Kuwait has its own unique dialect that may distinguish people from other Arabic speakers within the Middle East. Tourists can affect the language of a country, or area, as tourists will interact with the locals trying to speak to them (Eraqi 2007). Culture will also be affected greatly by language when foreign words are incorporated into everyday parlance by locals in their daily lives because of their interactions with tourists (Eraqi 2007; Janta et al. 2012; Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012).

Although Arabic is the language of the Quran, not all Muslim countries speak Arabic in the same way. For example, the Middle East and North Africa MENA regions incorporate Arabic into local dialects of the language spoken. Meanwhile Turkish is the language of Turkey and Farsi is spoken in Iran. Knowledge of Arabic is an important skill, as while not all Muslims are originally from Arab countries, they have to know Arabic to read the Quran. However, English has become very popular, and is one of the most used languages in the world for business purposes (Algeo and Butcher 2013; Crytal 2003). It may affect the identity of the destination, when people use other languages more than their mother language. For example, Shunnaq et al. (2008) argue that younger workers working in tourism in Jordan have learned many different languages due to the opportunities for acquiring and practicing the various tourist languages. This has an effect on their own language as it, over time, becomes a mixture of Arabic and other tourist languages, mainly English and French (Eraqi 2007; Shunnaq et al. 2008). However, this seems to be a positive impact where the local communities enhance their income, therefore there are many local schools and colleges doing training in improving international languages for young

people, so that they can work and become able to communicate well with tourists.

### ***Religion and beliefs***

Religion is also sometimes used to identify being part of the core identity of the community (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2008; Eriksen 2001). Moreover, religion is important in people's daily activities, as it has a significant effect on values, behaviour, habits and attitudes (Poria et al. 2003). Moreover, religious beliefs are fundamental to people's perception when interpreting life and the world around them; they thereby play a crucial role in society (Eriksen 2001). Behavior is affected and associated with the fact that religion contributes to the formation of culture, attitudes and values in society (Poria et al. 2003). Especially in Islamic countries, religion has a major role to play in creating the nature and structure of society, as well as influencing day-to-day life, by teaching and defining what is acceptable and what is not in the behaviour of individuals or groups (Eriksen 2001; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). Therefore, it is very much a concern when religious beliefs are disturbed (Chhabra 2010; Din 1989; Hashim et al. 2007).

From the perspective of Islam, adhering to *Sharia* is becoming more challenging in modern Islamic cultures (Jafari and Su'erdem 2012). Modesty in dress and behavior is central (Din 1989; Henderson 2003; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010), though it is expressed differently depending on communities' interpretation of the *Sharia* and personal preference (Cesari 2014). The majority of Islamic countries are planning to develop their tourism industry as an option to create a source of income (Jafari and Scott 2014). This may call for flexibility in terms of what is expected of and offered to international tourists (Henderson 2010; Stephenson 2014). This tension between tradition and modernity is of central importance to the possible development of tourism in Kuwait.

Religion often interacts with tourism activities, as religious principles and practices may control the quantity and quality of tourism activities (Arastech and Eilani 2011; Henderson 2003). Moreover, human behaviour is influenced and associated with the fact that religion contributes to the formation of culture, attitudes and values of people in society (Paria 2003). On the other hand, it has been argued by Jafari and Scott (2014) and Hashim et al. (2007) that religion is one of the main reasons that motivates people to travel, as well as being a potent



influence in the travel decision-making process. Many tourists choose to visit religious cities in various parts of the world, such as Mecca and the ancient cities of Jerusalem and Bangkok (Henderson 2008; Henderson 2010). Additionally, it is estimated that almost 240 million individuals annually go on religious journeys, the majority being Christians, Muslims and Hindus (Henderson 2003; Olsen 2011; Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012). This is because religious tourism has long been a basic rationale and is typically viewed as the most established type of travel. Therefore, the relationship between tourism and religion has been exhaustively addressed and this has been a particular research focus in recent years (see, for example, Bandyopadhyay et al. 2008; Poria et al. 2003; Olsen 2011; Timothy and Olsen 2006; Vukonic 2010; Weidenfeld and Ron 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012).

Religious buildings, rituals, festivals and ceremonial events are important tourist attractions for those with a casual interest, as well as more devout followers of particular systems of beliefs (Henderson 2003; Jafari and Scott 2014). Research has been conducted into aspects of the interconnectedness between religion and tourism, and parallels are often drawn between the two (Timothy and Olsen 2006; Vukonic 2010). Tourist sites are shown to have acquired a sacred quality, travel to them exhibiting the qualities of pilgrimage (Henderson 2010; Sanad et al. 2010), while actual pilgrimage venues display some of the trappings of the tourism industry so that the boundaries between them can be blurred. Moreover, religious symbols and practices carry an influence on recreation and tourist activities in many places (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2008; Olsen 2011; Wall and Mathieson 2006).

For example, The Sultanahmet Mosque is also called the Blue Mosque due to the blue tiles which cover the inside walls. At the height of the tourist season crowds of tourists will visit the Blue Mosque, as it is one of the most famous religious sites in Istanbul (Egresi et al. 2012). According to Henderson (2003), in a traditional sense, religion and tourism have always been closely linked, therefore in the next section we will discuss more about Islam, as it is the religion of Kuwait, and how Islam may affect the tourism development in any Islamic destination.

### 3.5.3. Tourism and Islam

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the world, with around one and a half billion believers (Hamza et al. 2012; Henderson 2008). Muslims mainly live in the 57 countries of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (Hamza et al. 2012; OIC 2014). As mentioned earlier, there is a growing volume of literature on the link between tourism and religion, as well as researchers who are increasingly looking at this topic from the viewpoint of Islam. Many Muslim tourists choose to visit religious sites throughout the world, often for reasons of worship (Hashim et al. 2007; Jafari and Scott 2014; Henderson 2008; Henderson 2010). As indicated by The Supreme Commission for Tourism, 19% of all domestic tourism and 71% of all inbound tourism excursions in Saudi Arabia were for religious purposes (ITN 2009). Travel - in the form of pilgrimage - is central to Islam. In particular, although not conceived of as tourism, the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) is a duty of every Muslim - as Ahmed (1992) points out - at least once in their life; however, Henderson (2011) and Eid (2012) claim that it seems to be necessary to look at the Hajj from an explicitly tourism perspective. Therefore, appropriate tourism goals include worship, seeking knowledge and education, and visiting Muslim friends and relatives (Din 1989; Henderson 2003; Hashim et al. 2007). This was seen in many verses of Quran as encouragement from Allah to Muslims to travel the earth (Din 1989; Sanad et al. 2010). For example, verse 20 of the Al-'Ankaboot (Spider) chapter declares: *'Say, [O Muhammad], Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. Then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed Allah, over all things, is competent.'* (Al-'Ankaboot: 20). Travelling is also perceived in Islam as a challenging undertaking that tests an individual's patience and determination (Din 1989).

Islam perpetuates a belief system that dictates a way of life. The values and norms allow people in a community to practise them, based on their perceptions and beliefs that underpin inclusivity and the identity of the community (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2008; Eriksen 2001). Fam et al. (2004) suggest that generally religions are comprised of ethics, sacred objects, values, rituals, prayers, norms, beliefs, requirements and taboos. Similarly, Henderson (2008) claims that the law of Islam (*Sharia*) is a system that guides, shapes and governs the responsibilities, values, attitudes, behaviour and morals of all Muslims, both individually and jointly, in all areas of their lives. In addition to other religious minorities in some Islamic countries, Islam may have a variable effect on the

socio-cultural context of these Islamic destinations. Consequently, Islam represents one of the most significant sources that influence the outlook and stance of many destinations, as well as visitors to them (Scott and Jafari 2010). According to Jafari and Scott (2014), Islamic teachings derive from the Quran and the Sunnah, where tourism is encouraged for recreational and educational purposes (Battour et al. 2010; Jafari and Scott 2014). Therefore, Islam affects the daily lives of Muslims, influencing what to eat, how to dress and how to travel (Din 1989; Henderson 2003, 2008; Fam et al. 2004; Hashim et al. 2007; Scott and Jafari 2010). But at the same time there are many Islamic countries such as Malaysia, Qatar and Dubai that show different attitudes to tourism, which may imply that there is no single version of Islam.

From another perspective, adhering to *Sharia* regulations is becoming more challenging in modern Islamic societies and cultures (Jafari and Su"erdem 2012). There is a difference in Islamic destinations with respect to how *Sharia* is applied. Furthermore, the demographics of Islamic countries are different, as many countries have non-Muslim citizens beside the Muslim population, such as Egypt and Indonesia (Henderson 2010; Sanad et al. 2010). Therefore, not all Islamic destinations are completely controlled by the principles of *Sharia*. This may refer also to the political systems in each country. In accordance with the traditions and basic principles of Islam, it is generally agreed that morality and virtue provide the basis for happiness. In addition, modesty, especially around the opposite sex, constitutes a central theme in the traditional code of behaviour (Din 1989; Henderson 2003; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). These traditions are expressed differently depending on communities' interpretation of the *Sharia* and personal preference. The decision as to how to operate tourism is affected by both values and economic imperatives.

While recognising variations in perceptions of the position and power of Muslim women, overall they do appear to be disadvantaged as tourists, hosts and workers in the tourism industry. Sonmez (2001) claims that women's inferior status is legitimized in the Middle East by misinterpretation of the religious texts, resulting in barriers to participation in tourism, as well as other spheres of activity. At the same time, a number of women believe that a proper textual interpretation actually enhances and protects their rights (Zamani-Farahani and Musa 2012). Veiling is also seen as an assertion of cultural identity and should not always be perceived as a symbol of female oppression (Din 1989; Henderson 2003). In

Muslim countries gender is still very important in terms of employment opportunities in the tourism industry. This is especially true in cases of women travelling alone in Muslim countries and worldwide.

Moreover, some Islamic societies frown on men and women mixing in public places because Islamic laws prohibit the free mixing of men and women together without reason (Din 1989; Sanad et al. 2010). The prophet Mohammed in his Hadith said that when a man conclave secretly with a woman, the devil will be present. Separate places for men and women are preferred and if there is a need for contact, it should take place behind some kind of barrier, such as a curtain. This can be understood from the following saying in the Quran: „...*And when ye ask of them (the wives of the Prophet) anything, ask it of them from behind a curtain or a veil. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts*” (Sura Al-Ahzab verse 53).

However, some authors have commented in general terms about the nature and significance of tourism in Islamic countries (Din 1989; Aziz 1992; Burns and Cooper 1997; Henderson 2003; Richter 1999; Sharpley 2002; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). In some instances, Henderson (2008b) argues that the requirements of Western holidaymakers are incompatible with the principles of Islam. Similarly, Battour et al. (2010) and Jafari and Scott (2014) claim that Islamic ideologies have made it difficult to market Islamic destinations that may sometimes be better marketed to Muslim tourists. An example of a country that has focused on attracting Muslim visitors over the last two decades is Malaysia (Battour et al. 2010; Tang and Tan 2013). In Malaysia they follow Leiper's model and have tailored their services in some destinations to Muslim demands by offering such facilities as prayer rooms with prayer mats, the Quran and Qibla stickers (arrows showing the direction of Mecca).

Information is also given on local places for prayer and Halal food (Hashim et al. 2007; Henderson 2003; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). As well as offering such services, restrictions may be placed on visitors in order to keep in line with Islamic principles. For example, couples may have to prove their marital status before being able to book a hotel room, and leisure activities such as swimming and spas are separated (Henderson 2003; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). Additionally, appropriate clothing is also offered, such as halal

swimming costumes <sup>3</sup> for women and men so that they are suitably covered (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner 2004; Duman 2011; Henderson 2003). According to Din (1989) and Henderson (2008), Muslim hosts are required by their religion to demonstrate an extremely lenient attitude and to be welcoming and hospitable. Additionally, it is considered acceptable to arrange excursions for non-Muslims within Muslim countries as long as the norms and values of the Muslim community are respected. Consequently, it is expected, in return, for non-Muslim tourists to demonstrate full respect for both the Islamic religion and culture (Din 1989; Henderson 2008).

In recent years the demand of Islamic and Halal tourism has been researched extensively (Battour et al. 2011; Duman 2011). Henderson (2003) stated that this is particularly evident when referring to tourism in Muslim countries. Al-Hamarneh (2012) considers that the goals of Islamic tourism are to restore Islamic cultures and broaden Islamic values, to aid the production of economic benefits to Islamic countries and to reinforce Islamic self-confidence. Neveu (2010) argues that to enable more Muslim tourists to consider visiting Arabic countries, places such as Jordan developed the idea of Islamic tourism after 11 September 2001 by advertising visits to the historical shrines of pre-Islamic prophets and the companions of Prophet Mohammed. This can be viewed as 'Islamic Tourism', as the travelling behaviour is intentionally influenced by Islamic cultural familiarity (Al-Hamareneh 2004; Al-Hamareneh and Steiner 2004; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). Saudi tourism authorities have decided to develop tourism only in an Islamic context, in order to minimise the exposure to the effects of interacting with perceived non-Islamic influences (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010), although it can be argued that Saudi Arabia follows Islamic tourism because they have the holy cities Mecca and AlMadianah.

But this Islamic approach may help the tourism industry (including the economy generally) in Islamic countries to grow. Therefore, the Islamic hospitality market is leading the way in the field of halal tourism (Stephenson 2014). Turkey, Malaysia and many more are attempting to attract Muslim tourists worldwide, offering amenities in agreement with Islamic religious values (Henderson 2008; Jafari and Scott 2014). The hotels do not provide alcoholic beverages, they offer segregated swimming pools and spas, and flights provide only Halal food, which

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<sup>3</sup> Halal swimming costumes: modern but modest intake of beachwear.

is the food that has been prepared in accordance with the Islamic *Sharia*, which does not include anything *Haram*, such as pork or alcohol (Bon and Hussain 2010; Henderson 2010; Stephenson 2014). Furthermore, announcements are made for prayer times and the on-board entertainment incorporates religious broadcasts (Henderson 2010). It was also pointed out by Stephenson et al. (2010) that Western tourists might be interested in Islamic hotels, as they may also appreciate wellbeing, health and culture, which have become increasingly popular in the last twenty years (Jafari and Scott 2014; Stephenson 2014).

Activities such as drinking alcohol, gambling, and prostitution are considered offensive and unacceptable in Islamic culture (Din 1989; Henderson 2008). Incidentally, Henderson (2008) highlights potential issues in the relationship between Islam and tourism. She discovered that some conduct within Western tourism, which includes drinking alcohol, prostitution, dressing scantily and public displays of affection, including kissing between the sexes, had resulted in a strong resentment within Islamic destinations at the time of her study (Henderson 2008). In addition, it was discovered by Eraqi (2007) that there were several sociocultural effects of tourism, which produced negative effects on the growth of local communities in Egypt. As revealed by Klemm (2002), Muslims are not particularly interested in beach holidays, where it is considered the norm to undress. This type of beach activity is considered by Muslim tourists to be unacceptable and immoral to them, for reasons that are religious and cultural. It is pointed out by Bogari et al. (2004) that Saudi tourists are heavily influenced by the beliefs and values of Islam. As a result of the varied context, it would be interesting to study the influence of Islam on the travel behaviour of people in each Islamic country.

### ***Alcohol Consumption***

Alcohol consumption can accompany tourism development and this is a particular concern in Islamic countries (Din 1989; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). These concerns are based on the assumption that tourists expect to be able to consume alcohol when on holiday. Certainly, many tourists treat their holiday as a time of freedom and liberation and may use the opportunity to drink more alcohol than they would at home. There are also forms of tourism specifically based on the consumption of alcohol, such as visits to wine-producing regions (Alamanos et al. 2014; Yuan et al. 2008). However, it

should be noted that not every tourist drinks alcohol and that many tourists are prepared to respect the traditions and practices of the countries they visit on holiday (which can include abstaining from alcohol).

The consumption of alcohol is not acceptable generally to Muslims and alcohol is not currently available in Kuwait. At the moment there are no specially designated tourist areas where alcohol can be consumed (Al-Watan 2013b). This is because alcohol is haram, which means 'forbidden' in Islam and there are many verses in the Quran and Sunnah that inform this stance. In the Sunnah, the Prophet Muhammad said: '*Any drink that causes drunkenness is forbidden.*' (al-Bukhari). However, although there are strict rules regarding alcohol consumption in most Islamic destinations for Muslims and non-Muslim visitors, there are still some countries that allow tourists to indulge in these activities legally, such as Brunei and Qatar (Ahmat et al. 2012; QAT 2009). Conversely, in the UAE there are two different cities, Dubai and Al-Sharja, which are very different. The first is more liberal and allows international tourists to drink alcohol, compared to the second city which has alcohol-free accommodation only (Al-Hamareneh 2004).

In Kuwait, this issue has been raised for discussion in parliament, because many Kuwaitis are unhappy about alcohol being permitted for foreigners in Kuwaiti hotels. On the other hand, many strict Muslims are concerned about the impact alcohol may have on the local population and are determined to stand against its permission (Aziz 2001; Chhabra 2010). The question of alcohol has led to a debate, because there are some Kuwaitis who think that holidays are often associated with increased alcohol intake and that this is beneficial for people who drink and travel to destinations like Bahrain or Dubai. Therefore, it has been suggested by Al-fadhel Parliament Member (MP) that it is better to have some specially designated places for those who drink alcohol so that they will stay in the country, as well as opening the door for tourists to enjoy their stay in Kuwait without any restrictions (Al-Watan 2013a). There is some hypocrisy in Kuwaiti society as some Kuwaitis drink alcohol and travel abroad to do so, but they often do not want to see alcohol available in Kuwait.

## ***Gambling***

From the perspective of Islamic law, gambling is forbidden because Allah said in Surat Al-Ma'idah: 'O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, and monuments and an abomination of Satan, avoid, that ye may prosper. Wants only to excite enmity and hatred in the wine and gambling, and hinder you from remembrance of Allah and from prayer will you not then abstain' (Quran, Al-Ma'idah, verse 90). Generally speaking, Islam forbids gambling because it may destroy family relationships and it may also increase levels of crime (Waller et al. 2005).

Gambling is a significant part of the local economy in some tourism destinations and in some places is a tourist attraction in itself. Certainly gambling is one of the booming industries in the global economy (Harrill et al. 2011) because it provides a significant opportunity for authorities to gain tax revenues (Hsu and Gu 2010). Stokowski (2004) points out that the casino industry claims to generate 21% of direct income for Atlantic City and 28% of its direct employment. Gambling is promoted by public and private sectors in developed countries, such as the US and Canada, as a part of tourism development. However, the monetary gains from gambling may not be satisfactory to balance the increase in traffic congestion, parking limitations, and sound pollution (Harrill et al. 2011 Hsu and Gu (2010). According to Kang et al. (1996), gambling causes social changes in local communities and brings changes to the image of the destination. Harrill et al. (2011) reported the emergence of a division in society, those who support the gambling industry in Macao and those who oppose it.

Although gambling is strictly forbidden to Muslim, in Egypt which is a predominantly a Muslim nation, there are casinos in the five-star hotels. The locals may work there, but are not allowed to gamble (Din 1989; Henderson 2003; Hashim et al. 2007; Hoffstaedter 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). In Dubai, however, according to Mckechnie et al.'s (2009) exploratory study on potential opportunities to open casinos, the local community rejected this kind of tourist activity because of the impacts of gambling on the socio-cultural context of the local community. In reality, some Muslims do gamble but this is not much publicised. It is also noted that there are high proportions of Arabs who gamble in non-Islamic countries such as the UK and the USA.

In Kuwait, gambling is illegal. It is not available anywhere in Kuwait, due to its potentially negative impacts on the community. Gambling in Kuwait is considered



a socio-cultural taboo. For example a famous Kuwaiti doctor was caught gambling in his own residence with a couple of friends and was punished in court and lost both his reputation and his career (Kuwait Times 2014). However, this is not to say that Kuwaiti nationals do not gamble when they travel abroad, but to indicate that the majority of Kuwaiti society wants to preserve their socio-cultural context as well as the Kuwaiti law, where gambling is seen as a crime. Therefore, this may be seen as one of the obstacles that faces tourism development in Kuwait. Also, it has been argued that the development of Hala tourism gives more room to practice the only acceptable tourism activities from the Islamic perspective.

### **Prostitution**

Although prostitution existed before tourism development, it often increases in tandem with tourism development (Park and Stokowski 2009; Sharma et al. 2008) although this depends on both the type of tourism and the type of destination. Tourism is linked with a liberalised attitude towards sex and a growth in the sex trade, including child prostitution (Fletcher 2008), problems that Thailand notoriously suffers from. In Islam any sexual relationship outside marriage is forbidden, in contrast to the more relaxed and liberal Western morality (Sanad et al. 2010). Harrison (1995), found a connection between tourism and prostitution in Swaziland and he believed that prostitution was viewed as an issue before tourism was brought into the nation. As tourism got to be vital, prostitution was engaged more on hotels, as there was significant uncertainty with reference to who were the prostitution customers. He, in this manner, presumes that tourism did not bring about prostitution in Swaziland.

On the other hand, in the Islamic context Allah said in Surat An-Nisa: *‘Those who commit unlawful sexual intercourse of your women - bring against them four [witnesses] from among you. And if they testify, confine the guilty women to houses until death takes them or Allah ordains for them [another] way’* (Surat An-Nisa verses 15). However, despite the strict control over relationships in Muslim countries, prostitution still exists, but it takes place very secretly because it is seen as a major crime. If caught, the penalties are severe. The newspapers in Kuwait regularly report that the police have searched houses where prostitutes are thought to be working (Al-Watan 2013b). However, it is well known that the authorities ‘turn a blind eye’ to the large number of foreign prostitutes, who are

brought over from poor countries to Islamic destinations (BBC 2010). The authorities have always found it very difficult to control this problem, because the powerful lobbies, making financial gains from tourism, stand as a hindrance to any legal actions (Fletcher 2008; Park and Stokowski 2009; Sharma et al. 2008). These rules are for morality reasons and to avoid moral corruption that may lead to prostitution (Al-Otaibi 2004). Din (1989) and Henderson (2008) argue that an unacceptable tourism activity such as prostitution is considered offensive and unacceptable in an Islamic culture such as Kuwait. The majority of Kuwaiti society is conservative and sensitive to many of the negative socio-cultural impacts associated with tourism development, especially prostitution. Kaposi (2014) argued that prostitution is illegal in Kuwait and can result in prison. However, it should be recognised that hypocrisy can be noted in some cases in Kuwaiti society, as there are some Kuwaitis who do indulge in prostitution, and developing tourism may increase prostitution. Therefore, this can be seen as a challenge for the development of tourism in Kuwait and actions are needed, such as the encouragement of the development of *Hala* tourism.

It has been concluded that there are many socio-cultural impacts of tourism development and these impacts seem to be more negative than positive. This section also shows that the sustainable tourism approach has a lot of opportunities as well as challenges in Kuwait, as an example of an Islamic country. However, Kuwait can be represented as an Islamic traditional destination, as the majority of Kuwaiti society seems to be more likely to preserve the Islamic identity and keep the Islamic law to shape the characteristics of the country. The concept of sustainability, as well as socio-cultural sustainability, was the main concern regarding applying tourism development in Kuwait. Therefore, sustainable tourism development in Kuwait faces many challenging issues regarding some tourism activities such as alcohol consumption, gambling and prostitution. On the other hand, there are some opportunities to be achieved through developing the tourism industry, for example empowering women and youth. This may be achieved by implementing a collaborative approach between stakeholders to develop sustainable tourism in Kuwait, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.6. The Stakeholder Collaboration Approach towards Achieving Sustainable Tourism**

The stakeholder collaborative approach may be an effective approach that can be used to achieve sustainable tourism in Kuwait. This is because a collaborative approach requires the inclusion of the voice of non-industry stakeholders, on equal terms with those of tourism professionals. This section will offer an overview of collaboration, as well as, identifying the stakeholders towards achieving a sustainable approach to tourism.

#### ***What is collaboration?***

Collaboration is a popular means for public and private sector organisations to achieve their goals and objectives (Fyall and Garrod 2005; Pansiri 2012; Wilson et al. 2009; Wong et al. 2011; Zapata and Hall 2012). Collaboration may be a significant determinant for the development of any industry or even any organisation in a destination (Baggio 2011; Wong et al. 2011; Vernon et al. 2005). Most scholars still depend on Gray's definition, which can be seen as a starting point: *'the pooling of appreciation and tangible resources by two or more stakeholders to solve a set of problems which cannot be solved individually'* (Gray 1985, p.912). Later on, Gray (1989, p.227) characterized collaboration as *'a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain'*. Wood and Gray (1991) also define collaboration within a broader platform and with a much more distinctive meaning, intentionally separating it out from the similar word 'co-operation', which was provided by Jamal and Getz (1995). Co-operation refers to working together to achieve certain goals and it lacks many of the vital elements of collaboration.

Collaboration is a more specific and practically oriented method that reflects the shared interests of the stakeholders and addresses the complexity of a task. In the context of community-based tourism planning, Jamal and Getz (1995, p.188) defined collaboration as follows: *'Collaboration for community-based tourism planning is a process of joint decision-making among autonomous, key stakeholders of an inter-organisational, community tourism domain to resolve planning problems of the domain and/or manage issues related to the planning and development of the domain.'* This definition is useful to this study, as it expands on the nature of the common elements involved, highlighting the need for boundary setting, and indicates that shared structures and norms will be

necessary. The only additional term used in this definition is 'community'. However, Hall (2009) identified the community as the first and most important body of stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Many terms are used to describe positive forms of inter-organisational relationships, such as networks, co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration (Park et al. 2008; Wang et al. 2012). Ladkin and Bertramini (2002) pointed out the difference between coordination and collaboration by arguing that coordination can be seen as leading towards collaboration. It was noted that, as an initial stage of the collaboration process, coordination takes place in the absence of rules and does not by itself solve an organisation's problems (Park et al. 2009; Waayers et al. 2012). Moreover, it can be said that although both co-operation and collaboration can be regarded as types of inter-organisational arrangement, collaboration seems to involve more developed types of interactive processes than cooperation (Fyall et al. 2012; Wang and Krakover 2008).

The fragmented nature of the tourism industry, which is influenced by many forces, such as airlines and investment based locally and or globally (Jamal and McDonald 2011; Waayers et al. 2012), increases the need to coordinate inter-relationships (Ladkin and Bertramini 2002; Wilson et al. 2009). Major stakeholders in the tourism sector recognise the critical relevance of collaborative approaches (Selin 1999; Wang and Fesenmaier 2007), although Wood and Gray (1991) argue that the collaboration process happens mainly when stakeholders are autonomous. Therefore, they keep their independent decision-making authority even when they work within the same framework. Collaboration often attracts different categories of private and public tourism organisations (Wang 2008; Wilson et al. 2009). Thus, Ladkin and Bertramini (2002) noted that it is very important to identify how the relationships among different organisations are to be managed. The limitations of remaining independent must be acknowledged since individual actions are no longer sufficient (Graci 2012; Jamal and Getz 1995). Pressure has mounted for greater levels of transparency in democratic approaches and there have been calls for involving community approaches in the tourism context (Ritchie 1999; Robertson 2011).

### ***Identifying Stakeholders***

A positive aspect of stakeholder theory is that it provides a structure to enable the identification of stakeholders and their roles within an organisation (Friedman and Miles 2006). Moreover, stakeholder theory is a potential strategy for managing the difficulties of putting the principles of sustainable tourism development into practice (Currie et al. 2009). This theory has made it possible for managers to organise stakeholders efficiently, so that they meet the aims of organisations (Friedman and Miles 2006). It was originally introduced by Freeman (1984) who defines a stakeholder as *'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives'* (Freeman 1984, p.46).

Two key issues in stakeholder theory are the validity and equal treatment of specific stakeholder groups (Jamal and Stronaza 2009). Validity is connected to how effective one group may be in influencing decisions made by an organisation. As a result this directly relates to how much power the group possesses to ensure that the organisation reflects their interests. It also relates to how much the stakeholder group is affected by decisions made by the organisation. This is controlled by how strong the need is for the institution to observe the group's requirements. Stakeholder theory aims for equal treatment of all parties involved. For example, many stakeholders can be included, as depicted in the diagram below.

**Figure 3.4 Tourism Stakeholders Map.**



*Source: Adapted from Freeman (1984)*

Stakeholders have a shared interest in collaboration. Okazaki (2008) claimed that stakeholders are interconnected and, if they try to work on problems by themselves, this creates difficulties for others. Solutions to problems tend to be found through working together and problems are unlikely to be solved by a stakeholder working alone. Hautbois et al. (2012) present an example of the use of stakeholder theory in the context of significant sporting occasions, which has given deeper understanding about the organisation of similar events. They looked at the French national bid to host the 2018 Olympic Winter Games, investigating the connections among stakeholders and studying the elements leading to successful stakeholder-based bids. Stakeholders working together hold a common vision and attain shared objectives through a uniform strategy and strenuous efforts (Friedman and Miles 2006). Devine et al. (2009) mentioned the suitability of collaboration in the highly fragmented area of sports tourism, given the various organisations involved. The key stakeholders who formulate and implement sports tourism policy have to take into account the factors that influence inter-organisational relationships. This might be applied to tourism in general. The collaboration process will be discussed in the next section in order to gain a deeper understanding of how it can be used effectively to ensure that the various parties involved in tourism projects work together for a successful outcome.

### ***Drivers of Collaborative Effectiveness***

The success of the tourism industry largely depends on different collaborative initiatives (Wang and Xiang 2007). Collaborative advantages refer to the outcomes of the collaborative process and the combined efforts of stakeholders producing outputs greater than the sum of individual outputs (Fyall and Garrod 2005; Huxham 1996). A key example of drivers of collaborative effectiveness is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The original aim of ASEAN was to create an area of free trade in Southeast Asia. As a consequence, tourism has developed significantly in the region and is now seen as an important industry: it contributes substantially to the economies of countries in the ASEAN (Wong et al. 2011). Wong et al. (2010) claim that one of the direct drivers for tourism collaboration came about from the conditions created under the ASEAN structure for participating countries. Other indirect drivers were the desire to follow shared interests in marketing the area and in bringing about stability, certainty and reliability through collaboration (Wong et al. 2011). Despite the fact that ASEAN countries collaborate to bring tourists to the region, Wong et al. (2010) mention that competition is naturally strong between the individual members and is expected (Wong et al. 2011). In contrast to this, although the North American Free Trade agreement (NAFTA) created increased certainty for investors, it did not prove to be a major driver of investment in tourism development in the context of North American visitors to Mexico (Melendez 2008; Rodriguez and Portales 1994). Tourism in Mexico had already been designated as an area for national development before NAFTA was signed and was seen as a very popular destination for North American tourists (Melendez 2008). However, the establishment of NAFTA meant that more encouragement was given to attract foreign investment, which led to even greater development of the tourism industry in Mexico.

Many GCC countries are working to develop specific types of tourism separately, as was seen in the case of Mexico. Examples of these countries are Saudi Arabia with Islamic tourism (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010) and the UAE with business and leisure tourism (Sharpley 2008; Stephenson 2013). If the example of the ASEAN organisation is followed, other GCC destinations, such as Kuwait, which have so far not developed their tourism industry substantially, may benefit from this and be able to exploit this sector more fully using a collaborative approach.

### ***Barriers to Collaboration***

There are internal and external barriers that affect the collaborative process. Kubickov and Wang (2011) suggest there may be a lack of a collaborative mind set, organisational and individual related characteristics. They also mention external barriers to the smooth implementation of collaborative efforts, which are beyond the control of the firm, such as the economic environment, shifts in trends and negative media portrayal (Kubickov and Wang 2011; Wong et al. 2011). The lack of a collaborative mind set still lingers with tourism policy makers and it is believed that this could be a symptom of other problems. A good example is when Singapore chose not to join Cambodia and Indonesia in the common competency standards scheme (Wong et al. 2011). It can be argued that collaboration can be troublesome in any context and this is the case in the tourism sector (Fyall et al. 2012) because the industry is fragmented in nature and uncertainty is high, due to vulnerability to changes in the macro-environment (Ford et al. 2012; Fyall and Garrod 2005). However, the possibilities are immense, if collaboration is used.

Collaborative governance is about utilisation of inter-organisational, cross-sectoral networks to develop policies and implement practices to focus on key issues of interest to the diverse group of stakeholders (Robertson 2011; Wong et al. 2011). An example of how collaboration was not successfully achieved was reported by Saftic et al. (2011), regarding the lack of satisfactory collaborative planning and implementation in Croatian tourism development. The study zone was Istria County, which witnessed many collaborative efforts. However, all but a few failed to gain collaborative benefits. Researchers pointed out a number of reasons for the ineffectiveness of collaborative projects in Istria. These include the authorities' centralised outlook on tourism policy formulation and implementation, which focused only on attaining the pre-set objectives of the government. Confusion associated with the introduction of decentralisation, conflicts among the various external groups and locals concerning the authority over resources combined with the local community not being given the priority it deserved were major contributors to failure. Saftic et al. (2011) conclude that collaboration could help Istria County to gain substantial benefits if it is well supported by the authorities and properly implemented with a key focus on the local community.



A further instance of collaboration barriers was seen between countries that were members of the ASEAN network. Although there was a considerable degree of successful collaboration, barriers were also experienced. For example, there was little coordination between government sectors in some cases and this led to ineffective communication between agencies (McCabe et al. 2012). This was evident when maintaining control and changing priorities in terms of travel into and within regions. As Hall (2009) also points out, there needs to be a constructive relationship between government and communities to ensure equity of access for all stakeholder groups (Robertson 2011; Wong et al. 2011).

### ***Collaboration in the Tourism Industry***

Terms, such as 'partnerships', 'alliances' and 'consortia,' are used to indicate various collaborative approaches (McCabe 2012; Park et al. 2008; Wilson et al. 2009). 'Partnership' is the term usually used to indicate collaborative projects, based at the destination level. 'Alliance' is the common term for collaborative initiatives in the airline sector (Fyall and Garrod 2005). However, there are no hard and fast rules related to the usage of these terms. Indeed they are sometimes used in combination, as in 'collaborative partnerships', or 'partners of an alliance' (Ford et al. 2012; Fyall et al. 2012).

Collaboration can be valuable in bringing better organisational performance, lowering costs, building social capital and adding to the public good (Fyall et al. 2012). Any destination seeking successful collaboration must consist of a well-established unit and be capable of combining elements of its organizational management of the destination (Fyall and Leask 2006). As a response to the challenge of collaboration, many countries around the world have set up Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) to make collaboration possible amongst the different parts of organisations (Fyall et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2012). This may be because support for policies within the tourism industry has grown (Morgan et al. 2012; Wong et al. 2011).

Hsu and Gu (2010) reported on the adoption of regional coordination and collaboration to support Hong Kong, Macau and Zuhai to enhance regional tourism development. Macau is a popular gaming and leisure zone for many visitors (Henderson 2012). In addition they are involved in collaborative projects with neighbours that help Macau to maintain its booming casino and gaming

sector. Hsu and Gu (2010) argue that tourism development that neglects regional coordination may lead to a breakdown in threshold levels resulting in intense competition and decreasing tourism arrivals. Thus, the joint regional plan may help in supporting Hong Kong, Macau and Zuhai (HMZ) to gain a competitive edge both regionally and globally.

A collaborative strategy in tourism is a practical option for reducing external threats. Apart from this, it allows organisations to harvest advantages using shared opportunities, rather than struggling in isolation (Fyall et al. 2012). A collaborative approach in the tourism industry is based on a public orientation push for the inclusion of non-industry stakeholders on equal terms with the expert segments (Hall 2009; McCabe et al. 2012). Crucially, networked relationships can be sustained through all parties sharing common aims and where trust among them is strong (Jamal et al. 2002). These factors may help to contribute to the sustainability of tourism.

### ***Collaboration in Islamic Destinations***

There have recently been several conferences on the subject of tourism in Islamic countries and it is now recognized that it is important to attract tourists from Muslim countries to minimize the negative socio-cultural impacts (Ghadami 2012). In 2008, the OIC held a conference that discussed forming a 'unified approach among the 57 member countries' in relation to promoting collaboration in the area of tourism (OIC 2014). The importance of tourism was discussed and the OIC stated their intention 'to cooperate jointly to develop tourism in OIC countries, as an important means to present and preserve the richness of Islamic civilization and culture' (OIC 2014). The main emphasis was on tourism from fellow Muslim countries and less on Western visitors to Muslim destinations (Henderson 2008).

In addition, the seventh session of the Islamic conference of tourism ministers held in Tehran in 2010 discussed an OIC Plan of Action to strengthen economic cooperation among the member states. At this conference, they showed their commitment to expanding the tourism industry within Muslim destinations through collaboration (OIC 2014). However, there could be many difficulties and problems when trying to integrate Western-style tourism into an Islamic context (Henderson 2008). It is, possibly, because of this that some Muslim countries have concentrated, so far, on promoting tourism within the Muslim world alone.

Clearly, religion (Islam) plays a role in some of Islamic nations in influencing decisions in tourism development at every level (Weidenfeld and Ron 2008).

Collaboration is a significant principle in the Quran, as Allah said '*Collaborate with one another to achieve virtue and piety and do not collaborate with one another in sin and transgression*' (Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 2). This verse from the Quran could raise the argument that it is related to virtue vs. transgression but many believe that relates to all aspects of life including business. Therefore, it is appropriate culturally those Muslim countries should collaborate, to develop tourism (OIC 2014).

Additionally, it must be stated that collaboration is not new in GCC countries, although the major areas of cooperation are in political, economic, legal, financial, social and environmental sectors. For example, the Supreme Commission of Tourism (SCT) in Saudi Arabia brought stakeholders together, collaboratively, in order to strengthen tourism development. In this case, restaurants and hotels worked in partnership for a festival that took place in Jeddah (Yaghmour and Scott 2009). With regard to the upcoming hosting of the World Cup in Qatar 2022, collaboration is going to be a key factor (De Jong 2011; QAT) 2013).

Dubai's tourism system is widely acclaimed and this has put the city in a strong position globally in terms of tourism (Sharpley 2008). Dubai can attribute its success in tourism development largely to the Dubai government's long-term vision planning (Stephenson 2013). In order to share costs for projects amongst local and international investors, in the mainly Muslim world, the government fostered partnerships between the private and public sectors (Sharpley 2008). The Shopping Festival is an example of an event which changed over a decade to being completely funded by the private sector. Cooperation within this sector is seen as positive (Sharpley 2008; Stephenson 2013).

The implementation of a collaborative approach will not be free of challenges, especially because collaboration theories have their origins from a Western style of management thinking, although there is a basic principle of collaboration in Islam. Collaborations and partnerships are key elements for deriving desirable outcomes in sustainable tourism development, through being sensitive and tolerant to cultural differences within an Islamic destination (Park et al. 2008; Robinson 1999).

### **3.7. Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to critically examine the concepts of tourism, development, sustainable tourism, the role of stakeholders, and the collaboration needed to develop a broad understanding of these theories. This was done by reviewing the tourism definitions, the tourism system, the development concept and theories and sustainable tourism, its underlying principles and major stakeholder groups, and implementation limitations, which are related to contextual factors found at the study site for this research. The reasoning behind this examination lies in the fact that it is crucial to fully understand these concepts in order to facilitate answering the defined research question. This chapter has demonstrated gaps in the literature in connection with sustainability in Islamic destinations and socio-cultural impacts, which can vary from negative to positive depending on the destination context. Furthermore, some theoretical models, such as Doxey's and Butler's, help in assessing the development of tourism, but these need to be modified when dealing with an Islamic context, as Islamic destinations enjoy a unique socio-cultural context; namely that whilst the concept is a respectable goal to aim for, its implementation continues to be a difficult task.

Tourism development may be encouraged through collaboration nationally and globally. However, due to religious and cultural sensitivities still in practice, it may be advisable to promote cooperation between members of the Muslim world. This is because Western and Middle Eastern cultures are markedly different from each other and people from these areas are still naturally cautious about interaction. Kuwait has democratic governance that can provide sufficient space to incorporate various stakeholder views, though the government needs to be on board from the outset. Also identified in this chapter is the absolute importance of stakeholder involvement and collaboration to achieve sustainability when developing tourism, especially in new destinations such as Kuwait. Kuwait, being in the initial stage of tourism development, can learn from existing tourist policies in the Middle East. It may be possible to develop a thriving tourist industry in Kuwait whilst preserving the unique Kuwaiti identity.

## Chapter 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1. Introduction

This study adopts a qualitative research approach in order to achieve its aim and objectives. An appropriate research methodology is fundamentally the road map for realising the research aim and objectives and thereby answering the research questions (Bryman 2008; Saunders et al. 2009). It is essential that the paradigm chosen for a study closely fits the aim of the research in this study an interpretivism philosophy will help to facilitate understanding of the participants' view and their understanding of the important role in decision making as they are the stakeholders of the tourism industry. The data collection technique is semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis is used. The limitations of the research will be addressed at the end of this chapter. The table below offers a snapshot of the approach taken in this research.

**Table 4.1 Methodological approach**

Interpretivist paradigm chosen: leading to the adoption of a qualitative approach
Literature review conducted
Semi-structured interviews identified as the method of data collection Interview guide created based on the literature review
Pilot test conducted: modifications made to the interview guide, and more interviewer preparation made
Sample of key stakeholders identified Snowball sampling undertaken to reach a fuller sample
Interviews conducted Thematic analysis used: transcription, familiarisation, coding and categorising
Organisation of categorised data into two themed chapters. Interpretation of data, with particular attention paid to context. Interweaving of literature, tied to the emergent themes.
Conclusions and recommendations offered on the possible future of tourism development in Kuwait Conclusions are context-bound, linked to realities of the desire for diversification and the retention of Islamic identity.

## 4.2. Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to assess the potential from the perspective of key stakeholders for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait.

1. To discuss the development of sustainable tourism in an Islamic context.
2. To analyse some of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development that Kuwait is likely to face in the future.
3. To identify the government efforts for developing tourism in Islamic culture in Kuwait.
4. To explore the barriers and the opportunities for developing tourism in Kuwait.
5. To evaluate the types of tourism that are suitable in Arabic and Islamic culture in Kuwait.
6. To propose a model for developing culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait that could be implemented in other conservative Islamic destinations.

## 4.3. Research Paradigm

There are several types of paradigm, including positivism, constructivism and interpretivism (Clough and Nutbrown 2007; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Guba and Lincoln 2003). Guba and Lincoln (2003, p.151) defined a paradigm as: *'a set of beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimate or first principles. It represents a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relations to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do.'* The paradigm chosen by any researcher is influenced by their worldview, which comes from their social and cultural background (Casel and Symon 2004.). A philosophical basis is essential for research, as it forms the foundation for the framework of a study, which helps to determine the methodological approach, data collection techniques and how the data are interpreted (Holloway and Wheeler 2010). A paradigm contains three crucial components: ontology, epistemology and methodology, which offer a framework that assists in creating a structure for the research as well as linking the theory to the research methods (Bryman 2008). The table below explains some of the philosophical paradigms.

**Table 4.2 Different Philosophical Paradigms**

<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Constructivism</b>	<b>Interpretivism</b>
<b>Research Elements</b>			
<b>Ontology</b>	Focus on one reality Reality is tangible Ruled by natural laws	Deals with many different realities Reality is socially constructed	Researcher's view may vary and is subjective
<b>Epistemology</b>	Objective Findings are real	Subjective Researcher interprets findings	Subjective and emphasis on specifics and their contexts
<b>Methodology</b>	Mainly quantitative	Mainly qualitative	Qualitative
<b>Data collection</b>	Large number of samples used (e.g. Surveys, questionnaires)	Mainly grounded theory Observation and Interviews	Small number of samples used (e.g. interviews, focus groups)

Source: Adapted from: Bryman (2008); Grix (2010); Guba and Lincoln (2003); Saunders et al. (2009)

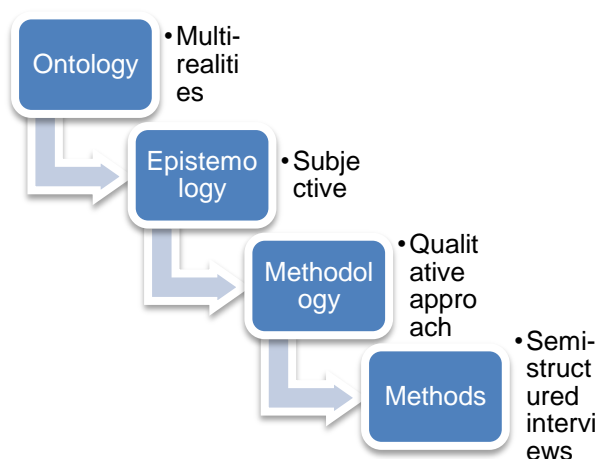
The interpretivist paradigm stresses the importance of understanding the different roles of people in social life (Saunders et al. 2009). Interpretivism suggests that many realities exist and can change according to context (Jennings 2010). The interpretivist paradigm places great focus on the participants, detailing their understanding of their setting. As a result, interpretivism encourages interaction and co-operation between the researcher and the participants by allowing room for minute details to be voiced, ensuring the quality and relevance of data. The basic assumptions guiding the interpretivist paradigm is that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process and that researchers should attempt to understand the '*complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it*' (Schwandt 1994, p.118). Moreover, it can be seen as a reaction to the dominance of positivism (Grix 2010). Subjectivity guides interpretivism in counter to objectivity, which is pursued by positivism.

For the purposes of achieving the aim of the research, it is necessary to use a paradigm that brings understanding to the setting of the study. This study is based around human actions with all their complexities. The interviewees are from different economic, social and cultural backgrounds; consequently, their responses in the interviews will reflect both similar and different opinions and attitudes. Context is therefore important. An interpretivist worldview is adopted for this study because it is acknowledged that a diverse range of participants will offer multiple perspectives on reality. The interpretivist paradigm recognises that there are multiple realities, which is important for this study because it aims to capture the viewpoints and experiences of a wide range of stakeholders. The paradigm also allows one to explore in-depth a topic about which little is known (Jones et al. 2013). Furthermore, an inductive approach is associated with interpretivism, which prioritises the primary data collected. Data will have primacy and will help to generate or modify theory. This is important in an exploratory study in which there is a gap in the literature concerning the socio-cultural impact of tourism in Islamic destinations.

#### 4.4. Choosing Qualitative Research

As reflected in the figure below, the adoption of an interpretivist paradigm led to the use of a qualitative approach.

**Figure 4.1 Flow of the Research Knowledge Framework**



Source: Adapted from Crotty (1998); Saunders et al. (2009)

Qualitative research is defined as ‘a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live’ (Holloway and Wheeler 2010, p.3). Qualitative research facilitates an in-depth



understanding, description and interpretation of the world as seen through the eyes of participants (Berg 2009). It provides ways of understanding the perceptions and attitudes of people and the meanings they attach to life (Berg 2009; Holloway and Brown 2012). Therefore, a qualitative methodology is preferred over a quantitative one because, as Deery et al. (2012) point out, the majority of quantitative approaches do not give such an in-depth understanding of the research subject, which is essential for this study. Here, the emphasis is on subjective interpretations; therefore, the use of research methods based on an objective orientation is ruled out. Additionally, a qualitative approach is often used when the research is exploratory in nature as is the case in this study.

Qualitative research is also context-bound; it is not located in a vacuum but always tied to its context, which refers to the locality, time and culture in which it takes place, and the values and beliefs the participants hold (Jones et al. 2013). To be aware of the context, researchers need context-sensitivity. This means that they can only grasp meaning through contextualisation. This is particularly important to this study, as values shape how tourism development is perceived. This means that the researcher should be sensitive to the participants' values, but through a process of reflexivity, they should also become aware of their own and how these may influence the research. Closely linked to the notion of context is 'thick description', which is defined as a detailed, contextual description that includes the feelings, meanings and attitudes of participants. The use of quotes from participants enhances the description and makes a study more vivid. It also enhances credibility.

#### **4.5. Research Method**

There are several methods for collecting data in qualitative research, such as interviewing, participant observation and documents analysis. As Corbetta (2003, p.287) stated, *'three fundamental actions underlying the techniques of qualitative research are observing, asking and reading.'* However, the interview is the most commonly used data collection tool in qualitative research (Holloway and Brown 2012). This research also uses the interviewing method to collect data because as this area of research has not been investigated before, in-depth interviewing seemed the best way to obtain detailed information about a little investigated topic. Interviews are defined as *'a form of communication, a means of extracting different forms of information from individuals and groups'* (Byrne 2012, p.207). The different types of interviews depend on the form and the amount they are

planned, as they can vary from unstructured to structured (Holloway and Brown 2012; Saunders et al. 2009).

Two types of interview are widely used in flexible qualitative research, namely unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Holloway and Brown 2012; Mason 2002). The semi-structured interview gives the researcher a degree of control over the interviews, allowing them to ask questions relating to particular relevant topics (Holloway and Brown 2012). In contrast, unstructured interviews give the interviewer little control of the conversation and he or she is unable to ask about specific areas of interest (Holloway and Brown 2012; Jones et al. 2013). Generally, the data elicited in unstructured interviews differ greatly from individual to individual, despite the researcher having some form of an agenda. Additionally, in an unstructured setting, the participant has more say on the content; therefore, the drop rate is high.

Semi-structured interviews require a specific set of questions to be applied through the interview, depending on the researcher's interest (Berg 2009; Holloway and Brown 2012). They also allow one to probe for answers and change questions according to participants' answers (Jennings 2010; Jones et al. 2013). The use of a guide is important, as it helps to keep the conversation on track and it means that one can gather similar kinds of information from all participants (Holloway and Brown 2012). It wastes less time and effort, and has a lower drop rate (Jennings 2010). During semi-structured interviews, although an interview guide is prepared, the way interviews are run and the interviewees' answers mean the ordering of questions is different for each participant (Holloway and Wheeler 2010; Holloway and Brown 2012).

The option of probing in semi-structured interviews provides space for asking any necessary extra questions and thereby facilitates gathering additional information (Holloway and Brown 2012). This was important in this study. As collaboration and culturally sustainable tourism development are not currently practiced in Kuwait, probing was necessary to bring out whatever knowledge was available from the stakeholders. Additionally, personal interviews can be valuable and give more space for the participant to express their views in depth when the topic of the research addresses a sensitive area, such as the impact of tourism development on Kuwaiti identity and the socio-cultural context of Kuwait.

#### **4.6. Interview Guide**

An interview guide significantly improves the reliability of qualitative research overall (Holloway and Brown 2012; Patton 2002). It contains a framework for the interview and the questions are adapted depending on the responses given by participants (Holloway and Brown 2012; Saunders et al. 2009). I designed the research guide to gather data from the research participants in terms of their feelings, perceptions and thoughts about the development of a culturally sustainable tourism industry in Kuwait. I am not obliged to use all the questions in the interview guide; however, the guide helps to control the interview and keeps the focus on the research topic (Bryman 2008; Holloway and Brown 2012). The topics for the interview guide were developed based on the literature review and research objectives, and include the following:

- The challenges facing tourism in Kuwait
- Tourism development and impacts: Economic/Environmental/Socio-cultural impacts
- The type of tourism suitable for Kuwait
- The level and approaches of community participation
- Collaboration between government authorities and private enterprise.

The topic covered five areas with 24 questions. However, as a semi-structured interview was used, not all the questions were asked and other questions sometimes emerged, depending on the participant, how much information he or she provided and how the conversation evolved.

#### **4.7. Pilot Test**

Pilot tests are carried out to check how the interview process will operate in its practical execution or to check for any imperfections in the questions used in the real-world context, such as the clarity of the questions, the research participants' understanding of the meaning of the questions and suitability of the response categories (Black 2008; Holloway and Brown 2012). A pilot test was carried out with four tourism stakeholders in Kuwait:

- Former Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism,
- The Manager of the Union of Hotel Owners,
- Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development for the State of Kuwait,

- Chairperson and Managing Director of Kuwait Commercial Markets Complex Co.

Interviews were conducted in Arabic, as this is the language of Kuwait, as well as the researcher. This, of course, helped to build rapport. The initial interviewees contributed provided relevant information for the study and useful contacts with other relevant sectors in Kuwait. Holloway and Brown (2012) describe such people as 'gatekeepers'.

- There were too many prepared questions; the interview was too structured;
- More probing and follow-up questions were needed because I was inexperienced;
- More time was needed for the interviews; therefore, I needed to increase awareness of how long the interview should be in order to gain valuable data from the participant;
- There were minor language misunderstandings due to the translation from English to Arabic and vice versa. I had set the interview questions in English and then translated them into Arabic; therefore, I needed to word my questions carefully in order to avoid confusion. In some places, there was no direct translation for a phrase;

Interviewees digressed from the topic and it was important to keep them on track.

- To address these issues, the following amendments were made:
- The number of prepared questions was reduced. However, it was good to have the interview guide to help in asking relevant questions.
- More probing and follow-up questions were used.
- Participants were requested to allow more time to complete the interview.
- A series of prompts were added to explain the question in more detail if the interviewee was unsure about what is being asked.

Before the interview began, the aim of the study was emphasised. Moreover, it was useful to give the participants an overview about the areas that would be covered.

#### **4.8. Sampling**

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling, which is a common sampling technique in qualitative studies (Bryman 2008). It allows the researcher to choose participants in respect of specific criteria relating to the subject of interest (Holloway and Brown 2012). Maximum variation can also be used and it

is achieved by using a variety of participants in order to gain views on the subject from many different angles (Jennings 2010; Jones et al. 2013).

The most important criteria used for identifying participants for this research was that they should be stakeholders in the tourism development process. A wide variety of participants, working in both the public and the private sector, were identified. Many were chosen because they held a prominent position in the tourism/hospitality industry, because they worked in relevant fields such as marketing, PR or events or because they worked for the government. Many participants were in senior management positions, identified because they may be in a position to influence decisions affecting the development of tourism in Kuwait. University lecturers were also identified, with specialist knowledge on tourism, the media and Islam. The community is of course an important stakeholder; therefore participants were identified who could represent community views.

*Snowball or chain sampling* is an approach that begins by asking the participant in each interview *'who else can you recommend for participating in this research and who should I talk to?'* (Patton 2002 snowball sampling was used to identify additional participants, as my first interviewees are well known in their field and were able to refer me to more contacts. Although I did not have direct access to these contacts myself initially, I used a networking approach which is very unique to and one of the most resourceful assets in Kuwaiti culture. The process starts when the researcher asks the participant to name others who would meet the criteria for the study, resulting in the snowball getting bigger and bigger. Therefore, I used my family and friends' networks to locate the initial stakeholders and, from there, I was able to reach other potential stakeholders. However, it can be argued that there may be a bias as the participants are coming from a circle of friends but to overcome this there was also a random selection of participants.

In the end, through purposive and snowball sampling, I was able to interview a total of 32 participants, comprising 13 females and 19 males, and the majority of participants held high-level positions involved in decision making. For socio-cultural reasons, the majority of the sample was men. Therefore, there was an attempt to search for female participants and, if it was not possible to find one in an important position or working as a senior manager, I engaged with community

members or residents who are recognised as key stakeholders (Freeman 1984). To enable the reader to understand the background and context of the participants in this study, a profile with pseudonyms has been created and is shown below.

**Table 4.3 Participant Profile**

No	Name	Gender	Job	Public/Private
1	Samal	Male	Consultant in Al- Jazeera Airways Company	Public sector
2	Ahmad	Male	Social Science Lecturer at Kuwait University (a rare author who writes about tourism in Kuwait)	Public sector
3	Mona	Female	Business Simulation Analyst for advertising company	Private sector
4	Ali	Male	Lawyer (ex-parliament member)	Private sector
5	Fahad	Male	Observer National Assembly	Public sector
6	Nawal	Female	Member of Municipal Council	Public sector
7	Mohammad	Male	Consultant in the Department of Tourism	Public sector
8	Nada	Female	Marketing Consultant in private marketing company	Private sector
9	Talal	Male	Chairman & Managing Director of Construction	Public sector
10	Jassim	Male	Member of Hotel Association	Private sector
11	Najah	Female	Owner of tourism consultancy company	Private sector
12	Athary	Female	Community Member (high school teacher)	Public sector
13	Suaad	Female	Community Member (employee in government department)	Public sector
14	Shaleh	Male	Vice Chairman of the Board and Managing Director of a tourism company (this is the only public company that manages Kuwait's entertainment and tourism resources and activities )	Public sector
15	Bodor	Female	Lecturer in Media at Kuwait University	Public sector

16	Rashed	Male	Lecturer in Islamic Studies at Kuwait University	Public sector
17	Mobarak	Male	Director of Department of Fine Arts	Public sector
18	Jarah	Male	Director of Marketing in a tourism company	Public sector
19	Asmaa	Female	Director of Construction	Public sector
20	Sara	Female	Tourist Guide	Public sector
21	Kamal	Male	Member of Hotel Owners' Association	Private sector
22	Samer	Male	Secretary General of the Development of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development for the State of Kuwait	Public sector
23	Fatema	Female	Bank manager	Public sector
24	Bader	Male	Front desk manager in 5 star hotel	Private sector
25	Mishal	Male	Community member (employee in government department)	Public sector
26	Kholod	Female	Hotel owner	Private sector
27	Rami	Male	Human Resources Manager in 5 star hotel	Private sector
28	Fawaz	Male	Marketing Manager in telecom company	Private sector
29	Saad	Male	VP for Industry Affairs	Public sector
30	Huasain	Male	Event Organiser	Private sector
31	Rana	Female	Public Relations Officer for a services management company	Public sector
32	Danah	Female	Director of Marketing of a service provider company	Public sector

#### 4.9. Conducting the Interviews

I conducted the interviews in two separate stages using participants based in Kuwait. The first was the pilot study, which I carried out during the Christmas holidays in 2011 and the second stage of interviews was conducted from April to June 2012. the interviews were mostly conducted in the participant's office. However, there were some exceptions to this, with two female interviewees (Rana and Bodor) having their interviews conducted in a café shop. Each interview varied in length, ranging from 1 hour to 1 hour and 25 minutes,

depending on the flow of the interview and the amount of information covered. Participants, such as Fawaz and Rashed, were very enthusiastic about the topic of the research and they offered more personal insight. This is unusual as well as unexpected from male participants: it is known from my cultural background about Kuwaiti society that women prefer to talk more than men. Having said that, I did not feel that the male participants were uncomfortable being interviewed by a woman. This may be because of their senior position in their working environment and daily interaction with females in their department. The interviews were conducted mostly in the Kuwaiti dialect which is a derivative of classical Arabic.

Procedures must be closely followed to preserve the anonymity of participants and the interviewer should explain any terms of confidentiality (Holloway and Wheeler 2010). I explained who would have access to the data and how the data would be analysed and used. Before the interview begins, participants should be asked for permission to record the interview, as the researcher cannot count on memory to recall answers accurately (Jennings 2010). I had explained to participants the type of interview being conducted, the time needed and its nature. The participants were also told how long the interview usually took and they were provided with details of how to get in touch with me later if they wanted to. Finally, I checked if they had any questions or queries (Holloway and Brown 2012; Jones et al. 2013). Before the interviews were conducted, I informed respondents by telephone of the academic purpose of the study and asked them where and when they preferred the interview to be conducted. At the interview location, I showed them the sponsorship paper from the Public Authority of Applied Education and Training (PAAET), Kuwait, which assured the participants about the genuine nature of the research.

Additionally, I explained to participants that their information would only be used for the purpose of the study and that I would ensure their identity remained anonymous (Holloway and Brown 2012; Mason 2002). I asked permission to record the interview. I started the recording and asked them about their job, position and background to give them confidence and to help them to relax, to break the ice. I introduced myself and the purpose of the study to make them feel important and to indicate the significance of the information they would be providing. I used the Olympus voice recorder, which provided the option of transferring the data into a computer.



I started the interview by asking the first question on my interview guide: '*Do you consider tourism development to be an important option for Kuwait?*' After the interviewee answered, I followed up and probed with the use of open-ended questions, which was important to draw vital information. It was very important to listen carefully to the interviewee in order to find the right prompt questions. As stated previously, I learned many things from the pilot study and I conducted the second phase of the interviews in a different way from the pilot interviews in order to gain maximum benefit from the conversation. I was well prepared for the second stage and I did as much as I could to ensure that interviews ran smoothly in order to obtain the best quality data and to capture the maximum amount of data from each interview.

#### **4.10. Data Analysis**

This section presents the process for analysis of the qualitative data. As Saunders et al. (2009, p.480) stated, 'qualitative data refer to all non-numeric data or data that have not been quantified and can be a product of all research strategies.' Thematic analysis is widely used to analyse qualitative data. The analysis process goes through four stages (Holloway and Brown 2012; Jones et al. 2013):

- Transcription,
- Familiarisation: Reading and listening,
- Coding,
- Categorising.

The recordings were transcribed in Arabic and then translated into English. It is very important to refer to this process as it makes some difference in qualitative research where mostly it is ignored and/or introduced in the research as a logistical issue (Crystal 2003; Shklarov 2007). It is better to create a document that has clear and understandable written English (Grunwald and Goldfarb 2006), a translator to produce the final version of the interview transcription as the researcher is not a native English speaker. Temple and Young (2004) argue that using another person (not the researcher) to translate interviews will lose some of the meaning of the data, as the translator has other perspectives than the researcher. Transcribing and translating into English is a complicated process (Shklarov 2007), and trying to minimise the loss of data by revisiting

every step to check for any discrepancies is vital. Therefore special care was taken to ensure that vital information was not lost in translation.

The next stage in qualitative research is coding, which is defined by Jones et al. (2013, p.199) as 'examining and breaking down the data into pieces of text and naming them.' I coded the data using different colours to denote topics; therefore, when a new topic was found in the data, a different colour was used and a new code was given. For example, orange was the colour denoting 'attractions' and green was the colour used for 'tourism type'. At the end of the coding process, each transcript was subsequently organized to exclude anything unwanted or not relevant to the study.

Finally, when coding was finished, I made a list of codes, which I scrutinised so that I could create categories: groups of similar codes. Once all categories had been formed, these were carefully considered before they were placed into a logical order. Several themes came out of analysis, which were organised into two chapters. The first chapter is about facing the challenge of achieving culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait and it has six themes, each one with a number of sub-themes. The second chapter is about achieving tourism development through a collaborative approach and it has five themes, also with several sub-themes as shown in the following table:

**Table 4.4 The Themes and Sub-Themes**

	<b>First Findings Chapter</b>	<b>Second Findings Chapter</b>
<b>Themes/Sub-Themes</b>	Economic benefit of the tourism Industry Job creation for local people Alternative Source of Income Facilitating national and foreign investment	1-Identifying suitable tourism types for Kuwait: Family tourism Business tourism Domestic tourism Cultural tourism
	Government attitudes regard the tourism development Legislations and laws - Legislation and alcohol consumption in Islamic destinations	Food tourism Desert tourism

	Safety and Border Control Bureaucracy Corruption Lack of maintenance	
	Need for tourism planning Tourism education and training	Positive socio-cultural impact: Cultural pride Preserving handicrafts The role of women in developing tourism
	Marketing Kuwait as a tourism destination Role of the National Air Carrier in Marketing Kuwait as a Tourist Destination Tourism and Media	Negative socio-cultural impact: Unacceptable dress code of tourists Loss of cultural identity Effect of migrant worker on cultural identity Alcohol consumption Increased prostitution
	Developing tourism through collaboration Collaboration between the Public and Private Sector Regional Collaboration	Community attitudes towards tourism development

Once coding and categorising were completed, interpretation could begin, as recommended by Holloway and Brown (2012). To underline the importance of interpretation, Riessman (1993, p.2) said, '*nature and the world do not tell stories, people do, and interpretation is inevitable because narratives are representations.*' I interpreted the data using my own knowledge of Kuwaiti society and with reference to existing academic and policy literature. Several sources were used, including the Quran, to illuminate the findings

#### **4.11. Validity**

As Jones et al. (2013, p.166) defined, 'validity is the equivalent of the common-sense term of truthfulness and soundness, no matter what type of inquiry researchers adopt.' In qualitative research, validity describes the effectiveness with which researchers accurately reflect how participants have expressed themselves. However, validity in qualitative research varies from that used in quantitative studies (Holloway and Brown 2012). Validity has two important components, internal and external validity (Jones et al. 2013). Internal validity shows that research is valid in context and truthful with regard to participants' views and realities. Credibility acts as one way that validity is achieved. To achieve credibility and confirm internal validity, using member checks, an audit trail and quotations and relevant literature are highly recommended (Bryman 2008; Jones et al. 2013). In qualitative research, generalizability (external validity) is not applicable; instead Jones et al. (2013, p.168) use the term transferability, which 'refers to the extent to which findings and conclusions can be transferred to similar settings and situations with similar participants.'

In order to ensure the validity of my study, I used member checks. I sent participants the transcript (Arabic version) of their interview so that they could read it through and confirm that it accurately reflected their views. Additionally, I used quotations from interviewees to support and give strength to my findings and increase their credibility. Additionally, some of the findings are transferable to some other Middle Eastern and Islamic destinations but there will be differences based on their context. Finally, I created an audit trail detailing my actions and decisions, and I used the relevant literature to discuss and compare my findings.

#### **4.12. Reflexivity**

Reflexivity encourages the researcher to reflect and to be self-critical, to be aware of possible bias and assumption (Jones et al. 2013). As Holloway and Brown (2012) define, reflexivity is '*a process of looking inwards and considering how our life and values influence our thoughts and research at each different stage.*' Moreover, reflexivity helps the researcher to explore his/her position throughout the research (Jones et al. 2013).

One outcome of the reflexive process in my case is that, being a Kuwaiti, subjectivity issues could arise in conducting the study, which thereby could lead

to bias; however, the role of reflexivity is to manage that and assist the researcher to control his/her bias and increase trustworthiness (Holloway and Brown 2012; Jones et al. 2013). Reflection on my position as a female Kuwaiti, I could see when conducting the interviews, I felt more relaxed with female interviewees and I was able to probe more and ask more follow up questions. For example, the interview with Najah was very positive and provided much information because of this ease. This productive situation may be because of our socio-cultural background, which allows interaction with women to flow better. In contrast, some of the male interviewees were reserved in their answers and it made it difficult to use probe questions to explore the limited information they provided me. I believe that this was due to the cultural context, as I am a Kuwaiti female and interaction with men is restricted due to cultural values. Exceptions were two male participants (Fawaz and Rashed), who were very excited about my research, which made me feel more relaxed: the interviews lasted longer because we lost a sense of time. Women are generally shy in Kuwaiti society but my experience of studying abroad and doing this research made me more confident.

I believe I gained acceptance from interviewees because I come from Kuwait and have many things in common with the participants, such as language and cultural background, as well as shared Kuwaiti identity. If a non-Kuwaiti were to conduct the research, there would be some variation in the outcomes of the study, as the researcher's characteristics and background influence the research, and their local knowledge may not be as deep as mine. This could also be an advantage because a non-Kuwaiti would notice and report unfamiliar things. Many small details are not significant to me because I am so close to the culture, and habits of daily life are ingrained. On the other hand, this helps me to understand certain issues raised by participants due to our shared cultural background, language and identity.

As I am a Muslim, there were limitations throughout the whole process of the research as interaction with male participants is restricted. Furthermore, although Islam encourages tourism, many people in Kuwait misunderstand Islamic principles regarding this matter. Consequently, they disagree with the idea of developing tourism and they do not see it as an important industry to be built up. However, I am passionate about tourism being developed although I accept that

the planning process for tourism within an Islamic destination should be closely linked to the morals and values and standards associated with Kuwaiti culture.

Finally, language caused me difficulty: I was worried about losing some of the meaning while translating the data from Arabic into English. Many words and phrases either do not translate well or lose meaning in another language. Moreover, I had to face some challenges with some participants when they spoke in the Kuwaiti dialect and I had to find synonyms in the Arabic language before translating into English. I was concerned that this process would have an impact on the data so I was very careful to minimise these effects by accuracy in the translation process.

#### **4.13. Ethics**

Any research into a social or organisational context must consider the ethics of dealing with participants, I therefore followed the guidelines issued by Bournemouth University's Research Ethics Committee and they gave ethical approval for this research. Ethics in research is associated with four major areas:

- Physical or mental pressure on participants,
- Obtaining informed consent,
- Violation of privacy,
- Preventing deception (Holloway and Brown 2012; Punch 2005).

Firstly, participants were not put in a physically harmful situation, as the interviews were carried out in their preferred comfortable place; the majority asked to be interviewed in their own office as they felt their work environment had good conditions and facilities. Psychologically, the participants did not have to endure any pressure with language use, as the interviews were conducted in their native language. All participants agreed to be interviewed when first asked and were not badgered in any way.

Secondly, informed consent was necessary and I made the nature of the research clear to participants (Holloway and Brown 2012). The interviewer should explain the purpose of the interview, taking care to ensure complete clarity. Finally, the terms of confidentiality must be addressed (Berg 2009). Participants were explicitly informed of the aims of the research project. In a letter requesting an appointment, participants were advised of what the

researcher would require of them, and the time they would likely spend. In this way, the participant was fully aware of the aims of this study and how the findings would be used. Additionally, they were informed that they could withdraw from the process at any time. Interviewees were informed by me of the identity of the sponsor for the research and they were all given a letter written directly by the sponsor (Public Authority of Applied Education and Training), which had a significant effect on their response and encouraged them to participate in this study. Moreover, the participants' contribution to the research was acknowledged and they were told that participation was voluntary. Participants were given the researcher's contact and university details, to allow them to get in touch regarding any aspect of their participation. Therefore, no deception took place in this research, as Jones et al. (2013) recommended any kind of deception would break ethical considerations.

Thirdly, assurances of anonymity and confidentiality of the participants are important. Berg (2009) pointed out that one of the main tasks of the researcher is to ensure that the rights, privacy, and welfare of the researched are safeguarded in accordance with research ethics. The confidentiality factor is far more significant than the anonymity factor. Even though the participants were happy to state their names, I preferred to assure participants that their anonymity would be safeguarded. No information identifying them or their organisation would be available to any other parties. No personally identifiable information would appear on any published material; moreover, strict confidentiality would apply, in that the information they volunteered would be used only for the purposes of the research outlined.

#### **4.14. Limitations**

*Gender bias in the interviews:* More information was gained from female interviewees than from male participants, with the exception of two male participants. In my opinion, this was because the researcher is female and, in the Kuwaiti socio-cultural context of a collectivistic society, more interaction is promoted between females. I had intended to increase the number of female participants but I could not because the majority of participants in a position of power were male. Having said that I could gain significant information from women simply because interaction with them is more comfortable in the context of Kuwaiti society and they could express themselves in a safe environment away from the judgment of men.

*The absence of collaboration in the current context made it difficult for the participants to discuss the prospects and challenges of a collaborative approach. This is a finding in itself but was frustrating for the researcher during the data collection stage. A similar point can be made about tourism development as there is a lack of trust in some types of tourism.*

*It was sometimes difficult to get access to participants due to time. It was either due to their busy schedules or that the interviewees were under great time constraints and several were not available for more than half an hour. Once a letter was produced from my sponsor however, the Public Authority of Applied Education and Training (PAAET), people were more willing to participate. Additionally, during the interview there were often interruptions, as the participants held responsible and senior positions. This had an impact on the data sometimes, as I lost the connection and had to ask the question repeatedly; unfortunately, this also meant the participant was unable to stay on track too. Therefore, it put me under a lot of pressure to keep the interview going. Some difficulties arose when *translating from Arabic into English*. This is because many words do not have the same meaning and I could not find an equivalent expression.*

Another crucial limitation of this research is *the dearth of updated secondary data in the context of Kuwait*. Some documents or publications were last updated in 2011. This made the statistics not very accurate in terms of usage. Restrictions on certain publications and red tape made research limited. I was further constrained by the difficulty of accessing government and private sector data.

#### **4.15. Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated how the aim and objectives of the research contributed to the selection of the research methodology. The research is best suited to the interpretivist paradigm, as the study attempts to investigate the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders, and to the qualitative approach. The chapter has also detailed the method used and the sampling techniques followed. Thematic analysis was detailed, as were issues of ethics and validity. Finally the limitations of the study were presented. The next two chapters present and interpret the research findings.



## **Chapter 5. Tourism Development in Kuwait: Opportunities and Barriers**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the opportunities for, as well as, the barriers to the potential development of tourism in Kuwait. As the chapter will show, the barriers far outweigh the opportunities. This is, most likely, because the development of tourism is not a priority for the current government. The perception is that tourism development is not particularly important for the economic prosperity of the country at the moment. This perspective tends to encourage the creation of more barriers and challenges, rather than offering opportunities for the industry to flourish. The barriers include the negative attitudes of the current government, which has led to the majority of the tourism attractions and resources not being sufficiently developed to meet the demands of international tourists. Moreover, the lack of planning for the development of tourism together with the absence of a marketing strategy as well as the lack of collaboration within the public sector and between the public and private sectors significantly imposes constraints. However, the tourism industry will provide potential economic opportunities and benefits, such as job creation for local citizens and alternative sources of income.

This chapter includes five themes, which are the economic benefits of the tourism industry, government attitudes regarding tourism development, the need for tourism planning, marketing Kuwait as a tourism destination and developing tourism through collaboration. Each of these themes has a number of sub-themes.

The reflection on the data showed that religious orientation could influence attitudes towards tourism development in Kuwait. As with the political systems discussed in Chapter Two, Kuwaitis could be categorised into three groups: liberal, conservative and neutral. These categorizations reflect the input of these political movements in the country and on people's views. Although this was not an issue when choosing the sample, through the process of analysis it was possible to identify some stakeholders with a particular orientation.

## 5.2. Economic Benefits of the Tourism Industry

The economic benefits of the tourism industry are addressed first in the whole benefits of the tourism industry, as Harrison (1988) argues that it is inevitable to view the economic growth of the tourism with the economic change in the structure of the societies. Similarly, the majority of the interviewees had agreed with that, as the tourism industry could be a notable addition to the economy of Kuwait in the future when the Kuwaiti government had fully activated the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan. Morakabati et al. (2014) claim that the tourism industry can be promising for Qatar as well as other GCC countries as a potential alternative economic option. Moreover, some of the interviewees argue that the tourism sector can help the economy to develop, both directly and indirectly. The above can be understood from the following statements:

*'Likened to a train, tourism is the first carriage that pulls more than one sector behind it. According to the International Tourism Organization, about 75 sectors in the country will develop alongside tourism. Of these, 35 are affected directly. Those indirectly affected are the railway, communication and goods sectors.'* (Najah)

*'The main benefactor, from a developing tourism sector, will be the economy. We need to pursue the vision of how to benefit from the advantages of the tourism industry, as there are many economic benefits, such as increased revenue and job creation.'* (Mobarak)

*'I believe that the economy will benefit mostly from tourism, which can be divided into two parts. Firstly, internal tourist expenditure and secondly, economic recovery by attracting investment and providing jobs...'* (Ali)

The majority of the participants believe that the economy will benefit from the development of the tourism sector and that Kuwaitis need to take full advantage of these benefits. Sharpley (2000) argues that one of the economic benefits of developing tourism in a destination is the benefit that host communities will have. Similarly, Payne and Mervar (2010) claim that the tourism industry has been one of the most effective and growing economic sectors around the globe. In the case of Kuwait, the development of the tourism industry represents a potential opportunity for the country as at the moment it depends on the only source of income, oil, which is non-renewable. Also, the Kuwaiti authorities have a good

economic basis to offer finance and to work on raising awareness among locals of the importance of involving tourism in the economic diversification process (Al-Otaibi 2004; Alrashid 2012). The oil sector contributes more than one third of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), more than 90% of exports and over 95% of currency stability (Euromonitor International 2014). Moreover, recent trends indicate that there has been a gradual reduction in Western countries in the dependence on Middle Eastern oil (Al-Tamimi 2013). Therefore, there is a need to reduce dependency on the oil industry, and tourism is one potential industry that can accomplish this goal. However, there are some attempts to raise the awareness in different departments of the Kuwaiti government in order to look forward to the potential offered by the tourism sector to diversify the economy (MeetMe 2013). One of these attempts was the creation of the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan in 2005 (ASIA 2015; MeetMe 2013), which has not yet been implemented.

Economic diversification has recently become even more pressing, when Kuwait takes into consideration fluctuating oil prices, the emergence of new oil exporting countries, and the progress made by neighbouring countries, such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (especially Dubai), in developing the tourism sector (Morakabati et al. 2014; Stephenson 2013). It is becoming increasingly important to develop a more stable form of income, which is not likely to have such fluctuations. Some experts see the tourism industry functioning as a stimulant for economic development (Lansing and De Vries 2007; Morakabati 2012; Schubert et al. 2011). Meanwhile, others see its impact on a country being measured in terms of its effect on gross domestic product (GDP), the level of employment and foreign exchange (Nowak et al. 2007).

To date, none of the GCC countries, except Dubai specifically, which is a part of the UAE, has implemented the tourism industry to its full potential. Therefore Dubai will be taken as an example in different sections of the findings chapter, as it is the region's leader in developing tourism, as well as sharing many common features with Kuwait, such as religion, language and cultural background. However, it is acknowledged that the style of tourism adopted by Dubai is not that aspired to by Kuwait. Additionally, Sharpley (2008) argues that the Dubai model is not sustainable, as they have developed a mass tourism model. Thus when Kuwait develops its tourism industry there is a need to follow sustainable principles of economic development in order to become a model nation in the

Middle East, as well as in the world (Al-Watan 2013a). This might well be achieved through the development of culturally sustainable tourism, making Kuwait a model for other Islamic destinations to follow.

### **5.2.1. Job Creation for Local People**

The job creation for the local people was the most important theme from the participants' point of view, as they highlighted that there are many Kuwaiti nationals who are unemployed. Similarly, Al-Wugayan and Ashimmiri (2010) argue that approximately 22.6 % of Kuwait's total population is unemployed. It is interesting to note that Abdalla and Al-Homoud (2012) claim that those unemployed prefer to wait up to a year in order to secure a job in the public sector; the benefits that they get from working in governmental posts are much better than if they worked in the private sector. Kuwaitis who work for the private sector (10% of the total workforce) criticize the sector for the lack of incentives such as high pay, reasonable working hours and long-term security normally offered by the government.

Participants see the tourism industry as a long-term resource for creating jobs for unemployed locals, as shown below:

*'We have a large number of unemployed Kuwaitis. If the tourism industry is developed and introduced as a new future career, I think it would attract a lot of job seekers, as well as helping solve the challenge of unemployment.'* (Shaleh)

*'In the tourism master plan strategy they predict that developing tourism could provide 30,000 job opportunities during the next fifteen years. Meaning it will decrease current unemployment among Kuwaiti locals, as long as locals are prepared to take up jobs in this sector.'* (Kamal)

*'Well, tourism is actually a kind of service, which is going to employ a lot of people in the future. In addition, being labour intensive, its ability to attract local labour is going to increase. So actually the public sector, as well as the private sector, will benefit from the service industry, which will, in turn, benefit employment opportunities or labour sector.'* (Samer)

These remarks indicate an awareness of how the tourism industry can lead to the creation of jobs for local nationals, both in the private and public sector. For example, travel agents, aviation service companies and transportation companies are a few of the potential job opportunities available for nationals.

However, Walmsley (2004) suggests that tourism jobs in Kuwait are seen as being low paid and low skilled. This mirrors Harrison (1988) and Sharpley's (2000) views about the majority of tourism jobs. Moreover, Wall and Mathieson (2006) claim that employment for professional occupations for locals is sometimes limited and in some cases they prefer expertise. Therefore, in the context of developing tourism this may be a topic for public debate in Kuwait, since the participants believe it is still too early for Kuwaiti nationals to engage in this sector, because most think that taking jobs in the tourism sector is unsuitable from a socio-cultural perspective, given the associated low pay and low status, as the following statements show:

*'Kuwaiti nationals do not like to take vocational jobs, such as hotel receptionists, tourism company sales and other similar positions currently dominated by non-Kuwaiti nationals. This is because they do not regard these jobs as of sufficiently high status. This way of thinking should be changed maybe by providing better knowledge about the importance of these jobs.'* (Najah)

*'Many locals believe that working in tourism is unsuitable due to its low status image, thus more needs to be done to change this attitude through raising awareness of the benefit and importance of this industry.'* (Shaleh)

As can be seen from the above comments, participants feel that more effort is required to change local attitudes with regard to work in the tourism sector. Even though it is widely acknowledged that tourism is an effective tool for generating employment, among other things (Lansing and De Vries 2007; Lacher and Oh 2012; Oh 2005), the question of employment within the tourism sector, for nationals in Kuwait, remains controversial. Furthermore, factors like the nature of available jobs, levels of education, and required skills make Kuwait's labour force structure less than ideal (Tosun 2001; Lacher and Oh 2012). Kuwait's public sector is faced with its greatest challenge of restructuring the economy to make it more dependent on private sector initiatives and simultaneously increasing the volume of employment for local citizens (Abdalla and Al-Homoud 2012; Eltony, 2007). This is underlined by Eltony (2007) who recommended that the Kuwaiti economy should be restructured to make it more reliant on private sector initiatives while, at the same time, increasing the local Kuwaiti labour force in the form of direct and indirect jobs.

Interviewees mentioned that Kuwaitis are rarely found in jobs within the tourism sector, which are perceived to be low in status, as the following comments highlighted:

*'In Kuwaiti hotels, there are a limited number of local employees and if there are any, they work in the public relations department; none of them works on the reception front desk because these are careers regarded as socially inferior.'* (Essa)

*'Kuwaitis are financially at ease so they don't need low-paid tourism jobs. Therefore, the tourism sector has to take into consideration the attitude of Kuwaiti society when they embark on tourism ...'* (Samer)

The above comments indicate that Kuwaitis are not yet attracted to work in the tourism sector, because they also lack the financial need: as Casey (2007) notes, Kuwait is known to the world as a wealthy oil-based nation with the strongest currency in the world. However, some interviewees felt that this perception has to change since becoming a model nation in the Middle East should be on the basis of developing the tourism industry whilst, at the same time, stressing the importance of safeguarding the Kuwaiti national identity. Additionally, tourists visiting Kuwait will most likely be interested to meet local people who enhance the identity of the country, as well as the destination image. If more Kuwaitis took up positions in the tourism industry, this would have the benefit of enhancing their country's identity. Janta et al. (2011) support this idea, arguing that too many migrants in the tourism and hospitality industry may affect the image of the destination. It is therefore important for the industry to employ more native Kuwaitis as this would also support the policy of Kuwaitization, whereby local workers replace expatriates who are currently widely employed within the tourism sector (Randeree 2012). This in turn would enhance the national identity of the country and distinguish it as a tourist destination in the region.

Currently, many GCC countries are trying to implement this policy. For example, although Saudi Arabia has employed immigrants and expatriates for the last three decades in tourism and hospitality, they are currently trying to encourage Saudization by employing national staff following training from expatriates (Sadi and Henderson 2005). It can be argued that a low desire for employment in the tourism sector on the part of local people might jeopardise a successful tourism

development plan. Alanjari (2015) claims that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan will provide jobs for Kuwaitis when fully activated. She also acknowledges that this promising sector can generate up to 30,000 jobs in the next fifteen years. This will go in line with sustainable tourism principles as it will secure a long-term vision in terms of income generated for the host community. However, this is more likely to be successful for Kuwaiti nationals if attitudes towards this sector change so that jobs in the tourism industry are sought after. This issue is therefore of significance, as the reluctance of Kuwaitis to work in this industry may lead to more immigration from those countries where the citizens are happy to be employed in this field.

### **5.2.2. Alternative Source of Income**

The following excerpts reflect all participants' view that tourism is an alternative income source to oil, as shown below:

*'Kuwait is a first-grade oil-based country, as the oil was discovered in the late thirties of the last century and since then it has been the only source of income. Therefore, there is a need to give attention towards developing alternative income resources and this is where international tourism can be seen as having the potential to ensure a national income for future generations'* (Kamal)

*'Although Kuwait is an oil-based country, this will not serve us forever. Therefore, I think there should be an alternative resource to enhance national income and, in my opinion, developing tourism will be a good choice.'* (Nawal)

*'I think tourism could be one of the alternative choices for diversification of the national economy. Moreover, tourism will generate substantial income, even though not in the early stages of the industry. It will be for the next generation; thus, we need to put the basics in place and continue with the foundation work.'* (Rashed)

Participants understand that the oil industry is not a sustainable industry, as it depends on non-renewable resources. This awareness is accompanied by an increasing motivation to develop a national tourism industry in Kuwait in the future. This may serve as a vital long-term economic strategy for balancing the economy against declining oil reserves (Morakabati 2012). It is widely acknowledged that tourism is an effective tool for generating income through economic diversification, increasing economic activity, greater foreign investment,

tax revenues and employment (Lansing and De Vries 2007; Mansfeld and Winckler 2004; Morakabati 2012; Oh 2005). As oil resources are non-renewable, economic diversification is recommended, as stated by Henderson (2006) and Sharpley (2008). It is recognised by some of the participants that the foundations of this sector will take time to be laid and that the full effects and benefits may not be seen until the next generation. Therefore, it is essential to focus on basic planning for economic diversification, as recommended by Morakabati et al. (2014). Additionally, the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan claims to serve two purposes: firstly to generate more income for the country through a developed tourism industry, but secondly it recognizes that this industry will benefit other sectors, such as hospitality, services, transport and real estate. In this way an alternative source of income will be created.

### **5.2.3. Facilitating National and Foreign Investment**

Encouragement of local and international investors to participate in the private sector is a vital feature when developing the tourism industry (Al-Watan 2013a). This also increases opportunities for the development of the tourism industry in Kuwait. Interviewees believed that Kuwait should learn from the examples set by other countries in the region where the process of investment in the tourism industry is made easier. They would like to see increased attraction by investors, local or foreign, to benefit the tourism industry, as seen below:

*'Among many of the economic factors that will benefit the economic development process of the country overall, it is hoped that tourism development will attract foreign as well as local investors to Kuwait because, at present, the investment environment is uninviting.'* (Nawal)

*'Many people go to Dubai and invest there instead of investing in Kuwait, because there are more practical licensing procedures in Dubai and any project will be completed without investors losing their money. This is not the case in Kuwait.'* (Mona)

Participants commented on the limited and unclear investment vision of the government in recent years. Some of them strongly believe that the Kuwaiti investment environment repels local investors. This is because of the large amount of bureaucracy, an issue which will be discussed later. Moreover, the participants see this as a major reason why Kuwaiti investors have been looking to invest outside the country, especially in Dubai, which is a state that attracts



investors through simplified processes for creating business projects. A feeling of frustration was noted from all interviewees over this negative indicator for developing the tourism industry in Kuwait. In fact, Kuwait's private sector has been hoping for governmental encouragement for a long time (Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri 2010). As Eltony (2007) points out, for many decades, the state's heavy reliance on oil has slowed down one of its key economic development strategies of expanding the role of the private sector. As Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri (2010) notes, Kuwait's economic development has been lagging behind many countries in actual foreign direct investment (FDI) performance for the last few decades. According to Qin et al. (2011), governments play a major role in determining the framework for management and investment. However, in Kuwait the participants stress that the government avoids addressing the importance of investment in the country. It has become apparent that this is the first barrier to overcome in order to stimulate development. Investors are put off, as one of the participants stated: '*capital is cowardly.*' (Talal). This refers to the fact that investors need a guarantee that their money will not be lost or devalued over time.

Interviewees believe that, initially, the tourism industry cannot survive without strong governmental support, but that in the long term, it will become an independent private sector-led institution. In addition, it is anticipated that all tourism assets owned by the public sector will need to be privatised, as highlighted by the following comments:

*'The government needs to encourage and support the private sector to invest in the tourism sector by simplifying the steps and procedures for executing any project and making profit out of it. I think the tourism industry should be privatised in the long run.'* (Husain)

*'If the tourism sector is privatised, it will enrich tourism in the country, especially as this sector has a large number of enthusiastic young people with advanced ideas on the development of tourism'* (Sara)

The above indicates the importance of encouraging people to work and invest more in the private sector rather than in the public sector. Alanjiri 2014 The 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan emphasized this point and indicated that encouraging the privatisation of enterprises and divesting itself of public sector enterprises, encouraging foreign investment and removing

distortions within the economy would all serve to increase competition and productivity (ASIA 2015). However, attracting foreign and local investment will not be an easy task for the public sector, without a well-constructed initial plan that will carefully open the necessary doors to facilitate development of the tourism industry (Qin et al. 2011). For example, Dubai's view of tourism was to transform the city into a business and leisure spot by attracting international investors. Furthermore, tourism is supported by investments in the real estate sector, telecommunications, media and financial trading (Al-Hamareneh 2004; Henderson 2006b; Stephenson et al. 2010). In addition, irrespective of whether the investment source in this sector is from national or foreign investors, it will need considerable support from the government, as was stressed repeatedly by participants, which currently is lacking. Additionally, as was discussed in Section 2.5.2 (Foreign Direct Investments in Kuwait), Al-Wugayan and Alshimmiri (2010) claim that the system is so highly regulated at the moment that it is not appealing to foreign investors. It is clear that there is much work to be done by the government to make the shift from public services to private companies. In the next section it will be seen that there are additional challenges and issues to be faced in relation to tourism development.

### **5.3. Government Attitudes Regarding Tourism Development**

The political stance of the government in any country can play a vitally important role in determining the nature of tourism development (Hall 1994). However, the unsuitability of the political system in Kuwait has had an effect on government policies and the development progress in general, as well as having had an influence on the development of the tourism sector. This has made the majority of participants heavily criticise the poor performance of the government development as a whole, and particularly in developing the tourism industry in Kuwait. It should be understood that only two of the participants were involved in the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan for developing tourism, and the remaining thirty had no knowledge of the existence of the plan. The government's attitude of putting tourism among the least prioritized sectors raises barriers, as shown below:

*'I think there are many higher priorities at the moment for the government than developing tourism. You will not find any member of parliament adopting this issue because there are other priorities, such as education and health.'* (Danah)

*'We have heard about a lot of projects that are going to be started but, in reality, nothing happened. The government only announced they will start a number of projects but then struggled with their implementation.'* (Fawaz)

*'Unfortunately, the public sector is facing many challenges and does not have the vision to develop the tourism industry as an option for diversifying their economy in the near future. Moreover, it seems the government has many other priorities instead of tourism for the time being.'* (Ahmad)

The above comments reflect the fact that development of the tourism industry is not a current issue of concern for the government. This may be because the government has basic priorities to help the local population, such as education, health and housing, which still have to be achieved. The Kuwaiti constitution confers the right of every Kuwaiti to satisfy these basic needs (Al-Shehab 1992). Participants felt that the development of the tourism sector could become a priority issue only after those basic areas have seen satisfactory progress. Government involvement in tourism is important in order to provide a macro-environment suitable for tourism. Consequently, most governments have their own tourism agencies or separate ministries (Qin et al. 2011).

However, the participants noticed that the other GCC countries governments support the development of the tourism industry as an important source of income, as reflected in the following statement by Rashed:

*'In Dubai, the government strongly supports the development of the tourism industry and has achieved its target of marketing the destination at a global level and making it known worldwide.'*

Henderson (2006) observes that Dubai adopted international tourism as a tool for economic development and successfully made the country an internationally popular tourist destination. Another interesting example was given by Morakabati et al. (2014), who explained that Qatar aims at diversifying its economy through tourism development and to, gradually, become less dependent on oil. One of the major difficulties in Kuwait seems to be that there is hardly any priority given to the tourism industry within the government strategy (Alqabas 2010). As Alanjiri

(2014) argues, the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan for developing tourism was created in 2005, but has not been implemented. She points out that the level of support from the tourism sector for the government in Kuwait is disappointing in comparison with the support of other GCC governments from their tourism sectors, as the Kuwaiti government does not engage with its sector to the same degree.

The inertia shown by the government, with regard to activating a plan for diversifying the economy through tourism development, indicates a long-standing poor performance (Alwatandaily 2010). One participant feels that the government views tourism as part of the entertainment area and attaches to the tourism sector the least priority. Indeed, the Kuwaiti government has not yet treated the tourism industry as a priority for public sector development, unlike education, health and/or housing (Alkuwaitiyah 2013). It has become apparent that the government needs a radical change in attitude to favour tourism. The country lacks visions for tourism and is lagging behind international standards for the development of the industry (Alkuwaitiyah 2013; Alqabas 2010). Meanwhile the governments in the other GCC countries, such as Qatar, are trying to establish as a priority the development of the tourism industry to an international level (Morakabati et al. 2014).

### **5.3.1. Legislation and Laws**

The introduction of legislative procedures would facilitate the development of the tourism sector, but there is government disinterest in this. Many participants strongly believe that the government will need to bring in legislation to ease visa regulations and investment procedures, which would make it easier for tourism projects to be implemented, as shown below:

*'I suspect that the things which hinder tourism development the most in Kuwait are legislative procedures that prevent the implementation of projects. The biggest obstacles are government institutions and the lack of a clear legal system for development.'* (Mona)

*'I think the problem lies with the passing of legislation and laws, and with applying them. You can see that Kuwait has many laws but the public sector does not have a clear vision for dealing with them and how to apply them in practice.'* (Fahad)

Participants point to an urgent need for legislation that provides direction for the development of Kuwait's tourism industry in the future. This is because any new sector has to have legislative support to guide development activity. One participant noted that although Kuwait has plenty of laws, the government lacks a clear idea on how to implement them. Legislation should help with the development of tourism, by dealing with the creation of new rules, as well as changing existing regulations (Hall and Lew 2009; Li 2011; Reid et al. 2012). Alanjiri (2015) claims that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan can be implemented when it is seen as a worthwhile goal, therefore the government needs to issue laws through Parliament to facilitate development. However, in Kuwait this can be a lengthy process because before a law can be passed it has to be approved first by the government and then by parliament. At this stage it then goes back to the government again to be officially issued. Currently the bill relating to the tourism industry has not yet been passed on to Parliament, although it was first presented to the government in 2005 and is still under consideration. As Tosun (2001) declared, based on a study in Turkey, legislation has a major effect on tourism development. He also showed that when a strong bureaucracy controls legislative procedures and is ineffective in communication, it can lead to a lack of collaborative planning strategies. The issues of bureaucracy and collaboration will be discussed in later sections.

#### **5.3.1.1. Legislation and alcohol consumption in Islamic destinations**

As previously mentioned, the socio-cultural context of Kuwait and its religion have a great influence on the daily life of locals. As the second article of the Kuwaiti constitution states: *'the Islamic Sharia shall be the main source of legislation.'* Participants highlighted the link between religion and cultural background and formulating laws and legislation. Existing Kuwaiti laws limit entertainment provision and ban the consumption of alcohol as there are many sayings in the Quran that prohibit drinking alcohol, such as that in Surah Al-Ma'idah (The Table, verses 90, 91): *'O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, idolatry, and divination are abominations of Satan's doing. Avoid them, so that you may prosper. Satan wants to provoke strife and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and to prevent you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer. Will you not desist?'* Moreover, in Surah Baqarah (verses 219): *'They ask you regarding wine and gambling. Say, in both of them is major sin, and there is some benefit for men, but the sin of them is far greater than benefit'.*

This may have an effect on the views on the prohibition of alcohol in Kuwait. Many Kuwaitis from conservative roots are more tied to Sharia and Islamic principles: they believe that all laws should only come from the Qur'an and Sunnah. There are others who are more open minded and more liberal in their thinking who may believe in a more secular approach common to European countries. This would involve a separation between the religion and the country's laws. Thus some participants believe that tourism will be more successful with the provision of entertainment facilities that provide for the consumption of alcohol. Some feel that each destination in Kuwait should have the choice of its own legislation and laws to address any specific issue related to how the destination is managed. For example, in Kuwait there are six governorates. If each one is permitted by the federal government to form its own regulations and laws specifying that in their tourist areas drinking alcohol would be permitted, this may confer on destinations following that route more freedom and potential for financial success. Other participants feel that the consumption of alcohol should be avoided, as seen in the following statements:

*'Tourism will be successful if tourists can drink alcohol, but really each destination needs to establish its own rules. Moreover, the Kuwaiti law does not allow drinking alcohol and also at the moment it is not acceptable in Kuwait society. So this needs to be thought through'* (Shaleh)

*'Kuwait is an Islamic country in which there are laws prohibiting alcohol consumption. Tourists should respect the socio-cultural context of the country and abide by the country's legislation.'*(Bodor)

Some interviewees suggested that destinations must make their own decisions regarding drinking alcohol and entertainment facilities. The issue of entertainment facilities and drinking alcohol in Muslim tourism destinations by non-Muslim tourists has been a source of controversy (Zamani-Farhani and Henderson 2010). Muslim destinations interested in developing the tourism industry have used a variety of approaches in dealing with this subject. For example, in Brunei, the consumption of alcohol is banned in public areas, but it is allowed for non-Muslim tourists in international hotels (Ahmat et al. 2012). Another example of relaxed legislation regarding the provision of alcohol for non-Muslim visitors in hotels is Qatar, which is one of the GCC countries (QAT 2013). On the other hand, the UAE has two states, Dubai and Al-Sharjah, which deal very differently

with alcohol consumption. Dubai is more liberal and provides alcohol for international tourists. In contrast, Al-Sharjah has alcohol-free accommodation rules (Al-Hamareneh 2004). Meanwhile, in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iran, it is absolutely forbidden to sell or drink alcohol in public or in hotels (Ahmat et al. 2012; Zamani-Farhani and Henderson 2010). This is not to say that in Kuwait there is not a secret consumption of alcohol, but it is consumed behind closed doors.

Currently, Muslim values are strongly entrenched in the socio-cultural make-up of Kuwait. The participants emphasised the importance of maintaining these values, even though international non-Muslim tourists may visit the country. It is therefore likely that the dry hotel style might represent a direction for tourism development in Kuwait. As Ahmat et al. (2012) stated, the dry hotel approach is not new in the Middle Eastern region. However, Kuwait is not at present promoting Islamic tourism only; one might therefore question whether restrictions should be imposed on non-Muslim tourists? It is also important to recognise that not all tourists from non-Islamic countries are consumers of alcohol. Furthermore, others (such as cultural tourists) who may drink alcohol at home are often fully prepared to respect the laws and practices of the countries they visit on holiday and so would be prepared to refrain from drinking alcohol when visiting an Islamic country.

It should be noted that many Kuwaitis enjoy visiting western countries and some even indulge in activities prohibited in Kuwait, for example drinking alcohol and gambling. It is not the case that all Kuwaitis are against such things and there may be a case to be made to incorporate some flexibility for tourists and Kuwaitis alike. One possible way of achieving this could be to use an island, such as Failaka Island, as a place where visitors can do things that are not otherwise allowed outside this island (Alqabas 2010). It has been noted that island tourism is one of the most successful types of tourism in many different destinations such as Malaysia and Turkey (Erfanian and Tahir 2012; Hall 2001). Moreover, there are some Islamic destinations such as the Maldives and Indonesia, especially Bali Island, that have been able to deal with the inherent conflict between residents and non-Muslims tourists by providing islands only for the international tourists, which offer tourist activities that are prohibited by Islamic laws (Diarta 2004; Zamani-Farhani and Henderson 2010). Offering an exclusive isolated island for international tourists for the purpose of tourism development may help

strike a balance between the satisfaction of locals and economic rewards of developing the tourism industry.

Alanjiri (2014) and Paris and Rubin (2012) claim that there is a vision in the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan for Failaka Island to be one of the mega tourism development projects at a cost of 3.3 billion US dollars, but as already observed, this has not been activated yet. Related to the theme of this section, one of the reasons for the reticence to develop tourism could be related to the so far unresolved debate over alcohol consumption in an Islamic destination. It has been acknowledged that alcohol is consumed by Kuwaitis (there are no statistics available), both at home, and particularly abroad, but there is a clear reluctance to introduce legislation that openly permits its consumption. The degree to which flexibility is shown over its possible introduction is probably influenced by the degree of religious conservatism in individuals: though some people may consume alcohol themselves they may not want it to be drunk publicly in Kuwaiti society. One may question the desire to sustain aspects of a culture that some/many individuals flout themselves. There is clearly ambivalence in attitudes towards alcohol that is not easily resolved. Other destinations have found ways to please the Western tourist, but this does not mean that their strategy is embraced by the population.

### **5.3.2. Security and Border Control**

Security and border controls pose another obstacle facing the development of the tourism industry. The State of Kuwait is still suffering the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of 1990. There is still a general mistrust between the people of both countries and, about six hundred people are still missing because of the war. At present, security concerns make it hard for many international travelers to obtain a tourist visas for Kuwait, because there is still nervousness about border issues arising from war-time experiences. Furthermore, participants fear that many international travelers believe the area is not yet safe enough for travel, as shown in the following comments:



*'Security concerns are an obstacle to the development of the tourism industry in Kuwait today. These concerns have made the authorities adopt a strict policy when issuing entry visas to Kuwait...So this tight policy needs to be relaxed by issuing visas to visitors as soon as they arrive in the country.'* (Salam)

*'Unfortunately, security concerns remain very high since the Iraqi invasion. The airline company I work for has no authority to issue immediate entry visas for a number of countries. We can only issue visas in advance. It would be much easier and practical to issue visiting visas like our neighboring countries, on arrival at the airport.'*(Saad)

These comments show that security and border controls have not helped the development of the tourism industry. Getting a visa is unnecessarily complicated and may deter visitors who would otherwise like to visit the country. Therefore, the participants believe that the government should relax its visa policies and start pursuing tourism-friendly strategies similar to neighboring countries. Moreover, Alanjiri (2014) argues that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, suggested at the initial stage of promoting Kuwait as a tourist destination, should aim to instigate demand from GCC countries as there are no visa regulations required for their nationals. Furthermore, there are a lot of common features - such as religion and customs - that may lead to local people being more welcoming. Additionally, in order to make it easier for tourists to enter Kuwait the government has relaxed visa regulations for 34 countries so that they are issued with their visa on arrival at the airport. This is one positive step that the government has taken to encourage more people to enter the country, even though the main motivation for this may be for business reasons. However, the indirect effect of this is that travelers will make use of tourist facilities and the more such visitors that come to Kuwait, the more facilities will be needed, and this in turn may help to stimulate the growth of the tourism industry. Having a less strict visa system would be positive for the industry, but from the perspective of the Kuwaiti government this does not take into account security issues, which is understandably an important responsibility of the government.

Growing awareness of the importance of travel and tourism for their economies has led many governments in the Gulf area to pursue tourism-friendly strategies, such as better regulation of border facilities and relaxation of visa requirements. The United Arab Emirates is ranked 14th in the world for providing excellent

tourism safety and particularly for having a reliable police force for protection against crime. This makes tourists more interested and more likely to visit destinations like Kuwait, if their security and safety are assured (Stephenson 2013). This position is supported by Morakabati et al. (2014) who state in their research on Qatar that tourists from the UK are looking for safety when they choose their holiday destination and they also prefer visiting Qatar, which is perceived to be less risky in the region.

Tourism development has experienced many challenges over the years, especially relating to security issues. Two Gulf Wars, 9/11 and the Arab Spring are a few examples where security was a serious issue (Stephenson 2013). In spite of these negative events, the flow of tourists to this region, particularly Dubai, is still high. The Turkish government noticed an increase in the number of tourists from particular countries and therefore entered agreements with them to facilitate the visa requirements for visiting Turkey (Balli et al. 2013). In a similar case, recently, the Kuwaiti government approved 34 nationalities, such as British, Spanish and US citizens, being granted visas at the airport (KGO 2014). Additionally, Kuwait is regarded as an extremely safe country, with only minor concerns over the risk of terrorism (Al-Hamareneh, 2004a).

### **5.3.3. Bureaucracy and corruption**

The bureaucracy factor is seen as another indication of a negative government attitude, as well as being one of the major barriers to tourism development by interviewees. As a result of bureaucracy, many leading development projects have been ignored, as stated below:

*‘Truly, the bureaucracy in the public sector is very bad and off-putting, as it is impossible to finish your paperwork within a couple of days. They make you come back the week after and so on until you become thoroughly frustrated. And so, without any support, you may even decide not to go ahead with your project at all.’* (Fatema)

*‘The government offices are very complex and not centralised. This makes it hard and frustrating for applicants. For example, if any person wants to start a small project, he/she faces a very long journey through different government offices.’* (Kholod)

The above comments highlight a high level of dissatisfaction with government bureaucracy in the public sector. Interviewees believe bureaucracy will have an adverse effect on the development of the tourism industry. This is clearly reflected in the delay in discussing and approving the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan by the Kuwaiti government (Alanjiri 2014; ASIA 2015; Al-Shamari 2011). This does not mean that the plan has been rejected, it is merely on hold until any of the decision holders takes it further to implement it.

Even in areas as simple as property registration, it is embarrassing how Kuwait is lagging behind other countries in the region. Eltony (2007) observes that it took 75 days to register a property in Kuwait in 2004, compared to only 4 and 9 days in Saudi Arabia and the UAE respectively. In the area of business registration, Kuwait gives reasons for hope because it takes 19 days less to start a business in Kuwait than in Saudi Arabia and the UAE respectively (Alanba 2013). Bureaucratic procedures include complicated form and applications filling in many different offices, all of which takes a very long time to complete. The result is a costly and lengthy process that may be very demotivating for people, who are often deterred from setting up their businesses. Electronic registrations have been widely introduced since 2011 in the U.A.E to speed up development, as highlighted by participants. Dubai has now implemented fully electronically operated paperless governmental services (Alqabas, 2010).

Corruption and a lack of transparency in government institutions are further additional negative features of the public sector. Interviewees described their experiences in relation to projects associated with tourism development. Unfortunately, corruption is present extensively in many departments of the Kuwaiti government and bound to lead to limited growth as well as increasing the gap between the government and the locals as shown in the following statement:

*'...there is corruption and bribery in some ministries in conducting transactions for individuals and documents will be ignored sometimes if they are not part of the corrupt system. This became a phenomena and many people get boredom from the amount of corruption in the different department of the public sector. This is also affecting the people daily life as they sometime have to pay bribery to finish the work they need it to be done.'* (Mona)

Corruption is a subject of great debate in Kuwait and evidence of corrupt actions forced the previous Prime Minister to resign as he was suspected of having given

bribes to some MPs in return for support of his agenda (BBC 2014). The corruption that he was involved in hindered national economic development and impacted negatively on developing a fully democratic system of government.

Participants talked about the need for strictly controlling corruption in the government, as this may promote the development process, which can be achieved by getting rid of negative attitudes from a small minority of officials, as the following comments highlighted:

*'There is a need to have an understanding of the effect of the tribal connection, which has a great effect on the spreading of corruption. We need to control corruption by stopping favouritism which hinders all development projects and tourism especially.'* (Bader)

The participants indicate that corruption in the public sector delays the development process in the country. They cite two ways to control corruption: reintroducing laws that ban favouritism and promoting employment schemes based on qualifications rather than connections. Das and DiRienzo (2010) explain how corruption affects countries in different ways, harms their ability to create stable businesses and economic environments in which tourism can prosper. In addition, power associated with high official posts, can be abused for personal gain by misallocating resources. Moreover, with corruption playing a major role in influencing a nation's business and economic environment, it is logical to conclude that a country's tourism competitiveness is bound to be influenced by its level of corruption (Das and DiRienzo's 2010). For example, the Body of Citizen Service and Governmental Entities Performance Evaluation, noticed in their study of corruption in Kuwait that corruption indicators are very high. For example, when the current Emir of Kuwait was prime minister in 2003, he said: 'the amount of corruption in the municipality could not be carried by camels' (Alqabas 2010; Alraimedia 2013). The emir made special cultural reference to camels, being locally the symbol of strength and endurance, hence emphasising the corruption which is practised on a large scale within the public sector. The Kuwait Transparency Society was established in 2006 because it was felt to be paramount to eliminate corruption in Kuwait (Alraimedia 2013).

Participants use the term '*Wasta*' to refer to corruption, which refers to a practice widely regarded as being corrupt, as shown below:

*'Some people use their position and connections in order to bypass the laws; this is commonly known as "Wasta" and this has mainly led to increased corruption in the country.'* (Fahad)

*'The level of corruption in the public sector is unbelievable; this is because many existing laws are no longer applicable. Meanwhile, many people misuse their connections to government officials, as a cover against the law in what is known as 'Wasta'.'* (Suaad)

*Wasta* has its origin in traditional Arab culture, where the person of authority, the sheikh, would sit in a petition hearing council with his subjects. Today, however, *Wasta* refers to someone who receives a price for his services. An intermediary, who has the ear of an authoritative person, is often used to get a good job, admission to a university or a business opportunity (Hooker 2008). *Wasta* has drifted far away from its original Bedouin role, a mediation and peacekeeping practice between families or tribes (BBC 2013). *Wasta* becomes corrupting, when intermediaries obtain favours that would not be extended by a responsible decision maker, or when favouritism is shown to an extended family, institution, or responsible leader (Hooker 2008).

Corruption can be a major obstacle to a country's economic and social development. It has the effect of weakening a nation's institutional foundations, distorting the rule of law and creating mistrust amongst its citizens (Das and DiRienzo 2010). Hooker (2008) looked at corruption from a cross-cultural perspective, contrasting the Middle East and North America. He looked at how different activities corrupt in different ways, in different parts of the world. For example, nepotism, cronyism or bribery, which is regarded as corruption in the West, may be functional forms of conduct in relationship-based cultures.

Hooker's (2008) observation is very useful in understanding the functional differences between corruption in Arab countries and the West. This is very difficult to understand in terms of the cultural and legal practices within the Arab world. For example, what may be deemed corrupt in other parts of the world may be acceptable, to a certain extent, in relationship-based cultures in the Middle East. However, such practices could be said to be impeding the development of tourism in Kuwait. An interesting point may be observed here: the interest of this study is in exploring the potential for developing culturally sustainable tourism. However, as this section suggests, not all aspects of Kuwaiti culture are worthy of

preservation. Of course, what is deemed worthy of preservation is subjectively judged, and influenced by a host of factors. One can see Kuwait as a traditional society and there are many aspects which are worth keeping because they are good for society, for example the strong bond within the family. However, *Wasta* can be regarded as a negative and destructive tradition because it leads to an unjust society which only favours certain individuals and prevents many from having access to opportunities in important areas of life. Therefore, by eliminating *Wasta* from Kuwaiti society this would enable the right people to be put in the right places in government departments so that the general process of development begins to move again, as will the tourism industry through the engagement of those in charge who are not affected by *Wasta*.

#### **5.3.4. Lack of Maintenance**

Lack of maintenance is another barrier exposing the government's neglect of the tourism industry in Kuwait. Some interviewees became upset when they spoke of the poor condition of existing tourism resources. For example, Entertainment City, which was the first theme park in the region, has fallen into disrepair. They believe that if resources had been under regular maintenance in accordance with a clear development plan, the situation would be entirely different, as the following statements shown:

*'There has not been any maintenance whatsoever of any of the existing tourism resources which have been totally neglected for a very long time since they started operating. The maintenance process we have is only for roads!'*(Sara)

*'Unfortunately, we have many neglected and ignored resources that lack any kind of maintenance. For example, Entertainment City, which was opened in 1984, as the first and biggest theme park of its kind in the area, now operates with most of its rides out of operation because of a lack of maintenance.'* (Athary)

*'Tourism resources do not enjoy any sort of development or maintenance. For example, Khiran resort was a fabulous and remarkable place with outstanding services but over time it has needed renovation and refurbishing. But there is a severe lack of maintenance.'*(Nawal)

The comments above reveal maintenance weaknesses of facilities and services, which obviously deter the attraction of tourists. The unique Entertainment City and the Khiran resort are two major examples of breakdowns cited by

participants that could have been avoided, had their maintenance been prioritised. The importance and cost of regular and skilled maintenance are often underestimated, when compared to the cost of major breakdowns on roads. As Spencely (2010) indicates, maintenance is of vital importance for the success of tourism. It has been seen for example that rides in theme parks have been closed due to lack of maintenance and they have not been updated with new and more modern models. As a result, statistics show a decrease in the number of visitors to The Entertainment City between 2009 and 2011 (from 493,362 to 472,222) (KCSB 2014). This figure is likely to decrease further in the next few years, if steps are not taken to maintain these facilities. Alanjiri (2014) argued that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan cites the need for a maintenance plan to preserve existing tourist resources, as well as a plan for developing future attractions.

Moreover, this lack of maintenance challenges the use of Butler's product lifecycle (1980) as it seems from the above that Kuwait is not yet even at the first stage of development therefore this model is not useful for this study at the moment. Butler's Lifecycle would at least demand a participant to engage in the exploration stage. The few recreation facilities or activities that Kuwait has to offer are in desperate need of maintenance and upgrading. Many places like Entertainment City have excellent plans on paper but struggle to come to fruition because of negative attitudes and apathy on the part of the government. There is also a serious lack of interest among the stakeholders who hold the keys to the development of tourism in Kuwait. The above factors prevent any impetus for tourism development in the country.

## 5.4. The Need for Tourism Planning

There is an urgent need for tourism planning, in the interviewees' view. Participants showed consensus over the felt necessity for the Kuwaiti State to provide a concrete plan, assisted by research, in order to introduce appropriate laws and decrees that would assist the creation of an official and competent authority responsible for the gradual development of a tourism industry. It should be noted that the majority of the participants were completely unaware of the existence of the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, even though they were all involved, directly or indirectly, in tourism activities. This is mainly because the plan has not been published either in the official government newspaper nor the official website of the government. However, some of those who were involved in working to establish the plan had begun to share some of its content in the public domain.

The participants particularly believe the absence of a tourism authority is among the major reasons for the observed delay in the growth of tourism in Kuwait. This is shown in the following comments:

*'First of all, the State should provide a concrete plan to provide a legal basis for the creation of an umbrella authority that would run the tourism sector. It is important to realise that tourism can only flourish with a clear plan and a public authority for tourism; this will at least enable us to bring more foreign tourists to Kuwait or to keep more Kuwaiti tourists inside the country.'* (Samer)

*'We need to have a plan and a Supreme Council for Tourism that would introduce step-by-step development of a tourism industry. This plan should come with power and the help of more research with the mission statement to produce legislative laws, related to the importance of having a tourism authority, to move forward to the development of tourism.'* (Rami)

*'The government should come up with a tourism plan that would establish an organization to create laws and decrees allocating responsibilities for trained staff and competent people to market tourism.'* (Kamal)

*'Establishing an authority for tourism is a first step towards creating a clear vision for developing a tourism industry in Kuwait.'* (Ahmad)



The above comments reflect a serious need for tourism planning in Kuwait. The authority, referred to as a '*legal umbrella*' by one participant, would provide trained staff and be able to operate tourism marketing and human resource management for the development of the tourism industry. Alanjiri (2014) claimed that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan saw the necessity to create an authority for tourism and noted that this authority would lead the way in helping to develop the tourism industry in Kuwait. Such a tourism authority has been established in most countries in the region, such as the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities in Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Tourism in Oman. Having a tourism authority in Kuwait would benefit the industry by clarifying the vision for the future, providing expertise and sustaining the socio-culture of the country, according to participants:

*'A dedicated ministry or authority for tourism has to be established to create more options for managing and supervising tourism projects and protecting sociocultural values.'* (Husain)

*'I believe that the first thing that the government has to do is create an authority for tourism, which would be a starting point for developing a tourism industry, organising products and services and training staff.'* (Najah)

Participants pointed to the need for governmental support for the industry, starting with the establishment of a public organisation as the first step towards developing the tourism industry. Sharpley (2002) also supported this argument in his study on Cyprus, where a national tourism organisation was established to help develop the tourism sector. This is because the tourism authority is the central organisation that has the mission to operate the marketing strategy, branding and promotion of different tourism products of the destination (Gilbert 2008). However, it could be argued that many countries, including the UK, have very successful tourism policies and industries without an explicit ministry. In Kuwait as well as many other Islamic countries, the authoritarian approach may be the most suitable way though to start development, encouraging people to accept and welcome the new industry.

The government needs to communicate the costs and benefits of tourism in order to get important stakeholders to buy into it. These tie in with social exchange theory, whereby the benefits are promoted in order to foster a favorable attitude towards the development of tourism. It is common for local residents to view

tourists as intruders, so the government needs to promote more of the positive benefits in order to gain buy-in from the locals.

Since it does not pursue tourism development, the government's vision was not felt to be as clear as that of those countries in the region that have a more complete and functioning tourism industry, as shown in the following comments:

*'Neighbouring countries have developed a tourism industry with the support of their government such as UAE or Qatar. The Kuwaiti government is not supporting the development of the tourism industry at all as there is a conflict between the National Assembly and the government about the type of tourism which is suitable for Kuwait.'* (Mobarak)

*'If we compare Kuwait to Dubai, for example, we will find that Dubai government strongly supports the development of the tourism industry and has achieved its target of marketing the destination at a global level and making it known worldwide.'* (Rashed)

Participants were upset when they compared Kuwait with the rest of the GCC, where governments are more responsive to tourism. It is not surprising to hear some interviewees expressing the view that the tourism sector should be run by the government. Such involvement is supported by the successful experience of Dubai (Sharpley 2008; Stephenson and Ali-Knight 2011). Scheyvens (2011) points to the important role of government in influencing the development of the tourism industry. This is specifically evident in developing countries where government support leads to greater success of local initiatives and a strengthened economy. As an interviewee pointed out, in tourism or any other field of development, people expect the decision-making process to be determined by a higher authority, otherwise policies will be ignored. For instance, Mohammad Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, had a vision of Dubai as a tourism attraction within the UAE particularly, as well as for the GCC in general. This vision was consequently taken seriously and applied (Mansfeld and Winckler 2004; Stephenson et al. 2010). This is expressed in the following quotation:

*'I think the development of the tourism industry needs to be run from the top as in any decision-making process, like Dubai. The decision about its transformation came from the governor of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and therefore Dubai became a success and an icon in the tourism industry globally.'*

*Likewise, I think we need a decision from the top to kick start the development of the tourism sector in Kuwait.’ (Suaad)*

The above comment points to an urgent need for a decision from a high official in the country to give an impetus to tourism development. The majority of participants holds this view and believes that a wide group of stakeholders should be involved in tourism planning and development, as a direct result of a clear directive from the leader. This in itself would see tourism become an important driver for the economy. Using stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984) to identify the key stakeholders who may be involved in tourism planning process and to form powerful decisions from a high authority, would give extra weight and credibility to the development of a tourism industry. This might particularly be the case in a high power distance culture such as Kuwait, where there is centralization of political power and control by a minority of Kuwaitis (Toama 2013). Alanjiri (2014) stated that until now there does not appear to be an understanding of the potential that tourism has to take the country forward. Although a large group of experts from national and international organizations worked hard for two years at a cost of three million US dollars, the recommendations have not been looked at. For the Kuwaiti team involved in this project it has been very frustrating to see the lack of action from the government.

#### **5.4.1. Tourism Education and Training**

A lack of human resources and expertise were other problems identified by interviewees who felt there should be an effective planning organisation, manned by competent personnel with professional and technical specialisation. These experts would then be able to formulate, implement, review and monitor all plans and implement policies to achieve the desired goals for tourism development. Moreover, participants highlighted that tourism training and education for locals in Kuwait are still limited. This industry requires efficient and effective trainers but Kuwait has few fully qualified trainers.

*‘The development of the tourism industry needs many measures and is related to different dimensions such as offering high quality of training schemes and programmers in order to have qualified trainers who are able to work efficiently and develop the tourism sector. This well helps to improve the staff working in the tourism industry, as well as attract more people to work and learn about working in this sector.’ (Suaad)*

One participant, who works as a tourism educator, expressed surprise that people are still not able to accept the notion that tourism needs to be officially studied as a real profession, as shown below:

*'It really amazes me that when people hear that I teach tourism for a living, they say it is not a proper subject to be taught in Kuwait; when I ask them why it is not a proper one, they say: 'because we do not have tourism in Kuwait and no future for locals to have a career in such field! Although, I have studied tourism abroad with funding from the Kuwaiti government, this really confused and disturbed me because when the Kuwaiti government sent me abroad they surely wanted to create an efficient staff that would help in establishing tourism in Kuwait through education and training. The government's indifference and society's reaction are really shocking.'* (Fahad)

The participant highlighted that at the moment tourism, as a subject for study, is not well defined: it has not been introduced into the curriculum in order to prepare students for jobs in the industry. There is just one college within the PEAAT, which provides a diploma in tourism and hospitality (Alanba 2013). Some of the participants emphasized the importance of the government providing equitable education in the field of tourism for both male and female locals. It is felt to be the government's responsibility to expand what is there and provide educational opportunities for male students too, as at the moment, the only college for tourism in Kuwait is for females (Alanba 2013). This will also give more knowledge to those who want to work in the tourism field, as the following comments show:

*'I think it is time the Kuwaiti government thought more of having a better education level for those working in tourism and hospitality, as well as having training courses for staff in the tourism sector both male and female.'* (Kamal)

*'It is very important to introduce tourism as a subject in the state curriculum to ensure that staffs develop a basic knowledge and to create awareness of the benefits of the tourism industry. Moreover, I think it will be a good idea to provide a college for males as there is one for females at the moment therefore why not give the opportunity for males to study as they might enhance the development of tourism if we have expertise from both gender.'* (Saad)

The above point highlights a need for the development and implementation of tourism education, which will lay the foundation for more educational opportunities for students and a greater sense of awareness about tourism as a career option. Participants also mentioned the possibility of offering higher education courses in tourism, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Indeed as Johnson (2010) stated, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has begun to increase its investment in high-level tourism education and training in order to guarantee effective tourism planning in the long term.

One of the participants highlighted that tourism education should ideally start from the secondary school level, in order to familiarize the younger generation with the concepts of tourism, such as sustainable growth for future generations, ecotourism and the benefits of employment within this industry. This would be a good precursor to help facilitate a change in the attitudes of local Kuwaitis, as they will be better educated, as well as having an increased sense of awareness of the importance of the tourism industry and its benefits. Moreover, Kuwait could learn from one of its neighbours, the UAE, which has provided training programmes that follow career-progression linked to UAE nationals working in the industry (Stephenson et al. 2010). The two participants who were involved in creating the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan highlighted the importance of Kuwaiti citizens having a role to play in working in tourism jobs, as well as developing the industry.

## **5.5. Marketing Kuwait as a Tourism Destination**

Marketing Kuwait as a tourism destination is faced with many obstacles, which severely curb the country's ability to promote itself regionally or internationally. Therefore, it requires the government to take a number of steps, the most important of which, according to the participants, is the urgent creation of an excellent tourism marketing strategy. Moreover, marketing is a way to enhance the position of Kuwait as a tourist destination. The following statements illustrate this:

*'I think what is missing, is to have a tourism marketing strategy. It is the responsibility of the Kuwait government to work on marketing Kuwait as a potential tourist destination. Moreover, Kuwait can follow their neighbouring countries such as Dubai and Qatar in how they have worked on developing their tourism industry, by marketing their countries globally, by using different types of*

*marketing strategy. For example their aviation companies might be a place to start'* (Mishal)

*'Unfortunately, we do not have a tourism marketing strategy yet. The government should give support to tourism development through marketing Kuwait as a tourist destination. This has to be a priority for planning, as the marketing will be the first step to introduce Kuwait as a potential tourist destination'* (Mona)

The participants treat marketing as an important issue, which seems to be neglected by the government. Alanjiri (2014) claimed that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan emphasised how important it is to create a marketing strategy that will advertise Kuwait as a tourist destination, both at home and abroad. Marketing can be defined as an organised procedure, offering a suitable product at a convenient time, with location and price, and consistently requiring higher international standards (Buhalis 2000; Cooper 2008; Morgan et al. 2012). Moreover, the participants believe that Kuwait should start to plan for marketing itself as a tourist destination, as the other members of GCC have done so far. For example, Qatar and Abu-Dhabi have a similar environment and tourism resources to Kuwait, but both of their governments have started to market their capital cities in order to be competitive and be recognised on the world tourism map (Hazime 2011; Morakabati et al. 2014). In Kuwait, the marketing strategy is not coordinated by the government, which, according to the participants, should take responsibility for it (Alshahed 2013).

Participants recommend that the government look at the example of neighboring Dubai, whose marketing strategy was the key success factor that turned the state, as well as the country, UAE, into an international tourism destination, as shown below:

*'Unfortunately, Kuwaiti authorities have no tourism marketing strategy and the government has to be more active and learn more from surrounding countries like Dubai, which had used all of its resources such as the aviation sector and the media to promote the city as tourist destination internationally.'* (Suaad)

*'If we think to follow one of the successful marketing strategies in the GCC region, we should take the example of Dubai, and try to take some of their*

*advantages and ideas in using the best marketing strategies in the world to transform Dubai from a small emirate into a well-known spot worldwide.'* (Saad)

Participants are disappointed with the government's lack of a well-developed marketing strategy aimed at turning Kuwait into a major tourism destination, as shown by neighboring countries like UAE. Incidentally the lack of literature on marketing the Gulf States is surprising. Existing literature mostly addresses Dubai's successful tourism development experiment, followed by Oman and Qatar in the region (Al-Hamareneh and Steiner 2004; Sharpley 2008). This is changing now as these countries are looking to develop their tourism sector and to reach the maximum number of tourists through marketing. For example, Oman's marketing strategy is to introduce the country as an ecotourism destination, as well as promoting cultural and heritage sites (Buerkert et al. 2010; Winckler 2007). Moreover, Qatar's marketing strategy depends on promoting tourism products in line with their sensitive cultural and religious identity (Hazime 2011; Morakabati et al. 2014).

Some participants suggest that it would be useful if the authorities began marketing tourism activities aimed at domestic and GCC citizens at an initial stage, whose demand for tourism is noted by Najah:

*'I think there are two aspects regarding the development of tourism. Firstly, the demand for resorts and chalets would reduce the travel of our residents, as they travel a lot! Do you know that during the Eid short holiday more than 150,000 Kuwaiti travelled abroad?! Secondly, there is a need for more entertainment to suit the needs of fellow GCC citizens. More than 200,000 visitors from Saudi Arabia enter Kuwait every year for different reasons. If we consider their needs and provide facilities for them, this would meet the demands for the amount of people visiting Kuwait. These are the people we should be targeting in our marketing.'* (Najah)

The above comment illustrates the fact that the main demand for Kuwait today as a place of tourism is from either domestic tourists and/or from the GCC countries who are interested in family holidays. It also shows that there are a lot of people coming from Saudi Arabia. As has been noted before, Saudis often travel to Kuwait for different purposes, for example to visit their family and friends and to enjoy its entertainment facilities that they cannot experience in Saudi Arabia, such as cinemas. As a result, Alanjiri (2014) states that the 2005/2011 Kuwait

National Tourism Master Plan highlights the need for Kuwait's marketing strategy to promote recreational attractions.

Participants criticised the Kuwaiti government for its lack of support for tourism marketing, which neighbouring countries, such as Qatar, benefit from. Qatar in fact is increasing its supply of planes and has specified five distinct types of tourism products, including culture, sport and education (Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) 2013). Moreover, De Jong (2011) notes that the government of Qatar encouraged the development of the tourism industry by engaging in marketing and promoting the country as an international tourist destination, as well as one for regional visitors (Hazime 2011; QTA 2013).

Participants feel that an active vibrant marketing strategy is needed, in order to make people more aware of the country's tourism products and sites, as shown below:

*'Tourism can be developed by marketing the country in many different ways. For example, using cultural sites, such as the Grand Mosque in Kuwait City, to attract visitors or promoting tourist activities likes water sports.'* (Sara)

*'We need to market our products in an effective way, by increasing the interest of potential local visitors and international tourists to come and visit the different types of tourist attractions, such as the Souq Almubarikia with its cultural and heritage atmosphere.'* (Kamal)

Participants highlighted branding, which is a significant aspect of tourism marketing management that organisations are increasingly interested in (Fan 2006; Tasci and Kozak 2006). Gilbert (2008, p.647) defines a brand by suggesting that *'a brand is a name, a sympol, term or design or a combination of these that marketers attempt to promote'*. Some participants suggested creating a brand related to the country's key elements, the sea and the desert. This would attract tourists seeking specific climatic conditions; namely the sea in the summer and the desert experience during the winter. In this way the industry could offer a year-round product.

Most participants highlighted the need to introduce a new brand for Kuwait, because the existing image is one of a country rich in oil and surrounded by conflict.



*'The development of tourism in Kuwait has to be linked to a positive international image of the country. The brand and the image are the first sign posts that indicate to the visitor what the destinations offer through their image as well as the brand. This can be done through a series of international advertisements presenting diverse and attractive images of Kuwait as a flourishing tourism destination and this will attract more tourists.'* (Kamal)

*'The only image people have of Kuwait is that it is an oil producing and rich country. Therefore, I wish to change this image through branding which will reflect its culture and the kindness of its people.'* (Asmaa)

*'...the first images in people's minds when Kuwait is mentioned, is oil, wars or the Iraqi invasion. Therefore, we need to remove this negative image by presenting an image of a peaceful Kuwait and its nice people.'* (Mishel)

These comments show how people's dominant image of Kuwait is linked to oil and unrest. Participants believe it is crucial to change Kuwait's negative image and support the view found in the literature that it is vital to motivate travellers, by creating more positive images (Beerli et al. 2007; Cooper 2008; Kotler and Gertner 2002). Moreover, very successful tourist destinations have strong images that reflect their character, leading to strong associations with the destination, encouraging return visits (Chi and Qu 2008; Kotler and Gertner 2002). Indeed, participants state that those who make the effort to visit Kuwait are surprised by Kuwait's welcome, safety and modern lifestyle. In most cases, these tourists become repeat visitors.

Additionally, one participant suggests the creation of a tourism marketing logo, to ensure that Kuwait is easily identifiable as a tourist destination:

*'There should be a brand to reflect the uniqueness of the Kuwaiti identity that locates Kuwait on the tourism map. Consequently, this has to be distinct, so that tourists know more about Kuwait through the country's marketing logo and understand the nature of the country. Frequent visitors to Kuwait informally refer to Kuwait as the jewel of the Arabian Gulf. This could become a great marketing logo!'* (Najah)

A unique marketing logo to distinguish itself worldwide is very important, particularly as the competition, within the GCC countries, is very high. Apparently Kuwait appears to be the last country to think about this. Govers et al. (2007)

also emphasises the need for tourism authorities to understand the extent to which successful tourism development is dependent on a destination's tourism image. Moreover, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) note how influential the features of destination and branded images are in determining the popularity of travel destinations. It should be noted that a destination could attempt to present a specific image, by using a variety of branding strategies (Hosany et al. 2007; Tasci and Kozak 2006). Nevertheless, many tourists may understand such advertising messages from their own perspective and context. Therefore, they often react in a different way to the messages than was intended (Hosany et al. 2007; Kim and Lehto 2013). For example, if the image of Kuwait presented is the sea, it should also include something about the dress code that is acceptable in the country, without any conflict with the law and the socio-cultural context. Kim and Lehto (2013) support this notion, as they argue that tourists sometimes misunderstand the messages that the destination tries to implement through its brand advertisements.

#### **5.5.1. Role of the National Air Carrier in Marketing Kuwait as a Tourist Destination**

The national air carrier can play an important role in marketing Kuwait as a tourist destination. This in turn will enhance the opportunity of developing the tourism industry in Kuwait. One participant shows his disappointment with the low standard and incompetence of his country's official carrier, as stated below:

*'I think that Kuwait Airways have to be the first promoter and marketer for Kuwait as a tourist destination; in reality, their standard is very low and they have bad timing and services. There is no comparison with Emirates Airways or Qatar Airways, which are now famous and highly regarded worldwide' (Fahad)*

This poor performance instills frustration and disappointment for Kuwaiti travellers, who look at the performance efficiency of the airlines of neighbouring countries with admiration and envy. Moreover, Alanjiri (2014) claims that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan was dissatisfied with the performance of Kuwaiti Airways and emphasised its decreasing market. Meanwhile De Jong (2011) comments on the crucial role Qatar Airways plays in promoting Qatar's tourism, by showing videos on-board and distributing information on Qatar (QTA 2013). Moreover, UAE increases its tourism potential through the increased use of low-cost airlines, such as Air Arabia and Fly Dubai.

By attracting and providing low budget services for tourists they increase market share (Stephenson et al. 2010). Participants criticised and were disappointed with the negative role of Kuwait Airways, as they expected the airline would make more effort to market Kuwait as a tourist destination, following similar companies in neighbouring countries:

*'Kuwait Airways as a company does not have a marketing strategy to promote the company internationally; accordingly the company closed its offices in many destinations worldwide. Such closure discourages citizens from travelling with their national carrier and pushes them to look for other carriers to travel. The weak performance of the national carrier implies that it has no effective role in promoting the country, or tourism in the near future' (Nawal)*

What is worse is that the national airline carrier picked a neighbouring country in which to stage a promotional event but did not take the opportunity to market its own country:

*'One of the funny things that happened to Kuwait Airways in 2003 was to sponsor the Hala February Shopping Festival. They offered a ticket and accommodation in Lebanon for 99 KD and this was a big shock, because they were effectively promoting another country and not their own.'* (Fawaz)

Therefore, the airline acted only as an exporter and did not bring any benefits to Kuwait itself. Participants commented that the general lack of support for tourism from Kuwait Airways has been staggering and very unusual. Airlines often brand a destination and Qatar is an interesting example of this. As their planes fly to more than one hundred locations globally, Doha has developed into an attractive transport centre and it receives more visitors, thereby enhancing their tourism sector (Barakat 2012; De Jong 2011). The UAE is another example of a country which has enhanced its tourism sector, by establishing and using its airline to increase the number of visitors through its main airport in Dubai (Stephenson 2013). International airlines in many tourist destinations play a significant role in the development of tourism and this is a major limitation for Kuwait currently.

### **5.5.2. Tourism and the Media**

Another important opportunity for the development of tourism is offered by encouraging the media to play an active role in promoting and marketing the destination. There is a need to communicate messages about the destination

through promotion and public relations, using different forms of media, as suggested by Coombe and Melki (2012) in a study of the role of global media in enhancing the tourism image of Dubai. The use of the media in the form of television seems to participants to be a crucial promotional instrument, playing an active role in marketing Kuwait as a tourism destination, as shown below:

*'Kuwait TV should be used to promote Kuwait as a tourist destination, even though soap operas. For example, Turkey has been no 1 in tourism since it started using the media and a Turkish TV series as a marketing strategy to attract tourists.'* (Ahmad)

*'I think the media is very important for promoting Kuwait as a potential tourist destination. For example, the Kuwait TV might play a role in creating a set of material introducing Kuwait as a tourist destination to the world which could also be offered in information offices in every Kuwait embassy.'* (Kamal)

The above comments reveal the extent to which television can be used for marketing and promoting Kuwait as a tourism destination. Indeed, Balli et al.'s (2013) study on the Turkish series, which attracted tourists especially from the Middle East and Eastern Europe, found the Turkish soap operas had a significant impact on boosting inbound tourism to Turkey (Balli et al. 2013; Busby et al. 2013). Similarly, there are many sites in Kuwait like the Al Wafra (a farm area with historical sites) as well as other heritage sites, which are used to shoot Kuwaiti soap operas, which are well received in the Middle East. Moreover, these sites portray a distinctive Kuwaiti cultural identity and offer indirect messages to the audience about what they will see in Kuwait. All of these features could spark interest in visiting Kuwait.

Participants also mention social media, as the most used form of marketing because so many people communicate, offer information and interact with each other via web-based communities:

*'I think we have to increase our use of the media, especially new types of social media; for example, twitter, blogs and Facebook with whose help we can invest more effort into marketing and promoting Kuwait as a tourism destination.'* (Asmaa)

*'The times are changing and everyone is using social media; I assume that every person in Kuwait at least has an account with Facebook or twitter so it would be*

*perfect for this medium to be utilised to promote Kuwait as a tourist destination.'*  
(Rana)

It is often pointed out that social media delivers unrestrained and uncensored opinions and information on any subject and can have a significant impact on destination images, because they are seen to be unbiased compared with traditional advertising outlets (Kim and Richardson 2003; Xiang and Gretzel 2010). Moreover, the majority of studies on online social networks mention the role of the social media as information sources for destination marketing (Chung and Buhalis 2008; Xiang and Gretzel 2010). These social networks are powerful marketing tools because they are not banned in Kuwait and can be accessed globally. Currently, the majority of tourists use social media such as Facebook, twitter, and blogs to review the destinations that they may travel to and to look for the best deals (Xiang and Gretzel 2010).

A new and positive initiative has been developed in Kuwait recently. Due to the lack of action on the part of the government regarding tourism development, a group of young people have started to take independent steps to promote Kuwait as a tourist destination through the use of a twitter account (@TourismInKuwait) and a blog web ([www.around q8.com](http://www.aroundq8.com)). Their aim is to introduce people to authentic traditional Kuwaiti experiences by promoting, for example, unique, traditional style restaurants and cafes. Alanjiri (2014) states that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan only discussed the traditional forms of media for advertising, for example TV, radio and newspapers. This is probably due to the fact that originally the plan was devised in 2005 when social media did not have much prominence, even less so as a marketing tool. The failure to incorporate this form of marketing in the Master Plan of 2011 only confirms what was discussed earlier: the government lacks insight when it comes to these forms of media, which should undoubtedly be considered in future development and marketing plans.

## **5.6. Developing Tourism through Collaboration**

The participants emphasised that there is an important role for collaboration in planning for sustainable tourism development. They saw that a collaboration approach would be acceptable for Kuwaiti society, as the majority of the population is Muslim and Islam advocates collaboration and the spirit of teamwork in the Quran and Sunnah. Examples are: the saying in sura Taha: 'and

let him share my task, (32) '(chapter 32 Taha). This refers to the idea of people collaborating with each other in ways so they become more powerful to face challenges and solve difficulties. Additionally, the messenger of Allah supported and encouraged teamwork when he said, 'God's hand with the group' (The Tirmithi). Therefore, it is easy to understand why it may be seen as appropriate culturally that a Muslim country should collaborate to develop tourism. Some of the interviewees expressed concerns over the lack of collaboration among different sector of the government and highlighted the necessity for a collaborative approach between all parties of the government and between public and private sectors to achieve tourism development, as the following comments highlighted:

*'I think there is an urgent need for collaboration among all the different departments within the government as at the moment there are not any type of collaboration. This when implement will enhance teamwork which can lead to achieving development in the tourism sector, which will reflect on the economy of the country.'* (Sara)

*'There is a need for collaboration in the public sector in order to achieve successful development. For example, the Municipality does not give permission for any tourism project until the Ministry of Public Works has first approved it, as there is no collaboration between those different departments. Therefore, if we apply the concept of collaboration, which we learnt from Islamic principles, this would help progress tourism development.'* (Fatema)

The above comments reflect the belief that a collaborative approach marks a significant step towards taking tourism out of its present underdeveloped state. As stated by Huxham (1996, p.7), 'collaboration is taken to imply a very positive form of working in association with others for some mutual benefit.' Further, understanding and having communication channels between the key stakeholders is a primary prerequisite when implementing a collaborative approach (Aas et al. 2005; Lee et al. 2010). Moreover, the participants think that the government should move towards collaboration between different departments, especially since there is still no law or decree to help organise the tourism development process. They believe that, once enacted, such a law would have an effect across various government departments and kick-start the collaboration process to develop the public administration of tourism (Baggio

2011; Bramwell 2005). Jamal and McDonald (2011) reported upon the collaborative efforts initiated by the authorities in Canmore, Canada, which was needed to face the challenges such as the lack of planning of the development of tourism industry in the initial stages. Moreover, their study suggests the need for a new planning paradigm which should offer an integrated theoretical framework for the government and other stakeholders to manage the complexities of tourism development (Jamal and McDonald 2011). Likewise, the Kuwaiti government could learn how to manage different stakeholders in planning for the development of tourism.

Some participants believe that closer links between different departments and organisations would lead to an improvement in the quality of services and an enhanced experience for tourists, as shown below:

*'I think we need government support and collaboration in order to develop tourism projects and achieve a better service quality for visitors to our tourist attractions.'* (Athary)

*'There is a need for collaboration between government and the private sector to enhance the level of service for tourists. This is because the government cannot do all the work for the development of the tourism sector therefore having a partnership with the private sector will make the development process move forward more quickly.'* (Husain)

Participants feel that public sector involvement through collaboration is necessary; however, this is not an easy task as the communication between different departments in the government is, at best, lacking. The power of stakeholders to act is limited, because tourism development in Kuwait is still in its early stages, and although plans exist for the promotion of tourism through collaboration in Kuwait, they are not being actively pursued by the public sector, as is indicated in the following statements:

*'Although, there has been a strategy since 2005 for development of the tourism sector in Kuwait through the collaboration of stakeholders, unfortunately, this plan has yet to be activated.'* (Fawaz)

The 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan involved collaboration with international bodies, such as the United Nations Organization for Development and the World Tourism Organization, national organizations, other government

entities and representatives of the private sector. The Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan was the result of a collaboration process that anticipated progress in the tourism sector in Kuwait if it was activated. Mohamad was one of the officials who had worked very hard on this strategy and he knew the significance of the plan and how it could affect the development of the tourism industry.

A good example in the region of successful collaboration is offered by Yaghmour and Scott (2009) who studied the outcomes of stakeholder collaboration in the Jeddah Festival in Saudi Arabia and highlighted the role of the Supreme Commission of Tourism (SCT), which brought stakeholders (for example, restaurants and hotels) together collaboratively, working in partnership for the event, in order to strengthen tourism development. According to Butler's Lifecycle Model (1980), Kuwait is not even in the Exploration stage as a result of internal politics. In order to initiate Butler's Lifecycle Model, tourism development would need all stakeholders on board. Additionally, despite the fact that the concept of collaboration is not well known to the public sector in Kuwait, it was the basis for work on the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan. Furthermore, Alanjiri (2014) states that the plan recommended collaboration when developing a tourism industry in Kuwait. She also discusses the advantages of collaboration among departments, which is evident in the plan.

#### **5.6.1. Collaboration between the Public and Private Sectors**

Collaboration between the public and private sectors offers a great opportunity to develop the tourism industry in Kuwait. According to Alanjiri (2014), this is shown in the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, which highlights the necessary part that the FDI should play in stimulating the development of tourism projects and activities. She claims that FDI investments will improve the public and private sectors' collaboration, which will in turn facilitate development. Moreover, some of the participants highlighted that the government needs to create favourable conditions for the private sector to engage more deeply in tourism development, and for investment to be made in tourism services and facilities. In addition, they emphasise that collaboration between the public and private sectors could take the form of partnerships, which are crucial in sustaining tourism development in Kuwait. If privatisation is well designed and managed, the goals of both tourism development and private sector profitability will be achieved faster and more efficiently, as shown below:



*'I support collaboration in its all forms and I think that the partnership between the public sector and private sector will give the maximum benefit for the early stage of collaboration. This is because this would make procedures easier for developing tourism projects and this, in turn, would eliminate the bureaucracy of the public sector.'* (Rashed)

*'There must be collaboration between the public and private sectors in order to provide the facilities necessary for developing the tourism sector. But it must be profitable for investors. This will attract more investors to Kuwait whether they come from inside Kuwait or international investors.'* (Mona)

*'I think the public and private sectors should be involved in the development of the tourism sector in a collaborative approach, to ensure the tourism industry flourishes. Otherwise it will be more difficult for the private sectors to build the necessary infrastructure needed for tourism development without adequate funding from the government.'* (Samer)

Public and private partnerships have been used as a tool for tourism industry development (Jamal and McDonald 2011; Yaghmour and Scott 2009; Zapata and Hall 2012). The idea of collaboration between different stakeholders in the early stages of development of the tourism industry starts with planning and communication involving all parties (Aas et al. 2005; Dredge 2006; Zapata and Hall 2012). Dubai's tourism system is an example of how a strategic partnership between the government and the private sector can put a city in a successful and very strong position globally (Sharpley 2008). Additionally, Das and Chakraborty (2012) found the development of a public and private partnership enhanced development of the tourism industry, in Bangladesh, where the tourism industry became a major source of income for the country.

Participants explained that collaboration could take many forms. One of these is a partnership between the public and private sectors in the form of Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) projects, whereby the government builds the projects using private companies and, after a limited time, retrieves them to transfer them to another company (Al-Shqairat and Altarawneh 2011). For example, the Scientific Centre which is in Salmiya, Kuwait, was established in the form of a BOT project between the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) and the government. Participants mentioned how the government managed to make a

tentative start on collaboration in 1996 with BOT schemes in a few locations, such as the Marina, and Souk Sharq shopping malls, as shown below:

*'I think the sea front projects, such as the Marina, Souk Sharq and the Scientific Centre, are very successful BOT projects. These kinds of collaborative strategy between different government sectors show a positive outcome that could lead to more development for the tourism industry.'* (Saad)

*'I believe that without partnerships in the form of BOT schemes, we cannot implement tourism. This is because tourism projects are very expensive and the profit will be valid in the long term. Therefore businessmen want to ensure their revenue which can be more absorbed with BOT strategy.'* (Talal)

*'The BOT projects are very successful, though none of them are directly related to tourism. It would only be logical to extend the idea and bring BOT projects into the arena of tourism development. Moreover, Dubai for example had been using BOT strategy to improve their tourism sector and reached the top in developing the tourism industry.'* (Nawal)

As indicated, some successful BOT projects, involving collaboration, could be usefully extended to include tourism development, although BOT projects were put on hold in 2008 following changes in the legislature. Requests for similar projects have been initiated recently. BOTs currently operate on a 20-year timeframe and the government is examining regulations with an eye to making them more flexible (Alqabas, 2010). Elsewhere, Al-Shqairat and Altarawneh (2011) discuss the use of BOTs in the modernization of the Amman International Airport project, in which the private sector provided the financing, building and running of the airport for 20 years before its transferal to the government.

There is however some BOT schemes that have not performed to the level expected, as shown in the following statements:

*'The BOT partnership which we are now working on is not going very well. Not a single project has been approved for BOT in the most recent development plan for the country. It is not clear why this is happening. It may be because of bureaucracy or wasta, I do not know. It is not my role or responsibility to follow every action connected with the project, although I do this in order to make sure that plans go ahead. This puts a lot of pressure on me to finish the work and I can see the pressure building up further.'* (Samer)

*'The bureaucracy and legislation in the government hinder the BOT projects. For example, plans for developing Failaka Island, the aim of which is to launch it as a world-class tourist resort; 20 hotels, chalets, a golf course, housing units, a marine park, and entertainment facilities in an environmentally-friendly atmosphere. The aim was to support the development of the tourism industry, but where is it now, what has happened to these projects?'* (Essa)

In summary, participants explained that attempts at collaboration have been limited. Any efforts that were made were for investment purposes only and not with the particular intention of providing tourist services. Participants stated that efforts should be extended and applied to tourism despite their limited success. However, legislation, bureaucracy and wasta are clearly seen as deterrents. One has to be armed with a wealth of local influential contacts for progress at any level to take place. Some have suggested that in order to attract private sector participation, any government should address issues that would create a conducive business environment, liberalising rules, providing investment incentives, developing an adequate legislative framework and strengthening the government's negotiating capacity (Hall 2009; Zapata and Hall 2012).

### **5.6.2. Regional Collaboration**

Regional collaboration within the GCC countries could represent an opportunity for Kuwait to develop the tourism industry. This is because of its small size; some participants suggested that Kuwait could be a tourist destination as part of a wider tour, in which holidaymakers combine it with visits to other nearby countries, rather than visiting Kuwait alone. According to Alanjiri (2014), the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan tried to involve all GCC countries in the development of tourism, making a start with domestic tourism and following on to aim for regional tourism. One interviewee mentioned the idea of operating cruises around the area, including countries such as Bahrain and Qatar. As the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is already collaborating on many levels in this region, this cooperation could be extended to include tourism, as the following comments highlighted:

*'I think the first step in developing the tourism industry should be to coordinate and collaborate with Dubai, as it is a leader in the region. Moreover, I think it is possible to benefit from the GCC organisation as they cooperate in different fields. Therefore they can also form a collaborative strategy for tourism.'* (Nada)

*'From my point of view, I see that tourism has a potentially huge market in the region. I think if there were a kind of cooperation between Kuwait and the GCC countries, it would benefit the development of the tourism industry.'* (Husain)

The above comments are significant in that they highlight the point that Kuwait should make use of its official membership of The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), a cooperative organisation, and benefit from it. This cooperative venture gives emphasis to an Islamic and Arabic perspective, and the major areas of cooperative achievement have been in the political, economic, legal, financial, social and environmental sectors (GCC 2013). It is noted that the main area of cooperation between the GCC countries and Saudi Arabia is in relation to religious tourism, which deals with pilgrimages to the Holy cities every year (Al-Hamareneh and Steiner 2004).

According to the participants, Kuwait should also employ a strategy of collaborating with countries in the region that are more advanced in tourism, such as Dubai. A study by Yuskel and Yuskel (2005) based on Kusadasi, an international tourist destination in Turkey, emphasised the role of international collaboration, linked to EU participants with key stakeholders and NGOs with local tourism development. Hsu and Gu (2010) also reported on regional coordination and collaboration to support the augmentation of regional tourism development in Hong Kong, Macau and Zuhai (HMZ). This joint regional plan proposed minimisation of intraregional competition, but improvement with respect to gains on the grounds of regional unity, which would help HMZ to gain a competitive edge, both regionally and globally.

Geographically, Kuwait lies in the heart of the Middle Eastern regions, situated in the North Western corner of the Arabian Gulf. Its geographical position makes Kuwait easily accessible to travellers from surrounding countries, as noted below:

*'Kuwait has a great geographical location that can make it a transit country for tourism and allow it to challenge Dubai as a hub for flights to the Far East.'* (Rashed)

*'You can see the perfect location of Kuwait in the centre between India, the Far East and Europe; our grandfather used Kuwait as a hub for trading and I am really surprised that this advantage is not used to develop the tourism and travel industry.'* (Saad)

As participants observe, Kuwait's geographical location, in the centre of the Middle East, could well increase its competitiveness as a hub and put it among the leading tourism countries in the region. Perhaps in a later more advanced phase of its tourism development, Kuwait could possibly join forces with other small and low populated countries and use its position, as an aviation hub, to become a major international tourism destination. In their study, Lohmann et al. (2009) observed that by using vertically integrated strategies, both Singapore and Dubai have successfully transformed their aviation hubs. Moreover, by coordinating the activities of their airlines, airports, tourism enterprises and authorities to provide incentives for passengers to visit, they have established themselves as a major tourist destination.

## **5.7. Conclusion**

This chapter shows an awareness of the economic benefits of developing the tourism industry as a potential strategy for economic diversification. At the moment, the demand for oil faces a gradual reduction by Western countries as market sources shift. The eventual depletion of oil resources of Middle Eastern countries also implies the need for more efforts to diversify the economy. This topic represents the first theme of this chapter, as all of the participants appreciate the economic benefits of tourism. It is one of the only potential economic development opportunities that can have a direct impact on job creation for local people. It can provide an alternative source of income for the country and help to facilitate national and foreign investment in a new direction. Social Exchange Theory becomes relevant if the locals can look at tourism as being a source of positive rather than negative impact.

However, there are more barriers against than opportunities for developing tourism in Kuwait. The second theme was government attitudes regarding tourism development, which is the underlying barrier to tourism development. Other potential negatives are the sub-themes of legislation and alcohol consumption in Islamic destinations, security and border controls, bureaucracy and lack of maintenance. This study shows that the lack of government priority is hindering the initiation of plans for tourism. The findings indicate that Kuwait is not even in the exploration stage of Butler's model. As a result of the lucrative profits that the oil industry has generated, there are some important stakeholders who are of the opinion that tourism may not be as attractive in terms of benefits

for the country. Therefore, according to Social Exchange theory, there may not be enough benefits perceived.

The third theme related to the need for tourism planning, and to the importance of having an official department in the public sector in order to progress the 2005/2011 tourism development strategy. Applying stakeholders theory (Freeman 1984) may benefit in recognizing the key stakeholders to kick off development of tourism in Kuwait. Furthermore, the sub-theme of tourism education and training illustrates the role of government in preparing for the initial stages of development, by providing the infrastructure of education and training that will have the responsibility for creating the first generation of tourism employees.

The fourth theme relates to marketing Kuwait as a tourism destination which is discussed alongside two sub-themes, of the role of the national air carrier in marketing Kuwait as a tourist destination and tourism and the media. This study shows that there is a need for a marketing strategy which fully utilises all the different tools needed to promote Kuwait as a potential tourist destination. Other GCC countries have successfully encouraged their national airlines and media outlets to market their destinations but this has not been the case with Kuwait which has not been advertised as a tourist destination.

The final theme concerned developing tourism through collaboration, which included two sub-themes, collaboration between the public and private sectors, and regional collaboration. This study shows that there is a lack of a concerted and coordinated response to building the tourism industry through collaboration. This led many interviewees to emphasise the need to create greater links with government bodies involved in tourism development and a stronger hierarchy in decision-making. It is not clear why the relevant ministries are so unsupportive of tourism development in Kuwait, but while this attitude exists, it is not easy to see a way forward for a more collaborative approach. In essence, the Social Exchange Theory functions on the premise that all stakeholders, including the community, should benefit. However in the case of Kuwait the indifference shown towards tourism does not allow the community to see its benefits because they are not promoted.

The picture painted in this chapter is therefore quite negative, however it must be noted that the opportunity for Kuwait to use tourism development to diversify its economy is clearly grasped by participants. The tourism industry will offer an alternative income source and will help to create direct and indirect employment. The government plays a central role however in educating the locals about the benefits of working in the tourism sector. Participants have clear ideas on how Kuwait should be marketed, how investment should be stimulated and how regional collaboration could help stimulate a growth in arrivals. The government role is seen as central however, and without a change in attitude, it is clear that little will move. This study poses a question: should tourism be developed if there is little to no government support? The information regarding the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan that has been cited throughout this study was gained from the two participants who were involved in its creation, and also from one of them who has publicized some parts of the plan. It has been interesting to see how the position taken by participants is similar to the outcomes recommended by the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan. This chapter ends on a negative note and unfortunately this is further reinforced by the postponing of the plan, which was very expensive and time-consuming to produce. From the point of view of those involved in the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, it was suggested that like Dubai's success in developing tourism around the world, Kuwait is equally able to follow the same concept but within its specific socio-cultural context.

## **Chapter 6. Tourism impacts and tourism products**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings from two different perspectives. First, the potential tourism products that match the conservative nature of Kuwaiti society are discussed. Second, the findings identify the potential impacts of tourism and the importance of constructive engagement with local communities. The findings illustrate policy implications with respect to encouraging tourism planning that can, potentially, develop a culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. This chapter incorporates four themes: Kuwait's tourism offering, the positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism, the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism and community attitudes, and their potential effects on tourism development.

### **6.2. Identifying Suitable Tourism Types for Kuwait**

Identifying suitable types of tourism for Kuwait is not an easy task, as Kuwait is an Islamic country, its norms and values need to be respected. The majority of the participants felt that Kuwaitis are conservative and want to preserve their Kuwaiti Islamic identity and society. Most stated that conservative Kuwaitis do travel to other Muslim and non-Muslim countries, but they are often keen to respect their Islamic customs and traditions, performing their five prayers at the appropriate times, eating halal food and wearing modest clothes. On the other hand, there were some participants who were of the opinion that some Kuwaitis are liberal-minded and live a liberal lifestyle inside and outside Kuwait. Nevertheless, the majority felt that both conservative and liberal Kuwaitis think that developing tourism should not come at the detriment of losing Kuwait's Islamic identity, regardless of their own travel habits. Therefore the only way forward for Kuwait to develop tourism, according also to the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, is for the Kuwaiti tourism sector to develop the types of tourism which accord with the socio-cultural framework of Kuwaiti society. Principal products and markets could include families; the desert; business, conferences and exhibitions; maritime; and island markets, as well as domestic and regional markets. This will enhance the supply side as well as will increase the desire of tourists whether domestic or regional (from GCC countries)



to enjoy these forms of niche tourism markets. This is reflected in the following comments:

*'I think that Kuwait has a variety of resources and it could develop more than one type of tourism because we have the desert, sea, beaches and the beautiful islands. Whatever type we develop, it is important to preserve our culture.'* (Sara)

*'As long as the country has the money, resources and a government that is willing to spend money on tourism, Kuwaitis can be as creative as they like. With its hot climate and long shorelines, Kuwait's beach and island resorts, will be the high potential to develop triple S destinations, but with suitable dress codes for swimming, regarding the Islamic laws, would be perfect, and air-conditioned indoor sports and entertainment activities could be developed too.'* (Hussain)

Thus Kuwait has a variety of attractive resources that show significant potential for promoting and developing for tourism. These resources can be the focus of high demand, particularly if they are developed in a way which respects the conservative nature of Kuwaiti society. This is also essential given that the main source of demand for tourism in Kuwait is Saudi Arabia whose citizens are known to be conservative tourists. According to KCSB (2014), a total of 24,983 Saudis booked different types of accommodation such as hotels (from five stars to one star), hotel apartments and resorts in 2013. Furthermore there is considerable potential to expand this market (and possibly double its size) since there are many Saudis who have relatives and friends in Kuwait.

Moreover, the interviewees stressed that when suitable types of tourism have been identified for a conservative society which is concerned to preserve its socio-cultural identity, this will increase the potential for developing tourism in Kuwait. Stephenson (2013) argues that it is important to preserve the cultural identity of the destination so that the originality of the host country is not forgotten. This is one of the key principles of cultural sustainability which emphasises recognition and respect for local cultural values. Participants were interested in a such a culturally sustainable approach, in which they can develop tourism without damaging the Islamic society. One way of doing this is by following the approach of "dry hotels", which are not allowed to sell alcohol (Henderson 2010: Stephenson 2013). However, this may constrain the development of tourism in Islamic destinations. Some participants argue that Kuwait should not be too restrictive, if the aim is to maximise tourism numbers

and therefore the revenue generated from tourism. This is clearly a debate, which will continue until the costs of developing the tourism industry in Kuwait are fully understood. The question is: will all Kuwaitis (both liberals and conservatives) accept the perceived social costs and be willing to allow the changes that tourism may bring?

### ***Business Tourism***

The size of the business tourism market in Kuwait is currently limited. Arrivals for business/professional purposes numbered 11,000 in 2012 (UNWTO 2014) although a recent report (WTTC 2014) indicated that business tourism accounted for 23% of tourist spending in the country. There is clearly potential to expand the business tourism market and participants believed that this was an appropriate form of tourism for further development. Business tourism will have a knock-on effect to other services, for example transport and retail, as well as on other tourism sectors such as hospitality and catering. Therefore, because the benefit of this could be felt in such a variety of places, some compromise between all stakeholders should be encouraged in return for tourism income.

Moreover, participants see that this type of tourism is compatible with the Emir of Kuwait's area of personal interest. The Emir has the vision of turning the country into a distinguished, regional financial and trade center (Aldaryeesh 2010). This is reflected in the following quotes:

*'Business tourism was addressed by His Highness the Emir in his speech, when he explained his desire to make the state of Kuwait a financial and commercial hub, which could lead to enhancing business tourism.'* (Kamal)

*'We have to create an image of a business center for Kuwait, as expressed by His Highness the Emir. We need to provide facilities and good services for executives when they stay in hotels, have a meal in a restaurant or need a conference hall. All facilities should be available for different kinds of tourism activities, in order to make business tourism attractive.'* (Ali)

The two participants above considered the most important point of the speech by the Emir of Kuwait to be his announcement that there is a need to make the state of Kuwait a destination for business tourism. This idea was presented as an alternative to oil, which is not a sustainable industry (Euromonitor International 2014). The participants believed that if this vision comes to fruition, it would have

to go hand-in-hand with a flourishing tourism industry, supported by an advanced infrastructure in order to attract customers. However, according to the KCSB (2014), the number of visitors who come to Kuwait for business from the GCC countries is very limited, less than three thousand visitors in 2013. This is mainly because of the currently unattractive business environment in Kuwait.

In fact, interviewees considered that in order to develop the business tourism market in Kuwait it is essential to create and develop high level conference facilities. This would enable the country to promote itself as a venue for regional or international conferences. High quality venues can attract business visitors, as the following statements shows:

*‘Business tourists might prefer to choose Kuwait for international conferences if we have the right facilities to attract conferences. At the moment in Kuwait, this is limited and this makes many people go to GCC countries such as Qatar and Dubai to do their programs there. This is because there are many people who are interested in this kind of tourism and the potential for Kuwait is really high, but it needs to be developed.’* (Hussain)

*‘We need to start establishing the infrastructure for the right facilities and buildings for conferences and exhibitions. We need to have the will and ambition to create a kind of business tourism that has been successful in neighbouring countries and bring back the majority of businessmen, who travel and transfer their business to other GCC countries.’* (Salam)

*‘If I want to organise a conference, I am more likely to travel to Dubai, because they have very good facilities there. It is also cheaper for me to pay the fees there because there are many conference centres, more than what is being offered in Kuwait. Moreover, I’m sure that the majority of the audience attended will be Kuwaitis!’* (Mishal)

These statements indicate a recognition that, at present, the international conference/exhibition market is poorly developed in Kuwait, particularly in comparison with other GCC countries. Participants highlighted the need to develop the appropriate infrastructure in order to attract tourists to Kuwait for business purposes. It is interesting to note that the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan match the views of participants in this respect. To catch up with the rest of the GCC countries, this plan needs then to be activated. Dubai is

one of Kuwait's neighbours and is well established as a prominent business tourist destination (Henderson 2006a; Sharpley 2008). Moreover, the volume of Kuwaiti businesses in Dubai is very high as it represented about 5.17 billion dollars (USA) in 2013 (Annahar 2012). Mishal explained that many Kuwaitis are forced to travel outside the country to enjoy good facilities for conferences. He also made reference to the costs, which seem to be surprisingly high. Morakabati et al (2014) agree that the service sector, including tourism, is the primary way for the diversification of the economy. Therefore, Kuwait should now be seriously concerned about missing out on opportunities to establish itself as a commercial hub, as was requested by the Emir of Kuwait (Aldaryeesh 2010). Kuwait should aim at providing top quality hotels, conferences and exhibitions centres, to meet business needs. This, in return, would create a more even seasonal spread of visitors (Henderson 2006a). Furthermore some GCC countries, such as the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar, provide business centres and tourist resources so that business travelers can combine business with pleasure (Mansfeld and Winckler 2004; Morakabati et al 2014).

### ***Family Tourism***

Family tourism is seen as the most suitable type of tourism to be potentially developed in Kuwait. Alanjiri (2014) claims that the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan recommended that the development of family tourism is something that would be more accepted by the Kuwaiti people. Conversely, there was concern about developing opposite types of tourism such as singles' holidays, which are not encouraged, as shown in the following quotations:

*'I think the most suitable type of tourism we will go for is family tourism, as this will be more welcome from the locals. This is because this kind of tourism suits the culture of Kuwait. As we have a lot of spare land in Kuwait, we can provide many attractions for a family with two or three children, such as theme parks and so on.'* (Samer)

*'As Kuwait is a conservative society, I prefer to consider the development of family tourism, which can help us to preserve our identity, rather than singles holidays, which would challenge it.'* (Fatema)

Moreover, family tourism reflects the nature of Kuwaiti society as well as most Arab societies, where emphasizing the family unit (and discouraging young single

visitors) is felt to be better suited to Islamic culture. Therefore, the benefits of this type of tourism can minimize the undesirable impacts where all stakeholders were encouraged in the development of tourism. Additionally, this may increase the demand for Kuwait as it will be hosting the majority of families from the other GCC countries.

This is interesting as according to Hofstede (2009), Kuwait has a highly collectivist culture, which is not tolerant to change. This is particularly true in the case of challenges to cultural norms that are derived from religion. Generally, Kuwaiti people would feel more comfortable with family tourism, as this is more likely to mean that moral conflict will be avoided or, at least, will be as minimal as possible. If family tourism is promoted, gender comingling would not be an issue.

The participants believe that it is important to understand the background of Kuwaiti people with regards to the type of tourism that they prefer in Kuwait, whether they come from conservative or liberal communities. Indeed the majority of the participants prefer to have family tourism rather than singles tourism. This type of tourism will be more comfortable for local citizens to accept. Moreover, this will fall in line with the euphoria stage of Doxey's Irridex Model (1975), where the locals welcome the tourists as they will visit Kuwait as families not singles. Therefore, the Kuwaiti government could be encouraged to develop family type tourism, as this will encourage Kuwaitis to be more welcoming to their visitors.

### ***Domestic Tourism***

Domestic tourism currently accounts for the majority of tourist spending (89.2%) in Kuwait and this is forecast to rise in the next decade (WTTC 2014). This is another type of tourism however that requires encouragement and investment from the government. Kuwait has developed an advanced and sophisticated consumer society. Therefore, the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan suggested that there is high demand to travel among local residents but the supply side within Kuwait is very limited. Moreover, holidays are important to Kuwaiti people and they do not hesitate to spend large sums of money on them. Furthermore, many Kuwaitis have enough financial means to enable them to afford luxurious holiday trips, which benefits neighbouring tourism destinations as they are a key market for GCC countries (Al Fulaij 2008; Taw El-Lail 2014). Participants in this study would like to see that money spent in Kuwait, to boost the domestic tourism industry, as the following comments highlight:

*'Kuwaitis love to travel for pleasure and are willing to spend a lot of money due to their high disposable income. They travel to destinations like Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, Manama, Jeddah, Muscat etc, which share almost the same climate and geography. These destinations do not provide things that Kuwait is not able to provide. Therefore, it is necessary to invest in developing similar or even better facilities that would divert the Kuwaiti travelling expenditure into local economy.'*  
(Husain)

*'The majority of Kuwaiti people enjoy luxury and they have plenty of money to spend on their spare time and holidays. Therefore, a large number of Kuwaitis travel abroad for each holiday such as Eids ( Islamic festival)s , spring and summer holidays and sometimes they take a leave vacation to travel outside Kuwait to many destinations around the world especially to the Gulf States.'*  
(Kamal)

The above comments show that many Kuwaitis are wealthy enough to enjoy holidays in different destinations such as London, Paris, Turkey and Dubai. London and/or Dubai came first and second place in the Kuwaiti travel market for 2012 (Alkuwaitiyah, 2013). It is very interesting to notice that the majority of Kuwaitis are traveling around the world especially to Western countries, but they have many fears regarding visitors from the West. This is mainly because they think that developing tourism in Kuwait will have a negative influence on Kuwaiti society. This may show the apparent hypocrisy in Kuwaiti society, as the majority of Kuwaitis are traveling around the world. However they do not want to bring in the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism that they have experienced in other destinations. Many Kuwaitis feel that these influences may disturb certain components of the Kuwaiti society and its social structure.

Participants supported the encouragement and development of domestic tourism as a way to persuade Kuwaitis to stay in the country, instead of frequently travelling to other holiday destinations. However they argued that more domestic sights and attractions were needed:

*'It is very important to have more development of tourism resource as there is a demand as well as there are needs to develop domestic tourism for locals. Therefore, Kuwaitis are frequently traveled outside the country as they find more recreation and entertainment facilities than at home so if the country provides more tourism projects them can spend their holidays within the country.'* (Mishal)

*'I would like to have more tourism projects such as more resorts, theme parks and recreation and entertainment centers that would encourage domestic tourism. I hope there is more growth in the tourism sector which will have an effective and distinctive role in developing tourism industry in Kuwait.'* (Athary)

*'We do not have domestic tourism as you may find it in other countries this is because there are not many thing that you can do here it is either book in one of the few resorts which are very expensive and always fully book or going to one of the shopping malls with a lot of restaurants and cafes. Generally, this is not enough to satisfy Kuwaiti tourists who travel all around the world.'* (Fawaz)

As mentioned above, it is apparent that main tourist attractions and tourist facilities are not sufficiently developed to meet the needs of the domestic tourist market. It is also the case that some of the most high-profile domestic attractions have suffered years of neglect and are not in a good condition (Kuwait Times 3 December 2013). Furthermore, the delay in implementing the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan has cost a lot from the supply side as well as the demand side. This is because the majority of residents search for tourism activities and when they do not find enough offers from the supply side in Kuwait they look to other destinations. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that domestic tourism may be considered a significant source of income (Otero-Giraldez et al. 2012). In addition, it would contribute heavily to increased expenditure in the country, if more tourist attractions are developed. The number of Kuwaiti tourists who travelled outside the country increased by 11.7 % in 2012, compared with 2011, with an expenditure of 2.4 Billion KD, about £4,800,000,000, on tickets and accommodation alone (Al-Watan 2013a). Kuwaitis will continue to travel, and the Kuwaiti government should take notice that there is a lot of money going out of the country.

Therefore a more focused analysis of the needs of Kuwaiti consumers should be conducted, as well as coordinated strategies developed to change attitudes towards travelling outside the country and instead spending holidays in Kuwait. In addition, investment in domestic attractions and resources is required. Kuwait is one of the ten richest countries in the world (Annahar 2012). Therefore it is not incapable of creating a new tourist industry, on a similar footing with other regional tourist destinations. This tourism development strategy may help to change Kuwait's status from a tourism supply region to a tourism generating

region. There is potential, as according to the KCSB (2014), the total number of guests in different types and class of hotel is 34,639 Kuwaitis in 2014, indicating a high demand for domestic tourism. Nevertheless, Kuwaitis are interested in recreational facilities and if they do not find what they are looking for inside Kuwait they will not hesitate to travel abroad to enjoy themselves. Moreover, this was noted in the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, but since this strategy has not yet been implemented, Kuwait will continue to be a generating country for other destinations. However, as this has not gripped the government's attention yet, other stakeholders should have cooperated to bring in the benefits of the tourism industry and return the revenue of tourism into the country. It is interesting to see that in the last few years private individuals and businesses have realized the demand of Kuwaitis for domestic tourism and have created their own initiatives to generate income inside Kuwait.

### ***Cultural Tourism***

Traditional heritage and archaeological sites are a source of cultural tourism, with a potential for attracting tourists from all over the world. Furthermore, cultural tourism is one of the most important and fastest growing forms of tourism worldwide (Griffin et al 2013). Helmy and Cooper (2002) agree with McKercher et al (2004) that cultural tourism is the oldest of the “new” tourism phenomena. However cultural tourism is currently weakly developed in Kuwait. The country does not have any registered World Heritage Sites though there are ongoing attempts to register Failaka Island as a World Heritage Site. This application was made when it was announced by The Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Ambassador Dr. Ali Altarah (Alqabas 2013; Kuna 2013). If this is accepted, it will be the first step towards making Kuwait a cultural tourism destination. This recognition, in turn, may help develop this type of tourism in Kuwait. The Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan also proposes that Failaka Island can be one of the mega projects which will kick start the development of tourism (Alanjiri 2014; Paris and Rubin 2012). In the same way as the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan, the project to develop Failaka Island has been held back due to a lack of priority by the government.



Failaka Island is highly regarded by Kuwaitis and participants were agreed that cultural tourism (and in particular Failaka Island) was an appropriate future form of tourism development.

*'We have for example, Failaka Island, which could be developed as one of the cultural resources. As it has historical sites and the potential for developing cultural tourism will increase, if it has been adopted by UNESCO and accepted as a World Heritage Site. This would raise the potential for organising boat tours and day trips to the island to explore its history.'* (Asmaa)

*'Failaka Island, the most beautiful island in the area, should be developed; we should give investors the opportunity to make the island a remarkable place to visit. UNESCO recognition would certainly help in this.'* (Fawaz)

The above comments show that there are some historical and cultural sites that perhaps have been forgotten, or neglected, for a long time. However, the majority of the participants stress that they still have the potential for development. This will need commitment and coordination from the government since the public sector will have to take the lead on improving the infrastructure and cultural resources on the island. In addition, environmental protection and a management plan will be necessary to ensure registration with UNESCO (Kuna 2013).

What has become evident, during the interviews with the participants, is the need to preserve certain buildings that are key to the country's cultural identity. The relationship between heritage and national/cultural identity is well established (Graham et al 2000). Many countries seek to protect buildings, landmarks and monuments which are important symbols of history and collective identity. In addition many countries encourage tourists (both domestic and international) to visit such buildings and monuments in order to reinforce understandings of cultural identity. The Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan emphasised the importance of sustaining the Kuwaiti identity by preserving every tangible aspect of Kuwaiti heritage (Alanjiri 2014; ASIA 2015). However, in the past, buildings have been destroyed and there was a lack of awareness of the importance of preserving certain architectural structures. This was something which participants were well aware of:

*'Unfortunately, Kuwaitis have damaged their own national heritage and not protected it like other old cities have done around the world. This was because*

*of the law of appraisal in the 1950s where a lot of our heritage was damaged by demolishing old houses.'* (Ali)

*'Unfortunately, most of the old buildings have been destroyed. There is currently a project named "the traditional village" where they are rebuilding some historical houses and areas depicting objects and lifestyles from the old city. The aim is to restore the buildings to display their cultural uniqueness. In my view, Kuwaiti identity has vanished and there will be some difficulty in bringing it back. At the least we must preserve the Diwanias important symbols of our cultural identity.'* (Asmaa)

The above quotes show participants' regret over the destruction of buildings which led to the loss of some of the country's heritage. National awareness of the importance of such heritage buildings has led to the launch of projects to restore some of the lost cultural identity. Following the United Nations declaration of 2002 as the 'Year for Cultural Heritage', Pedersen's Practical Manual for World Heritage Site Management suggests a series of managerial guidelines, including tourism projects that respond to the needs and aspirations of the visitor, while minimising adverse impacts on the heritage and lifestyles of the host community (UNESCO 2013). Tourism development and infrastructure projects should consider the following features: the aesthetic, social and cultural dimensions, natural and cultural landscapes, bio-diversity characteristics and the broader visual context of heritage places. Preference should be given to the usage of local materials bearing in mind local architectural styles. Tourism development plans should make prior assessment of the natural and cultural values of the resource (Dyer et al. 2003; Lee 2013).

One of the interviewees stated that the National Council contributes to the preservation of the national culture. Its aim is not directly to improve the tourism product, but it may ultimately support the development of tourism, as the following comment highlights:

*'The function of the National Council is to preserve Kuwaiti identity. For example, our museums place emphasis on Kuwait, its history and the past civilizations in this region. This might lead indirectly to improving the tourism offer.'* (Mobarak)

The above comment emphasises the important role played by the National Council, a public organisation, in preserving Kuwait's national identity. It also

illustrates the relationship between preservation, national identity and tourism. Many preserved buildings and monuments are given new, contemporary uses as heritage tourism attractions. Their role is to reinforce shared understandings of national history and identity among domestic tourists. In this way they contribute to reinforcing shared senses of citizenship and national identity (Palmer 1999; Franklin 2003). However sites of national heritage can also be important for projecting national identity to an external audience (international tourists). Museums are also an important part of this project. Their role is not only to preserve historically important objects but also to 'tell the national story', to both domestic and international visitors.

In this context, governments also seek to protect and encourage cultural traditions which are important for cultural/national identity. This is frequently done through promoting such traditions for (and to) tourists as a means of keeping them alive. For example, in Morocco, government support for the development of the craft industry can be broadly categorized into three major types of intervention: training, investment incentives and the organization of cooperatives. The Kuwaiti government could similarly encourage local people to participate in the craft industry with a view to promoting traditional arts and crafts to tourists. Government support of tourism is the basis for a successful industry, according to Qin et al. (2011).

Participants offered a number of practical ideas for engaging tourists with the country's cultural heritage and additionally pointed out that development of cultural tourism would help to sustain these sites for the benefit of local people. For example:

*'We have to demonstrate our cultural life by inviting tourists to the Diwaniya and the weekly family get together where the sons and grandfathers assemble in the same house. They should also see and experience the way Kuwaiti families meet together for special occasions in their houses.'* (Rashed)

*'One special feature of traditional Kuwaiti culture is the Diwaniya. You know if I have any guest come to Kuwait for the first time I will be very keen to took him to visit Diwaniya which most visitors to Kuwait would like to experience this place and to mix with Kuwaitis in their daily life environment.'* (Rami)

The *Diwaniya* is a large room in each family house, or in an independent block, which is kept for family gatherings (Al-Kandari 2009; Al Shamlan 1986). Traditionally, only the men of the family have used them, but they are now increasingly being used by the women. In rare cases, the *Diwaniya* is used for mixed gatherings. The interviewees believe that visiting a *Diwaniya* would be a distinctive tourist activity, which also reflects the culture of the destination. However, it is likely that such tourism would only be acceptable if the visitors were from other Islamic countries. As an additional activity, participants suggested that visitors to Kuwait should experience the characteristics of family life so that they may better understand the Kuwaiti culture and how the people communicate with each other. Moreover, the *Diwaniya* plays a great role in the political, economic and social life in Kuwait (Al-Kandari 2009). Therefore it is interesting for tourists to include a visit to these places.

Participants highlighted other potential attractions, related to history that could illustrate the culture of Kuwait, including traditional music and musical instruments associated with pearl diving, fishing and sea trade:

*'We have traditional songs and music that are a component of maritime heritage; unfortunately, we have not invested in it appropriately. This art form was prevalent in the early days when men went to sea for pearl diving expeditions. The cultural songs were instrumental in this whole activity. Unfortunately, this might disappear and this is a part of our culture that could be a significant and distinct feature of the Kuwaiti identity that could be packaged as a cultural tourist product somehow.'* (Mishal)

Artifacts dating back to Greek and Hellenistic periods found on Failaka Island were also cited, as were visits to the *Al-Mubarikia Souq* and the Friday open market in the old city.

Participants emphasised that cultural tourists should acquaint themselves with the various ways of life of Kuwaitis, past and present. Participants pointed to the MENA region as a successful example, which relies on its heritage as a crucial feature of the tourism offering (Kalesar 2010). The region is famous for its cultural heritage resources such as the desert atmosphere, archaeological sites, architectural designs, traditional costumes and folklore. It is unfortunate to note that armed conflict, or terrorist activity, can lead to the destruction of an area's cultural features which are often deliberately targeted (KCSB 2014). The Gulf

Invasion destroyed and damaged sites like the Kuwait Towers, which had to be repaired, and artefacts from the Kuwait National Museum were stolen and damaged (Casey 2007; KCSB 2014).

### ***Food Tourism***

Food is an important factor in any tourist destination (Quan and Wang 2004). In particular, food (or gastronomy) tourism is increasingly popular around the world (Hall et al 2003). Local food specialities are an important aspect of place identity and can be promoted within branding strategies to emphasise the distinctiveness of a destination (Lin et al 2011). This is another new form of tourism that Kuwait could develop. There is diversity in Kuwaiti cuisine that ensures a vast range of choices with respect to foodstuff; namely Arabian, Western, Indian and Far Eastern cuisine (KGO 2014). Food habits are interlinked to cultural and religious frameworks of a society. Native cooking represents the Kuwaiti history, its tribes and immigrants together with desert and marine trade links. The cuisine has its roots in Bedouin, Persian, Indian and Eastern Mediterranean food (Al-Awadi and Amine 1988).

Interviewees highlighted that Kuwaiti food has a distinctive taste which includes a blending of Indian and Arabic spices. This can be used as the basis for a promotional and branding campaign which can attract tourists to the country to experience the taste of new and traditional dishes, as shown below:

*'Kuwait can provide ethnic cuisine in restaurants, which caters for groups coming from outside and allows them to taste Kuwaiti food that has a special flavour. Kuwait is a haven for food; it could attract tourists to the country.'* (Danah)

*'Once, I had guests from the US and I invited them to have lunch at my home; they were surprised at the variety of food. They also liked the flavour of Kuwaiti dishes. I think, if we provide Kuwaiti cuisine in a traditional setting, it would attract many tourists.'* (Mona)

*'I love to go to the Al-Mubarikia Souq and enjoy everything there, especially the food which, with the cultural and traditional atmosphere, it takes me back to Kuwait's past. If I have visitors from outside Kuwait, I like to take them there to test and enjoy the Kuwaiti food; if these places were developed more, it could help in the development of the tourism industry in Kuwait.'* (Rana)

The above comments show how food could be an important feature of Kuwaiti tourism. Moreover, the interviewees suggested that traditional Kuwaiti cuisine, as well as the hospitality of the Kuwaiti people, might draw more visitors to the country. As Samer and Mona suggested, the serving of foods in traditional dining rooms may play an attractive part for tourists' enjoyment of a destination's cuisine. Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei (2013) supports this argument that food tourism is an important tourism product that can help in effectively marketing a destination. Many tourists, for example, visit destinations for authentic cuisine such as France, Spain and Italy. It may also be claimed that another point underlying the art of serving food, is the ability to communicate with tourists. Part of this approach is the value added factor, which can be in the form of an expert that presents an explanation about the background of foods and the regional culture through the art and act of cooking.

### ***Triple 'S' Tourism***

Triple 'S' tourism (sun, sand and sea) is another type of tourism highlighted by the participants. Kuwait has 499km of coastline and contains many high-quality beaches. In addition, Kuwait has a variety of islands, due to its geographic position at the top of the Arabian Gulf, and this could be exploited to develop beach and maritime tourism. Moreover, this kind of tourism can be offered mostly all year round especially for tourists' coming from countries with very cold weather because the Kuwaiti weather from October to March is moderate and the heat is bearable during April to June (KCSB 2014). The 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan has recommended the encouragement of beach tourism from October to March for the international market (Alanjiri 2014; ASIA 2015). There has been a continuous debate, for some time, in the Kuwaiti Parliament regarding the possibility of developing triple 'S' tourism for international tourists on one or two of the Kuwaiti Islands. This could be Kuwait's way of copying the Maldives' experience (Scheyvens 2011). However the project failed due to an absence of clear vision and objectives. Therefore, the mission was not accomplished. Examples are Failaka Island, which is considered to be a rich historical site, and Boubyan Island, which has the potential to be developed as a maritime tourist haven, as shown in the comment below:

*'We have a long coastal line that would be perfect for maritime activities. We can develop many maritime activities for tourist by investing in the beaches and*

*establishing tourist resorts. This will not only attract tourists but it will also will keep Kuwaitis in the country to enjoy these new resources as well as save the money for the benefit of the Kuwaiti economy' (Athary)*

Secondly, because islands are not being fully utilized, they have a high potential for development. Kuwait has nine natural islands but there is considerable conflict regarding how to develop these islands for the purpose of tourism activities. Moreover, one of the mega projects in the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan was a vision to develop these island especially Failaka Island (ASIA 2015; Paris and Rubin 2012). However, the issue has caused concern since beach tourism is associated with practices that are not considered acceptable by Kuwaitis such as alcohol consumption and particular ways of dressing, as discussed earlier. Some of the participants suggested that this issue could be avoided by providing one or two isolated islands for tourists. This would allow the development of tourism on some islands, as well as avoiding conflict with a conservative society. This falls in line with other Islamic destinations such as the Maldives where beach tourism has been developed on isolated islands where there are no interactions between tourists and locals (Dikou et al. 2009; Scheyvens 2010).

Participants identified the activities that could be offered on the islands mentioned, as the following statements highlight:

*'There are 9 natural islands, which could offer such as water sports, island trips and fishing. If these islands developed for the tourism purposes activities it will attract many tourists as well as locals visiting these island and it is possible to make some of the island for locals and some for international tourists. However, this will need more effort to develop these activities and market them correctly locally and internationally.'* (Mona)

*'I think there are opportunities to develop island tourism as in Kuwait there are 9 natural islands. Each island could have its own theme such as Adventure Island or Spa Island and so on as well as it will be preferred form the locals to not mix with the international tourists therefor I recommend to have island for tourist and island for locals '* (Essa)

The participants believe that many maritime-based specialised activities could be developed alongside beach tourism. As Hall (2001) highlighted, such

development enhances income and creates more jobs for local people. Activity options include island hopping and combination tours, snorkelling, round-island trips, and diving (Jaafar and Maideen 2011). As Erfanian and Tahir (2012) highlighted in their study of Kish Island in Iran, there are many benefits to the surrounding area when an island is developed. Kuwait, if in the possession of fully developed facilities on its many offshore islands, could have realistic chances of promoting island tourism as a major tourist attraction (Mohamed 2005). Because island tourism is often associated with activities that are not appreciated by Muslims, for example immodest dress and drinking alcohol, there are some who oppose this project and want to prevent it from happening. Therefore, a compromise may be a way forward to satisfy all sections of Kuwaiti society, through the introduction of *Halal* tourism.

### ***Desert Tourism***

Desert tourism is yet another type that participants cited as having development potential. Kuwait has a large desert area, with more than 90% of the total area of Kuwait being deserted (Mahgoub 2007). The desert, especially during the winter, is viewed as one of the most attractive places to go to, not only by the majority of locals but also by visitors. Every year Kuwaitis wait for the camping season to start at the beginning of November (lasting to the end of March). When the season starts they enjoy the weather, practicing many activities such as desert sports and organising social gatherings between family and friends, as shown in the following statements:

*'We actually have a season for camping, and most Kuwaiti families go to the desert to camp. They need to express themselves through their culture and traditions which include desert camping and safaris. You cannot see this feature in many destinations so you could promote this locally and internationally.'* (Salam)

*'I think the only way we can attract tourists is by providing services with an identity characteristic. For example, taking tourists to spend a night camping in the desert would be a unique and special experience. Tourists would welcome observing the traditional camping season for Kuwaiti families.'* (Saad)



*'Camping in the desert would be an attractive activity for international tourists, especially those who visit from cold environments. Therefore, we should focus on the camping season, which runs from November to April.'* (Danah)

The above comments highlight the camping season as an ideal time for tourists to visit Kuwait, as the climate is pleasant and conducive to unique desert activities. Kuwaitis, with their Gulf neighbours, share a love for the desert, drawing many families to the south every winter to revive their customs of seeking refuge in the sand. The desert has always been part of the Arabian culture and way of life. It is a place to visit for leisure and entertainment by locals and tourists. Desert tourism makes reference to a diversity of products, experiences and environments, without there being a clear single 'desert tourism' market. Instead, there is a collection of markets characterised by their small scale and complex interactions with natural, social and cultural environments. Overall it is an important form of domestic tourism. However, there may also be potential to develop desert tourism for the international market since the 'desert' is one of the most iconic and alluring images of the Middle East. In Dubai, the desert is used as a tourist attraction for foreigners. As pointed out by Lee and Jain (2009), outdoor desert activities, such as sand boarding adventures, 'Dune bashing' and camel tours, are tourist activities offered by Dubai to enhance the tourist experience. However, in Kuwait, the desert is currently only used as a seasonal attraction for families and groups during the wintertime (Mahgoub 2007). Therefore, lessons have to be drawn by the authorities in Kuwait, which has ample desert areas to draw on. It may be worth considering the fact that desert tourism will not encourage those undesirable activities connected to beach tourism to the same extent and may therefore be less controversial among different social groups. Desert tourism also can be controlled more because the duration of the season would only be from November to March, whereas the beach season could last all year round.

From all the above, it can be understood that there are many kinds of tourism that could be developed in Kuwait. There are a lot of potential resources, which may lead to the establishment of many types of tourism but these have to be realised within the limitation of the socio-cultural context of Kuwait. In particular, the development of any new forms of tourism will have to meet the principles of cultural sustainability in that they should accord with the traditional, conservative values of Kuwaiti society. However, as stated before, the data analysis and the

2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan suggests that Kuwait has an inadequate base of resources and attractions to satisfy either domestic or international demand.

### **6.3. Positive Socio-Cultural Impacts**

This section deals with the positive impact that tourism has on social and cultural customs, as perceived by participants. It is important that the local community perceives tourism to promise positive impacts so that its development is supported. It is helpful to use the Social Exchange theory here to highlight that the local community needs to see the more favourable impacts of tourism rather than the negative impacts that accompany it if it is to be supported.

#### ***Cultural Pride***

Kuwait's culture is rich and diverse, a source of pride for its population and Kuwaitis are concerned about cultural dilution. The majority of participants highlighted that Kuwaitis are a very patriotic and proud people, who are very loyal to their country and Prince. Prime examples of this are particularly evident in February, during the National and Liberation Day celebrations. Although the participants highlighted that the majority of Kuwaitis are the globetrotters of the Middle East, they are very proud to live in Kuwait, as the following statements show:

*'When I travel abroad and I meet any person who asks me 'where are you from?' I answer full of pride and say 'I am from Kuwait; it is a small country but it has a great reputation for its hospitality and a unique cultural and traditional environment'.'* (Ahmad)

*'I feel very proud when my friends from the US and Europe visit me. I make sure I take them to all the special places, such as Souq Almubarikia, and I take them to dinner in the best places, the most popular restaurants. They are always impressed and surprised by the good food and the local culture.'* (Mishal)

*'When I have guests, I take them everywhere, for example to one of our marriage ceremonies or to Dowaniua so they can see something of our culture and traditions. This makes me proud of my culture - I feel we have something that is unique.'* (Rashed)

The above comments reflect the enthusiasm that Kuwaitis have for introducing visitors to new cultural experiences and exposing them to traditional features of life in Kuwait. The participants are proud of Kuwait's cultural attractions and see pride as helpful to the authorities if tourism is developed. In addition, as Sharma et al. (2008) state, tourism is making a positive contribution by generating awareness among the host community of their own cultural and traditional values. Tourism potentially has an important role to play in raising the international profile of Kuwait and enabling the citizens of other countries to see Kuwait and its people for themselves. A greater priority on tourism development would, therefore, accord with a sense of national pride and a desire for Kuwait to be better known among foreign citizens. Participants are convinced that the community is willing to accommodate more tourists and they believe that the community is ready to participate and communicate with international tourists. This eagerness stems from a desire to highlight local customs, attractions and traditions. It does not appear to be profit oriented, as shown in the following comments.

*'I am proud that Kuwait is a magnet for many writers, artists and academics from different parts of the world. They are keen on visiting Kuwait during the cultural seasons such as Hala February and Quran cultural Festivals. I feel very fortunate to meet them and of course this broadens an inspiration to preserve our cultural heritage. If we don't have such events in Kuwait we will not have the chance to meet those people. This also will contribute to tourism by highlighting all the landmarks in the country.'* (Sara)

*'In my opinion, in the cultural events, the locals may market their local attractions in their areas by for example wearing their traditional clothes such Gutra and oqal ,dishdasha for men and gold jewelries, abaya or dra`a (Tunic/ loose fitting dress) for women. This will enhance their national pride as well as increase the potential to preserve and sustain facilities for the benefit of the local community and tourists.'* (Athary)

The above comments suggest that participants agree that local communities should be encouraged to become involved in the tourism development process, by taking on more responsibilities, such as interactions between locals and tourists, enhancing knowledge of cultural heritage and marketing the cultural attractions of Kuwait. The involvement of the local community in this way could

represent a successful form of community-based tourism. This local activity can in addition provide an incentive to motivate the government, entrepreneurs and locals, in general, to preserve their cultural identity and cultural pride. This finding agrees with Harrison's suggestion that tourism development increases interaction between tourists and locals and that will change the social state of the host community. Petra's local community in Jordan offers a good example of how civic pride is exploited and sustained by tourism. Alhasanat and Hyasat (2011) observed that through the efforts of its exceptional community, Petra has acquired a premier attraction and iconic status, giving its inhabitants a passion and pride in their cultural heritage. Their inherent loyalty to the place and all its historical associations gives them the necessary pride and enjoyment that motivates them to become involved in tourism.

### ***Preserving Handicrafts***

The preservation of declining traditions and crafts is frequently identified as one of the positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism (Hall and Lew 2009), particularly in the developing countries. In particular, tourists frequently demand what they believe to be authentic souvenirs from the destinations they visit and locally-made handicrafts are ideally placed to meet this demand. In this study, participants highlighted the fact that development of the tourism industry in Kuwait could lead to a revival of handicrafts, the establishment of cultural centres and a raised awareness of the importance of keeping relations between tradition and modernity. They emphasised that this may encourage cultural activities on the part of the local people and open up new sources of employment. They hope that this revival might lead to a reopening of traditional jobs, which may continue to be passed from one generation to another within families, as shown below:

*'I believe we have many cultural handicrafts that reflect the basic jobs of our fathers and grandfathers. During their times, they used to build dhows, which now appear only in the form of souvenirs. Therefore, I think the authorities should consider these handicrafts more as our cultural heritage and use them in cultural activities. This will stimulate job creation that may have a sustainable future.'* (Jarrah)

*'Some activities should take place all year round to show the traditional work done by our grandfathers and how they lived in the past. For example, AL-Sadu house, where they offer cultural events and activities for visitors, such as*

*weaving; for example, showing the Bedu women weaving tents and making furniture would be a good idea if at the end of their visit, they take some souvenirs.'* (Kholod)

Here, participants emphasised how Kuwait was famous for its traditional handicrafts relating to maritime and desert traditions. The boats known as dhows, large wooden vessels, were made for pearl diving and travel for trade in Kuwait's past (NCCAL 2003). Dhows are no longer used as before, but they are built as models and as souvenirs. If this important traditional trade could be revived, this traditional industry from Kuwait's history could be preserved, with fathers passing on their knowledge to their sons (Al Shamlan 1986; KGO 2014). However the trade has been in decline, due to low demand. Therefore, tourism development may be a way to increase the demand for these products and encourage local businessmen to set up manufacturing units. This potential product may offer economic benefits to the locals whilst preserving and sustaining traditional handicrafts. These kinds of tourism projects may have a role in safeguarding the cultural heritage of host destinations, as well as providing the chance for new generations to know about their heritage and work in small enterprises related to preserving handicrafts. One participant, especially, mentioned the weaving of tents by Bedu women. These long low tents were made of strips woven out of goat's hair or sheep's wool or a mixture of both (Al Hadad 1987; Al Shamlan 1986). The woven items, known as *sadu* work, used to be an important source of income. The modernisation of Kuwait changed the lifestyle of the desert Bedouins who took advantage of new work opportunities and the prosperity created by the discovery of oil. The Bedouin way of life became extinct, but traditional values and cultural identity remain intact (AL-Sadu 2014).

Certain Arab countries, for example Egypt, Oman, UAE and Jordan, have launched various initiatives to establish traditional arts and craft museums aiming, among other things, to reconstitute the lost memory of a people. The crafts industry and tourism are obviously two sectors whose fates are interlinked such as in Jordan (Alhasanat and Hyasat 2011). Arab countries are globally renowned for their quality craft industries, which draw heavily on authentic centuries-old traditions. When purchasing traditional Arabian crafts and cultural artefacts, Western tourists prefer simple designs and sober colours, which means a return to an earlier style before local fashion changed the way the products

were developed (Fletcher 2008). Participants suggested that tourists could buy unique products such as handicrafts, which could be marketed as souvenirs. This would bring a positive economic impact for the host destination (Dyer et al. 2003).

### ***The role of women in developing tourism***

Some of the interviewees highlighted the role of women in furthering the development of the tourism industry in Kuwait. In 2005, Kuwaiti women secured the right to vote and to stand for local and parliamentary elections. This means that Kuwait is becoming more open to the possibility of gradually strengthening women's representation in parliament and the cabinet. Participants were hopeful that this may increase the involvement of women in encouraging the development of tourism in Kuwait, as shown below:

*'Certainly, I am one of the women pioneers calling for the development of the tourism industry. In a number of articles I have written over the past few years, I have called for the development of tourism as it could become a major alternative income source for Kuwait in the future.'* (Najah)

*'I think once women have access to a job in a high position in government or become members of parliament, they will be more motivated to develop the tourism industry and encourage more women to work in this field.'* (Essa)

*'I work in a hotel and I find this job very inspiring. I am a creative person and every day I deal with new people and manage different situations. In my experience, I think this job is suitable for Kuwaiti women and I will encourage them to work in this industry as soon as they have the opportunity to do so. I want to encourage the authorities to look at the development of the tourism industry as a priority.'* (Kholod)

There has been considerable debate about the benefits and disadvantages of tourism work for women (Sinclair 1997; UNWTO 2011; Baum 2013). One strand of this debate argues that tourism creates many opportunities for women who are able to take advantage of the possibilities offered by tourism work. In particular, tourism can empower women (even in traditionally male-dominated societies) and bring about significance change in their economic, social and political position (Pritchard et al 2007). For example, they can gain greater financial independence so that they are not dependent on men and can gain confidence

from being able to contribute to household budgets (Scott 1997). Furthermore, tourism creates opportunities for women to set up their own small businesses (or microenterprises) which can often be based in the home.

Currently, there are very few women working in the tourism and hospitality sector in Kuwait but the participants were hopeful that their numbers will increase as they get the opportunity and encouragement to participate more. Losinski and Waldorf (2007) conducted their study in San Cristobal and, although the region is known to be male dominated, tourism has offered jobs and enhanced the level of the education for women (Cave and Kilic 2010; Losinski and Waldorf 2007). Likewise, Kuwait is a male dominated society and a developing tourism may create more chances for women to work in this field. As women represent slightly more than half of the Kuwaiti population (KCSB 2014), this is not a hurdle that is insurmountable.

Al-Mughni (2001) states that women's rights and position in society have been influenced by religion and traditional Bedouin culture. In today's Kuwait, women tend to work with other women, but there are many examples of men and women working alongside each other (Euromonitor International 2014). There are a number of women in Islamic countries working in the tourism sector, such as Egypt, Jordan and the Maldives (Shakeela et al. 2010). Although the idea to encourage women to work in this sector is very appealing in theory, it may be more difficult to achieve in practice due to cultural attitudes. The majority of participants highlighted that in Kuwait it would not be accepted for women to work night shifts in hotels, especially local women. Therefore, it is very common to see migrant female workers in the tourism sector, particularly in hotels in Kuwait as well as in other GCC countries (see also Scott 1997). Jobs that could be socially acceptable as well as being attractive to women, working in the sector would involve day shifts or work in an all-female environment. In addition, there are many opportunities for women to work in small enterprises producing handicrafts for sale to tourists and, since it is based in the home, such work is often considered acceptable in conservative societies.

There are many positive socio-cultural impacts that could occur as a result of tourism development that have not been mentioned in this section, as the knowledge of the participants is limited on this issue. However, they have noted some impacts, such as cultural pride, preserving handicrafts and the role of

women in developing tourism. Applying Social Exchange theory reveals that the locals may see the benefits of tourism; however these may not be enough to offset the costs incurred, as the next section will discuss.

#### **6.4. Negative Socio-Cultural Impacts**

This section discusses the potential negative socio-cultural impacts that developing the tourism industry may have on local people. The majority of the participants believed that the development of tourism will be responsible for unacceptable behaviour by tourists, loss of cultural identity, and an increase in immigration, alcohol abuse and prostitution. Until now, this is possibly the main reason why the tourism industry has not been developed in Kuwait. These factors which are seen negatively may counterbalance the benefits cited above. Participants believe that Kuwaitis are reluctant to receive foreign visitors, even though they are keen themselves to travel abroad. Participants emphasised that Kuwaiti culture is sensitive and this may be one of the reasons why they have not developed tourism yet. They do not want any more external factors to impact on an already-changing culture.

##### ***Unacceptable dress code of tourists***

One of the negative socio-cultural impacts pointed out by participants is the influence that tourist dress styles could have on the local people, as shown in the following comments:

*'We are a conservative society; we don't want to see skimpy swimsuits, even on foreigners. I don't mind having tourists in Kuwait. If the tourists respect our culture, they are more than welcome to come to my country.'* (Fatema)

*'As we are a conservative people and we don't accept that men wear shorts or women wear tops without sleeves. You know we dressed differently in the fifties and sixties when we followed the latest fashion designs in Europe. Then in the seventies the Islamic movement started. Now, I believe that most Kuwaitis prefer to be somewhere in the middle, avoiding any extremes.'* (Mona)

Although, judging from the way they dressed, some participants were open-minded, nevertheless many showed unhappy faces when asked for their thoughts on a dress code for tourists. It was interesting that the participant Mona had referred to the period in the last century in Kuwait's history, when she remembered her mother dressing differently in the fifties and sixties. In the late



seventies dress, became governed by the principles of Islam. People's dress became more conservative and strict views developed towards visitors' style of dress too.

Participants point out that Kuwait has always been a conservative society with many norms of behaviour to which citizens are expected to conform. Pointing to the example of Kuwait's neighbours, such as Bahrain and the UAE (partially Dubai), they worry that young people in Kuwait may copy the freer lifestyles of tourists and this may cause conflict in society, as shown below:

*'We don't want to be a copy of Dubai, however, it seems to be a successful hub for national and international tourists, but I personally I don't like to see the uncontrolled behavior from the tourists, as there is a high level of freedom such as women wearing shorts in public places.'* (Ali)

Indeed, Dubai's transnational tourism companies display more Western features than the Emirati socio-cultural (Islamic) perspectives and values (Sharpley 2008). This relates to a much-discussed impact of tourism in Developing Countries: the demonstration effect (Sharma 2010; Teo 1994; Wall and Mathieson 2006). According to this argument, local people (particularly young people) in the destination tend to imitate the behaviour and values of tourists, thereby leading to an erosion of traditional socio-cultural values. Nevertheless, there has been considerable academic debate about the extent of the demonstration effect in destinations. Some researchers have found little definitive evidence for the demonstration effect and have called for caution in the use of the concept (Mcelroy and Albuquerque 1986; Fisher 2004). In addition, in the contemporary world it is difficult to isolate tourism from the wider effects of cultural globalisation, particularly the influence of television and Western consumption patterns (Hall and Lew 2009) which can also contribute to social and cultural change in a destination.

For tourism to be accepted by Kuwaitis as an industry, limitations may need to be introduced in order to control the negative socio-cultural impacts. Such an approach is evident in other countries outside the Islamic world, which also aim to avoid cultural resistance. For example, in Saudi Arabia the most welcome tourists are those who come from the other GCC countries, because of the similarity of their cultural background. Thus the level of socio-cultural impacts is reduced in line with the principles of sustainability (Scott and Jafari 2010). On

the other hand, this may affect the economic benefits offered, by limiting the types of tourists. Clearly, introducing limitations will have to be carried out carefully. Otherwise, there is a strong likelihood that many tourists will react negatively and choose another destination instead. Ultimately, the Kuwaiti government will have to make a choice.

### ***Loss of Cultural Identity***

Different studies on tourism claim that one of the significant socio-cultural impacts of tourism development is the loss of cultural identity of the host destination (Agba et al. 2010; Brohman 1996; Wall and Matheison 2006; Yang and Wall 2009). Participants are worried about a potential loss of cultural identity through the development of tourism, as shown in the following statements:

*'If we are successful we will attract lots of visitors, but I worry that this will lead to a dilution of our culture as they may be from completely different cultures. The authorities should think about that. If we want to minimise the loss of our cultural identity we have to think of a way that we can preserve our culture and reinforce this in our young people as well as visitors.'* (Saleh)

*'One important thing we have to consider is that tourists are visitors for a limited period only, but in a short time they can cause a lot of damage, if they come with different values and behaviour. We need to put limitations in place. Besides a social-cultural environment that is completely different from their own may also attract them.'* (Nada)

*'If tourism grows, we will get the economic benefits, but our culture may also suffer. Everything has pros and cons and the intelligent thing to do is to take advantage of the pros as much as possible and put limits and controls that restrict the spread of negative phenomena. This will help to safeguard the socio-cultural values of Kuwait.'* (Sara)

Participants were concerned that Kuwaiti's cultural heritage would become diluted because of increased foreign influence from international visitors although they were vague on the details of what might happen. Participants acknowledged that the perceived problematic socio-cultural aspect of tourists visiting Kuwait may not occur if tourists come from a similar cultural background, such as the Gulf region. They highlighted that potential problems can be overcome by putting limitations in place so that tourists clearly understand the

boundaries that exist. In particular cases, governments can introduce strict legal norms to create tourist awareness as regards the socio-cultural sensitivity of the local community and its culture (Sharma et al. 2008). It is interesting to note that participants seemed to assume that tourists from non-Islamic countries were likely to be insensitive to Kuwaiti culture and traditions and there was little mention or recognition that some cultural tourists from non-Islamic countries may visit Kuwait specifically in order to understand and appreciate Arab/Islamic culture. Such tourists are less likely to behave in a way which is considered inappropriate by local people.

### ***Effect of migrant workers on cultural identity***

An additional concern expressed by the participants is that there are already a high number of foreign workers in Kuwait. One disadvantage of tourism development is that this number will increase due to the increasing demands for labour in the tourism industry. This will have an impact on the tourist experience as tourists visiting Kuwait will not usually come into contact with local Kuwaiti workers. Therefore, they will not always experience a genuine Kuwaiti welcome. Participants worried also that a rise in the number of immigrants to Kuwait seeking employment in tourism may impact negatively on the country's identity. Therefore, participants stated that tourism resources have to be staffed by local nationals, as shown below:

*'In my opinion the tourism industry has to be manned by Kuwaitis. This will also help to decrease the burden of youth unemployment, as more job opportunities are created and I would prefer to see some of my native people working in this industry. This is because at the moment there are a lot of foreigners working in hotels and tourist attractions and it is rare to see Kuwaitis working in this jobs '* (Sara)

*'Kuwaiti workers are not prepared to be employed in areas that generally belong to the tourism sector such as hotels, transportation and restaurants. They prefer to set up their own business and bring in someone from a western country to manage their project. However, it may have a long term affect our socio-cultural landscape. By having more immigrants working in the tourism sector, than Kuwaiti nationals, it will affect the image tourists develop of the country.'* (Essa)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, most Kuwaitis prefer not to work in tourism jobs and are happy for foreign workers to take jobs that they see as unsuitable. This is not only applicable to Kuwait but appears to be the same for all of the GCC countries. This view is also supported by Sadi and Henderson (2005) who state that in Saudi Arabia the majority of workers in the tourism and hospitality industry are foreigners. As discussed previously, this has given rise to the localization policy in almost all of the GCC countries. However, this is still limited and the number of migrant workers may increase, which will have an effect on the cultural identity of the destination. Therefore, the Kuwaiti government should make more efforts to promote the idea of Kuwaitis developing an interest to work in tourism and hospitality jobs. This will reduce the effect of migrant workers on the cultural identity of Kuwait. It will also decrease negative socio-cultural impacts, which are related to the large numbers of migrant workers in Kuwait. Additionally, further long-term benefit of localization will be the reduction in reliance on other countries for workers, and the increasing autonomy for Kuwait.

### ***Alcohol consumption***

Another concern discussed by the participants was their anticipation that, with the development of the tourism industry, there will be a significant increase in alcohol consumption. They fear that this will compromise the country's socio-cultural fabric. However, there is a difference of opinion among participants as to the level of risk presented by tourism development. Some believe that the risk is too high and, therefore, they are resistant to developing tourism fully. However, others highlight the fact that tourists could be made to understand and respect Kuwait's socio-cultural norms, as shown below:

*'I think the development of tourism will have a negative impact on the social life of Kuwait. As a conservative person I have my worries that there will be a high level of alcohol consumption and, culturally, this is unacceptable to me and most local people as this may lead to an increase in the crime rate.'* (Mona)

*'I think there are many red lines for developing the tourism industry in Kuwait as development may lead to moral decay, including alcohol consumption and visiting night clubs, getting drunk, but this is not inevitable. If tourists are properly more educated about the Kuwaiti culture and Laws such problems can be avoided.'* (Rami)

The above comments reflect common reservations regarding the development of tourism. Some interviewees believe that tourism carries only socio-cultural costs, which is why they are slow in embracing its development. Meanwhile, others believe that the negative effects have been exaggerated, leading to fear and anxiety, and can be managed. For many, the consumption of alcohol is the beginning of moral decay, and this influences the type of tourist they are willing to receive.

However, there are some participants that believe tourism is an important industry that does not have to be linked with alcohol consumption, as shown below:

*'We are in Kuwait where the majority of people are Muslim and follow the Islamic principle that alcohol is haram (forbidden). Therefore, I think that there is no need to connect alcohol consumption with the development of tourism. We can create a type of tourism that is within our Islamic perspective.'* (Salam)

*'If we go back to the definition of tourism and we know what it entails, we know it is not just about alcohol and wearing indecent clothes, it is about the framework that introduces the destination and the vision of how tourism can flourish.'* (Kamal)

The above comments suggest the possibility of developing tourism within an Islamic framework, as reflected in Surat Al-Baqra: *'They ask you (O Muhammad PUBH) concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: In them is a great sin, and (some) benefit for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit.' And they ask you what they ought to spend. Say: That which is beyond your needs. Thus Allah makes clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought.'* (Al-Baqra; verse 219). The rise of Islamic and enclave tourism can be seen to support *Sharia* practices, clearly indicating the interference of religion in tourism (Olsen 2011; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). One possible solution to this issue is to make use of the uninhabited islands and allow international tourists to enjoy their holidays in a free environment without restrictions on alcohol. However, some people in Kuwait might be critical of this and see it as a way of encouraging double standards, although the author acknowledges that many Kuwaitis already drink in private or in other countries, as noted before.

### ***Increased prostitution***

Participants believed that prostitution might increase with the development of tourism. They fear that venereal diseases will spread, moral values and behaviour will vanish and fade away gradually and that will affect the Islamic identity. Islam forbids prostitution and there are verses in the Holy Quran that clarify its negative impacts on society. For example, in surat An-Nur, Allah said: *'But let them who find not [the means for] marriage abstain [from sexual relations] until Allah enriches them from His bounty. And those who seek a contract [for eventual emancipation] from among whom your right hands possess - then make a contract with them if you know there is within them goodness and give them from the wealth of Allah which He has given you. And do not compel your slave girls to prostitution, if they desire chastity, to seek [thereby] the temporary interests of worldly life. And if someone should compel them, then indeed, Allah is [to them], after their compulsion, Forgiving and Merciful.'* (Sura-An Nur; verse 33).

Participants feel that prostitution is currently related to the growth in the number of foreign migrant workers, particularly those who come from non-Muslim countries. Therefore, they fear that an increase in migrant workers in a growing tourism industry might increase this negative socio-cultural impact still further, as shown in the following statements:

*'One of the things that obstructs tourism development is the issue of prostitution. We do not want to put our head in the ground like an ostrich and say that we don't have prostitution. No, we do have this problem because of the high number of migrant workers. We have to find a solution to this problem or else it is going to get worse with every passing day.'* (Essa)

*'I believe that prostitution will increase when we develop tourism as we will need more migrant workers. You will see that no Kuwaitis are involved in prostitution; you will only see foreign prostitutes who, as we read in the newspapers, are managed by gangs of migrant workers.'* (Samer)

The majority of migrant workers come from the East and Far East Asia to work in private households (KCSB 2014). There is evidence from the police department that many of those housemaids escape from their employers' homes and go to work as prostitutes (Al-Watan 2013b). The market for prostitution is thought to be

provided by migrant workers. Though it must be acknowledged that prostitution occurs in many Islamic countries and Kuwait is no exception, it is nevertheless not widespread as yet. Thus, Kuwait's dependence on migrant workers should be minimised out of consideration for the changes large numbers of such workers may bring to the country.

This study shows that the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development are seen to be more significant than the positive impacts for the participants, as they have a lot of fears of what the industry may bring to society. In its initial stages the carrying capacity model can be applied to tourism (Saarinen 2006; Saveriades 2000). As stated by Aref et al. (2010), the planning for tourism activities should be within the level of carrying capacity of a destination. Kuwait is a conservative society that is controlled by religion and cultural traditions. This causes the majority of the participants to see only the dark sides of tourism. If the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development are not managed, this may lead to disinterest which is already high. The carrying capacity model (Saveriades 2000) mainly depends on two components, the quality of the tourism experience, and the tolerance levels of the locals towards tourists. Therefore, this model can be used in planning for tourism development to ensure the quality of tourism products as well as the acceptance of the locals for the visitors to their areas. It seems from this study that the majority of Kuwaitis are not motivated towards having many non-Muslim international tourists in Kuwait. Therefore it is the responsibility of the Kuwaiti government to develop and promote suitable types of tourism which meet the satisfaction of locals.

## **6.5. Community Attitudes towards Tourism Development**

Community attitudes can have a great effect on the development of tourism, but in the case of Kuwait, such attitudes need to be carefully nurtured. Before launching any initiatives, participants believe that the government should maximise awareness of the importance of developing the tourism industry, as shown in the following comments:

*'There is a necessity to encourage awareness in the local society about the benefits of tourism as it is a new demand for many potential jobs. Moreover, the government has a great role in improving the locals knowledge and skills about the new business opportunities for the tourism industry. Therefore, there is a need to have training to learn more about the tourism industry, what its benefits*

*are and how to have the chance to work in this industry and how to deal with tourists,' (Kamal)*

*'We need to raise people's awareness levels about the importance of developing the tourism industry. They need to understand how the industry will benefit them personally as well as how this will affect the next generations as this industry can provide for them jobs and they also may create their own business.'* (Rana)

Since Kuwait is not yet close to being a fully developed tourism destination, raising people's awareness concerning the benefits of tourism is not going to be a straightforward task. Its achievement may require a well-planned strategy in a society in which people hold controversial views regarding the development of tourism. Nevertheless, it is generally believed that increased understanding and greater support for the development of tourism can be achieved through broad-based education and awareness campaigns (Stephenson 2013). As Feighery (2011) observes, information is vital in helping to raise awareness and to stimulate involvement in tourism projects. Indeed one of the reasons for a lack of community support for tourism development projects is that residents are unaware of the nature of tourism development, either through the government's deliberate exclusion of residents or by simply withholding information from them (Sirakaya et al. 2002).

According to Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2012), residents' reactions to the process of tourism development are explained in models that vary between welcoming and antagonistic. These contrasting models help to explain how tourism influences local residents' perceptions, and recognize the increasing intensity of socio-cultural impact as the stages of tourism development progresses. However, criticism can be made of the assumption that the whole community can become hostile to tourism; communities are heterogeneous and different sections of the community often react differently. Social Exchange Theory (Ap1992) suggests that local residents see tourism in terms of the costs and benefits. They also expect in the exchange process that the theory will assess for their involvement to the development of tourism industry (Ap 1992; Lee 2013). Vukonic (2010) remarks that tourism in some Muslim countries is quite developed (such as in Indonesia and Malaysia), and that the Muslim religious community there displays a very liberal attitude towards all forms of tourism, and towards those from other faiths. Indeed, Moyle et al. (2010) argued



that host communities have diversity in their motivations when it comes to social exchange processes with tourists.

A key question among participants related to Kuwaitis' preparedness to welcome tourism, as shown in the following statement:

*'There is a very important question we should ask, namely are Kuwaiti communities convinced that developing the tourism industry is a necessity and that it can open opportunities for them?' (Salam)*

For another interviewee, building tourism awareness should be an on-going process conducted several years in advance of any major launch:

*'The development process of the tourism industry will take a long time, as will raising awareness in the receiving communities. I do not think that the development process will be implemented within one to two years.'* (Fatema)

In the above estimation, developing tourism will take a long time, as will the raising of awareness amongst community members. Sirakaya et al. (2002) observed that support for tourism development is influenced by factors such as perceptions of tourists, tourism impacts, membership in community organizations, and awareness of tourism development projects in the community. However, residents' support for particular tourism development projects depends on their awareness and acceptance of their benefits and costs, as implied by the social exchange theory (Lee 2013). On the other hand, as participants, stated, Kuwaitis are traditionally government-led. They have always had little say in their own affairs accepting government directives, policies and practices. The government has a great influence on how the country is run, even if it is a democracy with an elected parliament. Therefore if there is a national will to develop tourism, it will probably happen. In this case it will be similar to the case of the Maldives as it was government-led to ensure sustainable tourism development (Scheyvens 2010)

Participants point to a limited involvement in tourism planning, development and management in Kuwait, a wish for more participation and a desire for the local community to be given a fair chance to participate in the development of the tourism industry, as shown below:

*'The community needs to participate in the development of the tourism industry. The amount of community participation will depend on the amount of government encouragement they receive as this will increase their knowledge about tourism development.'* (Fatema)

*'I think that if local communities have more chance to participate in the development and planning of tourism, it will encourage them to have also the chance in creating a new business such as small family hotel or restaurant.'* (Fahad)

*'You know if the local people have their role in the development and management of the tourism industry, and they have been given huge encouragement from the government. This can bring in more knowledge and break the barriers in how to promote the country and make it unique in the region as the majority of the locals work in this industry.'* (Rami)

The future may lie in community-based tourism initiatives (Russell 2000; Hall 2008; Mowforth and Munt 2009; Salazar 2012). Community-based tourism (which is widespread in the Developing World) aims to ensure local control over the process of tourism development by empowering local people to decide for themselves on the nature and form that tourism will take in their locality. It is a practice intended to limit the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism. It has been put into practice in other Arab countries such as Oman which has been promoting 'quality' (rather than mass) tourism since the 1990s (Mershen 2007). It could be particularly appropriate for small-scale initiatives involving desert tourism, cultural tourism and food tourism. Participants believe that if the community is involved in tourism development from the beginning, they might gradually become more enthusiastic about the benefits associated with the tourism industry. Moreover, this finding falls in line with Akama and Kiete's (2007) study on local community participation in Kenya with regards to tourism development. They said that one of the barriers that local communities face is the lack of knowledge about tourism development products. Moreover, as stated by Tosun (2000), it is very difficult to ensure involving the local communities of developing countries in the development of tourism. However, as Andereck et al. (2005) observe, those who are involved in the process of developing tourism become supportive and more aware of its positive impacts. A key point about community-based tourism is that it requires the central authorities to devolve

decision-making to the local level and such a practice is not yet well-developed in Kuwait. Transferring decision-making to the local level could be a good option for Kuwait, as it has been shown already that the central authorities are very slow at making decisions. Therefore, by giving this task to the local communities, this may result in more decisive action toward tourism development.

The interviewees observed a high degree of social interaction among local residents in Kuwait, especially compared to Dubai, and they see this as conducive to a preparedness to be friendly and at least visible to tourists:

*'When you visit tourist attractions in Dubai, you will not find any local people. This may be considered as low participation from local communities in the development of the tourism industry. On the other hand, wherever you go in Kuwait, you will find local people will like to mix together with visitors.'* (Fatema)

*'Kuwait is significant for the social relationships of its local residents, who meet in all kinds of places, maybe because it is a small country and the population is low. Therefore, most Kuwaitis know each other. I'm speaking about citizens not all residents, and this might not be a phenomenon in many other countries. Also this may raise their participation in the development of the tourism industry, if they get the chance and the encouragement from the government.'* (Rashed)

When tourists visit Kuwait, they will notice the presence of Kuwaitis everywhere, which will help them to detect something of the cultural identity of the country. Kuwaiti hospitality towards visitors can encourage tourism and is one of the features of Kuwaiti society. In Dubai, in contrast, few nationals are seen in public places as they are outnumbered by the many migrant workers who also work in the tourism and hospitality sector.

It can be argued that one of the potential benefits of developing the tourism industry in Kuwait is to enhance its economic status and keep up the quality of life of the local community. This is because at the moment Kuwait is one of the 10 richest countries in the world, but this will not be forever as the only source of income (oil) will be depleted sooner or later (Annahar 2012). To reach these benefits, the locals' attitudes have to change to affect positively the process of tourism development.

## 6.6. Conclusion

Though this chapter highlights several challenges facing potential tourism development in Kuwait, it also reveals a strong potential for developing this industry. This was discussed in five themes, the first one describes the types of tourism that best suit Kuwaiti society, such as family tourism and business tourism, which are seen to be among the most suitable for the Kuwaiti context. This is in line with Doxey's (1975) model as the Kuwaitis will be amenable to tourists coming from these two type of tourism. Additionally, participants emphasised the need for a clear vision of what kind of tourism framework could be developed in Kuwait to avoid a loss of cultural identity. Island tourism was also cited, as this could exploit the country's geographical position and offer a series of maritime activities that could prove attractive whilst desert tourism could introduce tourists to an important aspect of Kuwaiti heritage. Opportunities for cultural tourism were also identified, which would serve to satisfy both the growing number of cultural tourists as well as help to preserve heritage traditions. Within the broad domain of cultural tourism is food tourism which was seen to hold strong potential, thanks to a uniquely identifiable national cuisine.

Secondly, participants identified potential resources, which could form the basis for a variety of developing culturally sustainable tourism. However, the participants criticized the Kuwaiti government which has not supplied a clear vision for future development. Applying Butler's life cycle model (1980) shows that Kuwait has barely progressed beyond the first (exploration) stage.

The third and fourth theme covered the socio-cultural impacts of tourism. The positive socio-cultural impacts were limited and only a few were identified by participants such as cultural pride, preserving handicrafts and the enhanced role of women. Conversely, the participants had more to say about the negative impacts as the majority of the participants were fearful about the development of tourism, mainly because of the negative impacts associated with tourism from an Islamic perspective. Therefore, participants' enthusiasm for tourism development has to be set against their awareness of the concerns many people have about increased visitor numbers to Kuwait. The carrying capacity model can be applied to facilitate tourism development as controlling the number and type of visitors may help the locals to accept interaction with tourists.

Notwithstanding the recognition of the positive impacts of tourism development, participants point to a strong resistance to developing tourism because of a fear of the associated negative impacts on Kuwait. These include an increase in migrant workers who staff the tourism industry and an associated increase in prostitution as well as an increased consumption of alcohol and a flouting of a culturally acceptable dress code. It has to be acknowledged that the Kuwaiti government's concern is currently limited to the negative socio-cultural impacts that could occur. The carrying capacity theory may offer indicators of how locals will tolerate the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development but this will not be clear until the process of development of tourism start in Kuwait

The last theme places emphasis on community attitudes and their effects on tourism development. There is a strong resistance to tourism development because of apprehension about cultural change. The discussion identified community-based tourism as a possible way forward. Though participants are conscious of the importance of both local community awareness of and involvement in tourism projects, they are, at the same time, keenly aware that resistance needs to move at a national level before attitudes shift in the community. Using the Social Exchange Theory, locals may become convinced of the benefits of the development of tourism in Kuwait, which may offset the costs.

## **Chapter 7. Conclusion**

### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter highlights the contribution made by this research to fill the identified gap in knowledge on the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. To achieve this, it was important to have an insider perspective in order to access and understand the different opinions and views of the participants on developing culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. With that aim in mind, this research adopted an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative approach that used interviews: primary data were collected from 32 Kuwaiti stakeholders. This chapter will revisit the research objectives, synthesise the findings and highlight the contributions to knowledge. Furthermore, in this chapter the implication of these findings for practice will be discussed, and the new directions and suggestions for future research will be presented. Finally, at the end of this thesis there is a reflection on the process of this research.

### **7.2. The research objectives revisited**

The aim of this study was to assess the potential from the perspective of key stakeholders for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait, and in order to meet this aim, the research set six objectives:

1. To discuss the development of sustainable tourism in an Islamic context.
2. To analyse some of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism development that Kuwait is likely to face in the future.
3. To identify the government efforts for developing tourism in Islamic culture in Kuwait.
4. To explore the barriers and the opportunities for developing tourism in Kuwait.
5. To evaluate the types of tourism that are suitable in Arabic and Islamic culture in Kuwait.
6. To propose a model for developing culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait that could be implemented in other conservative Islamic destinations.

The first objective was achieved through reviewing the related literature. Various sources of literature were used, to allow the researcher to carefully examine the concepts of tourism, development, and sustainable tourism development, in particular within an Islamic context. A range of academic literature about the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and the challenges of developing tourism in a traditional culture was evaluated. It is clear that tourism can have major impacts on people and ways of life in destinations, but it is also important to recognise that tourism is just one among a number of vectors of socio-cultural change. The review also considered various models and theories of socio-cultural impacts in destinations, although not all of these were relevant to the Kuwaiti context, since Kuwait is at a very early stage of the destination lifecycle. However, consulting these models provided insights into some of the challenges that Kuwait might face, as well as indicating what the country might need to do in order to achieve a culturally sustainable form of tourism in the future.

The second objective was achieved through a literature review of tourism impacts and through primary research. Data analysis reveals a high level of concern among stakeholders about the ways in which tourism development can bring about changes to traditional social and cultural values and ways of life. It was apparent that participants have deep reservations about the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development. It is perhaps for this reason that there has been considerable reluctance to pursue tourism development, given the traditional nature of Kuwaiti society. This is reflected in the sidelining of the Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan (2005- 2011).

The third objective was achieved by investigating interviewees' views on government attitudes towards tourism development and by examining the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan and its aspirations and intentions. It is apparent that the plan has never been implemented, which indicates that the Kuwaiti government is hesitant about pursuing the development of tourism. Furthermore, when investigating government procedures to promote the country to local and foreign investors, it was found that bureaucracy and corruption posed real challenges for all investors, local and foreign alike.

The fourth objective was achieved through primary research, by exploring the barriers and the opportunities for developing tourism in Kuwait. Analysis revealed that participants are optimistic about the potential of Kuwait to attract tourists. A

number of forms of tourism that would be socially acceptable to Kuwaitis were identified, such as family tourism, island tourism and desert tourism. It is clear that Kuwait has clear tourism potential. At the same time there is strong doubt that the government will support the development of tourism. Furthermore, there is concern over the extent to which tourism might conflict with Islamic values, particularly if it involved visitors from non-Islamic countries.

The fifth objective was achieved in two ways: firstly, through a literature review on the various types of tourism development in an Islamic context similar to Kuwait. It is apparent that some Islamic states have promoted themselves as tourist destinations, although there is considerable difference in the strategies adopted, the types of tourism promoted, and the types of tourist considered acceptable. The second method of approaching this objective was through primary research, which revealed stakeholder views on the type/s of tourism that could be developed. Some participants advocated a liberal approach in order to capture the international market, while others called for a more conservative approach to tourism development that is sensitive to the Islamic context.

The final objective was achieved partly through evaluation of the literature on tourism development and cultural sustainability, as well as consideration of the types of tourism developed in other Islamic destinations. Largely, however, it was achieved through an analysis of the primary data, which led to the consideration of the potential tourism products and markets and the potential challenges faced by a conservative Islamic society. It is hoped that the model will be useful to other similar sociocultural contexts, though of course allowances will be made for variations in values and economic and political realities.

### **7.3. A Review of the Main Findings**

This thesis aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by considering the potential for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. This section of the conclusion chapter will consider the major themes that emerged from data analysis. It is important to note that one of the themes that cut across all other themes related to government disinterest and distrust: without a change in attitude and priority, the study revealed little hope that tourism will be developed in the future. This study revealed that stakeholders are of the opinion that tourism has the potential to contribute to economic development in Kuwait and can act as a tool for economic diversification from dependence on oil



revenues and can make a contribution to economic development. Tourism would lead to job creation not only in the tourism sector but also in other sectors such as transportation, communication, state agencies and trade. Economic diversification is a major topic for the GCC countries as well as for Kuwait because they all depend on oil as a main source of income. Countries such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (especially Dubai) have made significant progress in diversifying their economy particularly through tourism. However, the Kuwaiti government has thus far not shown an interest in tourism development (see Al-Otaibi 2004; Alrashid 2012; De Jong 2011; Morakabati et al. 2014; Payne and Mervar 2010; Stephenson 2013). A further finding is that although job creation is one of the important economic benefits of tourism development for Kuwait (due to high rates of unemployment), the majority of young Kuwaitis do not wish to work in the tourism sector because jobs are low paid and have a low status. For this reason the majority of tourism jobs are taken by non-Kuwaiti immigrants. Clearly there is a need to challenge and change the perception of tourism employment before any strategy of tourism development is pursued since an immigrant labour force can potentially be a significant vector of socio-cultural change. Allowing Kuwaiti women to work in the tourism sector would be one way of redressing the reliance on immigrant labour and tourism has a proven track record of empowering women. However such a strategy is unlikely to be acceptable to all sections of Kuwait society due to the current position of women and views about what is deemed acceptable work for women.

This study showed a distinct lack of interest by the Kuwaiti government in developing tourism which was reflected in a lack of encouragement for national and foreign investment in the sector. This was reflected in the shelving of the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan which has not yet been implemented by the Kuwaiti government. Al Ghanim, a private business owner, has stated that his organization intends to launch a range of entertainment, tourism and sports projects under the InterContinental Hotel Group (Al-Shamari 2011; Paris and Rubin 2012). But investment needs support from all stakeholders in Kuwait including the government, NGOs, businesses and the local community. However, if the government is not keen on facilitating national or international investment, the other stakeholders will not get on board. There is a unanimous view shown in this study that the Kuwaiti government has an agenda with many priorities but the tourism industry is at the bottom of the list: there is no attempt to

even bring it into discussion. This poses a significant barrier to tourism development and here Kuwait clearly differs from global trends and current policies in the GCC region.

This study also shows that the public sector faces many challenges that hinder the development of tourism, including legislation which is seen as an important obstacle. It appears that there is a need to revise current legislation to facilitate development and increase national and foreign investment. However, there is debate as to the legislation for some tourism activities, which are not allowed under *Sharia* law such as alcohol consumption, gambling and night clubs, which undermine the Islamic identity of Kuwait, even if they help to attract tourists. This study clearly points to a link between religion and the development of tourism. In some countries, Islamic principles are written in stone such as is the case for Kuwait but in others, flexibility is shown in order to attract as many tourists as possible. A ban on alcohol could result in a distinct absence of nightlife which could make a tourist destination unattractive to some types of foreign tourist. It may be that the government could target a niche tourism market by promoting Kuwait as an Islamic destination for Muslim tourists only (see Busby et al. 2013; Duman 2011; Jafari and Scott 2014; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson 2010). It should be recognized that a ban on alcohol is not a deterrent to all tourists and there is an opportunity for the government to promote forms of tourism (such as cultural tourism based on Islamic/Arab culture) that could be targeted at the types of foreign visitors who are prepared to respect local laws and customs.

This research also addressed issues of safety and security. Security and border control play a vital role in facilitating tourist arrivals but this study showed that there are considerable barriers to tourism in Kuwait as the government is reluctant to ease restrictions on entry to the country. The 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan suggests a more flexible approach to visa applications on the arrival at the airport, and there has been some progress in this respect. Nonetheless, Kuwait has a high rate of safety among the GCC countries; this is set against the fact that many of the Middle Eastern countries are suffering from political and social instability following the events of the Arab Spring.

Additionally, this study found a lack of confidence in tourism development because of conditions relating to the internal environment, particularly

bureaucracy and corruption. Bureaucracy has led to noticeable delays in progressing projects in various public sector departments. This poor performance led many participants to doubt the possibility of developing any sector or project including tourism in the near future. This research also identified corruption within the public sector that has exceeded public tolerance levels. '*Wasta*' was identified as a negative phenomenon, being important to progressing projects and undermining public confidence in government. Moreover, *Wasta* has become a feature of the Kuwaiti culture. It might be necessary to create a separate ministry or board to deal with the tourism industry of Kuwait as it is currently handled only by a small section of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and therefore it is susceptible to the influence of *Wasta*. It is interesting to note here that *Wasta* is a feature of Kuwaiti culture that is not to be sustained, according to the participants, and for successful tourism development, it is definitely something to strive to remove. Thus, not every aspect of Kuwaiti culture is to be preserved as Kuwait opens its doors to international (if only regional) tourists.

One of the important roles for the government to play is to keep up the maintenance of the country's existing resources and infrastructure but this study shows that the majority of Kuwait's tourism resources are being neglected, posing a challenge to tourism development. This approach challenges the application of Butler's Lifecycle Model (1980) to Kuwait as such decline usually takes place in the latter stages of tourism development rather than in the initial stage. In the case of Kuwait, it reveals yet again the government's lack of interest in tourism.

Indeed, this study illustrates the leading role that the government needs to take in tourism development. It can be argued that some countries develop tourism without having a tourism authority in place, but such uncontrolled and unregulated development of tourism can have unforeseen social and cultural impacts on hosts and destinations. In Kuwait the decision to develop tourism has to come from the decision maker with ultimate authority that is the government. Moreover, all GCC countries, except Kuwait, have a discrete tourism authority, be it a ministry or an independent entity: examples are the Qatar tourism authority and the Omani tourism ministry. Such an authority needs to take a leading role in planning and coordinating tourism development and should also be active in reviewing and evaluating the results and impacts of current policies.

In this study the importance of placing tourism on the curriculum was noted, especially in high school and higher education. This will raise knowledge and awareness of the younger generations about the importance of tourism and build their interest in working in this field in the future. The Kuwaiti government should follow the lead of other GCC countries such as Oman, Saudi Arabia and UAE in how they developed their tourism education in both colleges and universities (see Johnson 2010; Stephenson et al. 2010). This has the potential to lead to a committed and professionalised workforce for the tourism sector.

This study revealed that Kuwait lacks a proper tourism marketing strategy. Such a national marketing strategy is usually led by a government agency (such as a tourism ministry) and again this illustrates the absence of government support for the industry. Marketing was not discussed in this study's literature review but it emerged from the analysis as an important theme. The establishment of a dedicated tourism authority would address this need and this study has identified the need for Kuwait to create a distinct national brand identity based on the country's distinct cultural identity. Part of such national branding involves that creation of a unique logo that may help to change Kuwait's image as a nation dependent on oil and it will help to market Kuwait as tourist destination. There are opportunities to utilise the national carrier (Kuwait airways) as a medium for promoting this brand. However, compared with other airlines operating in the region, the carrier shows a marked underperformance. A marketing strategy needs to take into account the influential tools of the TV, internet and social media: the latter two are recognised as the main sources of information for tourists.

It was revealed in this study that collaboration between all interested stakeholders may be a way to successfully implement planning for sustainable tourism development in Kuwait. As stated previously, Islam supports teamwork but collaboration relies on the government to kick-start the collaboration process, confirming studies in the literature (see Aas et al. 2005; Baggio 2011; Bramwell 2005; Jamal and McDonald 2011; Lee et al. 2010). Additionally, to activate the 2005/2011 Kuwait National Tourism Master Plan there will be a need to implement the concept of collaboration among all government departments, as advocated in the plan itself. Also, the government needs to engage the private sector more deeply in tourism development using many different forms of collaboration such as partnerships between the public and private sectors (PPP).

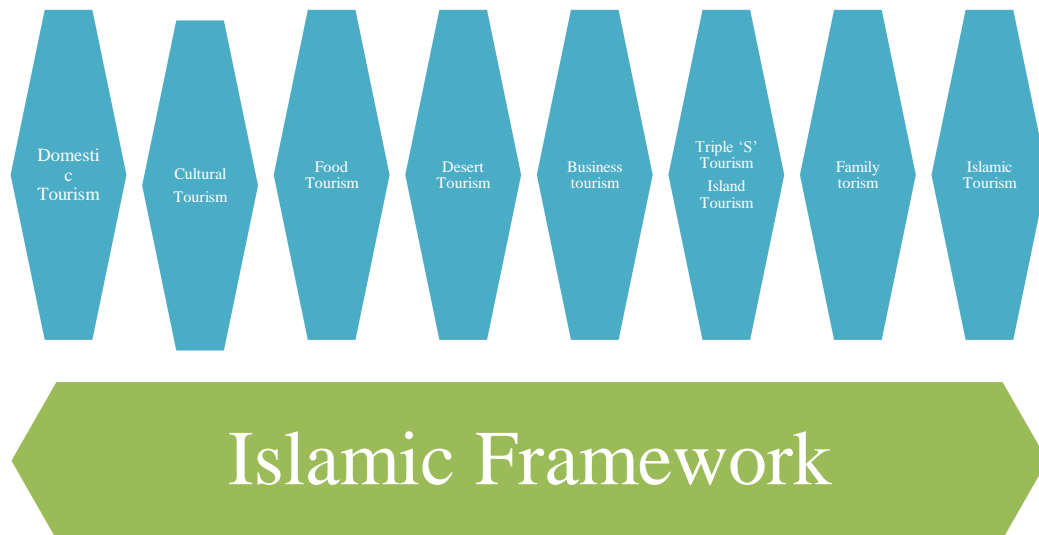
There are also opportunities to engage local communities and implement forms of community-based tourism where local people have a high level of control over the nature of tourism development in their region. This is another way to achieve a culturally sustainable form of tourism development. Furthermore, the findings suggested that there is a great opportunity to utilize the membership of Kuwait in the GCC and move forward towards regional collaboration in developing culturally sustainable tourism. This is because Kuwait is an Islamic country with a conservative traditional society; therefore it can share experiences and best practice with its neighbours.

This research addressed the suitable types of tourism that Kuwait could promote based on its natural and cultural resources. The nature of tourism demand was also identified since it is very important to know who will visit Kuwait as a tourist destination and what their needs are. Although there is little statistical evidence, it appears that the majority of foreign visitors to Kuwait are from the GCC countries and especially from Saudi Arabia. There is also evidence in the data that there is untapped domestic demand among Kuwaiti citizens. In terms of appropriate types of tourism, it was identified that family tourism and business tourism would suit a destination wishing to observe and protect its Islamic values and both would be acceptable to Kuwaiti people for this reason. A further potential form of tourism is island tourism. This type of tourism would exploit Kuwait's location and geography and could attract both international and domestic visitors. For instance, Failaka Island could be promoted as a major tourist attraction for isolated island resort holidays. This could be an effective strategy to manage the social and cultural impacts of foreign visitors by minimising the contact between tourists and local people. Kuwait has 8 other islands that could be developed for the benefit of tourism and there is the opportunity for a differentiated development strategy whereby different islands cater for different types of tourism and tourist.

In addition, desert tourism was identified as a form of tourism with considerable potential. Tourism based on the unique physical and cultural properties of the desert would both showcase an important aspect of Kuwaiti heritage and Kuwaiti culture but would also attract cultural tourists who would be likely to appreciate and respect local values. Desert tourism could, therefore, be a model for culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. However this type of tourism could only be promoted in the winter season. Furthermore, this study pointed to the potential

market for cultural and food tourism. Again this is an opportunity for the local community to highlight its cultural, traditional and national identity for cultural tourists who would appreciate and respect this aspect of Kuwaiti culture. The potential types of tourism for Kuwait are represented in the following diagram.

**Figure 7.1 The potential types of tourism**



As discussed earlier, the above diagram shows that there is a potential to develop different types of tourism such as family, domestic, cultural, food, desert, triple 'S' (beach) tourism, island tourism and business tourism. However, in order to achieve culturally sustainable tourism these should be developed within the context of Islamic values. Such a finding, though clearly not yet tested, would be of interest to other Islamic countries wishing to develop tourism without compromising their sociocultural fabric.

Although this study showed that the positive impacts of tourism were not always very clear, cultural pride and preserving handicrafts were seen to be vital positive socio-cultural impacts and a way of sustaining Kuwaiti cultural identity. This study revealed that Kuwaitis are proud of their national identity as they have a strong attachment to their country which they would like to show off to the wider world. Moreover, preserving handicrafts is a way to sustain cultural identity and to help the next generation to learn more about their heritage and history. Furthermore, a clear role for women in tourism development was cited as a potential positive impact.

However, this research showed a common anticipation of challenges brought by the development of tourism in Kuwait. In particular, fear was identified that tourism development would incur negative socio-cultural impacts that are not desirable in a conservative Islamic society such as Kuwait. It must be stressed that the perception of stakeholders was that the negative social-cultural impacts outweighed the perceived benefits of tourism for Kuwait. Indeed, apprehension about the possible behaviour of (some) foreign visitors constitutes one of the main barriers to developing tourism in Kuwait. An example is unacceptable ways of dressing which would be avoided if halal tourism were developed. This would make the locals more welcoming, even in the initial stage, validating Doxey's model.

This study also revealed the locals' concerns about allowing the consumption of alcohol in Kuwait that might result if a tourism development strategy were pursued. There is debate over whether this should be allowed, and it is a possibility that it could be allowed on a secluded island. However, due to compliance with *Sharia* law, it is unlikely that such legislation would be passed. Though this study acknowledges a degree of hypocrisy in this area, as some Kuwaitis do drink in private, at the same time the idea of allowing alcohol for tourists in public places will probably be resisted. This issue could be avoided if particular types of tourism were promoted for the type of foreign visitor who would be prepared to respect local laws and customs. In this respect there may be a need to educate and reassure the Kuwaiti people that it is possible to promote tourism for particular types of foreign visitors who will not insist on drinking alcohol on holiday.

This study cited prostitution as another negative socio-cultural impact of tourism, mainly associated with the large number of migrant workers in Kuwait. There are fears that increased tourism arrivals will lead to increased migrant workers, and therefore to increased prostitution. This adds further weight to the need to encourage locals to take up jobs in the tourism sector. If the government decides to pursue a policy of tourism development there will also be the need for an accompanying domestic publicity campaign to persuade Kuwaitis that working in the tourism sector is a valid and professional career path.

This study recognised that the development of tourism will depend on the local community's attitude. To ensure a positive attitude, the government will have to

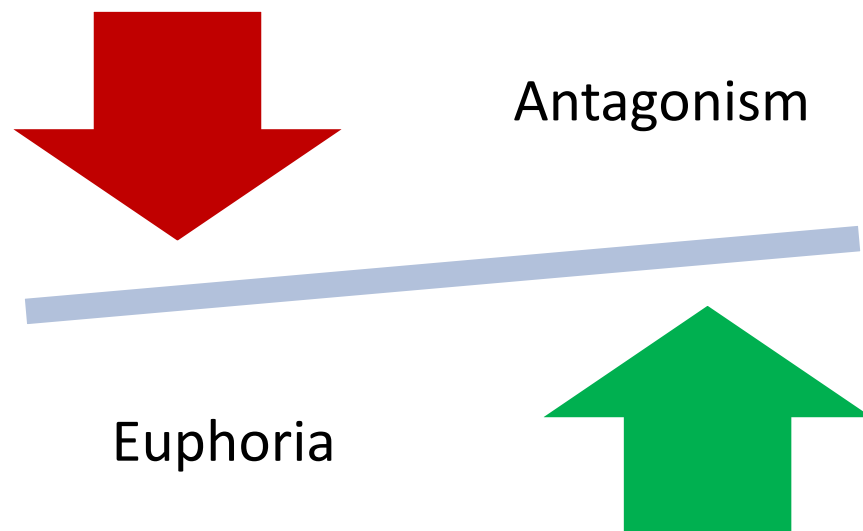
work on raising the awareness of the host community of the benefits of tourism development and engaging them in the process. This supports the notion contained in social exchange theory that the development of tourism depends on locals' awareness and acceptance of its benefits and costs. This study notes that almost every community has a representative in parliament. Therefore, engagement of local communities in the development process from the beginning was urged, as also recommended in the literature (see Alhasanat and Hyasat 2010; Sharma et al. 2008; Feighery 2011; Sirakaya et al. 2002; Stephenson 2013). Strong government support for community-based tourism could be a way to empower local communities and ensure that their voice is heard in any debate about tourism development.

A number of lessons have been learned from this study when assessing the four models cited as being useful in the literature review: Butler's Lifecycle Model, Doxey's Index of Irritation, Social Exchange Theory and Social Carrying Capacity. Butler's Lifecycle Model (1980) has little to contribute to understanding the current situation in Kuwait since the country is at a very early stage of tourism development. However, it may be useful for modelling future trajectories of tourism development in Kuwait. It also offers a useful means for benchmarking Kuwait's progress against other GCC countries. Butler's model reinforces the need for good planning which requires strong decision-making otherwise there will be decline in the process of tourism development.

Doxey's Index of Irritation (1975) was useful in this research to reflect on the interaction between host and guest and also provided a framework for considering current attitudes among Kuwaitis towards tourism and tourists. The study revealed that there is considerable apprehension about tourists which unusually places Kuwait in the antagonism stage of Doxey's model whilst being at the pre-tourism stage of the destination life cycle. To ensure that host-guest relations do not continue at the antagonism stage, a tourism development strategy that respects Islamic values is necessary which would allow a move to the Euphoria stage. If Kuwait were to develop and promote a culturally sustainable form of tourism it could potentially invert Doxey's Irritation Index as shown in the following diagram.



**Figure 7.2 The relationship between two stages of Doxey's model**



Using Social Exchange Theory reveals that tourism brings benefits as well as costs for the socio-cultural context of Kuwait, which need to be weighed up and which influence host attitudes. At present, Kuwaitis seem less tolerant of the costs of tourism than they are receptive towards the benefits, and this affects the attitudes of both the community at large and, more importantly, the government. This may change as tourism develops and more benefits are perceived, and education on the potential benefits is needed to change attitudes. However, this will not happen until a change in the government's position towards tourism takes place.

This research indicates that social carrying capacity is not useful at the moment as Kuwait is at a pre-initial stage of developing tourism. However, it may be useful in the future as a planning tool for monitoring the socio-cultural impacts of tourism. For this reason the the government and other key stakeholders need to keep the concept of social carrying capacity in mind as this model is important in sustaining the socio-cultural context and in helping to avoid the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism development.

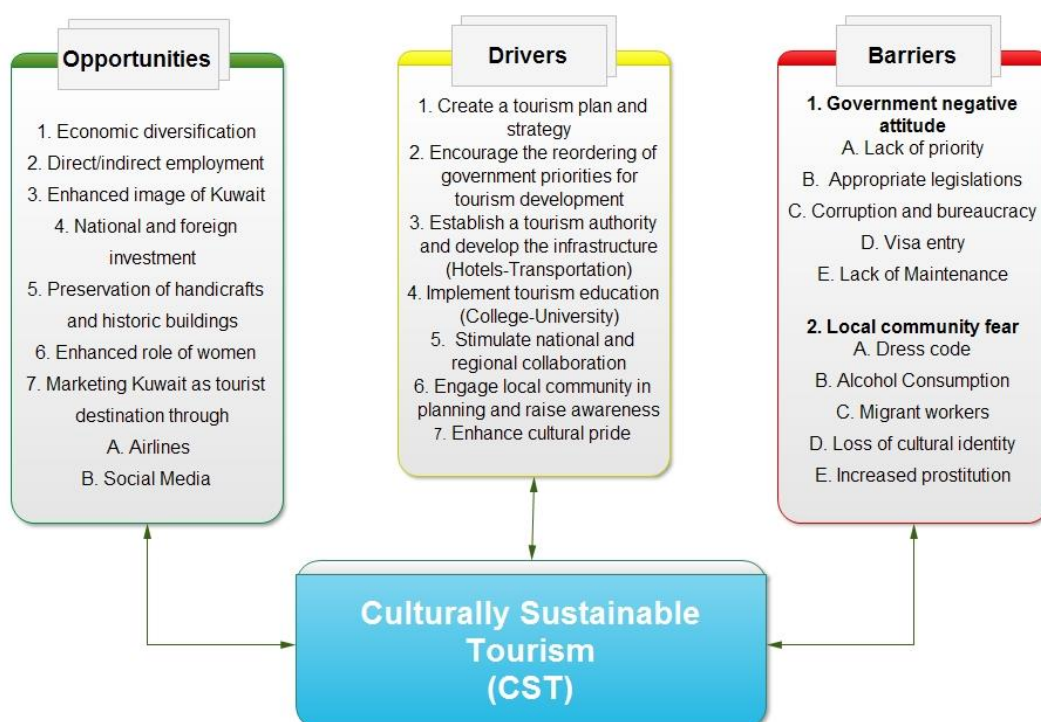
Overall, this study concludes that there *is* potential for Kuwait to develop tourism, but this is unlikely to happen in the near future. The Kuwaiti government currently has little interest in attracting foreign tourists to the country and local people are equally unwilling to deal with the development of the tourism industry. Nonetheless, the study has clearly revealed the key issues that need to be

addressed if, at some stage in the future, Kuwait wishes to pursue a course of promoting tourism. In particular there is a conflict between the desire to sustain the country's sociocultural fabric and to maximise external sources of income. However, given that there is no urgent need at present to target income at the cost of negative impacts, the country has a unique opportunity to take the time to carefully plan for a tourism development strategy that can take into account Kuwait's cultural values and norms for behaviour. The lessons learned from this study for tourism development in Kuwait can also apply to other Islamic countries seeking to adopt tourism as an income generator.

## 7.4. Contributions to knowledge

This study has presented an analysis of perceived barriers to, and impacts of, tourism development in an Islamic state. It has been informed by the positionality of the researcher as a female, Muslim, Kuwaiti. Such a perspective is rare in tourism studies which is currently dominated by Eurocentric approaches, practices and assumptions (El-Sherif Ibrahim et al 2007). In particular, this study has produced knowledge and understanding about the issue of tourism in Islamic societies from the standpoint of an ‘insider’. It has taken ‘Western’ theories and models but applied and interpreted them from a specifically Islamic perspective. The result contributes to a more nuanced, inclusive and enriched understanding of the social-cultural impacts of tourism on host communities.

**Figure 7.3 Developing culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait**



In addition, this study has contributed to tourism research in generating a new body of knowledge on the barriers to and opportunities for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. No previous studies have explored the potential for developing culturally sustainable tourism in the context of Kuwait. Indeed, the broader issue of culturally sustainable tourism development in Islamic countries is also under-researched so that this study has made an important contribution to this debate. The following figure presents a graphic illustration of the potential for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. This

new model may be used with reference to other Islamic destinations, with cautious consideration of differing socio-cultural context.

The above model shows the researcher's understanding of how culturally sustainable tourism could be developed in Kuwait. The potential of tourism cannot be realised unless the barriers cited are overcome, the opportunities are seized and the drivers worked upon. In this figure there are two main barriers depicted which are the negative attitude of the Kuwaiti government and the locals' fear of negative impacts from the development of tourism in Kuwait. To overcome the barriers requires a change of attitude by the government: it needs to make tourism development a priority; it needs to produce enabling legislations (including liberalising the visa system for entry to the country; it needs to reduce the amount of bureaucracy and corruption in the public and private sector; and, perhaps most importantly, it needs to work on changing the attitudes and understanding of the Kuwaiti population in order to allay their fears. This can be done through applying the drivers depicted which include strategic national planning for tourism; the establishment of a dedicated tourism authority; the creation of university and college courses in order to produce a professionalised workforce, and promoting infrastructure development, particularly an increased supply of accommodation and improved transportation links. A further driver regards action taken to raise awareness of the benefits of tourism and to encourage engagement of the local community in tourism planning. Positive impacts should be communicated, including job creation, economic diversification, the preservation of cultural heritage and enhanced cultural pride, whilst fears over the negative impacts should be realistically assuaged. In short, if the government wishes to promote tourism then a major public education campaign is needed to convince a skeptical population of its potential benefits.

It is anticipated that the above model could be adapted to other potential Islamic destinations whose governments and communities wish to develop tourism in a way that respects its heritage and values. Such an approach may diminish market share in that quality is pursued at the expense of quantity. However, by carefully promoting particular types of tourism at carefully targetted markets, Kuwait can ensure that it maximises the benefits of tourism whilst mitigating the negative socio-cultural impacts. Such a strategy, if carefully planned and implemented could act as a model for other Islamic countries.

## 7.5. Recommendations for Practice

This section identifies a number of recommendations from the findings of the study that may help to reach the target of developing culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait.

*The government should be lobbied to change its perspective on tourism development given the economic benefits involved.*

This recommendation derives from the unanimous acknowledgement of the economic benefits of developing tourism. Governments play a central role in tourism development and without a change in attitude by the current administration, it is clear that little will change. Kuwait's main source of income is the oil industry but tourism can play a key role in diversifying the national economy. The depletion of oil revenues in the future and the threat of competitors may adversely affect Kuwait's GDP and at some stage the government will need to address the issue of economic diversification. Frustration over government inactivity and indifference has informed this recommendation.

*If and when tourism is developed, only those types of tourism that are suitable for an Islamic destination should be considered.*

Various types of tourism were identified in this study, exploiting Kuwait's maritime and cultural heritage in a way that are sensitive to the cultural context behavioural norms of an Islamic destination. This will preserve Islamic identity and make Kuwait attractive to Muslim tourists, who represent a large and growing market. However, Kuwait also has the opportunity to attract non-Muslim tourists by targeting particular groups who are likely to be sensitive to the need to respect Islamic laws and customs.

*There is a need to investigate the potential for enclave island tourism designed solely for international tourists.*

Establishing an isolated island for international tourists is one potential solution to the conflict between increasing income from tourism and protecting the sociocultural fabric in Kuwait.

*Collaboration between the public and private sector needs to be stimulated.*

The findings suggest that collaboration has an important role in developing tourism. Stakeholder collaboration could be instrumental in implementing a framework within which tourism could develop in Kuwait, with clearly defined roles for private and public sector bodies.

*Local community participation is essential for long term development of culturally sustainable tourism, thus awareness needs to be raised through education, and involvement of the community must be encouraged.*

This suggestion relates to the incentives that locals would need to buy into tourism development and to take ownership of different tourism ventures. A strong public education campaign would firstly change the negative outlook on tourism in Kuwait and secondly raise awareness of the benefits of direct and indirect wealth and employment opportunities. Implementation of community-based tourism would also be a means to empower and win the support of local communities.

*The role of various forms of media in marketing should be explored.*

This recommendation emphasizes the role of the media, and especially social media, in terms of raising Kuwait's profile, particularly but not only in neighbouring countries. A simple step would be the creation of promotional and advertising messages in different sources of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## **7.6. Recommendations for Future Research**

This section identifies a number of recommendations for future research based on the findings of this study. Such research would further contribute to the exploration of the potential for the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Islamic countries which is an under-researched topic.

Further research could be undertaken on the role of Kuwaiti women in developing tourism in Kuwait. This is because more than the half of the Kuwaiti population is female and the majority are well educated (KCSB 2014). Furthermore, in 2005 Kuwaiti women gained the right to vote as well as to stand for parliamentary elections (Al Mughni 2009; Shultziner and Tetrealt 2012). There is an opportunity to explore in more detail women's participation in industry, in government, and particularly in tourism. For example, do women perceive tourism as a worthwhile

and form of employment? Similarly, does Kuwaiti society regard tourism as an appropriate sphere of employment for women? Working in tourism can empower and improve the situation of women in many contexts and there is an opportunity to explore these issues in greater detail in Islamic societies such as Kuwait.

There is considerable scope for future research into the nature of tourism development in Islamic countries and societies. Tourism is developed differently in various Muslim countries, influenced by a myriad of factors, including economic drivers, degree of conservatism and cultural flexibility. It would be useful to discover what lies behind development approaches and decisions. Such research is best undertaken by citizens of these countries who are in a unique position to understand the situation from the perspective of an 'insider'. This could, in turn, lead to the development of tourism models, theories and concepts that recognise the specific circumstances of Islam. Tourism is such a diverse phenomenon and takes so many different forms around the world that there is a need for theories that are sensitive to specific contexts, rather than assuming that Western models have a universal applicability. Further research into tourism in Islamic societies could produce a specific body of theory that can enrich our academic understanding of tourism globally. One useful example might be the study of the Qatar experience of hosting the 2020 FIFA world cup to see how it copes with large numbers of diverse visitors.

There is also a need for further research into the role of governments in the development of sustainable tourism. The case of Kuwait illustrates how governments can be the most significant barrier to the development of tourism. More broadly, the role of the state in tourism development is under-researched despite the recognition that the state is a key factor in determining national priorities for tourism. Governments can play a decisive role in encouraging sustainable tourism (as is apparent in some countries in Central America). Therefore the wider issue of how governments understand and embrace the issue of sustainable development, and how they choose to apply this to tourism needs to be better understood. This has particular relevance in Islamic societies where the model of culturally sustainable development is of particular relevance and importance. Indeed, sustainable development and sustainable tourism are Western concepts and there is an opportunity to study how such ideas are transferred to, and negotiated with, non-Western (particularly Islamic) contexts.

There is a need to investigate in more detail the attitudes of the local community to the development of culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait. This includes focussing on understanding and awareness of the principles of cultural sustainability in general, and culturally sustainable tourism in particular. Kuwait is a democratic country; people have a voice through the parliament, which can be very powerful. They therefore have a say in whether development takes place or not, therefore understanding their views is important.

Finally, through the analysis and interpretation process, when reflection on the data was high, the researcher became increasingly aware that religious orientation could influence attitudes towards tourism development in Kuwait. Based on the researcher's long familiarity with the Kuwaitis context, Kuwaitis could arguably be distinguished into three groups: liberal, conservative and neutral. The sample of participants was not chosen according to this categorisation, but analysis shows that their religious values influenced at times the answers participants gave. It is recommended then that future research investigates more fully the make-up of the population in Kuwait in terms of religious affiliation and values and identifies a sample of participants based around this categorisation of the population. This will allow the researcher to identify the extent to which tourism development will be affected by religion. The researcher is very interested in this topic, and considers it to be the first postdoctoral study that she will undertake. The attitudes of different groups in Islamic societies towards tourism development is an under-researched topic: this study has explicitly identified this as an issue to be researched further.

### **7.7. Reflections on the research process**

This thesis was designed to explore the potential for developing sustainable tourism in Kuwait. The research allowed me to explore many issues which have not been researched before in Kuwait. However, I faced a dearth of information while searching for context information on tourism as well as on other issues. Every effort was made to collect data from different sources about Kuwait but many sources did not show recent data. This was frustrating at times but at least I feel I have added to knowledge that was previously lacking, even if the findings appear to be negative at times.



The use of the qualitative approach to investigate the possibility of developing culturally sustainable tourism in Kuwait opened new avenues of understanding that I wasn't familiar with before. I enjoyed undertaking interviews as I learned to see my country and its government from a range of different perspectives. One of the advantages of this study was that I conducted interviews in my home country; I was more confident as I was interviewing people from the same cultural background in our shared language. However, as I am female it was challenging at times to interact with male interviewees. This was a challenge I had to rise to as I had to get data from them, so I learnt how to encourage these participants to take part in the research and to express their views and opinions with me. This was an emotionally difficult process as it challenged the norms for behaviour that both I and the participants were used to.

During my PhD journey I learned a lot, both topic and method-related and I improved my ability to plan and undertake research. I am a shy person coming from a very restricted culture where there is no space to express myself, and this affected my confidence in conducting interviews, in challenging the literature and in presenting an argument. This journey has changed me as a person, as a researcher and in the way that I view the world.

Finally, I have contradictory feelings about my research findings: sometimes I am hopeful and on other occasions I am disappointed. These two conflicting feelings are present simultaneously. The first feeling comes from the positive findings which come under the opportunities and drivers for this study and it comes from some of the participants who have the initiative as well as an entrepreneurial spirit and look to the future. However, I am sometimes disappointed when I reflect upon the challenges and barriers facing the development of tourism in Kuwait. On the other hand I think about the role that I will play when I return to facilitate development. I will be working as a lecturer in one of the Kuwaiti universities. In my view education is the first step to implementing tourism and I am excited about being a part of this.

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