



الباروميتر العربي
ARAB BAROMETER

Arab Barometer VII

Kuwait Report



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Introduction

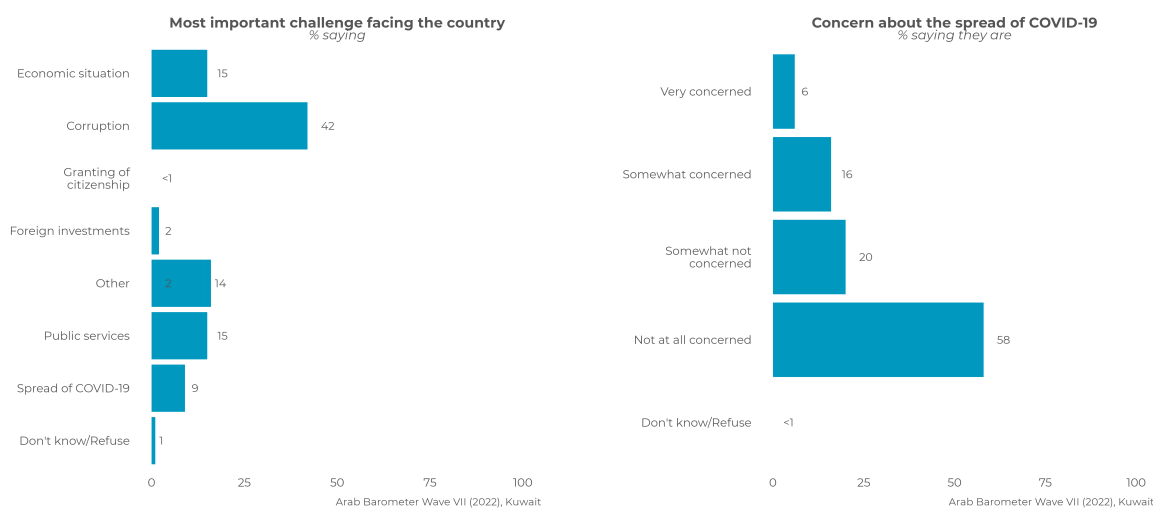
Since 1962, Kuwait has been a relatively open country in terms of freedom of expression and political participation. Although political life in general has faced many challenges and interruptions, political culture is still present and influential. Notably, the Arab Barometer survey ended in June 2022, during a continuing political crisis in the Parliament, in deadlock with the government. The crisis manifested itself in the way several members of the Parliament boycotted the sessions, which led to a political deadlock of sorts. Since the latest elections held before the survey in 2020, the political crisis did witness a considerable escalation. This led, among other things, to a stagnated political process. Surprisingly, the Emir and Crown Prince gave an important speech on 22 June 2022, in which they both expressed their intention to call for early elections, and as such announced the dissolution of the Parliament. This procedure is not new since the Parliament was disbanded ten times out of 18 elections in the past. These reforms led to a general state of optimism in society, which positively impacted the election campaigns. The campaigns became less polarizing and less aggressive against the government. The Parliament was disbanded, and elections were held on 19 September 2022. Results brought new indicators that are worthy of highlighting, but which are outside the scope of the survey.

It is likely that if the survey was delayed until after June, the results would have been different from the results that came in before the governmental reforms. It might be useful to conduct a second follow-up survey as soon as possible, even if it will be conducted through phone interviews, and be limited to certain questions only.

In any case, the survey results are consistent with earlier surveys. There is a clear sense of dissatisfaction with the government, especially in relation to some specific policies, like public education policies and anti-corruption measures. It is notable also that the government's policies towards Covid-19 were evaluated positively. Moreover, certain cultural elements and concerns, especially in relation to gender, have showed some important changes worthy of more studies. The same applies to the economic situation. In spite of the generally negative economic circumstances, the overall trend towards the economy shows noticeable optimism. The survey also focused on questions related to the workforce and employment, being largely concentrated in the public sector, with less employed in the private sector. The survey shows the intensive use of social media platforms in the country.

COVID-19

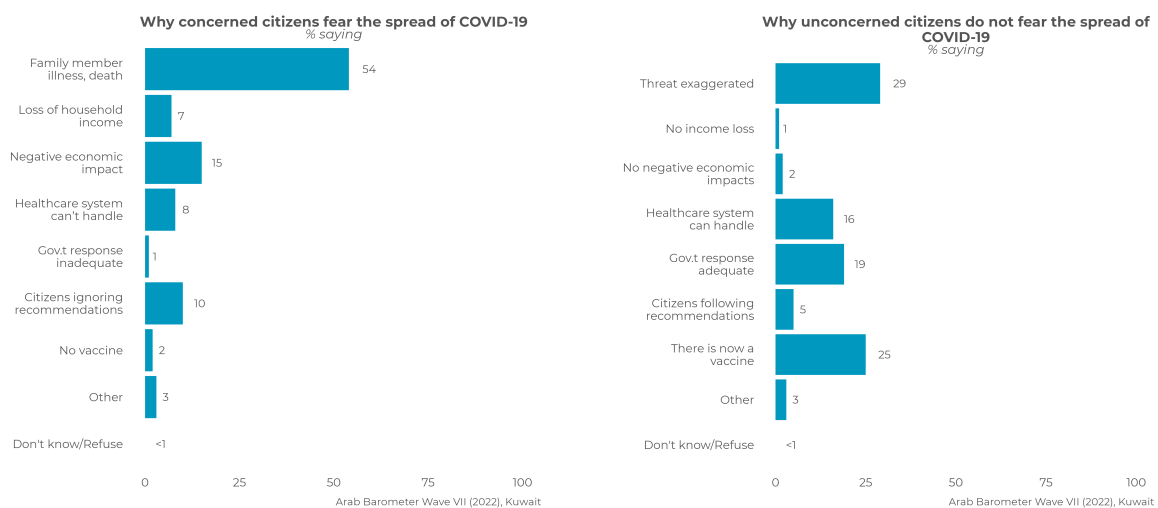
Despite the big impact of COVID-19 on society, it is clear that the pandemic has ceased to represent a major concern for Kuwaitis. Corruption is still occupying the first rank in terms of challenges, at 42 percent, followed by the economic situation (15 percent). The same percentage points to public services (that include health, education, roads, and other services), while COVID-19 is named by only nine percent in terms of the biggest challenge facing the country. It is further of note that the question of nationality does not garner any substantial concern, even if it is usually a hotly debated issue in Kuwaiti society. Also notably, opinions vary greatly on gender lines. The majority of men see corruption as the biggest challenge facing the country (53 percent), much more than women (32 percent). Women, in return, are more concerned about the economic situation than men (17 percent vs 12 percent respectively). The same gap appears in relation to perceptions on public services, with a bigger gap yet in COVID-19 (12 percent women vs five percent men).



COVID-19 seemingly is not perceived as a challenge anymore. More than half of the population (58 percent) do not see it as a threat at all. One-in-five Kuwaitis are somewhat not concerned, while only six percent are very concerned about it. This is because of the governmental policies of providing vaccinations early on, for citizens and residents.

While those concerned about COVID-19 are few, the majority of them (54 percent) are worried about the death or serious illness of a family member over COVID. On the other hand, among those who are not concerned about the

spread of the virus, 29 percent think that COVID-19’s threat was overstated, which can be tied to the intensive campaigns on social media that claim that the virus is not very serious. It is likely that governmental efforts for addressing COVID were the reason for this in one way or another. A quarter of Kuwaitis say they are not concerned because of the availability of the vaccines. While a fifth (19 percent) say the government response was adequate, fewer (16 percent) state that the health system can handle the crisis. Notably, men are more likely than women (39 percent vs 19 percent) to believe that COVID is overstated. In other indicators, the percentage of women is higher than men.



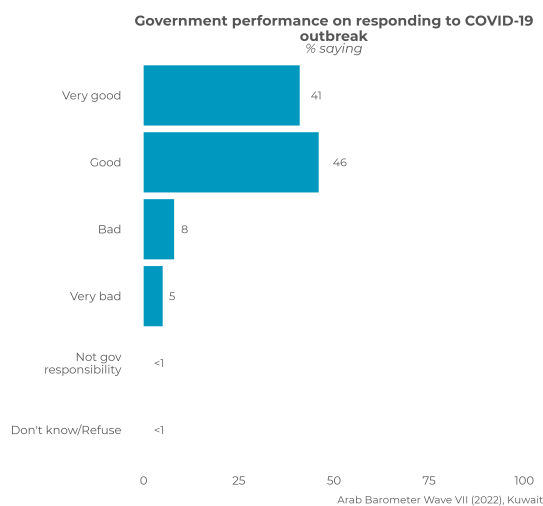
Regarding the question of whether there was targeted assistance given during the crisis, the overwhelming majority of people (85 percent) say they did not receive support. The reason is that salaries and incomes continued to be paid during the shutdown, beside the long-standing support schemes. As such, the answer is not counter to expectations. This is further confirmed by the answer of the next question, on the source of support, as 90 percent of those who received support say they received it from the government.

When it comes to challenges caused by the pandemic, the biggest percentage states that it was the disruptions to social life. Lockdown, curfew and the banning of social events (Diwans, marriage ceremonies, funerals, visiting shopping malls and restaurants, etc) led to a great social disruption. The second challenge is the disruption of education, which impacted everybody. Education shifted greatly to virtual and online learning. There is still an ongoing debate about such platforms. Third came psychological impact (at 20 percent), which is a

high percentage. However, in spite of how high it is, there are no clear procedures for dealing with these impacts or for monitoring them. The fourth challenge (16 percent) is the economic inflation. Only a small minority states that the biggest challenge is getting infected (six percent) or dealing with the side effects of the infection.

When asked about the impact of COVID on poor citizens, nearly a fifth of Kuwaitis (18 percent) say that the impact was not harmful. Meanwhile, 43 percent believe that the impact in question was balanced, while 38 percent think it was harmful. Notably, 90 percent work in the public sector, and for them nothing changed in terms of income, since salaries were not disrupted during the shutdown. Moreover, because of COVID, associated with lower consumption rates and the shutdown of markets, shopping malls and restaurants, and substantially lower rates of travel, salaries were not fully consumed. Also, the government applied a freeze on the repayment of loans. This applies too to the next question, which is about COVID's impact on the country's residents. Only three percent think that the impact was less on residents. A third (34 percent) think the impact was the same as COVID impacted citizens, while a clear majority (62 percent) say the impact was greater on residents, given that they do not have the same protection networks available to citizens.

These perceptions show also in the positive perceptions towards the government. Answers to the question of rating the government's performance during COVID are overwhelmingly favourable. Four-in-ten (41 percent) say that the government's performance was very good, while 46 percent think that it was good, meaning that the vast majority have favourable opinions towards how the government handled COVID. On the other hand, eight percent think that it was a bad performance, while five percent only say it was very bad. This is a clear indicator on the high satisfaction level with the government's performance. The government made use of an old law on epidemics, from 1968, that grants broad mandates to the Minister of Health for issuing decisions and starting procedures to face the epidemic.



Regarding perceptions on the biggest weakness of the healthcare system during COVID, roughly a third (31 percent) think it is the absence of enough health-care personnel. A quarter of Kuwaitis see it as the insufficiency of hospitals, while 23 percent say the system is not at all weak and 11 percent of Kuwaitis who believe that the healthcare is generally weak.

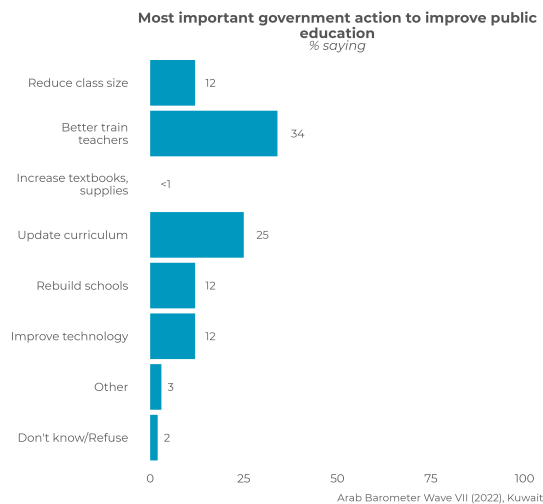
Perhaps the direct question on vaccination reflects the trust level in governmental procedures and acceptance rates of getting vaccinated. The overwhelming majority (91 percent) of Kuwaitis say they got vaccinated. The greatest percentage of those who did not get the vaccination say they are likely not going to get the vaccination at all, and as such they are probably against vaccination in principle. Among the unvaccinated few, reasons for not getting vaccinated vary: a third (33 percent) say the vaccine is not effective, a fifth (21 percent) say the epidemic is almost over, another 18 percent are afraid of the side effects, while another fifth say it is simply "God's will".

It is evident that preference for vaccines is influenced by governmental and external advertisement for different vaccines. Nearly two thirds of people (64 percent) prefer Pfizer's vaccine, three-in-ten Kuwaitis 30 percent do not prefer a specific vaccine in particular, while one-in-ten prefer AstraZeneca, and six percent think Johnson & Johnson is best.

Education

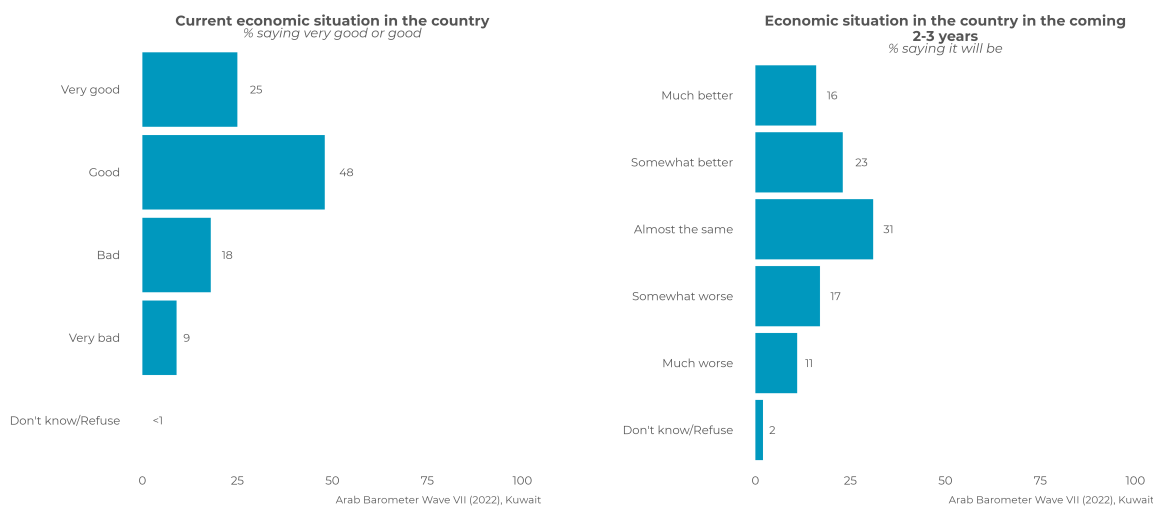
Education is an important issue for Kuwaitis. It is always present in public and policy-related discussions. Concerning the question about the most important

action the government can resort to in order to enhance education, a third (34 percent) say it is giving better training to teachers, while a quarter think it is to update the curriculum. Meanwhile, 12 percent believe it is to rebuild schools, the same percentage goes for improving technology in the classroom and for decreasing class density.



Economy

Although the present indicators and ongoing discussions on the economic situation give the impression that the economy is not heading in the right direction, the general trend of the population is that the economic situation is good. Perhaps this reflects the situation of the people in general, as a quarter of Kuwaitis say that the economy of the country is very good. Nearly half (48 percent) think that the economy is good, meaning that those who have a positive position on the economic situation amount to nearly three quarters of Kuwaitis. On the other hand, 18 percent think that the economic situation is bad, while nine percent only think it is very bad.

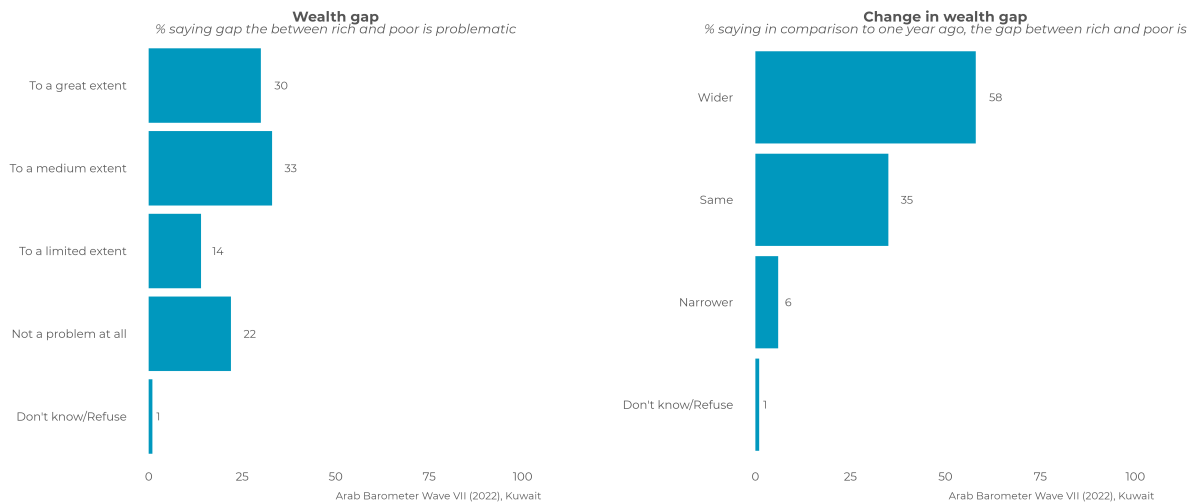


Regarding expectations on the economy over the coming 2-3 years, the answers are suggestive of an optimistic outlook. Only 16 percent of the population think that the situation will be much better, while almost a quarter (23 percent) say it will be somewhat better. Three-in-ten Kuwaitis (31 percent) believe it will remain the same. Given that the great majority believe that the current economic situation is good or very good, the economic outlook for the near future is also positive. In return, only a minority think the economy will be somewhat worse (17 percent) or much worse (11 percent).

On the wealth gap between the poor and the rich, and whether it represents a problem, three-in-ten think that the gap is a problem to a great extent; a third think it is a problem to some extent, while 14 percent say it is a slight problem and 22 percent do not think it represents a problem at all. Asking about whether the wealth gap increased or decreased or remained the same compared to the situation a year ago, more than half (58 percent) say it increased, 35 percent say it remained the same, while six percent only say the gap has decreased.

When it comes to factors affecting the wealth gap, Arab Barometer asks whether the gap is because some people work more than others, the answers are as follows: 28 percent say this is true to a great extent; 41 percent say it is moderately true, and 23 percent believe it is slightly true, while 15 percent say it is not true at all. On the answer that the gap is because some people were born to rich families, 26 percent agree to this statement saying it is true to a great extent, while 33 percent agree with it moderately, and 23 percent think this statement's validity is limited, while 15 percent say it is not true at all. On the last answer to the question on the reasons of the wealth gap, the statement that "nobody in the

government works for the interest of the poor", we see a clear negative position on the government's performance in this regard: 32 percent agree to the statement to a great extent, 35 percent agree with it somewhat, while 24 percent think it is slightly true, and six percent believe it is not true at all.



The first priority step the government should take to enhance the economy, according to the survey, are deeper than direct economic actions. Working towards more political stability and reforming education were cited by a fifth (19 percent) for each action item. Creating more jobs and limiting the inflation come next with 16 percent, while 11 percent say it should be increasing wages, seven percent think it should be supporting small businesses, and one percent choose limiting smuggling. When asked about the second most important action to improve the economy, the results are as follows: 18 percent for creating jobs, 15 percent each for increasing wages and limiting the inflation, 14 percent for reforming education, 13 percent for political stability, 11 percent for supporting small businesses, and two percent only choose limiting smuggling.

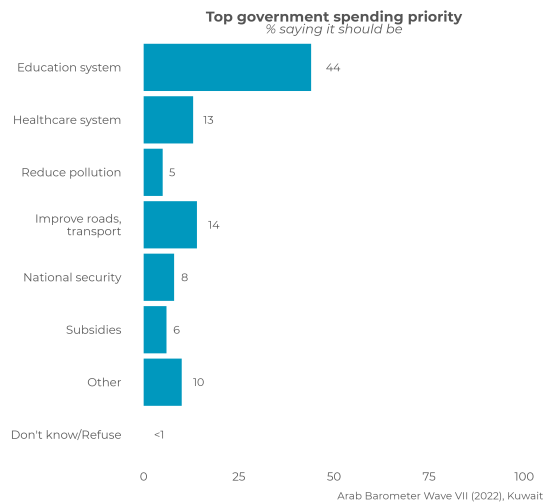
A fifth of the population think that the sector the government should create more jobs in is the public sector, while 18 percent say it should be the private sector. Anyway, the majority (61 percent) do not have preference for more jobs in the public or private sectors.

The hardest job to get is a job in the public sector according to half of Kuwaitis (52 percent). This is because most people looking for jobs seek to work in the government. Three-in-ten (29 percent) say it is harder to get a job in the private sector, while 12 percent do not believe it is hard to get a job in either sector, and six percent say both are equally hard to get hired in. When it comes to

perceptions on differences between the two sectors regarding compensation, the result is effectively a tie, as 47 percent say that the public sector pays better wages, while 45 percent think it is the private sector. Four percent say they are closely tied. Perhaps the more important question is which sector gives more job security. The overwhelming majority (92 percent) confirm that the public sector provides better job security, while only four percent choose the private sector. This explains the much greater preference for applying to public sector jobs, where more than 90 percent of citizens work. Applying for a public service job is not only about profitability and wages, but also about job security, regardless of productivity. Although the government established a special recruitment agency for placement in its various institutions, a citizen has the right to apply to this agency, register, and is next hired based on the needs of different governmental sectors. This process works, but “wasta” stated in answers to this question is probably about having placement in specific agencies, not according to governmental needs for staff.

Regarding the need for “wasta” to get a public sector job, the majority of Kuwaitis (58 percent) say it is needed, while only 20 percent say that wasta is necessary to land a job in the private sector. Only 12 percent think wasta is not needed in either sectors, and eight percent say both sectors require wasta equally. Overall, most citizens prefer working for the public sector (78 percent), while a minority (15 percent) prefer the private sector.

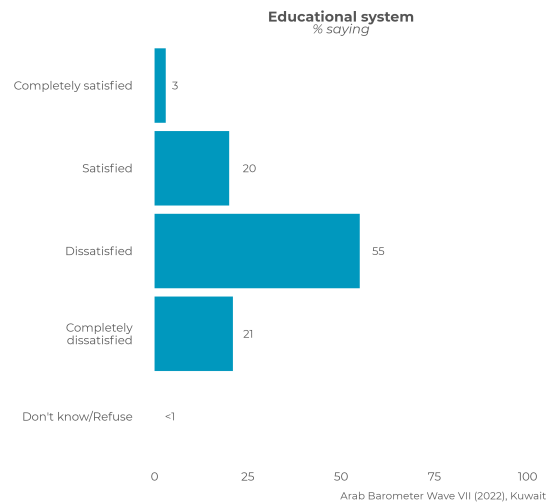
Perhaps the more relevant question regarding economic trends is the one about the priorities of budget spending. The plurality of Kuwaitis (44 percent) say the first spending priority should be education. Next in line comes spending on roads and transportation (14 percent), then the healthcare system (13 percent), and national security (eight percent), followed by six percent for subsidies and subsidizing food supplies, five percent for limiting pollution, and ten percent for other items.



Trust and government performance

On trust and government performance, it seems that the majority are reluctant. Around 82 percent say they should be careful in trusting people, while 15 percent say it is possible to trust most people.

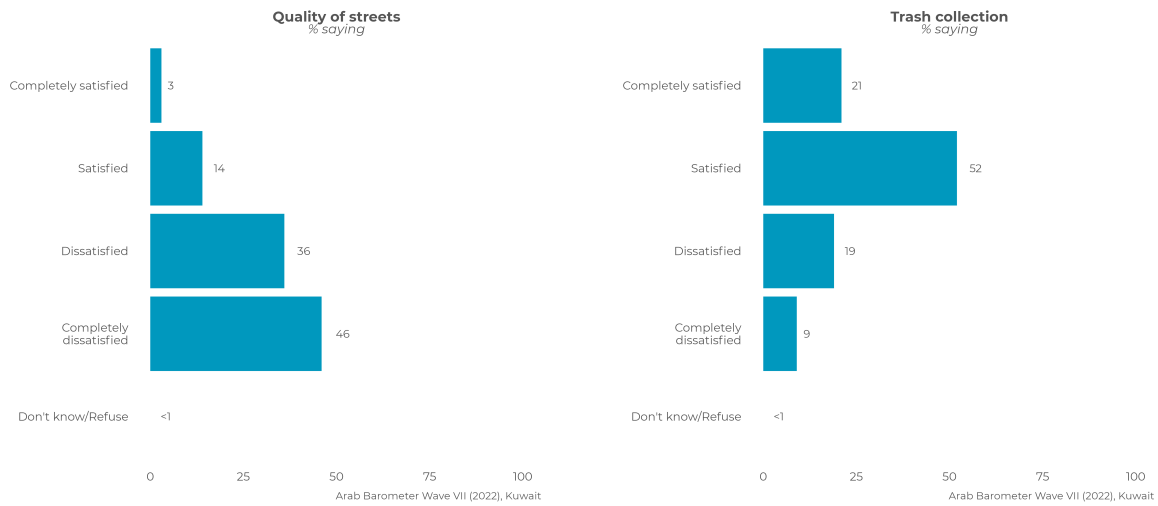
On the government performance, the answer is generally negative, as four-in-ten say they are not satisfied with the government performance, while 18 percent are very dissatisfied. Only six percent say they are totally satisfied, and 36 percent are satisfied. Looking more closely, we see some variation. In terms of satisfaction with the educational system, More than half of Kuwaitis say they are dissatisfied (55 percent), while a fifth (21 percent) say they are completely dissatisfied. Less than a quarter of the population say they are either satisfied (20 percent) or completely satisfied (three percent).



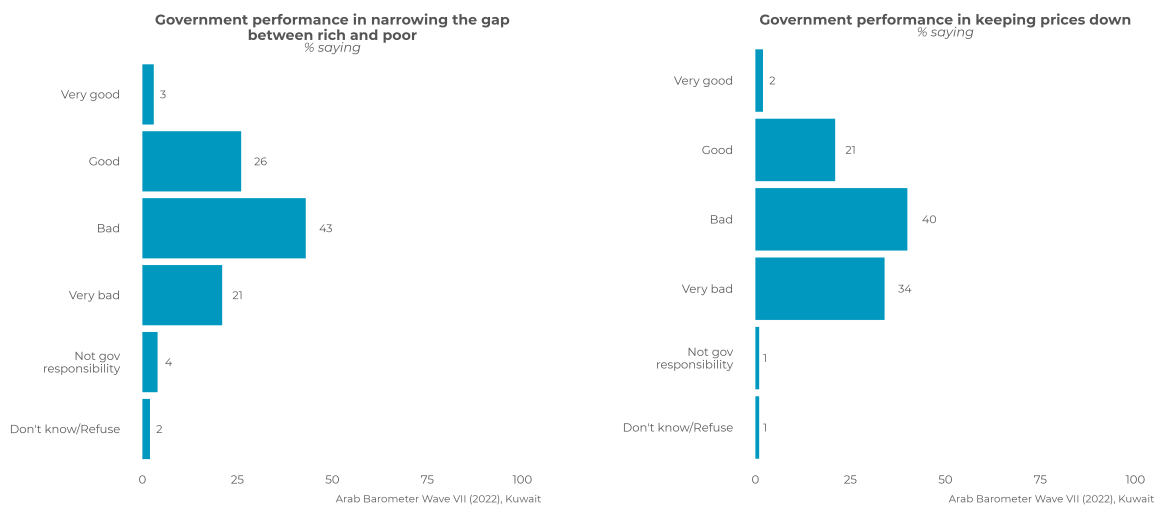
Satisfaction with the healthcare system is different. More people are satisfied with it, even if the system faces criticism repeatedly. However, it seems that the positive handling of the COVID-19 situation increased satisfaction levels with the healthcare system. One-in-ten say they are totally satisfied with the healthcare system, while half of Kuwaitis say they are satisfied. On the other hand, three-in-ten are not satisfied, and one-in-ten are very dissatisfied with the healthcare system in Kuwait.

We see a totally different view when it comes to public roads, one that is very negative. Nearly half of Kuwaitis (46 percent) are totally dissatisfied with the quality of roads; additionally, more than a third (36 percent) are dissatisfied. Only a small minority express satisfaction with 14 percent saying they are satisfied with roads and three percent saying they are very satisfied. Trash collection services are viewed more positively. Nearly three quarters of Kuwaitis say they are very satisfied (52 percent) or satisfied (21 percent). Those not satisfied with trash collection services by the government are only 19 percent, and the very dissatisfied category amount to nine percent only. This indicates the efficiency of trash collection services.

Arab Barometer – Wave VII
Kuwait Report



This positive trend is absent in the next question on the government, which is the statement: "citizens must support government decisions even if they disagree with them". No more than seven percent say they totally agree with the statement, while a third (32 percent) say they agree. On the other hand, more than half say they either disagree (41 percent) or strongly disagree (17 percent). The same trend is witnessed in opinions about government performance in decreasing the gap between the poor and the rich, as 43 percent think the government performance is bad in this regard, and 21 percent believe it is very bad. On the other hand, a quarter of the population (26 percent) say the government performance is good, and only three percent say it is very good.



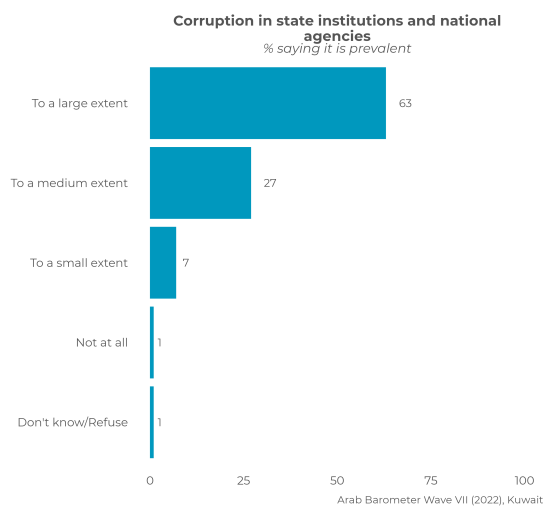
There is a negative outlook when it comes to perceptions on government performance in keeping prices down: four-in-ten say the performance on this front is bad while a third (34 percent) rate it as very bad. On the flip side, a fifth (21 percent) think the government performance is good in this regard, and only two percent say it is very good.

The question on best means to influence governmental decision opens the door to understanding dynamics of communication between the people and decision makers. Generally, the answers show a surprising outlook: the plurality (37 percent) say the best way to influence governmental decisions is online activism, while 12 percent believe it is more efficient to write directly to officials. Only nine percent say it is lobbying, and the same percentage goes to political blocs, while seven percent believe it is leveraging family connections with the officials. In return, a fifth of Kuwaitis (21 percent) say nothing is effective in influencing governmental decisions.

Corruption

Answers to questions about corruption are windows to understanding perceptions of Kuwaitis about a topic that garners great public interest, as citizens believe corruption is prevalent to a great extent, in the absence of perceived action from the government towards challenging it.

On corruption and how prevalent it is believed to be in state institutions and governmental agencies, the majority believe it is present. Nearly two thirds (63 percent) believe it is prevalent in governmental agencies to a great extent, and 27 percent say it is prevalent to a medium extent, while seven percent say it is present to a little extent. Only one percent say corruption is not prevalent at all in state institutions.



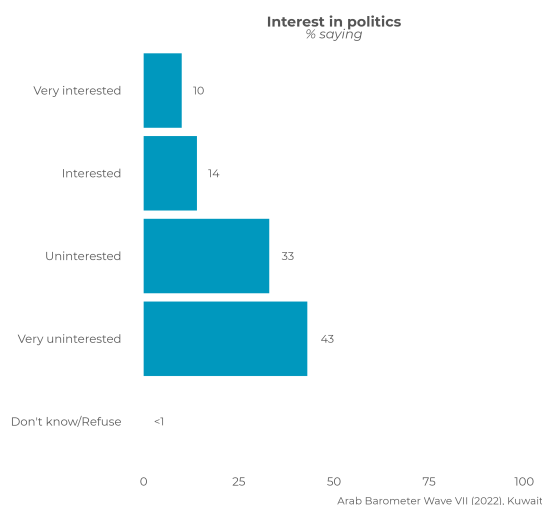
Concerning how far the government is perceived as working on fighting corruption, eight percent believe the government combats corruption to a large extent, a quarter say it combats corruption to a medium extent, while 36 percent say the government combats corruption to a limited extent. Three-in-ten say the government does not combat corruption at all. It seems that the negative perceptions on corruption are deeply rooted, in spite of many cases against senior officials, including some members of the ruling family, and regardless of how several of them were convicted. Despite that, the negative perceptions on corruption are still going strong.

To measure how people define corruption, a hypothetical question is asked in which a government official hiring a relative of his/hers to a public service position, and whether people consider this corruption. Only 37 percent think that this is corrupt, while ten percent believe it is immoral only, and 42 percent say it is both corrupt and immoral. On the other hand, 11 percent say it is neither corrupt or immoral. A second question on private sector is about a director in a private entity giving a job to a relative of his/hers. Only 17 percent say this is corruption, while 13 percent think it is only immoral, and 16 percent believe it is both corrupt and immoral. Surprisingly, more than half (54 percent) do not think it is either corrupt or immoral. This is potentially related to perceptions on greater discretion for the private sector in hiring decisions.

On how responsive the government is with the citizens, only one-in-ten perceive it as very responsive, while a fifth say it is generally responsive. Roughly half (48 percent) of Kuwaitis think it is not responsive and a fifth (21 percent) see it as not responsive at all.

Political engagement, governance, and civil society

How much are people interested in politics? From the survey, political engagement turns out to be less than expected, especially given the open political culture in Kuwait. Less than half (43 percent) say they are “not interested at all”, and a third say they are not interested. This means that those alienated from politics are nearly three quarters of the population, which is a high proportion, especially that the prevalent impression about Kuwait is that the majority is politically engaged. On the other hand, one-in-ten state that they are very interested in politics, and 14 percent are interested. There is no definite meaning for the word “politics” here, giving a wide margin for interpreting these results.



The question on membership in associations and civil society organizations gives a different outlook on engagement with the civil society. The vast majority of people (87 percent) say they are not members in associations, and roughly one-in-ten (13 percent) say they are members, which is a low percentage. In addition, a fifth of Kuwaitis (20 percent) say they have volunteered for a cause, while eight-in-ten (79 percent) say they don't, which is a large percentage. Among those who have volunteered for a cause, the types of causes are as follows: 57 percent say they would volunteer for charity and less than one-in-ten say they have volunteered in each of the remaining fields including education, youth and children, and economic development.

When it comes to donating to a charity or the poor, 85 percent say they have, while 14 percent say they have not. On helping the poor, four-in-ten (39 percent) say they prefer to help the poor at high personal costs, while roughly half

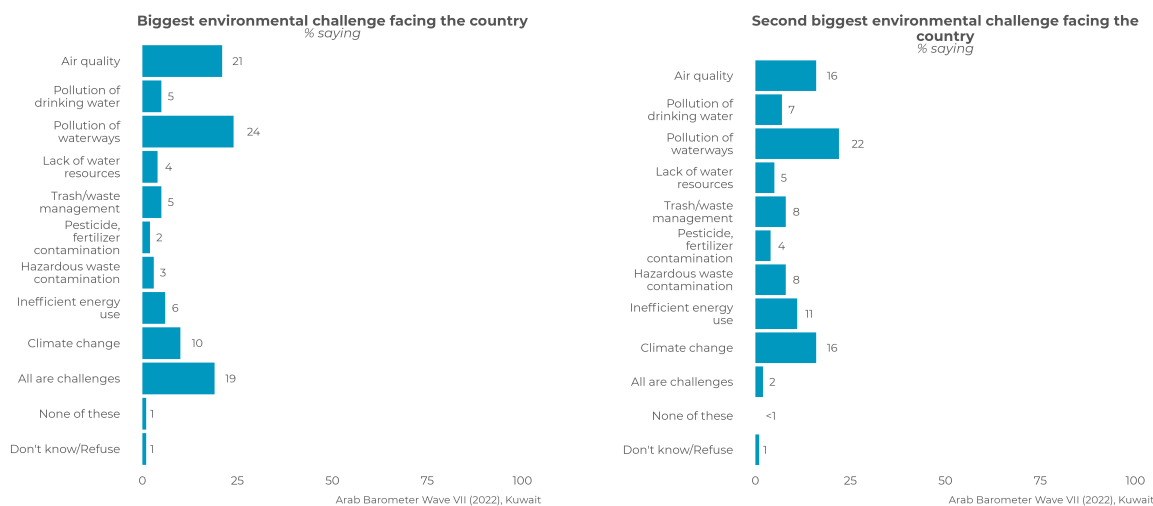
(47 percent) say they would help the poor by bearing low personal costs, and 12 percent say they would help the poor only if it does not cost them anything.

Regarding role models, four-in-ten Kuwaitis (41 percent) say they look up to a family member, while roughly a similar percentage (39 percent) say their role models are religious figures (without specifying whether they are contemporary or historical figures), whereas only four percent say they take political figures as role models, and three percent went for charitable figures. Only one-in-ten (nine percent) say they do not have any role models.

Furthermore, the overwhelming majority (93 percent) do not participate in online political activities.

Environment

On recycling, specifically whether people reuse plastic bottles for drinking water, two thirds of Kuwaitis (68 percent) say they do not do that, while a quarter do that sometimes, and seven percent do it often. Reasons for recycling plastic bottles according to roughly half (47 percent) are protecting the environment, while a fifth (21 percent) say it is to save money, another fifth say because it is convenient, and 12 percent say for other reasons. Citizens believe that the biggest environmental challenges in Kuwait are as follows: air quality (21 percent), pollution of drinking water (five percent), waterways (24 percent), water resources scarcity (five percent), trash collection (six percent), insecticides (two percent), hazardous material (three percent), low power consumption efficiency (six percent), and climate change (10 percent). The second biggest environmental challenge in their views is as follows: air quality (16 percent), pollution of drinking water (seven percent), polluted waterways (22 percent), water resources scarcity (five percent), trash collection (eight percent), insecticides (four percent), hazardous material (eight percent), low power consumption efficiency (11 percent), and climate change (16 percent).



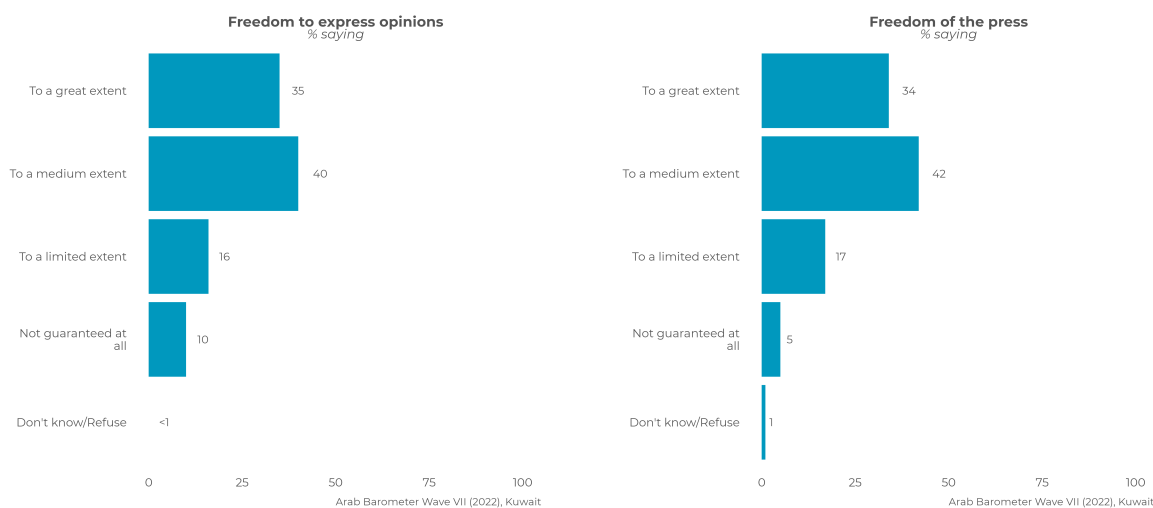
Regarding environmental awareness, half the population say that people have it to a great extent, while four-in-ten (39 percent) think that environmental awareness is prevalent to some extent, and seven say it is present to a modest level only. On the question of the absence of governmental initiatives and budget spending on the environment, 46 percent think this statement is true to a great extent, while 41 percent say it is true to a medium extent, and one-in-ten (nine percent) believe it is true to a limited extent. On how far the government is doing concerning climate change, half the population think the government is doing great in tackling climate change, while 18 percent think the government is not doing enough, and a quarter of Kuwaitis say it is doing just enough.

Freedoms

A third of the population (35 percent) say freedom of expression is guaranteed to a great extent, while four-in-ten think it is guaranteed to a medium extent, and 16 percent believe it is to a limited extent. Also, one-in-ten believe freedom of expression is totally absent. Regarding how far the media is free to criticize governmental policies, a third of the population again believe it is guaranteed to a great extent, and 42 percent say this freedom is guaranteed to a medium extent, while 16 percent think this is limited, and nine percent say this is not guaranteed at all.

On press freedoms, a third of Kuwaitis (34 percent) believe it is guaranteed to a great extent, while 42 percent see it as somewhat guaranteed. Meanwhile, 17 percent believe press freedom is limited and five percent say it is not guaranteed at all. The majority of Kuwaitis also believe that freedom of belief and

religious freedoms are guaranteed to a great extent (68 percent), while 25 percent say they are guaranteed to medium extent, and five percent see them as guaranteed to a limited extent, beside two percent think it is not guaranteed at all.



Kuwaitis are relatively tolerant towards governmental attempts at curbing freedom of expression during emergencies. For example, 16 percent think that curbing such freedoms during emergencies is always acceptable, while more than half (55 percent) say it is acceptable sometimes. On the other hand, three-in-ten (29 percent) believe this is not acceptable in all cases. The answers to the question on censorship of the media in emergencies followed the same lines: always justified (25 percent), sometimes (52 percent), and never justified (23 percent).

Democracy and political reform

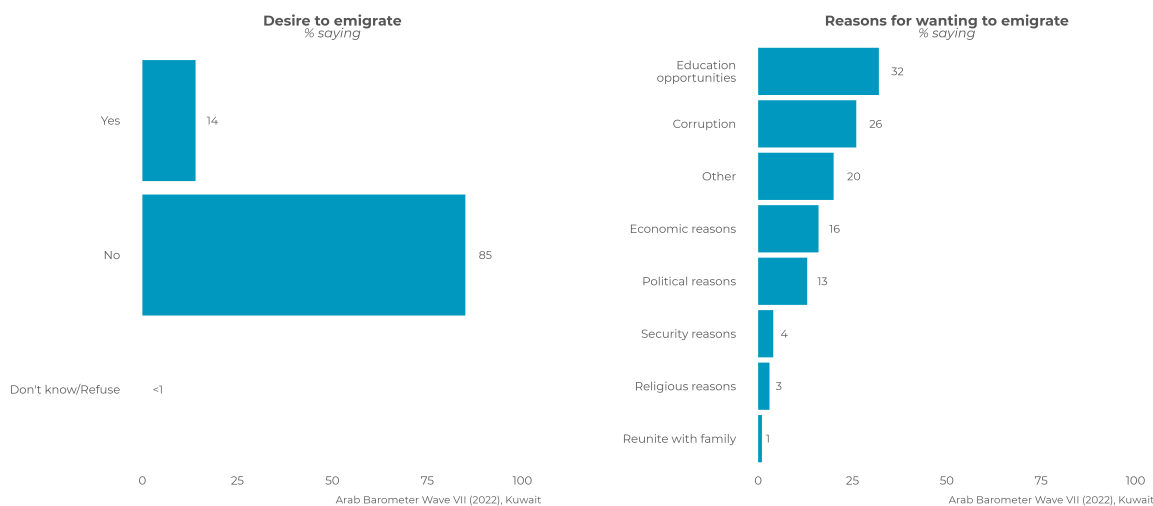
Kuwaitis are polarized around the pace of political reform. More than half (56 percent) believe that political reform should always be gradual, while four-in-ten see that reforms should be introduced all at once. Regarding how economic performance ties in with democracy, and whether democracies feature weak economic performance, we see polarization again: No more than six percent completely agree with the statement that “economic performance under democracy is weak”; 43 percent agree; 41 percent disagree; and five percent strongly disagree. This can be partly explained by the apparent economic

downturn. The same pattern is repeated with the next statement on democracy, which is that democracies are indecisive and full of problems: those who strongly agree are eight percent, those who agree are 44 percent, while 39 percent disagree and five percent strongly disagree with the statement. The different iteration on the same idea with the next statement garnered similar percentages. The answers to the question of “democracies are ineffective in maintaining order and stability” are: six percent strongly agree, 37 percent agree, 47 percent (a substantial percentage) disagree, and seven percent strongly disagree with the statement. The next question, however, shows a clearly positive position towards democracy. Commenting on the statement that despite their problems, democracies are still better than other governance systems, those who strongly agree are a quarter (24 percent) of the population, along with six-in-ten who agree. Only 12 percent disagree with the statement and one percent say they strongly disagree.

Concerning the last elections (2020 elections which were very controversial), six-in-ten say they voted. Of note here is that this percentage is close to the regular voting rate in elections. Those who did not cast their votes amounted to 40 percent.

Migration

Only a small minority (14 percent) of Kuwaitis say they have considered leaving their country, while 85 percent say they have not thought about emigrating. Among those who wish to leave the country, reasons for wanting to leave vary. While a third (32 percent) cite their intention to look for educational opportunities abroad, a quarter (26 percent) point to corruption, 16 percent say economic reasons, 13 percent for political reasons, and less than one-in-ten say they want to emigrate for other reasons including security, religious motives, or reuniting with their families. For potential Kuwaiti migrants, the preferred emigration destinations include the United States (26 percent), Britain (20 percent), Canada (17 percent), Turkey (nine percent), Europe (six percent), United Arab Emirates (six percent), Saudi Arabia (six percent), Spain (four percent), and other countries (less than three percent each). On whether potential emigrants would migrate without proper documentation, only 16 percent say they would consider emigrating without the necessary documents, while 84 percent say they will only emigrate if they have the necessary documents.



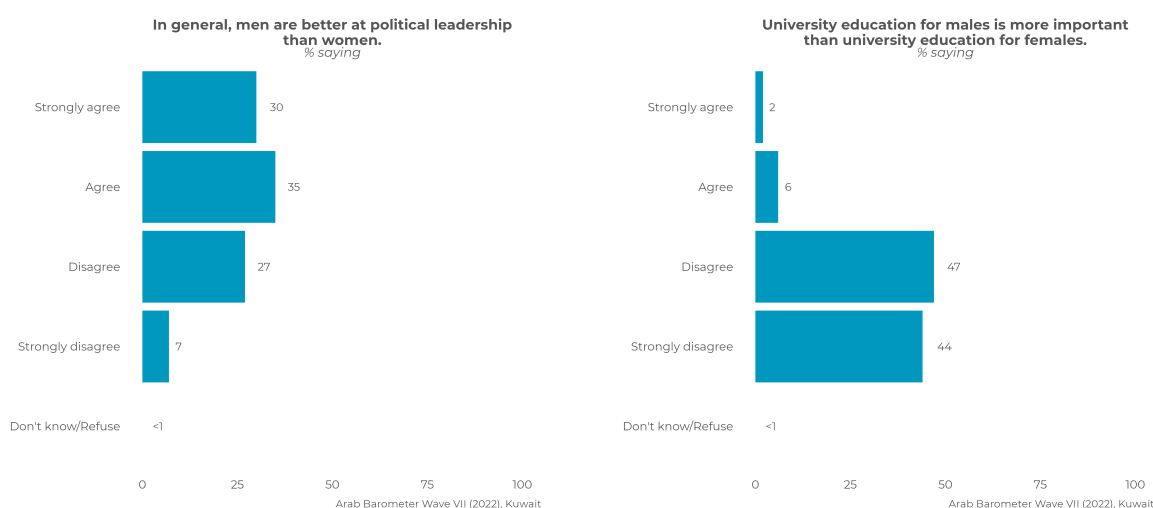
Quality of life

Asking about the vulnerable social groups that would face discrimination in opportunities in ascending socially, a plurality in Kuwait (39 percent) say no group would face such discrimination, whereas one-in-ten think this could only be the lower class, while five percent say refugees and immigrants, three percent think it could be a certain ethnic group, and two percent say it could be on regional or geographic basis. When comparing their quality of life to that of their parents or their kids, Kuwaitis seem optimistic. Roughly two thirds (65 percent) say their standard of living is better than their parents', a quarter think it is the same level, while only one-in-ten say it is worse. In the same context, half the population (51 percent) say the standard of living of their children will be better than theirs, 28 percent think it will be the same, while a fifth (19 percent) say it will be worse.

Gender norms

Views on gender issues are mixed in Kuwait. Nearly two thirds of Kuwaitis say they strongly agree (30 percent) or agree (35 percent) with the statement that men are better at political leadership than women. There is, however, a clear divide across gender lines on this question. While four-in-five men agree or strongly agree with the statement, only half (51 percent) of women share their view. Furthermore on gender relations, on the statement of whether higher

education is more important to men and women, we have a general disagreement with the statement. Those who strongly agree are two percent, while those who agree are no more than six percent. An overwhelming majority of 91 percent disagree with this statement (disagree and strongly disagree). No noticeable variance here between male and female citizens. A question that digs deeper into norms and traditions, is the statement of whether a man should have the final say in all decisions concerning the family. Roughly half the population say they strongly agree (14 percent) or agree (35 percent) with this statement. Here, too, variance across genders is noticeable. While seven-in-ten (69 percent) men hold this view, only three-in-ten women do so.



Another important question that opens the door for understanding important social positions, is the one on whether a woman married to a foreigner can pass citizenship to her children. Nearly half in Kuwait say they strongly agree (ten percent) or agree (38 percent) that a Kuwaiti woman married to a foreigner should be able to pass her citizenship to her children. This question is indicative on the scale of change in a very important and highly controversial issue. Regardless, opinions seem noticeably close, as 48 percent agree that women married to foreign men should be able to pass citizenship to their children, while those who disagree are 50 percent. Notably, women support women rights in this regard more than men do (57 percent vs. 38 percent).

Regarding family roles in helping children with their studies, four-in-ten (39 percent) says the mother is responsible for helping children with their schoolwork, and only two percent believe it should be the father. Notably, more than

half (58 percent) of the population say it is a shared responsibility.

About the household budgeting responsibility and fulfilling the household's needs, only four percent think this is the responsibility of the mother exclusively. On the other hand, six-in-ten say it should be the exclusive responsibility of the father, and more than a third (35 percent) believe both must share the responsibility. Although it is expected that, traditionally, the financial responsibilities are with the husband, seeing that more than one third of the population believe it is a shared responsibility is a change in itself, or the start of a conceptual/cultural change, as we have gleaned also from some of the questions above. Perhaps one reason for this trend is the entry of women into the workforce and their increasing and sustained economic empowerment.

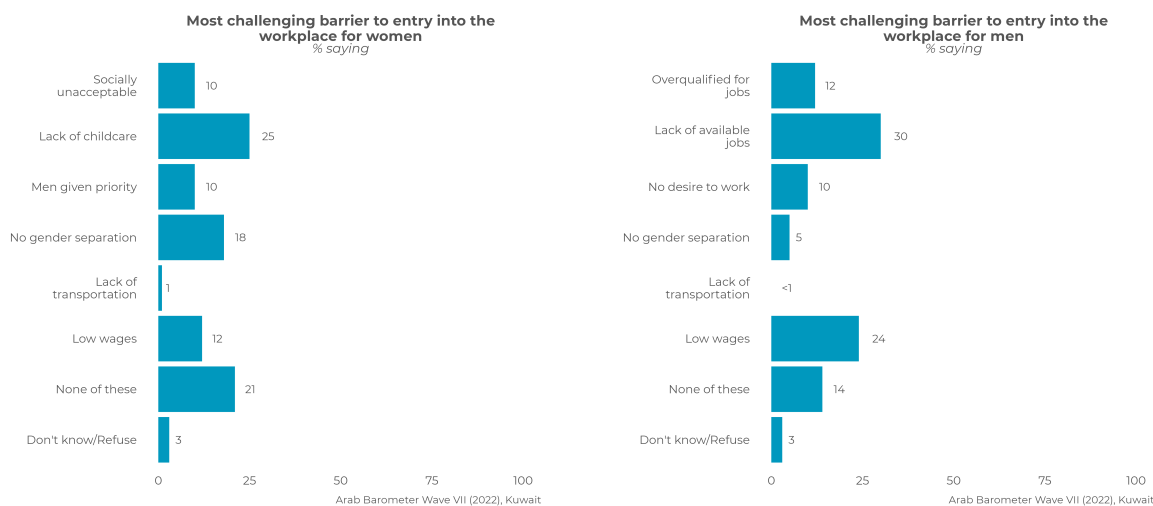
Employment

On barriers to entering the workforce, including lack of transportation, 12 percent of Kuwaitis say this is a bigger barrier for women, only one percent think it is a bigger barrier for men, and a fifth (21 percent) believe it is a barrier to men and women in equal measures, while two thirds of the population believe it is not a barrier to either men or women. Lack of skills for available jobs is believed to be a bigger barrier for women by 12 percent, and seven percent in the case of men, while more than half (55 percent) say it poses an equal barrier for both women and men, and a quarter do not think it poses a barrier at all.

Concerning mixed workplaces as hindering women access to the workforce, 17 percent think this is a bigger barrier for women (four percent in the case of men), and 17 percent say mixed workplaces pose a barrier to men and women equally. The majority of Kuwaitis (62 percent), however, believe this does not pose a barrier at all. Notably, more women (69 percent) do not think mixed workplaces pose a barrier, than do men (54 percent). On the question of women working alongside men, along the lines of the question above, six-in-ten do not believe this is an obstacle to the work of women. Women here, again, embrace this view more than men do (65 percent vs 55 percent, respectively). Meanwhile, a fifth say it is a bigger problem for women than men, five percent think it is a bigger problem for men, and 14 percent think men and women are impacted by this factor equally. Views towards the statement "men and women shall be separated in the workplace" are evenly split: a fifth of Kuwaitis agree to the statement (25 percent men vs 14 percent women), and 27 percent agree to some extent (31 percent men vs 24 percent women). Those who do disagree are 35 percent of the population (30 percent men vs 38 percent women), and 17 percent strongly disagree (11 percent men vs 23 percent women).

Opinions towards the biggest barrier to women's access to the workforce are as

follows: one-in-ten say it is because the labor of women is not socially acceptable; notably a quarter say it absence of childcare at workplaces; ten percent believe is it because men are preferred to women in hiring decisions, and 18 percent say it is because of mixed workplaces. Notably, more men hold this view (23 percent men vs 13 percent women). Meanwhile, 12 percent believe the biggest barrier for women is the low wages. On the other hand, one fifth (21 percent) say none of these reasons pose a barrier to women’s access to the workforce.



In the case of men, the biggest barrier to work is estimated as follows: 12 percent choose the answer of “overqualified for the job”, three-in-ten say it is the unavailability of job opportunities, one-in-ten say it is the lack of desire to work, five percent believe the biggest barrier is mixed workplaces, a quarter (24 percent) believe it is low pay, and 14 percent choose “none of the above”.

Media and social media

The survey shows intensive use of the internet, as 83 percent say they use the internet all day, while 12 percent say they use it at least once a day, meaning that nearly all Kuwaitis use the internet on a daily basis. Only one percent say they use the internet a few times every week, and three percent only say they never use the internet. Notably, hours spent on social media platforms, among those who use the internet, are long: 14 percent say they use social media platforms for two hours per day, while 42 percent say they spend five hours per day on social media. Meanwhile, a quarter of the population use social media for

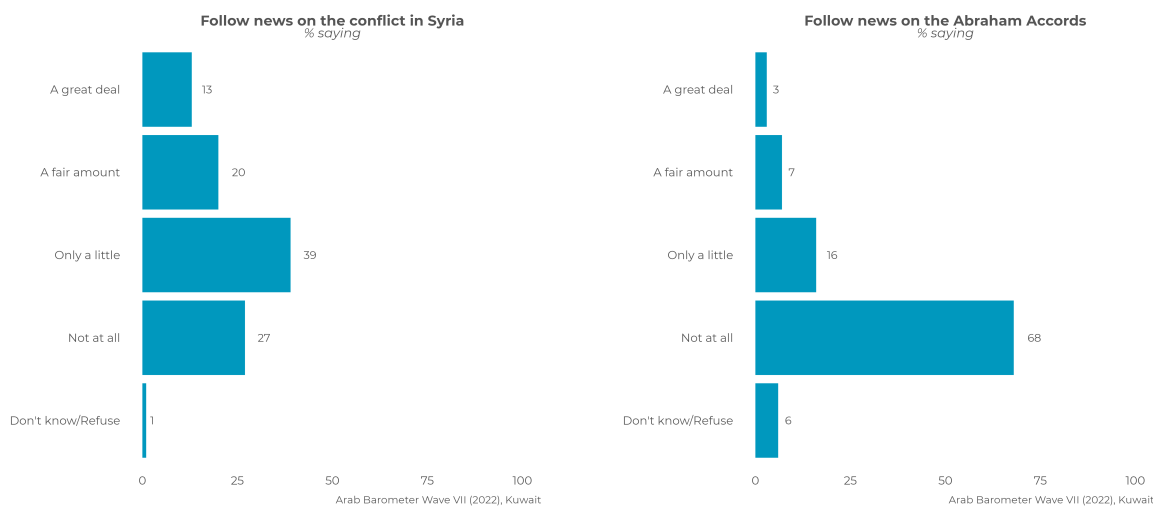
less than ten hours per day, and one fifth (18 percent) say they use it more than ten hours each day.

The levels of engagement of social media platforms by the population are as follows: WhatsApp at 81 percent, which is unsurprising; 70 percent for Instagram; 61 percent for Snapchat, 55 percent for Twitter, 46 percent for YouTube, 30 percent for TikTok, 18 percent for Telegram, nine percent for Facebook, and less for other platforms. Concerning how social media platforms are used and whether they are used to express political opinions, nine percent say they do that at least once each day, while six percent say they do that at least few times every week, and five percent who believe they do it once per week. Meanwhile, 14 percent estimate that they express political opinions on social media less than once per week. Roughly two thirds of Kuwaitis (64 percent) say they never use social media to express political opinions, which is a high percentage. This means that perhaps the big debates on social media platforms are impacted to some extent at least by fake accounts.

Concerning the sources of accessing breaking news: three percent say it is through face to face conversations, one-in-ten say it is through phone calls, three percent through newspapers, one percent over the Radio, a fifth (21 percent) get their news from TV. Social media platforms garnered the highest percentage as six-in-ten Kuwaitis access breaking news through such platforms. This is a strong indicator on the platforms very influential on the public opinion.

The best News sources are ranked by Kuwaitis as follows: 28 percent for the Kuwaiti TV, 14 percent for KUNA (Kuwait News Agency), ten percent for Al Jazeera, nine percent for Al Arabiya, nine percent for Alqabas, and less for other platforms. Following up on the same question, regarding the worst news outlet, answers are as follows: Aljazeera leading with 45 percent (given how the outlet had always been attacking Kuwait since it was launched, leading to a strong Kuwaiti position against Aljazeera. This also explains the polarization we see if we compare this answer to the previous question). This is followed by Alarabiya (24 percent). Explaining why they think the aforementioned news outlets are not trustworthy, six-in-ten (59 percent) Kuwaitis cite lack of credibility, while a fifth (19 percent) point to absence of diverse and different opinions.

Answering the question of “do you follow the news of the Syrian conflict?”, 13 percent say they do to a great extent, a fifth say they follow it to some extent, and four-in-ten (39 percent) follow it occasionally, while a quarter (27 percent) do not follow news on this subject. About the Abraham Accords, three percent say they follow these news to a great extent, and a fifth say they follow it to some extent, 16 percent follow it occasionally, and two thirds (68 percent) say they do not follow this topic (73 percent women and 64 percent men).



In regards to following the news on the American sanctions against Iran: five percent say they follow these news to a great extent, one-in-ten say they follow it to some extent, while a fifth follow it occasionally, and 61 percent never follow these news (72 percent women and 50 percent men). Concerning the degree to which people follow the news on the Chinese Muslim minority and the Uyghurs, 12 percent say they follow these news to a great extent, 14 percent to some extent, a quarter (26 percent) follow it occasionally, while 44 percent never follow these news (55 percent women vs 33 percent men). It seems that interest in international and regional news is limited in Kuwait, especially in the category of following the news topics “to a great extent”. Interest in local news is perhaps greater. It also seems that international and regional news are more interesting to men than women.

International relations

Although the United Nations has a multifaceted relationship with Kuwait, responses towards the perceived priorities of the UN indicate perceptions of the Intergovernmental body as being of a generalist nature. This assumption is supported by the fact that a fifth of Kuwaitis do not associate the work of the UN with a specific topic of priority. Priorities of the UN according to the citizens are as follows: human rights (30 percent), education (17 percent), climate change (nine percent), food security (eight percent), migrants (five percent), women rights (five percent), unemployment (four percent), and those who do not choose any of the above, as stated earlier, are 20 percent.

Regarding the best proposed solution to the problem of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (which is a much-discussed topic in Kuwaiti society), a third (32 percent) believe it should be resolved by a two-state solution based on 1967 border, and five percent say the best solution is the one state scenario, while four percent believe a confederate is the best solution. Notably, nearly half (47 percent) say they prefer other solutions.



ABOUT ARAB BAROMETER

Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insight into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006 across 15 countries.

We are the longest-standing and the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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