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## **SECURITY AS A RISK VARIABLE IN THE GOVERNANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN OIL-RICH GULF STATES**

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### **Abstract**

A widely accepted hypothesis is that people are motivated by a hierarchy of needs. Safety and security of the body, morality, employment, health and resources is the second level of human needs identified by Maslow. Satisfaction associated with these issues is said to lead to a sense of belongingness and love and finally to other higher order of needs. An investment in security becomes critical when one considers the broadened view of security in relation to countries endowed with rich natural resources. Findings of recent studies alluding to resource-curse and blessings suggest negative growth and development outcomes resulting from natural resources. The rate at which natural resources are exploited becomes a cause for concern. Since the gifts of nature are not renewable and cannot be replenished, countries endowed with rich natural resources need to align themselves to economic, political, social, ethical and moral forms of governance that would insulate the country from threats of disaster. Should countries fail to align themselves to strategies that enhance sustainable socio-economic and political developments, countries could find themselves financing conflicts through natural resource exploitation resulting in predatory rulers and predatory states that lead to governments' failure in fulfilling their mandate. Insecurity in its broadest definition reduces the return to private effort and destroys private initiatives and consequently the benefits associated with security far outweigh the costs of insecurity resulting in private and public rent seeking conduct. This paper presents the returns accruing to a country's investment in long term security and the conduct of the private and public sector should elements of insecurity prevail.

*Keywords: Governance: Human Capital: Investment in Education: Resource Curse: Security*

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### **1. Introduction**

The alarming rapidity with which Gulf Countries are consuming resources at a great expense of economic, social and political benefits is a subject of major concern. Being endowed with rich natural resources, studies have shown that these natural resource endowed countries have performed badly in terms of several growth metrics. Sachs and Warner (2001), Auty and Gelb (2001), Gylfason et al. (1999) have all tested the resource curse hypothesis empirically and found convincingly that the prevalence of natural resources did not translate into economic growth and development. They found that countries with an abundance of natural resources appeared to perform not as well as their more poorly endowed neighbors. The plundering of resources resulting in a deteriorating physical environment together with a host of other social evils make

Gulf States fundamentally more vulnerable to the threats of economic, political and social catastrophes. Consequently, an investment in long term security necessitates an understanding of the socio-economic and political environment of a country. Governments of the day are mandated by the electorate to provide them with security in the form of a police force, military and a judicial system. This constitutes the military or defense intelligence community of the government. Firstly, the police force plays a vital role in the maintenance of law and order in society. It is a source of moral strength, confidence and happiness to all individuals who seek to live a good and decent life in society. The first level of intelligence is usually provided by a competent police force. Secondly, the military addresses pressing problems which include threats to the survival of the state. In some democratic and undemocratic countries the military acts against masses of citizens who try to address their economic, political and social goals in peaceful or violent protests. A higher level of intelligence is provided by the military or the defense. Thirdly, the judicial system ensures justice for all and addresses issues associated with human rights and human dignity. A failure in intelligence is usually passed over to the judiciary to arbitrate. This narrow definition of security is adequate should there be mutual respect between the various stakeholders, electorates and governments. However, the mere provision of a police system, the army and a judicial system was rendered a very narrow definition of security immediately after the World War I.

A wider definition of security should ideally encompass: the improvement of social relations, the fostering of economic growth, financial development and independence; reducing political, social and financial volatility; fostering employment growth; fostering sustainable environment; restructuring social security; re-focus on food security, ensuring fiscal discipline; and re-energizing trade agreements. Security is no longer a function of a police force, military, and a judicial system alone. Civil disobedience as a result of political, social and economic inequities in many countries attests to this notion. An investment in all forms of education plays a pivotal role in the pursuit of safety and security.

According to Toffler "the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." One should extend a definition of the illiterate and ignorant of the future to one who cannot think, who cannot rethink and cannot unthink. By any definition, the greatest threat to security is the illiterate, the one who cannot think, one who cannot rethink and one who cannot unthink. What to think, what to rethink and what to unthink is a function of the value of intelligence that stakeholders share. The illiterate could be the electorate or the government depending upon who are the custodians of intelligence. Table 1 shows security issues that a country could face.

Kilgour (2000) addresses the same trend of thought that it is not empty stomachs, impunity or corruption alone, that necessarily jeopardize the security of a democracy; it is their accumulated effects. The greatest threat to security does not always come from the barrel of a gun, but from the collected effects of poverty, apathy, and economic, social and political insecurity. Accordingly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2003) presents robust evidence that human capital, social capital and cultural capital as primary determinants of security and the findings indicate that these forms of capital are also associated with a wide range of non-economic benefits such as better health and a more civil society. These findings are consistent with Becker's (1993) assertion that an investment in human capital, measured in terms of education, has moved to centre stage in strategies to promote economic prosperity, fuller employment and social cohesion and finally security. As a result, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2002) argues that education is increasingly considered an investment in the collective future of societies and nations, rather than simply in the future success of individuals.

Table 1: Security Risk Associated With Literacy

	INTELLIGENT GOVERNMENT	UNINTELLIGENT GOVERNMENT
INTELLIGENT ELECTORATE	<p>Strong democratic state.</p> <p>Least security risk.</p> <p>Stability in terms of politics, social cohesion and economic prosperity.</p>	<p>Inherent security risk.</p> <p>Civil uprisings. Individuals with profound thoughts are imprisoned. Governments do not tolerate any form of descent. Masses are excluded from true democracy through compliance, depoliticization and fear.</p>
UNINTELLIGENT ELECTORATE	<p>Inherent security risk. Risks associated with trying to change an illiterate electorate. Civil disobedience.</p>	<p>Highest security risk. Both electorate and governments plunder the economy.</p>

The United Nations' Commission on Sustainable Development, (2008) suggest that as countries become economically competitive and financially affluent, the consequences of placing monetary value above all else and applauding unbridled greed and rapacious consumerism at enormous social costs have not been addressed adequately. In this regard the United Nations' Commission on Sustainable Development (2008) lays the groundwork for a policy setting debate and considers that developing countries as a whole had for decades been facing the challenge posed by economic inequalities and market inequities. Furthermore, the Commission considered whether these inequities have been concealed by the developed world and international financial institutions so that the industrialized countries could avoid their responsibility to change their rapacious consumption habits. Undoubtedly, investing one's energies in values that undermine more important national and societal goals, renders one to conduct one's way that undermines social, economic and political goals resulting in security threats.

Schubert (2006) in revisiting the oil curse questions whether oil rich nations are doomed to autocracy and inequality or would oil rich countries prove the adage about wealth and democracy that says the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances it will sustain democracy. Investment in sustainable growth opportunities in several countries typically reflect investment in energy security to provide a reliable, affordable, and environmentally sound energy, protection of persons and property within a structure of a legal process and provisions for investment stability in relation to overall economic development goals (Mitchell, 2002).

## 2. Democracy: Beyond Military and Defense - An Investment in Education

Dewey's (1916) seminal work on democracy and education suggests that there is a clear link between democracy and the provision of education and that there are significant shifts in the creation of democratic attitudes as a result of improved education. Moreover, Zulu (2000) suggests an axiomatic relationship between education and democracy. However, he outlines mediating factors which determine the type of education and the nature of democracy in existence. According to Flew (2000), when an investment in education is made by a country, democracy is strengthened, social integration takes place, prestige of the

forces of law and order are maintained, and acceptable civic and moral standards of human conduct in a given society are observed. The importance of a well-educated population rich in moral and ethical values manifested in civil conduct as well as a dynamic research and development sector become more apparent.

Frere (1999) contends that a specific conception of citizenry determines the form and content of education. As a facilitative process, education becomes a pre-condition for democracy. An education mediated by different conceptions of citizenship is instrumental in promoting the hegemonic concepts and practices at a given time. This is evident in the pedagogy of different countries under communistic regimes to totalitarian states and countries where racial prejudices prevail. Zulu (2000:160) goes on to add that "in its 'pure' form, education has inherent properties which transcend ideologies. It gives the capacity and wisdom to access and process information, to select the relevant from the general and to promote a critical understanding which is fundamental to choice. Democracy is about freedom of choice, equity and justice and no process or practice other than education has the competence to promote these fundamental values". Security becomes secondary.

An observation that led to Frere's (1972) seminal work – *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – was that in some countries ideological and institutional practices were employed by those in power to exclude masses from true democracy through compliance, depoliticization and fear. In the exclusion of masses from democratic participation, education becomes a powerful tool. In order for students to mobilize against any forms of oppression, students will need according to Frere (1972) a pedagogy that will enable them to break through ideological chains of authoritarianism and oppression. Table 1 reflects a summary of the meaningful roles played by formal educational institutions in different types of democracies. Poorly governed economies tend to endure lower standards of public education. A higher education system is a great asset, both for individuals and the nation. The skills, creativity, and research developed through higher education are major success factors in creating jobs and economic prosperity. These are vital fundamentals of a secured nation.

### **3. Education, Security and Civil Liberty**

Security is an elusive concept. Social disorder is a symbol of incivility and manifests fear. Recent research in the areas of liberty and quality of life has identified a sense of security as a significant component. Considering a stakeholder theory point of view of liberty, returns and benefits of security manifest themselves in different tangible and intangible forms. Does security motivate conflict? A variety of interests may motivate conflict, ranging from prejudice to greed, from insecurity to hatred. Rabindranath Tagore best provides the benefits of education as a pursuit for a secure world in the following poem:

- Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
- Where knowledge is free;
- Where the world has not been broken up into fragments;
- By narrow domestic walls;
- Where words come out from the depth of truth
- Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
- Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
- into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
- Where the mind is led forward by thee
- Into ever-widening thought and action

- Into that heaven of freedom,
- my Father, let my country awake

Tagore's thoughts may just be an anecdotal response to a deteriorating society. However, emotive they may be he signals caution. Was Tagore referring to the Gulf at that time since it now seems to be the "the dreary desert sand of dead habit" which is endowed with rich natural resources? It is worth pointing out that in the past decades, remarkable progress has been made to attain sustainable objectives. However, the lack of accountability and transparency, deficits in governance standards, corruption, injustice and prejudicial conduct, institutional decay and misallocation of resources still exist in most of these countries reducing the level of potential progress.

The most widely recognized benefits from an investment in education are the economic or monetary benefits that more educated individuals receive. Many intangible and tangible benefits accrue to society. In this regard, Baum and Payea (2005) contend that graduates pay more taxes on their typically higher incomes, they also tend to have better health, they rely less on government social programs, are less likely to be incarcerated, and are more likely to engage in civic activities. These benefits lead to other benefits that produce a multiplier effect. Capital in the form of financial, natural and physical are the ones that are commonly considered in terms of risk-return profiles. There are many other forms of capital too. These include organizational, intellectual and environmental. In any discussion of education, human, cultural and social capital should also be added to the list and these are reflected in Table 2. Firstly, human capital according to Becker (1993) is generally considered as the knowledge, skills and competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity. One's duration of schooling and one's level of qualification may be the standard metrics used to measure human capital. However, these metrics do not adequately capture the extent of human capital. Individuals make an investment in some skill or knowledge such as education or practical experience in anticipation of a reward which is often expressed in the form of earnings. However, this also gives the individual a degree of power over their employers who are willing to pay more for employees who are perceived to have skills, knowledge and experience.

Secondly, cultural capital, on the other hand, is a more academic notion, referring to the credentials and cultural assets embodied in individuals and their families. The French sociologist Bourdieu together with colleagues considered cultural capital as a notion to explain disparities in the educational attainment of children from different social classes Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) contend that beyond economic factors cultural issues are fundamentally important to educational success. In maintaining that culture shares many of the properties that are characteristic of economic capital, Bourdieu (1977) concludes that cultural capital in the form of habits and dispositions comprises a resource capable of generating a return. Moreover, cultural capital is can be monopolized by individuals and groups and are transmitted from one generation to the next. Consequently, cultural capital can be used to explain the reproduction of social hierarchy. Elite families usually endow their children with the cultural capital which enables them to succeed in maintaining their elite position. Extending this notion of cultural capital further, countries that are well governed and show a high concern for human dignity also endow their citizens with cultural capital. In these countries an investment in education allows one to move from non-elite positions into elite positions. Thirdly, social capital according to Loury (1977) could be defined in terms of faith, trust, norms and at levels of expressed trust in other people. Social capital allows agents and institutions to be more effective in achieving common objectives.

According to Coleman (1988) the most common measures of social capital include one's participation in various forms of civic engagements, membership to voluntary associations, churches and political parties. Social capital has been deployed to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including general economic performance, levels of crime and disorder, immigrant employment and health trends.

Table 2: Human, Social and Cultural Capital

FORMS	DESCRIPTION	METRIC
HUMAN Becker (1993)	Knowledge, skills and competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity.	Duration of schooling; level of educational and professional qualification.
CULTURAL Bourdieu and Passeron (1977)	Is a more academic notion, referring to the credentials and cultural assets embodied in individuals and their families. Used to explain the reproduction of social hierarchy – elite families and elite societies.	Governance standards. Role of the governments in empowering societies and nation-building.
SOCIAL Bourdieu (1986) Loury (1977) Coleman (1988)	Capital that allows agents and institutions to be more effective in achieving common objectives. Usually deployed to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including general economic performance, levels of crime and disorder, immigrant employment and health trends. Generally understood as a property of groups rather than the property of individuals.	Participation and engagement in civic roles, membership to voluntary associations, places of worship and political parties.

Despite some ambiguity, social capital is generally understood as a matter of relationships, as a property of groups rather than the property of individuals. Moreover, social capital itself can have socially undesirable effects, where trust and mutuality operate to enhance inequalities, exclusion or even criminality. Wolfe and Haveman (2002) have suggested the following list of non-monetary and societal benefits:

- Intelligent and responsible consumption related conduct resulting in higher saving rates;
- Extensive job searches among the more highly educated, resulting in a better match between the individual and the company, thereby enhancing productivity, effectiveness and efficiency;
- A higher investment in education, increases awareness in public welfare and public charitable assistance is increased;
- Reduced violent criminal behavior and lower incarceration rates and increased participation in voluntary work;
- Social cohesion is higher among the more highly educated. This is reflected in higher voting rates. Informed and involved voters are the foundation of a democratic society, and education helps develop skills for a democracy;
- The educational attainment and cognitive development of children are positively affected by the educational attainment of parents;

- The health of the individual, their spouse, and their children are positively related to educational attainment; and
- Desired family size is more commonly attained among those with higher educational attainment.

Measuring these non monetary benefits presents major problems. Nevertheless, a reasonable equivalent numeric value could be ascertained (Hofreiter (2007, Acemoglu et.al. 2005) by considering changes in government expenditure as a result of increased education and literacy This is the case in most democratic and stable countries and countries that are well governed. Countries manifesting instability, and those that are unsatisfactorily governed would manifest a negative correlation. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation – Depicting Security Risks at Different Levels

	INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS	SOCIETAL BENEFITS	GOVERNMENT BENEFITS
INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS	1	Positive (low risk)	Positive (low risk)
SOCIETAL BENEFITS	Negative (risk prevalent)	1	Positive (low risk)
GOVERNMENT BENEFITS	Negative (risk prevalent)	Negative (risk prevalent)	1

In cases where there is a very high prevalence of individual benefits as the case is with Gulf countries where a substantially large proportion of the resources are held by a few individuals, benefits accruing to governments and society becomes small. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some of these countries may cease to exist with large scale eradication of corruption and other social evils. Generally, political, social, ethical, moral, and business and economic reasons have been expressively identified to characterize the challenges by governments of different countries pursuing sustainable growth and development. Given the challenges, these countries need to focus on broadening its investments in its Total Factor Productivity (TFP), technological progress, and rich abundant natural resources. The empirical study emanating from this study will consider the role of TFP, technological progress, and rich abundant natural resources in relation to a country’s investment in prospective growth. This approach is justified since the broadened view of investment not only contributes in understanding the complex and continually evolving dynamics in investment, but also underscores at a broad level the major challenges for industrialization process and sustainable economic development in Gulf countries.

The various dimensions of an investment in education and the correlation between these dimensions present another dimension of risk. This is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Tabulation of Outcomes and Benefits

	INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS (Consider for each of the capital – human, social and cultural)	SOCIETAL BENEFITS (Consider for each of the capital – human, social and cultural)	GOVERNMENTBENE FITS (Consider for each of the capital – human, social and cultural)	Risk levels
Outcome 1	Positive	Positive	Positive	Least risk
Outcome 2	Positive	Positive	Negative	Inherent risk
Outcome 3	Positive	Negative	Positive	Inherent risk
Outcome 4	Negative	Positive	Positive	Inherent risk
Outcome 5	Positive	Negative	Negative	Inherent risk
Outcome 6	Negative	Negative	Positive	Inherent risk
Outcome 7	Negative	Positive	Negative	Inherent risk
Outcome 8	Negative	Negative	Negative	Highest risk

Should each of the outcomes be positive for the stakeholders, there would be minimal risk. Inherent risks would be prevalent, should one of the outcomes be negative. Moreover, should all three outcomes be negative the greatest risk is prevalent.

#### 4. Governance and Security

In an exhaustive research undertaking, Palliam (2008) contend that good governance, transparency, accountability, integrity and honesty are values that countries ought to espouse. In their seminal work Al-Salem, Al-Mutairi and Cripps (2007) contend that stakeholders mandating governments require accountability in every aspect of government involvement. Throughout the world, lies are often converted into half-truths. Undoubtedly corruption is a great cause of annoyance and misfortune. If good governance is the hallmark of security, corruption is its bane. The recent spate of corporate scandals worldwide has raised serious concerns surrounding governance standards. The credibility of leaders, chief executive officers, the different professions is in serious doubt as stakeholders question their ethical obligations and moral standards. A universally accepted fact is that education in all its form is required to present deep and careful thinking about ethical questions, to sustain public dialogue and help to ensure that the benefits of education are not squandered through ignorance, oversight and selfishness. The sudden collapse of major corporations and consequently economies reveals the extent to which educational institutions failed in instilling rich ethical and beneficial moral values in their graduates who were actively involved in manipulating financial results and financial positions within the confines of generally accepted accounting practices. Academics are actively encouraging students to reaffirm their commitment to ethical and moral conduct; as it is imperative they begin working to restore confidence in areas that stakeholders have lost faith in. However, it must also be underscored that practices that one society condemns as corrupt are considered harmless or even appropriate in another cultural context.

Moreover, Palliam (2008) suggests that if the cost of a corrupt act is lower than the cost of a proper act under an illegitimate and bureaucratic regime then corruption is going to be pervasive. However, corruption is the cause of annoyance and misfortune despite it having an efficiency enhancing value in restrictive economies. However, corrupt acts are, in every definition, improper or illegitimate. Forms of



corruption would include: bribery, extortion, fraud and collusion. Corruption could be individual, systemic and cultural. Individual corruption would entail the benefits of corruption being enjoyed by a small group of individuals. Systemic corruption on the other hand is institutionalized corruption. When individual corruption and systemic corruption become pervasive – corruption becomes a culture. Systemic corruption ought to be a serious item that merits priority status in the global agenda. Generally, corruption is a "zero-sum game" where through bribery, extortion, collusion or fraud someone wins at the expense of others and thus it must be curbed for the effective functioning of a global village. To be controlled effectively, systemic corruption will require a system's approach strategy that simultaneously encompasses givers and takers. Only with the momentum that could be achieved by a global commitment, (similar to the commitment for sustainable development), will it be possible to make a difference on the subject. Gulf Countries to a large extent engage in what one calls "wasta" or influence in getting things done. The closer one is to a source of influence the sooner issues could be resolved without due process. "Wasta" is closely related to power and power has a very low correlation with education levels. While the importance of education for promotion of economic development is generally recognized, one needs to realize that corruption erodes future possibilities of sustainable development. Persistent absence of viable economic, social and political opportunities to improve one's life can lead to significant out-migration of the young generation in search of better opportunities for both education and employment. Since the education sector accounts for a large component of public expenditure, a financial loss should accrue to the migrant's country of origin. Social inequality accompanies corruption which undermines social cohesion. The poorer sections of society are the ones that can ill-afford corruption and they are the ones that bear the greatest burden of corrupt practices. In societies where dishonesty and corruption (as opposed to a merit-based system) is rewarded, the ethical cost of corruption becomes insurmountable. Consequently, younger generations develop cynicism and a sense of discouragement that translates into lack of trust in economic, social and political participation – the pillars of democracy and the result is total insecurity.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study is a precursor to several studies in the area of security. An investment in long term security requires a thorough understanding of the political and socio-economic environment of a country. The risk-return variables that are to be addressed are related to social, psychological, political and economic dimensions. An investment in education ensures that individuals and communities acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes, required for the creation of sustainable communities. Education for sustainable development, therefore, calls for multi-sector learning partnerships among the individual, the state and the enterprise. Failure on the part of stakeholders to address an investment in security such as issues related to greed, rapacious consumption, corruption and discrimination, they will run the risk of not doing adequate for the security of people whom major stakeholders purport to serve, the planet which individuals wish to sustain and economic and social metrics that sustain growth and development.

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