

THE SETTLING OF THE BADU AND THE POLITICAL
FUNCTIONING OF THE STATE OF KUWAIT
THE GEOPOLITICAL EFFECTS

An Abstract of a Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of the Geography Department
Western Illinois University
In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
a Master of Arts
Degree

by

Abdulwahab Rashed Al-Haroon

September 1976

MAP
DS
247
.K8
A4
c.3

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study, "The Settling of the Badu and the Political Functioning of the State of Kuwait, the Geopolitical Effects," is to investigate the affects of the Kuwaiti government policy of planned sedentary settlement of desert nomads (Badu) on the political functioning of the State of Kuwait, by an examination of the elective power of the "Badu," their social and political attitudes, and their degree of acceptance of the state-idea as expressed in the Constitution, promulgated in 1962.

The approach to the study is essentially geographic: the population distribution of Kuwait, with particular reference to the "Badu" was studied; the election effects of population shifts were analyzed; and the "Badu" attitudes to the state-idea were determined from an analysis of the Badu social attitudes, election returns, and National Assembly votes. Historic facts of genesis were used as those aided in understanding structural features that were considered to be significant.

The study of the Kuwaiti national policy of settlement of the country's desert nomads (Badu), and the resulting migration to villages and towns, old and new, provides evidence that: (1) Badu have migrated to and settled in the towns and villages peripheral to Kuwait City in politically significant numbers; (2) they have organized and voted in elections in such a way that they control success in these areas; and (3) as a result, the settled Badu constitute a major centripetal force

both directly and indirectly contributing to the effective functioning of the State of Kuwait as it is now constitutionally established, as a monarchical democratic state, with the effective political power vested in the Emir.

In addition, as a result of the study, it is hypothesized that the large non-Kuwaiti population, 52.5 percent of the total population, constitutes a potential centrifugal force which might tend to disrupt the smooth functioning of the state.