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Tribalism in Kuwait

Impacts on the Parliament

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Master of Science in International Relations

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Declaration

I, Naser AlFozaie, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

To His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the State of Kuwait

Abstract

The State of Kuwait is composed of different tribes from variant origins. This thesis explores the very foundation of this cultural phenomenon and analyses its socio-political developments in the country's parliament. Also, in an effort to understand the many undisclosed layers of Kuwait's political equation, the research will introduce customary elements within the phonic narrative.

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“Kuwait was the Marseilles of the Persian Gulf. Its population was good natured, mixed, and vicious. As it was the outlet from the north to the Gulf and hence to the Indies, merchants from Bombay and Tehran, Indians, Persians, Syrians from Aleppo and Damascus, Armenians, Turks and Jews, traders from all the East, and some Europeans came to Kuwait.”

– H. C. Armstrong, Lord of Arabia

Chapter 1: Introduction

Heritage by means of tribal affiliations connects many contemporary Kuwaitis to traditionalism in which honour, respect, and loyalty to family or by and large the tribe is prioritized especially against external forces. This thesis statement will elucidate on how tribalism acts as a motivating factor in Kuwaiti politics. Today, the State of Kuwait has a population of approximately 4.2 million – Kuwaitis accounting for only %30 of the total population; the other %70 consists of expatriates from diverse backgrounds; not to mention illegal stateless people, known as Bedoon, who claim citizenship.

The Kuwaiti populace can be divided into three major factions: Sunni, Shi'a, and Bedouin. The most predominant and influential being the Sunni majority – among them the ruling regime and an amalgamation of long established settled tribes, known as Hadhar, both considered as the founders of Kuwaiti nationhood respectively. The Shi'a minority, albeit a rapidly growing one, followed the footsteps of the aforementioned by emerging into the Kuwaiti civil society as migrant merchants and workers from nearby regional areas. Though they are not tribes in the true sense, they function cohesively as a unit through common interests with their primary affiliation being their religious identity. The Bedouins of Kuwait, often simply referred to as Bedu, are a group of nomadic tribes who share a symbiotic relationship with the land and its early-settlers. The urbanites followed the Bedu's migration-patterns which allowed for interaction between the two, and the Bedouins integrated by trading with them periodically.

Thereon, the delineation of physical borders after the Uqair Protocol of 1922, which I will allude to later on in the paper, along with the discovery of oil established a sense of unity and association to the newly formed national entity of Kuwait with oil providing several benefits to the people, but that also included delineations in tribes as there were evident distinctions in lifestyles and fundamental differences in mentalities among the settlers, especially the new ones. In essence, this was the primary impasse of tribalism in the political sense. This study will briefly demonstrate the crucial role tribalism plays in the political life of Kuwait with emphasis on parliamentary issues.

The thesis is structured into eight chapters. The first chapter is a short introduction on the state demographics in relation to tribalism, the primary concept. It is meant to establish the setting of the thesis. Chapter two presents the historical and theoretical fabric of the concept, and explores its evolution into contemporary affairs. The third chapter gives account for the methodology used in this paper by describing the sampling strategy and data collection method. The fourth and fifth chapters explore the prevalent identity clashes within the Kuwaiti society through a brief timeline; in this section, faction and tribal traits are discussed. The sixth and seventh chapters draw figures in correlation to tribal influences in the parliamentary elections; these chapters are important for understanding the gravity of tribal impacts. The final chapter concludes the research.

Chapter 2: Tribalism

2.1 Exposition:

Tribalism in Arabia could be historically interpreted as the traditional portrayal of ex situ socio-political status with an interest in economic welfare under ingrained family and ideological values. The principle of this determinant contributes to the organized construction of the social framework upon which a vessel of cultural conformity and bonding among the tribe members is mutually understood – in short, social constructivism theory is an instrumental agent in tribalism. However, the tribe's primordialist nature of being pledges loyalty first to the tribe then to the state, and this offsets the ethics of the philosophy itself asserting that social constructivism by virtue of tribalism can only rally individuals so far until tribal affiliations and biases take over – the point of departure for this study being politics. In a pseudo democracy where political parties are absent according to the country's constitution, tribalism is implemented as a mobilizing factor to outflank rising political movements and fill the parliamentary vacuum with informal tribal primaries (Jones, 2009).

During the early stages of the parliament's development, tribes often manipulated the electoral system by being loyal to and leanings towards the ruling regime and the social conservatist agenda whence serviceable; and this begot a strong tendency among tribes to function internally and nominate members of their own as candidates in hopes of achieving the parochial interest of their tribe – this, of course, debunks notions of honest democracy in the country and epitomizes the gravity of tribal fidelity. It must be understood that tribalists are not confined to a citizenship; their identity adheres to their interests. This outlook has often been contested by civil society; it is characterized as ethnocentric and even racist. In present parliamentary developments, estranged supporters of the government witnessed this inexorable wave of tribal assertiveness grow. This upset the disparate public and continued to confront the confused concept of Kuwait en masse. Withal, while the demographics of the state shifted by time; Kuwait's undefined nationhood beheld the severance of its own people along tribal lines as the old pro-regime status quo faded throughout time with tribal interests transitioning into a personal state of affair and consequently, eclipsing the nation's.

2.2 Theoretical Correlation:

Inherently, tribalism embodies the theoretical virtue of zeal, germane to cultural relativism; it is developed psychologically as a natural proclivity to cultural identity. In addition, tribalism may perhaps be seen as an adaptive modus of human evolution where individuals are committed to a pattern of social bonding that is fostered by a collective common good. The primary purpose of this social phenomenon is for human beings to establish solidarity within their kinship; such a source of support is devised through a system of structural functionalism which subtends ontological characteristics for example, genealogy, to modern practices, like monetary exchange, education, communication, and for this case, policy making. While, tribalism could be viewed as an unfolding defence mechanism conceived to safeguard the tribe's liberty, it also embraces nostalgic principles for guidance in a post-modern mass societal era – this could be conceptualized as neo-tribalism (Maffesoli, 1996). This is evident in Kuwaiti politics today.

Now with the element of zealousness in mind, the concept of tribalism without the inclusion of its genealogy could be depicted in several apolitical factions. For instance, sports club fanaticism resembles a similar type of valence in its supporters, and it could lead to the boasting of one's past and present honours; as well as rivalries against oppositions, and even violence in the form of hooliganism. Moreover, affiliation to academic institutions thru the proclamation of one's Alma mater would be a more moderate example of human bonding and rivalry. However, rivalry per se is not quintessential in the tribal equation. There are modern examples in society that confirm this, like the followers of popular culture figures; a growing trend that is becoming more accessible to people through the internet and social media. Hence, with reference to this, the basis of this concept is rather broad but it could be simplified by its possession to cultural and ethnic integrity which Kuwait apparently harbours a plethora of. However, history has proven that the principles which advocate biological superiority generally gathered a negative connotation, and indeed several historical events have propelled this – the most prominent were the acts by the Nazi regime under the influence of the *Übermensch* concept (Nietzsche, 1883), though this was subjected as an extremist case, no less. In Kuwait, modern tribes in the post-oil discovery era are more or less inspired by contemporary Marxist

conceptions, and regularly perform as such; tribes tend to employ nepotistic tactics to maintain their influence in a certain sector and preserve their wealth, too. Also, it is to no dissent that tribalism will abide to Marx's Law of Increasing Poverty but only to thrive from it (Marx, 1847). This has severe societal implications with regard to who a tribe allows into their own; ergo marital strains occur as a result of this along with continuous class divisions and economic inequality. Furthermore, as the rich got richer in Kuwait, self-estrangement in small doses, as a consequence of the theory of alienation, prevailed and it alluded to the creation of Kuwait's competitive and materialistic modern culture. This usually affected the less privileged government workers and the social outcasts however many; they were commonly regarded as demotivated abstract citizens with plastic aspirations (Marx, 1844). Thus, in lieu of combating this social predicament by providing the middle and lower classes more opportunities, tribal facets casually ignored this problem. The disengagement of tribes and common citizens created a sense of exceptionalism for tribalists by which some rules or norms didn't apply – this pride provoked perception contributed to the ever present bending of rules within the state's ambiguous political system; as too, voting patterns and tribal primaries affirm this.

2.3 Reputation:

Indeed, tribalism as a concept has attracted a lot of negative criticisms. However, we must look at the big picture and ask ourselves if it actually works because something in Kuwait definitely is. The country sustains a very high human development index on a global scale; it leads by example, providing its citizens with great benefits among other unmatched privileges. Kuwait prides itself in having a resilient democratic political system with outstanding civil liberties. So, for a country that is buried between the bosoms of regional strives, that is quite an impressive feat. This will beg the question: is tribalism a detriment to society or a blessing in disguise. From an anthropological viewpoint, tribalism in Arabia has had an active and positive presence in the region. Hence, one might wonder if tribalism is currently running its course into a more legislative setting, but regardless of that and most importantly, is it fundamental.

The modern state of Kuwait was established through a subtle system of tribal engagements which further developed into what is now a civil society. In its ominous times, the country utilized tribalism as a go-to strategy to shield its citizens against the aggression of external forces (Al-Otaibi, 2010). The Gulf War of 1990, for example, fortified Kuwaitis and enveloped a decade long nation building process among tribes – with national interest succeeding the tribe's. In like manner, the perks of oil discovery in the country paved the path for swift modernisation of the state. Tribes notably worked hand in hand with the government and the elite merchant families to make this transformation possible whether it was through political exertions in the parliament or industrial outlets. In any case, it is true that tribes act as partisan agents without official governance; their followers are seen as symbols of ideological recognition in the political equation. Thus, in order to maintain the peace within the system, tribal views are often considered, and some of their policies are even ratified and accepted by the public, such as the building of assigned houses to less-fortunate Bedouins, whom of course are also tribalists. Therefore, I would state the case that tribal contribution is of importance to society as a whole. In many cases, their interests coincide with the nation's and although some of their plans are biased, they are fundamentally looking out for their own people because in Kuwait, everyone else is doing the same thing; this includes merchant families who preserve their wealth by passing on their businesses to their family members whom also inherit land (Al-Samhaan).

In actuality, all Kuwaiti families have nomadic tribal ancestries. The existing Hadhar society decided to consciously deviate from this path by settling down and getting rid of their tribal name; in lieu of this, they identify to their heritage by adopting the titles of their past professions or regions of origin. For instance, the Shi'a Al-Kandari family from the region of Br Faris in Persia worked as water carriers and distributors to people's homes; the Farsi word for this profession is Kandari. The Sunni Al-Failakawai family originally resided on the Island of Failaka – Table 1 below will illustrate further examples. However, the level of modernization differs from family to family so not all Hadhar are equally as modern. Per contra, the families that kept their tribal name are those who are now considered either Bedouin and or tribalists in Kuwait's modern society. However, the concept of tribalism implies to all factions in society.

Table.1: Examples of Identity thru Profession or Region

Family Name	Early Profession
Al-Kandari	The Water Carrier
Al-Bannay	The Constructor
Al-Najjar	The Carpenter
Al-Ostath	The Contractor
Al-Haddad	The Blacksmith
Family Name	Region of Origin
Al-Shatti	Shatt Bani Tamim in Br Faris
Al-Kharji	Kharg Island of Iran
Al-Failakawi	Failaka Island of Kuwait
Al-Houti	Houta in Arabian Peninsula
Al-Awadhi	Awadh in Br Faris

Chapter 3: Methodology

Tribalism is a taboo subject in Kuwait, and people avoid discussing it in formal situations especially with foreigners; this is why they aren't any resourceful literatures in the English language available to review. Ergo, the most viable way to learn about Kuwaiti happenings, either past or present, is to simply belong as one. In the spirit of Kuwait's democratic plurality, nationals generally talk about their problems and address them in collective privacy among family and friends. Thereon, their ideas and solutions are implemented on a national level in professional fashion to maintain its integrity. I personally happened to be a Kuwaiti Sunni Hadhar from an esteemed intellectual family and occasionally, I would attend diwaniya gatherings and participate in them – this was the criteria for my sampling strategy; I knew well that I had to utilize this luxury in order to explore the heart of this topic. However, the main concern with this relaxed, unorthodox data collection strategy is my inability to trust whether the information I receive was bias towards certain political or ideological affiliations.

In an academic sense, my data has been collected by using qualitative, semi-structured interviews albeit without the formalities to preserve the genuineness of the process and allow for dynamic interactions; this subsequently led to a research snowball effect, a method which allows the interviewer to recruit more informants directed by the selected initial informants (Booth et al, 1995); this was incredibly beneficial as I was able to analyse a collection of written articles by Kuwaiti scholars. The majority of my literature review consisted of Arabic sources from books, newspaper articles, blog entries, and academic journals; I was required to both translate and transliterate every idea in order to communicate this in English – this proved to be a hefty task since much of my thoughts were lost in translation as they were being written down. Hence, this is why the conditional conceptualization of tribalism in Arabia can only be grasped by the individuals involved in this phenomenon at a given time. Nevertheless, in my attempts to deliver this issue as both an agent of tribalism and an academic persona, my personal opinions have not been included in my data or this thesis statement.

Chapter 4: Citizenship

4.1 Conceptualization

The concept of citizenship in Kuwait examined the transformation of a tribal political schema into a nation state. Be that as it may, citizenship has proved to having historical links to tribal structures. In view, the formation of the state left traces that tied tribalism to citizenship, and since the concept was quite foreign to society, people were still identified by their tribe. In fact, the concept of citizenship itself was derived from European societies and it was implemented on a global scale in the wake of modern state building. The concept was an object of limited analytical scrutiny and is assumed as a universal institution with the purpose of being practiced in the same manner in all societies and under all circumstances (Butenschon et al, 2000). Furthermore, the concept of citizenship can be categorized into two types: the law of blood, *jus sanguinis*, and the law of soil, *jus soli*. The first implies the acquisition of citizenship by ethnical and ancestral means, while the latter implies the granting of citizenship as a result of being born in a certain territory or living there for a certain number of years. In Kuwait, *jus sanguinis* citizenship is the most dominant form, empowering the tribal factor in citizenship. The Kuwaiti citizenship that is based on *jus soli* was conditioned according to the status quo during the country's age of oil discovery. However, there are several articles of citizenship in Kuwait – the first article was entitled to the most original, known as Asil – purebloods and the settlers prior to 1920, the year of the building of the third and last city wall; the second article was given to those who came after them. There are other articles of citizenships, twenty-four to be exact, each as irrelevant as they are complicated. Also, there are those who refused to claim their non-Asil article of citizenship and as a consequence, ended up as Bedoon – illegal stateless residents; these people are often associated as descendants of article 2 tribes (Longva, 1997). This ethnocentric system is rather viewed as a farce by Kuwaitis today and proves that tribal influences are evident in state citizenship.

In addition, the Kuwaiti nationality law restricts expatriates from citizenship yet exceptions have been decreed to allow for the naturalization of foreign citizens in Kuwait under certain conditions. According to the law, children born to a Kuwaiti father irrespective of the

place of birth will be granted Kuwaiti citizenship. Further, children born in Kuwait to unknown parents will also be granted Kuwaiti citizenship and will receive the benefits that come with it such as education and healthcare. The abandoned children are taken to government owned orphanages. As they get older, they are placed in dormitories where they are tutored privately on Kuwaiti customs and social ways; they also attend public schools and are given pocket money. When adults, they are found jobs to enable them to assemble into society and most of them end up marrying fellow orphans. It is important to mention that Kuwaiti orphans, if not adopted, are not given any family name meaning they have no tribal affiliations. In the declaration for naturalization, Arab Muslim residents who qualify for citizenship would have lived in the country for at least fifteen years, earning a living without being convicted of a crime and have offered valuable services to the state, or in simpler circumstances, would have lived in Kuwait prior to the year 1945 up to their desired date of naturalization. The process also mentions that individuals born to a Kuwaiti mother and a deceased or divorced foreign father will be able to qualify for citizenship if they have lived in the country till the age of majority. In another case, the wife of a Kuwaiti man can be granted citizenship only after fifteen years of declaring it. However, she will lose her original citizenship as a result of this since Kuwait does not allow dual nationalities. In all mentioned scenarios, naturalized citizens will not be able to participate in the parliament for the first thirty years their citizenship. I must note that whatever their status might be, all Kuwaitis can have their citizenship revoked if they lash out against the government or the royal family (The Kuwaiti Nationality Law, 1959).

4.2 Identity

The earlier the tribe's period of settlement within the old walled town, the more original they are... yet the Kuwaiti identity stills remains a nebulous concept. The country has experienced several influential shifts in power schemes given its geo-political location; it has been under the patronage of tribal confederations as well as more powerful extrinsic empires – such as the British and the Ottoman (Slot, 2005). This prosperous country also performed as a trading post for merchants and workers alike and this allowed for the amalgamation of different people from around the region (Carter, 1984). Ergo, it is very common to find various facial

features among Kuwaitis and even within families; some Kuwaitis have distinct African features which is due to the frequent historical interaction between Kuwaitis and East Africans, especially within Somalia and the island of Zanzibar. The same applies to Kuwaitis with obvious South Asian and Indonesian features. Thusly, there is no such thing as Kuwaiti-looking since they come in all shapes, colours, and sizes. In that respect, physical appearance has no significance to identity whatsoever. Rather it's mainly the family name which usually, but not always, has tribal connotations; the Shi'a populace being a heavy exception since their inclusion was and is more business orientated than political.

Most of the Sunni Hadhar families are identified as tribes from the Saudi regions of Najd, Al-Hasa, and Shammar while most Hadhar Shi'a identify themselves as immigrants from either Iran or Iraq. The two factions, for the most part, laid the foundation of Kuwait's economy prior to the oil boom. The majority of the Sunni Hadhar citizens started their humble beginnings as fisherman and pearl-divers; some families were engaged in economic activities as pearl merchants (Al-Shamlaan). The Hadhar Shi'a often traded in goods, importing a plethora of products from Iran such as crafts, spices, gold, textiles, and artillery among other products. In view, the families' fiscal contribution to the country and its nation continues to be a core element in their identification; families still identify by their past profession with pride. This period of commerce established trust within its diverse society, and people were coexisting well on the shore. However, the incorporation of Bedouins in the big picture who generally lived beyond the town walls as nomadic tribalists, both Sunni and Shi'a, provoked a sense of untrustworthiness which is still apparent today. The Hadhar generally identified Bedouins as being unfaithful to Kuwait, insisting that Bedouins' loyalty was to their tribal homeland or country of origin. In this regard, Bedouins today do indeed identify themselves by their tribal roots first then by their nationality – the next chapter will elucidate on this. It all reads as rather tumultuous but to clarify this, tribalism as a concept is the same among different tribes. However, tribes identify themselves differently from other tribes; the identification process is not constant and to be fair, nor is it easily understood.

Chapter 5: Bedouins

5.1 Tribal Affiliation

The body of land which is now the modern state of Kuwait has been shared by the Bedouins and Hadhar for centuries; each group dwelled in their own separate environment – the Hadhar settled within the old walls by the shore while the Bedu opted to graze their flock across the desert. The two regularly interacted mainly for trade purposes and later on for security matters; their relationship was shaped by two major events. In the 1920 Battle of Jahra, the Kuwaiti Sheikh along with the Hadhar repelled an attack from the Wahhabi Bedouin militia, Ikhwan. The Ikhwan threatened to continue their attacks if the Kuwaiti forces refused to surrender. The Sheikh ultimately called in for help from the British who then intervened thusly ending the attacks. The battle resulted in a truce and the Ikhwan militia retreated. The significance of this battle with regard to Hadhar and Bedouin relationships is that many of today's Kuwaiti Bedouin descendants made up a large portion of the Ikhwan's manpower and had Kuwait lost, it would have been absorbed into the Saudi domain. The Amiri decree, an amendment that established citizenship, was adopted in 1950; it took the year 1920 as the year to determine citizenship due to the Battle of Jahra (Al-Sheikh, 1962).

The other major event involved Ibn Saud, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's first monarch, who was the ruler of the many Najd-based Bedouin tribes that raided Kuwaiti homes. It was during the Uqair Protocol of 1922 that Kuwait lost more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of its territory; the agreement was convened in Uqair, modern Saudi Arabia, and was imposed by the British High Commissioner to Iraq, Percy Cox, after meeting with Ibn Saud and John More, the British Political Agent to Kuwait. The purpose of the protocol was to define boundaries between Kuwait, Iraq, and the Sultanate of Najd. Kuwait had no say in the outcome of the agreement which saw the country lose a massive chunk of its land area and this incited feelings of resentment against the British. In regard to the Bedouin tribes who usually followed nomadic cross-border migratory patterns, they were assigned to the country where their wells were located. However, this did not sit well with Ibn Saud who then proposed the idea of having neutral zones. This idea was constituted as a borderless area based on tribal grazing zones. The

undefined Saudi-Kuwaiti neutral zone still exists today (Khoury, 1990).

The changing of loyalty which was more or less forced upon by the delineation of borders and creation of new nation-states made matters tricky for the Kuwaiti Bedouins. This transition demanded the exchange of old allegiances to new imagined communities (Anderson, 1991). The Bedouins in Kuwait lived in the desert and as a result, they faced scorching temperatures and dust storms; they were frequently dehydrated and even at times poverty-stricken. Subsequently, many Bedouins escaped the desert life and attempted to shake off their habitual by becoming more urbanized. Fortunately, the implementation of the Uqair Protocol meant that these Bedouins were now under the care of the ruling Kuwaiti Sheikh who in their best interest alleviated their situation by fulfilling his almsgiving duties. This persuaded Bedouins to slowly move into the walled town and leave their vagabond ways behind – many of them took up fishing and pearl diving as an occupation since it was the most popular and in demand profession in the country. The discovery of oil catalyzed the relocation process and helped the Bedouins settle down in urban areas. In the midst of the oil boom, Kuwait became a beacon of opportunities for many foreigners who wished to earn a living; the country experienced an influx of immigrants and its population increased dramatically – the Bedouins were among those who were hoping to thrive off of the country's new riches (Case et al, 1951). In any case, while the Hadhar and the Bedouins peacefully integrated, there were still strong dissimilarities apparent between the two that socially separated them up till today. The Bedouins are the least educated and most illiterate of Kuwaitis while the Hadhar are naturally the most privileged. Therefore, the primary difference was in their level of sophistication which typically denotes contrasting mentalities. In substance, the patriotism of the Hadhar challenges the Bedouins lack thereof, and although both groups have tribal affiliations, the Bedouins never truly adjusted their nationalist bearings.

Additionally, another noticeable factor that distinguished the two was the area of residence. The Bedouins and Hadhar usually lived in their own communities segregated to one another. The homes of the Hadhar were obviously grander than the Bedouins' who normally settled for much simpler housing; some houses even looked identical to others in their suburbs. The Hadhar commonly developed the skill of knowing which family resides where in the

country since Kuwait was such a small state, and with that, over time they also learned to recognize which districts were inhabited by Bedouins. The Hadhar rarely entered those areas since they saw them as ghettos and the government never really put much effort into improving them; this gave the Bedouins the freedom to unofficially govern their own districts. During election season, the Bedouins would strategically pitch tents in their suburbs to campaign for pre-votes in their tribal primaries before the start of national elections. These activities were illegal since political parties are banned in Kuwait. Their aspiration in doing so was to determine which tribe members will be chosen to run for the upcoming parliamentary elections; the winners of these tribal elections will be voted for by their fellow tribalist Bedouins come election time. The government attempted to overturn these illicit primaries by sending law enforcement squads to shut them down but instead, they were welcomed by rioting tribalist protestors who defeated the government's ploy. The main reason for these tribal primaries was to ensure the Bedouins that they will not lose votes to other candidates, and to ultimately have their social and political interests represented on a government stage. In essence, Bedouin tribalism implied cross-border affiliations (Freeth, 1972); the tribal primaries were also attended by tribe members from numerous countries across the Arabian Peninsula, they too voted for tribal candidates. These transnational interventions threatened to substitute the national interest of Kuwait with the tribe's in the matter of policy and decision making. Nonetheless, cross-border tribal visits are very common among Bedouins, and they are mostly apolitical; they merely resemble a reunion of extended family members under one roof where they all eat well, share stories, and rekindle relationships. All in all, the unfolding of regular travel visits amid tribe members symbolized the strength of Bedouin tribal unity. Howbeit, lately, the years have proved that as the old generations of Bedouins died out, tribal affiliation withered away with them.

5.2 Participation in Civil Society

The new generations of Bedouins are far less tribally vehement than their ancestors. Though they still keep to their Bedouin ways in moderations, they managed to assimilate into civil society better than their forebears ever could by becoming valued doctors, lawyers, and engineers among other respectable professions. It was primarily through employment that new

generation Bedouins fared to participate in civil society; lured by high-wages, Kuwaiti Bedouins began to discard any ideas of moving back to their Saudi, Iraqi, or Irani homeland since they have now experienced the good life Kuwait has to offer. Moreover, Bedouins began to gain the trust of the government by joining the military and serving the country, earning high ranks along the way. Indeed for a large portion of Kuwait's police and armed forces are comprised of Bedouins, at least %75; their ruthless nature of being and history in combat makes them ideal fighters. Their involvement in organized authorities, which were directed by the state's interests, compelled them to be more nationalistically inclined; likewise, they became more disciplined, pledging their allegiance to the nation and its ruling family. In fact, the royal family shared a historical and symbiotic relationship with the Bedouins – when members of the Al-Sabah family went on desert excursions, their convoy consisted of desert savvy Bedouin tribesmen who were also intrusted in guarding the old walls. The royal family respected the Bedouins so much that they would routinely send a representative to their communities to manage their needs.

In truth, the ruling family sympathized with the Bedouins and sincerely comprehended their ways of life because they too were once nomadic tribes; before the prestige and regality, the Al-Sabah tribe was a leading family who arrived to Kuwait from the south in hopes of finding life resources after escaping an economic depression. They were handlers of the journey, guiding many other tribes along the way who dubbed the leading Al-Sabah tribesman as Amir or Sheikh. Upon arrival to the land by the sea, now known as Kuwait, tribes established a political system under the regime of the Al-Sabah tribe – this was the beginning of the creation of civil society in Kuwait; the emergence of a Hadhar society from a Bedouin culture, and the replacing of animal herding in the desert with fishing and maritime navigation which became their primary source of income. The sea was plentiful and things began to look up for the new settlers. The ruling family urged its citizens to maintain this harmony and resolve any potential civil tensions through democracy. This qualified Kuwait as a comfortable and sustainable place to live in; its reputation spread across the peninsula reaching even the nearby Bedouins who were once companions of the new settlers. In respect to that, the ruling Sheikh commended his people to welcome any Bedouins and to show them compassion. However, in those promising beginnings, the Bedouin's participation in civil society engendered bitter affairs tainted by moments of betrayal. Thusly, their relationship with the Hadhar deteriorated through the course of time (Al-Otaibi 2010).

In 1901, the Emirate of Kuwait under the command of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah went on a campaign to capture the southern portion of the Rashidi dominion from under the Emirate of Ha'il; the Sheikh rallied an estimated 1200 of his own citizens to battle along with more than 20,000 tribalist from 15 different Bedouin tribes of whom the Sheikh maintained good relations with. His megalomaniac campaign turned sour at the Battle of Al-Sarif where he lost most of his army including those of the royal family; personal recollections of the battle cited the main reason behind Sheikh Mubarak's defeat was due to the fleeing of most if not all of his Bedouin fighters away from the battleground leaving him with only the Hadhar townspeople (Al-Samhaan). This crushing defeat imposed a serious threat on the power balance of the Emirate of Kuwait, and so in fear of losing his rule, the Sheikh called for a British Protectorate status which was refused due to rising tensions in the region. The prolonged conflicts in the region amounted to yet another battle for the Kuwaiti Sheikh; this battle took place northwest of Kuwait against tribal oppositions, the Al-Dhafeeri tribe and the Al-Muntafaq tribe – it was known as the Battle of Hadea and it marked a turning point for Hadhar-Bedouin relations by highlighting the Bedouins' poor participation in the Kuwaiti civil society who this time fought against the Sheikh and the Emirate of Kuwait, and helped in defeating them (Al-Sheikh, 1962).

In any case, the outset of World War I saw the Emirate of Kuwait side with the British against the Ottoman Empire, who in exchange recognized Kuwait as an independent government under British protection; the Sheikh was able to outmanoeuvre and destabilize Ottoman and German presence in the Arabian Gulf thus contributing to the Allied victory during the Middle Eastern theatre. Bedouin tribes in Kuwait during that time had their loyalty tested since the country stood with extrinsic forces in opposition to the House of Rasheed dynasty; their involvement in the war demanded belligerent consistency. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I meant that the country could reform so the Bedouins were keen to make amends for their failed participation and be included in this political transformation. In a reoccurring theme of selfish interest, the tribalist Bedouins planned their devotion to the newly formed country (Potter, 2009).

Kuwait finally returned to its peaceful way and began to develop its social, political, and economic motives. The Bedouins with the intention of being pictured in the grand scheme of

things started to work in the town, adopting local vocations on the sea. However, matters began to worsen for Kuwait. The country suffered an economic collapse which was propelled by the world economic depression and international trade blockades in the 1920s; Kuwaiti pearls, the country's leading trade product were no longer in demand as a result of the Great Depression and to make matters worse, they were replaced by Japanese cultured pearls. The Kuwaiti people were impoverished from this economic hardship as quoted by travel writer, Freya Stark, who mentioned that *"poverty has settled in Kuwait more heavily since my last visit five years ago, both by sea, where the pearl trade continues to decline, and by land, where the blockade established by Saudi Arabia now harms the merchants"*, (Al-Jassar). However, in good time, oil was discovered at Burgan in 1938 but it was not exported until 1946 because of World War II. Nonetheless, this discovery revolutionized the country's economy and workforce. The Kuwait Oil Company, formed as a joint venture by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and Gulf Oil (Tétreault, 1995), began employing many Kuwaiti workers, among them a plenitude of Bedouin tribalists. Furthermore, Bedouins continued to graze animals and occasionally, shepherds would take their products from dairy produce to whole sheep to downtown markets for sale; and since the Hadhar lived off fish, they entrusted the Bedouins to provide the goats, sheep, and even the uromastyx lizard, a Bedouin delicacy, to town for consumption. As such, the Bedouins also sold camels, horses, donkeys, and cows which were used by locals as a means of transportation. In this regard, their contributions to society turned out to be actually quite essential; they dared to venture into the wild to invest in imperative daily resources and operate as manual labour workers under the merciless temperatures (Al-Waquiyan, 2007). Also, from a more cultural frame of reference, Bedouin women immersed themselves in knitting and craft-making, designing custom attire for both men and women alike, accessories, and other garments for special occasions. In addition, they also mastered in herbal medicine; the Bedouins would gather firewood and special leaves from across the desert and sell them at markets – the herbs were cited to have cured a variety of diseases.

Chapter 6: The Parliament

6.1 Structure

The legal system of Kuwait is based on the civil law system and is modelled after British, French, and Egyptian laws; as well as Islamic legal principles significant in personal matters. Kuwait is hereditary and constitutional emirate with a parliamentary government. In 1962, following the country's independence from the United Kingdom, the constitution was drawn up by an elected Constituent Assembly and was ratified by Kuwait's first Amir, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah. The constitution is found on democratic principles that take the interest of the sovereignty of the State, equality, and public freedom. It is composed of 183 articles divided into five chapters, and it stipulates to the existence of an elected legislature, a parliament. The National Assembly of Kuwait is composed of fifty seats from five electoral districts to the unicameral legislature; and since political parties are banned in accordance to the constitution, factions are usually created in addition to independents and are categorized as liberalist, populist, or Islamist. The aforementioned factions then form voting blocs once elected; these blocs in the parliament act as de facto political parties; the table below shows the major de facto political parties active in Kuwait along with their ideology and current number of elected seats.

Table.2: The Major De Facto Political Parties of Kuwait

De Facto Political Party	Ideology	Current Number of Seats
National Democratic Alliance	National Liberalism	2
Popular Action Bloc	Popular Nationalism	5
Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood	Sunni Islamism	3
National Islamic Alliance	Shi'a Islamism	2
Justice and Peace Alliance	Moderate Shi'a	1

Source: Kuwait Politics Database

The parliament was a motive of political reform developed to bind the state and the citizen. This principle of consultation is deeply rooted to Kuwait's democratic spirit which extends back to 1752, during when the Sheikhdome of Kuwait gained independence from the Emirate of Al-Hasa and the Bani Khalid tribal confederation. The people of Kuwait elected a member of their own to manage the affairs of the town and lead the country in the discussions for freedom; Sheikh Sabah bin Jaber was chosen for the position and the people pledged their allegiance to the Al-Sabah family ever since. This event symbolizes Kuwait's history of democracy which continued its path to this day. In 1921, prior to the parliament, Kuwait established a Shura Council, an assembly under Islamic Democracy values, and it was the first entity that politically involved citizens in the management of state affairs. Further, in 1938 under tense internal and external conditions already mentioned in this paper, the Kuwaiti people found it necessary to participate in a more representative democratic system in order to make political, social, and economic reforms. Their efforts lead to the creation of a legislative council, the first of its kind in the country, and it focused on achieving free and fair elections, and being granted the authority to organize the affairs of the country. The Amir approved this proposal and 320 electorates were invited to vote; 14 of the approximate 20 candidates won and their first duty was to draft a constitution which briefed upon matters of people's sovereignty and the ratification of international treaties. Initially, in their first term, the Council formed several political committees and governmental departments but disputes within the Council brought it to its dissolution the same year. This experimental convocation was successful in theory even though the trial was short lived yet four days after it had been dissolved, over a hundred invitations were sent out to citizens to meet and discuss the country's next democratic phase; the agreements of the meetings decided on placing a new legislative council that adopted the constitution with more representatives.

The Kuwaiti democratic ethos was prolonged in civil society; its practices were perfected internally among family and friends through a process of open dialogue in a diwaniya, a Kuwaiti household gathering of men and an instrument for good dialogue and social updates. This modus of expression unified factions in a private environment with the luxury of discussing traditional matters in phonic secrecy; meaning if not involved, an individual would miss out a lot of these unwritten common views. Therefore, trust as it has always been, is a vital element in Kuwait's

political system be it through electoral processes or loyalty to the ruling regime. In retrospect, a diwaniya provides a multipurpose platform for democratic pluralism; this epitomizes Kuwait as a progressive social and cultural plurality influenced by tribal aspects. Nevertheless, although diwaween are literally open to anyone, people are usually more selective with regard to its location and frequent attendees especially since there is a regular pattern. The diwaween often welcome family lineages as such that when boys start to mature, they follow their fathers to the same diwaniya and are naturally inclined to share their same political views which, by essence, begets the tribal factor in voting patterns. In other words, to go against the tribal collective view would be a shaming matter. This affiliation to a degree empowers tribes as de facto political parties. The extent of this is severe as it contributes to significant shifts in demographics; high tribal birth rates that have grown to vote along tribal lines comprise more than half of the electorate. In tribal diwaween, the attendees generally come to a consensus on who they would wish to vote for; a plan is schemed for each electoral district and is promoted among the tribe members. In Sunni Hadhar diwaween, the occasion is on more of an individual basis; members of the family are not pressured to vote one way nor are they swayed into voting another. In most circumstances, during election season, candidates would commonly attend the diwaween in the district area they are running in; they would socialize with the attendees to know them on a more personal level before eventually pitching their case for votes. The Shi'a Hadhar diwaween, however, welcome strictly Shi'a candidates only and since they are the minority, their intention is to gain as much representation in the parliament as possible. Therefore, their bearings are in the direction of their ideology, and a guilt-tripping strategy is implemented on all Shi'a by their tribe members and the de facto parties they follow or have tribal representation in, especially the more radical ones.

During its early stages, the parliamentary elections were divided into ten constituencies. In the 1970s, a political Shi'a movement emerged from a young group of political intellectuals who took over the Social Society for Culture, an establishment by the Shi'a merchants to unify Shi'a fractions in order to promote Shi'a culture; this transformed into the Al-Da'wa movement. The young intellectuals decided to join forces with the Shi'a merchants by supporting candidates of theirs and in the 1975 elections, the Shi'as managed to successfully win ten seats; one of whom becoming the first Shi'a minister, notably Abdelmutalib Al-Kazemi – Minister of Oil

(Hertog, Luciani, Valeri, p.80). The years that followed were rather unfortunate for the Shi'a commune – rising tensions from the Iranian Revolution of 1979; as well as the eight-year Iran-Iraq war of 1980, inspired a re-division of electoral constituencies to preserve Sunni power and weaken Shi'a influences during that time. This new system was established as such that voters could vote twice in their district since there were two representatives per department now. Therefore, candidates with the highest and second highest number of votes earned seats in the National Assembly. Ergo, in the 1985 elections, Kuwaiti Islamists were backed by the government to weaken the Arab nationalists along with the Islamic Shi'a movement in order to gain a more compliant parliament. The vote-buying strategy succeeded and the Kuwaiti Islamists won much support in the public arena. This consequently hurt the Shi'a parliamentary representation which subsequently fell from ten seats to three; two of which were pro-government Shi'a elites.

Ironically, the vote-buying strategy came back to haunt the government. In 2006, the number of constituencies was reduced from 25 districts to 5 after a decree on electoral reformation was passed in the parliament and later approved by the ruling Amir - ten candidates ran per district thus maintaining the 50 electoral seat total. Though strangely, this reformation also included a four vote per person allowance which baffled many. This system proved to be an advantage to the emerging tribal Islamists bloc who during then performed in opposition to the government largely because it viewed it as an egregiously secular and corrupt. Therefore, to placate the tribalists, the Prime Minister stacked the cabinet with members of the most predominant tribes, entrusting them to keep his people in line. This strategy failed miserably as tribal patriarchal patronages did not conform to the government's agenda. Inside illegal tribal primaries, the four votes per person system gave tribal candidates a competitive edge over independents. The turnout of the 2008 parliamentary elections granted 34 seats to Islamist tribalists out of 50. This disparity increased tensions between tribes and the Government of Kuwait. In an effort to impede electoral frauds and imbalance, the Amir of Kuwait unilaterally amended the 2006 election law prior to the 2012 parliamentary elections so that voters can only vote once; it was seen by independent as a mechanism to level the playing field. In response, tribalist convened to boycott the elections in protest but to no avail. The one-vote law fractured tribalists, minimizing their ability to win beyond their proportion.

6.2 Constituencies

There are overwhelming size differences among constituencies within the electoral framework, each represented by ten members of the parliament accordingly; citizens have thus criticized the influence of one vote which in larger districts seems rather insignificant and have called for the delimiting of districts so that they are representative of their number of votes. The constituencies have different tribal and socio-economic configurations. The inequalities in the weight of one vote are still far smaller than the inequalities present under the twenty-five constituency system. In substance, the decision to adopt the one person, one vote system was to promote electoral equality among voters (Suliman, 2013). Its practice within the framework should not discriminate against any group, ideologically or tribally, and there are no intentions of gerrymandering behind its application. However, inequality seems to be an inevitable factor in Kuwaiti politics since, as previously mentioned in the paper, most tribal groups or followers of a certain belief system live in their allocated areas and maintain their lineages there, too. In the case of the distortion in distribution of votes, thematic voting patterns have emerged as a result of these district divisions.

The Shi'a populace dominates District 1 with approximately %45 of its electorate residing there; residential areas such as Al-Dai'ya and Al-Rumaithiya are notorious for inhabiting the majority of Kuwait's most radical Shi'a families. The suburbs are normally peppered with black flags and green florescent lights, both symbols of Shi'a presence. Their contributions will definitely guarantee Shi'a representation, and perhaps this might be a government strategy to avoid any civil upheaval post elections. The other residential areas in District 1 are mainly dwelled by Arab foreigners who, obviously, are not qualified to vote. Also, the Sunni Hadhar families constitute the majority of District 2 and 3; many of the towns in these constituencies are considered a part of Old Kuwait – like Kaifan and Shuwaikh. The wealthiest families in Kuwait reside in those districts. Finally, Bedouins and Islamic tribalists hold sway over District 4 and 5; this is where tribal primaries are held and the tribal effect is most noticeable. Table.3 illustrates the electoral constituencies along with the visual size of their area – notice how the larger districts constitute the most number of registered voters.

Table.3: Electoral Districts in Kuwait and Registered Voters in 2013



District	Area on Map	Registered Voters
District 1	Hawally	77,245
District 2	Al-Asimah	49,755
District 3	Al-Farwaniyah	76,501
District 4	Al-Jahra	113,685
District 5	Mubarak Al-Kabeer & Al-Ahmadi	122,429
Total		439,715

Source: Kuwait New Agency

The division of districts weakened the concept of tribalism which usually functions as a mobilizing agent in the country's internal politics. This further damaged the government's relationship with the tribalists and Islamists, who felt undone by this injustice. Table.4 identifies and categorizes the residential areas in accordance to their constituency; District 4 and 5 hold the most residential areas in the country; as well as voters per district – see Table.5

Table.4: Distribution of Residential Areas in Kuwait

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
Al-Sharq	Al-Murqaab	Kaifan	Al-Farwaniya	Al-Ahmadi
Al-Dasma	Al-Sulaibikhaat	Khaitaan Al-Jadeeda	Dhahiyat Sabah Al-Nasser	Dhahiyat Fahad Al-Ahmad
Al-Mataba	Al-Qibla	Al-Rawda	Al-Furdos	Hadiya
Dasman	Al-Shuwaikh	Al-‘Adailiya	Al-Omairiya	Mahbula
Bneid Al-Gar	Al-Qadsiya	Al-Jabriya	Al-Andalus	Abu-Halifa
Dhahiyat Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber	Dhahiyat Abdullah Al-Salem	Al-Surra	Al-Riq’i Madinat Sa’ad Al-Abdullah	Dhahiyat Ali Sabah Al-Salem
Al-Sha’ab	Al-Shamiya	Al-Khaldiya	Jleeb Shyookh	Al-Fanaitis
Failaka Island	Al-Mansooriya	Qurtuba	Al-Rahaab	Al-Fintas
Hawally	Al-Faiha	Al-Yarmouk	Al-Shadaadiya	Al-Riq’a
Bayan	Al-Nizha	Abraq Khaitaan	Al-‘Adhailiya	Al-Sabahiya
Al-Nigra	Al-Doha	Al-Salaam	Al-‘Ardhiya	Al-Dahar
Maidan Hawally	Gernada	Al-Sadeeq	Al-Jahrah	Dhahiyat Sabah Al-Salem
Mishref	Al-Qairawaan	Huteen	Al-Sulaibiya	Al-Qrain
Al-Salmiya		Al-Shuhadaa’	Al-Jahrah Al-Jadeeda	Dhahiyat Jaber Al-Ali
Al-Bidi’		Al-Zahra’	Saheed Al-Awazim	Mubarak Al-Kabeer
Al-Dai’ya			Al-Riq’i	Al-Massila
Salwa				Al-‘Adaan
Al-Rumaithiya				Al-Manqaf
Al-Raas				Al-Qsoor
				Al-‘Aqila
				Al-Fhaheel
				Al-Zoar
				Mina’ Abdullah
				Al-Wafrah

Source: Al-Harbi

Table.5: Distribution of Voters per District in 2008

District	Women Voters	% of Total	Men Voters	% of Total	Total
1	36,571	%54.88	30,070	%45.12	66,641
2	22,103	%53.43	19,262	%46.57	41,365
3	33,056	%56.34	25,618	%43.66	58,674
4	54,351	%58.00	39,360	%42.00	93,711
5	54,418	%53.72	48,876	%46.28	101,294
Total	200,499	%55.43	161,186	%44.57	361,685

Source: Kuwait Times

In order to explore how tribalism affects the elections in each district, I will briefly introduce some tribal aspects that come to mind. The first constituency is composed of Sunni Hadhar, Shi'a Hadhar, Sunni families from the Persian region of Br Faris, and Tribalists. Figures will show that this district favours the Shi'a Hadhar who have %40 of its people registered in that district – 32,480 in total, even though many of the Sunni elite families including members of the royal family reside in its residential areas, like Al-Dasma, Bayan, Al-Sharq, and Mishref. The Sunni Hadhar make up %23.75 of the constituency, while Sunni Persian origin families from Br Faris compose %9.25. The most predominate tribe in District 1 is the Al-Azmi tribe; they comprise most of the registered tribal voters in the constituency with 8,000 tribe members; they are followed by 310 Al-Ajmi tribe members and 300 of the Al-Mutairi tribe. Tribes encompass %25 of the district's registered voters who their illicit tribal primaries in 1985, 1999, and 2009. Table.6 visualizes the distribution of voters District.1 in the 2009 Parliamentary elections.

Table.6: Distribution of Voters in District.1 in the 2009 Parliamentary Elections

District.1	Male Voters	Female Voters	Total
Number	31,613	37,519	69,132
Percentage	%45.8	%54.2	%100

Source: Al-Sa'eedi

District 2 has the lowest amount of registered voters in the country yet it is the most diverse and balanced among the other constituencies. The district also maintains an even amalgam of socio-economic powers. The Sunni merchant elites and members of the royal family, for example, mostly reside in the notable Al-Shuwaikh area, and the majority of the middle-class Sunni Hadhar families registered in District 2 live in the suburbs of Al-Shamiya, Al-Nizha, Al-Faiha, and Al-Qadsiya. However, the area of Al-Mansooriya is predominately Shi'a Hadhar, and is more or less, fanatical. The tribalists are common in Al-Sulaibikhaat, Gernada, Al-Doha and Al-Qibla – they are Bedouin families mostly. In the case for Al-Qairawaan, a new residential area, it has been composed of a diverse cluster of Kuwaitis and in essence, many of the new residential areas are as well – it's a strategy by the government to spread all types of Kuwaitis across the country to reduce traffic and urban sprawl within the capital.

Tribalist knew well of their insufficient influence in the district and for this reason, many of them opted to join the District 4 tribal primaries to participate and show their support for the Al-'Enizi, Al-Mutairi, and Al-Rashidi tribes. Their absence consequently aided the Shi'a Hadhar populace in gaining a seat or two in their constituency. Tribalists constitute approximately %22 of all registered voters in District 2 – roughly 9550 voters in total. The tribal vote is rather insignificant in comparison to District 4 and 5, and the constituency only accommodates a few members of the major tribes in Kuwait; the most popular being the Al-'Enizi tribe, %3.4, then the Al-Azmi, 1.9%, followed by Al-Shammari, %1.7, and Al-Rashidi, %1.6. Table.7 visualizes the distribution of voters District.1 in the 2009 Parliamentary elections (Al-Harbi).

Table.7: Distribution of Voters in District.2 in the 2009 Parliamentary Elections

District.2	Male Voters	Female Voters	Total
Number	20,380	23,093	43,473
Percentage	%46.9	%53.1	%100

Source: Al-Sa'eedi

District 3 is made up of large, medium, and small residential areas. It also has a low rate of registered votes compared to the rest of the constituencies. The district is almost equally split up between Sunni Hadhar families and Tribalists. The Shi'a populace has low significance in this constituency. District 3 is famous for its political vitality in the country – the Kuwaiti Arab Nationalist Movement was born in some of the Sunni Hadhar residential areas in this constituency, Kaifan and Al-Khaldiya to be specific, where two of the three campuses of Kuwait University are located. Kuwaiti progressive and liberal movements have also been shaped here. In addition, technocracy is a proven motivational element in this district as residents often lean towards supporting intellectuals over tribal lines, such as lawyers, engineers, university professors, and doctors. District 3 hosts many of these dynamic characters including many members of the parliament.

In the district's tribal fame of things, tribal influences have been spread out in small portions across the constituency, though there has been a successful pattern in the residential area of Al-Rawda which witnessed the success of the Al-Rashidi tribal member, the deceased Jasser Al-Jasser, in the 1971, 1985, 1996 elections. His political contributions to the tribal cause inspired two candidates of the Al-Rashidi family to follow in his footsteps in the Al-Rawda area. The other prominent tribal residential area in District 3 is Khaitaan – both Khaitaan Al-Jadeeda and Abraq Khaitaan; here smaller tribal groups maintain the collective voice, and most of them support the Al-Otaibi tribe who have 1975 registered voters in Khaitaan alone. Be that as it may, tribalists have the lowest percentile of registered voters in the district – the Sunni Hadhar form %73.5 of the total population; the Shi'a maintain %14 while the Tribalists utilize a mere %12.5. Table.8 visualizes the distribution of voters District.1 in the 2009 Parliamentary elections.

Table.8: Distribution of Voters in District.3 in the 2009 Parliamentary Elections

District.3	Male Voters	Female Voters	Total
Number	27,754	34,833	62,587
Percentage	%44.3	%55.7	%100

Source: Al-Sa'eedi

The old residential areas in District 4 in comparison to those surrounding the capital are far less developed; they're typically inhabited by Bedouins, expatriates, and Bedoon – these areas include Al-Jahrah, Al-Farwaniya, and Al-Sulaibiya. That said, their residents are of the middle, low-middle, and low-class levels. The slums and ghettos of Kuwait are found there; most notably in Al-Sulaibiya where entire houses are as big as some kitchens in Hadhar houses. This socio-economic inequality is an extreme rarity in Kuwait. On the other hand, the new residential areas in District 4 have been complete with much consideration to urban planning due to Kuwait's rising population; some of the new residential areas are literally adjacent to the old slums of Kuwait. They have been distributed among all types of Kuwaitis, if desired. In any case, this constituency is the largest and fastest growing in the country and here, tribal influence are on the rise to such an exuberant extent that even some neighbourhoods have been designated to certain tribes. The tribal competitiveness in the district lead to many tribal failures and in some scenarios the tribal youth, who make up a large portion of tribal power, have opted to avoid voting along tribal lines and instead, voted on their individual preferences – mostly in favour of the nation's interest. The most powerful tribes in this District are the Al-Mutairi and Al-Rashidi tribe who over the years have outmanoeuvre and outplayed their competition through strategic thinking. The demographics of the constituency are summarized in Tables 9 and 10:

Table.9: Distribution of Factions in District 4 in the 2009 Parliamentary Elections

Faction	Percentile
Sunni Hadhar	% 14.5
Shi'a Hadhar	%5
Al-Mutairi Tribe	%20
Al-Rashidi	% 15
Al-'Enizi	%9
Al-Shammari	%7
Al-Dhafeeri	%6.5
Al-Ajmi	%4.3

Source: Al-Harbi

Table.10: Distribution of Voters in District.4 in the 2009 Parliamentary Elections

District.4	Male Voters	Female Voters	Total
Number	43,552	56,330	99,882
Percentage	%43.6	%56.4	%100

Source: Al-Sa'eedi

Finally, District 5 holds the most amount of registered voters in the country. The constituency contains 24 residential areas, three of which are the most inhabited and thus, carry the most influential votes. The area of Dhahiyat Sabah Al-Salem populates 17,998 registered voters, as Al-Sabahiya has 16,871 and Al-Riq'a with 13,227. The Al-Azmi tribe frame the constituency with the highest voter counter accounting for %36 of the entire district, narrowly followed by the Al-Ajmi tribe who register %25 in total. Evidentially, this constituency is where the tribal effect is more eminent and effective. The distribution of voters and tribal demographics in District 5 are shown in tables 11 and 12.

Table.11: Distribution of Tribes in District 5 in the 2009 Parliamentary Elections

Tribe	Electorates
Al-Azmi	20,000
Al-Ajmi	18,000
Al-Otaibi	7,300
Al-Mutairi	5,800
Bani-Haajir	5,700

Source: Al-Harbi

Table.12: Distribution of Factions in District 5 in the 2009 Parliamentary Elections

District.5	Male Voters	Female Voters	Total
Number	52,380	57,336	109,716
Percentage	%47.7	%52.3	% 100

Source: Al-Sa'eedi

In order to identify and further clarify the tribes and their influence on each constituency; as well as the final electoral, I have constructed Table 13 and 14 to brief on this. The tables will summarize this chapter in numbers and percentile.

Table.13: Distribution of Factions and Tribes per District according to 2006 records in Numbers

Social Structure	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	Total
Sunni Hadhar	20,501	22,500	38,040	13,114	12,950	107,105
Shi'a Hadhar	27,600	7,500	8,129	4,600	6,300	54,129
Al-Azmi	7,900	750	162	2122	22100	33,034
Al-Ajmi	310	-	433	3,890	16,750	213,383
Al-Otaibi	-	-	2,359	1,515	4,650	8,524
Al-Hajiri	-	-	-	207	4,350	4,557
Al-Mutairi	300	305	596	17,664	5,250	24,115
Al-Rashidi	-	650	710	13,768	1,590	16,718
Al-'Enizi	-	1,350	270	7,900	2,075	11,595
Al-Shammari	-	650	160	6,355	1,310	8,475
Al-Dhafeeri	-	450	-	5,875	-	6,325
Al-Dosari	-	-	-	-	2,452	2,452
Al-Subai'	-	-	-	-	1,350	1,350
Al-Harbi	-	-	-	1,685	902	2,560
Al-Fadhli	-	-	-	850	1,500	2,350
Al-Khaldi	-	-	-	1,061	360	1,421
Al-Qahtani	-	-	-	-	410	410
Al-Adwaani	-	-	-	880	270	1,150
Al-Harshi	-	1,550	-	890	721	3,161
Al-Sulaibi	-	1,500	-	2,600	-	4,100
Al-Kandari	4,900	1,140	2,710	15,003	2,972	13,225
Unknown	1,717	965	1,572	3,591	4,071	11,916
Total	63,228	39,310	55,141	90,036	92,533	340,248

Table.14: Distribution of Factions and Tribes per District according to 2006 records in Percentile

Social Structure	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	Total
Sunni Hadhar	%32.4	%57.2	%68.9	%14.5	%13.9	%31.5
Shi'a Hadhar	%43.6	%19.1	%14.7	%5.1	%6.8	%15.9
Al-Azmi	%12.5	%1.9	%0.3	%2.4	%23.8	%9.7
Al-Ajmi	%0.5	-	%1.1	%4.3	%18.1	%6.3
Al-Otaibi	-	-	%4.3	%1.2	%5	%2.5
Al-Hajiri	-	-	-	%0.2	%4.7	%1.3
Al-Mutairi	%0.5	%0.8	%1.1	%19.6	%5.6	%7.1
Al-Rashidi	-	%1.6	%1.3	%15.3	%1.7	%4.9
Al-'Enizi	-	%3.4	%0.5	%8.8	%2.2	%3.4
Al-Shammari	-	%1.7	%0.3	%7.1	%1.4	%2.5
Al-Dhafeeri	-	%1.1	-	%6.5	-	%2.9
Al-Dosari	-	-	-	-	%2.6	%0.7
Al-Subai'	-	-	-	-	%1.5	%0.4
Al-Harbi	-	-	-	%1.9	%1	%0.8
Al-Fadhli	-	-	-	%0.9	%1.6	%0.7
Al-Khaldi	-	-	-	%1.2	%0.4	%0.4
Al-Qahtani	-	-	-	-	%0.4	%0.1
Al-Adwaani	-	-	-	%1	%0.3	%0.3
Al-Harshi	-	%4	-	%1	%0.8	%0.9
Al-Sulaibi	-	%3.8	-	%2.9	-	%1.2
Al-Kandari	%7.7	%3	%4.9	%1.7	%3.2	%3.9
Unknown	%2.7	%2.4	%2.9	%4	%4.4	%3.5
Total	63,228	39,310	55,141	90,036	92,533	340,248

Source: Al-Harbi

As shown, tribal groups outweigh the independent Hadhar voices en masse. Tribes in districts 4 and 5 are responsible for almost half of the votes in the country. The figures in tables 12 and 13 interpret rough voting patterns; these figures are becoming more predictable every election year personifying Kuwait as somewhat of a pseudo democracy. The implications of this will be discussed and challenged in the next chapter. It is also worth noting that the previous tables have shown that women hold the voting majority since there are more registered female voters than men; this is because military and police forces are not included in the vote. Also, when the women's right to vote was introduced in 2005, women were automatically registered in the system whereas men who become eligible must register themselves.

Chapter 7: The Tribal Impact

7.1 Motivation

Tribalism, per se, is a state of being. In general, the Kuwaiti Hadhar label Bedouins as tribalists which is broadly true. However, tribalism as a concept is not designated to a certain group of people. In Kuwait, even Hadhar families depicted and still depict tribal traits. The motive behind this ontological reality dates back to Ayaam Al-Jahiliyyah, the days of ignorance, in Pre-Islamic Arabia; tribal influence was ubiquitous across the region then and was rooted by its genealogy, not faith nor any school of thought. Therefore, I wholeheartedly argue that as tribal interests evolved through time, history has proven that there have been no correlations between theological conservatism and conditional tribalism. In sum, tribes in Kuwait have never derived their interests from the Islamic faith. The Islamic interest of Kuwait has always been in the hands of the Islamists, pioneers of Kuwait's ethical conservatism and literalism.

The most effective tribal current in the parliament belongs to tribe aficionados. Their motives in the parliament consist of mainly monetary gains; they stress to rise in the ranks of the national hegemony through gaining positions in authoritative companies and ministries. In addition, tribal candidates wish to glorify and maintain their ancestral reputation in order to benefit their tribe members in the existing and upcoming generations. The lack of national sentiment behind their incentives remains to deter their parliamentary prospects. In contrast, Sunni Hadhar independent families who identify their heritage to their past professions maintain motives to stabilize the country's wellbeing in internal politics and economics; and naturally since Kuwait is a capitalist society, they too wish to achieve monetary gains but with less emphasis compared to tribalist candidates since they're usually wealthy. Further, the Shi'a Hadhar populace are usually not politicians so they're motives and contributions in the parliament have always been aligned to serve their communities and their ideology, but also the national interest, too. The Government of Kuwait normally employs Shi'a representatives to maintain healthy, peaceful relationships with neighbouring Shi'a majority countries, Iran and Iraq.

The Kuwaiti Islamists' motives in the parliament are much less self-centred; their main goal is to gather the nation under the principles of Islam. The Kuwaiti Islamists, which include members of the Kuwaiti branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Social Reform Society, deviate from conventional politics; they follow an apolitical agenda that focuses their efforts on encouraging the Kuwaiti people towards philanthropic endeavours, religious education, and cultural education. To elucidate on this, I will state some of their motives:

First, the preservation of the Islamic and Kuwaiti identity and rejection of any foreign values that could potentially damage society and disrupt the harmony between the people of Kuwait, this includes the production, selling and consumption of alcohol, prostitution, gambling, and usury. The Islamists are key players in this process, and unlike nearby Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates where alcohol distribution and prostitution is rampant, Kuwait prides itself for its Islamic conservatism. Second, the Islamists offer guidance to the public youth by helping them lead a righteous life of integrity and dignity; they also try to help them lead an active and social life by creating sports and leisurely activities for them. Third, the Islamists also provide a suitable curriculum in all matters educational and informational for the benefit of public interest, in accordance to the Islamic legislation. Fourth, in accordance to the legal system of Kuwait that adopts the Shari'a Law in civil and family matters, Islamists try to deal with and find solutions concerning such related matters. Fifth, and rather ambitiously, the Islamists are vehemently motivated to maintain the Islamic religion in good name so to reverberate good morality between individuals in order to preserve dignity and humility in the Kuwaiti community. The Government of Kuwait has been active in pursuing these aforementioned interests of which they are fond of. In truth, Kuwait being a soft state values itself as a global humanitarian force; it leads the world in providing fiscal and nutritional aid to crisis-ridden countries, undeveloped nations, and impoverished communities. This holistically captures Kuwait's contributions to the world aside from producing and exporting oil. To exemplify this, the current Kuwaiti ruler, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was honoured by the United Nations in 2014 for his humanitarian leadership (Eslah, 2015).

7.2 Faux Pas

Kuwait's democracy is obviously imperfect and there are apparent weaknesses in the state's political system. The country suffers from corruption and inexorable electoral fraud matters. The government employed vote buying strategies among other dirty tactics to have things work in their favour. However, elections in Kuwait are the only longstanding parliamentary process in the Gulf, and it is still developing (Al-Najjar, p.242). In this section, I will call out on some of the factions' motives in the parliament and expose some of their dirty little secrets. The tribal impact, per se, relies heavily on the tribe itself – in the case for tribalist candidates who come from significantly imposing tribes like the Al-Azmi tribe, they depend on nepotism in the parliament to reach their desired ranks; not to mention all the illicit practices that occur within their primaries beforehand. Tribalist members of the parliament would also engage in vote buying tactics to help their fellow tribe member to succeed in the elections and guarantee their affiliation a seat in the parliament. Ironically, tribes would believe that their elected members would serve their interest but in truth, many of them are simply in it for the prestige; once elected, some members would use people's money to invest in their own interests, like venturing into acquiring real estate or by starting up personal businesses. This is why members of the parliament are generally known as thieves by the Kuwaiti common society.

Moreover, adding to the indecency of the whole thing, the majority of the members of the parliament, regardless of their faith or faction, exploit their national status to scale the employment ranks by virtue of nepotism; current government ministers who are affiliated to a certain tribe or family are instrumental agents in these fiascos; they participate in nepotistic undertakings by employing members of their family or tribe to work in certain sectors – the Shi'a populace are known well for this. Therefore, in sum, elections in Kuwait are a good way of getting rich or by that, richer. Their engagements never had much of an impact on social reformation, so the general consensus often considers them as useless. In fact, the country's most politically mobilizing factor is its oil – not its politicians. Needless to say, the government has to maintain its democracy in order to securitize the country from rising civil tensions, and they do this by filling up the seats of its National Assembly through pseudo democratic elections.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Kuwait as a political entity and a concept is in sum new; its geographic location exposes it to the unfolding of cultural, political, and economical proceedings. The tiny state manages to flourish peacefully despite its densely diverse populations and surrounding war-torn settings. Indeed the country suffers from the megalomaniacal acts of wealthy elites and politicians but regardless of these negative anomalies, Kuwait in spirit epitomizes a progressive social and cultural phenomenon laced with a long history of tolerance and coexistence between its inhabitants. The politics when effective may not always serve the individual, rather it aims to collectively securitize the nation from any form of social or political uprising; as well as to remove any radical notions lingering into the country from foreign tribal forces.

To allude on tribalism as a motivating factor in Kuwaiti politics, previous parliamentary elections have proved that tribe members for the most part prioritize their self-interest ahead of the tribes, and the country's as well. The tribal impact, as such, is only practical until the end of the elections, and from there it's all about exploiting nepotism. Therefore, since tribalism is a zeitgeist matter, its influence on politics can't be concluded. However, in regard to my research, I am able to conclude the tribal impact in the Kuwaiti parliament is for the most part, arbitrary. The Government of Kuwait will continue to lay down the social and political agenda, and tribalists as well as other member candidates will be lured into sullyng their pockets with government bribes.

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