Kuwait's *Diwaniyyas*:

Dislocation and Dissent in an Urban Gulf Society

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Number 15: July 2015

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INTRODUCTION

The Gulf region of today is home to a diversity of ethnicities, reflecting "millennia of migrations between seafaring communities strung out along the shores of the region as far as Africa and the South China Sea".[1] Once bustling port cities, Gulf cities still retain their maritime functions that symbolise their multiple links with the world. Tracing back these functions to the commercial exchanges along the Arabian coast allows us to situate, if not differentiate, Gulf cities between their past and present contexts. On one hand, Gulf cities' urbanisation and modernisation processes are correctly attributed to their past water connections and population concentration which draw to them railways, highways and air routes; their maritime functions have been essential in transforming them into industrial and financial nodes, service centres, and political capitals.[2] On the other hand, the urbanisation process undergone by Gulf cities changes takes them into unfamiliar territories where new values that motivate urban design and planning are different to those that sustained port cities. As a result, this approach of physically shaping an urbanised city becomes socially mapped onto the population,[3] reflecting Lewis Mumford's argument that "social facts are primary, and the physical organization of the city […] must be subservient to its social needs".[4]

This paper will demonstrate how smaller built environments situated in urbanised Gulf societies, akin to the reception rooms known as *diwaniyyas* in Kuwait, are microcosms of societal change which reflect the far-reaching effects of urbanisation and modernisation. More specifically, this study will argue that activities in the *diwaniyyas* indicate a sense of dislocation caused by rapid urbanisation, and an underlying wave of dissent engendered by the flexible use of the space. The following excerpt succinctly describes the physical appearance and the use of the *diwaniyya*:[5]

In modern parlance, it (the *dīwānīyah*) refers to a secluded room that is part of the house but with its own entrance to the outside. The room is used for guests or as a place for gathering. All of these meanings and connotations revolve around a common concept: to meet discuss, and exchange views. Despite their modernization and urbanization, societies in the Arabian Gulf States still retain a private *dīwānīyah* for each tribe or family. […] They are now a distinguishing cultural and political characteristic of Arabian Gulf society as they play an important role in spreading political awareness among citizens and fill a vacuum in some of those societies where there are no political parties and, hence, no real political participation. […] This is true particularly in Kuwait, where the *dīwānīyah* played a very important and unique role in the politics of the country.[6]

As set out in the aforementioned excerpt, *diwaniyyas* are places of social gathering for Kuwaiti men to discuss issues relevant to them. The term "*diwaniyya*" refers to both the physical confines of the room, as well as the practice of gathering in the same room. Historically, the *diwaniyya* culture became entrenched in Kuwaiti society owing to the country's maritime past. As major stakeholders in a busy port city, Kuwaiti merchants who were concerned with their maritime dealings had *diwaniyyas* along the shoreline to monitor the port activities. Pre-oil Kuwaiti society[7] was governed by a mutually reinforcing ruler-merchant relationship[8] which meant that both parties' *diwaniyyas* were meeting places to arbitrate disputes over political and economic affairs. Following the discovery of oil, however, the power balance of the ruler-merchant equation was tipped in favour of the al-Sabah ruling family whose newfound oil wealth now gave them an edge over their economic counterparts. With their position being threatened, the merchants argued their case through gatherings in *diwaniyyas* with the belief that "they had a continuing right to a say in the distribution of state wealth".[9]

It is within such a context of change that existing academic literature on the *diwaniyya* has placed an emphasis on political debate and dissent, particularly on the use of *diwaniyyas* as spaces for electoral campaigning. Complementing the aforementioned excerpt's mention of the *diwaniyya's* role in 'spreading political awareness', recent literature has underscored the emergence of the 'Monday *Diwaniyyas*' in the eighties when Parliament was dissolved and the *diwaniyya* became an alternative avenue for political discussion. Mary Ann Tétreault's work on the evolution of civil society in Kuwait, in particular, reaffirms the importance of *diwaniyyas* in the political sphere.[10] She remarks how political participation in Kuwait takes place through formal and informal mechanisms "ranging from *diwaniyyas* to marketplaces to legislative assemblies".[11] Other academics have also observed how the *diwaniyya* is legally exempted from having to provide notice to local authorities whenever there is a gathering.[12]

The general scholarly consensus on the *diwaniyya*'s role in Kuwait confirms its value as an alternative political institution. However, its greater role as a socio-cultural anchor – one that reflects immediate social realities – leaves much to be desired in existing literature. In justifying why the *diwaniyya* is a vital political tool, writers unintentionally mention its social aspects without going into greater detail. For example, *diwaniyyas* are deemed appropriate as spaces for electoral campaigning because they allow Kuwaitis face-to-face communication.[13]

Elsewhere, the same space is argued to have the ability to "straddle the public-private divide" and this overlap between public and private realms is frequently exploited by politicians.[14] In this light, the social characteristics of the *diwaniyya* have been largely overlooked to give way to its political contributions, whereas this paper will argue that it is equally, if not more important, to consider the social dynamics both created and reflected by the *diwaniyya*.

THE *DIWANIYYA* AS A FORM OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT

A built environment is defined as a man-made space which provides a set of cues that "trigger appropriate behavior", hence establishing a relationship between space and individuals.[15] Social rules govern smaller built environments, and the interaction between individuals in these spaces result in a highly personalised end-product – "personal spaces".[16] Such interactions shape how a built environment is regarded in society, and more importantly, the human touch in physical spaces mould the historical trajectories of both space and society. The *diwaniyya*, as a small built environment, reflected societal dynamics of a pre-oil Kuwait that invested great attention in maritime activities. Sea captains used to watch their ships from the *datchas*, coral and mud benches built out from the front walls lining the *diwaniyyas* along the seafront.[17] *Diwaniyyas* owned by affluent merchant families of the past still line the stretch of Gulf Road today, once the shoreline visited by traders from all over the world.[18]

As described in the introduction, Gulf cities were lively port cities and Kuwait was no exception. The nature of port cities in the Gulf was characterised by an openness to the world through the diversity of idioms used to describe their trade and administration, and perceptions of outsiders and insiders were blurred in a social landscape dominated by newcomers and settlers.[19] Public life in a maritime-centred Gulf was therefore a result of a long period of organic development which Ben Hamouche calls "autonomous urbanism": A period of development when the general population was influenced by conditions of site, while residential quarters were given freedom and autonomy.[20]

The *diwaniyya's* role in pre-oil Kuwait demonstrated the level of receptiveness in a society that revolved around maritime trade. Kuwait's pre-oil residential landscape consisted of low-rise interconnected houses surrounding a courtyard in the middle.[21] These densely populated areas catered to a residential culture that catered for the needs of extended families. As one of the rooms surrounding the courtyard of the house, the *diwaniyya* was the room where men of the neighbourhood often met to discuss business and resolve local disputes.[22] The *diwaniyya* was a small built environment located amidst the bustling port activities, providing a sense of the porousness that characterised Kuwait and the outside world.[23] It is testimony to French sociologist Henri Lefebvre's conception of space a social product.[24] The success of Kuwait's trade dealings with the other countries was also reflected by the exportation of the *diwaniyya* culture; the *diwaniyya* was taken abroad to Zanzibar and Kenya when Kuwaitis went to these

countries for business purposes. [25] As such, a case study of a small built environment manifesting patterns of social interactions is best exemplified by the *diwaniyya*.

Figure 1. The Unused *Datchas* In Contemporary Kuwait (Photograph taken on 16/2/2013)

Figure 2. The Traditional Roudhan *Diwaniyya*: A Remnant Of Kuwait's Past (Photograph taken on 5/6/2014)

Figure 3. Pre-oil Kuwait Town (Photograph by Lawrence Lockhart, 1947, taken from R. Lewcock and Z. Freeth (ed.) *Traditional Architecture in Kuwait and the Northern Gulf*, **London, Art and Archaeology Papers, 1978)**

Figure 4. The A'soussi Family's Courtyard House (Photograph taken on 25/5/2014)

THE ADVENT OF URBANISATION AND MODERNISATION

In recent years, scholars have embarked on deeper exploration of the spatial aspects of the *diwaniyya*, owing to the rapid urbanisation that Kuwait underwent in the seventies, and to the inspiration drawn from Arab city planner Saba Shiber's work on Kuwait's urbanisation process. [26] One such person is Mohammad Khalid al-Jassar, whose work explains how urbanisation has transformed key spaces in Kuwait (such as the mosques and markets) and has led to the demise of the courtyard house. [27] Of greater relevance to this study are al-Jassar's observations on the transformations of Kuwaiti houses with urbanisation and oil wealth, and on the correlation between spatial size and affluence. [28] His research has shown that oil wealth has allowed the average Kuwaiti to afford a *diwaniyya*, what was once largely in the domain of the merchant families.

The changes engendered by urbanisation were noticeable in the living spaces of Kuwaiti families. The pre-oil residential landscape aimed at accommodating extended families in courtyard houses was demolished; taking its place are private villas that cater for nuclear families. The 1952 'Master Plan' produced a suburban landscape with "a new lifestyle that was highly privatized, with detached villas surrounded (and separated) by boundary walls". [29] These spatial changes reflected Kuwait's metamorphosis into a global, modernist oil city, as did other cities in the Gulf, during which a growing emphasis was placed on spectacular architecture and image creation. [30] In a global strategy to enhance their appeal to investors, iconic buildings are erected not only to represent power and identity, but also to highlight the primacy of the capitalist economy and the consumerist society. [31] This display of affluence is especially true in the case of *diwaniyyas*, which continue to be a mark of prestige accorded to Kuwaiti families who are in possession of these spaces. [32] Quoting a Kuwaiti scholar, the *diwaniyya* today serves as "a brand as to how you want to display yourself and market yourself in society". [33]

The lavish physical appearance of many *diwaniyyas* today indicates a shift in the definition of public life. Once characterised as 'autonomous urbanism' and communal in nature, public life in Kuwait has shed its openness, subjected itself to market forces, and given in to the interventionist role of the state. The control of the state, which will be discussed further in the coming sections, has influenced societal attitudes as public life becomes revolved around social privileges and material benefits due to the presence of the disproportionately large non-citizen population. [34] Contemporary *diwaniyyas* now resemble huge guest lounges equipped with extravagant items ranging from expensive furniture to video games and LCD television sets. [35] It is within such a context of modernisation that *diwaniyyas* are transformed, from this birth, into microcosms of acute social fragmentations in Kuwait.
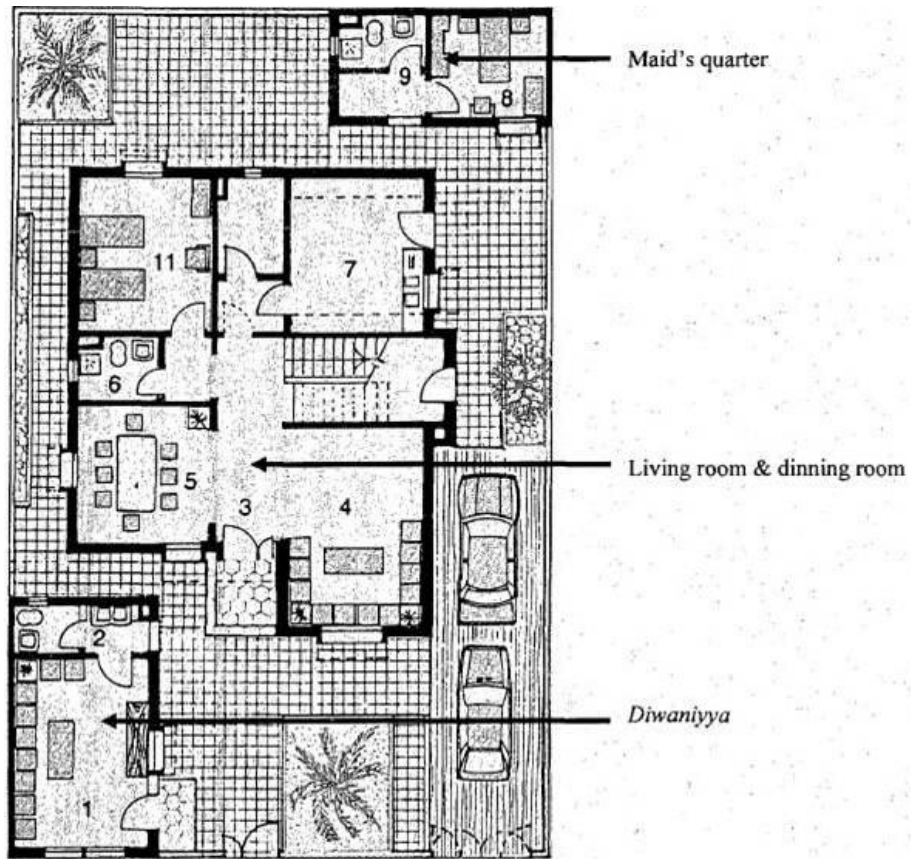
Figure 5. Floor Plan of a Modern Kuwaiti House (*Source:* National Housing Authority, taken from M. al-Jassar, 'Constancy and Change in Contemporary Kuwait City', 2009, p. 146)

Figure 6. The Roumi *Diwaniyya*: A Standalone *Diwaniyya* (Photograph taken on 28/05/2014)

Figure 7. Twenty-year-old Mishal Jaber al-Sabah's *Diwaniyya* (Photograph taken on 15/4/2013)

KUWAIT SOCIETY: A GROWING "ETHNOCRACY"

The term 'ethnocracy' was used by Longva to analyse the relationships between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis in terms of their perceptions of each other, and concluded that Kuwaitis had become the dominant group in Kuwaiti society by virtue of their ethnicity, instilling such a consciousness "through their everyday practice in the sphere of articulation".[36] This section argues that modernisation has created this process – largely through state-led policies – and resulted in the exclusion of foreigners from the *diwaniyya*.

The general modernisation process, compounded by specific city planning measures and by strict citizenship laws, has led to the growing alienation of non-Kuwaitis in Kuwait both socially and spatially. Housing segregation, a common occurrence across Gulf cities, resulted in neighbourhoods being divided along the lines of income, ethnicity and culture: for instance, Hawalli in Kuwait is known as *al-Dhifah al-Gharbeya* (West Bank in Palestine), while al-Karama in Dubai is almost entirely inhabited by Indians.[37] Even among nationals, housing patterns are stratified: The political elite live at the seafront, the new middle class in villas, and the low-income strata at the peripheries of cities.[38] In Kuwait, housing measures introduced by the state-controlled municipalities favour Kuwaitis as foreigners own neither land nor means of production, underscoring the latters' lack of capital.[39] Kuwaitis live in neighbourhoods in which they are the majority, and discriminatory stereotypes against migrants lead to the migrants being discouraged from visiting 'public' places unaccompanied.[40] Ghazi Sultan, a former architect in the Ministry of Housing, recounted how a Kuwaiti client preferred the separation of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residential areas

because he rejected foreign influences.[41] By extension, the foreign population of Kuwait becomes largely oblivious to the functions of, if not to the existence of, the *diwaniyyas* located in Kuwaiti homes, even if these *diwaniyyas* are known as semi-public spaces.

These separations run in stark contrast to the tight-knit housing and communal living of the pre-oil era. The British scholar William Palgrave who visited Kuwait in the mid-nineteenth century described its inhabitants as "tolerant to others and not over-rigid to themselves".[42] While *diwaniyyas* used to house passing travellers and the poor, today foreign groups have little involvement with them. In a survey carried out by al-Moosa, none of the immigrants had ever attended *diwaniyyas*, unless they were servants.[43] This mirrors the experience of my *diwaniyya* visits, during which few foreigners were seen. Although interviewees agree that the *diwaniyya* does not reject foreign guests, one person said, "they're coming for just an hour and they go".[44] This implies that even if non-Kuwaitis do visit the *diwaniyyas*, their visit is brief, almost perfunctory. Another female interviewee believes the *diwaniyya* shows that "Kuwaitis are better off than other men from other countries".[45] As such, the *diwaniyya* reinforces the notion of distinctive 'personal spaces',[46] differentiating Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis through the latters' lack of capital, and perpetuates a 'system of circular relations' – a system of growing social networks only within the national population.[47]

State-led policies have preserved the dominant position of the national population by enforcing strict citizenship laws and imposing legal restrictions on the entry and employment of foreigners.[48] This distinction between nationals and non-nationals has subsequently been played out implicitly in the space of the *diwaniyya*. In a country where the natives are in a minority, yet are in possession of the vast amount of material wealth, there has been much talk about preserving Kuwaiti identity.[49] The *dishdasha*, a floor length robe in white or cream, acts not only as the formal attire for Kuwaiti males in the *diwaniyya*, but also as an instrument that appropriates "the monopoly of social power vis-à-vis non-Kuwaitis", thereby ensuring the privileged treatment of Kuwaitis.[50] In this manner the *diwaniyya*, visited by Kuwaitis in their *dishdashas*, is a space that exemplifies what Gardner calls 'cultural sovereignty' – a zone of exception created for specific purposes for specific groups.[51] As a space that legitimises socio-economic inequality, the *diwaniyya* connects the spatial to the social, bringing about "a unique integration […] to members of the same class" and also in this case the same ethnicity (Kuwaitis); while others (non-Kuwaitis) are excluded.[52]

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND POLITICAL DISSENT

As discussed earlier, the *diwaniyya*'s social potential may be transformed into political potential, allowing it to act as an alternative political institution. The *diwaniyya's* political potential developed in tandem with state power, both of which are indirect and direct consequences of oil wealth respectively: "As the population was suburbanized en masse, the city was transformed into a landscape of state power and ceased to be a centre of political

discussion and debate as it had been prior to oil".[53] Urban planning and development in Kuwait had become state-led processes with no public input.[54] Against this concentration of power, *diwaniyyas* became reactive counter spaces against the state. These pockets of resistance came from the *diwaniyya*'s social function of congregation, described by a commentator as "the culture of the group".[55] Kuwait's inhabitants used *diwaniyyas* to regain their "right to the city", what Lefebvre refers to as the right to create a living environment according to one's needs and desires.[56]

Modernisation transformed Kuwait's social fabric from one that upheld an occupational division of labour (ruler, merchants and the working class) into one that fractured society into conflicting different groups according to class and affiliation. *Diwaniyyas* reflect such social fragmentation. In Kuwait's case, the *badu*[57] settled in "spontaneous shanty settlements" and were designated as stateless people as they had not obtained citizenship, unlike the *hadar*.[58] Without proper houses, the *badu* were also not in possession of *diwaniyyas*. The *badu* took to the streets in 2011 to demand rights from the state.[59] By contrast, the *hadar* hold regular *diwaniyya* sessions and their *diwaniyyas* represent social status. The importance of the family name linked with to the *diwaniyya* highlights how different groups within the Kuwaiti population possess varying amounts of capital, with only specific families tied to this mark of social status, and their *diwaniyyas* in turn reflect their position in the class society.

As state intervention became more pervasive in different aspects of everyday life, *diwaniyyas* became spaces to express political dissent and to exhibit 'the culture of the group' – or various religious and political affiliations. In the early stages of Kuwait's city planning, the townspeople had the option of approaching the ruler in his *diwaniyya*, as had been done in 1954 to protest against maladministration.[60] More recently, Kuwaitis have expressed their disapproval to the state in their *diwaniyyas*. During constitutional suspensions, *diwaniyyas* have been used as primary sites for political activity due to the protected nature of the space, making "the earmarking of particular *diwaniyya* meetings for mass mobilization the next logical step".[61] When the parliament was suspended for the second time, in 1986, members of a rump faction met in their *diwaniyyas* every Monday – these came to be known as the "Monday *Diwaniyyas*".[62] Musallam al-Barrak, a household name amongst the interviewees, is known for criticising government policies in his *diwaniyya*.[63] In the periods leading up to elections, campaign *diwaniyyas* are held for each candidate and large numbers of people attend them.[64]

Diwaniyyas expose sectarian and tribal tensions in Kuwait, resulting in "internal bickering and occasional governmental paralysis".[65] The *diwaniyya* provides what Arendt calls a 'space of appearance' where "action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere".[66] In this manner, the *diwaniyya* allows dissent outside of a pre-determined context. As the *diwaniyya* is also a semi-private space, the sense of proprietorship needs to be considered as the owner determines the nature of his *diwaniyya*.[67] This divides Kuwaiti society into groups with different preferences and social capitals who regularly attend their preferred *diwaniyyas*, reaffirming the reality of social stratification in Kuwait.

THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN

In May 2005 Kuwaiti women gained the right to vote and to run for office, a milestone that would be expected to redress gender inequality, and by extension improve women's access to *diwaniyyas*. Female interviewees indicated that well-known Kuwaiti women such as the Minister of State Planning Rula Dashti, and a former Member of Parliament Aseel al-Awadhi, hold their own *diwaniyyas* – an act that runs against social norms in Kuwait.[68] However, these instances still require a harder look at Kuwaiti society's general social climate in order to ascertain Kuwaiti females' sense of autonomy. Relating specifically to Kuwait, access to *diwaniyyas* does not necessarily confirm women's sense of autonomy.

While great strides have been made, gender inequality remains a challenge as the *diwaniyya* is still chiefly a male-dominated space. Indeed it would seem that the aforementioned advancement in Kuwaiti women's rights has obscured the continuing role of other legal restrictions on women, and obscured underlying male interests.[69] It has also been argued that ending female seclusion served the interests of the merchant class who intended "to change Kuwaiti social mores so that elite women of the merchant class could take over prestigious positions that might otherwise go to men from the emerging social classes".[70] Thus, the increased role of females ultimately served male interests.

It could be contended that in the quest to improve women's rights, divisions in Kuwaiti society have been exacerbated. On the one hand, it divided the men who have differing views on the granting of women's rights. For example, a member of the National Assembly, Ali al-Rashid, received a death threat over the telephone for opposing gender segregation in universities.[71] On the other hand, Stephenson explains how women have become careful in labelling their gatherings; some call theirs *jalsat* (general gatherings); some are known as *dar dini* (religious lessons); others call them social *diwaniyyas* or political *diwaniyyas* – these are typically organised by affluent women.[72] These different names reflect divisions, often based on different class interests, in the gatherings or forms of *diwaniyyas* that have been started by women.

In terms of local perceptions, *diwaniyyas* continue to reflect masculine domination in Kuwait society. Bourdieu explains how the strength of the masculine order is seen in the fact that it "dispenses with justification"; firstly through the "sexual division of labour", and secondly through "the structure of space".[73] This is true when examining perceptions of the *diwaniyya*. Male interviewees regard women's presence in *diwaniyyas* as an odd occurrence;[74] others see *diwaniyyas* as "gentlemen's clubs".[75] Women, at the same time, acknowledge the masculine attributes of the *diwaniyya*, implicitly demonstrating that "the everyday lives of Kuwaiti women are also regulated by an orderly set of rituals", all of which comply with "their moral duties to strengthen family ties".[76]

Masucline domination relegates Kuwaiti women to a class below men by limiting their access to the socially privileged space of the *diwaniyya*. Women are usually absent when men's *diwaniyyas* are in session, while campaign *diwaniyyas* remain divided by physical barriers separating the audience area into men's and women's sections.[77] Only "through the schemes of perception, appreciation and action" can we understand the masculine domination exhibited by the *diwaniyya* and the wider, "durable effects that the social order exerts on women".[78]

CONCLUSION

Social dislocation and political dissent in Kuwait, and the wider Gulf region, arise as a result of its rapid development targeted at achieving a modern urban landscape. Smaller built environments, spaces of either informal encounter or discussion, have been altered to varying degrees to fit into the exigencies of a modernist, oil city type. They are testament to the changing social realities of the GCC states. Dubai, for instance, seeks to be a model for other cities to emulate but its developments are fragmented, and its residential landscape highly exclusive – central features of its overall form.[79] Kuwait's, Dubai's and the Gulf's megamalls cater best to those who have sufficient purchasing power, namely the nationals, wealthy expatriates and the tourists. The entry of migrant workers into such malls is refused based on the assumption that these workers have intentions of harassment and that only the policing of these spaces can keep undesirable elements out.[80] In their strides towards the modern, Gulf cities akin to Kuwait allow the "familiarization of the strange" to ultimately defamiliarise the familiar by reinventing the definition of "public".[81]

In this manner, the *diwaniyya* episode in Kuwait's rapid development process reflects the transformation of the 'public'; Kuwait transforms from an open port town into an affluent, modernised and urbanised city with lines of exclusion. The main referents of the 'public' in the contemporary Kuwaiti context are its nationals; likewise the main participants in *diwaniyyas* are Kuwaiti males. As a smaller built environment, the *diwaniyya* is a microcosm of wider societal dynamics in Kuwait. It embodies the evolving traditions in Kuwait, and exhibits both continuous and discontinuous elements of Kuwait's maritime past. Compared with the openness of the past, the *diwaniyya* has shown more acute instances of exclusion (women, non-nationals, *badu*), class differentiations, and other specific affiliations in Kuwaiti society today. In an urban Kuwaiti society, new cleavages are compounded by "the spatial organization of sameness (typically along class or ethnic lines), [which] do less to produce forms of community within the city than to entrench alienation and distrust".[82] In order to redress social grievances and tensions in their pre-political stages caused by the reorganisation and reinvention of the urban landscape by the state, academics and policymakers alike would do well to look at smaller built environments comparable to the *diwaniyya*.

Notes

[1] M. Redha Bhacker, 'The Cultural Unity of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean: A *Longue Durée* Historical Perspective', in L. G. Potter (ed.), *The Persian Gulf In History*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 163-172.

[2] R. Murphey, 'On the Evolution of the Port City', in F. Broeze (ed.), *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries,* Kensington, New South Wales University Press, 1989, p. 227.

[3] J. Hannover and S. Shami (ed.), *Amman: The City and its Society,* Beyrouth, Cermoc, 1996, pp. 40-41.

[4] L. Mumford, 'Architectural Record', in R. T. LeGates and F. Stout (ed.), *The City Reader,* London, Routledge, 2007, p. 87.

[5] The word "*diwaniyya*" has many orthographic variations in English such as "*diwaniya*" or "*dewaniyeh*". For consistency, this paper will employ "*diwaniyya*" throughout.

[6] A. M. Alhajeri, 'Dīwānīyah', in E. E. Shahin (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 268-269.

[7] Pre-oil Kuwait usually refers to the country in the period leading up to the discovery of oil in 1938.

[8] For a deeper understanding of the ruler-merchant relationship in Kuwait, see J. Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Persian Gulf: Ruler and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

[9] Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Persian Gulf*, p. 45.

[10] M. A. Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2000.

[11] Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, pp. 12-13. See also E. Segal, 'Political Participation in Kuwait: *Dīwānīyya, Majlis* and Parliament', *Journal of Arabian Studies,* vol. 2, no. 2, 2012, pp. 127-141.

[12] See G. Alnajjar, 'The Challenges Facing Kuwaiti Democracy', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2000, pp. 242-258. Other works on the *diwaniyya's* legal existence include A. Kapiszewski, 'Elections and Parliamentary Activity in the GCC States: Broadening Political Participation in the Gulf Monarchies', in A. Khalaf and G. Luciani (ed.), *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf,* Dubai, Gulf Research Center, 2006, pp. 88-131 and S. al-Hamli, 'Impact of the Level of Women Participation in the Workforce on Economic Growth in Kuwait', Ph.D Thesis, King's College London, 2013.

[13] M. A. Tétreault, 'Advice and Dissent in Kuwait', *Middle East Report,* no. 226, 2003, p. 38.

[14] M. A. Tétreault, 'Civil Society in Kuwait: Protected Spaces and Women's Rights', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 47, no. 2, 1993, p. 279.

[15] A. Rapoport, *The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication,* London, SAGE Publications, 1982, pp. 60-61.

[16] R. Sommer, *Personal Space; the Behavioral Basis of Design,* Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1969, pp. 3-11.

[17] Z. Freeth, *Kuwait Was My Home*, London, George Allen and Unwin, p. 105. See also Figure 1 for an idea of the *datcha*.

[18] See Figure 2 for an idea of a preserved traditional *diwaniyya* in Kuwait today.

[19] N. Fuccaro, *Histories of City and State in the Persian Gulf: Manama since 1800,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 67-69.

[20] M. Ben Hamouche, 'Manama: The Metamorphosis of an Arab Gulf City', in Y. Elsheshtawy (ed.), *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development,* Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 185.

[21] See Figure 3 for an aerial photo of pre-oil Kuwait town.

[22] See, for instance, Royal Scottish Museum, *The Evolving Culture of Kuwait,* Edinburgh, Stationery Office Books, 1985, pp. 48-49.

[23] See Figure 4 for an idea of the few courtyard houses that remain in Kuwait today.

[24] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith, Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1991.

[25] Interview with Kuwait's former Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Ali Abdallah al-Shamlan, Kuwait City, 5 May 2013.

[26] For an extensive account of Kuwait's urban history, see S. Shiber, *The Kuwait Urbanization,* Kuwait City, Kuwait Municipality, 1964.

[27] See M. al-Jassar, 'Constancy and Change in the Built Environment: the case of Kuwait', *International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments*, no. 208, 2008, pp. 65-87.

[28] M. al-Jassar, 'Constancy and Change in Contemporary Kuwait City: the Socio-Cultural Dimensions of the Kuwaiti Courtyard and *Diwaniyya*', Ph.D thesis, The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2009, p. 128.

[29] F. al-Nakib, 'Towards an Urban Alternative for Kuwait: Protests and Public Participation', *Built Environment*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2014, p. 106.

[30] S. Sassen, 'The Global City: Introducing a Concept', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs,* vol. 11, no. 2, 2005, p. 38.

[31] Y. Elshestawy, *Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 133-136.

[32] See Figure 5 to have an idea of the modern Kuwaiti house.

[33] Interview with Associate Professor of Political Science and History at The American University of Kuwait (AUK), Dr. Hesham al-Awadi, Salmiya, 9 May 2013.

[34] See A. N. Longva, *Walls Built On Sand: Migration, Exclusion and Society in Kuwait,* Colorado, Westview Press, 1997, p. 47.

[35] See Figures 6 and 7 to gain a visual perspective of lavishly constructed *diwaniyyas.*

[36] Longva, *Walls Built On Sand,* p. 145.

[37] S. Khalaf, 'The Evolution of the Gulf City Type, Oil and Globalization', in J. Fox, N. Mourtada-Sabbah and M. al-Mutawa (ed.), *Globalization and the Gulf*, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 253.

[38] Khalaf, 'The Evolution of the Gulf City Type', pp. 253-255.

[39] Non-nationals are allowed to own neither property nor land in Kuwait. As a result they are left to rent property, usually apartment units, or live in shanty quarters. See A. N. Longva, 'Neither Autocracy nor Democracy but Ethnocracy: Citizens, Expatriates and the Socio-Political System in Kuwait', in P. Dresch and J. Piscatori (ed.), *Monarchies and Nations: Globalisation and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf,* London, I.B. Tauris, 2013, p. 118.

[40] Longva, *Walls Built On Sand,* p. 122.

[41] G. Sultan, 'Designing New Needs in Kuwait', *Toward an Architecture in the Spirit of Islam: Architectural Transformation in the Islamic World Conference,* Aiglement, France, April 1978, paper later published in Philadelphia by the Aga Khan Development Network, p. 94. For local perceptions, see also A. al-Moosa, 'Kuwait: Changing Environment in a Geographical Perspective', *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 11, no. 1, 1984, pp. 45-57.

[42] W. Palgrave, *Narrative of a Year's Journey Through Central and Eastern Arabia Volume II: 1862-1863*, London, Macmillan and Co., 1866, p. 386.

[43] Al-Moosa, 'Kuwait: Changing Environment in a Geographical Perspective', p. 50.

[44] Interview with the Director of the European, Asian and Far East Investment Division at Kuwait Investment Authority, Farouq Sultan, Shuwaikh, 29 April 2013.

[45] Interview with a graduate of the American University of Kuwait (AUK), Sumaiah al-Souri, Salmiya, 25 April 2013.

[46] This is based on the aforementioned discussion on the built environment.

[47] D. Schwartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu,* Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 103.

[48] R. Alissa, 'Modernizing Kuwait: Nation-building and Unplanned Spatial Practices', *Berkeley Planning Journal,* vol. 22, no. 1, 2009, p. 86. Legal restrictions placed on foreigners include conditions for naturalisation based on parentage, barriers to the right of ownership of real estate, and the need for a Kuwaiti sponsor for a migrant worker to gain entry. For more information, see Longva, 'Neither Autocracy nor Democracy but Ethnocracy', pp. 114-135.

[49] Longva, 'Neither Autocracy nor Democracy but Ethnocracy*,* p. 122.

[50] Longva, *Walls Built On Sand*, p. 125.

[51] A. Gardner, *Migrants, Urban Space and Segregation in the Gulf City,* The American University of Kuwait, 15 January 2013, [lecture].

[52] P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, cited in D. Schwartz, *Culture and Power,* p. 104.

[53] Al-Nakib, 'Towards an Urban Alternative for Kuwait', p. 101.

[54] Al-Nakib, 'Towards an Urban Alternative for Kuwait', p. 105. See also al-Dekhayel, *Kuwait: Oil, State and Political Legitimation*, Reading, Ithaca Press, 2000.

[55] Interview with the President and Medical Director of Fawzia Sultan Rehabilitation Institute (FSRI), Elham al-Hamdan, Salmiya, 7 May 2013.

[56] H. Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities,* Translated by E. Kofman and E. Bath, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996, pp. 128-129.

[57] *Badu* (also known as *bidoon*) refers to the Bedouins in Kuwait who practised a nomadic lifestyle in the past. They are considered culturally distinct from the *hadar*, or the settled urbanites. See also E. Dickinson, 'Kuwait's Bidoon May Still Be In Limbo', *The National,* 1 April 2013, http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/kuwaits-bidoon-may-still-be-in-limbo, (accessed 24 July 2014).

[58] F. al-Nakib, 'Revisiting *Ḥaḍar* and *Badū* in Kuwait: Citizenship, Housing, and the Construction of a Dichotomy', *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 46, 2014, pp. 12-16. See also A. N. Longva, 'Nationalism in pre-modern guise: the discourse on *Hadar* and *Badu* in Kuwait', *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 38, 2006, pp. 171-187 and N. Partrick, 'Nationalism in the Gulf States', in D. Held and K. Ulrichsen (ed.), *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics, Economics and the Global Order,* Oxon, Routledge, 2012, pp. 47-65.

[59] Human Rights Watch, 'Kuwait: Dozens Injured, Arrested in Bidun Crackdown', *Human Rights Watch*, 19 February 2011, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/19/kuwait-dozens-injured-arrested-bidun-crackdown, (accessed 24 July 2014).

[60] D. Logan, 'Logan to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 26 July 1954', in A. Rush (ed.), *Records of Kuwait 1899-1961: Internal Affairs III*, Trowbridge, Redwood Burn Limited, 1989, pp. 128-130. See also FO 1016/719, file 1097/61, W. Granston, 'Kuwaiti Opinion Report on the Iraqi Threat', 13 July 1961.

[61] Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, p. 70.

[62] Alnajjar, 'The Challenges Facing Kuwaiti Democracy', p. 257. See also M. A. Tétreault, 'Dissent and Citizens' Rights in Kuwait (Part One): The Limits of Electoral Democracy',

Jadaliyya, 5 Nov 2013, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/14945/dissent-and-citizens-rights-in-kuwait-(part-one)_t, (accessed 24 July 2014).

[63] Amnesty International, 'Kuwait: Charges Against Musallam al-Barrak Must Be Dropped', *Amnesty International,* 31 October 2012, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/kuwait-2012-10-31, (accessed 24 July 2014). See also M. A. Tétreault, 'Dissent and Citizens' Rights in Kuwait (Part Two): Ghost Parliaments and the "Abyss of Autocracy"', *Jadaliyya*, 5 Nov 2013, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/14946/dissent-and-citizens-rights-in-kuwait-(part-two)_g, (accessed 24 July 2014). Musallam al-Barrak had openly insulted the ruler, an act considered taboo in Kuwait. He was arrested, received a five-year prison sentence which he appealed, and was then released on bail.

[64] Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, pp. 102-103. Campaign *diwaniyyas* are usually large-event tents, located within or just outside the private Kuwaiti house, used for electoral campaigning.

[65] A. Abdulla, 'The Arab Gulf Moment', in D. Held and K. Ulrichsen (ed.), *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics, Economics and the Global Order,* Oxon, Routledge, 2012, p. 116. See also Human Rights Watch, 'Kuwait: Security Forces Attack Protesters', *Human Rights Watch*, 27 December 2012, http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/12/27/kuwait-security-forces-attack-protesters, (accessed 24 July 2014).

[66] H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1958, p. 177.

[67] M. A. Tétreault, Personal Communication, 10 June 2014.

[68] Interviews with a postgraduate student at Kuwait University, Reem al-Awadhi, Salmiya, 3 June 2014, and with a graduate of the American University of Kuwait, Mariam Mandani, Salmiya, 2 June 2014.

[69] For more details on these legal restrictions, see Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2010', *Human Rights Watch*, 2010, http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2010/kuwait, (accessed 24 July 2014).

[70] M. A. Tétreault and H. al-Mughni, 'Modernization and its Discontents: State and Gender in Kuwait', *Middle East Journal,* vol. 49, no. 3, 1995, p. 410.

[71] M. al-Sabah, *Gender and Politics in Kuwait*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2013, p. 84.

[72] L. Stephenson, 'Women and the Malleability of the Kuwaiti Dīwāniyya', *Journal of Arabian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2011, p. 192. There are also instances of mixed *diwaniyyas,* such as *Equait*, which aims to promote social equality. See their website: http://equait.org/.

[73] P. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination,* Translated by R. Nice, Oxford, Polity Press, 2001, p. 9.

[74] Interview with Ministry of Education Officer, Muhammad Hussein al-Shamlan, Kuwait City, 5 May 2013.

[75] Interview with Manual Therapist at the Fawzia Sultan Rehabilitation Institute (FSRI), Muhammad al-Zoubee, Salmiya, 7 May 2013.

[76] M. A. Tétreault and H. al-Mughni, 'Political Actors Without the Franchise: Women and Politics in Kuwait', in P. Dresch and J. Piscatori (ed.), *Monarchies and Nations: Globalisation and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2013, p. 208.

[77] Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy*, p. 104.

[78] Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, pp. 37-38.

[79] Y. Elsheshtawy, 'The Great Divide: Struggling and Emerging Cities in the Arab World', in Y. Elsheshtawy (ed.) *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development,* Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 22.

[80] Fuccaro, *Histories of City and State in the Persian Gulf*, p. 63.

[81] J. Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 6.

[82] F. Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2005, p. 22.

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